

Hebrews

1:1 God, after He spoke to the fathers long ago through the prophets in many portions and in many ways,¹ **1:2** in these the last days,² has spoken to us through the Son,³ whom He appointed heir of all things,⁴ in view of whom He also made the ages,⁵ **1:3** who is the radiance of His glory⁶ and the likeness of His identity.⁷

After bearing all things with respect to His powerful utterance,⁸ and having made purification of sins,⁹ he sat down at the right hand of the Great One in the heights,¹⁰ **1:4** because he has become far superior to the *angeloi*,¹¹ inasmuch as he has inherited a greater name than they.¹² **1:5** Because to which of the *angeloi* did He ever say,

You are My Son; today I have given birth to you <Psalm 2:7>;¹³

and again,

I will be a Father to him, and he will be a Son to Me <2 Samuel 7:14>.¹⁴

1:6 And whenever He again leads the firstborn into the arena of His influence,¹⁵ it says,

Indeed, let all the *angeloi* of God bow down before him <Psalm 97:7; Deut. 32:43 (LXX)>.¹⁶

1:7 Thus, on the one hand, it says regarding the *angeloi*,

He makes the winds His *angeloi* and flaming fire His ministers <Psalm 104:4>;¹⁷

1:8 and, on the other hand, regarding the Son,¹⁸

Your throne, O God,¹⁹ is into the age of the age,²⁰ and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom;²¹

1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;
Because of this, God, your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions <Psalm 45:6-7>.²²

1:10 In addition,²³

You, Yahweh, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands;²⁴

1:11 They will perish, but You remain;
And all of them will grow old like a garment;²⁵

1:12 And like a mantle You will roll them up;
Like a garment they will also be changed.
But You are the same, and Your years will not come to an end <Psalm 102:25-27>.²⁶

1:13 Now, to which of the *angeloi* has He ever said,

Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet <Psalm 110:1>?²⁷

1:14 Are they all not ministering winds that were sent to serve on account of those who will inherit salvation?²⁸

2:1 Therefore,²⁹ it is necessary that we pay much closer attention to the things that we heard,³⁰ lest we drift away.³¹ **2:2** For, if the message that was spoken through *angeloi*³² became established and every transgression and act of disobedience received a justifiable response of deserved justice,³³ **2:3** how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?³⁴ After it acquired a beginning to be spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,³⁵ **2:4** as God bore witness with them by means of signs and wonders and various displays of power and by distributions of the Holy Spirit according to His desire.³⁶

2:5 The point is that He did not subject to *angeloi* the future arena of influence (τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν) that we are discussing.³⁷ **2:6** But someone has solemnly declared somewhere, saying,³⁸

What is man that You remember him,
Or the Son of Man that You care for him?³⁹

2:7 You have caused him to be a little lower in status than the *angeloi*;⁴⁰
You have crowned him with glory and honor;
And You have appointed him over the works of Your hands.⁴¹

2:8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet <Psalm 8:4-6>.⁴²

Now, in subjecting all things to him, He has not left one thing that is not subject to him.⁴³

However, now, we do not yet see all things as being subject to him.⁴⁴ **2:9** Yet, we do “see” him, who has been caused to be little lower in status than the *angeloi*, Jesus,⁴⁵ and who has been crowned with glory and honor on account of the suffering of death,⁴⁶ in order that, with respect to the grace of God, he would taste death on behalf of everyone.⁴⁷ **2:10** You see, it was appropriate for Him, on account of whom everything exists and in light of whom everything exists, because He leads many sons to glory,⁴⁸ to cause the leader of their salvation to reach his goal (*telos*) (τελειῶσαι) through sufferings.⁴⁹ **2:11** Therefore, indeed, the one who sets people apart and the people who are set apart are all from one.⁵⁰ It is on account of this reason that he is not reluctant to call them brothers,⁵¹ **2:12** because it says,

I shall proclaim Your name to my brothers;⁵²
In the midst of the assembly I shall sing Your praises <Psalm 22:22>.⁵³

2:13 And furthermore,

I shall trust in Him <Isaiah 8:17>,⁵⁴

along with,

Behold, I and the children whom God has given me <Isaiah 8:18>.⁵⁵

2:14 Therefore, because the children⁵⁶ have shared in flesh and blood,⁵⁷ even he, likewise, participated in the same,⁵⁸ in order that, through death, he could nullify the one who has the power of death, that is, the adversary,⁵⁹ **2:15** and he could free these ones,⁶⁰ as many as were constrained by their slavery to the fear of death throughout their whole

lives.⁶¹ **2:16** For, of course, he does not provide help to *angeloi*, but he provides help to the seed of Abraham.⁶² **2:17** Therefore, he was obligated, according to all that he does, to be like his brothers,⁶³ in order that he become a merciful and faithful High Priest with respect to the things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.⁶⁴ **2:18** For, having himself been tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are tested.⁶⁵

3:1 Therefore, brothers who have been set apart,⁶⁶ partakers of the heavenly calling,⁶⁷ think carefully about the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Jesus,⁶⁸ **3:2** who was faithful to Him who created him⁶⁹ just as Moses also was in His whole household.⁷⁰ **3:3** Now, he is considered more worthy of being honored than Moses by just so much as the one who provides for the household has more honor than it.⁷¹ **3:4** For the whole household is provided for by someone, and God is the One who provides everything.⁷² **3:5** Indeed, on the one hand, Moses was faithful in His whole household as a servant to bear witness to the things that were to be spoken in the future.⁷³ **3:6** On the other hand, the Messiah was faithful as the Son over His household.⁷⁴ We are His household, if we hold on to our confidence and the boast of our hope until the end.⁷⁵

3:7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says,⁷⁶

Today, if you hear His voice,⁷⁷

3:8 do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah (the place of strife),
As in the day of Massah (the test) in the wilderness,

3:9 when your fathers tested Me.⁷⁸

They tested Me, even though they saw My accomplishments.⁷⁹

3:10 For forty years,⁸⁰ therefore, I felt disgust for this generation,
And said, they always get it wrong because of their hearts,⁸¹
And they do not know My ways.⁸²

3:11 As I swore in My anger,
Certainly, they shall not enter into My rest <Psalm 95:7-11>.⁸³

3:12 Watch out, brothers, lest there be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart in withdrawing from the living God.⁸⁴

3:13 Instead, encourage one another each day, as long as it is called "Today,"⁸⁵ in order that no one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of moral depravity.⁸⁶ **3:14** We have become partners with the Messiah,⁸⁷ if, indeed, we hold on to the reliable beginning of our title deed until the goal (*telos*) (μέχρι τέλους),⁸⁸ **3:15** because it has been said,

Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts
as at Meribah (the place of strife) <Psalm 95:7-8>.⁸⁹

3:16 For who rebelled *after* they had heard? Was it not all those who went out of Egypt through Moses?⁹⁰ **3:17** And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who committed evil, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?⁹¹ **3:18** And to whom did He swear that they would not enter into His rest but those who disobeyed?⁹² **3:19** Indeed, we see that they were not able to enter on account of unbelief.⁹³

4:1 Therefore, let us fear, lest the promise to enter into His rest is left behind and anyone of you seems to fail to reach it.⁹⁴

4:2 For, indeed, we have had good news proclaimed to us just as those ones did, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because it had not been united with belief in those who heard.⁹⁵ **4:3** For, we, who believe, are in the process of entering into the rest,⁹⁶ just as He has said,

As I swore in My anger,
Certainly, they shall not enter into My rest <Psalm 95:11>.⁹⁷

This is similar to what transpired at the foundation of the world.⁹⁸ **4:4** It has said thus somewhere concerning the seventh day,⁹⁹

Indeed, God rested from all His accomplishments on the seventh day <Genesis 2:2>.¹⁰⁰

4:5 And, again, in this passage we have,

Certainly, they shall not enter into My rest <Psalm 95:11>.¹⁰¹

4:6 Therefore, because it remains for some to enter into it, and the ones who formerly had good news proclaimed to them did not enter on account of disobedience,¹⁰² **4:7** again He fixes a certain day “Today” by speaking through David after so much time, just as it has been quoted above,

Today, if you hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts <Psalm 95:7-8>.¹⁰³

4:8 If Joshua had brought them to a place of rest, then He would not have spoken of another day after these things.¹⁰⁴

4:9 Therefore, a Shabbat rest remains for the people of God,¹⁰⁵ **4:10** and the person who enters into his rest has also rested from his works just as God did from His own.¹⁰⁶ **4:11** Therefore, let us be diligent to enter into that rest,¹⁰⁷ so that no one fall because of the same pattern of disobedience.¹⁰⁸

4:12 Indeed, the message of God is living, active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, while penetrating to the division of soul and spirit,¹⁰⁹ of both joints and marrow,¹¹⁰ and is capable of discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.¹¹¹ **4:13** Plus, there is no aspect of the creation that is hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and have been laid bare before His eyes,¹¹² before whom the matter exists for us.¹¹³

4:14 Therefore, because we have a great high priest, who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast the confession.¹¹⁴ **4:15** Certainly, we do not have a high priest who is not able to sympathize with our weaknesses, but he has been tested in all things similarly without being immoral.¹¹⁵ **4:16** As a result, let us approach with confidence to the throne of grace, in order that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.¹¹⁶

5:1 Every high priest,¹¹⁷ after he is taken from men,¹¹⁸ is put in charge of things pertaining to God on behalf of men, in order that he may offer up gifts and tokens of loyalty on behalf of sins.¹¹⁹ **5:2** He is able to have compassion on the ignorant and misguided, because he himself is plagued by weakness.¹²⁰ **5:3** Indeed, because of this, just as he is

obligated to offer up something on behalf of evil actions for the people, he is obligated to do so also for himself.¹²¹

5:4 In addition, no one grabs the honor for himself, but he receives it only after being called by God, just as what happened to Aaron.¹²² **5:5** Thus, also, the Messiah did not glorify himself in order to become a high priest, but the One who said to him,

You are My Son; today I have given birth to you <Psalm 2:7>,¹²³

5:6 likewise, also says in a different passage,

You are a priest into the age according to the order of Melchizedek <Psalm 110:4>.¹²⁴

5:7 In the days of his flesh, he made offerings (προσενέγκας) of prayers and requests with loud cries and tears to the One who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.¹²⁵ **5:8** And although he was the Son, learned obedience from the things which he suffered.¹²⁶ **5:9** And having been brought to the end of his goal (*telos*) (τελειωθεὶς),¹²⁷ he became the ground of eternal salvation to all those who obey him¹²⁸ **5:10** and was designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.¹²⁹

5:11 Concerning him, the message is great for us and yet hard to explain, because you have become slow to respond to things that you hear.¹³⁰ **5:12** Indeed, you ought to be able to instruct others by now, but you need again for someone to instruct you in the basics of the beginning of the messages of God, and you have come to need milk instead of solid food.¹³¹ **5:13** Everyone who partakes of milk is unskilled with respect to the message of justification, because he is an infant.¹³² **5:14** In contrast, solid food is for those who are well on their way to their goal (*telos*) (τελείων), who, on account of proficiency, have the mental faculties that are trained to make the distinction between good and bad.¹³³

6:1 Therefore, leaving behind the beginning of the message of the Messiah,¹³⁴ let us move ourselves along to being well on our way to our goal (*telos*) (ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα),¹³⁵ not laying again for ourselves a foundation of repentance for actions that deserve death and of belief in God,¹³⁶ **6:2** of instruction concerning ritual cleansings,¹³⁷ the laying on of hands,¹³⁸ the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.¹³⁹ **6:3** Indeed, we shall do this, if God permits.¹⁴⁰

6:4 It is impossible to renew again to repentance¹⁴¹ those who were once enlightened,¹⁴² such that they have tasted of the gift of heaven,¹⁴³ have become partners with the Holy Spirit,¹⁴⁴ **6:5** and have tasted of the good message of God, specifically the significant consequences of it with respect to the coming age,¹⁴⁵ **6:6** and have fallen away,¹⁴⁶ in so far as they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and disgrace him publicly.¹⁴⁷

6:7 Ground that drinks the rain that often comes upon it and brings forth plants that are fitting for those on account of whom it was indeed cultivated receives praise from God.¹⁴⁸

6:8 But ground that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and near being cursed, whose end (*telos*) (τὸ τέλος) is burning.¹⁴⁹

6:9 However, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, things that do indeed involve salvation, even though we are speaking like this.¹⁵⁰ **6:10** Certainly, God is

not unjust to forget your work and the love which you have demonstrated towards His name, by your having served and serving the ones who are set apart.¹⁵¹ **6:11** Still, we desire each one of you to demonstrate the same diligence until you reach your goal (ἄχρι τέλους)¹⁵² as a consequence of the full certainty of hope,¹⁵³ **6:12** in order that you may not be slow to respond.¹⁵⁴ Therefore, be imitators of those who inherit the promises through belief and patience.¹⁵⁵

6:13 Understand that, when God made the promise to Abraham, because He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself,¹⁵⁶ **6:14** saying,

Surely I will bless you and multiply you <Genesis 22:17>.¹⁵⁷

6:15 (Indeed, in this way, because he was patient, he obtained the promise.)¹⁵⁸ **6:16** Now, men swear by someone greater, and among them an oath is the conclusion of every dispute for the purpose of validating the point.¹⁵⁹ **6:17** God, because He desired even more to demonstrate to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, guaranteed it with an oath,¹⁶⁰ **6:18** so that in the light of two unchangeable things, by means of which it is impossible for God to lie, we, who are fleeing from danger, may have strong encouragement to seize the hope that is set before us.¹⁶¹

6:19 We have this hope as an anchor of the soul, sure and certain and which enters inside the veil,¹⁶² **6:20** where Jesus, who precedes us, entered on our behalf, because he has become a high priest into the age according to the order of Melchizedek.¹⁶³

7:1 As for this person, Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high god,¹⁶⁴ who met Abraham as he was returning from the defeat of the kings and who blessed him,¹⁶⁵ **7:2** to him, indeed, Abraham apportioned a tenth of all that he had.¹⁶⁶

First of all, on the one hand, by the translation of his name, he was king of *tzedek*, i.e., justification.¹⁶⁷ Then, on the other hand, he was king of Salem, which is to say king of *shalom*.¹⁶⁸ **7:3** He was also without father, without mother, without genealogy and having neither beginning of days nor end of life.¹⁶⁹ And, because he was likened to the Son of God,¹⁷⁰ he remains a priest into perpetuity (εἰς τὸ διηνεκές).¹⁷¹ **7:4** Take note of how extraordinarily important this man was, to whom Abraham, the patriarch, indeed gave a tenth of the best part of the spoils.¹⁷²

7:5 On the one hand, those who are of the sons of Levi and who received that priesthood have a commandment according to the Covenant to collect a tenth from the people—this is to say, from their brothers, in spite of the fact that they have come from the loins of Abraham.¹⁷³ **7:6** On the other hand, the one who cannot trace his descent from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who possesses the promises.¹⁷⁴

7:7 In addition, there is no dispute to the fact that the less important person is blessed by the more important person.¹⁷⁵ **7:8** Indeed, in the one case, men who die received a tenth, but, in the other case, there was the one of whom it is witnessed that he lives, **7:9** even as the verse says.¹⁷⁶ He has collected through Abraham a tenth even from Levi, who received a tenth, **7:10** because he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.¹⁷⁷

7:11 Therefore,¹⁷⁸ if indeed reaching the goal (*telos*) (τελείωσις) were through the Levitical priesthood¹⁷⁹ (for the people have been given the Covenant on the basis of it),¹⁸⁰ then

why was there yet the need for a different priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not to be called according to the order of Aaron?¹⁸¹

7:12 When the priesthood is changed, there is, of necessity, a change of Covenant,¹⁸² **7:13** because the one concerning whom these things were being said has participated in a different tribe, from which no one has paid attention to the altar.¹⁸³ **7:14** And this all becomes obvious because our Lord has arisen out of Judah, in regard to which tribe Moses said nothing about priests.¹⁸⁴ **7:15** And it is even more obvious if the different priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek.¹⁸⁵ **7:16** He has become such, not according to a principle that is part of a physical Covenant, but according to his credentials of an indestructible life.¹⁸⁶ **7:17** It is attested,

You are a priest into the age (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) according to the order of Melchizedek <Psalm 110:4>.¹⁸⁷

7:18 Consequently, on the one hand, there is the setting aside of a preceding Covenant because of its weakness and uselessness,¹⁸⁸ **7:19** because the Covenant did not provide the reaching of a human being's goal (*telos*) (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν).¹⁸⁹ On the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we approach God (δι' ἧς ἐγγίζομεν τῷ θεῷ).¹⁹⁰

7:20 Indeed, inasmuch as it was not without an oath, because, on the one hand, they have become priests without an oath,¹⁹¹ **7:21** on the other hand, he, with an oath, became a priest through the one who says for his benefit,¹⁹²

The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest into the age (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα)" <Psalm 110:4>.¹⁹³

7:22 so much more, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better Covenant.¹⁹⁴

7:23 Indeed, on the one hand, the many have become priests, because death hindered them from continuing.¹⁹⁵ **7:24** On the other hand, because he continues "into the age" (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα), he has a priesthood without successor.¹⁹⁶ **7:25** Therefore, he is also able to save into the reaching of the goal (*telos*) (σῶζειν εἰς τὸ παντελές) those who approach God with him in mind (τοὺς προσερχομένους δι' αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ), while he always lives in order to intercede on their behalf.¹⁹⁷

7:26 It indeed fit the circumstances for us to have such a high priest¹⁹⁸—special,¹⁹⁹ innocent, separated from morally depraved human beings, and raised to greater heights than the heavens.²⁰⁰ **7:27** He does not have the necessity daily (καθ' ἡμέραν), like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own evil actions, then for those of the people, because he did this once and never again (ἐφάπαξ), when he offered up himself.²⁰¹ **7:28** The Covenant appoints men as high priests who have a weakness, but the statement of the oath, which was after the Covenant, appoints a Son who has reached his goal (*telos*) (τετελειωμένον) into the age (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα).²⁰²

8:1 The main point in what has been said is that we have a high priest,²⁰³ who has sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Great One in the heavens,²⁰⁴ **8:2** an administrator of the sacred things and of the true tent (τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς),²⁰⁵ that the Lord pitched, not man.²⁰⁶ **8:3** Because every high priest is put in charge in order to

offer both gifts and tokens of loyalty, it is consequently necessary that even this one have something that he offers.²⁰⁷

8:4 In addition, on the one hand, if he were on earth, he would not be a priest, because there are those who offer gifts according to the Covenant,²⁰⁸ **8:5** who serve a copy (ὕποδείγματι) and a shadow (σκιᾷ) of the heavenly things.²⁰⁹

On the other hand, similar to Moses, who was warned when he was about to build/bring about the goal (*telos*) of (ἐπιτελεῖν) the tent,

“See,” He says, “that you make all things according to the pattern (τύπος) that was shown to you on the mountain” <Exodus 25:40>,²¹⁰

8:6 he has obtained a superior service, inasmuch as he is the mediator of a better Covenant, which has been legislated on the basis of better promises.²¹¹

8:7 Besides, if that first one had been capable of making people uncondemned before God (ἄμεμπτος), there would have been no occasion sought for a second.²¹² **8:8** Therefore, after deeming them condemned (μεμφόμενος), it says,²¹³

“Behold, days are coming,” says the Lord,²¹⁴

“and I will carry out/bring about the goal (*telos*) of (συντελέσω) a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,²¹⁵

8:9 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers,²¹⁶

in the day when I took their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt,

because they did not remain in My covenant,²¹⁷

and I neglected them,” says the Lord.²¹⁸

8:10 “Because this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel,²¹⁹ after those days,” says the Lord.

“I will put My instructions into their minds,

and I will write them on their hearts;²²⁰

and I will be to them as God,

and they will be to Me as people.²²¹

8:11 And they will not teach, each one his fellow citizen, and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know Yahweh,’

because they will all know Me,

from the least of them to the greatest,²²²

8:12 because I will be merciful to their transgressions,

and I will remember their evil actions no more” <Jeremiah 31:31-34>.²²³

8:13 By saying, “new,” He has made the first “old,” and that which has been made old and is growing old is close to disappearing.²²⁴

9:1 Now, on the one hand, the first one had requirements of worship and the earthly sacred setup.²²⁵ **9:2** In line with this, the first tent was constructed, in which were the lampstand, the table, and the offering of breads. It is called literally “The Holies.”²²⁶ **9:3** Then, behind the second veil, there is a tent which is called “The Holy of Holies,”²²⁷ **9:4** having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which was a golden jar containing manna, the staff of Aaron that sprouted, and the tablets of the covenant.²²⁸ **9:5** Then, above it were the cherubim of glory

overshadowing the place of mercy. However, it is not the time now to speak of these things in detail.²²⁹

9:6 After these things have been constructed in this manner, on the one hand, the priests are continually (διὰ παντός) entering the first tent and completing/bringing about the goal (*telos*) of (ἐπιτελοῦντες) the performance of the worshipful things (τάς λατρείας).²³⁰ **9:7** On the other hand, only the high priest enters once a year (ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ μόνος) into the second tent, yet not without blood, which he offers on behalf of sins committed in ignorance by himself and the people.²³¹

9:8 In the light of the spirit of the set apart one's making this clear to him—that the way of the holy things has not been revealed as long as the first tent still has standing,²³² **9:9** which tent is a parable (παραβολή) for the present season, according to which tent the gifts and tokens of loyalty are offered that, in accordance with his understanding, are incapable of bringing about the reaching of the goal (*telos*) (τελειῶσαι) for the worshiper,²³³ **9:10** because they are requirements of a physical nature (δικαιώματα σαρκός), relating only to foods, drinks, and various washings, imposed until the season of a new order—²³⁴ **9:11** the Messiah made his appearance, a high priest of good things that are developing, by means of a tent that is greater and provides better for reaching the goal (*telos*) (τελειοτέρας σκηνῆς), not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation,²³⁵ **9:12** and not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood. And he entered once and never again (ἐφ' ἅπαξ) into the holy things, thus finding eternal redemption.²³⁶

9:13 If the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled set apart for the purpose of physical cleansing (πρὸς τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς καθαρότητα),²³⁷ **9:14** how much more will the blood of the Messiah, who, in view of his spirit that is focused on the final age, offered himself without defect to God,²³⁸ cleanse our understanding from dead works (καθαριεῖ τὴν συνείδησιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων)²³⁹ in order to serve the living God?²⁴⁰ **9:15** Indeed, on account of this, he is the mediator of a *New Covenant*, so that, because a death has occurred for the redemption of transgressions committed under the *first Covenant*, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.²⁴¹

9:16 Insofar as there is this Covenant, it is inherent in the nature of it that it bear the death of the one who himself is doing the covenanting,²⁴² **9:17** because this Covenant comes into play for the dead, since at no time is it enforced when the one who is being covenanted is alive.²⁴³

9:18 In line with this, the first Covenant was indeed not inaugurated without blood.²⁴⁴ **9:19** After every commandment of the Covenant was spoken by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of bulls and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and he sprinkled the book itself and all the people, **9:20** saying,

This is the blood of the Covenant that God commanded you <Exodus 24:8>.²⁴⁵

9:21 Likewise, he sprinkled both the tent and all the liturgical vessels with the blood.²⁴⁶

9:22 Almost everything was cleansed by blood according to the Torah. By deduction, without the pouring out of blood, forgiveness does not happen.²⁴⁷

9:23 Therefore, it was required, on the one hand, for the copies of the things in the heavens (τὰ μὲν ὑποδείγματα τῶν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς τούτοις) to be “cleansed” with respect to these issues; on the other hand, for the heavenly things themselves with *better* sacrifices than these.²⁴⁸ **9:24** Thus, the Messiah did not enter into the holy things made with hands, i.e., copies of the true things (ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν), but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.²⁴⁹ **9:25** And not so that he could offer himself often, just as the high priest enters into the holy things each year (κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν) with blood that is not his own.²⁵⁰ **9:26** Otherwise, it would be necessary for him to suffer often from the foundation of the system.²⁵¹ Instead, now, once and never again (ἅπαξ) he has been revealed at the completion/goal (*telos*) of the ages (ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων) for the removal of evil (εἰς ἀθέτησιν τῆς ἁμαρτίας) through his sacrifice.²⁵² **9:27** Indeed, inasmuch as it is unavoidable for men to die once, and after this—judgment,²⁵³ **9:28** thus also, the Messiah, having been offered once (ἅπαξ) in order to bear the evil of many, will be seen a second time, apart from evil, by those who eagerly await him for salvation.²⁵⁴

10:1 The Covenant, because it contains a shadow (σκιά) of the future, good things, thereby not having even a veritable image of the things that matter (οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων), is never able, for all time, by the same kind of sacrifices which they offer year after year (κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν), to bring to their goal (*telos*) (τελειῶσαι) those who come near (τοὺς προσερχομένους).²⁵⁵ **10:2** Otherwise, would they not have ceased being offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed and never again, would no longer have the thought of their evil deeds?²⁵⁶ **10:3** Nevertheless, with the same kind of sacrifices, there is a *reminder* of evil actions year after year (κατ’ ἐνιαυτὸν), **10:4** because the blood of bulls and goats is powerless to take away evil (ἀδύνατον...ἀφαιρεῖν ἁμαρτίας).²⁵⁷

10:5²⁵⁸ Therefore, the one who engages in the religious system says,²⁵⁹

You do not desire sacrifice and offering.
Instead, You have prepared a body for me.²⁶⁰

10:6 You do not take pleasure in whole burnt offerings for evil.²⁶¹

10:7 Then, I said, ‘Behold, I come;
in the scroll of the book it has been written of me,
to do your desire, O God’ <Psalm 40:6-8>.²⁶²

10:8 After saying above,

You do not desire and you take no pleasure in sacrifices, offerings, and whole burnt offerings, even for evil <paraphrase of Psalm 40:6a & c>.²⁶³

which are offered according to the Covenant,²⁶⁴ **10:9** then he has said,

Behold, I come to do your desire <Psalm 40:7a & 8a>.²⁶⁵

He takes away (ἀναίρει) the first in order to establish the second,²⁶⁶ **10:10** in which “desire” we have become set apart in conjunction with the offering of the “body” of Jesus the Messiah once and never again (ἐφάπαξ).²⁶⁷

10:11 In addition, on the one hand, every priest has stood daily (καθ’ ἡμέραν), serving and bringing the same sacrifices often (πολλάκις), that are never able to take away (περιελεῖν) evil.²⁶⁸ **10:12** On the other hand, this one, having offered one sacrifice for evil

for all time (μίαν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν προσενέγκας θυσίαν εἰς τὸ διηνεκές), sat down at the right hand of God,²⁶⁹ **10:13** waiting from now on until his enemies are made a footstool for his feet.²⁷⁰ **10:14** Thus, with one offering (μιᾶ γὰρ προσφορᾶ), he has brought, for all time (εἰς τὸ διηνεκές), completion of their goal (*telos*) (τετελείωκεν) for those who are being set apart (τοὺς ἀγιαζομένους).²⁷¹

10:15 In conjunction with this, the Holy Spirit testifies to us, for, after having said,²⁷²

10:16 “This is the Covenant that I will make with them, after those days,” says the Lord.
“I will put My laws on their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds.”²⁷³

He also says,

10:17 “their transgressions and their lawless deeds I will remember no more”
<Jeremiah 31:33-34>.²⁷⁴

10:18 Where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer an offering for sin.²⁷⁵

10:19 Therefore, brothers, because we have confidence (παρρησίαν) to enter the holy things (εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἁγίων) on the basis of the blood of Jesus,²⁷⁶ **10:20** a fresh and living way that he inaugurated for us through the curtain, this is to say, of his flesh,²⁷⁷ **10:21** and because we have a great priest (ἱερέα μέγαν) over the household of God,²⁷⁸ **10:22** let us draw near (προσερχόμεθα) with an authentic heart (μετὰ ἀληθινῆς καρδίας) in the full certainty of belief (ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πίστεως),²⁷⁹ having had our hearts sprinkled from an understanding of evil (ἀπὸ συνειδήσεως πονηρᾶς) and our bodies washed with clean water.²⁸⁰

10:23 Let us hold on to an unwavering confession of hope (τὴν ὁμολογίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀκλινηῆ), because the One who made the promise is faithful.²⁸¹ **10:24** And let us think carefully how to rouse one another to love and good deeds,²⁸² **10:25** not leaving out our assembling together, as is the habit of some,²⁸³ but, instead, encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.²⁸⁴

10:26 If we continue deliberately sinning (ἐκουσίως γὰρ ἁμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν) after receiving knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for our sins,²⁸⁵ **10:27** but a certain horrifying expectation of judgment that will consume those who are opposed.²⁸⁶ **10:28** Anyone who rebels against the Torah of Moses dies without mercy on the basis of two or three witnesses.²⁸⁷ **10:29** How much worse do you think he will be counted worthy of punishment who treats with disdain the Son of God and has considered as mundane the blood of the Covenant on the basis of which he has been set apart, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?²⁸⁸

10:30 We know Him who said,

Vengeance is Mine, I will repay <Deuteronomy 32:35>,

and again,

The Lord will judge His people <Deuteronomy 32:36>.²⁸⁹

10:31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.²⁹⁰

10:32 Therefore, remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great struggle of sufferings²⁹¹—**10:33** on the one hand, by being put to public shame with insults and tribulations, and on the other hand, by becoming participants with those whose lives were thus turned upside down.²⁹² **10:34** Indeed, you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and you accepted with joy the seizure of your possessions, because you yourselves knew that you have a better possession and one that remains.²⁹³

10:35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence that has a great reward (τὴν παρρησίαν ὑμῶν ἣτις ἔχει μεγάλην μισθαποδοσίαν).²⁹⁴ **10:36** Indeed, you have need of perseverance (ὑπομονῆς), so that after you have done the desire of God (ἵνα τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ποιήσαντες), you will receive the promise.²⁹⁵

10:37 For, yet, soon that which is coming will come and will not delay.²⁹⁶

10:38 But My just one will live by virtue of belief, and if he draws back, My soul is not pleased with him <Habakkuk 2:3-4; Isaiah 26:20>.²⁹⁷

10:39 However, we are not those who are timid (ὑποστολῆς) that results in destruction, but we are those of belief (πίστεως) that results in the preservation of the person.²⁹⁸

11:1 Belief is the guarantee of things hoped for, the proof of matters not seen.²⁹⁹

11:2 Indeed, the men of old had witness borne to them by means of it.³⁰⁰

11:3 With belief, we understand that the ages have been created by the speaking of God, so that that which is seen has not come into existence out of things that are visible.³⁰¹

11:4 With belief, Abel offered a better sacrifice to God than Cain, in view of which it was borne witness to him that he was justified as God bore witness on the basis of his offerings, and through it he still speaks, even though he has died.³⁰²

11:5 Because of belief, Enoch was removed so that he would not see death, and

he was not found, because God removed him <Genesis 5:24>.

But before his removal, it had been borne witness to him that he was pleasing to God.³⁰³

11:6 Indeed, apart from belief, it is impossible to be pleasing, because it is necessary for the one who comes to God to believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.³⁰⁴

11:7 With belief, Noah, having been warned about things not yet seen, showed appropriate concern and built an ark for the salvation of his household, through which he condemned the world and became an heir of *dikaioSunay* according to belief.³⁰⁵

11:8 With belief, Abraham, having been called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance, and he went out not knowing where he was going.³⁰⁶

11:9 With belief, he lived as a stranger on the land of promise, as foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who were fellow heirs of the same promise,³⁰⁷ **11:10** and he was waiting for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.³⁰⁸

11:11 With belief, even barren Sarah herself received the ability for the building of seed, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered the One who made the promise to be faithful.³⁰⁹ **11:12** Therefore, from one man, and one as good as dead, there were born these as the stars of heaven in number, and as innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.³¹⁰

11:13 All these people died in belief, having not received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from a distance, even confessing that they were strangers and refugees on the land.³¹¹ **11:14** Those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.³¹² **11:15** And if, on the one hand, they were thinking of the one from which they went out, they would have had the opportunity to return.³¹³ **11:16** On the other hand, they now desire a better one, this is to say, from heaven.³¹⁴ Therefore, God was not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for He prepared a city for them.³¹⁵

11:17 With belief, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and the one who received the promises was offering up the unique one.³¹⁶ **11:18** With regard to him it was said,

In Isaac shall your seed be called <Genesis 21:12>.

11:19 He considered that God is able even to raise him from the dead. Therefore, he received him in a parable.³¹⁷

11:20 With belief, Isaac also blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.³¹⁸

11:21 With belief, Jacob, before he died, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and he worshiped on the basis of the extent of his tribe.³¹⁹

11:22 With belief, Joseph, as he was reaching the goal (*telos*) of his earthly existence, death (τελευτῶν), made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel. In addition, he gave instructions concerning his bones.³²⁰

11:23 With belief, Moses, after being born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that he was a special child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.³²¹

11:24 With belief, Moses, after growing up, refused to be called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh.³²² **11:25** He chose, instead, to suffer with the people of God, rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of immortality.³²³ **11:26** He considered the disgrace of an anointed one to be greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, because he was paying attention to the reward.³²⁴

11:27 With belief, he left Egypt, not fearing the anger of the king, because he endured, as seeing the One who is unseen.³²⁵

11:28 With belief, he performed the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the One who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.³²⁶

11:29 With belief, they went through the Red Sea as through dry land, in which, when they made the attempt, the Egyptians were drowned.³²⁷

11:30 With belief, the walls of Jericho fell after being encircled for seven days.³²⁸

11:31 With belief, Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she welcomed the spies with "Shalom."³²⁹

11:32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, even Samuel, and the prophets.³³⁰ **11:33** They, with belief, defeated kingdoms, performed righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,³³¹ **11:34** quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were strengthened from weakness, became mighty in war, put to flight foreign armies.³³² **11:35** Women received back their dead by resurrection, while others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they would obtain the better resurrection.³³³ **11:36** Others received the test of mockings and whippings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment.³³⁴ **11:37** They were stoned, sawn in two, and murdered with the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, being deprived, afflicted, and mistreated.³³⁵ **11:38** The world was not worthy of them who wandered in deserts, mountains, caves, and holes in the ground.³³⁶

11:39 And all these, having had witness borne to them in view of their belief, did not receive the promise,³³⁷ **11:40** because God has provided something better for us, so that, apart from us, they would not be caused to reach their final goal (*telos*) (τελειωθῶσιν).³³⁸

12:1 Therefore, indeed, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us,³³⁹ let us also lay aside every impediment and the sin that so easily distracts us,³⁴⁰ and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,³⁴¹ **12:2** while we fix our eyes on Jesus, the leader in belief and the one who finished his race (τὸν... τελειωτῆν).³⁴² For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, while thinking nothing of the humiliation, and he has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.³⁴³

12:3 Consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners towards himself, in order that you not become weary in regard to the real purpose of your lives and give up.³⁴⁴ **12:4** You have not yet opposed them to the point of blood in your struggling against sin.³⁴⁵

12:5 Indeed, have you forgotten altogether the persuasion that instructs you as sons,³⁴⁶

My son, do not think lightly of the training of the Lord,
and do not give up when you are reproved by Him,
12:6 because the Lord trains him whom He loves,
and He disciplines every son whom He receives <Proverbs 3:11-12>?³⁴⁷

12:7 Persevere for the purpose of training. God deals with you as sons, because what son is there whom his father does not train?³⁴⁸ **12:8** However, if you are without training, of which all have become participants, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.³⁴⁹

12:9 Furthermore, we had our fathers of the flesh as trainers, and we respected them. Shall we not much more rather submit to the Father of spirits and live?³⁵⁰ **12:10** On the one hand, they trained for a few days according to what seemed best to them, but, on the other hand, He trains on the basis of that which is advantageous, in order to

participate in His holiness.³⁵¹ **12:11** All training does not seem for the moment to be joyful, but sorrowful. However, afterwards, it pays back the shalom fruit of justification to those who have been exercised by it.³⁵²

12:12 Therefore, straighten the drooping hands and the weak knees.³⁵³ **12:13** Make straight the paths for your feet, in order that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.³⁵⁴

12:14 Pursue shalom with all men and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord.³⁵⁵ **12:15** Take care that no one fails to reach the sanctification that comes from the grace of God, that no root of resentment spring up in bitterness, with which many become defiled.³⁵⁶ **12:16** Take care that there be no immoral or worldly person like Esau, who sold his rights to be the firstborn for one meal.³⁵⁷ **12:17** You know that, indeed, afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, because he found no place for repentance, even though he earnestly sought it with tears.³⁵⁸

12:18 You have not come to something to be searched for, to a blazing fire, to darkness, gloom, a windstorm, **12:19** the blast of the shofar, and the sound of words, of which those who heard begged that no more be said to them,³⁵⁹ **12:20** because they could not bear the command,

Even if an animal touches the mountain, it will be stoned <Exodus 19:12-13>.³⁶⁰

12:21 In addition, so horrifying was the sight that Moses said,

I am terrified and trembling <Deuteronomy 9:19>.³⁶¹

12:22 Instead, you have come to Mt. Zion, indeed, to the city of the living God, the Jerusalem from heaven,³⁶² to countless thousands of angels, to a festal gathering, **12:23** the assembly of the firstborn ones, whose names have been put on the list in the heavens,³⁶³ to God, the Ruler of all,³⁶⁴ to the spirits of those who are justified, who have reached their goal (*telos*) (τετελειωμένων),³⁶⁵ **12:24** to Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant, and to sprinkled blood that speaks better than Abel.³⁶⁶

12:25 See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if those did not escape on earth when they refused him who was imparting a divine message, how much more shall we not escape, who turn away from him who is from heaven.³⁶⁷

12:26 His voice shook the earth then, and, now, He has promised, saying,

Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also heaven <Haggai 2:6>.³⁶⁸

12:27 As for the statement, "Yet once more," it refers to the transformation of shaken things, as they have been made, in order that unshaken things may remain.³⁶⁹ **12:28** Therefore, because we receive an unshakeable kingdom, let us be grateful, in view of which we serve God acceptably with reverence and awe,³⁷⁰ **12:29** because, indeed, our God is a consuming fire.³⁷¹

13:1 Let brotherly love endure.³⁷²

13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, especially because, through this, some have been unaware of receiving divine messengers.³⁷³

13:3 Remember the prisoners who are being mistreated, as though in prison with them, as those who are also in the body.³⁷⁴

13:4 Let marriage be honored among everyone, and the marriage bed be undefiled, because God will condemn the sexually immoral and adulterers.³⁷⁵

13:5 Let your way of life be free from greed, while being content with what is presently yours, because He has said,

I will never abandon you, and I will never leave you <Deuteronomy 31:6>.³⁷⁶

13:6 Consequently, we may courageously say,

The Lord is my Helper, and I shall not fear.
What will man do to me <Psalm 118:6>?³⁷⁷

13:7 Remember those who were leading you, who spoke the message of God to you, and give careful thought to the end result of their way of life. Mimic their belief.³⁷⁸

13:8 Jesus the Messiah—it is he who is yesterday and today and into the ages.³⁷⁹ **13:9** Do not be carried away by various and foreign teachings. It is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, in which those who conducted their lives were not benefited.³⁸⁰ **13:10** We have an altar, from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.³⁸¹

13:11 The bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the holy things by the high priest for sins, are burned outside the camp.³⁸² **13:12** Therefore, Jesus also, in order that he set apart the people through his own blood, suffered outside the gate.³⁸³ **13:13** As a result, let us go out to him outside the camp and bear his disgrace.³⁸⁴ **13:14** Here we do not have a city that remains, but we are seeking the future one.³⁸⁵

13:15 Consequently, in the light of who he is, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of admiration to God. This is the fruit of lips which are acknowledging his name.³⁸⁶ **13:16** And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for God is pleased with such sacrifices.³⁸⁷

13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your lives as those who will give an account, so that they may do this with joy and not groan, because this would be unprofitable for you and prevent you from reaching your goal (*telos*) (*ἀλυσιτελής*).³⁸⁸

13:18 Pray for us. We are persuaded that we have a good understanding, and we desire to conduct ourselves well in all things.³⁸⁹ **13:19** Thus, I encourage you all the more to do this, in order that I may be returned to you soon.³⁹⁰

13:20 May the God of shalom, who raised up from the dead the shepherd of the sheep, the great one by virtue of the blood of the eternal covenant, our Lord Jesus,³⁹¹ **13:21** strengthen you in every good thing in order to do His desire, who does in us that which is

pleasing in His sight in view of Jesus the Messiah, to whom be the glory into the ages of the ages. Amen.³⁹²

13:22 I encourage you, brothers, endure this message of persuasion, for, indeed, I have written to you briefly.³⁹³ **13:23** You know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you.³⁹⁴

13:24 Greet all your leaders and all those who are different. Those who are from Italy greet you.³⁹⁵ **13:25** May grace be with you all.³⁹⁶

¹ Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατράσιν ἔν τοις προφήταις – Paul is referring to the messages from God to the Israelites regarding God’s project that came via dreams, visions, “word of the Lord,” etc. and were recorded in the Old Testament. “fathers” – the first clue that this letter is addressed to Jews.

As far as his opponents in this letter are concerned, God has spoken through only the prophets, especially Moses, and not through the Son, because they reject Jesus as the Son of God because he is ontologically only a man and not a superordinary human being like the messengers of Yahweh in the OT. Thus the first chapter of this letter is about arguing for the Son’s superiority to all the messengers of Yahweh in the OT. The latter are simply “ministering winds,” while the Son is God’s proxy and representative as God within the creation.

² ἐπ’ ἑσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων – In the time of the first coming of Jesus as the Messiah that sets the stage for the end of the present realm that results in the final age. cf. Genesis 49:1, “Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, ‘Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come (עֲשׂוּ לָכֵן בְּיָמֵי אֵלֶיךָ) (ἐπ’ ἑσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν).’” Also Deut. 4:30 “When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days (עֲשׂוּ לָכֵן בְּיָמֵי אֵלֶיךָ) (ἐπ’ ἑσχάτω τῶν ἡμερῶν) you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice.” Also Hos. 3:5 “Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His goodness in the last days (עֲשׂוּ לָכֵן בְּיָמֵי אֵלֶיךָ) (ἐπ’ ἑσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν).” cf. Acts 2:17; 2 Timothy 3:1; James 5:3 “Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days (ἐν ἑσχάταις ἡμέραις) that you have stored up your treasure;” and 2 Peter 3:3 “Know this first of all, that in the last days (ἐπ’ ἑσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν) mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own evil desires.” In all these passages, the speaker/author is referring to the end of the history of the present realm when God will bring about the final judgment and segue into the eternal Kingdom of God. By the way, there is no use in the LXX of this Greek phrase with τούτων.

³ ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ – “Son” refers to the descendant of King David (circa 1000 B.C.), beginning with Solomon (and actually David himself – cf. Psalm 89), who also calls God his “Father” and who continues the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7), whereby God has promised that David’s kingdom, and thus the earthly Kingdom of Israel (and, eventually, the eternal Kingdom of God), will go on into perpetuity with David’s descendants as the kings of this kingdom. Jesus is the final Davidic king and therefore the final Son of God who has brought the most complete and final message from God (cf. Hebrews 1:5). While the primary purpose of the letter of Hebrews is to exhort the readers to continue in their belief in Jesus as the Son of God who has come into history and therefore their Messiah and High Priest (cf. Hebrews 2:1, etc.), the secondary purpose is to argue that Jesus, as the incarnation of God, is an ordinary human being in his ontology and has qualified to be the Messiah, High Priest, and eternal King by virtue of his death, which was his offering for human beings who are evil. Thus, he qualifies to intervene for other human beings and appeal for mercy on their behalf before God at the final judgment.

⁴ ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων – In the Ancient Near East, the king of an empire was the Son of God, i.e., the “Son” of the chief god of the people, who ruled over the god’s property as his proxy, stand-in, agent, and representative. Therefore, he was the icon or image of the god and was to be treated as though he were the god himself. Thus, the Davidic kings were God’s icon and proxy, and Jesus is the final Son of Yahweh whom God considers to be His “firstborn” and heir to the whole creation, including and especially the eternal Kingdom of God (cf. Ps. 89:27, “I shall also make him [David] my firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth”).

⁵ δι’ οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας³ – Here διὰ means “in view of,” identifying this particular Son of God, Jesus, as the central figure of all creation history (cf. Colossians 1:15, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For with respect to Him (ἐν αὐτῷ) all things were created, in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created in view of Him (δι’ αὐτοῦ) and for Him (εἰς αὐτὸν).”) Thus, God had Jesus in mind specifically when He created the cosmos, and Jesus will rule over the eternal age of the Kingdom of God. In other words, God has brought into existence and determined all of history to fulfill His Son-centric plans of creating a realm where Jesus will be king forever (cf. use of ποιέω (ποιεῖω) in Hebrews 3:2 regarding Jesus—Jesus has been created to fulfill the role of God’s Son over the household of God’s people, i.e., authentic believers). Jesus is the most important character in God’s story as the final Son of God and Davidic king.

⁶ ὃς ὦν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης – Jesus shares in the glory and moral perfection of the transcendent Father in the same way that light beams from the sun share in its brightness. Thus, Jesus is God within the creation, i.e., the incarnation of God. He is the only mother-born, flesh and blood human being who can claim to be God (cf. Hebrews 2).

⁷ καὶ χαρακτηρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ – Jesus represents God in a manner that no other naturally born human being ever has, by his being identified as God Himself within the creation. He has the very mark of God stamped upon his person the same way that a typewriter leaves a carbon image on a paper that is the exact representation of the element, so that Jesus is identified as God among mankind. In addition, unlike the man in Genesis 18 who visited Abraham and who was Yahweh, i.e., an actual theophany of Yahweh, Jesus is an expression of Yahweh and, therefore, a separate person from him. Also unlike the man in Genesis 18, Jesus is a permanent and eternal person within the created reality and not just a temporary one.

⁸ ἔφερον τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ – Jesus has patiently born, i.e., carried, and accomplished all the things that God has powerfully said in the Old Testament regarding the Messiah, including that he would suffer,

die, and then rule over the creation (cf. Hebrews 12:20, “For they could not bear the command, ‘If even...’”; 13:13, “So let us go outside the camp, bearing his reproach;” also John 20:27, “Then he said to Thomas, ‘Reach (φέρε) here with your finger, and see my hands; and reach (φέρε) here with your hand and put (βάλε) it into my side...”). Alternatively, the Majority Text adds either δι’ ἑαυτοῦ or δι’ αὐτοῦ, the latter of which makes sense if Paul, the author of Hebrews, is referring with this added phrase to Jesus as the one through whom God supports His authority by speaking through him, for example, when Jesus says, “Get up, pick up your pallet and walk” (John 5:8) (cf. Hebrews 2:4). Or Paul could be referring to the three recorded times when the voice of God out of heaven said something to the effect, “This is my beloved Son...” (cf. Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28) so that this would be translated, “by His powerful statement.” However, if the δι’ ἑαυτοῦ or δι’ αὐτοῦ are not actually a part of the text, then the point is that Jesus patiently bears all things about God’s saying that he is the suffering Messiah by his accepting the position of offering, ruler, and intervener, thus proving that he is the Son of God to whom these readers need to listen, which then permits Paul to move on to talk about the Son in v. 3b and following.

⁹ τ καθαρισμὸν ἑαυτοῦ ἀμαρτιῶν ποιησάμενος – cf. Exodus 30:10 where Aaron, as the first high priest of the Mosaic Covenant, was commanded by God to “atone” for the evil acts of the Israelites once a year, “Aaron shall make atonement (כִּפֹּרֶת) (ἐξιλάσεται) on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement (כִּפֹּרֶת) (καθαριεῖ) on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement (כַּדְּמַיִם הַזֹּאתִים מִדָּמַיִם) (ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν τοῦ ἐξιλάσμου) once a year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD.” In Hebrews, Paul uses several Greek words borrowed from the LXX or similar to words in the LXX, among which are καθαρισμός (purification, cleansing, 1:3), λύτρωσις (redemption, 9:12), ῥαντίζω (sprinkle, 9:13, 19, 21; 10:22), καθαρότης (cleansing, 9:13), καθαρίζω (cleanse, 9:14, 22, 23; 10:2), ἀπολύτρωσις (redemption, 9:15), ἀφαιρέω (take away (sins), 10:4), λούω (wash, 10:22), all of which both in the Old Testament and in this letter refer to the demonstration of the moral deficiency of people, their need for God’s mercy, and God’s granting His mercy by virtue of a proper offering’s being made in the light of the people’s authentic inwardness, belief, and repentance. While exhorting his readers not to give up their belief in Jesus as the Son of God, Paul’s main argument is that Jesus, the human incarnation of God, is the most important High Priest who also has offered himself as a sacrifice for sins in order to qualify to intercede on our behalf at the judgment (cf. Hebrews 5-10). Paul’s opponents have not put together the two ideas of Messiah/King and High Priest from the NT with respect to one, future individual who fulfills both roles within the creation and human race. A Son of God who is merely human and suffers death is not part of their picture of the Messiah. But Paul is going to argue that this is the only understanding of the Messiah that makes sense of the OT data, especially Psalm 110.

¹⁰ ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς μεγαλωσύνης ἐν ὑψηλοῖς – cf. Psalm 110:1, “Yahweh said to my Lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet (LXX – κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου).” This idea in Psalm 110 of sitting at God’s right hand is a key concept for Paul in demonstrating Jesus’ importance to his readers, that Jesus’ own exalted authority is just under the transcendent God’s by virtue of his “sitting at His right hand,” metaphorically speaking. After Jesus suffered death as an offering for sin, he earned the title “Son of God” as ruler over the creation and advocate for sinners at the final judgment, which is why God resurrected him from the dead. This statement is metaphorical because the created Jesus cannot go outside the creation and transcend it as God the Father does. Besides, God, assuming He is incorporeal, does not have an actual right hand and arm?

¹¹ τοσοῦτω κρείττων γενόμενος ὁ τῶν ἀγγέλων – cf. the “angel of Yahweh” (מַלְאָכִי יְהוָה) (ἄγγελος κυρίου) – 56x in the Old Testament. Two reasons within the context to interpret *angeloi* as theophanies of Yahweh and not conventional angels. First is Hebrews 2:2, that the Mosaic Covenant came through the *angeloi* of Yahweh. In light of Exodus that states that Yahweh appeared to Moses on Mt. Sinai, the phrase *angeloi* of Yahweh refers to the ways that God appeared within the created reality—by a thick cloud in Ex. 19:9, and thunder, lightning, and a thick cloud in Ex. 19:16. Second is Hebrews 2:7 that quotes the LXX’s translation of Psalm 8:5 as saying that the Son of Man is a little lower than *angeloi*, when the Hebrew text of this verse in Psalm 8 says a little lower than God, i.e., *Elohim*. Thus, the Son of Man is a little lower than any manifestation of Yahweh, because the Son of Man, as the ruler of the created reality within the creation, is still lower in authority than the transcendent Creator Himself, i.e., than Yahweh. Consequently, Paul is referring to the physical and temporary theophanies of Yahweh that were not ordinary mother-born flesh and blood human beings but some sort of superordinary beings. Other examples of *angeloi* of Yahweh are the burning bush of Exodus 3, the “man” who appeared to Abraham in Genesis 19, and the “angel” who wrestled with Jacob in Genesis 32. We can conclude that some Jews were under the impression that the Messiah would be a superordinary and indestructible being, an “angel of God” like those of the Old Testament, who obviously then would not die on a cross. Instead, the “angel of God” as the Messiah would only crush his enemies, leading these Jews to the conclusion that Jesus cannot be the Messiah.

In contrast, Paul in this letter is arguing that the Messiah is an ordinary human being like David and Solomon, albeit morally perfect and the “likeness of [God’s] identity,” i.e., God within the creation (cf. Hebrews 1:3). In chapter 1, Paul demonstrates that Jesus as the Son of God has greater honor and a greater role within the creation than any of the *angeloi* of Yahweh, the temporary theophanies of Yahweh, because he will exist eternally and rule over God’s property, the whole creation, including and especially the eternal Kingdom of God. Nevertheless, in chapter 2, Paul will use Psalm 8 to argue that Jesus is less than the *angeloi* of Yahweh, the temporary theophanies of God, because they

refer to the transcendent Creator Himself and His authority. Thus, because Jesus is an ordinary man who died and yet who rules over the whole creation, he still is less in authority than the transcendent Creator. Jesus as the Son of God submits to the authority of Yahweh but also plays a much greater role within the creation of the theophanies of Yahweh by having become a faithful High Priest who propitiates God's anger with his sacrifice and offering of himself and intercedes for sinners by obtaining God's eternal mercy and forgiveness for them.

¹² ὅσοῦ διαφορώτερον παρ' αὐτοῦς κεκληρονόμηκεν ὄνομα – “Name” in the Bible refers to all that is involved in describing a person, i.e., his personhood, character, role, and function within all of reality. Therefore, the transcendent Creator, God the Father, obviously has the greatest “name.” Then, while His proxy as ruler of the universe, the Son of God, has a “name” a little lower than God's (cf. Psalm 8:4,5; Hebrews 2:5-8), he still has a greater role and function than any of the temporary *angeloi* of God such as the burning bush. This particular Son of God, Jesus, is both the permanent and eternal manifestation of God within the creation and also the eternal ruler of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the name or title of Son of God involves the right to rule over God's creation (cf. Hebrews 2:5-9; Psalm 8), a name and role which Jesus “inherited” and acquired by suffering death on the cross for the sins of his people (cf. Romans 1:4). To have the name “Son” is greater than having the name “angelos,” i.e., “messenger,” because the Son's role is to die and rise from the dead for providing eternal mercy for sinners and then rule over God's creation and bring order and justice to it for all eternity.

¹³ Τίτι γὰρ εἶπεν ποτε τῶν ἀγγέλων υἱός μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε – Psalm 2, cited as a Psalm of David (Acts 4:25), was written to extol God at the coronation of Solomon, the new king of Israel who succeeded his father David. Thus, David says that God gave birth so to speak to Solomon as His “Son” when Solomon was crowned king. Consequently, Solomon, a mere human being and king of Israel (even morally depraved human being in this case) was greater than all the *angeloi* of Yahweh, the theophanies of God, because of his right and responsibility to be God's proxy on earth and ruler over the creation (cf. Psalm 8; Hebrews 2:5-9).

¹⁴ καὶ πάλιν ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτῷ εἰς πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν – 2 Samuel 7 lays out the Davidic Covenant that God made with David, first, in regard to Solomon as the Son of God, and, ultimately, in regard to Jesus, the final and eternal Son of God and king of both Israel and the eternal Kingdom of God. God borrowed, so to speak, the idea that He had already written into His story regarding the kings of the Ancient Near Eastern empires who were each considered the Son of the people's chief god and therefore had the right and responsibility to rule over the god's property, which, in the case of Yahweh, was and is the whole creation (cf. Psalm 8; Hebrews 2:5-9). Clearly, Paul is not interested in demonstrating that Jesus is the co-eternal 2nd person of the trinity. Otherwise, he would have made a direct trinitarian statement rather than focusing on the Davidic Covenant. Indeed, Paul's argument pertains to Jesus' role and status as the very human king and high priest of the Davidic Covenant and New Covenants respectively, not to his prior existence or co-eternity with God the Father.

¹⁵ ὅταν δὲ πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην – cf. Psalm 89:27 where God calls David not only His Son but also His firstborn, the one who rules over the creation as God's proxy and deputy. God led each Davidic king into the “world” (τὴν οἰκουμένην) so that each king was God's firstborn, His Son. Thus, εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην means into the arena in which the Son of God as the Davidic king has authority and influence, i.e., his dominion that involves his rightful rule over the creation (cf. Psalm 8), the rule which God has granted him through the Davidic Covenant by calling him and appointing him His “Son.”

But God is going to lead Jesus again into the Davidic arena when he returns to restore the Kingdom of Israel and truly begin the ages of the eternal Kingdom of God (cf. Hebrews 2:5). Thus, God's calling each Davidic king His Son culminates in God's “leading” the final king and eternal firstborn Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, into the “world” at his return when all the *angeloi* of Yahweh (wind, rain, etc.) will effectively bow their knee to him because he will rule over them (even the burning bush to some extent because after all it is only a bush ontologically that had a temporary role as a theophany of God).

¹⁶ λέγει καὶ προσκυνήσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ – The superscription before Psalm 97 in the LXX reads, “For David, when his land is established,” thus indicating that when the psalmist writes “Yahweh reigns” in v. 1, he is speaking not only of the transcendent God whose name is Yahweh, but also of his deputy on earth, David as the Son of God and king of Israel. cf. v. 7c – יְהוָה יְהוָה יְהוָה ; LXX – προσκυνήσατε αὐτῷ, πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ (notice, his *angeloi*, which Paul interprets as God's *angeloi*). Therefore, in line with the LXX, the false gods, as aspects of nature, are like the *angeloi* of God. They are “winds” and “ministers” of Yahweh (cf. Psalm 104:4 and Hebrews 1:7). It is consequently appropriate for the false gods and the *angeloi* of God to “worship,” i.e., show respect, to Yahweh and the Davidic king, even David and, ultimately, Jesus, since the king of Israel has a higher status and greater role than the theophanies of God who temporarily serve the people to whom God is appearing. This also makes the most sense when we consider that the created reality is ontologically completely different from God, so that even the *angeloi* of God, e.g., the burning bush, were of created ontology and not of transcendent ontology. They were ontologically no greater than wind or fire. However, they were manifestations of Yahweh. Thus, the point in this passage is that Jesus is of created ontology, i.e., merely an ordinary human being, but he plays a greater role than the temporary theophanies of God. He is not only God within the creation but also the ruler and high priest of God's people for all eternity in the Kingdom of God.

been arguing. And in this case, anyone who has the title “God,” Jesus as the eternal king of Israel, will go on into eternity with the transcendent, eternal God and His plans.

²⁷ πρὸς τίνα δὲ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἶρηκέν ποτε κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου (LXX – Psalm 110:1, κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου, ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου) – cf. Hebrews 1:3 and all of chapters 5-10. Therefore, in light of who God is as quoted from Psalm 102, notice that the Son and not any of the *angeloi* sits at God’s right hand to rule over the creation. This obviously makes him as an ordinary human being to be superior to the *angeloi* (cf. chapter 2).

This statement from Psalm 110 is central to Paul’s argument that a suffering Son of God is biblically necessary as opposed to a superordinary Messiah as an *angelos* of Yahweh. Thus, the Messiah is David’s “Lord,” the Son of God who is not only the king and ruler over the creation, but also the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (cf. Psalm 110:4). Nevertheless, the Messiah, i.e., Jesus of Nazareth, must offer himself and does offer himself to God through death in order to qualify to intervene on behalf of sinners at the final judgment. As a result, it is Jesus, not the theophanies of Yahweh, who sits at the right hand of God so to speak, which is a position reserved for the co-ruler of God’s property, the creation. And this is the God who sovereignly controls the state of being of each element within the creation, whether it currently exists or is being destroyed to make room so to speak for the new heavens and the new earth that will exist into eternity. Therefore, he is more exalted than the *angeloi* of Yahweh because they were temporary “manifestations” of God who never sit at God’s right hand while the Son is an eternal “manifestation” of God, indeed an “manifestation” who plays the role of the king of the eternal Kingdom of God.

²⁸ οὐχὶ πάντες εἰσὶν λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα εἰς ἑταίριαν ἀποστελλόμενα διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν – The *angeloi* of Yahweh as theophanies of the transcendent Creator were sent to present important messages to the descendants of Abraham, the nation of Israel, regarding how they were to obtain the blessing of Abraham of eternal life. Thus, they only “serve” temporarily like the wind while the Son of God, Jesus, rules permanently and eternally over the universe as God’s proxy within the creation. Paul asks, Isn’t this all that they are? And the answer is, Yes.

²⁹ ὁτιὰ τοῦτο – Because the Son has more clout than the *angeloi* of Yahweh, the theophanies of transcendent Creator, it is all that much more important to listen to him in comparison to what God said in the Old Testament through His theophanies.

³⁰ δεῖ περισσοτέρως προσέχειν ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσιν – Paul is referring both to himself as an apostle and authoritative spokesman for the Messiah and to his Jewish readers who have heard from someone the message of Jesus as the Messiah and believed it to be true. If the Jews of the Old Testament were obligated to listen to the theophanies of God when they spoke, how much more important is it to listen to the Son of God, God’s permanent and eternal proxy within the creation and the one through whom God has spoken “in these the last days” (cf. Hebrews 1:2).

³¹ μήποτε παραρῶμεν. – The verb is possibly a nautical term, i.e., like a ship without a rudder or mooring. The primary purpose of the letter of Hebrews is to exhort the readers to continue believing in Jesus as the Messiah and to confront them with the consequences both of perseverance of their belief, which is eternal life, and of giving up their belief, which is eternal condemnation and destruction by God. Obviously, Paul wants them to persevere.

³² ὁ δι’ ἀγγέλων λαληθεὶς λόγος – This is referring to the message of the Mosaic Covenant dramatically communicated in the midst of the various and multiple theophanies of thunder, lightening, thick cloud, and a loud trumpet sound, i.e., the manifestation of Yahweh as the transcendent Creator using natural, created elements that were familiar to the Israelites (cf. Exodus 19:16).

Acts 7:53 you who received the law as ordained by angels (εἰς διαταγὰς (διατάσσω) ἀγγέλων), and yet did not keep it.

Gal. 3:19 Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels (διαταγῆς (διατάσσω) δι’ ἀγγέλων) by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. cf. **Acts 13:48** When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life (ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι (τάσσω) εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον) believed.

2 Thessalonians 1:7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels (μετ’ ἀγγέλων δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ) in flaming fire, **8** dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Genesis 16:7 Now the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. **8** He said, “Hagar, Sarai’s maid, where have you come from and where are you going?” And she said, “I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.” **9** Then the angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.” **10** Moreover, the angel of the LORD said to her, “I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.”

Genesis 21:17 God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.

Genesis 22:11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

Genesis 22:15 Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,

Genesis 24:7 “The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give this land,’ He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there.

Genesis 31:11 “Then the **angel** of **God** said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob,’ and I said, ‘Here I am.’”

Exodus 3:2 The **angel** of the **LORD** appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed.

Exodus 14:19 The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.

Numbers 22:31 Then the **LORD** opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the **angel** of the **LORD** standing in the way with his drawn sword in his hand; and he bowed all the way to the ground.

Judges 2:1 Now the angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, “I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land which I have sworn to your fathers; and I said, ‘I will never break My covenant with you, [many times in the book of Judges]

Judges 6:22 When Gideon saw that he was the **angel** of the **LORD**, he said, “Alas, O **Lord GOD!** For now I have seen the **angel** of the **LORD** face to face.”

³³ ἐγένετο βέβαιος καὶ πᾶσα παράβασις καὶ παρακοή ἔλαβεν ἔνδικον μισθοποδοσίαν – God was serious about the 613 commandments that He gave to the Israelites in the Mosaic Covenant. As a result, every act of disobedience by them that we have recorded for us in the Old Testament incurred the temporal and earthly punishment, literally “just wage,” that God stipulated in the covenant (cf. Hebrews 10:35; 11:26). These responses of justice were from both God and the Israelites, so that Paul must be assuming that justice was carried out against violators of the Mosaic Covenant even if the violations and punishments have not been recorded for us in the Old Testament.

³⁴ πῶς ἡμεῖς ἐκφευζόμεθα τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας – Because we are talking about a salvation through the message that God has spoken *through the eternal Son*, not through mere temporary theophanies, and regarding eternal salvation in the final age (cf. Hebrews 1:1-3) and not just rescue from Egypt, this is obviously a much greater salvation for the Jews. So not only does Jesus have more clout than theophanies in the Old Testament, even those at Mt. Sinai, his message of eternal salvation is ultimately more significant also.

However, the contrast here that Paul is drawing is between the justice of the Mosaic Covenant and the salvation of Jesus through the New Covenant (cf. Hebrews 7 and following). If it is important to listen to a message from God about earthly justice, how much more important is it to listen to a message from Him about eternal salvation? This is the difference between the value and emphasis on the Mosaic Covenant and those of the New Covenant and Jesus.

³⁵ ἥτις ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ὑπὸ τῶν ἀκουσάντων εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαιώθη – The message of eternal salvation (feminine λαβοῦσα referring to the feminine σωτηρίας as a metonymy standing for the message) was originally proclaimed by Jesus as the Messiah in person (cf. Hebrews 1:1-3—and in contrast to the message existing in the Old Testament but lacking the truly personal touch of an actual human being who is speaking the message). Then, he commissioned his apostles, including Paul, to present the same message with the same accuracy and level of authority (cf. John 13-17). As a result, the apostles are the only authoritative spokesmen for the message of salvation spoken through Jesus, and they fulfilled their responsibility by proclaiming it as if Jesus himself were doing so.

³⁶ ἑσυνεπιμαρτυροῦντος τοῦ θεοῦ σημεῖοις ὅτε καὶ τέρασι καὶ ποικίλαις δυνάμεσιν καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου μερισμοῖς κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ θέλησιν – God confirmed the authority and accuracy of the apostles’ message regarding Jesus as the Son of God by performing miracles through them (as he did with Jesus to confirm that he was the Messiah) and by distributing gifts of the Holy Spirit in the midst of their teaching, e.g., the unique gift of tongues, also to confirm the genuineness of their message. The implied question is, Isn’t this worth something that these designated hearers of Jesus’ message proclaimed it with the accompaniment of God’s miraculous works to confirm the truth of the message and the authority of the messengers.

“According to His desire” indicates that God sovereignly controlled all that the apostles have said and done for the purpose of revealing the truth through them.

³⁷ Οὐ γὰρ ἀγγέλους ὑπέταξεν τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν, περὶ ἧς λαλοῦμεν – The implication of Hebrews 1 is that the Jews who are persecuting these Christians believe that the Messiah will be a superordinary being like the theophanies of the Old Testament. However, Paul reminds his readers that God has not said that a theophany will rule over the Kingdom of God starting with the millennial kingdom and culminates in a new heavens and a new earth that lasts for eternity (cf. 1:6,8; 12:27-29; 13:14), but that a descendant of David will. This is to say that an ordinary human being will be God’s proxy, the Son of God—even Solomon as Psalm 5 actually declares because it was written by David after the events of 2 Samuel 7 when God made the Davidic Covenant with him. Therefore, part of the point is that the very human Son of God is greater in his role than the temporary theophanies of God.

³⁸ διεμαρτύρατο δὲ πού τις λέγων – David wrote Psalm 8 after God had declared in 2 Samuel 7 that his son, Solomon, would be God’s Son and ruler over the creation. This fact so awed and humbled David that he wrote the psalm (cf. David’s prayer immediately following the Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7:18-29). The psalm is not referring to the creation mandate of Genesis 1:26-28 and the role of man in general but specifically to the Davidic Covenant. This is clear also by virtue of the fact that Paul is discussing “the future arena of influence” of the eternal Kingdom of God (v. 5), not the present world.

³⁹ τί ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος ὅτι μνησκη αὐτοῦ, ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ὅτι ἐπισκέπη αὐτόν – David is referring to the Son of God, the king of Israel according to the Davidic Covenant, who is from mankind, i.e., who is simply a lowly, real human being, e.g., Solomon, David’s son who will succeed him to the throne of Israel and will rule over the universe with an authority that is just a little less than God’s. This is because the king as the Son of God is God’s representative

on earth.

⁴⁰ ἠλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχὺ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους (LXX also) (אֱלֹהִים מִמַּלְאָכָיו) – There are two issues in this quote from Psalm 8:5. First is that βραχὺ refers either to time (NAS95, NRSV) or position (KJV, NIV). Position makes the most sense in Psalm 8 and here. God has exalted Solomon, David's son, and David's Messianic descendants, who are mere men, to the position of ruling over God's creation, i.e., a position that is a little lower than God's own position of authority as the transcendent Creator. Second, the Hebrew text uses אֱלֹהִים, than *elohim*, while the LXX uses παρ' ἀγγέλους, than *angeloi*. The word *elohim* can refer either to God or to gods, while *angeloi* can refer either to theophanies of Yahweh or conventional angels. It makes the most sense in this psalm that the LXX translators are referring to theophanies and therefore to Yahweh himself. Thus, David and, therefore, Paul are both saying that the Son of God who is from humanity is a little less than Yahweh by virtue of the Messiah's ruling over Yahweh's creation with the authority just under that of Yahweh. Such is the notion that is so humbling and awesome to David that he feels compelled to write this psalm, a statement of the exaltation of the very human king of Israel and anointed one, i.e., Messiah.

⁴¹ δόξη καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν, Ἧ καὶ κατέστησας αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα τῶν χειρῶν σου – God has crowned Solomon and David's descendants with the glory of ruling over the entire creation, including the works of God's hands that will be the future realm of the eternal Kingdom of God.

⁴² πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ – cf. Othmar Keel's *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (1997), pages 254 & 255, where images of Egyptian art depict Pharaoh's sitting on the lap of the god Ra with his enemies under his feet and therefore in subjection to him. God "borrows" this ANE imagery to describe what the final Davidic king will experience with respect to not only his enemies but also the entire created reality.

⁴³ ἐν τῷ γὰρ ὑποτάξει οὐ[αὐτῷ] τὰ πάντα οὐδὲν ἀφῆκεν αὐτῷ ἀνυπότακτον – Him = the Son of Man, the Son of God and king of Israel. Paul is emphasizing the fact that, in Psalm 8, David is stating unequivocally that Solomon, the Son of Man and therefore the Son of God, along with all his royal descendants and especially the final Son of God, Jesus, in contrast to the *angeloi*, have been appointed to rule over the whole of God's creation with the same level of authority as God Himself—but just a little under that of the Transcendent Creator. Plus, the *angeloi* existed temporarily to present important information to the Israelites while Jesus exists eternal to present information of salvation and to rule forever over God's Kingdom. Thus, David is humbled and awed by such generosity by God. Again, this is the point. *Angeloi* serve only by conveying messages and leading the Israelites, e.g., the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. The Son of God, especially the final Son, Jesus, rules over the cosmos and provides eternal salvation to sinners. Clearly, he is greater in his role than the *angeloi*. Thus, he will rule over even the *future* millennial kingdom that will culminate in the eternal new heavens and new earth, which is all truly important to all believers, even Jewish ones.

⁴⁴ Νῦν δὲ οὐπω ὁρώμεν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα – The Davidic king, the Son of Man and Son of God, does not yet rule over the creation completely, because Jesus has not yet returned to restore the Kingdom of Israel, and the final enemy, death, has not yet been eliminated when God will create the new and permanent realm of the eternal Kingdom of God (cf. Hebrews 1:13;10:13).

This statement by Paul makes the most sense only with the understanding of the concept of the Son of God in the ANE, i.e., the chief god's proxy who rules over his property.

⁴⁵ τὸν δὲ βραχὺ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἠλαττωμένον βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν – cf. the LXX's translation in Psalm 8:5 of אֱלֹהִים with ἀγγέλους and the previous discussion regarding this. ἠλαττωμένον is a perfect tense participle so that Paul is referring to Jesus' having been given a little lower status than that of the *angeloi* of Yahweh, and he still is lower in status than them, i.e., lower in status than the transcendent Creator, God Himself. Jesus is the Son of God, the Davidic king, who rules over the creation with the authority of God, but even he as the very incarnation of God within the creation never becomes transcendent like Yahweh. He remains God within the creation into eternity (cf. Hebrews 2:7) and therefore "a little lower in status" than the transcendent Creator Himself, the Father. It is this Jesus, who has "ascended into heaven" by this time, whom Paul says that we "see," i.e., that believers have heard of, believed in, and embraced as their Messiah (and high priest as he will go on to explain).

⁴⁶ διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου δόξη καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον – Solomon was crowned with glory and honor simply because God designated him the Son of God according to the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7 (cf. Psalms 2 & 8; Hebrews 2:7), while Jesus has earned his glory and honor and has been designated the Son of God not only because he is David's descendant like Solomon, but, ultimately, because he fulfilled his role by suffering death on the cross and offering himself to God on behalf of sinners. This is truly remarkable because the greatest honor and glory does not come to people who die, even for their country, but to those who rule and gain tremendous power over people and territory. Thus, Jesus qualified to be not only king of the creation but also High Priest of sinners, as Paul will go on to demonstrate in chapters 3-10. No other Davidic king was assigned the role of offering himself in order to become everyone's High Priest. Only the final one was. And, again, this is the point.

⁴⁷ ὅπως χάριτι θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσῃται θανάτου. – God's purpose in having Jesus die was both to demonstrate the eventuality of death and, therefore, eternal condemnation that all morally depraved human beings deserve unless

they obtain God's mercy and so that Jesus could qualify to intervene at the judgment as part of the work of God's grace on behalf of those who have genuine belief.

⁴⁸ Ἐπρεπεν γὰρ αὐτῷ, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα καὶ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα, πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα – God the Father and transcendent Creator will lead many human beings to inherit both His property of the eternal Kingdom of God and moral perfection under the rule of Jesus as the king of this kingdom. Thus, Solomon and Jesus are not the only “Sons of God” *per se*. All believers are also in the sense that they will submit to the ultimate Son, Jesus, and help rule over God's eternal property of the Kingdom of God. Paul's use of the word “sons” here makes no sense if his argument is that Jesus as the Son of God is the co-eternal 2nd person of the trinity. If we, too, are Sons of God, then obviously Paul is arguing that Jesus is an ordinary human being with the role of God within the creation and the responsibility to rule over the cosmos as the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

⁴⁹ τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν διὰ παθημάτων τελειῶσαι – Paul says literally that Jesus fulfills, fill outs, or completes the leader of their salvation through sufferings. Jesus leads the way to God's mercy and the eternal Kingdom of God by obeying God perfectly to such an extent that he was willing to die on the cross for sinners and thereby qualify to intervene for them at the final judgment. No other Davidic king was assigned this particular responsibility. Thus, Paul can say that it was appropriate for God to make the very instrument of human beings' receiving His mercy to be a human being just like them, except morally perfect and the icon of God within the creation.

⁵⁰ ὁ τε γὰρ ἀγιάζων καὶ οἱ ἀγιαζόμενοι ἐξ ἐνὸς πάντες – Jesus actively sets people apart for God's mercy and salvation when he intervenes at the final judgment and appeals to the Father for mercy on their behalf. In addition, Jesus and these people are all from one kind of process of God's bringing people into existence and leading them in life through moments of suffering in order to reach the eternal Kingdom of God. Both Jesus and his followers who obtain eternal life come into existence from God's creating and manipulating the stuff of this creation, the organic material that starts out as zygotes in women's uteri and results in ordinary, mortal human beings (cf. Psalm 22:9,10). This was just as true for Jesus, the leader of our salvation as it is for us. Rather than his being a superordinary being, an *angelos* of Yahweh, who did not have a physical origin like all other human beings (except, of course, Adam and Eve, but they are unique for the sake of how God wanted to bring about the initial creation), Jesus was an ontologically ordinary human being (cf. 2:14ff). He was born of Mary and died on the cross to qualify to rule as God incarnate and the Son of God in the eternal Kingdom of God. Then it was also true for Jesus as it is for us his followers that he suffered before obtaining his eternal destiny. His suffering was specifically through death on the cross while our suffering is through our moral depravity and its effects in this world that extend all the way from our personal, internal guilt to outward, physical harm from other people or disease. These effects include also mental and emotional ill-health and culminate in a “slavery to a fear of death” (cf. 2:15).

⁵¹ δι' ἣν αἰτίαν οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦς ῥακαλεῖν – Even though Jesus is the ruler of the cosmos and morally perfect in contrast to the morally depraved human beings whom he saves, he does not feel that it is a disgrace to call other ordinary human beings his brothers, because he and they have all been born of women and trust God for His promises of the eternal Kingdom of God while experiencing similar suffering in this world that allows them to commiserate with one another.

⁵² λέγων ἀπαγγεῶ τὸ ὄνομά σου τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς μου – In Psalm 22, David laments his condition of suffering and, yet, by referring to the fact that the forefathers of the Jews had trusted (לָקַח) (LXX – ἐλπίζω) God and by making this statement that Paul quotes, he affirms his trust and hope in God and His promises to the nation of Israel and to the Gentiles. In addition, even though David as the Messiah (anointed one) is the king and ruler of the entire cosmos (since he is included by God in the group who are each called a Son of God – cf. Psalm 89), he has no problem considering himself humbly equal to his fellow Jews who are his subjects, because they have the same ontological origin and trust in God to fulfill His promises of the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants. They are created beings born of women and who have a mortal, human nature (cf. Ps. 22:9). In addition, they have the same kind of belief as David. Thus, they are not only David's subjects but also his “brothers.” Certainly David knows that his role and status are God's doing, not his. The same is true of Jesus in the midst of his suffering death on the cross. The suffering in no way detracts either from his origin as having been born of a woman resulting in his being a mortal, organic human being or from his role as the eternal Davidic king and Son of God. Despite his status as Messiah, Jesus, like David, is willing to call his fellow human beings his “brothers,” who trust God for His promises.

⁵³ ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας ὑμῆσῶ σε – The phrase in the Hebrew text for ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας is לְפָנַי אֲסִיבָהּ. The Greek word *ekklyasia* is typically translated “church” in other verses in the New Testament. It merely means assembly or gathering so that, in Psalm 22, it is the assembly of God's people, specifically believing Jews within the nation of Israel whom David calls his brothers, because they, like him, are trusting God for His promises. Thus, in Psalm 22, David, the Messiah and Son of God (by extension of the Davidic Covenant – cf. Psalm 89), is suffering oppression from his enemies. Yet, he trusts God on the basis of the Davidic Covenant that he will not be killed and made to leave his responsibility of ruling over Israel and the entire cosmos. Thus, he informs God that he will proclaim His greatness and faithfulness to those who are of the same ontological origin as he and who also are believers in God like him. An *angelos* of Yahweh, i.e., a theophany of Yahweh (man at the entrance to Abraham's tent, the burning bush, the cloud and pillar of fire, etc.), would not be able to call other human beings his “brothers.” So the Son of God, whether David or any of his royal descendants, including Jesus, must be ontologically different from an *angelos* of Yahweh and

ontologically the same as all other human beings. Yes, both *angeloi* of Yahweh and Jesus are creations within the creation, but only Jesus was born of a woman and considered a mortal human being, which he demonstrated by dying on the cross and suffering in a similar manner to that of other human beings, i.e., sinners who require his priestly function for them to acquire God's forgiveness and mercy.

⁵⁴ καὶ πάλιν ἐγὼ ἔσομαι πεποιθὼς ἐπ' αὐτῷ (Is. 8:17 – καὶ πεποιθὼς ἔσομαι ἐπ' αὐτῷ (לְיִשְׁיָהוּ)) – Isaiah as a prophet is a Messiah (cf. 1 Kings 19:16 below) like David, who is a king. In addition, Isaiah trusted God to fulfill His promises of preserving the Davidic Kingdom in the midst of oppression from Judah's enemies. Aram and the northern kingdom of Israel, in alliance with one another, were amassing their troops on the northern border of Judah in order to invade the southern kingdom and replace King Ahaz. Rather than being afraid like Ahaz, who wanted to make an alliance with the Assyrians and solicit their help in defending Judah from Aram and Israel, Isaiah declares that he is trusting Yahweh for the Davidic Covenant. Thus, Isaiah was a true Messiah, prophet, and spokesman of God. As a result, Paul quotes Isaiah as properly representative of Jesus' attitude toward God, especially since Jesus is considered the greatest prophet of God. This, too, was like David's attitude toward God (cf. Hebrews 1:1,2). Cf. **1 Kings 19:16**, “and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint (יָשִׁיחַ) (χρίσεις) king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint (יָשִׁיחַ) (χρίσεις) as prophet in your place.” **This last verse is the only one in the OT where a prophet is mentioned as being anointed.**

The bottom line is that Paul is showing that all truthful statements by prophets, priests, and kings can be appropriately applied to Jesus as the final Messiah. Whatever they said, Jesus would say likewise.

⁵⁵ καὶ πάλιν ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ παιδία ἃ μοι ἔδωκεν ὁ θεός (LXX – same in Is. 8:18 (יְהוָה לִי יִתְּנֶנּוּ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה לִי אֲנִי וְיְהוָה)) – The same was true of Isaiah's children, ordinary human beings who were born of his human wife (cf. Is. 8:3), that they followed their father, a prophet and Messiah, in trusting God for the promise of the Davidic Covenant. This is to say that they were a Messiah's children. Hence, any “children” of Jesus, i.e., those who follow him in his belief in Yahweh, are including themselves in the promises of God and trusting Him for His promises. Also, by quoting this verse in Isaiah, Paul is emphasizing the humanness of the Messiahs of the OT such as David and Isaiah. By extrapolation, he is emphasizing the humanness of Jesus. David was an ordinary human being. His fellow Jews were ordinary human beings. Isaiah was an ordinary human being. And his children were also. Jesus is an ordinary human being, like those who believe in him for the sake of their salvation as sinners.

⁵⁶ Ἐπεὶ οὖν τὰ παιδία – The children of Isaiah, i.e., the children of a Messiah, were certainly genuine human beings. Thus, Jesus, the final Messiah, in order to rescue them from God's eternal condemnation, was required to be like them in their humanity. As a result, he can stand with them at the judgment and appeal to God for mercy on their behalf. The upshot of all this is that Jesus is an ordinary human being like David, Isaiah, and Isaiah's children, all who trusted God for His promise of the eternal Kingdom of God according to the Davidic Covenant. Jesus is not a superordinary *angelos* of Yahweh.

⁵⁷ κεκοινῶνῃκεν αἵματος καὶ σαρκός – Certainly Paul could mean “flesh and blood” by this phrase as we normally do, i.e., regular human physicality, but it makes sense in this context to see him referring to both normal, human birth from a woman that results in mortal, physical human nature. Therefore, Paul is arguing that it was entirely appropriate that Jesus, the Messiah, be an ordinary human being who was born of a human mother, then suffered and died (as our leader and high priest who offered himself to God). Consequently, he was not an extraordinary human being, like some of the *angeloi* of Yahweh, who were not born of a woman, did not suffer, and especially did not experience death (cf. Genesis 18-19 where Yahweh was one of the three men who appeared to Abraham, and Exodus 3 where Yahweh was the burning bush. These theophanies suddenly came into existence as creations within the creation and then went out of existence. They were not born of a woman.)

⁵⁸ καὶ αὐτὸς παραπλησίως μετέσχευεν τῶν αὐτῶν τ – In contrast to the *angeloi* of Yahweh, who could not be considered as actually “sharing in blood and flesh,” i.e., in human birth and mortal, physical nature, so that they were not susceptible to dying or destined to die in their role of manifesting God, Jesus, not only as an ordinary human being born of a woman, but also as the literal embodiment of God, could legitimately call other human beings, that is to say authentic believers, both Jews and Gentiles, his brothers. These two things, Jesus' ordinary humanness and his death, were probably the key elements about Jesus that were causing the Jewish persecutors of Paul's Jewish readers' to reject him as the Messiah. It is much more attractive if the Messiah is a conquering super-hero as opposed to a crucified carpenter and stone mason.

⁵⁹ ἵνα διὰ τοῦ θανάτου καταργήσῃ τὸν τὸ κράτος ἔχοντα τοῦ θανάτου, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τὸν διάβολον – Cf. Psalm 109:4,6 – “In return for my love they act as my accusers (בְּרִיבֵי) (ἐνδιεβαλλόν με); But I am in prayer... Appoint a wicked man over him [them], And let an accuser (יָשִׁיחַ) (καὶ διάβολος) stand at his [their] right hand.” Satan, the devil (*diabolos*) and accuser, will also “stand with us at the judgment and accuse us before God of deserving His eternal condemnation” so to speak, and he will be right. This gives Satan the “power of death” over morally depraved human beings if God follows his advice and eternally condemns them. However, by being an ordinary human being and suffering death on the cross, Jesus qualified to be our advocate to counteract Satan's accusations and appeal to God the Father for mercy at the judgment. Thus, Jesus will prevail on behalf of true believers. This means also that it will not be

enough for us to appeal to God for mercy at the final judgment. Only Jesus' appeal as the Son of God who died on the cross will work (cf. John 5; 1 John 3:8, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου).

⁶⁰ καὶ ἀπαλλάξῃ τούτους – Jesus' death as an ordinary human being (since he is not an extraordinary *angelos* of God) sets people free eternally from the innate fear of God's eternal condemnation by his qualifying to appeal to the Father for their mercy at the final judgment (cf. John 5; Romans 1,3).

⁶¹ ὅσοι φόβῳ θανάτου διὰ παντὸς τοῦ ζῆν ἔνοχοι ἦσαν δουλείας – All human beings have been unavoidably constrained throughout the entirety of their lives by slavery to the fear of death, i.e., to the fear of eternal condemnation at the judgment. As Paul indicates in Romans 1, it is because of their moral depravity. Every human being, regardless of when and where he has lived in human history, knows that he is morally accountable and condemned by God because of his rebellion against Him. Thus, every human being not only knows that he deserves God's condemnation at the final judgment, but also is terrified of the judgment and is in despair (cf. Romans 1:32), regardless of how little he may display his fear and despair outwardly to himself and others. Nevertheless, people's moral depravity constrains them from escaping eternal condemnation apart from God's grace and keeps them enslaved to their "fear of death." This fear of God's condemnation and inextricably being tied to it apart from God's grace leads people to place all their hope for happiness and fulfillment in this life and the things they can acquire along with the experiences they can have (cf. Matthew 6:25-34, Philippians 4:4-9). They therefore become more afraid of physical death and not getting the most out of this life than they are of God and His eternal condemnation. And they harshly criticize and try to force into compliance anyone who does not agree with their view and decisions to maximize their earthly security and lives, even if they reduce others' freedom to choose how they want to handle the risks of life.

cf. Soren Kierkegaard's *The Sickness Unto Death* where he argues that every human being is in despair and fear at the prospect of God's condemnation, regardless of how happy people may appear. I have also written a commentary of the same title on Kierkegaard's book that can be found on the biblicalphilosophers.com website.

⁶² οὐ γὰρ δὴ πῶς ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται ἀλλὰ σπέρματος Ἀβραάμ ἐπιλαμβάνεται – There is the principle of like for like. An *angelos* of Yahweh would provide help for the *angeloi* of Yahweh. A created human being would provide help for other created human beings. Besides the fact that an *angelos* of Yahweh would or even could not die, Jesus' death would be meaningless for us ordinary human beings if he were an *angelos* of Yahweh. By virtue of the principle of like for like, his death would be for those who do not require a high priest before God. Only morally depraved human beings need an advocate before God for His mercy. Therefore, by virtue of his being an ordinary human being, at the final judgment Jesus provides help to other ordinary human beings who are of the same belief as Abraham and, therefore, the true "seed of Abraham," i.e., who have the same kind of inwardness and belief that Abraham had (cf. Galatians 3:7, "Therefore, know that it is who are of belief who are sons of Abraham." This kind of inwardness means that they believe in Jesus as the Son of God and Messiah who suffered death on their behalf, resulting in his appealing to God the Father for eternal mercy on their behalf.

⁶³ ὅθεν ὤφειλεν κατὰ πάντα τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ὁμοιωθῆναι – Paul reverts to the "brothers" signification of Psalm 22. God had assigned Jesus the moral responsibility of suffering death as an ordinary human being in order to qualify to be other ordinary human beings' advocate at the final judgment.

⁶⁴ ἵνα ἐλεῆμων γένηται καὶ πιστὸς ἀρχιερεὺς τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εἰς τὸ ἰλάσκεσθαι 'τὰς ἀμαρτίας' τοῦ λαοῦ – This is the main point of the whole letter (cf. chapter 8). Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice to God in order to qualify to be the High Priest of sinners who need his advocacy in order to obtain God's eternal mercy.

Not only must there have been a contingent of Jews who were claiming that the Messiah had to be some sort of superordinary being, i.e. an *angelos* (theophany of Yahweh) like the man of Genesis 18 or the burning bush of Exodus 3, but they also had not adequately connected the notion of high priest with that of the Son of God, Messiah, and king of Israel. Who would ever think that a king would also present himself as an offering to God in order to become a priest? Therefore, these Jews believed that not only were both Jesus' being an ordinary human being and his suffering death on the cross good reasons for not believing that he was the Messiah, but they also would have believed that his death had nothing to do with the notion of high priest in the Old Testament. High priests do not offer themselves as a propitiatory offering. They offer something else, e.g., a bull or goat. On the contrary, Paul is arguing that Jesus' ordinary humanity and death are exactly what qualify him to be both Son of God and self-offering high priest. Indeed, he was obligated not only to be an ordinary human being born of a woman, but also to die in order to qualify to be both Messiah and high priest. It was thus fitting that the final Son of God and Messiah be an ordinary human being like David, Solomon, Isaiah, et al. (while also being both God in the flesh and morally perfect), in order to be able to offer himself as a legitimate propitiatory sacrifice to God and, thereby, qualify to intervene as a high priest at the final judgment for his fellow human "brothers," who are sinners (cf. Hebrews 7:25), and obtain for them salvation from eternal condemnation and death. In other words, by dying on the cross and appealing to God for mercy at the judgment, Jesus "makes propitiation for the sins of the people." Later, in chapters 7 & 8, Paul will argue that changing priests also requires changing covenants, and thus Jesus is a high priest under the New Covenant. Cf. Exodus 28:41, "You shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him; and you shall anoint them and ordain them (and consecrate them, that they may serve Me as priests (וְיַשְׁחֲתוּ אֹהֲלֵם וּמִזְבְּחֹתָי אֲשֶׁר וּמִלְאָכֵם וּמִזְבְּחֹתָי אֲשֶׁר) (καὶ χρίσεις αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐμπλήσεις αὐτῶν τὰς χεῖρας καὶ ἀγιάσεις αὐτούς, ἵνα ἱερατεύωσίν μοι)." Cf. Exodus 29:7, "Then you shall take the anointing oil and pour it on his head and anoint him (וְשָׁמַן הַמִּשְׁחָה וַיִּצְקֶתָ עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ וּמִשְׁחָתָה אֹתוֹ)

עֲלֵהֶם (καὶ λήμψη τοῦ ἐλαίου τοῦ χρίσματος καὶ ἐπιχειεῖ αὐτὸ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ χρίσεις αὐτόν) (ἐπιχέω is used only once in NT in Luke 10:34 when the good Samaritan pours oil and wine on the victim's wounds)." Cf. Exodus 29:21, "Then you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and on his garments and on his sons and on his sons' garments with him; so he and his garments shall be consecrated, as well as his sons and his sons' garments with him." Cf. Leviticus 21:10, "The priest who is the highest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured (וְהַשָּׂרֵפֶת אֲשֶׁר יָשָׁה עָלָיו לְעֹלָם לֹא יִסְתֹּר אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ וְלֹא יִרְדֹּף אֶת־בְּגָדוֹ) (τοῦ ἐπικεχυμένου ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ ἐλαίου τοῦ χρίστου) and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes." Thus, Aaron was high priest in the Levitical order of priests, and he was a Messiah besides.

⁶⁵ ἐν ᾧ γὰρ πέπονθεν αὐτὸς πειρασθεὶς, δύναται τοῖς πειραζομένοις βοηθῆσαι – Jesus, by fulfilling his obligation to the Father through suffering death on the cross, will help his fellow human beings, who by virtue of their immoral condition deserve God's eternal condemnation. Instead, at the final judgment Jesus will intercede for them and appeal to God for mercy after their faith has been tested and proven to be genuine like his in the present realm (cf. Hebrews 4:15,16). Thus, it was appropriate that he go through normal human testing of his belief in God the Father just as Paul's readers are going through it. Indeed, Paul's primary purpose in this letter is to exhort his readers to persevere in their belief in Jesus as the Messiah as their fellow sufferer of the exigencies of life in the present realm in the midst of a world hostile to the truth. In addition, certainly no *angelos* of Yahweh could have his faith tested because each one was simply a manifestation of Yahweh with the main purpose of communicating information and ideas to sinful human beings.

Therefore, the help which Jesus provides is not direct involvement in the sustaining of believer's faith. This is the transcendent Creator's responsibility as He remains faithful and loyal to those whom He has chosen to obtain eternal life. Jesus' help will come later at the first resurrection when he acts as all believers' advocate before God.

⁶⁶ Ὅθεν ἀδελφοὶ ἀγαπῶ – In line with the previous discussion of Jesus' calling other ordinary (and yet morally depraved) human beings "brothers," Paul now addresses his Christian readers as "brothers." They are set apart because Paul believes that they have been inwardly changed by God to be authentic believers.

⁶⁷ κλήσεως ἐπουρανίου μέτοχοι – If Paul's readers are genuinely changed in their inwardness, then they are participants in an irreversible process whereby the transcendent Creator has caused them to respond with authentic belief to the message that Jesus is the Messiah.

⁶⁸ κατανοήσατε τὸν ἀπόστολον καὶ ἀρχιερέα τῆς ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν – The point of this letter by Paul is to encourage his readers to focus on Jesus as the Messiah on the basis of his credentials. He is the apostle of their declaring themselves to be believers in him, which refers to Jesus' having been sent by God to proclaim God's message of his messiahship (cf. Hebrews 1:1-4). Paul's secondary purpose in this letter is to argue that Jesus is the Messiah by virtue of his human nature and his death, which was his offering for sin as our high priest, so that he qualifies to intervene for us and appeal for mercy before God at the final judgment. of our common acknowledgement and agreement with God the Father that Jesus is the Messiah

⁶⁹ πιστὸν ὄντα τῷ ποιήσαντι αὐτόν – Just as all human beings are "made," i.e., created, by God, Jesus was too, with the express purpose of his being not only the incarnation of God, i.e., God in the creation, but also the Jewish King/Messiah who suffered death in order to qualify for his role and responsibility of being sinners' advocate at the final judgment, so that then he could move on to be the king of the eternal Kingdom of God. Jesus was faithful to God the Father who created him for this specific role within the created reality.

⁷⁰ ὥς καὶ Μωϋσῆς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ – The household of God is the people of Israel. cf. Numbers 12:7, "Not so, with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My household (LXX – οὐχ οὕτως ὁ θεράπων μου Μωϋσῆς· ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ μου πιστός ἐστιν) (אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֶת־מִוֹסֵף אֶת־כָּל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל); with him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?" When Miriam and Aaron questioned whether or not God spoke through only Moses, He said, yes. In fact, God said that He speaks to other prophets through dreams, but not so with Moses, with whom He speaks face to face. Thus Paul is making the point that his readers should listen to Jesus more than to Moses, whom their persecutors are insisting is God's most important spokesman in His household, i.e., among God's people, the Jews (cf. Hebrews 10:21).

⁷¹ πλείονος γὰρ ὁ οὗτος δόξης ἢ παρὰ Μωϋσῆν ἠξίωται, καθ' ὅσον πλείονα τιμὴν ἔχει τοῦ οἴκου ὁ κατασκευάσας αὐτόν – Jesus as the icon of God (1:3) and the Davidic ruler over God's creation with the same authority as God (cf. 1:5, 2:5-8, etc.) is more important than both Moses and God's "household," i.e., His people the Jews, because Jesus has provided for the "household" by offering himself to God in order to qualify to be everyone's high priest. In other words, Moses is *just a member* of God's household, while Jesus as a member is also *the unique provider* of the household, because he does not need salvation. Indeed, he has provided salvation for even Moses.

⁷² πᾶς γὰρ οἶκος κατασκευάζεται ὑπὸ τινος, ὁ δὲ τὰ πάντα κατασκευάσας θεός – Ultimately, of course, God the Father is the one who transcendentally provides salvation for His people, while the Son as the embodiment of God, provides salvation *within the creation*. Therefore, Jesus as the Davidic king, high priest/advocate at the final judgment, and heir of the Father's property is obviously a more important spokesman than Moses. With this argument Paul is intimating that his readers need to listen to what God has done by providing mercy for the household through the

ordinary human Son of God, a concept that the readers' persecutors misunderstand and are unwilling to believe to their eternal destruction if they persist in their unbelief.

⁷³ καὶ Μωϋσῆς μὲν πιστὸς ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ ὡς θεράπων εἰς μαρτύριον τῶν λαληθησομένων – cf. Numbers 12:7, “Not so, with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My household (LXX – οὐχ οὕτως ὁ θεράπων μου Μωϋσῆς; ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ μου πιστὸς ἐστίν)...” Moses was not as important as Jesus. He merely bore witness to more important things that would be said by Jesus, the Son, as God's ultimate and most important prophet and spokesman in the last days (cf. Heb. 1:1ff.; 2:1ff.).

⁷⁴ Χριστὸς δὲ ὡς υἱὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ – Jesus is not a mere servant, like Moses, among God's people. As the Son of God, the Davidic king who rules over the eternal Kingdom of God, Jesus “provides” for God's people with the same level of authority as the transcendent Creator Himself. He provides by ruling over them and by offering himself to God in order to qualify as the people's intervener for mercy at the final judgment. Indeed, he is the very embodiment of God on earth (cf. Hebrews 1:3).

⁷⁵ τοῦ οἴκου ἐσμεν ἡμεῖς ἑάν[περ] τὴν παρρησίαν καὶ τὸ καύχημα τῆς ἐλπίδος ἡ [μέχρι τέλους] κατάσχωμεν – Ultimately, the Jews who are really God's household are those who embrace ALL the truth that God has proclaimed through His prophets, especially through the greatest prophet Jesus, the Son of God. Embracing God's truth and holding on to it until the end of his life provides a Jew with the confidence of receiving God's promises, so that he can be bold in his expectation of being granted eternal mercy and life at the final judgment. Thus, while exhorting his readers to continue to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, Paul is implying that the whole meaning of human existence is to be willing at the core of one's being to undergo any and all circumstances in the present realm, no matter how difficult, while waiting expectantly for God to fulfill His promise of mercy and life in the eternal realm, i.e., to be constant in belief, which is greatly helped by knowing and embracing the complete and accurate truth of the Bible, especially about the Messiah, Jesus, and what God has done with him through his created existence (“confidence” (παρρησία) – cf. Hebrews 4:16; 10:19,35; “hope” (ἐλπίς; ἐλπίζω) – cf. Hebrews 6:11,18,19; 7:19; 10:23; 11:1).

⁷⁶ Διὸ, καθὼς λέγει τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον – Interesting way of stating this, that the Holy Spirit, God's activity within the creation, has spoken in Psalm 95, so that the psalm is not merely the voice of the human author, David (the superscription in the LXX is αἶνος ᾠδῆς τῷ δαυιδ = David's praise song (cf. Hebrews 4:7)). Actually, David himself switched from speaking from his perspective to speaking from God's perspective (notice the change in pronouns in Psalm 95:7-9 from the third person “He/Him” to the first person “I/Me.” Here, in Hebrews 3, this is born out in verses 7-9. Thus, we have an example via Paul's perspective on this of the meaning of biblical inspiration, that human authors with their thoughts, ideas, and intentions were ultimately speaking on behalf of God. Therefore, what they wrote was truth.

⁷⁷ σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε – God had expressed “His voice” through Moses His prophet—with both words and actions (cf. v. 9 – “My accomplishments” (τὰ ἔργα μου)). Then, He expressed “His voice” through David in Psalm 95. Now, He has expressed “His voice” through the Son, Jesus, to whom the readers do well to listen and believe and not engage in inappropriate inwardness. cf. Numbers 12:6-8 – [God] said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, Yahweh, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream. Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household; with him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and he beholds the form of Yahweh. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, against Moses?” In other words, by extrapolation from the context of Numbers 12, why are the Jewish readers' persecutors not afraid to speak against God's Son, Jesus, similarly to how Aaron and Miriam had spoken against Moses after God had made it clear through His actions that Moses was His primary spokesman at the time. Consider, for example, the miracles in Egypt and the parting of the Red Sea vs. the miracles that Jesus and his apostles performed (cf. Hebrews 2:1-4) and, especially, Jesus' death as an “accomplishment” of God whereby he qualified to be our high priest (cf. Hebrews 2:9-18)?

⁷⁸ μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ οὗ ἐπειράσαν ὅτι πατέρες ὑμῶν ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ – Just as David in Psalm 95 referred to the Israelites' disobedience of God in the wilderness as they journeyed from Egypt to the promised land as a means to encourage his contemporary Jews to trust God for His promises, Paul does the same with his Jewish readers. cf. Exodus 17:7, “[Moses] named the place Massah (מַסָּה) (πειρασμὸς) and Meribah (מֵרִיבָה) (λοιδόρησις) because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD (וַיִּסְתַּחֲוּ אֱלֹהִים לְעַם יִשְׂרָאֵל) (διὰ τὸ πειράζειν κύριον), saying, ‘Is the LORD among us, or not?’” The Israelites' quarrel in the desert with God was after He had rescued them from slavery in Egypt with a great demonstration of His power and faithfulness. Thus, rejecting God's goodness in the midst of His promises and previous faithful actions is to test God and incur His judgment and condemnation, which means failing the test that God brings on His people. cf. Exodus 16:4, “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them (וַיִּסְתַּחֲוּ אֱלֹהִים לְעַם יִשְׂרָאֵל) (ὅπως πειράσω αὐτούς), whether or not they will walk in My instruction (וַיִּסְתַּחֲוּ אֱלֹהִים לְעַם יִשְׂרָאֵל) (εἰ πορεύσονται τῷ νόμῳ μου ἢ οὐ).”

⁷⁹ ἐν δοκιμασίᾳ καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου (LXX and the Majority Text (TR) have ἐδοκίμασαν καὶ εἶδσαν (εἶδον – TR) τὰ ἔργα μου) (וַיִּסְתַּחֲוּ אֱלֹהִים לְעַם יִשְׂרָאֵל) = they tested me even though they saw my accomplishments) – It makes more

sense to follow the LXX and Majority Text with ἐδοκίμασαν = they tested, as well as to follow the Hebrew (גַּם) (*gam*) and translate the *καὶ* (*kai*) as “even though.” Therefore, David and Paul mean that, even though the Israelites had just seen God perform the ten miracles of the plagues in Egypt, plus the miracle of parting the Red Sea, they still refused to trust God soon afterwards when the spies had been sent into the land of Canaan for reconnaissance purposes and before they were to enter and conquer the land. The implied point is that Paul’s readers should not test God after “seeing” His accomplishments with and through Jesus (and his apostles) as the earthly Son. It is this seeing of God’s accomplishments that is included in “hearing his voice” (cf. v. 7) and for which people are accountable, whether it was the Israelites and what they say in Egypt and the desert or Paul’s readers and what they have seen in regard to Jesus through being presented with the message of his being the Messiah.

⁸⁰ τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη – It also makes more sense to follow both the Hebrew text and the actual story in order to connect these words with what comes after them, that for forty years God was angry with the Israelites after they disobeyed Him and refused to enter into and conquer the land of Canaan after the spies had reported back to them that giants lived in the land. cf. Numbers 32:13, “So the LORD’S anger burned against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the entire generation of those who had done evil in the sight of the LORD was destroyed.”

⁸¹ διὸ προσώχθισα τῇ γενεᾷ ταύτῃ καὶ εἶπον· αἰεὶ πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ – Here is the main issue, that people are characterized by their inwardness, that is oriented either toward authentically and humbly desiring goodness and mercy from God, or toward rejecting God through some sort of man-made worldview and way of living life, even in the midst of appearing to be attracted to the biblical message like the desert Israelites.

⁸² αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδοὺς μου – The Israelites intellectually knew what God had said and commanded them to do, but they were unwilling to obey His message. Thus, their knowing lack authentic belief and therefore could be labelled as not knowing. cf. Soren Kierkegaard’s *The Sickness Unto Death* and the chapter entitled “The Socratic Definition of Sin.”

⁸³ ὡς ὄμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου (וְאָמַרְתִּי בְּעֵינַי לֵאמֹר) – Several passages are important for understanding Psalm 95 and this verse which Paul quotes. First, Deuteronomy 12:8-12, **Deut. 12:8** “You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man *doing* whatever is right in his own eyes; **Deut. 12:9** for you have not as yet come to “the resting place (וְאָמַרְתִּי בְּעֵינַי לֵאמֹר) and the ^binheritance which the LORD your God is giving you. **Deut. 12:10** “When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and “He gives you rest (וְאָמַרְתִּי בְּעֵינַי לֵאמֹר) from all your enemies around *you* so that you live in security, **Deut. 12:11** “then it shall come about that the place in which the LORD your God will choose for His name to dwell, there you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution of your hand, and all your choice votive offerings which you will vow to the LORD. **Deut. 12:12** “And you shall ^arejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the ^bLevite who is within your gates, since ‘he has no portion or inheritance with you.” Thus, 500 years before David and Psalm 95, God says that He intends to give the Israelites rest from their enemies in a particular geographical location, the land of Canaan. Therefore, when He swore that the Israelites in Moses’ day would not enter His rest, this is at least part of what He meant, the rest from their enemies which He would give them.

Second, Numbers 13:1,2, **Num. 13:1** Then “the LORD spoke to Moses saying, **Num. 13:2** “Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers’ tribes, every one a leader among them.” Thus, God intends to bring the Israelites safely into the land and give it to them regardless of the apparent difficulties of, for example, the strength of the people currently living on the land. Therefore, not to believe God for His promise of giving them the land would be rebellious towards Him.

Third, Numbers 13:30, **Num. 13:30** Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it.” Here we find that Caleb believed God for His promise that the Israelites would defeat the Canaanites regardless of how strong they looked, and he was encouraging the fearful Israelites to believe God as he was.

Fourth, Numbers 14:5-9, **Num. 14:5** “Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel. **6** Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; **7** and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, ““The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. **8** ““If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us — ^ba land which flows with milk and honey. **9** ““Only “do not rebel against the LORD; and do not ^bfear the people of the land, for they will be our ¹prey. Their ²protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them.” And Moses, Aaron, and Joshua also believed God for His promise to bring them all safely into the land and reacted to the people’s unbelief.

Fifth, Numbers 14:26-32, **Num. 14:26** The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **27** “How long *shall I bear* with this evil congregation who are “grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are ¹making against Me. **28** “Say to them, “As I live,” says the LORD, “just as ^byou have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; **29** ^ayour corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all ^byour ¹numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. **30** “Surely you shall not come

into the land in which I¹ swore to settle you, “except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. **31** “Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey — I will bring them in, and they will know the land which you have rejected. **32** “But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness.” Thus, God means by “rest” in Numbers 13 & 14 living securely on the land of Canaan/Israel free from the Israelites’ enemies. It must be specifically this that God through the psalmist, David, means by “My rest” in Psalm 95:11 (cf. Deuteronomy 12:10;25:19;28:65 (the Holocaust?) Joshua 21:44; 23:1). In addition, He probably means the cessation of the hard work of persevering in belief through the desert during the journey from Egypt to the promised land of Canaan (cf. Numbers 10:33;14:20-24; Deuteronomy 12:9; Joshua 22:4). So Psalm 95 is an exhortation to worship Yahweh for His greatness as the Creator and Shepherd of His people, the Israelites, and to avoid rejecting Him as the Israelites did after He had rescued them from slavery in Egypt, which moved God to swear that they would not enter the land of Israel.

However, because the Psalm involves authentic belief in contrast to a hard heart, then there is a further ramification of the Israelites’ unbelief, which is to miss out on the “rest” of the Kingdom of God after resurrection from physical death, first on the land of Israel at the return of the Messiah and second in a new creation. In other words, the Israelites’ unbelief was not a one time event but was coming from an unchanged heart of unbelief. It is this which David has in mind as he exhorts his readers to believe God’s promises to them, both to have a changed heart and to demonstrate authentic belief (cf. Hebrews 4:6-11). What follows in this passage and, especially Hebrews 4:8, makes it clear that God through David in Psalm 95 is referring to eternal life, which begins with the Kingdom of Israel in the present realm and culminates in an eternal realm.

⁸⁴ Βλέπετε, ἀδελφοί, μήποτε ἔσται ἐν τινι ὑμῶν καρδιά πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος – The danger to Paul’s readers is their engaging in inappropriate inwardness like the Israelites in the wilderness and, thereby, forfeiting eternal life by abandoning the message of Jesus as their Messiah and high priest who will intervene on their behalf at the final judgment (cf. Hebrews 2:1). Thus, Paul uses the experience of the OT Israelites and David’s exhortation and warning to his contemporary Israelites 500 years later to exhort and warn his own contemporary Israelites who are considering abandoning God’s truth in a similar manner. Even though they are thinking of focusing on Moses and the Mosaic Covenant, nevertheless, they would actually be abandoning God if they gave up believing in God’s ultimate spokesman, Jesus of Nazareth, their Messiah, King, and High Priest.

⁸⁵ ἀλλὰ ἴ παρακαλεῖτε ἑαυτοὺς καθ’ ἐκάστην ἡμέραν, ἄχρις οὗ τὸ σήμερον ἰκαλεῖται – “Today,” as when David used the word in Psalm 95:7, is in the sense that Paul and his readers still live in the present realm before God brings about the final judgment and creates first the Kingdom of Israel on the land of Israel and then the new, future realm of the eternal Kingdom of God. As long as God is not finished with the present realm and has not brought about the final judgment of the second resurrection, there is time, i.e., “Today,” to continue to respond to God’s accomplishments (ἔργα) through Jesus and his apostles and to believe the truth that God has spoken regarding him as the eternal Messiah.

⁸⁶ ἵνα μὴ σκληρυνθῆ τις ἐξ ὑμῶν ἀπάτη τῆς ἀμαρτίας – The Israelites’ moral depravity, in the midst of their suffering in the desert, led them to refuse to believe that God is faithful to His promises. Paul’s readers’ own moral depravity would lead them to the same kind of conclusion—that eternal life and trusting God are not worth the pain and suffering that is sometimes necessary to endure because of their belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Paul’s encouragement is for them not to let sin deceive them into this false perspective.

⁸⁷ μέτοχοι γὰρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγονάμεν – Paul now includes himself with his readers and claims that they have all become co-heirs with Jesus of the eternal Kingdom of God where he will be king first of the Kingdom of Israel and then the eternal kingdom in a completely new realm.

⁸⁸ εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν κατέσχωμεν – Paul’s readers will reach the goal of escaping from God’s condemnation and thereby gain eternal life only by persevering in belief in the message that God has communicated to them through Jesus and his apostles, which is like a title deed showing that they will inherit salvation. Thus, belief in God’s message is a reliable beginning to their journey toward eternity. ὑπόστασις refers to the basis of their expectation of obtaining eternal. This basis is the message that they have heard of Jesus as the Messiah that acts as a kind of title-deed to their “owning” the entirety of what they will receive, i.e., eternal life and citizenship in the eternal Kingdom of God.

⁸⁹ ἐν τῷ λέγεσθαι σήμερον ἐάν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, μὴ σκληρύνετε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ – In Psalm 95 David emphasized persevering in belief after hearing God’s message, which is what the first generation desert Israelites did not do. Thus, Paul uses David’s message to the Jews’ of his day to exhort his readers to belief, so that they may avoid the negative consequences of unbelief, i.e., eternal condemnation.

⁹⁰ ἴτινες γὰρ ἀκούσαντες παρεπίκραναν; ἀλλ’ οὐ πάντες οἱ ἐξεληθόντες ἐξ Αἰγύπτου διὰ Μωϋσέως – cf. as above Numbers 13:1-14:45, especially 14:20-38 – This is the story of the spies who were sent into the land. After hearing the spies’ report, the Israelites, frightened out of their minds, rejected God’s exhortation to enter and destroy the Canaanites, even after God had saved them from the Egyptians with so many miracles through Moses which demonstrated His power and commitment to them. Here is the same kind of “sin” by which Paul’s readers could be deceived (Hebrews 3:13). After hearing the final message from God, “seeing” what He has done through Jesus, including the miracles performed by the apostles, and then initially embracing the message, they would rebel against God and reject the message of Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God because they are frightened of experiencing

pain in the midst of persecution and suffering in the present realm (cf. Hebrews 1:1-3). The message which they have heard and the negative example of the Israelites in the Sinai wilderness should give them adequate motivation to continue to believe.

⁹¹ τίσιν δὲ τὸ προσάχθισεν τεσσεράκοντα ἔτη; οὐχὶ τοῖς ἁμαρτήσασιν, ὧν τὰ κώλα ἔπεσεν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ – cf. Numbers 14:32, “But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness (καὶ τὰ κώλα ὑμῶν πεσεῖται ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ταύτῃ).” This verse makes it clear that “rest” for the Israelites was not only protection from their enemies but also a particular geographical location, the promised land of Canaan, as a stepping stone to the eternal Kingdom of God. Thus, God forbade them from entering into the promised land by causing them to die in the desert. In other words, the Israelites could not experience the “rest” of protection from their enemies merely by God’s shielding them *in the desert*. They would have had to enter into the land of Canaan in order to encounter the first step towards the “rest” of eternal life to which God and David were referring in Psalm 95, culminating eventually in the Kingdom of Israel on the land and then the eternal Kingdom of God in a new creation. Therefore, by their dying in the wilderness, God demonstrated that they lacked changed hearts and authentic belief. Indeed, they were characterized by abject rebellion against God.

⁹² τίσιν δὲ ὤμοσεν μὴ εἰσελεύσεσθαι εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ εἰ μὴ τοῖς ἁπειθήσασιν – Again, the OT Israelites rejected God’s promise to cause them to defeat the giants in the land of Canaan, which would have brought them the first step of rest from their enemies and from working hard to persevere in belief in the midst of desert difficulties. Instead, this disobedient generation of Israelites died in the wilderness before their sons and daughters reached the eastern banks of the Jordan River opposite Jericho (cf. Numbers 10:33; Deuteronomy 12:9; Joshua 21:44; 22:4; 23:1). Thus, they would miss out on all the “rest” which God has in store for His people that includes the eternal Kingdom of God.

⁹³ καὶ βλέπομεν ὅτι οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν εἰσελθεῖν δι’ ἀπιστίαν – Thus, Paul is saying that the disobedience of the Israelites by refusing to enter into the land and conquer the Canaanites is the same as unbelief, which we can conclude is the same as having an unchanged heart, which we can also conclude will result in all the possible consequences for these Israelites, including that they will miss out on the eternal Kingdom of God. Paul is also making a direct connection between the unbelief/disobedience of the Old Testament Israelites and that which could possibly occur among his Jewish readers. The implication is that just as God did not permit the unbelieving and disobedient Israelites to enter the promised land of Canaan and eternal life, neither will his readers enter into eternal life if they abandon their belief in Jesus as the Son of God, especially after “seeing God’s accomplishments” through Jesus so to speak (cf. Psalm 95:9; Hebrews 3:9). They will encounter the same kind of anger from God, and it will last for all eternity, resulting in eternal condemnation and destruction. Consequently, if these Jewish readers exist at the time of Jesus’ return and in the light of the Mosaic Covenant and its relevance to the Jews as God’s chosen nation, they as a conglomerate of unbelieving people could collectively and even individually experience God’s anger and earthly consequences stemming from His anger and judgment of them as described in the book of Revelation when disaster comes upon Israel and Jerusalem prior to the return of Jesus.

⁹⁴ Φοβηθῶμεν οὖν, μήποτε καταλειπομένης τῆς ἐπαγγελίας εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ δοκῇ τις ἐξ ὑμῶν ὑστερηκεῖναι – Here, Paul is referring to God’s rest of eternal salvation, in the same way that God had promised to the Israelites the land of Canaan as a place of rest from their enemies and hard work of persevering in belief in the desert as a stepping stone towards eternal life. Paul will go on to exegete this phrase for his readers in the next verses by showing that the rest that God has promised them is neither that of the land of Canaan nor that of the cosmos (cf. Genesis 2:2). Thus, Paul means that, if his readers fail to continue to believe God for the Davidic promise of the eternal kingdom through Jesus as the Messiah, then, like the unbelieving Israelites in the desert who failed to reach the “rest” of the promised land of Canaan and this kingdom, they will fail to reach the “rest” of this same eternal kingdom. cf. Hebrews 12:15 regarding , “See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God...”.

⁹⁵ καὶ γὰρ ἐσμεν εὐηγγελισμένοι, καθάπερ κάκεινοι ἀλλ’ οὐκ ὠφέλησεν ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς ἐκείνους, μὴ ἰσχυρομένους τῇ πίστει ‘τοῖς ἀκούσασιν’ – The OT Israelites had heard the message of God’s promise of their entering into the land of Canaan by virtue of His grace and power in defeating their Canaanite enemies. They both “heard” and “saw” this message through Moses’ teaching and God’s miracles respectively. Paul is saying that the Jewish believers and he have likewise heard and seen God’s message through Jesus’ proclamation of it orally and his miracles. However, the OT Israelites refused to believe what God was saying, which meant that the message was useless in their lives. God demonstrated this uselessness by not allowing them to enter into the promised land. In this verse, we also are made privy to a key concept in the whole Bible—the combining into one package inside a human being of the knowledge/understanding of God’s message, regardless how much or how little a person grasps it, and authentic belief in the message that stems from divinely caused true inwardness. It is these two human elements together, understanding and belief, that qualify a person for eternal mercy and life in the Kingdom of God where Jesus will rule (cf. Hebrews 3:19).

⁹⁶ εἰσερχόμεθα ἡγάρ εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες – Just as the OT Israelites could have been in the process of entering the promised land if they had committed themselves to believing God for His promises, Paul says that the Jewish believers and he are actually in the process of entering into the “rest” of eternal salvation in the Kingdom of God.

⁹⁷ καθὼς εἶρηκεν, Ὡς ὅμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου, εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου – Like David, Paul uses Psalm 95 as a kind of negative exhortation. In other words, he is telling them, don't be like the OT Israelites. Instead, do be like any authentic believer who receives the fulfillment of God's promises, whether the "rest" of the promised land of Canaan for the Israelites (that will eventually be actualized in the millennial kingdom after Jesus' return and the Jews become a "great nation" (cf. Genesis 12:1-3), or the "rest" of eternal life for David's and Paul's readers.

⁹⁸ καίτοι τῶν ἔργων ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου γενηθέντων – Paul now uses the story of God's initially bringing things into existence during the creation as described in Genesis 1 and draws a comparison between it and his readers' experience of working that will result eventually in rest.

⁹⁹ εἶρηκεν ὅγάρ που περὶ τῆς ἐβδόμης οὕτως – As in Hebrews 3:7, Paul continues to refer to what the Holy Spirit, i.e., God's working within the creation, says about God and His "rest" by means of the Bible.

¹⁰⁰ καὶ κατέπαυσεν ὁ Θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ – cf. Genesis 2:2, καὶ συνετέλεσεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ, ἃ ἐποίησεν, καὶ κατέπαυσεν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ, ὃν ἐποίησεν (וַיִּשְׁבַּח מְנוּחָתוֹ מִכָּל-מְצִיֵּי הַשָּׁמַיִם בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי). Paul is doing two things. One, he is asking if the rest that God promises to his readers is God's rest as declared in Genesis 2:2, whereby God rested from His "moral," creative actions of bringing the whole cosmos into existence. Since it still remains for some to enter into God's rest (v. 6,9), the answer is, no. Instead, God's rest for his readers is God's rest from His present cosmic creating actions that will actually involve another creation(?). Second, Paul is drawing an analogy between God's "resting" from His "moral," creative actions of bringing the whole cosmos into existence and two other events. First, there was the opportunity for the Israelites to enter into the promised land of Canaan and "rest" from their conflicts with their enemies and from their working at persevering in belief while on their journey from Egypt through the desert to Canaan. Arriving and living in Canaan would be rest from their "moral" obedience to God in the desert. Second, there is now the opportunity for Paul's readers to "rest" from enduring persecution and from working in the present realm at persevering in belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Just as God finished His actions of the initial creation and rested, Paul is exhorting his readers to finish out their earthly actions of enduring suffering and persevering in belief with authentic inwardness, so that they will be able to rest in the eternal Kingdom of God. However, they must *finish their works* as God finished His (and as the desert Israelites should have finished theirs) in order to rest. However, this they will do only if they do not abandon their belief in Jesus. Therefore, Paul's readers need to work like God in order that they can rest like God. Thus, through the Genesis passage, Paul is instructing his readers that "rest" has always been an important biblical theme, and that God first demonstrated this through His own resting after the "work" of the initial creation. As people read this passage, they can know that God has planned a "rest" for them, if they obey the biblical message.

¹⁰¹ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ πάλιν ἔεισελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου – Because he is comparing the Jews' work and rest to God's work and rest, Paul once again mentions the lack of both in the OT Israelites' experience.

¹⁰² ἐπεὶ οὖν ἀπολείπεται τινὰς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς αὐτήν, καὶ οἱ πρότερον εὐαγγελισθέντες οὐκ εἰσήλθον δι' ἀπειθειαν – There is still a future rest for both David's readers and Paul's readers. This is the rest of eternal life, which will constitute God's rest for them, i.e., the rest like God's that God actually grants them, as implied by Psalm 95 that was written to Israelites who were living around 1000 B.C. The Israelites could have enjoyed the "rest" of the land of Canaan, safe and secure from their enemies, and the "rest" like God's of Genesis 2:2, where they could stop working hard at believing and obeying God in the wilderness once they entered the land of Canaan and conquered it.

¹⁰³ πάλιν τινὰ ὀρίζει ἡμέραν, σήμερον, ἐν Δαυὶδ λέγων μετὰ τοσοῦτον χρόνον, καθὼς ἔπροειρηται σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε, μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν – In other words, God has always been saying to the Israelites, "Today, do not harden your hearts," and, ultimately, in regard to eternal life. This is especially true now in the light of the final and complete message of God that Jesus has brought as the Messiah (cf. Hebrews 1).

Above, in Hebrews 3:7, Paul identifies the "author" so to speak of Psalm 95 as the Holy Spirit, "Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today, if you hear His voice...' Here, he states that David is the human author. Interestingly enough, this is the only instance where Paul names David with respect to the three important OT passages that he quotes as pertaining to the Messiah and High Priest of God's eternal plans and that David wrote—Psalm 8 in Hebrews 2:6-8, Psalm 110 in Hebrews 5:6 & 7:17,21, and Psalm 40 in Hebrews 10:5-10.

¹⁰⁴ εἰ γὰρ αὐτοὺς Ἰησοῦς κατέπαυσεν, οὐκ ἔαν περὶ ἄλλης ἐλάλει μετὰ ταῦτα ἡμέρας – If God, through Joshua, had brought the Jews to a place of *final* "rest" in the land of Canaan that involved all that He had in mind regarding the concept of "rest," then God through David in Psalm 95, 500 years later, would not have spoken to David's fellow Israelites who were actually living in the land of another day and of another "rest." Therefore, David was speaking of the eternal Kingdom of God. Paul properly interprets David this way and is using David, the first Son of God, as his model of exhortation to his readers.

¹⁰⁵ ἄρα ἀπολείπεται σαββατισμὸς τῷ λαῷ τοῦ θεοῦ – Sabbath comes from one of the Hebrew words for "rest," Shabbat (שַׁבָּת – the other Hebrew word is מִנוּחַ from מָנוַח). Paul is arguing that the Messiah brings about an even greater Sabbath and rest than that of the promised land of Canaan. This greater Sabbath is what God through David ultimately meant in Psalm 95 and that Paul is concerned about with respect to his contemporary Jewish readers.

¹⁰⁶ ὁ γὰρ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ ὡσπερ ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων ὁ θεός – By definition, rest implies that a person has worked hard beforehand such that the rest is a cessation of work

and indicates a completion or finishing of the work. Therefore, just as God rested from His works of bringing the cosmos into existence at the “creation” in Genesis 1 after *finishing* this particular work (cf. Hebrews 4:4), so will authentic believers enter into their rest, i.e., a rest in eternal life from their works of being diligent to persevere in belief in the present realm (cf. Hebrews 4:4-5,11) after *finishing* these particular works.

¹⁰⁷ σπουδάσωμεν οὖν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν κατάπαυσιν – Paul is saying that the present realm is a time to work hard at persevering in belief. This perseverance is a person’s “work” that will be complete and come to an end when his life in the present realm ends and he enters into the eternal Kingdom of God. The primary purpose of this letter is to exhort the readers to persevere in belief in Jesus for the benefit that it brings—eternal life (cf. Hebrews 6:11).

¹⁰⁸ ἵνα μὴ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τις ὑποδείγματι πέσῃ τῆς ῥάπειθείας – Paul is referring to his readers’ failing to enter into the eternal Kingdom of God and, instead, incurring God’s complete destruction by disobeying Him and not continuing to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, just as the Israelites “fell,” i.e., died physically, in the wilderness because of their disobedience and inappropriate inwardness, thus failing to enter into the “rest” of the land of Canaan (cf. Hebrews 3:8,15,17).

¹⁰⁹ Ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἔνεργῆς καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον καὶ δῖκνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος – Whenever God speaks, it is through His spokesmen, whether prophets or the *angeloi* of Yahweh. In this case, God has spoken through His Son, the final Davidic king, Jesus, and his apostles. And the message of God that they have brought is that Jesus is the Son of God and high priest of God’s and his people at the final judgment (cf. Hebrews 1:1-2;2:3-4). Paul’s point is that the truth regarding Jesus as the message invades and reveals the innermost condition of a human being, where “soul” and “spirit” meet, i.e., where the person as a person (the combination of his spirit and body) and his spirit (God’s conception of the person for the purposes of all eternity) reside. Is the person humble and desirous of truth for the sake of eternal salvation, or is the person proud and closed to truth? The answer to this question is what the message of God brings forth from a person.

¹¹⁰ ἄρμων τε καὶ μυελῶν – “Joints” is probably not the best translation. The point is that the gospel message infiltrates the innermost part of a person’s being where the important aspects of his personhood meet, his soul and his spirit. Therefore, “bone casings” is a better rendition of ἄρμων, i.e., “of bone casings and bone marrow.” cf. Louw & Nida’s article on μυελός.

¹¹¹ καὶ κριτικὸς ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας – The message of God is capable of revealing what kind of heart/inwardness a person has, either receptive or not to His message and truth, which, in this case, is that Jesus is the Messiah. Thus, the most important issue for a human being is his inwardness, what kind of person he is internally with respect to the biblical truth, i.e., as to whether or not a person perseveringly desires and believes this truth throughout his whole life and lives a life commensurate with the truth.

¹¹² καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν κτίσις ἀφανῆς ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, πάντα δὲ γυμνά καὶ τετραχλησμένα τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ – God sees every aspect of the created reality at every moment. Therefore, Paul’s readers will not be able to hide their rejection of Jesus if they merely pretend to believe in him. cf. Soren Kierkegaard’s concept of “confidentiality.” God is not just “confidentiality about confidentiality.” He is the very essence of “confidentiality” (Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, “Love is a Matter of Conscience” [and a pure heart and a sincere faith], pages 151-153).

¹¹³ πρὸς ὃν ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος – Ultimately, Paul’s readers’ belief in Jesus as the Messiah will become the matter at hand at the final judgment, where all of their and our most confidential secrets will become known to God along with the true nature of their and our hearts.

¹¹⁴ Ἐχοντες οὖν ἀρχιερέα μέγαν διεληλυθότα τοὺς οὐρανοὺς. Ἰησοῦν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, κρατῶμεν τῆς ὁμολογίας – Paul is getting back to the point that he was making at the end of chapter 2 where he was connecting the idea of high priest to the idea of Messiah and Son of God while also demonstrating that Jesus with his suffering death was the perfect candidate for both. Paul will now describe in detail in Hebrews 5-10 how the Son’s high priesthood fits with the OT texts and Jesus’ role by means of the New Covenant in contrast to the Levitical priests’ role under the Mosaic Covenant. Thus, Jesus has transitioned from his earthly existence as an ordinary human being and Son of God to his “sitting at the right hand of God” as an ordinary human being, the Son of God, and the high priest who intervenes eternally for sinners at the final judgment. The point of this whole letter is that Paul’s readers need to continue to believe this about Jesus for the sake of their eternal destiny.

¹¹⁵ πεπειρασμένον δὲ κατὰ πάντα καθ’ ὁμοιότητα χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας – Jesus can sympathize with our moral weaknesses (ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν) even though he was morally perfect, since he, as an ordinary human being and not a superordinary being like the *angeloi*, was tested with respect to his own belief in God as his God and Father. Consider the tests that Jesus endured in the desert after his baptism (Matthew 4, Luke 4) as well as in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36ff.). cf. John 20:17 – Jesus said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God’”.

¹¹⁶ προσερχόμεθα οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος, ἵνα λάβωμεν ἔλεος καὶ χάριν ἐύρωμεν εἰς εὐκαιρὸν βοήθειαν – Paul could be speaking of the Messiah’s throne from where he rules over the universe (cf. Hebrews 1:8; Psalm 45:6), but, in this context about Jesus’ role as high priest, he is referring to God’s throne of both sovereign rule and judgment (cf. Hebrews 8:1;12:2). Paul’s claim is that the only way to have confidence at the final judgment that God will grant one eternal mercy is through persevering belief in Jesus as the Messiah and intervening high priest, in light of the fact, as he will go on to explain, that the OT makes it clear that a superordinary *angelos* of Yahweh as Messiah would be useless at the judgment. By virtue of having a suffering, human Messiah and high priest, the

judgment seat of God becomes a throne of grace, because a morally depraved human will be able to take advantage of Jesus' priestly actions of self-offering and intervention (cf. Hebrews 5-10).

In this verse, Paul is stating the goal (*telos*) of a morally depraved human being. It is to approach God's throne of judgment with confidence of receiving eternal mercy. Then, once the approach is made, God grants the petitioner His mercy and life in the Kingdom of God as the ultimate part of the goal, and this all takes place because of Jesus' intervention on the person's behalf now that he has qualified through his death to be both ruler and high priest. Cf. Hebrews 3:6; 10:19,35 in regard to *παρησία*. Cf. Hebrews 7:25; 10:1,22; 11:6; 12:18,22 in regard to *προσέρχομαι* and Hebrews 7:19 in regard to *ἐγγίζω*. Therefore, the "timely help" is at the judgment when it will be most needed and the penitent sinner will receive God's eternal mercy and forgiveness through Jesus as high priest.

¹¹⁷ *πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεύς* – Paul now begins his in-depth comparison of Jesus as a high priest to the Levitical high priests of the Mosaic Covenant as he earnestly works to convince his readers that Jesus is the only high priest to trust with their obtaining eternal mercy from God. Cf. Leviticus 4:3, "...if the anointed priest (הַכֹּהֵן הַמְשֻׁחַ) (ὁ ἀρχιερεύς ὁ κεχρισμένος) sins so as to bring guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD a bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed." The word *ἀρχιερεύς* appears only two times in the LXX (Lev. 4:3; Josh 24:33) and 11 times in the apocrypha. The more common phrase is ὁ ἱερεύς ὁ μέγας which appears 21 times in the LXX. Cf. Leviticus 21:10, "The priest who is the highest among his brothers (הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל) (ὁ ἱερεύς ὁ μέγας ἀπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ), on whose head the anointing oil has been poured and who has been consecrated to wear the garments, shall not uncover his head nor tear his clothes." Cf. Exodus 28:41, "You shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him; and you shall anoint them (וַיִּשָׁחֲוּ) (χρίσεις αὐτούς) and ordain them (וַיִּתְּנֵם) (ἐμπλήσεις αὐτῶν τὰς χεῖρας) and consecrate them (וַיִּקְדֹּשׁוּ) (ἀγιάσεις αὐτούς), that they may serve Me as priests (לְעֹלֵי) (ἵνα ἱερατεύωσίν μοι)." Also cf. Leviticus 8:12, "Then he poured some of the anointing oil (וַיִּשְׁפֹּךְ) (τοῦ ἐλαίου τῆς χρίσεως) on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him (וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ) (καὶ ἔχρισεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἡγίασεν αὐτόν)." Cf. Exodus 28:1, "Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me (לְעֹלֵי) (ἱερατεύειν μοι) — Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons."

¹¹⁸ *ἐξ ἀνθρώπων λαμβανόμενος* – Paul is referring to the fact that the Levitical high priests were picked from among the Israelite tribe of Levi. Therefore, each high priest was a real human being and not a superordinary being like the *angeli* of Yahweh. The argument continues that, like the Levitical priests and high-priest, the Son of God as the final Davidic king of Israel and of the the Kingdom of God is an ordinary human being. In addition, the Son of God as the high-priest who replaces the Levitical high-priest is also. Cf. Exodus 28:1, "Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me (לְעֹלֵי) (ἱερατεύειν μοι) — Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons."

While Paul will sometimes refer to *daily* sacrifices by all the priests as prescribed by the Mosaic Covenant, his argument is mainly about the high priest who brings the *annual* sacrifice on Yom Kippur and sprinkles blood on the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies.

¹¹⁹ *ἵνα προσφέρῃ δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν* – Cf. 5:3,7; 8:3,4; 9:7,9,14,25,28; 10:1,8,11,12; 11:4,17; 12:7; Here, in one sentence, Paul states the main responsibility of the Levitical priests under the Mosaic Covenant – that they were to offer up to God gifts (δῶρά – Hebrews 8:3,4;9:9;11:13) as a means to appeal to Him for mercy in light of people's sins and immoral actions and their deserving God's condemnation and the punishment of death (cf. Hebrews 8:3,4;9:9;11:4).

Cf. Numbers 18:1, "So the LORD said to Aaron, 'You and your sons and your father's household with you shall bear the guilt in connection with the sanctuary (וְעָלְתֶם) (λήμψεσθε τὰς ἁμαρτίας τῶν ἁγίων), and you and your sons with you shall bear the guilt in connection with your priesthood (וְעָלְתֶם) (λήμψεσθε τὰς ἁμαρτίας τῆς ἱερατείας ὑμῶν).'" This translation from the NAS95 does not quite interpret properly God's intent. Notice that the LXX translates וְעָלְתֶם (from עָלָה) with λήμψεσθε (from λαμβάνω). In other words, "bear," i.e., carry *per se*, is not what the priests do with Israel's sins and immoral actions. Instead, they take or receive the responsibility to deal with their evil and intervene between God and them in order to appeal to Him for mercy. However, Paul will go on to argue that the Levitical priests were entirely unsuccessful themselves to obtain mercy, i.e., complete and eternal mercy. In other words, Paul's whole argument in chapters 5-10 hinges on the fact that the sacrificial ceremonies required by the Mosaic Covenant involving mere animals were and are complete ineffective for obtaining God's eternal mercy. In fact, the entire Mosaic Covenant is one big ineffective religious system that God gave to the Israelites simply so that they could be a didactic tool and signpost for the benefit of all the rest of humanity. The Jews' obedience to the Mosaic Covenant provides the Gentiles and themselves with a means to observe what kind of God the transcendent Creator is and that He is a God of morality, goodness, love, provision, and mercy. However, Paul will argue that with respect to this last issue, mercy and especially complete and eternal mercy, the continual and multiple offerings of bulls and goats communicate only that the problem of a morally depraved human being's deserving God's eternal condemnation is never resolved by virtue of them. In other words, some other methodology and, indeed, sacrificial offering, is necessary to obtaining God's eternal mercy. And Paul will argue from the OT that Jesus as the real, human Messiah, who offered himself once on the cross, qualifies to secure complete mercy from God. Therefore,

anytime that God granted complete forgiveness to the Israelites, it was on the basis of Jesus' high priesthood and offering of himself in order to qualify for his priestly responsibility.

Cf. Leviticus 1:2, "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When any man of you brings an offering to the LORD (לְיְהוָה לְקָרְבָן מִבְּהֵמַת הַבָּיָהּ) (ἐὰν προσάγαγῃ δῶρα τῷ κυρίῳ), you shall bring your offering (מִבְּהֵמַת הַבָּיָהּ) (προσποιήσετε τὰ δῶρα ὑμῶν) of animals from the herd or the flock.'" Cf. Leviticus 4:13,14,16,20, "Now if the whole congregation of Israel commits error and the matter escapes the notice of the assembly, and they commit any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and they become guilty; when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a bull of the herd for a sin offering and bring it before the tent of meeting... Then the anointed priest (הַכֹּהֵן הַמְשֻׁחַ) (ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ χριστός) is to bring some of the blood of the bull to the tent of meeting... He shall also do with the bull just as he did with the bull of the sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them (וַיַּכֶּרְתֵם) (ἐξιλάσεται περὶ αὐτῶν), and they will be forgiven (וְנִסְחָתוּ) (ἀφεθήσεται αὐτοῖς ἡ ἁμαρτία)." This last phrase, וַיַּכֶּרְתֵם and ἀφεθήσεται αὐτοῖς ἡ ἁμαρτία, should be translated better with something like, "and it (the sin) will be overlooked," i.e. until God deals with the Israelites' moral depravity at the final judgment through the high priesthood of the Messiah.

¹²⁰ μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀγνοοῦσιν καὶ πλανωμένοις, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὸς περικείται ἀσθένειαν – There is an important similarity between the Levitical high priest and the rest of the Israelites. They are both morally depraved. Thus, if the Levitical high priest truly understands his immoral condition, which the priests of Jesus' day did not for the most part, he can exercise compassion and patience toward his fellow Jews just as he would want God to exercise compassion and patience toward him (cf. James 5:14-20). In other words, whenever a Levitical priest intervenes on behalf of the evil actions of an Israelite or the Israelites, he should ask himself, "What good is this really going to do, because I need someone to intervene on *my* behalf?" And, indeed, his actions did not really do any good. The issue of complete forgiveness only got prolonged by means other sacrificial offerings of the Mosaic Covenant. It did not get resolved. Thus, eternal mercy and forgiveness towards any human being, including a Jew, has always been and will always be on the basis of Jesus, the morally perfect and eternal high priest.

¹²¹ καὶ 'δι' αὐτὴν ὀφείλει, καθὼς περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, οὕτως καὶ περὶ 'αὐτοῦ προσφέρειν περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν – A Levitical priest is morally and covenantally obligated to deal with his own sins and immoral actions before God in addition to those of the other Israelites by bringing an offering to God. It is this issue of a high priest's obligation to bring an offering to God that Paul will exploit in this letter as he compares Jesus as high priest to these others. Cf. Leviticus 9:7, "Moses then said to Aaron, 'Come near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, that you may make atonement for yourself and for the people (וְעָשִׂיתָ) (καὶ ἐξιλάσαι περὶ σεαυτοῦ καὶ τοῦ οἴκου σου); then make the offering for the people, that you may make atonement for them, just as the LORD has commanded.'" As with the the word כָּלַס as quoted above from Leviticus 4:20 in the notes for v. 1, כָּרַךְ and ἐξιλάσαι refer to only prolonging the issue of God's justice and mercy, but not resolving it.

The point that Paul makes in this paragraph is that the high priest's responsibility is to bring a sacrifice to God in order to hold off His condemnation, as well as, in the case of the Levitical high priest, to bring the sacrifice in order to do the same for himself, because he, too, is a morally depraved human being. Yet, if he really understands what God requires, he would know that eventually it must be some other high priest, indeed, a morally perfect high priest, who settles the issue of eternal mercy between God and all morally depraved human beings.

¹²² καὶ οὐχ ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει τὴν τιμὴν ἀλλὰ καλούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς καθὼς περ καὶ Ἀαρὼν – Here is another similarity between Jesus as high priest and the high priests of the Mosaic Covenant. They are both chosen by God. cf. v. 1 and Exodus 28:1, "Then bring near to yourself Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the sons of Israel, to minister as priest to Me — Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons." Cf. Exodus 28:43; Leviticus 8-10. Cf. Leviticus 16:32, "So the [high] priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father's place (וְהַכֹּהֵן הַמְשֻׁחַ) = who anoints it (?) and fills its (?) hand to act as priest after his father) (ὃν ἂν χρίσωσιν αὐτόν καὶ ὃν ἂν τελειώσωσιν τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ ἱερατεύειν μετὰ τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ = same as translation of the Hebrew shall make atonement...." Cf. Numbers 3-4,8:5-26, especially vs. 24,25, "This is what applies to the Levites: from twenty-five years old and upward they shall enter to perform service in the work of the tent of meeting. But at the age of fifty years they shall retire from service in the work and not work any more." Also, cf. Numbers 18, especially v. 23, "Only the Levites shall perform the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; it shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations (וְהָיָה לְדָוָם) (νόμιμον αἰώνιον εἰς τὰς γενεὰς αὐτῶν), and among the sons of Israel they shall have no inheritance." Also cf. Deuteronomy 18:1-8, especially v. 5, "For the LORD your God has chosen him (בְּיָדְךָ) (αὐτόν ἐξελέξατο) (the tribe of Levi) and his sons from all your tribes, to stand and serve in the name of the LORD forever (וְעָמְדוּ) (The LXX translation is not available)."

¹²³ οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασεν γεννηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα ἀλλ' ὁ λαλήσας πρὸς αὐτόν υἱὸς μου εἶ σύ, ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε – Jesus as the Messiah did not appoint himself to be a high priest. Instead, it was the person

who had spoken in Psalm 2 about Solomon’s becoming the Son of God when he was crowned king of Israel. This person in Psalm 2 was God. However, every Davidic king after Solomon also became God’s Son at his coronation, including now Jesus. Distinct from all the other Davidic kings, Jesus also became a high priest, as Paul will go on to demonstrate in the next verse and mainly in Hebrews 7. Because Psalm 2 was written by David at the coronation of Solomon, and because God “gave birth” to Solomon as His Son at the coronation, it makes sense that God “gives birth” to Jesus as His Son, indeed, the final Son of God of the eternal Kingdom of God. However, in contrast to Solomon and the other Davidic kings who were coronated during their lifetimes, Paul is arguing in this letter that Jesus has to fulfill a unique role and qualify to become the king of Israel, a high-priest, and the Son of God by suffering death on the cross. Therefore, God’s resurrecting Jesus from the dead becomes his coronation ceremony, which is also the moment when Jesus qualifies to be the only advocate on behalf of morally depraved human beings at the final judgment. As a result, Jesus’ resurrection is also the moment, in line with Psalm 2, when God “gave birth” to Jesus as the Son of God. Notice that, rather than refer to the three recorded times when God spoke audibly from heaven to declare Jesus His Son (cf. Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35; John 12:28), Paul refers to these Old Testament passages of Psalm 2 and Psalm 110, because he is dealing with believing Jews who need to know better their Old Testaments in order to refute the arguments of the unbelieving Jews who are pressuring them to abandon their belief in such a low-life Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

¹²⁴ καθὼς καὶ ἐν ἑτέρῳ λέγει σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ (LXX – Psalm 110:4, σὺ εἶ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ) – Psalm 110:4 becomes the key to Paul’s argument about Jesus’ ordinary humanness and importance, which will become clear in Hebrews 7. Just as God declared that Jesus is His Son by virtue of his having qualified to be such through his death (see previous verse and note), so also, through David in Psalm 110, God declared that Jesus is a high priest who intervenes eternally for morally depraved and rebellious human beings who are willing to accept his advocacy. It is putting together the two ideas of Son of God (Psalm 2) and high-priest (Psalm 110) that Paul does so marvelously in this letter in order to convince his readers to continue in their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, i.e., as the human King and High Priest of both Israel and the Gentiles. Paul’s point here is that Jesus as the Messiah, unlike the *angeloi* of Yahweh, receives his role, function, and the accompanying honor from God *through the words of the Bible*, since he is an ordinary man. By virtue of their being simple manifestations of the transcendent Creator, the *angeloi* of God are so closely associated with Him that they can be said to “grasp” their own glory and honor. For example, the burning bush would have naturally been able to refer to its divine glory, because it was the transcendent Creator who was merely appearing in the form of the bush. In contrast, Jesus was an ordinary (but morally perfect) human being, and rather than his taking on his roles simply by assuming them, he realized that God’s methodology for his becoming the Son of God and a high-priest was by virtue of God’s statements in both Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 that found their fulfillment in God’s resurrecting Jesus from the dead after he offered himself on behalf of the moral depravity and mankind.

Therefore, the statement in Psalm 2 of God’s conferring “Sonship” onto the ordinary human being Solomon (and Jesus by extrapolation) only makes sense if the Son of God is an ordinary human being as God who has written himself into the story of creation as a separate person and not an *angelos* and theophany like the burning bush who is the same person as the transcendent Creator. Similarly, the statement in Psalm 110 is addressed to a human being, not to an *angelos* of Yahweh and theophany.

As a result, in this last paragraph, Paul makes the point that high priests cannot be presumptuous and claim the right of this responsibility for themselves. They must be appointed my God. Likewise, God appointed Jesus to his role and even assigned him to be a member of a completely different order from the Levitical priesthood. He is of the order of Melchizedek, and he holds his priesthood “into the age,” i.e., into the age of the Kingdom of God, which is eternity.

¹²⁵ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ δεήσεις τε καὶ ἰκετηρίας πρὸς τὸν δυνάμενον σῶζειν αὐτὸν ἐκ θανάτου μετὰ κραυγῆς ἰσχυρᾶς καὶ δακρύων προσενέγκας καὶ εἰσακουσθεὶς ἀπὸ τῆς εὐλαβείας – Here Paul refers to a very human moment in Jesus’ experience as the Son of God, a moment that one would certainly not expect a superordinary *angelos* of Yahweh to have to go through. Not only did Jesus not grab for the honor of being a High Priest, he actually tried to avoid it when praying in the Garden of Gethsemane with loud groaning and even tears—albeit righteously, by sorrowfully praying that his responsibilities could be different. Yet, he was willing to submit to God’s calling for him. God the Father accepted the human Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane because of his authentic inwardness, even though God could have saved him from suffering death on the cross. However, He did not, and neither did Jesus ultimately want to avoid death, because he knew that this was his destiny in order to qualify to be the eternal high priest for morally depraved human beings. These events in the Messiah’s life make no sense if he was supposed to be a superman and *angelos* of Yahweh. One would certainly never expect an *angelos* of Yahweh to groan, cry, and pray for release from suffering. Nor would one expect an *angelos* to suffer, period.

¹²⁶ καίπερ ὢν υἱός, ἔμαθεν ἀφ’ ὧν ἔπαθεν τὴν ὑπακοήν – While it might seem reasonable to think that the final Son of God, who is the ruler of the universe (cf. Psalm 2,8), would not suffer death at the hands of his enemies and would not have to learn obedience to the Father, this is exactly what happened to the very human Jesus, in order for him to qualify to be our priest and intervener at the final judgment, because his suffering was his offering to God as a priest (cf. Hebrews 9:11,12). Jesus willingly allowed the sufferings he endured to teach him obedience to the Father at a deeper level than he had experienced up to the time of his arrest, trial, beatings, and crucifixion. Jesus had been relatively in control of his life up to that point—traveling where he wanted, saying what he wanted, healing when he wanted, and

even escaping from the Jewish leadership when he wanted. Then others took control the night before his crucifixion, and he suffered greatly as a result.

Thus, Paul is saying that suffering was a tool of God to enhance Jesus' own obedience to him, and the inference we can draw is that it is also a very important tool for us in our process of learning what it means to obey God—to listen to His voice (cf. OT uses of this phrase), to believe what we hear from Him, and to choose to respond to what He says with as much ready willingness as His grace allows. And to work hard to this, because, as with Jesus, we should not expect it to be an easy thing to choose. At lower levels of suffering, we have the sense that we are in control of our lives to a large degree. As the suffering increases, our sense is of less and less control, and we are led to trust God to a greater extent than we have had to before. Thus our journey can look very much like Jesus, even if we do not suffer death at the hands of those who violently oppose God.

¹²⁷ καὶ τελειωθείς – The *telos* or goal of Jesus' existence on earth as the one person who would qualify to be the final Son of God was to suffer death on the cross for the sake of the people in order to become both their king and high priest. Paul first mentioned this idea in 2:10, that it was appropriate for God the Creator to lead the one who solves the problem of the moral depravity of human beings to his goal through the methodology of suffering. Cf. also Hebrews 3:14 – we reach our goal if we acknowledge and believe that Jesus as the Messiah reached his goal. Notice also the passive voice of this verb, τελειωθείς. Ultimately, Jesus was brought to his goal by the sovereignty of God.

¹²⁸ ἐγένετο πᾶσιν τοῖς ὑπακούουσιν αὐτῷ αἴτιος σωτηρίας αἰωνίου – Paul is saying that, through Jesus' suffering death on the cross, he became the very basis of salvation from God's condemnation at the judgment, having qualified to be the intermediary for God's mercy on behalf of fundamentally rebellious human beings. Thus, this is for all those who obey Jesus by embracing the message that he spoke from God the Father, to the effect that he is the Messiah, i.e., the eternal king and high priest, for the sake of their salvation.

The implications of this is that we become what God intends for us and the effect that we are to have on other people by our learning obedience through what we suffer.

¹²⁹ προσαγορευθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρχιερεὺς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ – Jesus' path to acquiring the ultimate, honorable role of king over the universe was through suffering, a path that would be highly unusual for a superordinary *angelos* of Yahweh. Therefore, Jesus was an ordinary human being, who earned from God the titles of both Son and High Priest by suffering death on the cross. Paul is making the point that his readers must never abandon their belief in that which God has declared, that Jesus is both Son (Psalm 2) and Priest (Psalm 110) for the sake of their eternal salvation. Paul will go on in chapter 7 to describe in more detail what it means for Jesus to be a high priest “according to the order of Melchizedek.”

In this paragraph, Paul has explained that Jesus acquired his ultimate role of high priest by qualifying for it through suffering, something that Paul is implying that Aaron and the Levitical high priests did not have to do to gain their responsibility. Thus, by Jesus' suffering as he did, he learned obedience to the Father and reached his own goal (*telos*) as the Messiah to be the high priest of those who would approach God to seek His mercy through him. Paul will go on to use this idea of reaching a goal for morally depraved human beings, so that it becomes clear that their goal is to approach God and gain His eternal mercy and life in the Kingdom of God. Consequently, the task of a sinful human being is to prepare himself for the judgment.

And the effect of a sinful human being's obedience to God is to become a “priest” to others who need instruction and encouragement to approach God with repentance, belief, and obedience.

¹³⁰ Περὶ οὗ πολλὸς ἡμῖν ὁ λόγος καὶ δυσερμήνευτος λέγειν, ἐπεὶ ὠθηροὶ γέγονατε ταῖς ἀκοαῖς – Here is a parenthetical section and excursus where Paul comments on the poor spiritual and intellectual condition of his readers, hoping that they will take to heart his warning and his encouragement to continue learning and growing in their belief in Jesus as their Messiah and high priest.

Paul says that the explanation of Jesus as both Son and high priest according to the order of Melchizedek is extensive for us as human beings, because it involves understanding the relationship between passages such as Psalm 2 and Psalm 110, both of which Paul has just quoted. He will go on to demonstrate the profundity of the explanation in chapters 7-10. Now, though, he once again exhorts his immature readers to press on toward a more mature understanding and belief in Jesus as the very human Son of God and high priest. The pressure and intimidation that have been applied by their persecutors have made it difficult for them to respond positively to the concept of Jesus as God's Son (cf. Hebrews 6:12). It sounds as though Paul has already had some firsthand or at least secondhand experience with his readers' slowness to learn.

¹³¹ καὶ γὰρ ὀφείλοντες εἶναι διδάσκαλοι διὰ τὸν χρόνον, πάλιν χρεῖαν ἔχετε τοῦ διδάσκειν ὑμᾶς ἵτινά τὰ στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ γέγονατε χρεῖαν ἔχοντες γάλακτος ἢ [καὶ] οὐ στερεᾶς τροφῆς – At this point in their journey as believers in the Messiah, Paul's readers ought to be able to explain what it means for the Messiah to be also a High Priest as Paul himself understands these concepts, but their dullness and reluctance to endure the persecution that they are experiencing is hindering this ability. Consequently, their “need” is not a good one but a bad one, i.e., one that Paul says that they should not have. This “need” is basically that the only message that they can hear because of the intimidation from their persecutors is what the persecutors are saying about the Old Testament, the basics of the biblical message that lacks a proper explanation of the Messiah and how one acquires eternal life through his being their high priest at the final judgment. As a result, they need to move on from the infancy of a poor

understanding of the Old Testament to the maturity of a more accurate and detailed explanation of the Old Testament (cf. 5:13-6:2). Therefore, their current “need” is not really a need but a lack.

¹³² πᾶς γὰρ ὁ μετέχων γάλακτος ἀπειροῦ λόγου δικαιοσύνης, νήπιος γὰρ ἔστιν – Paul is referring to the person who lacks the proper skill that comes from working diligently and arduously with the Old Testament in order to connect the dots of the various passages that paint a whole picture regarding the Messiah and eternal salvation, including a proper understanding of grace. Indeed, it is through belief in this message that a person acquires eternal forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, which are both at the heart of this message. Notice that ἀπειροῦ comes from the same root as πειράζω = test, approve.

¹³³ τελειῶν δὲ ἐστὶν ἡ στερεὰ τροφή, τῶν διὰ τὴν ἔξιν τὰ αἰσθητήρια γεγυμνασμένα ἐχόντων πρὸς διάκρισιν καλοῦ τε καὶ κακοῦ – Paul is referring to theologically mature people who are fully committed to their goal (*telos*) of eternal mercy so that they have worked hard at understanding the extensive message of God’s project involving a Messiah who is both king and priest. This is the “solid food” that only the mature of thought can grasp, so that their mental faculties have been adequately trained to discern theological truth from error. This is what he is most concerned about for them in addition to the perseverance of their belief. A theologically mature person understands the “good” of the message of the gospel of Jesus as the very human Messiah and high priest, while a theological infant holds on to the “bad” of Paul’s readers’ Jewish persecutors by rejecting the proper explanation of God’s message, thinking that the Messiah has to be a superordinary being, an *angelos* of Yahweh, and that the idea of the Messiah does not connect to the idea of high priest via suffering death on a cross. In other words, it takes competence and proficiency of thought to think through and learn the various components of the Old Testament message that results in a person’s truly knowing and following the truth. Cf. Hebrews 9:8ff.

The theologically mature person can also be said to be a morally depraved human being who really is on his way to reaching his goal (*telos*), i.e., the goal of eternal mercy and life in the Kingdom of God (cf. Hebrews 7:11, etc.).

¹³⁴ διὸ ἀφέντες τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον – It seems that for most modern Christians, the word “Christ” did not become relevant in biblical history until Jesus arrived on the scene so that they interpret Paul as speaking of Jesus and Christianity in this verse. However, the word “Christ” is simply the word Messiah, which was a relevant term meaning anointed one in Old Testament Israel regarding priests, kings, and prophets. Therefore, it makes more sense that Paul is not referring to the message of Jesus Christ *per se*, i.e., the message of Jesus as the Messiah, but to the explanation of the Messiah and eternal salvation in the Old Testament by which it becomes natural to conclude that Jesus is the Messiah and we are saved by grace. Paul would have been quite happy for his readers at least to embrace the beginning of the message of Jesus as the Messiah, but they were considering giving up belief in this message. Therefore, Paul is concerned about his readers’ leaving behind the basics of the message of the Messiah *as taught in the Old Testament* and moving on to a more mature understanding of the message as taught in the Old Testament. As a result, he brings together Psalm 2 and Psalm 100 in Hebrews 5:5,6 before he heads into a lengthy explanation in chapters 7-10. For Paul, the written message regarding the Messiah begins and ends in the Old Testament (since the New Testament did not yet exist), to which, of course, the Jews had access. While Paul had learned from Jesus what he had said about himself as the Messiah, even Jesus based his understanding of himself on the Old Testament. Cf. John 5:39, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me.” In other words, Jesus obtained his understanding of what it meant for him to be the Messiah from the Old Testament. And Paul is saying that his readers need to move on from a basic and erroneous *Judaistic* understanding of the Messiah derived from the Old Testament, i.e., that he is coming and makes relevant the basic concepts that Paul lists in vs. 1 & 2, to an accurate and fuller understanding that covers the extent of the concept of the Messiah as both king and priest. This latter understanding would then lead them to embrace the very human Jesus as the Messiah and count strictly on God’s grace.

¹³⁵ ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα φερόμεθα – Paul is exhorting his readers and even himself to head diligently in the direction of their goal, which, in the short term on earth, involves biblical, “adult” knowledge and behavior that come from fully embracing Jesus as the Messiah. In the long term, their goal is to move beyond a basic knowledge of Judaism from the Old Testament to a sound, Old Testament knowledge of the Messiah, which makes it clear that Jesus is both the final Son of God and the Melchizedek High Priest. In turn, this will lead to the final goal for a morally depraved human being of eternal mercy and life in the Kingdom of God.

¹³⁶ μὴ πάλιν θεμέλιον καταβαλλόμενοι μετανοίας ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων καὶ πίστεως ἐπὶ θεόν – Correctly, the Jews were aware of the Old Testament’s call for them and all human beings to appeal to God for mercy because of actions that are contaminated by a fundamental rebellion against God and that lead to a person’s deserving His eternal condemnation and death. Also, clearly and obviously, the Old Testament calls for the Jews and all others to believe in the one true God. But these are only foundational concepts on top of which a proper understanding of the Messiah as presented in the Old Testament should be built.

¹³⁷ βαπτισμῶν ἡ διδασκαλία – cf. Leviticus 14:8 regarding the cleansing of a leper, “The one to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes (וַיִּשְׁבֹּץ אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וְאֶת-בְּגָדֵי הַיּוֹשֵׁב עִמּוֹ) (καὶ πλυνεῖ ὁ καθαρῶς τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ) and shave off all his hair and bathe in water and be clean. Now afterward, he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days.”

¹³⁸ ἐπιθέσεώς τε χειρῶν – cf. Exodus 29:10, “Then you shall bring the bull before the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on the head of the bull (וַיִּשְׁכַּח אֶת-יָדָיו עַל-רֹאשׁ הַבָּקָר) (καὶ

ἐπιθήσουσιν Ααρων καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ μόσχου).” Cf. Leviticus 16:21, “Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat (וַיָּשֶׁתְּ אֶת־יָדָיו עַל־רֹאשׁ הַיָּעִבֹר [וַיְהִי־וְיָדָו וְיִשָּׁפֹט־תָּאֵן יְהוָה] (καὶ ἐπιθήσει Ααρων τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ χιμάρου τοῦ ζῶντος), and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness.”

¹³⁹ ἀναστασεῶς ὅτε νεκρῶν καὶ κρίματος αἰωνίου – cf. **Isaiah 26:29**, “Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.” All these things were what not only the Old Testament but also the Judaism of Paul’s day taught. And they were the focus of his readers’ persecutors. However, these things also fall short of a *complete* understanding of the Old Testament and *the Messiah* as Son of God and high priest, as Paul is showing.

¹⁴⁰ καὶ τοῦτο ποιήσομεν, ἕανπερ ἐπιτρέπη ὁ θεός – Paul states the biblical fact that his readers and he will reach maturity, i.e., their goal (*telos*), (6:1) only if this is part of God’s sovereign and eternal plan. This is to say that they will fully grasp the message of the Messiah with Jesus as the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek (5:10) if God in His grace allows, because ultimately it is up to Him as to whether or not any human being fully embraces the biblical truth and perseveres in belief throughout his life. All the NT authors continually emphasize this point. It is a definite check on human presumption in regard to anything good that occurs in our lives. Cf. John 16:7,8, “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (ὁ παράκλητος = the Persuader) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict (ἐλέγξει = convince) the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” Here Jesus states that it is God through His activity within the creation who causes both the apostles to be fully persuaded of what he has taught them and the world to become convinced of the apostolic message of God’s perspective on human moral depravity that will result in His condemnation if people do not embrace salvation through the Jewish Messiah.

¹⁴¹ ἀδύνατον... πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν – Humanly speaking, if a person remains entrenched in unbelief after grasping intellectually or at least giving intellectual assent to the messages of Jesus as Messiah/high priest, of the profundity of human moral depravity, and of the consequences of either eternal life or death that come from believing the message or rejecting it, it is hard to call someone back from this. In addition, in the instance of someone’s having initially responded positively to the NT message but then having changed their minds by rejecting the message, it becomes humanly impossible to renew them to embracing the message authentically. This is meant as a warning to Paul’s readers not to let themselves slip into unbelief and rebellion against God.

¹⁴² τοὺς ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας – Paul is referring to those who have been exposed enough to the NT message of Jesus the Messiah to make an informed decision to change from an erroneous and superficial Judaistic perspective on the Old Testament’s information regarding the Messiah and immortality to an accurate perspective that includes acknowledging the profundity of one’s moral depravity, belief in Jesus as the Messiah, and recognizing the significant consequences of eternal life or death that come from believing or rejecting it.

¹⁴³ γευσαμένους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου – Paul is referring to those who have been exposed, through Jesus the Son and through his apostles, to God’s gift of the message of Jesus’ Messiahship and salvation on account of his death and from the eternal consequences of moral depravity. The τε indicates that the three phrases that follow, “tasting the gift of heaven,” “becoming partners with the HS,” and “tasting the good message of God” are subordinate to and explanatory of the phrase “become enlightened.”

¹⁴⁴ καὶ μετόχους γεννηθέντας πνεύματος ἁγίου – Paul is referring to those who have matched intellectually the Holy Spirit’s (God’s) grasp of the NT gospel message, but they lack the proper inwardness to embrace the message for the sake of their eternal salvation.

¹⁴⁵ καὶ καλὸν γευσαμένους θεοῦ ῥῆμα δυνάμεις τε μέλλοντος αἰῶνος – Paul is referring to those who have intellectually come to grips with the NT message and the consequences of either eternal life or death, and, yet, have chosen to reject the message and incur God’s condemnation and eternal death. In this context, it would be because they are relying on the Mosaic Covenant and its animal sacrifices to provide them with eternal mercy. Cf. Matthew 12:32 regarding the phrase “coming age,” i.e., “Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come (οὔτε ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰῶνι οὔτε ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι).” Cf. Ephesians 1:21 also regarding the phrase “coming age,” i.e., “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come (οὐ μόνον ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι).” The τε indicates that the phrase “the authorized requirements of the coming age” is subordinate to and explanatory of the phrase “the good message of God.”

¹⁴⁶ καὶ παραπείσοντας – Paul identifies this as the real problem in a so-called believer’s life, even a Jew’s life. The person has all sorts of biblical knowledge and engages in all sorts of apparent biblical obedience to God. Yet, he has taken what he now grasps intellectually of the NT message and willfully chooses to reject it. Therefore, by deduction, neither his knowledge nor his obedience is actually biblical.

¹⁴⁷ ἀνασταυροῦντας ἑαυτοῖς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παραδειγματίζοντας – Anyone who intellectually grasps the message of the profundity of human moral depravity along with Jesus’ role as Messiah and high priest who has suffered death on the cross and then rejects this message is, in effect, hanging Jesus on the cross again. Like Jesus’ first opponents in the Jewish community and the Roman Empire who executed him by crucifixion, the person in Paul’s day

(and ours, too) who refuses to embrace Jesus as the Messiah might as well be hammering the nails into Jesus' hands and feet again. This person has basically given up the goal of eternal mercy and is settling for something far less than it. Thus, anyone who remains in this state of willful rejection of the NT message puts himself in a position whereby it is very difficult to believe the message again because of his intentionally hardening his heart.

¹⁴⁸ γῆ γὰρ ἡ πιοῦσα τὸν ἐπ' αὐτῆς ἐρχόμενον πολλακίς ὑετὸν καὶ τίκτουσα βοτάνην εὐθετον ἐκείνοις δι' οὓς καὶ γεωργεῖται, μεταλαμβάνει εὐλογίας ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ – Paul uses an agricultural metaphor to illustrate the point that he has made in vs. 1-6. Those who embrace with authentic belief that Jesus is both the Messiah and high priest of their existences as morally depraved human beings will continue to grow in their understanding of him, in their repentance, and in the firmness of their belief, with the result that God eventually, at the end of the present realm, praises them and grants them eternal life.

¹⁴⁹ ἐκφέρουσα δὲ ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους, ἀδόκιμος καὶ κατάρως ἐγγύς, ἧς τὸ τέλος εἰς καύσιν – Those who hear the NT message, grasp it intellectually, and then reject it, never to embrace it at all or again, will incur God's eternal condemnation and destruction. Cf. the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:1-23.

¹⁵⁰ Πεισισμεθα δὲ περὶ ὑμῶν, ἁγαπητοί, τὰ κρείσσονα καὶ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας, εἰ καὶ οὕτως λαλοῦμεν – To the degree that it is possible for a human being to evaluate the authenticity of the belief of another human being, Paul is convinced that his readers are genuine Christians, so that they will heed his exhortation to persevere in their belief in Jesus as the Messiah and High Priest, resulting in eternal salvation for them.

¹⁵¹ οὐ γὰρ ἄδικος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιλαθέσθαι τοῦ ἔργου ὑμῶν καὶ τῆς ἀγάπης ἧς ἐνεδείξασθε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, διακονήσαντες τοῖς ἀγίοις καὶ διακονοῦντες – Genuine, inwardly sourced love of fellow believers is intimately tied to a mature knowledge of the message of the Messiah, and Paul has become convinced of the authenticity of the belief of his Jewish readers by virtue of their mutual care and concern since the time of their initially believing the gospel. Thus, he is speaking of a salvation by works of sorts, in the sense that love and care for fellow Christians demonstrate authentic inwardness and belief in Jesus as the Messiah, both of which result in eternal life (cf. Hebrews 10:32-34; 1 John). In turn, Paul is implying that their genuine love for one another should lead to their accepting his exhortation to believe what he is teaching them in this letter.

¹⁵² ἐπιθυμοῦμεν δὲ ἕκαστον ὑμῶν τὴν αὐτὴν ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδὴν πρὸς τὴν πληροφῶριαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἄχρι τέλους – Paul is exhorting these discouraged believers to engage now in the same eager diligence of serving and caring for their fellow Christians as they did in the past. They probably have become reluctant to do so because of the intensity of the persecution that they are experiencing. It keeps increasing and has made them less enthusiastic about Christianity and exposing themselves to more persecution as a result of helping their fellow Christians. But Paul is emphatic. It is only by renewing their enthusiasm for belief and serving that they will receive eternal life as promised by the NT message.

¹⁵³ πρὸς τὴν πληροφῶριαν τῆς ἐλπίδος – Paul is saying that their diligent and eager serving of their fellow Christians to the end of their lives should and will occur as a consequence of their embracing and being completely confident in the NT message that proclaims the inviolability of God's promise to grant eternal salvation to authentic believers (cf. Hebrews 10:22). Counting on God's promise and His faithfulness is the only way to stay motivated to obey Him in the midst of pain and suffering. Thus, along with their genuine love should be a confident hope of eternal mercy that comes from understanding exactly what Jesus the Messiah is about such he has reached his goal and can be their high priest. Likewise, they will reach their goal through his intervention before God at the final judgment.

¹⁵⁴ ἵνα μὴ νοθροὶ γένησθε – Paul is hoping that his readers consider carefully God's promise of eternal life to those who believe all the truth to which He exposes them, so that they can then respond immediately and positively to the extensive message of the Messiah as king and priest that he is presenting them.

¹⁵⁵ μιμηταὶ δὲ τῶν διὰ πίστεως καὶ μακροθυμίας κληρονομοῦντων τὰς ἐπαγγελίας – Paul wants his readers to act like all those who, since Abraham, received the fulfillment of these promises by virtue of their patient, persevering belief that authentically mimicked Abraham's. Abraham initially received the promises from God (especially the promise of eternal life), and God said that those who are like Abraham in terms of their belief will also obtain the fulfillment of these promises. Paul also states that it takes great patience to wait for God to finish giving them eternal life, especially in the face of all the suffering on earth that Christians are prone to experience in association with their Messiah, who also suffered greatly.

¹⁵⁶ Τῷ γὰρ Ἀβραάμ ἐπαγγελιάμενος ὁ θεός, ἐπεὶ κατ' οὐδενὸς εἶχεν μείζονος ὁμόσαι, ὥμοσεν καθ' ἑαυτοῦ – “For” is not the best way to translate γὰρ as Paul goes on to make the point of why it is that receiving the same promises that God gave to Abraham has such tremendous benefit for those who have authentic belief and patience—because God actually had future believers in mind when He swore an oath to Abraham in order to guarantee the certainty of His fulfilling His promises to him and them. The process of God's making His promise(s) to Abraham began much earlier in his life when God called Abraham to leave Ur and travel to Canaan (cf. Genesis 11 & 12). But God repeated and “made” the promise in Genesis 22 when He tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice Isaac and then swore an oath to Abraham in order to “guarantee” the promise with even future believers in mind. Cf. Genesis 22:15-18, “Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, ‘By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD (יהוה אלהים) (לֵאמֹר, אֲנִי עָשִׂיתָ) (λέγων κατ' ἑμαυτοῦ ὡμοσα, λέγει κύριος), because you have done this thing (הַיָּהוּה אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי עָשִׂיתָ) (ὁὐ εἶνεκεν ἐποίησας τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο) and have not withheld your son, your only son,

indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice (אֱלֹהִים בְּרַבְרָבָה אֶתְּנֶנְךָ וְאֶתְּנֶנְךָ) (ἀνθ' ὧν ὑπήκουσας τῆς ἐμῆς φωνῆς).”

¹⁵⁷ ‘εἰ μὴν’ εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ σε – If we look at the whole statement that God makes to Abraham, we see that He states this promise *after* He has sworn His oath – Gen. 22:15 “Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, 22:16 and said, ‘By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, 22:17 indeed I will greatly bless you (ἢ μὴν εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω σε καὶ πληθύνων πληθυνῶ τὸ σπέρμα σου), and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. 22:18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” Therefore, God backs up His promise with the oath, thus making the promise doubly certain, even though, theologically, it is completely unnecessary for God to do so. His promise is good enough to ensure His fulfilling it.

¹⁵⁸ καὶ οὕτως μακροθυμίας ἐπέτυχεν τῆς ἐπαγγελίας – Paul makes a parenthetical statement to the effect that Abraham’s patient belief in God’s promises, including his being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, resulted in his obtaining the fulfillment of His promises to him sometime after God had sworn the oath and made the promise again. Of course, God’s fulfillment of the promise of eternal life occurred long after this whole event, i.e., once Abraham had died, and, perhaps, even after the final judgment that is still to come, depending upon exactly how the process of dying, being eternally forgiven, and entering into the Kingdom of God actually occurs.

¹⁵⁹ ἄνθρωποι ἄρα κατὰ τοῦ μείζονος ὁμνύουσιν καὶ πάσης αὐτοῖς ἀντιλογίας πέρας εἰς βεβαίωσιν ὁ ὄρκος – Paul comments that there exists a cultural norm within both a pagan society and Judaism of swearing to the gods (God) when wanting to back up a statement that a person makes. Therefore, if God swears an oath regarding promises that He has already made, it is a huge deal, absolutely eliminating any question of God’s fulfilling His promises (as if there were any question).

¹⁶⁰ ἐν ᾧ ἰσχυρότερον βουλόμενος ὁ θεὸς ἐπιδειξάτω τοῖς κληρονόμοις τῆς ἐπαγγελίας τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς αὐτοῦ ἐμεσίτευσεν ὄρκω – The heirs of the promise are those who qualify for the fulfillment of the promise, i.e., those who authentically mimic Abraham’s belief, both within the Jewish community, because they themselves are fulfillments of the promise that Abraham would have many descendants, and within the Gentile community, because they are individual fulfillments of the the promise that through him all the families of the earth would be blessed with eternal life.

Paul is saying that God’s purpose for responding to Abraham’s belief by swearing an oath regarding His promises was for the believing “descendants” of Abraham (both Jews and Gentiles), that they may understand even better and feel just that much more assured of the certainty of God’s fulfilling His promises. Thus, they, too, can count on them with a confidence equal to that of Abraham’s. God, therefore, will definitely fulfill His promises for Paul’s readers just as He fulfilled them for Abraham. What we have then is this, after first making the promises to Abraham in Genesis 12 and confirming them through the covenant ceremony in Genesis 15, God swore an oath in Genesis 22 in the midst of repeating the promise (cf. v. 17) in order to “guarantee” that He would fulfill His promises. Only the first action on God’s part, the making of the promises in Genesis 12, was necessary to ensure that He would fulfill these promises. However, God made it doubly clear that He would do so via the promise of Genesis 12 and the oath in Genesis 22, not to mention the significance of the covenant ceremony in Genesis 15. This explanation of the oath to Abraham allows Paul to refer to this same concept in 7:20-22 with respect to the Messiah himself.

¹⁶¹ ἵνα διὰ δύο πραγμάτων ἀμεταθέτων, ἐν οἷς ἀδύνατον ψεύσασθαι ὁ θεός, ἰσχυρὰν παράκλησιν ἔχωμεν οἱ καταφυγόντες κρατῆσαι τῆς προκειμένης ἐλπίδος – Paul is commenting on the purpose for which God both made a promise to Abraham about eternal life and swore an oath to him. It was so that anyone in the future who wanted to escape God’s eternal condemnation and found out about these two events would have just that much more certainty in their belief that He was going to fulfill His promises that would include them as authentic believers. Understandably, therefore, the only way that it makes sense for morally depraved human beings to reach out metaphorically and seize the message of eternal life is if it is presented to them from God on the basis of His guaranteed faithfulness to His promises. Through the means of the Bible, we know that God has made His faithfulness clear by not only making promises but also swearing an oath to fulfill them. This message from God is now repeated and clarified through the Son, Jesus the Messiah.

¹⁶² ἦν ὡς ἄγκυραν ἔχομεν τῆς ψυχῆς ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ βεβαίαν καὶ εἰσερχομένην εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος – The absolute, guaranteed certainty of God’s mercy through His promises/oath anchors people to this mercy through their persevering belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Also, the final judgment will be a kind of Holy of Holies, where human beings will somehow appear before God and receive either complete mercy or condemnation. Through Jesus’ suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension, he precedes believers into the courtroom and God’s presence to plead for mercy on their behalf. The anchored hope that they have, i.e., the guaranteed fulfillment of God’s promise of eternal life for them, also guarantees God’s eternal mercy on their behalf, because their high priest goes into God’s presence to intervene on their behalf for all eternity (cf. the next verse) (cf. Leviticus 16; Hebrews 8-10).

¹⁶³ ὅπου πρόδρομος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν εἰσήλθεν Ἰησοῦς κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα – Jesus precedes believers into the courtroom of the final judgment and into the eternal Kingdom of God. While he does,

he also assuredly appeals to the Father for mercy on their behalf. Thus, Paul makes Jesus a theological part of God’s “oath” to Abraham and the guarantee that God was demonstrating to “the heirs of the promise.” In effect, God guaranteed (to Abraham) that Jesus would come along as the Messiah in order to appeal to Him for mercy on believers’ behalf. Having entered inside the curtain of the heavenly and eternal temple, so to speak, Jesus appeals for the sake of repentant sinners for God’s mercy at the final judgment (cf. Hebrews 9:3; 10:20). Thus, by virtue of both the Abrahamic promise/oath/guarantee and Jesus’ death to become a high priest, morally depraved human beings can say that their “hope” of eternal life is as certain as God’ existence, because the eternal high priest, Jesus, has qualified to intervene for them. Thus, they receive God’s mercy into the next and final age, while Paul will go on to show that Levitical priests cannot bring about this result. Indeed, the existence of Jesus as the Messiah and high priest within the story of the creation is God’s working out His promises and oath to Abraham.

In this way, Paul is tying the Messiah’s death and role for which he qualified to Abraham and God’s promise to him of eternal life. By implication, if Paul’s Jewish readers want to be authentic descendants of Abraham, they must embrace Jesus as their Messiah and high priest.

¹⁶⁴ Οὗτος γὰρ ὁ Μελχισέδεκ, βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ, ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου – cf. Genesis 14:18, כֹּהֵן לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן וְהוּא אֲבִימֶלֶךְ צִדְקָה שֶׁלֹּא הוּא אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְחָם וְיִין וְהוּא אֲבִימֶלֶךְ צִדְקָה (LXX – καὶ Μελχισέδεκ βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ ἐξήνεγκεν ἄρτους καὶ οἶνον ἦν δὲ ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου). Now that Paul has brought up the issue of God’s promise to Abraham and Abraham’s patience in waiting for it, he finds it appropriate to compare Melchizedek to Abraham, because these two men figure so prominently in understanding the Messiah as King as High Priest. Paul quotes the LXX exactly. This man Melchizedek is both king and priest, indeed king of a city whose name is Shalom (שָׁלוֹם) and a priest of El Elyon (אֵל עֶלְיוֹן), i.e., “God/god Most High.” Even though El Elyon could refer to Yahweh, the God of the Jews, the more likely possibility is that Melchizedek is the priest of the greatest god of the Canaanite pantheon, whom he worships. Cf. NIDOTTE, pg. 395, “El is a common, generic Sem. appellative for the deity. El is also the name of the high god in some cultures, as evidenced in the Ugaritic texts (see *TDOT* 1:242–53). El ‘is the primordial father of gods and men, sometimes stern, often compassionate, always wise in judgment’ (253). Some of the El compounds...also have West Sem. counterparts; they are probably to be understood as local manifestations of El. The use of El Elyon by Melchizedek in Gen 14:18–19 may be one such reference.”

Another possibility, as I have mentioned but that would require more data in the text in order to verify it, is that Melchizedek actually worships Abraham’s God (אֵל עֶלְיוֹן), Yahweh, the one true God (cf. Genesis 14:19-22).

Therefore, this would be a reference to Melchizedek’s previous conversion at some point to worshipping Abraham’s God instead of the Canaanite pantheon and is similar to Rahab’s conversion to worshipping the God of the Israelites after hearing about His defeating their enemies. However, Paul’s point can be made even if Melchizedek worships only the chief pagan god, and, to me, this seems more likely in the light of the religious culture in Canaan at the time around 2000 B.C. Therefore, “Priest of God Most High” was a common title throughout the ANE for those men who functioned as intermediaries between the pantheon and the people, so that this title implied that there was a chief god, and it was to him that the priest and the people owed the greatest allegiance.

¹⁶⁵ ὁ ἑὸς συναντήσας Ἀβραάμ ὑποστρέφοντι ἀπὸ τῆς κοπῆς τῶν βασιλείων ἑ καὶ εὐλογήσας αὐτόν – cf. Genesis 14:19,20, “He blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Owner of heaven and earth’ (שֶׁנֶאֱמַר בְּרַחֲמֵי אֱלֹהֵי עֶלְיוֹן קִנְיָהוּ אַבְרָם תֹּוֹתָן וְהוּא אֲבִימֶלֶךְ צִדְקָה) (LXX – καὶ ἠϋλόγησεν τὸν Ἀβραμ καὶ εἶπεν Εὐλογημένος Ἀβραμ τῷ θεῷ τῷ ὑψίστῳ, ὃς ἔκτισεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν).” In the ANE, the gods were considered to own the land on which their worshipers lived, so that, even when their worshipers fought against another group of people who invaded their land, the most important part of the battle, which they believed actually determined the outcome on earth, took place between their gods in the heavens. In this case, Melchizedek has recognized the greatness of Abraham’s God by calling him “Owner/Creator (LXX) of heaven and earth” and not just owner/creator of a particular land on the earth. Melchizedek, in true ANE fashion, also recognized the favor that Abraham’s God was showing him by defeating his enemies, the kings from whom Abraham had just rescued Lot in Genesis 14. If Melchizedek was not a worshiper of Abraham’s God alone, then he was at least acknowledging the unique role of Abraham’s God as sole maker of the entire created reality. Exactly how he was fitting this into his pagan worldview we do not know, but the fact remains that Melchizedek was making an important international, diplomatic gesture by bringing Abraham a meal and “blessing” him.

¹⁶⁶ ὃ καὶ δεκάτην ἀπὸ πάντων ἐμέρισεν Ἀβραάμ – cf. Genesis 14:20b, וַיִּתֵּן אֵל עֶלְיוֹן מִנְעֻשָׁר מִכָּל לֶחֶם וְיִין וְהוּא אֲבִימֶלֶךְ צִדְקָה (LXX – καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ δεκάτην ἀπὸ πάντων). Abraham’s giving a tenth of his spoils to Melchizedek is the first mention of the concept of tithing in the Old Testament, probably demonstrating that it was a common practice in the ANE prior to God’s using it within the Mosaic Covenant. What exactly was Abraham communicating to this “priest of god most high?” First, if we take into account that Melchizedek referred to Abraham’s God as אֵל עֶלְיוֹן (LXX – ὃς ἔκτισεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν), the One who has created the cosmos, then it seems that Melchizedek acknowledges an aspect of the greatness of Abraham’s God, even if he is still worshipping the chief Canaanite god. Therefore, Abraham is willing to show ANE deference towards Melchizedek and even present to him a gift deserving of a priest. Melchizedek brings

a meal to Abraham and praises his god, i.e., THE God, and Abraham brings a tenth of the spoils to finish the process of the demonstration of mutual respect for one another vis-à-vis the ANE customs. For Abraham to be the progenitor of the chosen people of God certainly makes him a great man. For Melchizedek, a priest who is not from the line of Abraham and Levi, to respect the progenitor of the chosen people of God allows David in Psalm 110 to use him as an example of greatness, even eternal greatness (see below).

¹⁶⁷ πρῶτον μὲν ἐρμηνεύομενος βασιλεὺς δικαιοσύνης – Melchizedek’s name (מֶלְכִּי־צֶדֶק) is made up of two Hebrew words, *melek* (מֶלֶךְ) and *tzedek* (צְדָקָה), meaning king and righteousness/justification respectively. Abraham would have recognized the significance of this, which probably contributed to his ascribing greatness to Melchizedek.

¹⁶⁸ ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ, ὁ ἐστὶν βασιλεὺς εἰρήνης – Besides Melchizedek’s name meaning “King of Righteousness/Justification,” he was also the king of a city named Salem (שָׁלֵם), which is similar to the Hebrew word Shalom (שָׁלוֹם). Thus, this man, coincidentally, covered the bases so to speak of two of the most important concepts in the Bible, forgiveness and life that is characterized as whole and good. As a result, we can assume that Abraham made these connections, and they, too, helped him to respect Melchizedek by offering him a diplomatic gesture of tithing in return for the meal that he served him.

¹⁶⁹ ἀπάτωρ ἀμήτωρ ἀγενεαλόγητος, μήτε ἀρχὴν ἡμερῶν μήτε ζωῆς τέλος ἔχων – Genesis 14:17-20 does not actually say this. Therefore, Paul is using these ideas *literarily* (notice, not *literally*). In other words, he is saying that, from the literary narrative of Genesis 14:17-20, we know very little about this man Melchizedek. For example, we do not know who his father was, who his mother was, etc. He merely appears on the scene and then immediately disappears, never to be heard of again—until David mentions his priestly order in Psalm 110, which becomes hugely important. Thus, David’s reference to Melchizedek (and now Paul’s too) had nothing to do with his actual origin or destiny. It had to do only with his name, title, and role as a Canaanite king and priest of El Elyon. Therefore, as far as we know, there was nothing in Melchizedek’s family lineage that qualified him to be a priest, even a priest of Yahweh, especially because he was not from the Israelite tribe of Levi, which God chose 500 years later as the one and only group who could supply priests to the nation of Israel under the Mosaic Covenant. Paul will go on to show that, similarly, there is nothing in Jesus’ family lineage that qualifies him to be a priest of the nation of Israel, especially under the Mosaic Covenant. Jesus’ priesthood is entirely dependent on **God’s swearing an oath through David in Psalm 110:4** that results in his becoming one. It is this fact that sets Jesus apart from all other priests who could possibly affect the Jews’ (AND the Gentiles’) relationship with Yahweh.

¹⁷⁰ ἀφωμοιωμένος δὲ τῷ υἱῷ τοῦ θεοῦ – The fact that David *likens* Melchizedek to his “Lord,” the Messiah, in Psalm 110 becomes the foundation for Paul’s argument that the final Davidic king and, therefore, Jesus, is both a king and a priest. This is what the Jews of Paul’s day were missing in their study of the Old Testament regarding the Messiah and why Paul is going through this in such detail. Notice that Paul does not say that Melchizedek *was* the Son of God. In other words, Melchizedek was not Jesus, in spite of many people trying to make him such by misinterpreting this passage. Thus, David in Psalm 110 was also not claiming that his “Lord” was Melchizedek. Melchizedek was an ANE Canaanite priest, and the manner in which Genesis 14 presents him, as someone about whom we know only the barest of details from the passage, makes it possible for David to liken him to his “Lord,” i.e., to comment on a similarity between him and his “Lord,” who is eventually revealed in biblical history as Jesus of Nazareth.

¹⁷¹ μένει ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸ διηνεκές – For all time, again *literarily* (not *literally*) speaking, Melchizedek’s genre of priesthood does not end as the Levitical priesthood does, **because information about his death is left out of the story in Genesis 14** (cf. Hebrews 10:1,12,14), which allows David to write his priesthood as eternal for his own literary purposes in Psalm 110:4. Thus, Paul can say that Jesus becomes a person *like* him, a king of shalom and a priest of the only God Most High, because he is carrying on the eternal priestly order of Melchizedek—so to speak. To put it another way, Melchizedek, even though he died, “remains a priest into perpetuity” because his *priesthood* remains into perpetuity, indeed into eternity—through the eternal existence of Jesus as Messiah and High Priest. It would be like saying that Aaron, the first high priest of Israel, “remains a priest” until God ends the Levitical priesthood when He brings the present realm to a conclusion and creates the new Kingdom of God. Just as the word Aaron stands for all the Aaronic priests down through time, so also Melchizedek stands for all the Melchizedekan priests down through time and into eternity by virtue of what is said in Psalm 110. However, as far as David and Paul are concerned, there were and are only two Melchizedekan priests—Melchizedek and Jesus. Therefore, Jesus, and only Jesus, will carry on the Melchizedekan order into eternity.

¹⁷² θεωρεῖτε δὲ πηλίκος οὖτος, ᾧ [καὶ] δεκάτην Ἀβραάμ ἔδωκεν ἐκ τῶν ἀκροθινίων ὁ πατριάρχης – If Abraham is important to the Jews, think about how important Melchizedek is, because he was the first of the priesthood of the “order of Melchizedek,” of which Jesus is the most important and final member as our high priest. We can think of it this way. If we have a choice between a priest who is available to appeal to God for His mercy on our behalf or Abraham as the progenitor of the Jews, we would obviously rather have the priest and not Abraham. In line with this, the mere fact that the receiver of God’s temporal and eternal promises, Abraham, tithed to Melchizedek, would indicate that Abraham certainly considered him important in accordance with ANE customs. Therefore, Abraham simply followed ANE protocol, and the two men granted deference to one another in an historically and, eventually, theologically significant manner—because of David’s use of Melchizedek in Psalm 110. When Paul refers to David’s

use of Melchizedek in Psalm 110:4 whereby he associates him with the person who will ultimately fulfill the Davidic Covenant and be David's "Lord" (cf. Hebrews 7:8,9), Paul latches onto this and uses it as part of his argument for why his Jewish Christian readers, who are thinking of giving up their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, *should not do so for the sake of their own eternal destinies*. Thus, through mainly David's comments and also Abraham's actions, Melchizedek becomes extraordinarily important in cosmic history as the one in whose footsteps and priestly order the Messiah as our High Priest follows.

¹⁷³ καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν Λευὶ τὴν ἱερατείαν λαμβάνοντες ἐντολὴν ἔχουσιν ἀποδεκατοῦν τὸν λαὸν κατὰ τὸν νόμον. τοῦτ' ἔστιν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτῶν, καίπερ ἐξεληλυθότας ἐκ τῆς ὀσφύος Ἀβραάμ – The Levitical priests received their assignment from God under the Mosaic Covenant to be priests who mediate between the Jews and God, which the non-believing Jews of Paul's day are insisting should be the focus of their relationship with God, rather than Jesus as the Messiah. Thus, their interpretation of Psalm 110 did not lead them to believe, for example, that the Son of God and king of Israel of Psalm 2 is the same person as the "priest...according to the order of Melchizedek" of Psalm 110. Nor did they ascertain the significance of the "priest...according to the order of Melchizedek" in Psalm 110. They had not grasped the fact that this man was their *eternal* priest instead of the Levitical priests, especially in the light of the facts that Abraham tithed to Melchizedek, as the Israelites were supposed to do to the Levites, and that Melchizedek blessed Abraham, just as the Levites blessed the Israelites (cf. Numbers 23-26, "Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace.'") Paul is, therefore, making the point that certain descendants of Abraham are to be viewed as "more important" than other descendants of Abraham in spite of the fact that they are all descended from Abraham. However, Paul will go on to say that these more important descendants of Abraham, the Levites, *are not as important as Melchizedek* (a non-Israelite) because of what David writes about him. By extrapolation, the Levites are not as important as Jesus who is the ultimate "High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek," the concept which Paul is exploiting in his argument here. Cf. Leviticus 27:33-34; Deuteronomy 12,14,26; Numbers 18:20-32 regarding the commandment for the Israelites to tithe.

¹⁷⁴ ὁ δὲ μὴ γενεαλογούμενος ἐξ αὐτῶν δεδεκάτωκεν Ἵ Ἀβραάμ καὶ τὸν ἔχοντα τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἔεὐλόγηκεν – A key element in the analogy between Melchizedek and Jesus is that, just as Melchizedek is not from the line of Levi, neither is Jesus, who is of the tribe of Judah (cf. Hebrews 7:13,14). In addition, Melchizedek was "paid" and honored by Abraham for his being a high priest of El Elyon, "god Most High." Thus, in a sense, Abraham recognized Melchizedek as a great person, who was also exercising his responsibility as a king. This greatness of Melchizedek was even in light of the fact that it was Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 to whom God had promised land, descendants, being a great nation, eternal life, and being the location of eternal salvation for the Gentiles, *including for Melchizedek himself*. Yet, it was Melchizedek to whom Abraham tithed (not the other way around), and it was Melchizedek who blessed Abraham (not the other way around).

¹⁷⁵ χωρὶς δὲ πάσης ἀντιλογίας τὸ ἔλαττον ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος εὐλογεῖται – Paul points out that someone whose genealogy did not require, on the basis of God's commandments such as those in the Mosaic Covenant regarding the Levites, that he collect a tithe from Abraham and, by extrapolation, from the Levites, did actually do so. In addition, by virtue of David's comment about Melchizedek in Psalm 110, this latter person theologically becomes more important than Abraham, a man of promise and blessing from God. All this data, put together as Paul is doing so, would be quite shocking to the Jews who are currently rejecting Jesus as the Messiah and persecuting the Jews who have believed in him. Nevertheless, all this data is exactly what the Bible is teaching and is meant to lead the Jews to see the *relative* importance of the Levitical priests in the light of the *absolute* importance of David's Psalm 110 priest.

¹⁷⁶ καὶ ὁδε μὲν δεκάτας ἀποθνήσκοντες ἄνθρωποι λαμβάνουσιν, ἐκεῖ δὲ μαρτυρούμενος ὅτι ζῆ καὶ ὡς ἔπος εἶπεν – The Levitical priests of Paul's day are rebels against God who die, while, as Psalm 110:4 says, and therefore *literarily* speaking, Melchizedek lives on, which is to say that his priestly order lives on. In other words, David causes Melchizedek to "live on" by *writing about* him in his explanation of his "Lord," who ends up being Jesus of Nazareth, the *eternal* priest, who, like Melchizedek, is both priest and king.

¹⁷⁷ δι' Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰ Λευὶ ὁ δεκάτας λαμβάνων δεδεκάτῳται ἔτι γὰρ ἐν τῇ ὀσφύϊ τοῦ πατρὸς ἦν ὅτε συνήνητησεν αὐτῷ Ἵ Μελχισέδεκ – Thus, in a sense that relativizes the significance of the Levitical priesthood, Levi and his priestly descendants acknowledged that Melchizedek was greater in importance than they are, because, at the time of Melchizedek's meeting with Abraham, he was greater than Abraham, Levi's great-grandfather (cf. Hebrews 7:7). As a result, if given the opportunity, the Levites would actually defer to Melchizedek, and, by extrapolation, defer to Jesus for him to intervene before God *on their behalf for eternal salvation*. Clearly, God has set up a greater and more important priesthood than that of the Levitical. In David's language of Psalm 110:4, it is the priesthood of Melchizedek.

¹⁷⁸ οὖν – On the basis of the fact that even the Levitical priests would recognize the superiority of Melchizedek and his priesthood...

¹⁷⁹ εἰ μὲν οὖν τελείωσις διὰ τῆς Λευιτικῆς ἱερωσύνης ὤῃν – cf. Hebrews 5:9, "and having been brought to the end of his goal (*telos*) (καὶ τελειωθείς), he became the ground of eternal salvation to all those who obey him." Also cf. **James 1:4** And let endurance have *its* perfect result (ἔργον τέλειον = goal completing effect (?)), so that you may be perfect and complete (τέλειοι καὶ ὀλόκληροι = those who complete their goal and reach their destiny), lacking in nothing.

If the first clause of this verse in Hebrews is objective in its sense, then it is referring to the Mosaic Covenant's ability to provide complete and eternal forgiveness and salvation for the Jewish believer. If subjective, then it is referring to the Jew's being able to ascertain that he is completely forgiven via the Levitical priests' mediation with the sacrifice of animals, therefore giving the worshiping Jew complete confidence that he will receive God's eternal mercy. As Paul will go on to argue, the meaning is the latter, because the multiple and continuous sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant were intended by God to communicate to the Jewish worshiper within the nation of Israel that he was *not* forgiven for the sake of eternal life by means of them. Instead, all of the Jew's obedience to the Mosaic Covenant, including his bringing his offerings and sacrifices to the Levitical priests to complete, was simply to qualify him as a *bona fide* member of the nation of Israel. Paul will go on to say in v. 19 that the Messiah/Priest's responsibility was "the bringing in of a better hope," i.e., a better means to giving the Jewish believer confidence that he can obtain complete and eternal forgiveness at the final judgment.

Thus, the main point of chapters 9 & 10 will be that the daily, annual, and ongoing animal sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant could never provide the worshiper with *complete* confidence in his being *completely and eternally* forgiven by God. Otherwise, why not just stop sacrificing the animals and rest in one's complete and eternal forgiveness, or think that the animal sacrifices will actually continue into eternity and provide the basis for eternal forgiveness this way? Indeed, Paul is arguing that a careful exegesis of Psalm 110, the key passage for Paul, leads the Jew to understand differently in regard to God's *eternal* mercy—that it is David's Lord who provides this and not the animal sacrifices, which for any Jew who is wholly focused on the Mosaic Covenant would be a shocking revelation!

¹⁸⁰ ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῆς ἑνενομοθέτηται – This is a parenthetical statement by Paul to remind his Jewish readers that the main reason for God's giving the Mosaic Covenant to the nation of Israel was to set up the Levitical priesthood—as an insufficient forerunner of the sufficient "Melchizedek" priesthood that Jesus would fulfill for the sake of morally depraved human beings' being granted *eternal* mercy (cf. Numbers 8:5-26). The Levitical sacrifices and offerings were merely part of the process of a Jew's demonstrating that he desired to participate authentically in the society of the chosen people of God, the nation of Israel. But as goes the Levitical priesthood, so goes the Mosaic Covenant and vice versa. If the Levitical priesthood has limited importance and effectiveness, then so does the Mosaic Covenant.

¹⁸¹ τίς ἔτι χρεῖα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ ἕτερον ἀνίστασθαι ἱερέα καὶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Ἀαρὼν λέγεσθαι: – Here is Paul's main point. The mere fact that the OT explicitly states that there is another priesthood, indeed one where *the high priest is also David's Lord* (cf. Psalm 110:1,4), indicates that the Mosaic Covenant, along with the Levitical priesthood, is not the means by which even the Jews can attain their goal (*telos*) of *eternal* mercy and life. In Psalm 110:4, David chose to associate and align the coming Messiah with Melchizedek, thus identifying the need for his "Lord" also to be his high priest who is NOT a Levitical high priest, and, by inference, must be a priest of another covenant besides the Mosaic Covenant, i.e., of the New Covenant as Paul goes on to explain. It is these inferences that a careful exegete of the whole OT is supposed to draw.

¹⁸² μετατιθεμένης γὰρ τῆς ἱεροσύνης ἐξ ἀνάγκης καὶ νόμου μετὰθεσις γίνεται – Paul has just said in v. 11 that the basis for the giving of the Mosaic Covenant was the Levitical priesthood (and, therefore, the effect that this priesthood could have on appealing to God for mercy, which was minimal and only intended to allow the Jew to be a member in good standing of the nation of Israel). Consequently, if another priesthood is instituted, as David has done in Psalm 110:4, then this requires a change from the Mosaic Covenant to *another* covenant, i.e., the New Covenant (cf. Hebrews 8-10). Probably, the readers' persecutors are claiming that the Mosaic Covenant is the perpetual focus of any Jew's relationship with God. Paul is arguing that the Bible teaches a change in covenants to the New Covenant that is completely separate from the Mosaic Covenant in its priesthood and that the Messiah is the High Priest of this latter covenant (cf. the next verses). It is the *new* high priest who must become the perpetual focus of any Jew's (or Gentile's) relationship with God with respect to being a person who qualifies for *eternal* mercy and citizenship in the Kingdom of God, and not just citizenship in the nation of Israel.

¹⁸³ ἐφ' ὃν γὰρ λέγεται ταῦτα, φυλῆς ἐτέρας ἠμετέσχηκεν. ἀφ' ἧς οὐδεὶς προσέσχηκεν τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ – The person about whom David speaks in Psalm 110 is clearly from another tribe besides Levi. Indeed, he must be from the tribe of Judah, because David, who is from the tribe of Judah, is calling him Lord and, therefore, referring to the person who will be the final King and fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, which involves only his descendants and, therefore, members of the tribe of Judah.

¹⁸⁴ πρόδηλον γὰρ ὅτι ἐξ Ἰουδα ἀνατέταλκεν ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν ἰ, εἰς ἣν φυλὴν ἑπεὶ ἱερέων οὐδὲν Μωϋσῆς ἐλάλησεν – Because Paul understands that it is vital to follow David in his line of reasoning, he calls this person of Psalm 110 "our Lord," thus agreeing with David about the authority that this person will exercise over all Jews of authentic belief (and, therefore, by extrapolation, all Gentiles of authentic belief). In addition, it is clear from the Mosaic Covenant that it prescribes only Levites to perform the function of priest. Thus, it should be obvious that another Covenant is necessary in order to accommodate this new priest who is from the tribe of Judah.

¹⁸⁵ καὶ περισσώτερον ἔτι κατάδηλόν ἐστιν, εἰ κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα Μελχισέδεκ ἀνίσταται ἱερεὺς ἕτερος – Two factors indicate the necessity for a change in covenant. 1) David's Lord is from the tribe of Judah and not from the tribe of Levi. 2) David has inerrantly declared that his Lord is a priest, but a priest of a different order from the Levitical. Indeed, David's Lord is a priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," who himself was a king and priest and not a Levite. Thus, the manner in which this different priest, i.e., Jesus, has arisen according to the order of Melchizedek is

by David's saying so in Psalm 110, including the fact that "Yahweh has sworn and will not change His mind" that David's Lord is this priest "according to the order of Melchizedek."

¹⁸⁶ ὅς οὐ κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης γέγονεν ἀλλὰ κατὰ δύναμιν ζωῆς ἀκαταλύτου – The Levitical priests qualified one after the other under the Mosaic Covenant to perform their function on the basis of their physical lineage, i.e., they were all from the same tribe. The priest, who is David's Lord in Psalm 110:4, qualifies for his function on the basis of God's having sworn an oath in Psalm 110 that he will exist forever. In other words, a portion of the inerrant truth from God, written by David, is that which causes the Davidic King to take on the additional responsibility of priest "according to the order of Melchizedek." This new priest from the tribe of Judah has the proper credentials, those of an indestructible nature in the eternal truth of God, that he will be permanent in the eternal Kingdom of God and a priest who is adequate to mediate on behalf of moral rebels for the sake their receiving God's *eternal* mercy.

¹⁸⁷ μαρτυρεῖται γὰρ ὅτι σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ (LXX – σὺ εἰ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισέδεκ) – Paul's emphasis here in his quote from Psalm 110:4b is the phrase "into the age (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα)." Within the priesthood of Jesus as intermediary at the final judgment, there is the potential for immortal life in the age of the eternal Kingdom of God. The Levitical priests can act as intermediaries within only the present, mortal realm. If God requires a priest to intervene at the eternal judgment for the sake of the future, immortal realm, and He does, then another kind of priest will have to come along. Jesus is this priest, according to the order of the king/priest Melchizedek. This inerrant and oathlike statement by God through David becomes the set of credentials that Jesus needs in order to acquire an indestructible life of intercessor and king on behalf of morally depraved human beings.

¹⁸⁸ ἀθέτησις ὁ μὲν γὰρ γίνεται προαγοῦσης ἐντολῆς διὰ τὸ αὐτῆς ἀσθενὲς καὶ ἀνωφελές – The Mosaic Covenant cannot provide the worshiper with either his goal of God's complete and eternal mercy or subjective, complete confidence that God has forgiven him. Consequently, its place in the life of a Jew is relativized by the Mosaic Covenant itself and must never be allowed to dominate the Jew's thoughts, life, and pursuits in comparison to the New Covenant. God Himself always intended to move on from the Mosaic Covenant to the New Covenant, and so must the Jews. Therefore, the former covenant should not figure into a Jewish worshiper's thinking when it comes to the issue of *eternal* life, only to participating well in the society of the Jews. Actually, it never should have and did not for those like David who understood the importance of both inwardness and God's providing mercy apart from continual animal sacrifices. Nevertheless, the Mosaic Covenant still retains a place of importance in the present, temporal realm for historical and didactic purposes—for the Jews to demonstrate in a striking manner that they are God's chosen people in history, as well as to communicate via the animal sacrifices that God is serious about man's immorality and His granting them mercy.

¹⁸⁹ οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν ὁ νόμος – Again, Paul is emphasizing that the Mosaic Covenant could not provide the worshiper with adequate confidence of eternal mercy through its method of appeal to God by means of inherently immoral priests and continual animal sacrifices. Instead, God requires and provides a permanent, eternal, and morally perfect intercessor at the final judgment, in order to grant people the mercy that they will need to go on into the next age of the eternal Kingdom of God. This provision is even for the Levitical priests who themselves are morally depraved human beings and, therefore, need an intercessor other than themselves at the final judgment in order to acquire eternal salvation (cf. Hebrews 5:1-3). Thus, only the New Covenant and David's Lord of Psalm 110 as priest according to a different order, i.e., that "of Melchizedek," fulfills the requirement of the right, eternal intermediary for moral rebels (cf. Hebrews 5:1-3 and chapters 8-10), such that they can have complete confidence in obtaining eternal mercy at the final judgment.

¹⁹⁰ ἐπεισαγωγὴ δὲ κρείττονος ἐλπίδος δι' ἧς ἐγγίζομεν τῷ θεῷ – Paul is referring to not just a *better* hope, but to hope in contrast to NO hope. The New Covenant along with the Davidic "Lord/Priest" both provide greater confidence to the worshiper with respect to his being able to acquire eternal life and mercy at the final judgment by virtue that his confidence is complete. The Jew could be commanded to approach God through the Levitical sacrifices with the hope that God would view him as a genuine member of the people of Israel. Likewise, Paul is arguing that it makes sense for Jewish worshipers to approach God at the judgment having embraced the ideas presented in Psalm 110, rather than relying on devotion to the Mosaic Covenant, because the latter covenant will be forever terminated by God at the end of the present realm. The task of a human being is to prepare himself for the judgment of God, and the Bible/Paul speaks of two available ways to approach God, 1) with the Levitical priests mediating for human beings, which method provides no confidence for eternal mercy to the worshiper, or 2) with David's Lord mediating for them, which provides more than enough confidence for eternal mercy to the worshiper. Paul will go on to say that even the Levites will need Jesus' at the last judgment in order to obtain mercy from God and escape eternal condemnation. Thus, it makes no sense to rely on the Levitical priests to mediate adequately for anyone who is a rebel against God. Indeed, the Levitical priests cannot even rely on themselves for themselves.

¹⁹¹ καὶ καθ' ὅσον οὐ χωρὶς ὀρκωμοσίας· οἱ μὲν γὰρ χωρὶς ὀρκωμοσίας εἰσὶν ἱερεῖς γεγονότες – Paul has already established in 6:13-18 regarding Abraham the importance of God's swearing an oath, that it is the foundation of confidence for human beings to the effect that what He says He is going to do, He will do. Here, Paul uses the fact that God did not swear an oath in regard to the Levitical priests. Thus, he is arguing that they lack importance in comparison to the Melchizedekan priest of Psalm 110 for the benefit of whom God did swear an oath. Therefore, if the

reader combines the significance of God's oath to Abraham with the significance of God's oath to David's Lord and high priest, he has grasped the importance of believing in a Messiah who died and qualified to be an *eternal* high priest.

¹⁹² ὁ δὲ μετὰ ὀρκωμοσίας διὰ τοῦ λέγοντος πρὸς αὐτόν – Just as God's oath to Abraham was partially for *eternal* purposes (cf. Hebrews 6:13-20), i.e., with respect to His promise of eternal life, so also His oath through David to David's "Lord" in Psalm 110, i.e. the final Son of God, was for *eternal* purposes. Consequently, an oath by God implies *eternal* purposes and effects. As a result, Aaron's and any Levitical priest's role was neither permanent nor eternal, because they were only "called" but had no oath sworn by God on their behalf (cf. Hebrews 5:1). While promises can be strictly temporary, oaths are eternal and, therefore, likewise make specific promises eternal.

¹⁹³ ὅμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται σὺ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἄ – Paul quotes all of Psalm 110:4.

¹⁹⁴ κατὰ ῥητοῦ τοῦ ὁ[καὶ] κρείττονος διαθήκης γέγονεν ἔγγυος Ἰησοῦς – The fact that God swore an oath regarding David's Lord in Psalm 110 that is in addition to the promise that God made to David in the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7 demonstrates the eternity and, therefore, greater effect of Jesus' fulfilling the role of this high priest "according to the order of Melchizedek." Jesus' intercession on behalf of eternally condemnable human beings at the final judgment even more *guarantees* the eternal effect of his priestly role (cf. vs. 23-25). Just as God will not renege on His promise to Abraham to grant him eternal life (cf. Hebrews 6:13-20), so also will He not renege on His commitment to Jesus to be our successful advocate at the eternal judgment. In other words, the "betterness" of the New Covenant is ultimately its provision of an eternal priest, that, in turn provides for "complete confidence" of eternal mercy for the Jewish worshiper (cf. vs. 19, 23-25).

¹⁹⁵ διὰ τὸ θανάτῳ κολύεσθαι παραμένειν – The morally depraved Levitical priests would die, and the next morally depraved generation of Levites would have to take over for them, thus requiring a constant succession and procession of priests down through history. But, like the Levitical priests, Jesus also died. But he did so on the cross. Therefore, "death" here primarily refers to its cause, i.e., mankind's moral depravity, while also referring to physical death. Jesus did not die because of his own moral depravity. He died because of everyone else's moral depravity. It is mankind's innate and eternally problematic immorality, along with its consequence of even physical death, that prevented the Levitical priests from intervening on behalf of other morally depraved human beings at the eternal judgment. And this is precisely the issue for Paul. God requires a permanent and eternal high priest to intervene in order for immoral human beings to receive eternal mercy. But only a morally perfect priest, who does not deserve either physical or eternal death, can do this. Otherwise, like all the Levitical priests, if an immoral human being had to stand alone before God, he would be condemned at the judgment too. As a result of needing an intermediary other than themselves at the judgment, all the Levitical priests will be disqualified to continue as priests into the eternal age. In the final analysis, the eternal condemnation that they all deserve prevents them from continuing as priests into eternity.

¹⁹⁶ ὁ δὲ διὰ τὸ μένειν αὐτόν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἀπαράβατον ἔχει τὴν ἱερωσύνην – Jesus' role as high priest and advocate lasts "into the age (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα)," i.e., into eternity, which makes his intervention "better" than that of the Levitical priests, just as the New Covenant is "better" than the Mosaic Covenant (cf. Hebrews 7:21,22). Rather than deserving eternal condemnation like the Levitical priests, Jesus deserves to be both king and priest on behalf of those who are otherwise eternally condemned by God. In addition, no one ever succeeds Jesus as eternal high priest, because he never dies *after* his resurrection and ascension. He is a permanent priest and king.

¹⁹⁷ ὅθεν καὶ σώζειν εἰς τὸ παντελὲς δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους δι' αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ, πάντοτε ζῶν εἰς τὸ ἐντυγχάνειν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν – Paul is referring to those who approach God at the final judgment with Jesus in mind as the one who will appeal to God for their mercy and be successful in doing so vs. their having in mind the Levitical priests as their advocates, which would fail to bring them *eternal* mercy. Thus, Jesus provides the means into a state of complete and eternal salvation for people, even Jewish people who genuinely qualify to participate in Israel through their inward obedience to the Mosaic Covenant, in the midst of his being the only person qualified to intercede as a priest without successor on their behalf at the final judgment. Levitical priests cannot do this, because they, like everyone else except Jesus, need an intercessor and, thus, disqualify themselves from continuing as priests at the final judgment and into eternity. The Levitical priest have been adequate to provide the Jewish worshiper the confidence that he is a *bona fide* member of the people of God, the Israelites, but he is no good at providing him with confidence that he is an authentic participant of the eternal Kingdom of God. Thus, if anyone relies on someone besides Jesus for intervening before God for eternal mercy after hearing about him, they will receive only eternal condemnation.

¹⁹⁸ τοιοῦτος γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁ καὶ ἔπρεπεν ἀρχιερεὺς – The situation of the Mosaic Covenant, whereby it merely started a person on the road to God's complete forgiveness by using the sacrificial practices involving animals and morally depraved priests as a means to participate properly in the nation of Israel but did not provide for complete confidence in God's eternal mercy or for complete and eternal forgiveness meant that Jesus, with his offering to God that qualified him to intercede at the final judgment and God's oath through David in Psalm 110:4 that determined that he would be a permanent priest, truly "fit the circumstances."

¹⁹⁹ ὅσιος – This word is usually translated "holy," but in this context the reference is to Jesus' being special in all that he is and does as a human being. He is the very presence of God within the created reality (Hebrews 1:1,2). He fulfills the role of both king and priest according to the Davidic Covenant and Psalm 110. He is morally perfect and has suffered death in order to qualify for both his eternal roles of king and priest/advocate.

²⁰⁰ ὅσιος ἄκακος ἀμίαντος, κεχωρισμένος ἀπὸ τῶν ἀμαρτωλῶν καὶ ὑψηλότερος τῶν οὐρανῶν γενόμενος – With these various necessary qualifications and as the king of Israel according to the Davidic Covenant, i.e., as the Son of

God, Jesus rules over the heavens, which is to say that he rules over the entire creation as the Davidic king and God's proxy. In this sense, he is higher than the heavens and, thus, than the Levitical priests just as even Solomon was (cf. Psalm 8).

²⁰¹ ὅς οὐκ ἔχει καθ' ἡμέραν ἀνάγκην, ὥσπερ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς, πρότερον ὑπὲρ τῶν ἰδίων ἀμαρτιῶν ἑθυσίας ἀναφέρειν ἔπειτα τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐποίησεν ἐφάπαξ ἑαυτὸν ἁγιασθέντα— In this whole context, Paul is not speaking of only the Yom Kippur sacrifice for the Jews' sins and immoral actions, but the daily and annual offerings that the priests would bring. As long as God was requiring the ruler of the eternal Kingdom of God to mediate for the people who would inhabit it, He also chose to have him offer himself as a propitiatory offering in order to qualify for his roles of king and high priest. Yet, this was a onetime offering by Jesus, because it was for others and not for himself. The Levitical priests used themselves and their own sacrifices to God to qualify to be in the nation of Israel. But this is all that they could do for themselves. It would take the Messiah/Priest of Psalm 110 to be the means to their entering into the eternal Kingdom of God by his bringing the only offering which God accepts for the result of eternal mercy and forgiveness—himself as both priest and offering. Thus, Jesus is an eternal priest as David states in Psalm 110 by literarily associating him with Melchizedek and as Paul is explicitly stating here by his bringing the only and only offering acceptable to God for eternal purposes—himself.

²⁰² ὁ νόμος γὰρ ἀνθρώπους καθίστησιν ἁρχιερεῖς ἔχοντας ἀσθένειαν, ὁ λόγος δὲ τῆς ὀρκωμοσίας τῆς μετὰ τὸν νόμον υἱὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τετελειωμένον— Here, again, Paul mentions the importance of God's oath with respect to Jesus as the Melchizedekan high priest, in light of the oath that He swore to Abraham. The Levitical priests' moral depravity would lead to their own eternal condemnation, if God were not to grant them mercy through some other means. Thus, they need a completely different priest and cannot be their own priests according to what God has designed for the story of history and the way that these truths have been described in the OT, e.g., in Psalm 110. Paul emphasizes that, in Psalm 110:4, God swore that the final Son of God would be an eternal priest “according to the order of Melchizedek.”

Paul is also saying that, because David wrote Psalm 110 five hundred years after the Mosaic Covenant, we know that his statements in the psalm supersede the Covenant. Thus, Jesus' responsibility as the Son of God was to die for the moral depravity of the people, in order that he could qualify to be their priest and intercessor at the final judgment and their king and high priest in the eternal Kingdom of God (cf. Hebrews 5:9-10). For God to appoint a Son, i.e., a king, to be also the ultimate priest for His people, does sound quite unusual, unless one takes a look, as David did in Psalm 110, at the ANE and people like Melchizedek. Then, it makes all the sense in the world. But a Jew must allow the Mosaic Covenant to be relativized in its importance in his mind, or he will miss these vital aspects of the OT.

²⁰³ κεφάλαιον δὲ ἔπι τοῖς λεγομένοις, τοιοῦτον ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα— Paul's goal in this letter and especially in this section of chapters 5-10 is to provide an adequate argument for Jesus of Nazareth's being both a high priest and a king, both an advocate for moral rebels and their ruler over the entire creation in the eternal Kingdom of God. In addition, he has argued that Jesus is fully human, morally perfect, eternal, and brings the proper, eternal offering of himself in order to intercede successfully for morally depraved human beings before God for His eternal mercy. Not only is a theophany of Yahweh incapable of fulfilling such a role as Messiah and high priest (cf. chapter 1), but so are the Levitical priests (chapters 5-10). It is the latter that Paul has focused on in chapters 5-7, ending with 7:23-28. This high priest is different from the Levitical priests who are completely inadequate to intercede eternally and completely for rebellious human beings. Jesus is not only different in his moral ontology (he is morally perfect), but he is different by also being a king over the people whom he rules.

²⁰⁴ ὃς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θρόνου τῆς μεγαλοσύνης ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς— cf. note at Hebrews 1:3; cf. Psalm 110:1. David's Lord, who fulfills the Davidic Covenant, rules over God's creation eternally, both over the temporal Kingdom of Israel and over the eternal Kingdom of God. David was speaking metaphorically when he mentioned his Lord's sitting at the right hand of God, because no created king, even Jesus, can escape the creation and become transcendent like Yahweh, the Father and Author of the story. To sit at God's right hand is to be granted the authority to rule over God's creation. This aspect of Jesus' role makes him completely different from the Levitical priests who only advocate for the people of Israel but do not rule over them.

²⁰⁵ τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς καὶ τῆς σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς— Just as Aaron and the Levitical priests administrated all the sacred tasks involving offerings to God in the earthly tabernacle/temple under the Mosaic Covenant in order to appeal to God for His approval of the individual Jews as members in good standing of the nation of Israel, so also Jesus, as the high priest of the New Covenant, administrates these tasks in the “heavenly temple” under the New Covenant by means of his offering himself and appealing to God for eternal mercy at the final judgment (cf. Hebrews 9). It is not that an actual, eternal temple building exists, but that Jesus appeals for eternal mercy within the courtroom of God at the judgment so to speak. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 indicates that the “judgment” for believers takes place when Jesus returns, so that, if someone is raised from the dead or ascends alive from the earth into “the clouds to meet the Lord in the air,” he has received God's mercy through Jesus' appeal to Him.

Also, there are at least three specific meanings for ὁ ἅγιος in the OT. **1.** The different compartments of the tabernacle/temple. Cf. Exodus 26:33, “You shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies (הַקֹּדֶשׁ הַקְּדוֹשׁ) (ἀνά μέσον τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ ἀνά μέσον τοῦ ἁγίου τῶν ἁγίων).” Also, cf.

Hebrews 9:1-12, especially v. 12. **2.** The moral commandments of God. Cf. Leviticus 19:20 (26:2), “You shall keep My sabbaths and revere My sanctuary (וְיָרֵא יְהוָה אֶת פְּנֵי הַמִּקְדָּשׁ) (καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων μου φοβηθήσεσθε); I am the LORD.”

Rather than “sanctuary” being the correct translation here, in the context it is more likely that it is “sacred commandments involving morality and offerings.” **3.** The sacred offerings of the people that involve the prescribed rituals of the Levitical priests under the Mosaic Covenant such that these offerings also become literal food for the Levites. Cf. Numbers 18:10, “As the most holy gifts (בְּכֹרֹת הַשְּׂמֶנֶת הַקְּדוֹת) (ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ τῶν ἁγίων) you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.” Notice that the words literally translate “in the holy of holies,” as though God is speaking of the room where the ark of covenant was kept. However, He probably is not speaking of the priests’ eating the offerings of the Israelites in the Holy of Holies. Instead, he is saying that they need to treat these offerings as really sacred stuff, even while they eat them as their payment and compensation for their fulfilling their duties as priests. Indeed, there are very many uses in Exodus through Numbers of a form of ὁ ἅγιος that refer to the Levites and the sacred place of the tabernacle along with the sacred rituals and offerings. For example, cf. also Numbers 8:19, “I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the sons of Israel, to perform the service of the sons of Israel at the tent of meeting and to make atonement on behalf of the sons of Israel, so that there will be no plague among the sons of Israel by their coming near to the sanctuary (בְּבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבָנֵי אַהֲרֹן לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעֹשֵׂת בְּנִשְׂוֹת לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעֹשֵׂת בְּנִשְׂוֹת לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) (καὶ οὐκ ἔσται ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ προσεγγίζων πρὸς τὰ ἅγια).” Then, in regard to the eternal “temple,” cf. Exodus 25:8,9, “Let them construct a **sanctuary** (מִקְדָּשׁ) (ἁγίασμα) for Me, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I am going to show you, the pattern of the tabernacle (τὸ παράδειγμα τῆς σκηνῆς) and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.” Thus, Jesus serves in the true, heavenly tabernacle/tent so to speak of the judgment room of God (cf. Hebrews 8:5;9:1-28), and his attention is toward the really sacred things of God’s eternal mercy (cf. Hebrews 9), not the earthly issue of properly participating in nation of Israel.

²⁰⁶ ἦν ἐπηξεν ὁ κύριος, ἵ οὐκ ἄνθρωπος – God has set up a place for eternal purposes where Jesus as high priest administrates his duties of appealing for mercy on behalf of morally depraved human beings. This place is the courtroom of God so to speak where the final judgment of all human beings’ takes place upon Jesus’ return (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

²⁰⁷ πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰς τὸ προσφέρειν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσιάς καθίσταται: ὅθεν ἀναγκαῖον ἔχειν τι καὶ τοῦτον ὁ προσενέγκῃ – cf. Hebrews 5:1. High priests mediate on behalf of human beings who have rebelled against God in order to gain His mercy for them. However, an offering is a necessary part of the process as God has designed the story of creation. No offering, no mercy. The right offering, mercy. And, in the case of Jesus, eternal mercy, because he is the only right offering with respect to it, which, in turn, qualifies him to act as high priest. He was assigned by God the function of acting as high priest for people, but he could not exercise his function until he had qualified to do so by dying on the cross as an offering to God. Thus, he carries out his responsibility into eternity while he also rules over the creation and the eternal Kingdom of God.

²⁰⁸ εἰ μὲν γοῦν ἦν ἐπὶ γῆς, οὐδ’ ἂν ἦν ἱερεὺς, ὄντων ἱ τῶν προσφερόντων κατὰ ἱ νόμον τὰ δῶρα – The Mosaic Covenant specifically stipulates that the tribe of Levi are responsible for being priests, not the tribe of Judah of which Jesus is a member. Therefore, Jesus is theologically and biblically not permitted to be a priest under Mosaic Covenant. Indeed, it would be outright disobedient and illegal of him to practice the rites of the Levites according to the Mosaic Covenant. He would be condemned by God for doing so. Thus, Jesus’ service as a priest has nothing to do with the Mosaic Covenant, demonstrating that this covenant is irrelevant when it comes to gaining God’s eternal mercy. The Levitical priests, therefore, by definition, are not performing their function with respect to eternal mercy. Their function has to do with something completely different. It has to do with gaining God’s statement of approval that the individual Jews are participating properly in the nation of Israel. Thus, Jesus’ service is not on earth, but in heaven. His is the priesthood that pertains to eternal life and the Jew/Gentile Kingdom of God and not just this life and the Jewish nation of Israel as was the case for the Levites.

²⁰⁹ οἵτινες ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσιν τῶν ἐπουρανίων – The earthly temple, along with its prescribed rituals under the Mosaic Covenant, is merely a copy of the heavenly place and its sacred “ritual” of Jesus’ appealing for mercy on behalf of morally depraved human beings, in the sense that the temple follows the drawings that were shown Moses on Mt. Sinai and provides a place where the Levites can perform the same kind of function for earthly and temporary benefit for the Israelites.

²¹⁰ καθὼς κεχηρμάτισται Μωϋσῆς μέλλων ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν σκηνὴν ὅρα γὰρ φησιν, ποιήσεις πάντα κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν δειχθέντα σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει – cf. Exodus 25:40, “See that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain (וְהָיָה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-רָאִיתָ אֶת-מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר-שֵׁנִי אֲשֶׁר-רָאִיתָ) (ὄρα ποιήσεις κατὰ τὸν τύπον τὸν δεδειγμένον σοι ἐν τῷ ὄρει).” תְּבִנֶנּוּ is derived from בָּנָה = he built. Thus, the word basically means a building plan. God showed Moses something on Mt. Sinai that gave him an image of exactly what the portable tabernacle and, eventually, the stone temple, would look like, along with all its sacred implements. Probably, it was just a floor plan, because it is the placement and location of the various objects used in the tabernacle/temple that was most important. For example, the Holy of Holies had to be separated from the rest of the tabernacle, in order to provide a place where only the High Priest entered once a year during Yom Kippur.

Paul is using the idea of God's showing Moses a building/floor plan, a pattern (τύπος), and telling him to stick to it exactly to say that this is similar to the relationship between the actual building that Moses built and the "building" in which Jesus serves, that the former is a merely a pattern (τύπος) of the heavenly "temple." Jesus was told to stick exactly to the plan that God had for him to obtain a way to serve morally depraved human beings that is superior to both that of Moses and the Levitical priests.

²¹¹ Ἦν ἡ δὲ διαφοροτέρα ρτέτυχεν λειτουργίας, ὅσῳ ὁ καὶ κρείττονός ἐστιν διαθήκης μεσίτης, ἥτις ἐπὶ κρείττοσιν ἐπαγγελίας νενομοθέτηται – Moses' service of the actual earthly temple was superior to his service of the pattern (τύπος) that he was shown by God. Similarly, Jesus' service of the heavenly temple is superior to the copy, i.e., pattern (τύπος), of this temple that is on earth. The "better promises" of the New Covenant is, most explicitly according to Jeremiah 31:31-34 that Paul will quote in a moment, the promise to forgive *eternally* the Jews simply on the basis of His changing their hearts and the offering of the Messiah (the latter being implied in Jeremiah 31:31-34), not on the basis of animal sacrifices, even if God were to change all their hearts so that they all "keep" the covenant, as He states in Deuteronomy 29-31 that He is eventually going to do. Thus, within this context, Paul will go on to argue that the *eternal* forgiveness of the Jews also includes a new priesthood that is heavenly and not earthly, that goes beyond merely the temporary effects of the Mosaic Covenant, because the Messiah will intervene on behalf of human beings at the *final* judgment. The Levitical priests cannot do this. Indeed, they themselves need Jesus' advocacy. In addition, Paul has already explained that the "promise" of the Mosaic Covenant could not provide an intercessor and priest at the final judgment and on into eternity. However, Deuteronomy 30 did promise a change of heart for all the Jews, but it should be considered as comments by God that also imply a change in covenant and a new priesthood, that of the New Covenant and the priesthood of Melchizedek respectively. Thus, Deuteronomy 30 is making the same promise as the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34, that, at some point in the future, all of the nation of Israel would become authentic believers (cf. Deuteronomy 30; Hebrews 8:8-12; 10:5-10, 15-18). And both passages are implicitly referring to both the Davidic Covenant and God's calling the final Davidic king to function as a high priest "according to the order of Melchizedek."

Therefore, Jesus' service to morally depraved human beings is superior to that of Levitical priests and, by extrapolation, Moses, because he brings about eternal forgiveness and not just the same kind of temporary effects of the Mosaic Covenant. In addition, he will serve as king in the eternal Kingdom of God, so that he rules and intervenes at the same time, which neither any of the other Davidic kings nor any of the Levitical priests ever did.

To put it succinctly, the "better promises" of the New Covenant is the promise of a new high priest whose function will bring about eternal forgiveness and participation in the Kingdom of God, not just in the nation of Israel, even though God made the New Covenant specifically with the Jews.

²¹² εἰ γὰρ ἡ πρώτη ἐκείνη ἦν ἄμεμπτος οὐκ ἂν ῥευτέρως ἐζητεῖτο τόπος – ἄμεμπτος is typically used to refer to people who are uncondemned before God (cf. Luke 1:16; Philippians 2:15). In this case, Paul is saying that the Mosaic Covenant is incapable of bringing about a standing before God whereby a morally depraved human being is *eternally* uncondemned, because it did not provide for the proper high priest who could appeal for *eternal* mercy. In other words, the Mosaic Covenant uses only mortal, immoral priests, who themselves need Jesus to appeal to God for eternal mercy on their behalf. The New Covenant, with Jesus as its high priest, provides eternal mercy and will involve eventually all living Jews because they will become changed of heart by God, as Paul goes on to explain in vs. 8-12. Cf. Hebrews 9:1-10:18, which is a full explanation of this statement in Hebrews 8:7. Thus, even the Jews should have been seeking a second covenant besides the Mosaic Covenant in order to obtain God's eternal mercy. All the time, energy, effort, and thought that the Jews have put into understanding and obeying the Mosaic Covenant seems incredibly ridiculous and wasteful in the light of what Paul is arguing here. Likewise, all the time, energy, effort, and thought that Christians have put into creating and maintaining a religious system that includes such things as buildings, staff, payrolls, administration of organizations, etc. seems incredibly ridiculous and wasteful in the light of what Paul is arguing here.

²¹³ μεμφόμενος γὰρ ῥαυτοὺς λέγει – Hebrews 8:8-12 is tricky, because these verses seem to indicate that the only problem with the Jews was their hearts, so that, if they had acquired changed hearts under the Mosaic Covenant, then God would grant them eternal mercy. However, this would not be coherent with Paul's argument in Hebrews. Instead, there were two problems with the OT Jews under the Mosaic Covenant. One was that they lacked the kind of hearts that God required for even obeying properly the Mosaic Covenant and participating correctly in the nation of Israel. But even the Mosaic Covenant in Deuteronomy 30 promised to correct this problem. Therefore, there must have been another problem that is implied by both the Mosaic Covenant and God's statement of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31. This was the problem of a less than adequate priesthood for Jews' obtaining God's eternal mercy. As a result, the New Covenant promises not only changed hearts for the Jews, but also a new and eternally adequate priest for them, indeed, the Messiah and Davidic king who is a "priest according to the order of Melchizedek." It just so happened that it was clearly the case that God could consider the OT Jews condemned (μεμφόμενος) because they lacked proper inwardness. But He also considered them condemned because they were rejecting the clear message of the Mosaic Covenant by virtue of its multiple, animal sacrifices and Levitical priesthood (cf. Hebrews 9 and 10) that a second and different covenant was going to be necessary to grant them *eternal* mercy. Thus, God deemed them condemned and declared that He would institute a New Covenant whereby He would forgive them all completely and rescue them eternally from His condemnation by changing the heart of each one of them (v. 8) in the midst of providing them with a different and effective high priest (cf. Hebrews 10:5-10, 15-18, which is a fuller explanation of this point and includes

comments by David that he understands the importance of another method besides the sacrifices of animals for obtaining eternal mercy). The implication of all this, as Paul will go on to argue in Hebrews 9 & 10, is that the New Covenant applies to only Jews who are not only inwardly changed but also grasp the significance of the eternal Melchizedekan priest.

²¹⁴ ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, λέγει κύριος – Cf. Jeremiah 31:31, LXX – ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται, φησὶν κύριος; Heb – הַיְהִי־נֶאֱמַר לְיָמַי הַגְּדִיל – God said this back about 580 B.C., and we are still waiting for Him to fulfill these words. He is definitely not in as much a hurry as we typically are or would like Him to be.

²¹⁵ καὶ συντελέσω ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰούδα διαθήκην καινὴν – Cf. Jeremiah 31:31, LXX – καὶ διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰουδα διαθήκην καινὴν; Heb – וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוּדָה בְּיַתְּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי הַשְּׁנֵי – Paul is helping to clarify that the New Covenant is to be made specifically with the Jews, “the house of Israel [the northern kingdom of Israel] and the house of Judah [the southern kingdom of Judah], while Gentiles will certainly be able to take advantage of it in order to obtain their goal of eternal mercy. Therefore, Gentiles are hitchhiking off it when God changes their hearts and they demonstrate authentic belief in both Yahweh and the Jewish Messiah. In addition, God specifically planned to make a covenant with the Jews that would permit them not only to fulfill the Mosaic Covenant in order to live securely on the land that God promised them through the Abrahamic Covenant, but also to move beyond the Mosaic Covenant and obtain *eternal* forgiveness by virtue of the special high priest that the New Covenant provides.

²¹⁶ οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην, ἣν ἐποίησα τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν – Cf. Jeremah 31:32a – אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אֶת־אֲבוֹתָם לָאֵלֹהִים – LXX, οὐ κατὰ τὴν διαθήκην, ἣν διεθέμην τοῖς πατράσιν αὐτῶν. Not like the Mosaic Covenant, within which specifically God did not change the hearts of all the Jews so that they could obey it properly, which God goes on to mention indirectly in v.9.

²¹⁷ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπιλαβομένου μου τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῶν ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτούς ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου – Cf. Jeremiah 31:32 – LXX – ὅτι αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου; Heb – וְהָפַרְוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי הַחֲמִשָּׁר־לְמִצְרַיִם – Here, God points to the problem with the Jews, that they lacked the proper inwardness to obey the Mosaic Covenant. Therefore, while they were journeying through the desert to the land of Canaan that God had promised to them, and even after they arrived in the land, they continually demonstrated their inward inability to “remain” in the covenant. Nevertheless, another of God’s promises under the Abrahamic Covenant is to turn the Jews into a great nation at some time in history. This radical transition from a relatively rebellious and ragtag group of people to a nation that clearly has inwardly and intellectually grasped the eternal plans and purposes of God will require that they ALL have changed hearts. Thus, Paul will go on to quote in v. 10 that the New Covenant is stating that all living Jews at some point in history will have changed hearts. Then, the part of the quote in v. 12 implies that there will be a change in priesthood for the Jews’ (and Gentiles’) eternal sake, which is most important for Paul’s argument in this section.

²¹⁸ κἀγὼ ἠμέλησα αὐτῶν, λέγει κύριος – Cf. Jeremiah 31:32 – LXX – καὶ ἐγὼ ἠμέλησα αὐτῶν, φησὶν κύριος; Heb – וְאִנִּי בְּעָלְתִּי – The Hebrew says, “And I was a husband to them,” while the LXX says, “And I neglected them.” Maybe the Hebrew word can mean two things, to be devoted to a woman as her husband, and its opposite, to divorce her. The better explanation is that Paul is right and the Jews’ own scriptures claim that God abandoned them of sorts because of their massive disobedience even in the Sinai desert after He had rescued them from slavery in Egypt. As unattractive an idea as this might be to any Jew, Paul is saying that it is true, which can be verified by God’s ejecting the Jews from the land of Israel both in the 700-600 B.C. time period and in A.D. 132 after the Bar Kokba Revolt. Yet, God through Jeremiah and Paul are declaring that God will remain faithful to the Jews, even to the point of ensuring that they become a great nation and acquire *eternal* life and mercy.

²¹⁹ ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη ὧν, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας, λέγει κύριος – Cf. Jeremiah 31:33 – LXX – ὅτι αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη, ἣν διαθήσομαι τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκεῖνας, φησὶν κύριος; Heb – הַיְהִי־נֶאֱמַר הַיְהִי־נֶאֱמַר לְיָמַי הַגְּדִיל אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אֶת־אֶרֶץ־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־אֶתְרֵי הַיְמָיִם הַהֵם – Here, “house of Israel” refers to the whole nation of Israel, i.e., the ethnic Jews in their entirety, with whom God will make this New Covenant. He is not referring to Gentiles, who will participate in the eternal benefits of this covenant through their belief in the Jewish Messiah and counting on him to appeal to the Father for mercy on their behalf in order that they obtain the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham that through him “all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

²²⁰ διδοὺς νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς – Cf. Jeremiah 31:33 – LXX – διδοὺς νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν γράψω αὐτούς; Heb – וְכָתַבְתִּי בְּבָבֶהּ – Here is the crux of the New Covenant from an obedience standpoint. God states explicitly that He will cause the Jews to obey it by changing them inwardly, and, thus, He will forgive them completely and eternally (v. 12). Because this eternal forgiveness will be by means of the new Melchizedekan high priest, i.e., Jesus of Nazareth from the tribe of Judah, it will be the commandment to believe in this high priest that will dominate all of God’s instructions (וְהָיָה לְכָל־מִצְוָתוֹ) (νόμους) in the minds and hearts of the Jews. In other words, the Torah of

Mosaic Covenant will be included in this set of New Covenant instructions, but it will be secondary to the Torah of believing in the crucified Jewish Messiah and high priest, Jesus. Consequently, there will come a time when all the Jews, for the first time in history, will properly obey the Mosaic Covenant by virtue of the changed inwardness that God will cause them to have (cf. Deuteronomy 29,30), AND they will properly obey the Torah to believe in and follow the crucified Jewish Messiah. In this way, the New Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant exist together for the Jews this side of eternity, such that the Mosaic Covenant, for them, will be under the umbrella of the New Covenant when God changes all their hearts. For Gentiles, there is only the application of the New Covenant to them by their participating in its eternal benefits through changed inwardness and belief in its different and Melchizedekan high priest—Jesus of Nazareth. Cf. Ezekiel 36:22-38.

²²¹ καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν – Cf. Jeremiah 31:33 – LXX – καὶ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς εἰς θεόν, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἔσονται μοι εἰς λαόν; Heb – לְעַם יְהוָה יִהְיֶה יְהוָה לֵאלֹהֵיהֶם וְיִהְיֶה יְהוָה לָהֶם – The result of all the Jews’ becoming inwardly changed is that they can claim that God is their God, and God can say that they are His people—finally, for the first time in history, with respect to the entire nation of Israel, who received the promise through Abraham as his physical descendants that they were God’s people. So two levels of this, 1) spiritual level as a result of a changed inwardness, i.e., God’s people in complete actuality, and 2) physical level as a result of being Abraham’s descendants with the potential to rise to the level of #1 through changed inwardness, while also having properly qualified for eternal life by believing in the new high priest of the New Covenant. Therefore, God’s ultimate plan has been to take the physical, ethnic group of Jews whom He promised to Abraham in Genesis 12 and cause all them at some point in history to obtain not only the land of Israel that was included in these promises but also the eternal Kingdom of God that was also included in these promises.

²²² καὶ οὐ μὴ διδάξωσιν ἕκαστος τὸν ἑταίρον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων γινώθι τὸν κύριον ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσιν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν – Cf. Jeremiah 31:34 – LXX – ὅτι πάντες εἰδήσουσιν με ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν καὶ ἕως μεγάλου αὐτῶν; Heb – כִּי-כֹלֵיהֶם יִדְעוּ אוֹתֵי לְמִקְטָנָם עַד-גְּדֹלָתָם – It will be the entire nation of Israel who will have changed hearts such that evangelism among them will be completely unnecessary. Because we know that this action by God had not occurred by the time that Paul wrote this to the Jews in the first century, it is clear that God must mean that knowing Him will include knowing, believing in, and following the Jewish Messiah who was crucified on their behalf. Paul is exploiting this aspect of God’s declaration of the New Covenant around 600 B.C. through Jeremiah to prove that a new high priest from a tribe different from Levi is necessary for all this to come about.

²²³ ὅτι ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι – Cf. Jeremiah 31:34 – LXX – ὅτι ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι; Heb – לֹא אֶזְכֹּר-עֲוֹן – Here is the crux of the New Covenant from a mercy/advocate standpoint. This last statement in v. 12 is not only the one that Paul is emphasizing by quoting all of Jeremiah 31:34 but also the one that Paul goes on to explain in chapters 9 and 10 regarding the difference between the continuous animal sacrifices of the immoral Levitical priests and the single sacrifice of the morally perfect Melchizedekan priest Jesus. The basis for God’s acceptance and mercy is always a propitiatory offering by a priest, and Jesus’ new Melchizedekan priesthood/offering, while it cannot operate on earth within the Mosaic Covenant but must do so in heaven at the final judgment within the New Covenant, also provides for *eternal* mercy, so that God “will remember their evil actions no more.” At best, the Mosaic Covenant can provide only a *temporary* mercy of sorts, i.e., an approval by God of a Jew’s participating properly in the nation of Israel, while the New Covenant provides *eternal* mercy and the approval by God of either a Jew’s or a Gentile’s participating properly in the community of believers who qualify for citizenship in the eternal Kingdom of God. Consequently, even though this description of the New Covenant in Jeremiah makes no *explicit* statement about a priesthood and sin offerings to God, it implies it as Paul has argued in Hebrews 7:11,12 and will argue in Hebrews 9 and 10—that when there is a change in priesthood, there is also a change in covenant, and vice versa.

²²⁴ ἐν τῷ λέγειν καινὴν πεπαλαίωκεν τὴν πρώτην· τὸ δὲ παλαιούμενον καὶ γηράσκον ἐγγὺς ἀφανισμοῦ – God has explicitly stated in Jeremiah 31:34 that, because He is making a New Covenant with the Israelites, by definition, the Mosaic Covenant is Old and, therefore, not the basis for eternal mercy with its priesthood. In this sense, the Mosaic Covenant is close to disappearing along with the present realm when God brings an end to this realm and creates the eternal Kingdom of God with Jesus as priest and intercessor on our behalf forever. At that point, the temporary, earthly, and historical purposes of the Jews through the Mosaic Covenant will also disappear. In the meantime, the Mosaic Covenant simply grows older and older so to speak. It becomes less and less permanent for the Jews as they look to or should look to the New Covenant and, specifically, Jesus’ priesthood in line with Psalm 110:4 for their obtaining God’s eternal mercy.

In addition, the animal sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant are completely irrelevant and unnecessary from an eternal perspective now that the new high priest has qualified for his role through suffering death on the cross. This clear and explicit relativizing of the animal sacrifices allows for a Jew to omit them from his Jewish life under the Mosaic Covenant without forfeiting God’s eternal mercy and existence in the eternal Kingdom of God, as, for example, was the

case with Paul during his travels in Turkey, Greece, Rome, etc. As long as a Jew has changed inwardness and embraces Jesus as his king and priest, God certainly will grant him mercy and eternal salvation.

²²⁵ εἶχεν μὲν οὖν [καὶ] ἢ πρώτη ἡ δικαιομάτα λατρείας τό τε ἅγιον κοσμικόν— With the Mosaic Covenant, God had established specific religious rituals for the Levites and a specific and unique place where they would perform them—the “sanctuary” or “tent/tabernacle” during their wanderings in the wilderness and in the Land of Canaan. Cf. Exodus 25:8,9 “8 Let them construct a sanctuary for Me (שְׁכֵנֶת־לִי מִקְדָּשׁ) (καὶ ποιήσεις μοι ἄγίασμα), that I may dwell among them (בְּתוֹכְכֶם בְּשֵׁנִי) (καὶ ὀφθήσομαι ἐν ὑμῖν = and I will be experienced (literally “seen” among you). 9

According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle (אֵת תְּבַנְיֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּן) (τὸ παράδειγμα τῆς σκηנῆς) and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.” Regarding תְּבַנְיֹת = pattern, see notes for

Hebrews 8:5. The word מִשְׁכָּן is from שָׁכַן = he dwelt, he settled, which seems synonymous with שָׁבַע. Notice that the Hebrew word “dwell” in v. 8 is the verb form of the noun “tabernacle” in v. 9. The LXX uses ὀφθήσομαι in the first case and τῆς σκηנῆς in the second. Our word “tabernacle” comes from the Latin *taberna* = hut, tavern, and is the diminutive of it, i.e., *tabernaculum*. Paul will go on to say that the New Covenant has sacred requirements also, but ones that that Jesus alone fulfills by his singular death and that produces eternal mercy and entrance into the Kingdom of God. In other words, there are no sacred, ritual requirements for followers of Jesus as the Messiah, except the Mosaic Covenant for Jews, but it is highly relativized and made almost trivial in comparison to the New Covenant.

²²⁶ σκηνη γὰρ κατασκευάσθη ἢ πρώτη ἐν ἧ ἢ τε λυχία καὶ ἡ τράπεζα καὶ ἡ πρόθεσις τῶν ἄρτων ἢ, ἣτις λέγεται Ἄγια – There were two compartments in the original tabernacle/tent that God directed the Israelites to construct in the wilderness. The first, or outer one, was a sacred place and contained the two items of the lampstand, i.e., the menorah, and the table with its showbread. Cf. Exodus 26:33,34, “You shall hang up the veil (אֵת הַפָּרֹקֶת) (τὸ καταπέτασμα) under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and the veil shall serve for you as a partition (בֵּין הַפָּרֹקֶת לְהַבְדִּילָהּ) (διοριεῖ τὸ καταπέτασμα ὑμῖν) between the holy place (שְׁכֵנֶת־לִי) (τοῦ ἁγίου) and the holy of holies (שְׁכֵנֶת־לִי שְׁכֵנֶת־לִי) (τοῦ ἁγίου τῶν ἁγίων). 34 You shall put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the holy of holies (בְּשֵׁנִי שְׁכֵנֶת־לִי) (ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ τῶν ἁγίων).”

²²⁷ μετὰ δὲ τὸ δευτέρον καταπέτασμα σκηνη ἢ λεγομένη Ἄγια Ἄγίων – On the one hand, first, God instructed the Israelites to make ten “curtains” that would form the outer walls of the portable dwelling place. Cf. Exodus 26:1-6.

Here is v. 1, “Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten **curtains** (תְּעָנִי) (**αὐλαίαις**) of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet material; you shall make them with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman.” Second, He instructed them to make eleven “curtains” that would form the roof of this portable dwelling place. Cf. Exodus 26:7-14.

Here is v. 7, “Then you shall make **curtains of goats’ hair** (עֲיִתֵי עֵיזִים) (**δέρρις τριχίνας**) for a tent over the tabernacle; you shall make eleven **curtains** (תְּעָנִי) (**δέρρις**) in all.” Third, God instructed the Israelites to make a

“screen” for the doorway of the tent. Cf. Exodus 26:36-37. Here is v. 36, “You shall make a **screen for the doorway of the tent** (מָסָךְ לְפֶתַח הָאֹהֶל) (**ἐπίσπαστρον**) of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen, the work of a weaver.” In this last case, the LXX uses the one word ἐπίσπαστρον to translate three Hebrew words for “a screen for the doorway of the tent.” This is the only time that ἐπίσπαστρον is used in the LXX, and it is not used in the NT.

Notice also that the LXX translates תְּעָנִי = curtain as **αὐλαίαις** when the Hebrew word refers to the walls (Exodus 26:1-6) and as **δέρρις** when it refers to the roof (Exodus 26:7-14). Fourth, God commanded the Israelites to surround the tent with a court, i.e., courtyard, that was a wall around the entire tabernacle/tent by “hangings” with a “screen” for a gate. Cf. Exodus 27:9-18. Here is v. 9, “You shall make the court of the tabernacle. On the south side there shall be **hangings for the court** (מַסְכֵּי הַחֲצָרָה) (**ιστία τῆς αὐλῆς**) of fine twisted linen one hundred cubits long for one

side.” Also, v. 16, “For the gate of the court there shall be a **screen** (מָסָךְ) (**κάλυμμα**) of twenty cubits, of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen, the work of a weaver, with their four pillars and their four sockets.”

Then, on the other hand, God instructed the Israelites to make a “veil” that would form the partition between the two parts of the sanctuary, i.e., between the outer “holy place” and the inner “holy of holies.” Cf. Exodus 36:31-35. Here is v. 31, “You shall make a **veil** (פָּרֹקֶת) (**καταπέτασμα**) of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen; it shall be made with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman.”

In v. 33, God says, “You shall hang up the **veil** (אֵת הַפָּרֹקֶת) (τὸ **καταπέτασμα**) under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there **within the veil** (בְּתוֹכָהּ) (**ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπέτασματος**); and the **veil** shall serve for you as a partition (בֵּין הַפָּרֹקֶת לְהַבְדִּילָהּ) (καὶ διοριεῖ τὸ **καταπέτασμα** ὑμῖν) between the holy place and the holy of holies (שְׁכֵנֶת־לִי שְׁכֵנֶת־לִי) (ἀνά μέσον τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ ἀνά μέσον τοῦ ἁγίου τῶν ἁγίων).”

The Greek word διορίζω is defined as “to set limits.”

Thus, with the words “the second veil (μετὰ δὲ τὸ δευτέρον καταπέτασμα),” Paul is referring to the curtain, the “veil (פָּרֹקֶת & **καταπέτασμα** in Exodus 36:31),” that separated the inner sanctum of the Holy of Holies from the outer

sanctum of the Holies, so that “the first veil” so to speak, that Paul does not mention explicitly, would be the curtains that formed the shape of the tabernacle/tent as instructed by God in Exodus 26:1-6. Paul is calling in v. 2 the outer sanctum of the The Holies “the first tent (σκηνή...ή πρώτη).” Thus, the “second tent,” that he does not explicitly mention with these words, would be the “Holy of Holies” as the innermost section of the tabernacle which contained the ark of the covenant. It was here that the high priest entered once a year on Yom Kippur, according to the instructions in Leviticus 16 (cf. Hebrews 9:7). It was also this curtain or “veil” that split and revealed the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem when Jesus died on the cross, thus symbolizing that the new and only manner to approach God for His eternal mercy had been brought into existence by Jesus’ death. Cf. Matthew 27:51 – καὶ ἰδοὺ, τὸ **καταπέτασμα** τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπὸ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω – “And behold, the **veil** of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” Cf. Hebrews 6:19 and 10:20.

²²⁸ χρυσοῦν ἔχουσα θυμιατήριον καὶ τὴν κιβωτὸν τῆς διαθήκης περικεκαλυμμένην πάντοθεν χρυσίῳ, ἐν ἣ ἰστάμενος χρυσῆ ἔχουσα τὸ μάννα καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος Ἀαρὼν ἣ βλαστήσασα καὶ αἱ πλάκες τῆς διαθήκης – Paul includes the altar of incense that stood in front of the second curtain, the “veil,” but belonged to the Holy of Holies as part of its own importance. The ark of the covenant with its contents and mercy seat, i.e., place of propitiation, mainly provided the Holy of Holies with its importance. The stone tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments were located in the ark. But this is in contrast to the New Covenant when God writes His Torah on the hearts of all the Jews, thus causing them to become appropriately obedient as morally depraved human beings and provides them all with forgiveness through an eternal high priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,” the Messiah Jesus (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-12; 10:15-18).

²²⁹ ὑπεράνω δὲ αὐτῆς χερουβὶν δόξης κατασκευάζοντα τὸ ἱλαστήριον περὶ ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν νῦν λέγειν κατὰ μέρος – cf. Exodus 25:17,18, “You shall make a mercy seat (תְּרֻבֶּבֶת) (ἱλαστήριον) of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. You shall make two cherubim (כְּרֻבִים) (χερουβιμ) of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat (תְּרֻבֶּבֶת) (τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου).” Also, God says to Moses regarding the Holy of Holies,

Ex. 25:22 “There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat (תְּרֻבֶּבֶת לְנֹכַח) (ἄνωθεν τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου), from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.” Therefore, it was during Yom Kippur and from His “position” within the Holy of Holies and above the ark of the covenant that God would grant the Israelites a level of mercy that indicated that He considered them all rightful participants of the nation of Israel, whom He would faithfully protect from enemies and provide them with abundant food, clothing, shelter, etc. on the Land of Israel. In other words, whatever God was dispensing from His position in the Holy of Holies, it pertained to only the Jews as His earthly chosen people. His operation from this position would also exist for only the time that the Jews existed on the earth as a separate nation of people, which is until the end of the present realm when He will destroy this realm so that the eternal Kingdom of God will be the only location for human beings to inhabit.

²³⁰ τούτων δὲ οὕτως κατεσκευασμένων εἰς μὲν τὴν πρώτην σκηνὴν διὰ παντὸς εἰσίσαισι οἱ ἱερεῖς τὰς λατρείας ἐπιτελοῦντες – The first or outer section of the tabernacle, the Holy Place, was used every day by the priests. Thus, daily the Israelites were to bring their offerings to God to demonstrate their desire to participate wholly in the nation of Israel. Because the Levitical priests were acting as mediators of a sort, God would lend His approval to the worshipers and grant them proper status among His chosen people. But this is all that He would grant them with these offerings through the Levitical priests.

²³¹ εἰς δὲ τὴν δευτέραν ἅπαξ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ μόνος ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, οὐ χωρὶς αἵματος ὃ προσφέρει ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων – The second or inner section of the tabernacle, the Holy of Holies, was used only once a year on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, by the high priest who performed the ritual necessary for obtaining God’s an earthly and temporary “forgiveness” of sorts for the Israelites’ evil actions as well as for his own. God granted this as long as whole nation of Israel were not in a state of abject rebellion against Him that originated from their innate moral depravity so that they were lacking in any level of authentic inwardness and belief (cf. Leviticus 16).

The OT speaks of sins and immoral actions on the Jews’ part that were unintentional, as well as sins that were committed defiantly. The former can be “forgiven,” so that He grants the individual Israelite the status of properly participating in the nation of Israel. The latter cannot be “forgiven.” Cf. Numbers 15:28 & 30, “The priest shall make atonement (וְיָצַח לְפָנָיו) (καὶ ἐξιλάσεται ὁ ἱερεὺς) before the LORD for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally (וְהָיָה עֲוֹנוֹ) (ἀκουσίως), making atonement for him that he may be forgiven (וְיָצַח לְפָנָיו) (ἐξιλάσασθαι περὶ αὐτοῦ)” & “But the person who does anything defiantly (וְהָיָה עֲוֹנוֹ) = with a high hand) (ἐν χειρὶ ὑπερφημίας), whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD (וְהָיָה עֲוֹנוֹ) (τὸν θεὸν οὕτως παροξύνει); and that person shall be cut off from among his people.” It would seem that the LXX’s use of τὸν θεὸν οὕτως παροξύνει indicates the its translators consider the word וְהָיָה עֲוֹנוֹ to refer to God’s response as a result of the Israelite’s defiant action, not to the defiant action itself or its quality. Thus, the word “blaspheme” would be better translated “evokes or elicits a response from God of His anger, justice, and condemnation.” But God’s justice occurs because the Israelite is choosing to rebel against God.

Paul uses the word ἀγνοημάτων to refer to the OT concept of sins done “unintentionally.” Cf. Numbers 15: 24, “then it shall be, if it is done unintentionally (אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדָעָה) (ἀκουσίως), without the knowledge of the congregation (מִן־עֵינֵי־הַקְּהִלָּה) = away from the eyes of the congregation) (ἐξ ὀφθαλμῶν τῆς συναγωγῆς), that all the congregation shall offer one bull for a burnt offering, as a soothing aroma to the LORD...” Cf. also Leviticus 5:18.

Therefore, even though the high priest, in effect, was entering into the presence of God to intervene on behalf of other people and on behalf of himself, the ritual itself made sense to only those Jews who had genuine belief and for whom the high priest was actually interceding. In other words, the Mosaic Covenant was intended for only Jews who had authentic inwardness (cf. Deuteronomy 10:16, “So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer.”). Anything less than authentic inwardness meant that the worshiping Jew would not understand what was really going on with the covenant. In fact, no offering to God, including the sacrifice of bulls and goats prescribed by the Mosaic Covenant, would make proper sense to a Jew apart from his having genuine belief (cf. Cain and Abel in Genesis 4). Thus, the Mosaic Covenant was even requiring a changed inwardness just as much as the New Covenant does. In addition, the whole message of the Bible is that a human being cannot really bring an appropriate sin offering to God and expect to receive forgiveness without authentic inwardness and repentance. Rituals alone are insufficient, and a person with a heart of abject rebellion will never receive God’s mercy, because this person is operating strictly on the basis of his moral depravity. Consequently, a word such as “undefiantly” or “unwillfully” would be a better translation than “unintentionally” in Numbers 15:24 & 28. Cf. Hebrews 10:26-29, **Heb. 10:26** “For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, **Heb. 10:27** but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. **Heb. 10:28** Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. **Heb. 10:29** How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean [mundane] the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?”

²³² τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, μήπω πεφανερῶσθαι τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδὸν ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχοῦσης στάσιν – The first clause contains a genitive absolute. While most translations interpret τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου as the Holy Spirit of God, it makes more sense in the flow of Paul’s argument that he is thinking of a Jew who is an authentic believer, e.g., David, whom he will quote from Psalm 40 in Hebrews 10. Part of what Paul has been doing is not only explaining the biblical role of the Messiah, who is Jesus, but also exhorting his Jewish readers to become more biblical in their understanding of the Messiah, which involves grasping the significance of the New Covenant with its ritual of the sacrifice of its High Priest in comparison to the Mosaic Covenant with its rituals (plural) of offerings, etc. by both the worshipers and the priests. Paul has been weaving the necessity of a Jew’s understanding the various elements of the OT into his explanation of the identity and role of the Messiah (cf. Hebrews 5:14, “In contrast, solid food is for those who are well on their way to their goal (*telos*) (τελείων), who, on account of proficiency, have the mental faculties that are trained to make the distinction between good and bad.”). The latter is useless for a human being without the former.

Therefore, the words in the genitive case, τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, refer to the spirit of the Jew whom God has set apart by virtue of His miraculous inner work. This person’s inner thoughts and understanding have made clear to him something important about the Mosaic Covenant and its prescribed rituals. The word τοῦτο refers to what follows after the genitive absolute and what the set apart and theologically discerning Jew clearly understands—that, as long as the Mosaic Covenant has more standing intellectually, emotionally, morally, and spiritually for someone than it should, then the functionally and actual way of obtaining God’s *eternal* mercy, i.e., by means of some other way, i.e., the death of and intercession by the Messiah, has not yet been revealed to and actualized in this person. It was certainly not uncommon in Paul’s day (and in modern times, too) for a Jew to focus strictly on the Mosaic Covenant, relative to all other elements of the OT. Indeed, Paul himself had done just exactly this before his conversion on the road to Damascus in Acts 9.

The third clause, ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχοῦσης στάσιν, also contains a genitive absolute like the first clause, referring to the fact that the tabernacle, with its process of seeking God’s mercy, still has a primary position of importance in a Jew’s life *as long as this Jew has not properly grasped the propitiatory significance of the Messiah*, especially now that the Messiah himself, Jesus of Nazareth, has appeared. Whereas the phrase ἡ πρώτη σκηνῆ in Hebrews 9:2 and 9:6 refers to the first compartment of the tabernacle called The Holy Place, which the priests entered daily, in contrast to the inner sanctum of the tabernacle, The Holy of Holies, where the high priest entered once a year, here ἡ πρώτη σκηνῆ as the “first tent” refers to the whole Mosaic Covenant tabernacle/tent as opposed to the “second tent,” i.e., the heavenly tabernacle, where Jesus enters to appeal to God for *eternal* mercy on behalf of the believing Jew at the judgment.

While God was dealing with the Israelites in OT times, He was making it obvious through the offerings of the Mosaic Covenant that having an advocate who could mediate between Him and them was at the heart of their relationship with Him (cf. Hebrews 7:11, “Therefore, if indeed reaching the goal (*telos*) (τελείωσις) [of eternal mercy and life] were through the Levitical priesthood (*for the people have been given the Covenant on the basis of it*), then why was there yet the need for a different priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not to be called according to the order of Aaron?” (emphasis mine)). In addition, the focus of the Jews’ appealing to God for mercy, even *eternal* mercy, was *daily* on the basis of the rituals of the Mosaic Covenant and the earthly tabernacle/tent. However, for the authentic

believing Jew, this daily attention to the physical matters of the Mosaic Covenant, including its animal sacrifices, was clearly not enough to convince him that he had obtained God's *eternal* mercy, as Paul will go on to show in chapter 10 with a quote from David and Psalm 40!

Therefore, Paul is arguing that when the focus shifts for a believing Jew to some other way different from the Levitical priesthood and offerings under the Mosaic Covenant, i.e., to the crucified Messiah as "priest according to the order of Melchizedek," then the actual reality of *eternal* mercy through him also becomes true for this Jew.

²³³ ἥτις ἵσταται παραβολὴ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα, καθ' ἣν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίαι προσφέρονται μὴ δυνάμεναι κατὰ συνείδησιν τελειῶσαι τὸν λατρεύοντα – Paul says that the ἡ πρώτη σκηνή (feminine noun to which ἥτις refers) serves the role of being an analogy, something that is like something else, with respect to what is happening now by virtue of the revelation of the Messiah as Jesus of Nazareth. The Levitical offerings are *similar to* the offering that the Melchizedekan priest brings, but they are clearly *not the same*. They lack the ability to convince the worshiper that he is completely and eternally forgiven. Thus, the Levitical priests and their offerings are unable to provide an understanding of and confidence for complete and eternal salvation, which is what Jesus' death does since it is both the offering of himself and that of him as the Messiah, who qualifies to intercede for rebellious human beings at the final judgment. It should be obvious, especially by now in Paul's explanation, that neither the Levitical priests nor their animal sacrifices can intercede for human beings at this judgment, because the priests need their own intercessor, and dead bulls as offerings do not rise from the dead to appeal to God for mercy for the ones who offered them to God! Nevertheless, the whole concept of a new separate high priest, in accordance with the Davidic Covenant and the New Covenant, was certainly difficult to figure out for the Jews as they studied their OTs. Only certain Jews, such as David, did so along the way, and this is why he was able to write Psalm 110.

²³⁴ μόνον ἐπὶ βρώμασιν καὶ πόμασιν καὶ διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς ἵσταται, δικαιώματα σαρκὸς μέχρι καιροῦ διορθώσεως ἐπικείμενα – cf. Leviticus 14:8 regarding the cleansing of a leper, "The one to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes (וַיִּבְרֹאשׁ אֶת-בְּגָדָיו אֶת-בְּרִיחֵי אֶת-הַמִּטְהַר אֶת-בְּרִיחֵי) (καὶ πλυνεῖ ὁ καθαρισθεὶς τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ) and shave off all his hair and bathe in water and be clean. Now afterward, he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days." The rituals of the Mosaic Covenant qualified a Jew to participate properly in the society and life of the nation of Israel. This was all that they accomplished. If it is possible to talk about forgiveness that God grants to the Israelites through their offerings, it is a very puny forgiveness in comparison to that which is obtained as a result of Jesus' offering himself and becoming their High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Nevertheless, it was this process of earthly, physical offerings and rituals that were to remain at the *physical* center of a Jew's daily worship of God, even after a new and improved process could provide *eternal* forgiveness along with moral perfection. This latter process was instituted through the New Covenant and involved the offering of the Messiah and his intervention at the final judgment. While the Mosaic Covenant certainly requires authentic inwardness, its focus on continuous outward religious rituals and the earthly tabernacle that required constant attention to the rituals by the Levitical priests indicates that it is not eternally substantive. The New Covenant is quite boring in comparison with its one time sacrificial act by its Melchizedekan priest and without its explicit requirements of multiple religious rituals, but it is nevertheless, in contrast to the Mosaic Covenant, *eternally* effective, which ultimately is the most important issue.

In addition, the Mosaic Covenant remains in effect for the Jews only until the New Covenant corrects this shortcoming of the Mosaic Covenant by completing God's promises of fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant's promise of eternal life in the Kingdom of God of the next creation. Therefore, while the rituals of the Mosaic Covenant *physically* dominate the daily worship of an authentically believing Jew, it is the ritual of the human offering of the Messiah of the New Covenant that *intellectually and theologically* dominates his overall worship of Yahweh, because he understands that it is only the latter by which he will be granted *eternal* mercy by God.

A version of the word διορθώσις appears as διορθωτής in Wisdom 7:15 and seems to mean corrector, specifically that God is the corrector of people who are wise and willing to be corrected by Him, i.e., to become even wiser.

²³⁵ Χριστὸς δὲ παραγενόμενος ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν ἑνεστημένων ἀγαθῶν διὰ τῆς μείζονος καὶ τελειοτέρας σκηνῆς οὐ χειροποιήτου, τοῦτ' ἔστιν οὐ ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως – Here we have the subject of the sentence that began in 9:8. Jesus, the Jewish Messiah and Jewish High Priest from the tribe of Judah, could not perform his priestly duties in the earthly tent and has had to do so in the tent of the next creation. This latter tent exists so to speak in a realm that constitutes the presence of God at the final judgment. Paul is pointing out that a high priest who performs his intercessory function in the presence of God is, in effect, doing so in the Holy of Holies, which was where God dwelt among the Israelites as stated in the OT (cf. Exodus 25:8, "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them."). By extrapolation, God not only dwelt in the earthly tent of the Israelites in the wilderness, but He also dwells wherever is His judgment seat at the final judgment. Thus, both locations can be called the Holy of Holies. The first is the temporary place of propitiation and approval for the Jews to obtain from God good status as citizens of the nation of Israel in the present realm, while the second is the place of *eternal* mercy for Jews (and Gentiles) in order to obtain from God citizenship in the Kingdom of God in the next realm.

Paul is explaining that Jesus appears as a high priest of the really valuable things of eternal mercy and life for a Jewish believer that are in the process of coming about through ultimately the intercession of Jesus for the Jew at the final judgment (cf. "eternal redemption" in v. 12). Cf. Hebrew 10:1 – τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν.

²³⁶ οὐδὲ δι' αἵματος τράγων καὶ μόσχων διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος εἰσῆλθεν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ ἅγια ἵ αἰώνιαν λύτρωσιν εὐράμενος – The Messiah has offered himself in order to qualify to be the Jew's High Priest at the final judgment in the particular Holy of Holies of God's eternal courtroom in order to obtain complete forgiveness and salvation for us. The "blood of bulls and goats" can obtain good standing in the nation of Israel for the Jew, but Jesus' "own blood" obtains entrance into the eternal Kingdom of God for him, which is accompanied by God's eternal mercy.

²³⁷ εἰ γὰρ τὸ αἶμα τράγων καὶ ταύρων καὶ σποδὸς δαμάλεως ῥαντίζουσα τοὺς κεκοινωνημένους ἀγιάζει πρὸς τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς καθαρότητα – The comparison is between the offering of animals and the offering of the Messiah and their respective effectiveness vis-à-vis God's response. The former can produce only a *temporary* effectiveness of life within the community of the Jews as God's chosen people. Therefore, it involves only *their* outward religious rituals, either as a *worshiper* who brings his offerings to God, or as a *priest* who submits the worshiper's offerings to God (cf. v. 10, foods, drinks, and various washings). Paul is explaining that an animal offering keeps the worshiping Jew alive within the nation of Israel. He is also in the process of explaining that Jesus' offering keeps the worshiping Jew alive in the eternal Kingdom of God. Cf. Numbers 19:1-10, "...This is the statute of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer in which is no defect and on which a yoke has never been placed. You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be brought outside the camp and be slaughtered in his presence. Next Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times... Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin (כִּי־יִטְהַר) (ἀγνισμά– *hapax legomenon*, i.e., used only here I the LXX in Numbers 19:9) [an offering with a 'cleansing' effect, i.e., it qualifies the worshiping Jew to participate properly in the nation of Israel]."

In Psalm 51:7, the LXX translates כִּי־יִטְהַר (=either the commission of an immoral act or the dealing with a person's immorality in such a way that mercy results, depending upon the context) with ῥαντίζω (=sprinkle). Thus, this latter physical term of splashing blood on a person or thing refers to God's taking care of a person's moral problem such that He grants him mercy and escape from His condemnation and destruction. In the case of the Jewish worshiper obeying the Mosaic Covenant, God granted the person life in the community of Jews, God's chosen people. In the case of the Jewish worshiper submitting to the New Covenant and its other way of bringing an offering to God, He granted the person life in the eternal realm.

²³⁸ πῶς ἄλλοι τὸ αἶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς διὰ πνεύματος ἁϊωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἄμωμον θεῷ – Eternal salvation comes to rebellious Jews (and Gentiles) in view of what the morally perfect Jesus was all about as the Messiah, whose role within the creation was to provide this eternal salvation through his death, resurrection, and intercession (cf. Romans 1:4 – κατὰ πνεῦμα ἀγιωσύνης). Paul is stating that Jesus was always focused on this role and its effect, because he knew that not only would it eventually lead to his death as an offering to God, but also it would have eternal effects for the true worshiper of God.

²³⁹ καθαριεὶ τὴν συνείδησιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων – Paul explains that Jesus' offering, and, by implication, not the offerings of bulls and goats in obedience to the Mosaic Covenant, provides the worshiping Jews with the understanding that they are saved from their innate rebellion against God by virtue of the death and intervention of their one, eternally official High Priest, the Messiah. While the animal sacrifices of the Mosaic covenant demonstrate how evil a Jew is, nevertheless, they, and the flagrant sins and immoral actions that any person commits, still leave him "dead" and condemned eternally speaking before God. In contrast, Jesus' death just that much more indicates how nothing that the Jews did could qualify them for eternal forgiveness and salvation from God's condemnation and destruction. In other words, not only the Levitical priests but also all morally depraved Jews need Jesus' divine and morally perfect intervention at the final judgment. But, his offering as the Messiah and eternal high priest clearly demonstrates to those who need God's eternal mercy that they can confidently approach God and obtain His mercy through Jesus. Additionally, this is in the midst of the eternally *inadequate* offerings of the Mosaic Covenant. Jesus' blood and death show that all authentically believing Jews will certainly receive God's mercy and entrance in His eternal kingdom.

²⁴⁰ εἰς τὸ λατρεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι ἵ – Jesus' death, along with the inward work of the Holy Spirit (cf. vs. 8ff.), opens up the eyes of the worshiper of God to the effect that he understands that he finds completion of his goal, forgiveness and eternal life, through Jesus' death and not through the Mosaic Covenant and its animal sacrifices. In addition, God is alive, and the purpose of the present existent cosmos is to provide eternal aliveness to those who embrace the truth of God and His offer of forgiveness through Jesus as the Messiah. When people embrace this truth in the present realm, they can be said to be serving the living God, a service that will continue into the next and eternal realm. By implication, Jews who are merely following the Mosaic Covenant without grasping the fact that they need another High Priest, who must intervene on their behalf for God's mercy, are not really "serving" God. They are as guilty as pagan idolators of rebelling against God.

²⁴¹ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διαθήκης καινῆς μεσίτης ἐστίν, ὅπως θανάτου γενομένου εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ πρώτῃ διαθήκῃ παραβάσεων τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν λάβωσιν οἱ κεκλημένοι τῆς αἰωνίου κληρονομίας – Jesus' death and offering provides *eternal* forgiveness for all those sins and immoral actions that the Jews have committed under the Mosaic Covenant, even after offering bulls and goats as sacrifices to God with genuine obedience, i.e., with authentic, biblical

inwardness. However, all these sacrifices, even those brought by a worshiper who had authentic inwardness, only qualified the Jew to participate appropriately in the nation of Israel. Thus, eternal forgiveness has always been on the basis of another way to appeal to God for mercy, i.e., on the basis of Jesus' death and sacrifice. As a result, God fulfills the promise of eternal life that He made in the Abrahamic Covenant for those Jews whom He changes inwardly such that they have grasped in OT times that God would use a different process from the Mosaic Covenant animal sacrifices. He also fulfills His promise for those Jews whom He changes inwardly such that they have grasped in NT times that this different process involves Jesus as the Messiah, who has offered himself to God on their behalf (cf. Genesis 12:2,3, "And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great. Thus, you shall be a blessing, and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed").

²⁴² ὅπου γὰρ διαθήκη, θάνατον ἀνάγκη φέρεσθαι τοῦ διαθεμένου – Paul is stating that Jesus' death was inherent in the very nature of the New Covenant. It would provide for the complete and eternal forgiveness of any authentically believing Jew (cf. Jeremiah 31:34 and Hebrews 8:12). However, in order to bring this about, God required that its new and unique High Priest offer himself in order to qualify as its High Priest, even though God does not need this death either from a legal or spiritual perspective. Basic mercy is a person's saying, "Yes, I will grant you a complete reprieve from paying for your wrongdoing, *even if no one pays for it.*" Nevertheless, for His own purposes, God has required that the High Priest of the New Covenant qualify for his role by suffering a criminal's death on the cross during the times of the Roman Empire.

²⁴³ διαθήκη γὰρ ἐπὶ νεκροῖς βεβαία, ἐπεὶ μήποτε ἰσχύει ὅτε ζῆ ὁ διαθέμενος – Here Paul implies that the Mosaic Covenant was intended for living Jews, i.e., Jews who were alive on earth and who could bring their offerings to God at the tabernacle/temple. Nevertheless, it left them eternally condemned before God, because once a Jew dies, how can he continue to bring his sin offerings before God? He can't. So while he may have achieved a good standing within the nation of Israel by his obedience to the Mosaic Covenant, he has no standing before God on its basis. Therefore, the nature and effect of the New Covenant is that it is intended for dead Jews, i.e., Jews who have died, left this earth, and yet who had authentic belief while they were alive. As a result, the New Covenant handles people's moral rebellion better than the Mosaic Covenant by providing not only a high priest who will be their advocate at the final judgment, but who also has offered himself to God through death. Just as the death of bulls and goats under the Mosaic Covenant made it clear that death is the consequence of moral rebellion against God, so does the death of the high priest, Jesus, who advocates for rebels at the final judgment.

Thus, death, even physical death, is still a major part of the experience of the Jews who are moral rebels against God. In line with this, the death of the High Priest as an offering to God becomes a key element of the New Covenant in order to point out that it will not come into final effect until after people die, i.e., at the final judgment. While a Jew is alive, there is technically the potential for salvation only at his death and at the final judgment. Paul is saying that it is in view of this fact that Jesus died—the death of the covenanter for the dead who were authentic believers in life and now face the judgment in their death in order to be granted eternal mercy.

²⁴⁴ ὅθεν οὐδὲ ἡ πρώτη χωρὶς αἵματος ἐγκεκρίνισται – When God instituted the first covenant, i.e., the Mosaic Covenant, He prescribed that death play a major role in His granting life to the Israelites who deserved death because of their immoral and disobedient actions under this covenant. However, as Paul is arguing, the blood of animals that was spilt for the Jews was in anticipation of the death of the High Priest who would be instrumental in making the New Covenant and providing eternal mercy and forgiveness for the Jews.

²⁴⁵ λαληθείσης γὰρ πάσης ἡ ἐντολῆς κατὰ ὅτον νόμον ὑπὸ Μωϋσέως παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, λαβὼν τὸ αἷμα τῶν ἄμωχων [καὶ τῶν τράγων] μετὰ ὕδατος καὶ ἐρίου κοκκίνου καὶ ὑσώπου αὐτό τε τὸ βιβλίον καὶ πάντα τὸν λαὸν ἐρράντισεν λέγων τοῦτο τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης ἧς ἐνετείλατο πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός – Cf. Exodus 24:8, LXX – ἰδοὺ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης, ἧς διέθετο κύριος πρὸς ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων τῶν λόγων τούτων; Heb. – כָּל־הַדָּמָם הִקְרַבְתִּי אֵלַי עַל־מִזְבֵּחַ הַיְהוָה יְהוָה כָּרַתְתָּ אֶת־כִּרְיֹתֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר־רָם־הַקְּרַבְתִּי אֵלַי הַיְהוָה – When God made the Mosaic Covenant with the Israelites and even before choosing the Levites as priests in Exodus 28 and Numbers 3:4ff., Moses made it clear through the ceremony in Exodus 24 that death was to play a vital and necessary role in the operation of the covenant. Indeed, it can be said that God "cut" the covenant with the Israelites during this ceremony of killing the animals and Moses' sprinkling their blood on the utensils of the covenant. Therefore, sprinkling the items with the bulls' and goats' blood communicated that everything used within the covenant had meaning only by virtue of its connection to the death of the offerings and appeals to God for life in the midst of the people's sins and immoral actions that deserved death. Cf. Leviticus 1:4, "He [the Jewish worshiper who is bringing his offering to God] shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement (וַיִּטֹּבֶה לְפָנָיו) (ἐξιλάσασθαι περὶ αὐτοῦ) on his behalf. He shall slay the young bull before the LORD; and Aaron's sons the priests shall offer up the blood and sprinkle the blood around on the altar that is at the doorway of the tent of meeting." Paul is arguing that all these offerings of the Mosaic Covenant anticipated God's making/cutting the New Covenant through Jesus' death on the cross and the spilling of his blood for the sake of "sprinkling" it on sinners (Jews in this context) so that they may obtain God's *eternal* mercy.

²⁴⁶ καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν δὲ καὶ πάντα τὰ σκεύη τῆς λειτουργίας τῷ αἵματι ὁμοίως ἐρράντισεν – Cf. Exodus 24:6; 40:9; Leviticus 8:15,19; 16:14-16 – The OT does not mention the sprinkling of blood on the tabernacle/tent. Instead Exodus 40:9ff. describes the anointing of "the tabernacle and all that is in it" with "anointing oil" (וַיִּשְׁמָנוּ אֶת־הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ אֵלַי אֵלֶּיךָ)

(τὸ ἔλαιον τοῦ χρίσματος). Perhaps what Paul means therefore is that sprinkling the scroll of the covenant and the people in Exodus 24, it can be inferred that as each new piece of the MC religion came into existence, Moses did the same with it. This is how important and vital is the contact of blood with the elements of God's relationship to His people, the Jews and the material stuff of the MC and all Christians and themselves metaphorically under the NC.

²⁴⁷ καὶ σχεδὸν ἐν αἵματι πάντα καθαρίζεται κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ χωρὶς αἱματεκχυσίας οὐ γίνεται ἄφεσις – The point is that the granting of life from God's mercy and forgiveness for people who deserve death because of their immorality come through the process of something's or someone's death's taking place. Therefore, almost everything involved in the Jew's existence is affected by this process. Eventually, the death of the Messiah as high priest fits with all the death and blood that was poured out from animals as offerings to God under the Mosaic Covenant, including the very first event of this kind when God was making the covenant with the Jews and Moses sprinkled blood over practically everything within his reach (cf. Exodus 24).

²⁴⁸ ἀνάγκη οὖν τὰ μὲν ὑποδείγματα τῶν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς τούτοις καθαρίζεσθαι, αὐτὰ δὲ τὰ ἐπουράνια κρείττοσιν θυσίαις παρὰ ταύτας – Paul draws the conclusion from the example of Moses that God has set things up within human history to make it theologically necessary that death play a major role in the acquisition of any temporary stay of execution for the Jews under the Mosaic Covenant, and, likewise, the acquisition of *eternal* mercy for them (and any others) under the New Covenant. Paul also draws the conclusion from what he knows and has been arguing about the role of the Messiah that the New Covenant requires an offering and death that is superior to that of bulls and goats. In the case of the New Covenant, the very human Messiah who is acting out his role as God within the creation, king of the eternal Kingdom of God, and high priest for rebellious human beings at the final judgment is precisely this very offering.

²⁴⁹ οὐ γὰρ εἰς χειροποίητα εἰσῆλθεν ἅγια Χριστός, ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν, ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν, νῦν ἐμφανισθῆναι τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν – Paul has already argued that Jesus is not permitted to operate as a priest under the jurisdiction of the Mosaic Covenant and, therefore, cannot operate as priest inside the physical, earthly tabernacle. Instead, Jesus has to operate under the jurisdiction of the New Covenant and carry out his priestly role in the heavenly tabernacle, i.e., at the final judgment, where, in the presence of the Father, he appeals to Him for *eternal* mercy on behalf of the Jews who have believed God for another way to grant them mercy that is different from bulls and goats as offerings.

It is not as though there is an actual building or temple in heaven. Paul simply uses the language of the tabernacle/temple of the Mosaic Covenant to talk about the same kind of process of appealing to God for life in the face of death that a person deserves. Wherever the actual "meeting" takes place between Yahweh and a morally rebellious Jew with Jesus at his side to intervene on his behalf, Jesus will be successful in obtaining eternal mercy for this person.

²⁵⁰ οὐδ' ἵνα πολλάκις προσφέρῃ ἑαυτόν, ὡσπερ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὰ ἅγια ἵ κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἐν αἵματι ἄλλοτρίῳ – The Levitical high priests were ordered by God under the Mosaic Covenant to enter into the Holy of Holies once a year on a continuous basis, year after year, with blood that did not belong to them but to the animals that they sacrificed each time. Paul is stating that the Messiah's offering is different in two important respects. His is not done on a continuous basis. It is done only once. And his does not involve the blood of something or someone else. It is with his blood through his death that he makes his offer.

²⁵¹ ἐπεὶ ἔδει αὐτὸν πολλάκις παθεῖν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου – If Jesus' offering were of the same kind as that of the Mosaic Covenants, where he was morally depraved and God required multiple sacrifices for his and other's benefit, then he would have had to offer himself continuously in order to obtain God's postponement of execution for himself and any one else who wanted to take advantage of his sacrifice and role as priest. And Paul is saying that this would have needed to happen from the beginning of the system of the New Covenant with its designated relationship between God and the Jews. However, the system of sacrifices under the New Covenant is different. Rather than repetitive and multiple sacrifices being necessary, only one is required—that of Jesus, the system's High Priest, on the cross.

²⁵² νῦν δὲ ἅπαξ ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς ἀθέτησιν [τῆς] ἁμαρτίας διὰ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ πεφανέρωται – It seems that Paul is saying that God instituted the Mosaic Covenant with the plan that it, with its continuous animal sacrifices, would exist for a rather long period of time in the history of the present realm, so that Jesus' sacrifice has come at a point in history where the time remaining for this realm is relatively short. Or, at least, Jesus' sacrifice definitely points to the end of the realm, while the animal sacrifices could point only to Jesus' sacrifice. Thus, at the beginning of the the period of time that constitutes the completion of the ages leading up to the eternal Kingdom of God, Jesus, the king and high priest of this kingdom, with the single offering of his own death on the cross, is the foundation of eternal salvation, who, eventually, brings it about for human beings whose basic, moral, and internal structure is characterized by rebellion against God (cf. Hebrews 1:1-4).

²⁵³ καὶ καθ' ὅσον ἀπόκειται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἅπαξ ἀποθανεῖν, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο κρίσις – God, the transcendent Creator and Judge, has so arranged human existence that people die and then experience the final judgment that ultimately results in either eternal forgiveness or eternal condemnation.

²⁵⁴ οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ προσενεχθεὶς εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας ἐκ δευτέρου χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας ὁφήσεται τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀπεκδεχομένοις εἰς σωτηρίαν ἵ – Paul is showing that there is a single event that corresponds to the single death that all human beings experience in the present realm. This single event is Jesus' second appearance. He died once during his first appearance, and human beings die once at the end of their own lifetimes on earth. Jesus will appear a second time, and human beings will be able to experience the benefits of this second appearance by being

rescued from God's eternal condemnation. Paul is using parabolic language to refer to what he describes in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 where Jesus will return in order that those who have looked forward to it for their salvation will rise up to meet him in the air and be with him for the rest of eternity, which effectively is his appealing to the Father "at the judgment" for their eternal mercy.

²⁵⁵ σκιάν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, 'οὐκ αὐτήν' τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων, κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ταῖς αὐταῖς θυσίαις ἵνα προσφέρουσιν εἰς τὸ διηκεῖς οὐδέποτε ἵδύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους τελειῶσαι – Paul has been arguing that the Mosaic Covenant has only shadow-like elements of eternal mercy, the goal of a morally depraved Jew. Now, he says that this Covenant does not have even an image of the things that really matter. In other words, the Mosaic Covenant is so devoid of anything beneficial for helping an immoral Jew obtain eternal life from God, that it can be said to lack even an image, e.g., a photograph, of Jesus and his death. Yes, there is a shadow of Jesus and his death in the covenant. But this is all, which means that the covenant lacks anything really substantive to commend a morally depraved Jew to God and obtain His eternal forgiveness. Consequently, Jesus' death is the only way that this level of mercy can be obtained by any other human being (cf. 8:5). Another way to say this is that the shadow that consitutes the Mosaic Covenant is nothing compared to the actual death of Jesus that allows for a confident approach to God for salvation (cf. Hebrews 7:3; 10:12,14).

Paul has been maintaining that the fact that many sacrifices year after year are necessary in order to fulfill God's requirements for the Jews under the Mosaic Covenant indicates that it is inadequate to provide *eternal* mercy. The Jew who appeals to God for mercy through the methodology of the Mosaic Covenant always has next year (indeed, the next day) to contemplate, thus correctly never feeling completely confident that he has obtained complete and eternal forgiveness from God.

There are two distinct meanings given to the Greek word εἰκόν the NT. The first, and more numerous, is its obvious meaning (for us who speak English) of image or representation, referring to something that is far less than the reality which the image represents. For example, a photograph of a beautiful landscape is still much less real than the landscape itself.

There are a couple of places where εἰκόν means appearance, referring to the very thing itself. Cf. Romans 8:29 for the meaning of appearance for εἰκόν – "because those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the appearance (εἰκόν) of His Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brethren." Cf. also 2 Corinthians 3:18 – "And we all with unveiled faces, while reflecting like a mirror the awesomeness of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image (εἰκόν) from glory into glory, just as from the Lord, that is, the Spirit."

In spite of the possibility that Paul is here using this second meaning, his argument is stronger if he is using the first meaning, so that the image is a very close representation of the real thing, but it is still not the real thing. Therefore, his point is that the Mosaic Covenant's sacrifices are not even an image of the real thing, which is Jesus' sacrifice. They are merely a shadow. As a result, Jesus' sacrifice is the only valid avenue to the proper existential goal of a human being—eternal forgiveness and life. Along with the inclusion of αὐτήν in the phrase οὐκ αὐτήν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων where it means actual or very, Paul is saying that the Mosaic Covenant does not have even the very image of the most important things with respect to a morally depraved Jew's human existence, i.e., the completion of his goal (*telos*) of eternal mercy and life that can come *only* through the Messiah Jesus. In this way, Paul, for the sake of convincing his readers that they dare not abandon their belief in Jesus as the Messiah, is emphasizing the wide and irreconcilable discrepancy between what God instituted through Moses and what He has instituted through Jesus.

²⁵⁶ ἐπεὶ 'οὐκ ἄν' ἐπαύσαντο προσφερόμενοι διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν ἔχειν ἔτι συνείδησιν ἁμαρτιῶν τοὺς λατρεύοντας ἅπαξ κεκαθαρισμένους – Once again, Paul mentions that that the multiple and continuous sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant were worthless for providing the worshipping Jew with eternal mercy and the confidence of eternal mercy. If they had been adequate for such, then the Jews could have stopped bringing them to the Levitical priests, and they could have felt settled in their hearts and minds that God would grant them salvation in the eternal Kingdom of God on the basis of them. This is to say that, if one Levitical offering were eternally effective, then the worshipers who used it to approach God for His forgiveness could think that the whole issue of obtaining and retaining God's mercy had been taken care of once and for all, so that they would never have to slaughter a bull or a goat again and offer it to God on behalf of their rebellion against Him.

Clearly, Paul is indicating that there is something about the psychological and intellectual connection between bringing an offering to God and the sense of what this has done as an important part of the process of seeking His mercy. What a person would like to be able to do is bring one offering to God, humbly appeal to Him for eternal mercy, and have God say, "Done deal! You will reach your goal (*telos*) of eternal life!" Afterward, the Jewish worshiper could leave the tabernacle/temple, continue living his existence as a human being in, for example, the tribe of Naphtali near the Sea of Galilee, and be completely confident that he actually has God's eternal forgiveness and the certainty of living in the eternal Kingdom of God, never having to do anything else or repeat coming to God with an offering. Paul's whole argument hinges on the fact that only Jesus' single offering under the New Covenant accomplishes this.

²⁵⁷ ἀλλ' ἐν αὐταῖς ἀνάμνησις ἁμαρτιῶν κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἀδύνατον γὰρ αἷμα ἰταύρων καὶ τράγων ἵνα ἀφαιρέιν ἁμαρτίας – Here is Paul's definitive statement. The ongoing death of bulls and goats is absolutely useless for appealing to God for eternal mercy. In fact, the daily and annual repetition is only a *reminder* that the problem of man's innate rebellion is not yet settled, so that there is still a lack of eternal forgiveness until God institutes another way to deal with it. Indeed, the way that God has set things up within the creation, an eternal high priest, who is morally perfect and king

of the universe, is necessary to appear at the final judgment and intervene on behalf of morally depraved human beings. And it is the *final judgment* that is the main event for obtaining God's eternal mercy. Slaughtered and resurrected, if it were the case, bulls and goats will not be there to help. They actually will remain dead and destroyed. Paul has also argued in chapter 7 that the priests who have brought these animal sacrifices to the altar of the Mosaic Covenant tabernacle/temple need their own mediator, thereby rendering them useless for intervening on behalf of other human beings' eternal mercy. And the final piece of this puzzle is that the appropriate high priest who appears at the final judgment qualifies for this eternally important role by offering himself as a sacrifice to God, which Jesus of Nazareth did when he died on the cross.

²⁵⁸ Hebrews 10:5-18 are a fuller explanation of Paul's point that the continuous sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant are merely a reminder that there must be another way to gain God's eternal mercy. Paul uses David and his comments from Psalm 40 to show that he, even as king of Israel, recognized this important point.

²⁵⁹ διὸ εἰσερχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον λέγει – Paul will now go on to explain that David, whenever he engaged in performing the religious system of the Mosaic Covenant that God had prescribed, understood that God would provide a method separate and different from the Mosaic Covenant in order for him to obtain God's mercy.

²⁶⁰ θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι – cf. Psalm 40:6a & b – תְּזַבְּחֵנִי לֹא | הַקָּהֵל וְיִבְרַח לִי אָזְנוֹי כְּרִיתִי לִי – these last three words = you hollowed out my ears; LXX – θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας ὥτια [i.e., σῶμα] δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι = you put in order/prepared my ears [i.e., body] (or, “ears/body for me”). There are two possibilities here –

1) In line with the Massoretic Hebrew text from around A.D. 500, David could speaking of how God caused him to respond appropriately to his sins and immoral actions, with a changed heart and an inward commitment to obey God by pursuing goodness. Therefore, the hollowing out of his ears would represent David's desire and willingness to embrace the truth of God, which he was able to do only because God had miraculously changed his inwardness. Thus, the LXX translates it as putting his ears in order. However, there is a textual variant in the LXX that uses σῶμα = body instead of ὥτια = ears, thus indicating that there is a possibility that David meant that God had put his whole body in order by transforming him into a person who fundamentally understands the truth and the importance of inward humility before God for the sake of appealing to Him for mercy. Thus, Paul would be talking about David's inwardness, not Jesus' obedience, and the former as a precursor to what God would do for all the Jews according to the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34 (cf. Hebrews 10:15-16). In addition, David understood, because of his changed heart, that the actual ritual of offering animal sacrifices was not ultimately what God desired from him. Instead, He desired a changed, humble, and repentant heart. Cf. Hebrews 9:8ff.

2) Another possibility is that Paul's quote is from the LXX that uses σῶμα = body, while the Massoretic Hebrew text had been changed by the Jews before A.D. 500 in order to counteract the arguments of Christians who used this passage to argue exactly what Paul is arguing, that the *multiple* Mosaic Covenant animal sacrifices were and are worthless for obtaining God's eternal mercy, while the Messiah Jesus' *one* sacrifice does provide for it. Therefore σῶμα = body is not necessarily being used by David in Psalm 40 to refer to Jesus' body, but David is simply saying that God will provide *something other than the Mosaic Covenant animal sacrifices* for him, in the midst of his authentic inwardness that can be assumed simply by virtue of the way that David is speaking. This “something other” will be the ground for David's appeal to God for eternal forgiveness.

²⁶¹ ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἀμαρτίας οὐκ εὐδόκησας – cf. Psalm 40:6c – תְּזַבְּחֵנִי לֹא הָאֵלֹהִים שְׂמַחֵנִי; LXX – ὀλοκαύτωμα καὶ περὶ ἀμαρτίας οὐκ ἤτησας – Paul changes “asked” to “were pleased,” that God neither asked for nor was pleased with the actual animal sacrifices. They are worthless for obtaining His eternal mercy. What pleased Him vis-à-vis the Mosaic Covenant was a changed and humble inwardness and the recognition on a morally depraved human being's part, such as David's, that God would provide eternal mercy some other way. Thus, Paul has been arguing that the New Covenant's sacrifice, Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, is vastly pleasing and even necessary to God, because he is required to be present and act at the final judgment on behalf of those who embrace him as their High Priest on into the Kingdom of God.

²⁶² τότε εἶπον, ἰδοὺ, ἤκω ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται ἵνα περὶ ἐμοῦ τοῦ ποιῆσαι, ὁ θεός, τὸ θέλημά σου – cf. Psalm 40:7 – עָלַי כָּתוּב בְּסֵפֶר הַמִּגְלָה בְּאָזְנוֹי הַקָּהֵל אֲמַרְתִּי אֵן; LXX – τότε εἶπον ἰδοὺ ἤκω, ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ ἐμοῦ; Psalm 40:8a – לֵעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנֵךְ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי תְּכַתְּבֵנִי; LXX – τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου, ὁ θεός μου ἐβουλήθη – David had grasped the fact that God had “written” in His book, i.e., His account/script of the story of the creation (cf. John 1:1), that He had “written” before He began creating the story, that he would be an individual Jew who did what God desires, i.e., a Jew whom God would choose to cause to become inwardly committed to His values and desires, i.e., abhorring and repenting of immorality while recognizing that God would provide a different basis for mercy from the animal sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant. Thus, David is doing the desire of God by recognizing that there must be another method of mercy, which bolsters Paul's argument to his Jewish readers who are being persecuted by Jews who claim that they know the OT, which requires that the Jews rely on the animal sacrifices for obtaining God's forgiveness.

²⁶³ ἀνώτερον λέγων ὅτι ‘θυσίας καὶ προσφορὰς’ καὶ ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἀμαρτίας οὐκ ἠθέλησας, οὐδὲ εὐδόκησας – Paul paraphrases Psalm 40:6a & c and even adds more words to David's text in order to make it clearer

that David had realized that God was not fundamentally interested in the sacrificial rituals that he was performing according to the Mosaic Covenant.

²⁶⁴ αἵτινες κατὰ τὸ νόμον προσφέρονται – Paul admits that the Mosaic Covenant did certainly prescribe and command the Jews to present animal sacrifices and other kinds of offerings to God. Thus, they were truly being obedient to God whenever they did so, i.e., when they did so with authentic inwardness.

²⁶⁵ τότε εἶρηκεν ἰδοὺ ἦκω τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου – David pursued obedience to God, not on the basis of the the Mosaic Covenant rituals that he was performing, but on the basis of another method that God would provide, all of which constituted David's doing the desire of God, in complete contradiction to the theology of Paul's readers' persecutors. Thus, Paul has been arguing that, through the New Covenant and David's Lord and priest according to the order of Melchizedek, David will gain God's eternal mercy.

²⁶⁶ ἀναίρει τὸ πρῶτον ἵνα τὸ δεύτερον στήσῃ – David accomplishes a kind of theological switch, but one that God actually intended. David switches out the rituals of the Mosaic Covenant sacrifices for the methodology that arises through the New Covenant, the sacrificial offering of the High Priest of this latter covenant, even if David could not have completely described this methodology.

²⁶⁷ ἐν ᾧ θελήματι ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμὲν τὸ διὰ τῆς προσφορᾶς τοῦ σώματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐφάπαξ – Paul is saying that, by following David's example of recognizing the necessity of an alternative method for obtaining God's forgiveness, he and his fellow Jews become set apart by God from other Jews for the Kingdom of God, especially now that Jesus as Messiah and sacrificed High Priest has appeared and made himself known as “the other way” (cf. John 14:6, “I am the way, the truth, and life. No one comes to the Father but by me.”). [If, with whatever Hebrew word was used in Psalm 40:6, David was not referring to an actual human body but simply to another “method” that God would use to provide eternal mercy, then Paul is using σώμα = body in the same way. Thus, the genitive phrase Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is in apposition to the words τοῦ σώματος, indicating that Jesus as the Messiah is the method and alternative way that God has used to correspond to what David had written.]

As a result, Paul is using David's understanding to show that, now, the means for NT morally depraved Jews to survive the final judgment is the Messiah's death + belief in the Messiah and his death, because he is their high priest who appeals to God for eternal mercy. Belief in the biblical truth of the inadequacy of the Mosaic Covenant and the necessity of an alternative method of offerings is what God causes a Jew to do according to His plans and purposes for the creation, so that, not only David, but also Paul and other NT believing Jews do the will of God.

²⁶⁸ καὶ πᾶς μὲν ἱερεὺς ἔστηκεν καθ' ἡμέραν λειτουργῶν καὶ τὰς αὐτὰς πολλάκις προσφέρων θυσίας, αἵτινες οὐδέποτε δύνανται περιελβεῖν ἁμαρτίας – Paul once again repeats his argument of chapters 7-9. The Levitical priesthood was never intended do provide eternal mercy by virtue of their multiple offerings that never could suffice for obtaining God's complete and eternal mercy and never could give a Jew a sense of confidence such that he knew that it was ok for him to stop bringing his animal sacrifices. In addition, Paul emphasizes the fact that the position of the Levitical priests was always one of standing, in contrast to that of the Messiah and High Priest...

²⁶⁹ οὗτος δὲ μίαν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν προσενέγκας θυσίαν εἰς τὸ διηκεῖς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ – In contrast to the Levites, who kept offering the Jews' and their own sacrifices, then died and remained dead, Jesus has died, risen from the dead, and taken his eternal position of ruling over the creation by **sitting down** at the right hand of Yahweh (cf. Psalm 110:1). In addition, by their very nature, the Levitical priests' sacrifices were temporary and implied that other sacrifices would follow only until the end of the present age. In contrast, Jesus' sacrifice was once and eternally effective, implying that no other sacrifices would follow for all of eternity. Therefore, Jesus is the only qualified eternal High Priest. His single offering of himself as the morally perfect icon of God within the creation qualifies him to intervene on behalf of even morally depraved Levitical priests in order to provide the right and confident sense of complete and eternal mercy. In addition, as with the continual *standing* of the Levitical priests in order to fulfill their priestly responsibilities, Paul is saying that the Melchizedekan High Priest was able to sit down after his own sacrifice, and, indeed, he sat down at the right hand of Yahweh, thus resulting in his taking on the responsibility of ruling over the creation, something the Levitical priests could never dream of doing. Only the Davidic king could do so as God's proxy within the creation according to the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7.

²⁷⁰ τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκδεχόμενος ἕως τεθῶσιν οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτοῦ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ – As Paul wraps us his explanation for why the new high priest of Psalm 110 is better than the high priests of the Mosaic Covenant, he indicates why his readers and he do not yet see this high priest in action. It is because he is waiting until God gets to the point in His story where He wants to crush this high priest's enemies. Thus, besides ruling over the creation, the high priest of the New Covenant can count on God's crushing his enemies, which God promised to do for the Jews, and therefore the Levitical priests, under the Mosaic Covenant also. However, the destruction of the Jews' enemies was strictly for earthly purposes, while the destruction of the Messiah's enemies is for heavenly and eternal purposes. Thus, Paul is declaring that Jesus, having qualified as High Priest and ruler over the creation, including over the temporal Kingdom of Israel in the present creation and the eternal Kingdom of God in the new creation, merely waits for God to complete His project when there will be no more enemies of truth, Jesus, and God within the creation. As I have said before, this is ANE and Davidic Covenant language, thus tying together Jesus' New Covenant and Melchizedekan priesthood with his role as king, which Paul has been arguing since the end of chapter 2 (cf. 2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 10:26ff; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

Psalm 110:1 – Yahweh said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

²⁷¹ μιᾶ γὰρ προσφορᾷ τετελείωκεν εἰς τὸ διηκεῖς τοὺς ἁγιαζομένους – This has been Paul’s main point. By virtue of his role as the Davidic and Melchizedek king and priest, Jesus can finish the task of obtaining eternal mercy for divinely caused inwardly appropriate Jews (cf. the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34) and, by implication, all morally depraved human beings with proper inwardness. Jesus will be able to appeal to the Father for mercy at the final judgment, something the Levitical priests were incapable of doing, because they will need the Messiah’s intervention just as much as any other morally depraved human being will need it (cf. Hebrews 10:10,15-18). Therefore, this “completion” mentioned by Paul is more than just complete confidence for the Jewish worshiper. It is complete salvation—for all time and eternity (cf. Hebrews 10:1 – εἰς τὸ διηκεῖς), that Jesus brings with his role as the single and unique offering of the New Covenant and mediator at the final judgment in contrast to the multiple and continuous offerings of animals under the Mosaic Covenant.

²⁷² μαρτυρεῖ δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον μετὰ γὰρ τὸ εἰρηκέναι – Paul obviously believes the Bible to be God’s communication to mankind and, therefore, inerrant (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16). In addition, it was God who was speaking through Jeremiah when He spoke of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34. But, because it was God *in the creation* who was speaking through Jeremiah, Paul can appropriately identify the person who is speaking as the Holy Spirit, i.e., God as He operates within the creation.

²⁷³ αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη ἦν διαθήσομαι πρὸς αὐτοὺς μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκείνας, λέγει κύριος διδούς νόμους μου ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ τῆν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς – Paul first draws the readers’ attention to the portion of Jeremiah 31:31-34 that he quoted in chapter 8. Here God says that He will eventually change the inwardness of all the Jews with a new covenant, indeed, the New Covenant. This change corresponds to what Paul has just implicitly pointed out in verses 5-10 about David, that he understood that, by understanding that God would provide an alternative method to Mosaic Covenant animal sacrifices for receiving His forgiveness, he was doing God’s will and being an authentically biblical inward person. And Paul is arguing that the Jews of his day can finally have God’s Torah of believing in the crucified Messiah placed on their hearts, which would be the contemporary form of David’s doing God’s will. In other words, with the the New Covenant, God commits to turning the Jews into a people who obey Him appropriately with “circumcised hearts” by causing them to embrace His commandment to believe in and follow Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah (cf. Deuteronomy 10:16, “So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer;” Romans 2:28,29, “**2:28** The true Jew is not the one who is such outwardly, and neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh, **2:29** but the true Jew is one in his hidden, innermost parts. And circumcision is of the heart by means of the Spirit, not of the letter. In addition, his praise is not from men but from God.”). It was all this that God was promising in Deuteronomy 29 & 30. For example, Deuteronomy 30:6, “Thus, Yahweh your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants so that you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your being, in order that you may live.” Thus, the commandment to embrace a crucified Messiah for the sake of eternal forgiveness becomes the new Torah for the Jews vis-à-vis the New Covenant.

²⁷⁴ τὰ καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὁ αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ ἠμνησθῆσομαι ἔτι – Secondly, Paul draws the readers’ attention to the next portion of Jeremiah 31:31-34 that he quoted in chapter 8. God’s purpose for making the New Covenant with the Jews is to provide them with eternal forgiveness and mercy, thus implying, by virtue of the change in covenant, a change in priesthood. In other words, eternal forgiveness for the Jews cannot take place through the multiple and continuous sacrifices of animals of the Mosaic Covenant without the single sacrifice of the New Covenant. Thus, there is a new priesthood that further demonstrates that the Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices are useless for obtaining the goal of a human being, the Kingdom of God in the next realm. God did remember the sins of the Jews who merely practiced the Mosaic Covenant and thought it was sufficient to obtain His forgiveness, while He will not remember their sins who practice the New Covenant by embracing Jesus as a single sacrifice and high priest (and who, like David (cf. Psalm 51), recognized that the multiple and continuous sacrifices did not bring complete and eternal forgiveness).

Paul has been arguing that the change of priesthood is fulfilled by Jesus as the Messiah and High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, as stated by David in Psalm 110. It is this and not the performing of sacrifices according to the Mosaic Covenant that is important for Paul’s readers to understand and believe, thus obviously putting them at odds with their persecutors who are promoting only the Mosaic Covenant and its animal sacrifices as the focal point of a Jew’s relationship with God.

²⁷⁵ ὅπου δὲ ἄφεσις τοῦτων, οὐκέτι προσφορὰ περὶ ἁμαρτίας – Here is the bottom line. As Paul has been arguing since chapter 7, only Jesus’ one offering of himself, not the multiple offerings of the Levitical priests, suffices for *eternal* forgiveness—so that even during OT times, God looked towards the future and Jesus’ death and resurrection to forgive any Jew of a changed heart who was bringing his offerings and sacrifices to the Levitical priests in obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. Theologically and logically, wherever God has declared a person completely and eternal forgiven, He has also declared that no more sacrifices and offerings are necessary to bring to Him, because Jesus’ one offering will result in his intervening on their behalf at the final judgment. Clearly, the psychological switch for a worshiping Jew from all the instructions about the tabernacle/temple to the priest and offering of the New Covenant is huge. However, it is absolutely necessary, Paul is arguing, in order to obey God properly and acquire His complete mercy and forgiveness. And when this psychological switch takes place within a Jew, it is this one offering of the New Covenant priest that he intellectually and spiritually focuses on and not the tabernacle/temple with its offerings. Imagine this occurring on a grand scale among the Jews in Israel with the temple existing in Jerusalem, and one has a

picture of the ramifications of what Paul is writing here. Even if the Jews were to continue offering animal sacrifices in line with the Mosaic Covenant, their sense of the importance of these animal sacrifices would be hugely relativized by their focus on their eternal high priest, Jesus of Nazareth.

In the millennial kingdom, the Jews will continue offering animal sacrifices out of respect for God and their unique position in the world as His chosen people, but they will know that their king and his sacrifice are all that they need to acquire God's eternal forgiveness.

²⁷⁶ ἔχοντες οὖν, ἀδελφοί, παρησίαν εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ αἵματι Ἰησοῦ – As Paul mentioned at the end of chapter 6 and has been arguing since then, Jesus' death qualifies him to enter the Holy of Holies of the heavenly temple, i.e., the judgment room, and appeal to God for mercy on our behalf, thus permitting us also to enter this same Holy of Holies and judgment room of God and actually receive eternal mercy through Jesus' intervention. Paul now goes back to the main purpose of his letter, to *exhort* his readers to embrace God's whole truth that includes the suffering Messiah as their High Priest at the judgment and to live morally now, while also confidently expecting eternal salvation and life. If they were really honest with themselves, the Jews had no basis for courageously walking into God's presence and asking Him for eternal mercy in the midst of their bringing their animal sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant to Him. Only Jesus' one offering and sacrifice is a legitimate basis.

²⁷⁷ ἦν ἐνεκαίνισεν ἡμῖν ὁδὸν πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ – Jesus' offering of his own body by his death on the cross is the new and living way (ὁδὸν) past the curtain that separates the Holy of Holies from the rest of the heavenly tabernacle. His purpose in offering himself was so that Paul and his fellow Jews (and all other authentic believers by extrapolation) may obtain God's eternal mercy, because he qualified to be raised from the dead and become their high priest, in contrast to the bulls and goats who died at the hands of the Levitical priests under the Mosaic Covenant. The bulls and goats were never raised to intercede for morally depraved human beings. Nor were the Levitical priests themselves raised to do so, especially because they themselves also need Jesus as their advocate at the final judgment.

²⁷⁸ καὶ ἱερέα μέγαν ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ – Having both confidence to appeal to God for mercy within the Holy of Holies of the heavenly tabernacle, i.e., the judgment place, and also a High Priest who is great, eternal, and intervenes on behalf of authentically inward Jews, means that these Jews actually obtain eternal mercy (cf. Hebrews 3:1-6). As high as the High Priest of the Mosaic Covenant was and is, he is nothing in comparison to the great priest (ἱερέα μέγαν) of the New Covenant.

The "household of God" are the authentic believers in Jesus, and in the context Paul is emphasizing Jewish believers as he did in Hebrews 3:1-6.

²⁷⁹ προσερχόμεθα μετὰ ἀληθινῆς καρδίας ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πίστεως (cf. Hebrews 6:11) – Paul wants his readers to understand that they can be absolutely certain that Jesus will appeal to God for mercy for them as they approach God with an authentic, biblical heart and inwardness, and, therefore, they will obtain eternal mercy. As a result, they should approach God in such a manner even now in anticipation of the final judgment. However, he is implying that it takes a different kind of inwardness and heart from that of most Jews in history who have been so focused on the Mosaic Covenant at the expense of understanding the Davidic Covenant and Psalm 110. It is this kind of heart that makes it clear to a worshiping Jew, like David (cf. Psalm 40:6), that God must provide another way to grant people mercy apart from animal sacrifices, as Paul also explained in Hebrews 9:8ff.

²⁸⁰ ῥεραντισμένοι τὰς καρδίας ἀπὸ συνειδήσεως πονηρᾶς καὶ λελουσμένοι τὸ σῶμα ὕδατι καθαρῷ – Paul's exhortation throughout this letter has been for his Jewish Christian readers to see that the Mosaic Covenant terminology of the cleansing, i.e., forgiving, of their moral depravity, etc. through animal sacrifices is exactly what happens to them when they understand the depth of their immorality and the extent of the effectiveness of Jesus' actions as High Priest. However, in the case of Jesus as their advocate, they have grasped the whole meaning of his work as Messiah and priest, thus giving them complete confidence in obtaining God's *eternal* mercy. They are now "clean" before God in the sense of being accepted by Him as those who will qualify for His mercy and entrance into the Kingdom of God, not just as those who qualify to participate appropriately in the temporary nation of Israel, which was possible under simply the Mosaic Covenant.

²⁸¹ κατέχωμεν τὴν ὁμολογίαν τῆς ἐλπίδος ἡ ἀκλινῆ, πιστὸς γὰρ ὁ ἐπαγγειλάμενος – The Jews who are rejecting Jesus as the Messiah and, therefore, holding on to only the Mosaic Covenant are missing the point about God's promises and faithfulness. Not only is Jesus the right and only High Priest on whom to depend to intervene with God, but God will be faithful to His promise to employ this priest of the New Covenant to gain entrance into the eternal Kingdom of God for those who have correctly relativized in their minds the Mosaic Covenant with its sacrifices and have placed their hope in God's alternative method for obtaining His mercy. Thus, Paul exhorts his readers and himself to hold on perseveringly to this promise, which certainly is part and parcel of the Abrahamic Covenant with its promise of eternal life (cf. Genesis 12:2, "And I will bless you) and of the New Covenant with its promise to forget forever the immorality of the Jews.

Really, it is always God's promise and grace that are the basis for anyone's holding on to a confidence that good things will happen to him in the future, i.e., mercy and the Kingdom of God.

²⁸² καὶ κατανοῶμεν ἀλλήλους ἕως παροξυσμὸν ἀγάπης καὶ καλῶν ἔργων – One of the most difficult things to do when a person is suffering is to love others with outward, explicit actions that are marked by patience, grace, mercy, and hope, even hope of eternal life. Paul wants his readers to think carefully how to help each other keep loving one

another when life is difficult and it would be easier if they stopped embracing Jesus as the Messiah in order to avoid the persecution that they are experiencing from the non-believing Jews.

Paul is also saying that the effect of being properly related to God (through belief in Jesus as king and priest for forgiveness instead of actions in line with the Mosaic Covenant) is not religious actions but genuine loving actions.

²⁸³ μή ἔγκαταλείποντες τὴν ἐπισυναγωγὴν ἑαυτῶν, καθὼς ἔθος τισὶν – Probably because of fear of persecution that is coming from unbelieving Jews, who would take note of the fact that they were going to Christian meetings and, as a result, would react negatively to them, Paul encourages his readers to assemble with one another nevertheless in order to help each other persevere in belief in Jesus as their king and priest.

[Really? Paul would want Christians to get together even if it meant suffering for them as opposed to remaining safe as individuals? Hmm. Or, maybe, he is just concerned about these Christians at least staying in touch with one another in order to help each other persevere in belief. This latter seems more likely in the light of the next part of the sentence. Paul is not advocating placing the whole Christian community in jeopardy unnecessarily but simply doing whatever they can to encourage one another in their faith.]

²⁸⁴ ἀλλὰ παρακαλοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς, καὶ τοσοῦτον μᾶλλον ὅσῳ βλέπετε ἐγγιζούσαν τὴν ἡμέραν – The day of judgment is approaching, and Paul considers his readers’ looking forward to it as part of the basis for their encouraging one another to persevere in their belief. In other words, his main concern in vs. 24 & 25 is his readers’ taking advantage of the fact that they have one another to help each other persevere in belief in the midst of the suffering and persecution that they are experiencing. To ignore this readily available tool of mutual encouragement would naturally be part of the effect of any suffering and persecution. But Paul wants them to combat the temptation to avoid one another and, instead, to continue pointing each other intellectually towards the return of their Messiah and priest.

²⁸⁵ ἐκουσίως ὡς γὰρ ἀμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν μετὰ τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας, οὐκέτι περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἠπολείπεται θυσία – Here is a great implicit explanation of the connections between truth, belief, and eternal salvation. If Paul’s Jewish readers reject belief in Jesus as the Messiah and revert to following only the Mosaic Covenant (actually, the tradition that they have created of the Mosaic Covenant) as the primary and sole basis of their relationship with God after all this detailed explanation that he has given them about why Jesus is their Messiah and high priest, then they are, in effect, rebelling against God and “deliberately sinning” (ἐκουσίως γὰρ ἀμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν), with the result that they will incur God’s eternal condemnation and not salvation—as Paul goes on to say (cf. Hebrews 3:12ff.).

²⁸⁶ φοβερὰ δὲ τις ἐκδοχὴ κρίσεως καὶ πυρὸς ζῆλος ἐσθίειν μέλλοντος τοὺς ὑπεναντίους – cf. Hebrews 6:4-8. Also, see footnote above. Cf. Isaiah 26:11 – O LORD, Your hand is lifted up yet they do not see it. They see Your zeal for the people and are put to shame; Indeed, fire will devour Your enemies (עַל־כַּדְשָׁן יִשְׁרָאֵל וְשֹׂנְאָיו) (καὶ νῦν πῦρ τοὺς ὑπεναντίους ἔδεται). Cf. Psalm 110:1,2 – The LORD says to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies (שֹׂנְאָיו) (τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου) a footstool for Your feet.” The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, “Rule in the midst of Your enemies (עַל־כַּדְשָׁן בְּרַגְלֶיךָ) (ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἐχθρῶν σου).” By rejecting Jesus as Messiah and high priest, Paul’s readers would be making themselves enemies of God who will be destroyed by Him.

²⁸⁷ ἀθετήσας τὸν νόμον Μωϋσέως χωρὶς οἰκτιρμῶν ἢ ἐπὶ δυσὶν ἢ τρισὶν μάρτυσιν ἀποθνήσκει – Ironically, there is a principle within the Mosaic Covenant that the readers’ persecutors would agree with wholeheartedly that actually condemns them and spells their destruction. Anyone who willfully rejects God’s instructions in the Mosaic Covenant incurs His justice and dies physically, whether at the hands of the people or by means that God miraculously produces within the created reality (cf. Numbers 21:6, “The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.”). However, here, Paul is specifically referring to situations where Jews personally testify against other Jews, who then are executed by these very human Jews on earth. Therefore, ...

²⁸⁸ πόσῳ δοκεῖτε χείρονος ἁξιωθῆσεται τιμωρίας ὁ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καταπατήσας καὶ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης κοινὸν ἠγασάμενος, ἢ ἐν ᾧ ἠγιάσθη, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας – The phrase ἐν ᾧ can mean “on the basis of which” as in Acts 4:12 “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which (ἐν ᾧ) we must be saved.”

To reject God’s Son, His proxy within the creation, is to reject God Himself and be executed by Him through the lack of advocacy of the very human Messiah and priest according to the order of Melchizedek. To think that Jesus’ death was as ordinary as any other human being’s death is to miss the point of how the Messiah had to qualify to become a high priest through his death. Also, to reject the NT message of Jesus as the Messiah is to turn one’s back on the gracious activity of God within the creation through the work of His Spirit that leads the apostles such as Paul to proclaim this message. Bottom line, all this is to reject God. The Jewish persecutors firmly believe that they are worshiping God in a biblical manner by focusing strictly on the Mosaic Covenant and rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, but they are not. They are in rebellion against God. And Paul is pointing out how much graver is their rebellion against God in comparison to any Jew who violates one of the commandments of the Mosaic Covenant, thereby being subject to physical execution and removal from the nation of Israel. To reject the grace and mercy of God through the Messiah/priest is to deserve eternal destruction by God, not just physical destruction by fellow Jews.

²⁸⁹ οἶδαμεν γὰρ τὸν εἰπόντα: ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω ἑ. καὶ πάλιν ἑ κρινεῖ κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ – cf. Deuteronomy 32:35,36 – אֲנִי יְהוָה וְלֹא יֵשׁוּב עִי וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּח עֲוֹנוֹתַי לִי (LXX – ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐκδικήσεως ἀνταποδώσω) and אֲנִי יְהוָה וְלֹא יִשְׁכַּח עֲוֹנוֹתַי לִי

(LXX – ὅτι κρινεὶ κύριος τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ). Deuteronomy 32:1-43 is Moses’ song of God’s assessment of the rebellion of the Israelites and His intended response of judgment towards them. In other words, according to Paul, the very Covenant on which the unbelieving Jews are focusing condemns them and Paul’s readers, if the latter succumb to the persecution of the former and give up their belief in the truth of the Messiah and Melchizedekian priest, because God is a God of justice and subsequent condemnation if He does not dispense mercy.

²⁹⁰ φοβερὸν τὸ ἐμπέσειν εἰς χεῖρας θεοῦ ζῶντος – Paul warns his readers that incurring God’s eternal condemnation would not be a pleasant experience and one that they should avoid.

²⁹¹ Ἀναμιμνήσκεσθε δὲ τὰς πρότερον ἡμέρας, ἐν αἷς φωτισθέντες πολλὴν ἄθλησιν ὑπεμείνατε παθημάτων – This may be a clue to indicate that Paul is addressing Jewish Christians who were arrested in Jerusalem as a result of the incident of Stephen in Acts 6 and then scattered from there to other parts of the Roman Empire, probably remaining where they went, but now requiring being set straight in their theology by Paul because of the strong influence of unbelieving and persecuting Jews in their communities.

²⁹² Ἀναμιμνήσκεσθε δὲ τὰς πρότερον ἡμέρας, ἐν αἷς φωτισθέντες πολλὴν ἄθλησιν ὑπεμείνατε παθημάτων τοῦτο μὲν ὀνειδισμοῖς τε καὶ θλίψεσιν θεατριζόμενοι, τοῦτο δὲ κοινωνοὶ τῶν οὕτως ἀναστρεφομένων γεννηθέντες – When these Jewish Christians had first been exposed to the enlightening news of Jesus as the Messiah and then embraced this information as true, they had experienced quite a bit of suffering from harsh treatment by their Jewish community. Obviously, now the resilience of their belief has decreased, so that they are strongly considering giving up their belief in Jesus as the Messiah. Paul wants them to remember how well they had responded to the persecution at that earlier time and to respond to the present situation with the same strength of belief.

²⁹³ καὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἁδελφοῖς συνεπαθήσατε καὶ τὴν ἀρπαγὴν τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ὑμῶν μετὰ χαρᾶς προσεδέξασθε γινώσκοντες ἔχειν ἑαυτοὺς κρείττονα ὑπαρξίν ἢ καὶ μένουσαν – Somehow these Jewish Christians had things taken from them because of their faith, in addition to some of them being imprisoned. However, they continued focusing on the fact that God had promised them even more possessions so to speak in the eternal Kingdom of God. If they had already experienced such suffering and persevered in their belief through it, why not do so now also? Paul is exhorting them to renew the steadfastness of their belief on the basis of all the good information that he has provided them in this letter, even if it means further suffering (and perhaps, the loss of their lives, like Jesus).

²⁹⁴ μὴ ἀποβάλλετε οὖν τὴν παρρησίαν ὑμῶν, ἣτις ἔχει μεγάλην μισθαποδοσίαν – Paul writes literally “a great wage.” Speaking metaphorically, God will grant these Jewish Christians the “wage” of eternal life if they persevere in their belief in Jesus as the Messiah (cf. v. 36). Clearly, the rest of the Bible teaches that morally depraved human beings cannot *earn* God’s mercy and eternal salvation, but Paul uses a common business term to refer to the response of God to genuine inwardness and belief that He himself has brought about through His grace (cf. Hebrews 11:6). Therefore, Paul wants his Jewish readers to reflect on the confidence and courage that they can employ in approaching Yahweh for His eternal forgiveness, because this kind and level of confidence and courage gets “paid” with eternal life. This would be in contrast to a complete lack of confidence in obtaining God’s mercy if a Jew relies on only his sacrifices according to the Mosaic Covenant (cf. 9:13-10:4).

²⁹⁵ ὑπομονῆς γὰρ ἔχετε χρεῖαν ἵνα τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ποιήσαντες κομίσησθε τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν – In the Abrahamic Covenant of Genesis 12:1-3, God promises the blessing of eternal life to those who appropriately mimic Abraham’s belief. In this way, it requires belief that perseveres until the end of one’s life. This is “the desire of God” for inherently immoral human beings, i.e., that which He commands them to do in order to obtain the eternal life that He has promised. Cf. David’s statement from Psalm 40:6-8 that Paul deals with in Hebrews 10:5-10, where he speaks of the same thing, the “desire of God” that God Himself even produces within a rebellious human being and that produces genuine, persevering belief in him. Persevering in what God desires by recognizing that God must provide an alternative method for obtaining His eternal mercy outside of the Mosaic Covenant will result in obtaining the promise of the New Covenant that God will forgive the Jews forever.

²⁹⁶ ἔτι ὅγὰρ μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον, ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἔξει καὶ οὐ χρονίσει – cf. Habakkuk 2:3, “For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; for it will certainly come, it will not delay (חֲזֵן אֶל־נְבוֹן אֶל־נְבוֹן לֹא־יִכְזָב וְיָבִי־אֶת־הַיְשׁוּעָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל) (ἐὰν ὑστερήσῃ, ὑπόμεινον αὐτόν, ὅτι ἐρχόμενος ἔξει καὶ οὐ μὴ χρονίση). Cf. Isaiah 26:20, “Come, My people, enter into your rooms and close your doors behind you; hide for a little (עָנִי־בְּעִנְיָי) (μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον) until indignation runs its course.” These are the only verses in the OT and the NT that contain the phrase μικρὸν ὅσον ὅσον. Paul conflates the two OT passages. Habakkuk is standing watch until the “vision” that God has shown him about the destruction of Judah by the Babylonians is fulfilled around 600 B.C. Isaiah is encouraging the Israelites to wait “a little while” until God has punished the rebellious Jews (world system?) and restores them to their land in peace. The point is that, at the final judgment, God will “soon” judge and destroy those who oppose Him and bring about His promise of eternal life in the Kingdom of God for those who persevere in believing Him for all His promises, including that of eternal forgiveness within the New Covenant. Cf. Psalm 40:17, “Since I am afflicted and needy, let the Lord be mindful of me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay (μὴ χρονίσης), O my God” – a psalm of David from which Paul quotes above in Hebrews 10:5-7.

²⁹⁷ ὁ δὲ δικάσιος ἄνθρωπος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται, καὶ ἐὰν ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ – cf. Habakkuk 2:4, “Behold, as for the proud one, his soul is not right within him (בְּרִשְׁוֹן נַפְשׁוֹ יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֱלֹהֵי עֲבָרָתוֹ) (ἐὰν

ὑποστείληται, οὐκ εὐδοκεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἐν αὐτῷ); but the righteous will live by his faith (הַיְשִׁיבֵנוּ בְּאֵמֶתֵנוּ הַיְשִׁיבֵנוּ) (ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται).” The LXX is different in the first part of this verse, but the sense is still the same, that God will not accept the proud person who rejects His truth. In addition, eternal life comes to those who live their lives on the basis of persevering belief in God’s statements regarding what He is going to do—that He will punish those who rebel against Him and bring eternal life to those who persevere in belief in Him. Paul simply reverses the order of the LXX, encouraging his Jewish readers who are wavering in their belief in Jesus as the Messiah to consider God’s justice and rejection of those who reject Him as well as the fact that it is those who persevere in belief who obtain life, i.e., eternal life, from God.

²⁹⁸ ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἐσμὲν ὑποστολῆς εἰς ἀπόλειαν ἀλλὰ πίστεως εἰς περιποίησιν ψυχῆς – It takes great courage to be a believer in Yahweh and His truth, including, and perhaps most especially, the truth of Jesus of Nazareth as the Jewish Messiah. To be timid and draw back from the truth, especially after one has heard it and apparently believed it, is to incur God’s condemnation and destruction. To continue to believe biblical truth in the midst of pain and suffering results in eternal mercy and salvation. Paul is confident that he and his readers will have the courage, by God’s grace, to be in the latter category and obtain salvation.

²⁹⁹ ἔστιν δὲ πίστις ἐλπίζομένων ὑπόστασις, πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων – In this chapter and in the light of Paul’s just mentioning the difficulties from their own kinsmen that his readers have faced as believers in Jesus, Paul states and then demonstrates through the example of OT believers who went through hard times and tests of their faith that the response of belief (as the umbrella over a sanctified or set apart by God life) to truth such as that which he has just provided his readers about Jesus as high priest in comparison to the Levitical priests of the Mosaic Covenant is what qualifies a morally depraved human being to have God bear witness that he is forgiven and will be granted the “reward” of eternal life. Thus, this statement in verse 1 is to the effect that belief in biblically presented truth, especially that of the suffering Messiah, as the proper subjectivity of a needy immoral person is both the guarantee of eternal life that the person is eagerly expecting as well as the proof that he really will obtain it, even though no one in the present realm can see the eternal realm yet.

ὑπόστασις = substantial nature, essence, actual being, reality, realization, plan, project, undertaking, endeavor in BDAG. In Hebrews 1:3, Jesus is the representation/stamp of God’s ὑπόστασις, which I have translated as identity, i.e., that Jesus as a morally perfect human with a unique role within history as the Messiah represents God exactly with whatever he says and does. Here in Hebrews 11:1, Paul is making the point that belief is the “likeness” of what all true believers hope for, which is God’s promise of eternal life that begins with the first resurrection at Jesus’ return and he establishes the millennial kingdom on the land of Israel and the rest of the earth. Thus, belief is like God’s promise as something which is just as substantial and therefore becomes the “guarantee” of life in the next ages.

ἔλεγχος = proof, proving, accusation, reproof, censure, correction in BDAG. Subjectively, belief is the proof of the invisible reality of eternal life that God will bring about in the future when He deems it proper to do so.

³⁰⁰ ἐν ταύτῃ γὰρ ἐμαρτυρήθησαν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι – Passive voice = it was borne witness to them. In all the following Old Testament examples, everything good that people did was ultimately based upon authentic belief, so that belief with its related activities that are not necessarily religious, not outward obedience to the Mosaic Covenant, was what pleased God—even in the midst of their being sinners in need of eternal mercy. In some of the examples, Paul mentions that God bore witness to, i.e., communicated to, the Old Testament believers that He approved of their authentic belief.

³⁰¹ πιστεῖ νοούμεν κατηρτίσθαι τοὺς αἰῶνας ῥήματι θεοῦ, εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐκ φαινομένων τὸ βλεπόμενον γεγονέναι – We = Paul, his readers, and, by implication, any other authentic believer. Authentic belief basically begins with and has as its foundation belief in God’s having brought all of the created reality into existence, so that belief in everything else God is and does merely follows from it, with the result that God responds to belief with granting eternal life to those who have a genuine form of it (cf. Hebrews 11:6). Notice “ages,” i.e., history, indeed all events in history (cf. John 1:3 All things came into being through it (the plan of God), and apart from it (the plan of God) not one thing which has come into being has come into being). Everything that exists other than God has come into existence out of “things,” so to speak, that are invisible, i.e., God and the process He used of simply calling things into existence (cf. Genesis 1). And the ages will go on into eternity for authentic believers as exactly as God has planned them from before the beginning of the creation (John 1:1 In the beginning was the plan/story, and the plan/story was with God, and God was the author of the plan/story). For example, Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:17, “Now to the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory into the ages of ages. Amen.” Also 2 Timothy 4:18, “The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and will save me into his kingdom from heaven. To Him be the glory into the ages of ages. Amen.”

³⁰² πιστεῖ πλείονα θυσίαν Ἄβελ παρά Κάιν προσήνεγκεν τῷ θεῷ, δι’ ἧς ἐμαρτυρήθη εἶναι δίκαιος, μαρτυροῦντος ἐπὶ τοῖς δόροις αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ δι’ αὐτῆς ἀποθανὼν ἐτι ἄλαεῖ – Passive voice = it was borne witness to Abel that he was justified, i.e., he had gained a standing before God such that he was forgiven and accepted so that he would eventually obtain eternal life. Cf. Genesis 4:3-5, “So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.” As the author of Hebrews states, God approved of Abel’s offering because of his inwardness, i.e., his belief, not because he brought a blood sacrifice and Cain did not.

Nevertheless, Abel did bring the “firstlings,” i.e., the best of his flock, while Cain offered anything of what he grew just by grabbing it. He was not thoughtful in bringing the best to God. Thus, Cain lacked authentic belief. Otherwise, God would have accepted his agricultural offering. Also here, active voice = God bore witness to him on the basis of his offerings. God responded positively to Abel’s offerings because he had a changed heart and true inwardness that included authentic belief. Genesis 4:4b, “And the LORD had regard (אֵלֶּיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ) for Abel and for his offering (καὶ ἐπειδὴν ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ Ἀβὲλ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς δόροις αὐτοῦ (LXX)).” Paul’s intent is for his readers to find encouragement in these stories of Old Testament believers in order that they, too, persevere in their belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

³⁰³ πιστεῖ Ἐνὼχ μετετέθη τοῦ μὴ ἰδεῖν θάνατον, καὶ οὐχ ἠύρισκετο διότι μετέθηκεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεός. πρὸ γὰρ τῆς μεταθέσεως ἔμεμαρτύρηται εὐαρεστηκεῖν αὐτῷ θεῷ – Passive voice = it was borne witness to him that his inwardness and belief were authentic so that God was pleased with him and would grant him eternal life. The point in Genesis 5:24 is that Enoch was a man who “walked with God,” i.e., he believed God for who He is, at the very least that He is the creator of all reality, and by this subjectively gained the confidence that he was pleasing God.

³⁰⁴ χωρὶς δὲ πίστεως ἀδύνατον εὐαρεστήσῃ πιστεῦσαι γὰρ δεῖ τὸν προσερχόμενον ὁθεῖν ὅτι ἔστιν καὶ τοῖς ἑκζητοῦσιν αὐτὸν μισθαποδότης γίνεται – Paul uses business terminology in order to communicate this idea. Cf. Hebrews 10:35. God is a “rewarder,” literally one who pays wages. However, human beings do not earn God’s “reward.” He grants it to them by His grace on the basis of their proper inwardness that manifests itself in belief in all that God says about Himself through the creation and through the biblical message in the midst of life’s circumstances whereby a person grasps as much as he can about God and becomes committed to acting in a manner that is in line with his belief in God. As a result, this kind of belief is essential for obtaining God’s promise of eternal life. Paul is making this point in the light of the truth of Jesus as our High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek which he has presented to his readers in this letter.

³⁰⁵ πιστεῖ χρηματισθεὶς Νῶε περὶ τῶν μηδέπω βλεπομένων, εὐλαβηθεὶς κατεσκεύασεν κιβωτὸν εἰς σωτηρίαν τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ δι’ ἧς κατέκρινεν τὸν κόσμον, καὶ τῆς κατὰ πίστιν δικαιοσύνης ἐγένετο κληρονόμος – Noah is a great example of someone who believed God for future events that could not be seen with his physical eyes—the flood vs. eternal life to which Paul refers in 11:1. Therefore, he took to heart what God said about the coming flood and acted on the basis of his belief that God would follow through on his plan to destroy the rest of mankind with a flood, even though his actions of building an ark would have been scorned by his contemporaries because of the otherwise complete lack of “scientific” evidence to the effect that the flood would take place.

Thus, taking to heart what God says and then acting on it, as Noah did, are essential characteristics of authentic belief. Cf. Genesis 6:9, “Noah was a righteous man (צַדִּיק אִישׁ), blameless in his time (מִלֵּוּד בְּיָמָיו); Noah walked with God (וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ אֱלֹהִים); Noah was a *dikaios* man, accepted by God in his generation and who stood to be forgiven eternally by Him. Noah was pleasing to God and on the basis of his belief and inwardness and, thus, would inherit eternal life (cf. Hebrews 11:6).

³⁰⁶ πιστεῖ ἑκαλούμενος Ἀβραάμ ὑπήκουσεν ἐξελθεῖν εἰς ἄγνωστον τόπον ὃν ἠμελλεν λαμβάνειν εἰς κληρονομίαν, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν μὴ ἐπιστάμενος ποῦ ἔρχεται – Abraham obeyed God’s command to leave the familiarity of Ur of the Chaldees and travel to the unknown land of Canaan. Paul focuses on this land as his “inheritance” instead of on the blessing of eternal life, both of which God promised Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. Paul will continue to focus on this land and its accompanying promise of God’s making Abraham’s physical descendants a “great nation” on it throughout the rest of chapter 11.

Thus, obedience to God by means of His grace, to the extent that sinners can obey God in being willing to leave behind their own plans for their lives and submit to God’s, is an essential characteristic of authentic belief and true inwardness. Cf. Genesis 12:1-4a, “Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.’ So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him...”

³⁰⁷ πιστεῖ παρῴκησεν εἰς γῆν τῆς επαγγελίας ὡς ἄλλοτριαν ἐν σκηναῖς κατοικήσας μετὰ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ τῶν συγκαληρονόμων τῆς επαγγελίας τῆς αὐτῆς – God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his physical descendants in Genesis 12:1-3. But Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were willing to live as those who did not possess the land yet until the time when God would fulfill His promise—even if they died before they possessed it (cf. v. 13). They believed that it was not necessary to grab the land as soon as they arrived but to be granted it by God according to His sovereign plan.

³⁰⁸ ἐξεδέχετο γὰρ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιτοίχην ἔχουσαν πόλιν ἣς τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς ὁ θεός – Even though Abraham was living in the “land of promise,” the land of Canaan, he felt like a stranger because, ultimately, he was waiting, in the midst of less than ideal circumstances, for what God had promised in the future—the land’s belonging to him and his people when God would deem it the right time at some point in the future. Thus God would provide the city-state (πόλιν) on the land by which Abraham and his descendants would exercise authority and governance over it. This we now know through the rest of the Bible is Jesus’ return to set up his millennial kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem (cf. Revelation 20).

In this case, “foundation” refers to God’s establishing this city with its city-state.

It makes sense to interpret this city as the earthly city and city-state of the millennial kingdom on the land of Canaan/Israel, rather than the city of the new heavens and earth of Revelation 21, because the former is more coherent with Paul's use of "land of promise" and the patriarchs' "dwelling in tents" in the previous verse. The point that Paul wants to make in this whole chapter is that the Jews (with a few Gentiles who understood OT history and God's promises) were waiting for God's fulfillment to them specifically and the importance of authentic belief in what God is saying. This fits well with the rest of the letter regarding Jesus as the sacrificed Messiah for Jews.

³⁰⁹ πίστει καὶ 'αὐτὴ Σάρρα στεῖρα' δύναμιν εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος ἔλαβεν ἵ καὶ παρὰ καιρὸν ἡλικίας ἵ, ἐπεὶ πιστὸν ἠγήσατο τὸν ἐπαγγειλάμενον – Sarah's story is important in this context as the first woman to bear the physical descendants of Abraham to whom God promised the land of Canaan/Israel as their inheritance of the millennial kingdom. Thus, barren Sarah also had authentic belief in God and His promise to provide them with a child and descendants beyond him, in spite of her behavior that could lead one to conclude otherwise about her belief.

³¹⁰ διὸ καὶ ἀφ' ἐνὸς ἔγεννήθησαν, καὶ ταῦτα νεκρωμένοι, καθὼς τὰ ἄστρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τῷ πλήθει καὶ ὡς ἡ ἄμμος ἢ παρὰ τὸ χεῖλος τῆς θαλάσσης ἡ ἀναρίθμητος – These are the physical descendants of Abraham who would eventually inherit the land of Canaan/Israel along with their status and position as the "great nation" of Genesis 12:1-3. Even though Abraham and Sarah were beyond the age of childbearing and Sarah was basically barren in addition, God fulfilled His promise to them. Cf. Genesis 22:17, "Indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies." Like the fulfillment of the promise to make of Abraham and his descendants a "great nation," the fulfillment of the promise that he would even have descendants occurred by means of a miracle. But, again, waiting in belief for God to produce the miracle is a vital characteristic of people who ultimately inherit the millennial kingdom and eternal life.

³¹¹ κατὰ πίστιν ἀπέθανον οὗτοι πάντες, μὴ ἴαβόντες τὰς ἐπαγγελίας ἀλλὰ πόρρωθεν αὐτὰς ἰδόντες καὶ ἀσπασάμενοι καὶ ὁμολογήσαντες ὅτι ξένοι καὶ παρεπίδημοί εἰσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς – Here ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς is better translated "on the land" instead of "on the earth," because the context is still the great nation of Israel on the land of Canaan/Israel. But is this really the life of belief, not receiving what God has promised until later when God wants to fulfill His promises? Yes, indeed. Thus, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob were willing to wait until the land of Canaan became God's fullblown existential gift to them—even after their own deaths if necessary (when they are resurrected along with all other believers who have died to meet Jesus when he returns to set up his millennial kingdom on the land).

³¹² οἱ γὰρ τοιαῦτα λέγοντες ἐμφανίζουσιν ὅτι πατρίδα ἔπιζητοῦσιν – Here the context points to "homeland" (πατρίδα) meaning the land of Israel with the Jews living on it as the great nation. By dwelling on the land of Canaan without grabbing for it, the patriarchs exhibited they were homesick for the land of Canaan as it would be granted them and their descendants by God in the future—during the millennial kingdom (to the extent that they had any details, which were not many, of this kingdom).

People who are willing to live out their present, earthly existence without ever receiving the ultimate promise of God, eternal life in their "homeland" of the earthly kingdom of Jesus first and then the new earthly kingdom of Jesus second, demonstrate their authentic belief. They are waiting for a place that they can truly call home, where they do not feel like strangers and foreigners, i.e., a permanent and eternal place to live that is truly theirs—by God's grace.

³¹³ καὶ εἰ μὲν ἐκείνης ἔμνημόνευον ἀφ' ἧς ἔξέβησαν, εἶχον ἂν καιρὸν ἀνακάμψαι – Still referring to land and lands on this earth and not to the eternal earth of Revelation 21, Paul's point here is to say that even Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob were expectantly waiting for the earthly great nation on the land of Canaan. They could have gone back to Ur or Haran. But they were willing to wait for God to grant them in its completeness a homeland on the land of Canaan. And this even if they had to die first. It will be an eternal existence of sorts, but it begins with God's establishing their homeland for them on the land of Israel. For this they wait in the midst of their homesickness.

³¹⁴ νῦν δὲ κρείττονος ὀρέγονται, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἐπουρανοῦ – It makes more sense in the context to interpret ἐπουρανοῦ as "from heaven" instead of "heavenly," meaning "in heaven." This is because Paul is still talking about the patriarchs and their looking forward to God's promise of a making their descendants a great nation in the present realm on the land of Israel.

Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob, with their limited knowledge, grasped the significance and magnificence of a city-state, etc. on the land of Canaan which God would miraculously provide at some time in the future. The fact that it is "from heaven" (ἐπουρανοῦ) means that the very source of this homeland/city is heaven in that it will be the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham as starting the blessing of eternal life and the eternal Kingdom of God when Jesus returns. And it will be so much better than the patriarchs' present situation on the land as well as so much better than if they were to try to establish it themselves.

³¹⁵ διὸ οὐκ ἐπαισχύνεται αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς θεὸς ἐπικαλεῖσθαι αὐτῶν ἠτοίμασεν γὰρ αὐτοῖς πόλιν – It is a understanding the value of the future fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham with a humble desire for it demonstrated by feeling as though one is a stranger on earth as it now exists to which God responds with participation in this future set of circumstances. Therefore, a willingness to go through all of life in the present realm without receiving what God has ultimately promised, eternal life and moral perfection (complete and substantial change in our moral condition) which will begin for resurrected believers at Jesus' second coming, while never feeling completely settled and secure in this world and yet enjoying whatever elements God grants us to enjoy, is an essential characteristic

of authentic belief. In this way, Abraham and his descendants are God's people, and He is their God, such that He is not ashamed to be their God. It will be when the entire nation of Israel are committed believers in God when Jesus returns that this will all find its final fulfillment. Therefore, this "city" is not the new Jerusalem of Revelation 21 which is the new creation which comes into existence after the millennial kingdom. Instead, it is the city-state of the millennial kingdom when Jesus sets up his capital in the present Jerusalem on his return.

³¹⁶ πίστει προσενήνοχεν Ἐβραάμ τὸν Ἰσαὰκ πειραζόμενος καὶ τὸν μονογενῆ προσέφερον – Speaking of the people to whom God has made these earthly promises to Abraham, Isaac is the next generation. And God tested Abraham in regard to him just as He had done in regard to the land by having him live on it as a stranger and foreigner without ever fully taking possession of it.

Isaac, not Ishmael, was the only son through whom God promised to give Abraham descendants within the Abrahamic Covenant. Therefore, if Isaac died, the promise would seemingly die with him, as implied by the parenthetical quote from Genesis 21:12 in the next verse, Hebrews 11:18. Nevertheless, Abraham was willing to believe God for His promise of physical descendants through Isaac and risk losing the promise by killing Isaac, because he knew that God is trustworthy and that he would not lose the promise.

Also, in this situation in comparison to Exodus 32, God is commanding Abraham to bring an end to the life of his son, while Moses is being invited to believe God for the promises which He had made in the past, to use the entire nation of Israel, including the tribe of Judah which would be wiped out, to bless them and the rest of the world.

³¹⁷ λογισάμενος ὅτι καὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἔγειρειν Ἐδυνατὸς ὁ θεός, ὅθεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐν παραβολῇ ἐκομίσατο – Abraham received Isaac from the altar of sacrifice as if God had raised him from the dead. This is the parable—like the very resurrection which he expected. The parable is for Abraham, not for the readers as if this paragraph is pointing to the resurrection of the Jesus as the Messiah. And this is how much Abraham believed that God is faithful to His promises. Thus, believing God for His promises when circumstances appear humanly impossible, for example, when one thinks that his belief is going to be crushed, is an essential characteristic of authentic belief.

³¹⁸ πίστει ἡ καὶ περὶ μελλόντων εὐλόγησεν Ἰσαὰκ τὸν Ἰακώβ καὶ τὸν Ἡσαΐ – Isaac passed down to his sons the promises of God, even though he was tricked into blessing Jacob and not Esau. But he believed these promises. Thus, his doing the right thing in the midst of others' doing the wrong thing so that he did the "wrong" thing did not change the eternal value of his authentic inwardness. His belief in the midst of doing the "wrong" thing included an authentic desire for what God had promised to Abraham of a land and a great nation, which Isaac had not yet seen happen, even though God had promised him exactly the same thing, and now he was going to die.

Thus, these "things to come" refer to the earthly promise of land and great nation, not to eternal life per se.

And God had already determined that Jacob would inherit the blessing as He had said to Rebekah, "The older will serve the younger (Genesis 25:23)."

³¹⁹ πίστει Ἰακώβ ἀποθνήσκων ἕκαστον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰωσήφ εὐλόγησεν καὶ προσεκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ – In a condition of very old age near his death, Jacob believed God for not only eternal life but also the fulfillment of his promises to Abraham's physical descendants. Cf. Genesis 47:31b, "Then Israel bowed in worship at the head of the bed." The Hebrew reads, $\text{וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ אֶל־רַגְלָיו בְּרֹאשׁ הַמִּטָּה}$ = and Israel worshiped at the head of the bed. The LXX reads, καὶ προσεκύνησεν Ἰσραὴλ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ = and Israel worshiped on the top of his staff. Paul uses the same wording as in the LXX but ῥάβδος can mean tribe, and the Hebrew וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה can also. In addition, ἄκρον can mean extreme limit or extent, and וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה can also. Thus, Jacob is thinking about believing all that God has promised of his tribe, which will include their possessing and ruling over the land of Canaan as a great nation. It is for this that he is worshipping God as he passes on to his sons the blessing and promises of God. He is looking to the future, even after he dies, for God's fulfilling His promises to them.

³²⁰ πίστει Ἰωσήφ τελευτῶν περὶ τῆς ἐξόδου τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ἐμνημόνευσεν καὶ περὶ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ ἐνετείλατο – As Joseph reached the goal of his earthly existence, death, he reflected back on what God has promised to Abraham, his grandfather, that the sons of Israel would be in Egypt for only 400 years. He also instructed his twelve sons to bury him in the land of promise, the land of Canaan. All this while he looked forward and believed God mostly for the fulfillment of His promises to Israel, that they would be a great nation on the land of Israel, and Joseph wants to be resurrected from that land when this all happens.

³²¹ πίστει Μωϋσῆς γεννηθεὶς ἐκρύβη τρίμηνον ὑπὸ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ, διότι εἶδον ἄστειον τὸ παιδίον καὶ οὐκ ἐφοβήθησαν τὸ διάταγμα τοῦ βασιλέως. Ἦ – Somehow, Moses' parents discovered (we do not know how, maybe just God's giving them a subjective impression) that he had a special role within the history of God's people. But they went through a difficult time and with belief in God's promises that included the earthly great nation, they hid him to keep him alive, when the Pharaoh had ordered to death of all newborn Jewish sons. They were more concerned about pleasing God than risking the ire of the Egyptian leader. Cf. Exodus 2:2, "The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was good/special (טוֹב) (ἄστειον = impressiveness of a person of high standing; cf. Acts 7:20, i.e., in the eyes of God), she hid him for three months." However, the context would seem to indicate that both טוֹב (literally good) and ἄστειον mean special, not physically beautiful. Thus, this verse is about the belief of Moses' parents.

³²² Πίστει Μωϋσῆς μέγας γενόμενος ἠρνήσατο λέγεσθαι υἱὸς θυγατρὸς Φαραῶ – Moses could have become a wealthy and powerful member of Pharaoh's household.

³²³ μᾶλλον ἐλόμενος συγκαουχεῖσθαι τῷ λαῷ τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ πρόσκαιρον ἔχειν ἀμαρτίας ἀπόλαυσιν – Just as it would be sin for the readers to abandon their obedience to God by belief in Jesus, so also it would have been sin for Moses to abandon his religious and cultural heritage as a descendant of Abraham in order to enjoy living out his life within the royal household, pursuing all their sinful practices that included idolatry. Instead, he chose the hard times of associating with his kinsmen, the Jews.

Here the “people of God” are the physical descendants of Abraham to whom God had promised that they would be a great nation on the land of Israel.

³²⁴ μείζονα πλοῦτον ἠγησάμενος τῶν Αἰγύπτου θησαυρῶν τὸν ὀνειδισμόν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀπέβλεπεν γὰρ εἰς τὴν μισθαποδοσίαν – Moses endured the Israelites' ridicule and rejection when he first approached them to lead them out of Egypt. But he realized that loyalty to Yahweh and His purposes, including the setting apart of the Jews as His people on earth, would gain him a greater “reward” (τὴν μισθαποδοσίαν – cf. Hebrews 10:35; 11:6), i.e., seeing the fulfillment of God's promises that included both the earthly great nation on the land of Israel and eternal life, than that of becoming a royal dignitary within the household of the Pharaoh. So here is a positive “test” of someone's belief, the possibility of a position of power and wealth instead of suffering with the people of God, as opposed to a negative “test,” where the suffering is simply thrust upon a person completely out of his control.

But this is not a voluntary renouncing of wealth and power like Francis of Assisi. Instead, it is not allowing the power, wealth, and success to dissuade him from following the path which God is offering.

Also, Moses' disgrace is similar to but not the same as Jesus' disgrace. So it makes more sense in the passage to see the “anointed one” as referring to Moses. God chose Moses for a special purpose which was initially going to involve disgrace from the Israelites.

³²⁵ πίστει κατέλιπεν Αἴγυπτον μὴ φοβηθεὶς τὸν θυμὸν τοῦ βασιλέως· τὸν γὰρ ἀόρατον ὡς ὄρων ἐκαρτέρησεν – Moses endured in his belief, caring more for what it meant to obey the invisible God with His promised outcome, going back to the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, than angering Pharaoh, the visible man, who threatened to kill Moses if he sees him again. Moses did not back off from following God at the risk of angering the Pharaoh even more. Moses knew that He was going to be ok, even though he could not see God and exactly what He has promised in the future. Pharaoh was visible and commanded a very visible army, which Moses and the Israelites could not match. But Moses trusted God for the result of his leadership, that the Israelites would escape anything Pharaoh tried to do to harm them.

So also should Paul's readers not fear anyone who threatens them because of their belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

³²⁶ Πίστει πεποίηκεν τὸ πάσχα καὶ τὴν πρόσχυσιν τοῦ αἵματος, ἵνα μὴ ὀλοθρεύων τὰ πρωτότοκα θίγη αὐτῶν – Moses followed through on God's instructions in spite of the risks with respect to the Egyptians, because he feared God who was going to destroy the firstborn of every household. So what if the Egyptians suffer this kind of loss in the light of who God is.

So also should Paul's readers fear God who can destroy them if they give up their belief in Jesus.

³²⁷ πίστει διέβησαν τὴν ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν ὡς διὰ ξηρᾶς ὄγης, ἧς πείραν λαβόντες οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι ἠκατέποθησαν – When the Egyptians received the opportunity to test the situation (cf. Hebrews 11:36), they failed, because God's purpose for them was to die in the sea, not pass through it as the Israelites had. Thus, they demonstrated their unbelief in God and His promises, while at least a few of the Israelites demonstrated their belief in God's promises which would include experiencing the great nation on the land of Israel and then eternal life on the new earth.

³²⁸ πίστει τὰ τεῖχη Ἱεριχὼ ἔπεσαν κυκλωθέντα ἐπὶ ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας – Paul says that there was authentic belief in God's promises among the Israelites as they marched around the city of Jericho after entering into the promised land of Canaan. While Abraham had to remain a nomad in the land and this attested to his belief, God commanded Joshua to take the land as an attestation to his belief. Thus life can look quite dissimilar for two people of belief, depending upon what God's plans are at the time. For Abraham, it was not yet time to take the land. For Joshua, it was. And yet the people of Israel still did not become the great nation of God's completely fulfilling His promise to Abraham.

³²⁹ πίστει Ῥαᾶβ ἡ ἑρμῆτις οὐ συναπόλετο τοῖς ἠπειθήσασιν δεξαμένη τοὺς κατασκόπους μετ' εἰρήνης – Rahab as a Gentile prostitute had heard stories and as a result embraced the notion of God's ability to grant His promises for both the Jews and the Gentiles, so that she also grasped God's purposes for the city of Jericho. It was being taken over by the Jews. As a result, God chose to save her family from death during the destruction of the city. It was this simple belief which changed the course of her life in comparison to her fellow city dwellers. She greeted the spies with their ultimate desire, “Shalom,” and hoped for the same for herself from Yahweh.

Here we have the first Gentile to be mentioned in this list that opens the door for Paul to refer to the Gentile women who received back their sons through death in v. 35. And it even more demonstrates the importance of belief since Gentiles are included in the promises which God fulfills towards those with authentic belief.

³³⁰ καὶ τί ἔτι λέγω; ἐπιλείψει ἔμε γὰρ διηγούμενον ὁ χρόνος περὶ Γεδεὼν, Βαράκ ἡ Σαμψών, Ἰεφθάε, Δαυὶδ τε καὶ Σαμουὴλ καὶ τῶν προφητῶν – It is not as though all these men were persons of sterling character or great wisdom. However, they did have authentic belief in God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which would eventually result in the great nation and then eternal life. And their belief did not need great character and impeccable moral behavior to be authentic. It required the commitments of their hearts in the midst of their moral depravity. Also, we

notice that belief in these men did not result in the victorious Christian life. It resulted in the opposite, bitter experiences of suffering.

³³¹ οἱ διὰ πίστεως ἑκατηγωνίσαντο βασιλείας, εἰργάσαντο δικαιοσύνην, ἐπέτυχον ἐπαγγελιῶν, ἔφραξαν στόματα λεόντων – Certainly there were some very positive moments in the lives of OT believers as they looked forward to God’s fulfilling all His promises to them.

³³² ἔσβησαν δύναμιν πυρός, ἔφυγον στόματα μαχαίρης, ἔδυναμώθησαν ἀπὸ ἀσθενείας, ἐγενήθησαν ἰσχυροὶ ἐν πολέμῳ, παρεμβολὰς ἔκλιναν ἀλλοτριῶν – Same as above.

³³³ ἔλαβον ἑγναίκες ἐξ ἀναστάσεως τοὺς νεκροὺς αὐτῶν ἄλλοι δὲ εὐμπανίσθησαν οὐ προσδεξάμενοι τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν, ἵνα κρείττονος ἀναστάσεως τύχωσιν – But there were also some very negative moments in the lives of OT believers in addition to the fact that God resurrected from the dead some of them, or at least relatives of some of them. This would be a reference to 1 Kings 17:1ff. and 2 Kings 4:36ff. where God raised from the dead the son of the woman of Zarephath with whom Elijah was staying and the son of the Shunammite woman through Elisha respectively. Other authentic believers were willing to suffer greatly rather than give up their belief in God for the fulfillment of His promises. Plus, escape from torture in this life is nothing in comparison to being a participant in the first of the two resurrections, which will be one of blessing and eternal life on first this earth and then the new earth after the millennial kingdom (cf. Revelation 20-22). This is “the better resurrection” in comparison to being raised from the dead in this realm only to die again. This is to say that women of the OT received back their dead children, not that they were snatched from “heaven” and eternal life. Instead, they were brought back from actual death in this present world and earth. So death does not mean that we are immediately translated into “heaven,” but we await the resurrection of the dead when Jesus returns, in order to live on the present earth and the new earth for all eternity with immortal and morally perfect bodies.

³³⁴ ἔτεροι δὲ εμπαιγμῶν καὶ μαστίγων πειραν ἔλαβον, ἔτι δὲ δεσμῶν καὶ φυλακῆς – They received the opportunity to have their belief tested (cf. Hebrews 11:29). And Paul is implying that they passed this test.

³³⁵ ἐλιθάσθησαν, ἐπρίσθησαν, ἐν φόβῳ μαχαίρης ἀπέθανον, περιήλθον ἐν μηλωταῖς, ἐν αἰγείοις δέρμασιν, ὑστερούμενοι, θλιβόμενοι, κακουχούμενοι – Some very difficult experiences that could easily crush anybody’s faith. But their faith survived because of God’s grace.

³³⁶ ὃν οὐκ ἦν ἄξιος ὁ κόσμος, ἐπὶ ἐρημίαις πλανώμενοι καὶ ὄρεσιν καὶ σπηλαίοις καὶ ταῖς ὄποις τῆς γῆς – The world is not worthy of such people because the world has abandoned God and deserves His condemnation and destruction, not the benefit of the presence of people who can offer the only message of hope.

Authentic belief will eventually get one in trouble with the world, but this is why belief looks to God’s promises for its ultimate fulfillment. Not exactly the victorious Christian life. But God’s promises will mean the greatness of the nation of Israel under Jesus’ rule with resurrected believers ruling with him. Can we hang in there for this?

³³⁷ καὶ οὗτοι πάντες μαρτυρηθέντες διὰ τῆς πίστεως οὐκ ἐκομίσαντο τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν – Cf. Hebrews 10:36. God demonstrated His commitment to people of authentic belief by virtue of His causing them to continue to believe in the midst of circumstances that would have naturally crushed their belief. Thus, they demonstrated that they were acceptable to God. They were *dikiai* before God. Yet, God’s plan did not include that they would during their lives experience the Jews’ being the great nation on the land of Israel as God had promised Abraham.

³³⁸ τοῦ θεοῦ περὶ ἡμῶν κρείττον τι προβλεψαμένου, ἵνα μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν τελειωθῶσιν – The OT believers did not reach their ultimate goal of receiving the earthly, Jewish promises of God by His grace so that there could be others after them who could do so also. In other words, if they had received the fulfillment of God’s promises, Paul and future believers would potentially not even come into existence. Indeed, each believer’s death indicates that there is still time for other believers to come into existence and receive the promise of the greatness of the nation of Israel along with the promise of eternal life. In addition, we will experience the fulfillment of God’s promises at the same time as Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, et. al in Hebrews 11—at the return of Jesus and the first resurrection.

Therefore, these statements explode the myth in Christian culture that heaven now exists for believers. Instead, each believer dies in order to await at Jesus’ return the resurrection of all believers who have died—from Abel to the very last believer who dies before Jesus’ return.

³³⁹ τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς τοσοῦτον ἔχοντες περικείμενον ἡμῖν νέφος μαρτύρων – These are the believers of Hebrews 11 who, in a literary sense, surround Paul and his readers and bear witness to the value of persevering in authentic belief for the sake of eternal life. Paul is not referring to their witnessing or observing him and his readers. He is referring to them as those who bore witness with their lives of persevering belief of its importance. They never gave up in their journeys of belief in God on earth, no matter how difficult, confusing, or problematic life became for them.

³⁴⁰ ὄγκον ἀποθέμενοι πάντα καὶ τὴν ἑὐπερίστατον ἀμαρτίαν – Like Moses’ situation (cf. Hebrews 11:24-26) and the situation of the Israelites who were journeying through the desert (cf. Hebrews 3:12ff.), there is the sin of inherent hostility toward God that is in the fabric of Paul’s and his readers’ very being and that would compromise with the “world,” even the Jewish religious culture that lacks authentic inwardness and belief. This would be in order to avoid suffering and pain in the present realm. Paul and his readers are tempted to abandon their belief in Jesus as the Messiah. But this is what Paul has been stating would be rebellion against God and a concrete impediment to their obtaining His blessing of eternal life. By extrapolation, every other sin which would distract them and us and seduce us from keeping our eyes on the prize of the Kingdom of God, we should get rid of in our lives.

³⁴¹ δι' ὑπομονῆς τρέχουμεν τὸν προκειμένον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα – The Greek races had the goal of finishing and winning. In this case, the goal and winning is obtaining the earthly millennial Kingdom of God and the new earthly eternal Kingdom of God along that will constitute the Sabbath rest of God (cf. Hebrews 4:1-11). Therefore, urges his readers and him to run the race of life with all that it brings them (and us) as though one is committed to winning it, regardless of the amount of suffering during this present existence.

³⁴² ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν – Instead of modeling their lives after Jews who focus on the Mosaic Covenant apart from Jesus, Paul wants his readers to consider the example of Jesus, who finished the race first and won it by persevering in his belief and dying on the cross. Jesus leads us across the finish line and into the eternal Kingdom of God.

³⁴³ ὃς ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς ὑπέμεινεν ἵνα σταυρὸν αἰσχύνῃς καταφρονήσας ἐν δεξιᾷ τε τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ ἵκεται – Jesus' joy was in the final outcome of his life, becoming the King of the eternal Kingdom of God and high priest for believers at the final judgment. Thus, he was willing to endure the suffering of a death filled with humiliation, which he felt emotionally, psychologically, and physically. As a result, he gained his position of metaphorically sitting at the right hand of God in order to rule and intercede. Cf. Psalm 110:1,4 – David states that his Lord is both king of the universe and high priest according to the order of Melchizedek (cf. Hebrews 7-10). This is different from the people in Hebrews 11 who are still in their graves. Jesus is out of the grave and has taken his place as ruler of the created reality. Thus, he is the best example of belief and the one who truly leads us into the kingdom, because he has reached immortality. He was already morally perfect as the icon of God within the creation, but now he his body has become eternal besides. We look forward to becoming both by running our races right behind him.

³⁴⁴ ἀναλογίσασθε γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ ἐστὶν ἡμεῖς ὡς οἱ ἄγγελοι – Paul switches to directly exhorting his readers. Jesus had to run toward the end of his race while being mistreated by angry people, even to the point of death. Thus, he did not give up on God and his belief in the Father and His plans and purposes that included his suffering on the cross. Paul wants his readers to draw encouragement and motivation to do the same from Jesus' example so that they, too, do not give up their belief in God's love, faithfulness, and purposes for them to acquire the eternal Kingdom of God.

³⁴⁵ οὐπω ἕως ἄμαρτος ἀντικατέστητε πρὸς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἁγανακτιζόμενοι – Paul reminds his readers that, in their internal battle of resisting the sin of rebelling against God and giving up on believing in Jesus as the Messiah, they have not yet been persecuted as harshly as Jesus was who was killed for his belief. This is Paul's way of saying the same thing as Jesus in Matthew 10:28, “Do not fear those who kill the body but who cannot kill the soul. Instead, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.” It is not that Paul is saying that persecution will never lead to death. But so far, for his readers, God has stopped short of bringing the same conclusion to their lives as He did for Jesus, which gives them ample opportunity to demonstrate authentic belief by persevering in it through the difficult times which they are experience. He will go on to say that this also part of God's love for them in training them up to become mature believers in him.

³⁴⁶ καὶ ἐκλέλησθε τῆς παρακλήσεως, ἣτις ὑμῖν ὡς υἱοῖς διαλέγεται – Paul reminds his Jewish readers that they need to know their Hebrew scriptures (just as Christians need to know their whole Bibles). The Old Testament contains the same message as the NT, that sinners, even the Jewish nation, will go through hardship that is orchestrated by and from God in order to refine their belief and instruct them to persevere in holding on to the truth.

³⁴⁷ υἱὲ ὄμου, μὴ ὀλιγόρει παιδείας κυρίου ἡμεῖς ἐκλύου ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐλεγχόμενοι: ὃν γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ κύριος παιδεύει, μαστιγοῖ δὲ πάντα υἱὸν ὃν παραδέχεται – Proverbs 3:11,12 – יְהוָה יוֹסֵף אֶת-כָּל-עֲוֹנוֹתָי וְלֹא יַעֲזֹב אֶת-עֵינָי מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְרֵנִי וְלֹא יִשְׁמַד אֶת-עֵינָי מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְרֵנִי וְלֹא יִשְׁמַד אֶת-עֵינָי מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְרֵנִי (LXX – υἱέ, μὴ ὀλιγόρει παιδείας κυρίου ἡμεῖς ἐκλύου ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐλεγχόμενοι ὃν γὰρ ἀγαπᾷ κύριος παιδεύει, μαστιγοῖ δὲ πάντα υἱὸν ὃν παραδέχεται) – God remains faithful to His people, bringing “loving” wrath upon the Israelites as a nation because of their disobedience to the Mosaic Covenant, and bringing loving training and reproof upon believing Jews and Gentiles because of their continued sinfulness under the New Covenant. It may feel as though God is punishing us, but the loving hardship is intended to produce, through the inward activity of God, persevering belief that will result in eternal mercy. In addition, there will be hard times in believers' lives, not because they have done anything wrong, but because it is good training in the course of faith and belief.

³⁴⁸ εἰς παιδείαν ὑπομένετε, ὡς υἱοῖς ὑμῖν προσφέρεται ὁ θεός. τίς γὰρ υἱὸς ὃν οὐ παιδεύει πατήρ – I would take this as a command. Paul wants them to look biblically at the hardship that is occurring in their lives and to subject themselves willingly to the training that their “Father,” God, is taking them through. In this way they will persevere in their belief just as the OT believers of chapter 11 did.

³⁴⁹ εἰ δὲ χωρὶς ἐστε παιδείας ἧς μέτοχοι γεγονάσιν πάντες, ἄρα νόθοι καὶ οὐχ υἱοὶ ἐστε – Paul's readers might wonder if it were possible to be a child of God without pain and the training in faith that is its purpose, and the answer is a resounding No. It would mean that they are without God as their Father and, therefore, bastards, spiritually speaking. The fact is that all Christians find themselves being trained by God at various times of their lives. No authentic believer escapes God's love, training, and the maturation of their belief by means of hard times.

³⁵⁰ εἶτα τοὺς μὲν τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν πατέρας εἶχομεν παιδευτάς καὶ ἐνετρεπόμεθα: οὐ πολὺ ὁ μᾶλλον ὑποταγησόμεθα τῷ πατρὶ τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ ζήσομεν – The analogy of earthly fathers holds, so that, whether or not we like it, the only way to gain the Kingdom of God and eternal life is by submitting to the training of the Father of

spirits, the One who is the very source of the existence of our spirits, i.e., of our persons and our stories, that both go on into eternal life. Our earthly fathers trained us to survive and behave properly in this life. God trains us to subordinate ourselves to His plan for our life and to gain eternal life.

³⁵¹ οἱ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς ὀλίγας ἡμέρας κατὰ τὸ δοκοῦν αὐτοῖς ἐπαίδευσον, ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ συμφέρον εἰς τὸ μεταλαβεῖν τῆς ἀγιότητος αὐτοῦ – The job of earthly fathers who train their children ends when they grow up and become adults. God’s training of Christians to mature and persevere in their belief goes on during the rest of their lives because God has eternity in mind. And Christians do not reach eternity until they die or Jesus returns. Therefore, they never really grow up in the same way that children do (or should do) with respect to their earthly fathers. This is to say that they never get to a point where they should not need the training of their “Father” God.

In order to participate in God’s holiness and being different from the world that is hostile towards Him and that culminates in the holiness and difference of being morally perfect in the eternal Kingdom of God, believers must go through a training process in the midst of their continued sin and rebellion. If a person is fundamentally willing to participate with God by being different like Him in a hostile world when things are even difficult and suffering is involved, then the person will meet the condition required for obtaining eternal life. But this takes the internal resolve of persevering in belief while wishing the pain would go away, the latter of which is only human.

³⁵² πάντα ἡδὲ παιδεία πρὸς μὲν τὸ παρὸν οὐ δοκεῖ χαρᾶς εἶναι ἀλλὰ λύπης, ὕστερον δὲ καρπὸν εἰρηνικὸν τοῖς δι’ αὐτῆς γεγυμνασμένοις ἀποδίδωσιν δικαιοσύνης – Yes, God’s training can definitely hurt. However, the outcome is the eternal Kingdom of God, the shalom environment that comes from our being accepted by God through belief in the Messiah. Translating εἰρηνικὸν as shalom rather than peaceful makes more sense in line with his Paul’s use of joyful and sorrowful earlier in the verse. Shalom is a flourishing and thriving existence that is joyful and not sorrowful. Dikaiosune here refers to being in a place where one stands to inherit eternal shalom. This place of dikaiosune is the fruit of the training and that one knows he is in by virtue of the training and testing of his belief, which endures the hardships and difficulties of the training. As a result, this is also the eternal shalom which is the fruit of dikaiosune. To be trained by God in persevering belief and obedience through suffering is to be in a place where one stands to receive eternal life.

³⁵³ διὸ τὰς παρειμένας χεῖρας καὶ τὰ παραλελυμένα γόνατα ἀνορθώσατε (cf. Isaiah 35:3 – ἰσχύσατε χεῖρες ἀνειμένα καὶ γόνατα παραλελυμένα – “Strengthen the loosened hands and weak knees”) – Isaiah is encouraging the rebellious Jews who are experiencing God’s final episode of wrath, the Day of the Lord, on Israel just before Jesus’ return to look forward to God’s fulfillment of His promises of causing them to live on their land in complete peace and security) – Paul is speaking metaphorically of a person’s motivation to persevere in belief in the eternal Kingdom of God through Jesus’ intercession and as our leader. The idea is to strengthen oneself with the truth of the gospel and God’s sovereignty and faithfulness to His people both to train them and to cause them to reach the ultimate goal of eternal life. And to do this when one is weary from enduring suffering and even shaking in fear because of the potential for harm and hardship in the present life.

³⁵⁴ καὶ τροχιάς ὀρθᾶς ποιεῖτε τοῖς ποσὶν ὑμῶν ἵνα μὴ τὸ χωλὸν ἐκτραπῆ, ἰαθῆ δὲ μᾶλλον – A lame leg could cause someone to walk in circles, never reaching his destination, which requires proceeding on a straight path in only one direction. Paul uses the metaphor to suggest that unbelief will only cause a sinful human being to walk in circles and never reach the goal of God’s blessing of eternal life. Only fixing the lame leg of unbelief so that a person can walk on the straight path of belief and pursuing goodness and morality will allow him to so.

(cf. Proverbs 4:26a – ὀρθᾶς τροχιάς ποιεῖ σοῖς ποσὶν – Solomon encourages his son to look straight ahead at morality and its payout, to live a life of wisdom and not foolishness) – Paul is offering the same encouragement and motivation to persevere in belief, to live on the basis of the truth of the gospel of God’s grace and mercy through the sacrificed and resurrected High Priest Jesus. This is the wise way to live life, because its outcome is eternal life—even if the training by God has involved unwise decisions and choices on the part of the trainee.

Again, speaking metaphorically, the belief of Paul’s readers has been injured so that they are walking through life lame from the lies being forced upon by the unbelieving Jews. This has resulted in their belief’s coming close to being “knocked out of joint,” i.e., being lost and non-existent anymore. Therefore, Paul wants them to heal their belief by persevering in embracing Jesus as King and High Priest for the sake of eternal life. If their belief becomes “dislocated,” then they lose their opportunity for eternal life. If it is healed through grasping the truth and through the work of God’s grace, they will gain eternal life. Lame belief is not unbelief. Dislocated belief is. It is certainly not unusual to experience a decided limp in one’s belief. But the truth and confidence in it as one embraces it—by fixing one’s eyes on Jesus’ experience of willingly suffering death on the cross—heals the limp and strengthens the legs that being seduced by falsehood and unbelief causes.

³⁵⁵ εἰρήνην διώκετε μετὰ πάντων καὶ τὸν ἀγιασμόν, οὐ χωρὶς οὐδεὶς ὄψεται τὸν κύριον – Paul wants them to pursue shalom, i.e., the wholesome existence God has promised in eternal life, with all those who are pursuing this same thing, by doing it together with the single message of Jesus as the Messiah. Ultimately, they all should pursue being different from the world according to God’s work within them, especially in the midst of the sorrowful and difficult training event. It is authentic inwardness that will result in their eternal salvation and allow a person to see Jesus, the Lord of God’s kingdom.

³⁵⁶ ἐπισκοποῦντες μὴ τις ὕστερῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ, μὴ τις ῥίζα πικρίας ἄνω φύουσα ἔνοχλῃ καὶ ἴδι’ αὐτῆς μανθῶσιν ἢ πολλοί – cf. Deuteronomy 29:18, “so that there will not be among you a man or woman, or family

or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations; that there will not be among you a root bearing poisonous fruit and wormwood” (μή τις ἐστὶν ἐν ὑμῖν ῥίζα ἄνω φύουσα ἐν χολῇ καὶ πικρίᾳ). cf. Acts 8:23, εἰς γὰρ χολὴν πικρίας καὶ σύνδεσμον ἀδικίας ὀρῶ σε ὄντα. ἐν χολῇ makes more sense. This is resentment toward God in the light of his readers’ being mistreated, ultimately, bitterness toward God (=idolatry in Deuteronomy 29:18), that would move a person to get so angry with God that he would give up the sanctification of inwardness and belief that are the necessary conditions for salvation and eternal life. In addition, once one person in a group that is suffering persecution becomes resentful and angry by grabbing idolatry as his solution, others can soon follow suit, especially after the first person starts voicing his resentment and justifying it—just like the people of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament who collectively grumbled against God.

³⁵⁷ μή τις πόρνος ἢ βέβηλος ὡς Ἡσαῦ, ὃς ἀντὶ βρώσεως μιᾶς ἀπέδετο ‘τὰ πρωτοτόκια’ ἑαυτοῦ – Paul urges his readers not to let the allure of the comforts and pleasures of this life, even social acceptance in one’s community, dissuade a person from persevering in belief in the truth of Jesus as the suffering Messiah and high priest. cf. Genesis 25 where Esau lets his physical hunger overshadow his understanding of the value of his inheritance and all that comes with it as the firstborn son. Esau took something valuable, God’s promise to Abraham which he would inherit, and exchanged it for food. He trivialized it. He allowed his sensual need to rid himself of the feeling of hunger to convince himself that his inheritance was worthless. This made him worldly, i.e., just like everybody else in the world. But nothing in this world is worth God’s inheritance of the eternal Kingdom of God.

But sometimes it is really difficult, because we just want the pain to go away because it is so intense. And we are tempted to want or do something that would mean giving up God’s promise of eternal life. But only God can make the pain go away if He chooses as He grants us enough proven belief that we accept what has happened in our life as from the sovereign hand of a loving God, that we learn from what has happened, and we move on—only to be willing to wait for the next time that God trains us with a sorrowful situation.

³⁵⁸ ἴστε γὰρ ὅτι καὶ μετέπειτα θέλων κληρονομήσαι τὴν εὐλογίαν ἀπεδοκιμάσθη, μετανοίας γὰρ τόπον οὐχ εὗρεν καίπερ μετὰ δακρῶν ἐκζητήσας αὐτήν – The experience of Esau in Genesis 25 and 27 is analogous to the final judgment when a person will have lost the opportunity to inherit the blessing of eternal life. It will be too late to turn from the attractiveness of the comfort and security of the present life and acquire, instead, eternal life with authentic belief. It is curious that Esau willingly sold his birthright for a meal and then was surprised when Jacob tricked their father Isaac into granting it to him. It shows the distorted thinking that accompanies rebellion against God and trivializing the things that are truly important, especially God’s eternal mercy and life.

³⁵⁹ οὐ γὰρ προσεληλύθατε ψηλαφωμένῳ Ἵ (ὄρει) καὶ κεκαυμένῳ πυρὶ καὶ γνόφῳ ‘καὶ ζόφῳ’ καὶ θυέλλῃ καὶ σάλπιγγος ἤχῳ καὶ φωνῇ ῥημάτων, ἧς οἱ ἀκούσαντες παρητήσαντο ὡμὴ προστεθῆναι αὐτοῖς λόγον – This list is all the ways that God revealed himself to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19-20 when He gave them the Mosaic Covenant and displayed the truth of His being a God of justice, indicating that Paul is talking about what his readers would be doing if they go back to the Mosaic Covenant. The non-believing Jews, who are persecuting Paul’s readers, groping and searching for God’s acceptance, will experience this same divine justice if they continue in their perspective towards God, the Mosaic Covenant, and Jesus. In addition, they are basically stuck looking at this scene by their focus on the Mosaic Covenant rather than moving on to seeing the celebration of God’s grace and mercy through the New Covenant of Jesus’ death and intercession at the judgment—stuck in the negative instead of moving on to the positive. They can expect to live in fear of God, not joy in God. Cf. Romans 8:15ff. They will live wondering if they have done enough to please God with the psychological and emotional effect of sheer fear.

cf. Acts 17:27 for the use of ψηλαφάω, “that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for (ψηλαφήσειαν) Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us”

³⁶⁰ οὐκ ἔφερον γὰρ τὸ διαστελλόμενον κἄν θηρίον θίγη τοῦ ὄρους, λιθοβοληθήσεται – It was a very frightening scene at Mt. Sinai.

³⁶¹ καὶ, οὕτως φοβερὸν ἦν τὸ φανταζόμενον, Μωϋσῆς εἶπεν ἔκφοβός εἰμι καὶ ἔντρομος – Paul has stated in Hebrews 9:16,17 that a Jew who violates the Mosaic Covenant incurs God’s justice and deserves death. Ironically, the non-believing Jews who are persecuting Paul’s readers are violating the Mosaic Covenant while thinking that they are champions of it.

³⁶² ἀλλὰ προσεληλύθατε Σιών ὄρει ὁ καὶ πόλει θεοῦ ζώντος, Ἱερουσαλήμ ἐπουρανίῳ – The Old Testament uses Mt. Zion to refer to Jerusalem, the capital city of the kingdom of Israel and the Jews. The prophets, especially, use Mt. Zion to refer to Jerusalem during the revival of the Jews at the end of history. However, it makes more sense that Paul is using all three phrases to refer to the eternal Kingdom of God, which begins with the earthly kingdom of Israel and continues with the eternal kingdom of the new earth, created after the destruction of this realm. So here Paul is talking about what his readers are doing if they go on to belief in Jesus the Messiah and remain committed to it. They can expect to live in joy in God, not fear of God. They do not have to worry if they have done enough to please God, because Jesus will intercede on their behalf and gain them mercy. They cannot earn it and cannot lose it through not deserving it. The result will be that they will live first in the Kingdom of Israel after the 2nd coming of Jesus and then in the Kingdom of God in the new and recreated realm.

³⁶³ καὶ ἑκατοντάσιν ἁγγέλων, πανηγύρει καὶ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρωτοτόκων ἁπογεγραμμένων ἐν οὐρανοῖς³ – These are conventional angels rejoicing in the heavenly realm over God’s justice and mercy. There is also a “gathering” of people who are destined to rejoice in the grace of God and salvation after the judgment, because they are heirs of God’s

inheritance of the eternal Kingdom of God. This is in contrast to people who were scared out of their minds at Mt. Sinai because of the possibility of God's justice. Even if the readers' persecutors are not willing to admit it, such fright should be their perspective. While Jesus is THE firstborn one (cf. Hebrews 1:6), the author is saying, that, because these believing Jews will inherit the same eternal kingdom as Jesus, they are firstborn sons also, and Jesus will be their leader. They are on the list of the justified who stand to receive God's promise of eternal life and then do so.

³⁶⁴ καὶ κριτῆ θεῶ πάντων – The “all” are the people who are genuinely approaching God for His eternal mercy as opposed to those who are persecuting the readers of this letter from Paul.

κριτῆς could be translated ruler (cf. Judges 2:16,18; Ruth 1:1 and may refer to Jesus, not the transcendent Creator, the Father. But Paul may not refer to Jesus until v. 24, and it makes sense that God leads all His people of genuine belief to this new Jerusalem of the millennial kingdom.

³⁶⁵ καὶ πνεύμασιν ἁγίοις τετελειωμένων – Paul emphasizes that these are the people who stand to be forgiven by God, the Ruler of all these who arrive at the new Jerusalem of the millennial kingdom, and who have reached their final goal of eternal life because of having persevered in belief during their earthly existence before death and/or the rapture and first resurrection. They are in their graves now (or still alive on earth), but they will be resurrected (or raised up from the earth) to eternal life and morally perfect bodies at Jesus' return.

³⁶⁶ καὶ διαθήκης νέας μεσίτη Ἰησοῦ καὶ αἵματι ῥαντισμοῦ κρείττον λαλοῦντι παρὰ τὸν Ἄβελ – The New Covenant is about grace and mercy. While Abel's blood said, “I cry out for vengeance” for myself (Genesis 4:10-12), Jesus' blood says, “I appeal for mercy on behalf of others who are morally depraved human beings,” which is the main point of Paul's letter. And Jesus' blood works to appeal for mercy in contrast to the blood of bulls and goats which does NOT work. The latter's blood can only point to Jesus' blood as the eternally effective blood.

³⁶⁷ βλέπετε μὴ παραιτήσησθε τὸν λαλοῦντα· εἰ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι οὐκ ἐξέφυγον ἐπὶ γῆς παραιτησάμενοι τὸν ἰσχυρισμὸν, πολὺ μάλλον ἡμεῖς οἱ τὸν ἀπ' οὐρανῶν ἀποστρεφόμενοι – Paul refers first to Jesus who is imparting a divine message from God just as Moses imparted God's message at Mt. Sinai in the form of the Mosaic Covenant. Then, the Jews experienced God's judgment under the Mosaic Covenant, for example, either in the desert after God brought them out of slavery from Egypt or by being expelled from the land of Israel and taken into captivity by the Assyrians and Babylonians between 700 and 600 B.C. The messenger of God is “from heaven” in the sense that he is the very embodiment of God, Jesus, the Son of God, who is both Messiah and high priest (cf. Hebrews 1:1-3 and chapters 5-10). Even though the readers should focus on the celebratory gathering in heaven of the angels and the gathering that occurs of authentic believers as Jesus comes from heaven to establish the millennial kingdom, there still remains the fact that God is a God of judgment and condemnation for those who refuse to embrace His grace and mercy through His divine messenger Jesus.

³⁶⁸ οὐ ἡ φωνὴ τὴν γῆν ἐσάλειψεν τότε, νῦν δὲ ἐπιγγέλλεται λέγων ἔτι ἅπαξ ἐγὼ σεισῶ οὐ μόνον τὴν γῆν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν – The sound of God's speaking at Mt. Sinai (“then”) shook the mountain and the earth, because God wanted to communicate not only His mercy, but also His justice. God will definitely communicate His justice again at the end of this temporary history when Jesus returns and before the final judgment and He recreates the earth for the eternal Kingdom of God. Cf. Haggai 2:6-7 – “For thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land (שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ וְיָם וְיַבְשָׁתָיִם וְכָל הָאָרֶץ וְכָל הַיָּם וְכָל הַיַּבֵּשׁ) (LXX – ἔτι ἅπαξ ἐγὼ σεισῶ τὸν οὐρανόν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὴν ξηράν). I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says Yahweh of hosts.” God will shake, i.e., destroy, the Gentile nations and Israel at the second coming of Christ. The result will be according to Haggai 2 that there will be a new temple built with the wealth brought to Jerusalem by Gentiles who will want to participate in its construction. This will also include God's reconciliation with His people, the Jews. See Acts 4:31 for a mini-shaking at the time of Jesus' first coming.

Shaking both the earth and heaven refers to a new structure to the created realm, first during the millennial kingdom when Jesus will exercise complete hegemony over all the earth, and second when God produces a brand new creation that will contain only immortal and morally perfect human beings.

³⁶⁹ τὸ δὲ ἔτι ἅπαξ δηλοῖ [τὴν] τῶν σαλευομένων μετάθεσιν ὡς πεποιτημένων, ἵνα μείνῃ τὰ μὴ σαλευόμενα – This refers initially to the millennial kingdom after the shaking of both the Gentile nations and the Jewish nation of Israel. The only things which will remain will be the “unshaken ones,” those things which are transformed in order that they may align with God's purposes of both the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants, such that the Jews as God's people can and will submit to Him properly. This will include their submission to Jesus as their Messiah, King, and High Priest. The unshaken things are not characterized by immortality and moral perfection yet, but eventually they will when God produces the eternal universe and creation.

³⁷⁰ διὸ βασιλείαν ἀσάλευτον παραλαμβάνοντες ἔχωμεν χάριν, δι' ἧς ἡλατρεύομεν εὐαρέστως τῷ θεῷ μετὰ εὐλαβείας καὶ δέους – The unshakeable Kingdom of God begins at Jesus' return so that the Jews and the land of Israel will never be subject to God's wrath and judgment again. Thus, the whole world will be ruled by Jesus, and no one will dare rebel against him until the end of the millennial kingdom. At the present moment, our response is gratitude, joy, reverence, and awe as this unshakeable/indestructible kingdom comes closer. Now we are to live lives that are given over to loving others, dealing with others truthfully and morally, even while suffering the training of God. Cf. Philippians where Paul encourages his readers to work out their salvation with fear and trembling—at God!!!

Not at man. Psalm 118:6, “Yahweh is for me. I will not fear. What can man do to me?” Romans 8:38,39, “For I am convinced that [nothing] will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

³⁷¹ ἡ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν πῦρ καταναλίσκων – God is not only a God of mercy, but also a God of judgment and condemnation for those who refuse His message of mercy and obedience that involves Jesus as Messiah and high priest. To reject His message and follow the lies of Satan that he has injected into the world is to face destruction by God.

³⁷² ἡ φιλαδελφία μενέτω – This chapter is a list of practical ways that the readers who are Jewish believers can serve God in the midst of the oppression and persecution that they are experiencing (cf. Hebrews 12:28), because this list contains ways of serving God that can very easily be ignored by these people in the midst of the troubles which they are experiencing. Paul begins with an exhortation for their care and concern for one another as believers in Jesus as the Messiah to continue.

³⁷³ τῆς φιλοξενίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε, διὰ ταύτης γὰρ ἔλαθόν τινες ξενίσαντες ἀγγέλους – By showing hospitality to travelers, these believing Jews may have taken in people whom God wants to use to sustain and strengthen their own faith.

³⁷⁴ μὴ μνησθεσθε τῶν δεσμίων ὡς συνδεδεμένοι, τῶν κακουχομένων ὡς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὄντες ἐν σόματι – Even though believing Jews are in prison, they are still a part of the community of believers and should be visited and encouraged while physically separated from their fellow Christians.

³⁷⁵ τίμιος ὁ γάμος ἐν πᾶσιν καὶ ἡ κοίτη ἀμίαντος, πόρνους γὰρ καὶ μοιχοὺς κρινεὶ ὁ θεός – Willful pursuit of any kind of immorality, including adultery, demonstrates a heart of rebellion towards God and a lack of appreciation for the value of morality. But Paul mentions adultery probably because of the incredible decadence of the Roman Empire and the temptation for these Christians to try to hide by conforming to the culture. And those who are committed to sexual immorality and adultery will face only the judgment and condemnation of God, as opposed to those who in the weakness of their humanity will have on occasion succumbed to the temptation to commit immorality. This may mean too that these Jewish believers are experiencing persecution from Romans as well as from the Jews.

³⁷⁶ ἀφιλάργυρος ὁ τρόπος, ἄρκοῦμενοι τοῖς παροῦσιν. αὐτὸς γὰρ εἶρηκεν οὐ μὴ σε ἀνῶ οὐδ’ οὐ μὴ σε ἔγκαταλίπω – Greed for the readers of this letter would be putting more importance on their material property than their belief and its eventual result, eternal life, in the midst of being persecuted for their Christianity. They are having their property taken away from them, and are finding it difficult to survive in a hostile environment. Certainly, it would be tempting to allow the disappointment from all the loss that they are experiencing to overwhelm their belief. To desire the eternal Kingdom of God more than what money can get us is Paul’s exhortation here to these people who are possibly experiencing great loss because of their belief in Jesus.

The Deuteronomy passage is a promise to Israel and not to Gentiles. Therefore, Paul is using this as a reference to the character of God, that He will grant even Gentiles the strength to continue to believe in the face of odds that could potentially crush their belief.

³⁷⁷ ὥστε θαρροῦντας ἡμᾶς λέγειν, κύριος ἐμοὶ βοηθός, ὡ[καὶ] οὐ φοβηθήσομαι τί ποιήσει μοι ἄνθρωπος – To think of God as one’s helper who cares about His people is especially important for these Jewish believers who are experiencing such intense persecution from their own Jewish community. Thus, Paul borrows from the Psalmist the concept of trusting God rather than caring about what other people think about you or even do to you. Ultimately, all that matters is what God’s view of us is in the midst of His caring for us however He pleases for His sovereign purposes.

Psalm 118:6 – **דְּרָא לִי הַשְׁמַע־הַיְהוָה אֲדִיר לִי לִי הַיְהוָה** – (LXX – κύριος ἐμοὶ βοηθός, οὐ φοβηθήσομαι τί ποιήσει μοι ἄνθρωπος). Thus, if God has promised Gentiles eternal life, anything that we go through in this life is trivial in comparison to existence in the eternal Kingdom of God. Anything money can buy is trivial compared to what God has promised us.

³⁷⁸ μνημονεύετε τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν, οἵτινες ἐλάλησαν ὑμῖν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ὧν ἀναθεωροῦντες τὴν ἔκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς μμεισθε τὴν πίστιν – Assuming these Jews had apostles, maybe even Peter, who originally presented the NT message to them, Paul wants them to remember them and think carefully about the beneficial outcome of their pursuit of persevering in belief, i.e., eternal life. At the least, the leaders are the first generation of Jewish believers who were eyewitnesses of Jesus ministry, death, and resurrection. He also exhorts his readers to copy this kind of belief, just as he urged them to consider the persevering belief of those in the OT. However, the emphasis is on the message, not the leaders, as Paul goes on to describe Jesus in v. 8.

³⁷⁹ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐχθὲς καὶ σήμερον ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τ – Probably an idiomatic expression that means that Jesus the Messiah, not the Mosaic Covenant, is the focal point of their lives and of the creation even into the future of the eternal Kingdom of God. This is what they should remember, and the message of Jesus does not change.

³⁸⁰ διδαχαῖς ποικίλαις καὶ ξέναις μὴ ἑραπαφέρεσθε, καλὸν γὰρ χάριτι βεβαιοῦσθαι τὴν καρδίαν, οὐ βρώμασιν ἐν οἷς οὐκ ὠφελήθησαν οἱ ἑραπατοῦντες – Paul calls the teachings of the Jews who are persecuting his readers “various and foreign,” i.e., unbiblical, even though they seem to come from the Bible. These Jews are missing the point about the Messiah being an ordinary man who suffers death as an offering for sin so that he can act as high priest at the judgment. They are also focused on only performing the Mosaic Covenant and upholding the Levitical priesthood, while ignoring Psalm 110:4. In addition, Paul points out that even the Levites’ eating the sacrifices to God has done and

continues to do nothing for their temporal or eternal standing before God. The contrasting concept is God's grace that is not dependent on religious performance of the Mosaic Covenant. Thus, sinful human beings are benefited most when they learn about and experience God's independent favor toward them, relying on it and not their religious performance for His kindness, love, and mercy. The Jews' offerings to God on the altar of the Mosaic Covenant never have been the basis for receiving His mercy. It is strictly a gift of His grace.

³⁸¹ ἔχομεν θυσιαστήριον ἐξ οὗ φαγεῖν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἑξουσίαν οἱ τῆ σκηνῆ λατρεύοντες – Paul insists that Jewish Christians worship God at a different “altar” from that of the Mosaic Covenant, that originally was part of the temporary tent setup in the wilderness. The Jewish Christians' altar is the cross on which Jesus offered himself, so that they eat this sacrifice by believing Jesus to be the Messiah. In spite of the importance of the Levitical priests' function, even they have no right to participate in the eating of this sacrifice as long as they are men of unbelief and focus strictly on performing the Mosaic Covenant.

³⁸² ὃν γὰρ εἰσφέρεται ζῶων τὸ αἷμα περὶ ἁμαρτίας εἰς τὰ ἅγια διὰ τοῦ ἀρχιερέως, τούτων τὰ σώματα κατακαίεται ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς – Leviticus 4:11,12 – “But the hide of the bull and all its flesh with its head and its legs and its entrails and its refuse, that is, all the rest of the bull, he is to bring out to a clean place outside the camp where the ashes are poured out, and burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.” Leviticus 16:27-28, “But the bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be taken outside the camp, and they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their refuse in the fire. Then the one who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water; then afterward he shall come into the camp.” There was a portion of the animal offerings to God that was considered unfit for offering and was rejected by not only God but also the people, because the high priest laid his hands on it as transferring the sins of the people to it.

³⁸³ διὸ καὶ Ἰησοῦς, ἵνα ἀγιάσῃ διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος τὸν λαόν, ἔξω τῆς ἑπάθην – Like the portion of animal offerings that was rejected by the Jews, Jesus was rejected by them also, as shown by his being crucified as a common criminal outside Jerusalem. The Jews were saying that he had no right to exist among them, because he was impure and defiled, just as God said that the portion of the animals had no right to exist among them. Even God “rejected” Jesus as a demonstration of His rejecting unclean portions of offerings and eventually “unclean” Jews whose hearts were not turned towards God.

But it is Jesus' blood and death by which Paul's readers become set apart from the whole rest of humanity by associating with Jesus and trusting him to be their king and high priest, thus receiving eternal mercy from God.

³⁸⁴ τοῖνον ἐξερχώμεθα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς τὸν ὄνειδισμὸν αὐτοῦ φέροντες – By using “camp” as an anachronism, Paul is encouraging his readers to go outside the present Judaism that is centered in the earthly Jerusalem and that misunderstands the Mosaic Covenant and Jesus as the mediator of the New Covenant. Yes, they will be rejected and feel disgraced by Judaism just as that portion of the animal sacrifice and Jesus were. In other words, if the people of God, the Jews, reject Paul's readers as Jesus was rejected, then so be it.

³⁸⁵ οὐ γὰρ ἔχομεν ὧδε μένουσαν πόλιν ἀλλὰ τὴν μέλλουσαν ἐπιζητοῦμεν – As attractive as it is to call Jerusalem home because it is the very center of Judaism and worship of God through the Mosaic Covenant, it is better for these believers to consider themselves as outcasts from this city while looking forward to the new Jerusalem of the eternal Kingdom of God when Jesus returns and sets up his government in the same physical location. But the future Jerusalem will be radically different and better with Jesus as their ruler who also exercises hegemony over the whole world. Cf. Hebrews 11:10 and Abraham's waiting for the city whose architect and builder is God, i.e., the city of the millennial kingdom.

³⁸⁶ Ἰδιὸν αὐτοῦ [οὐδὲν] ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως διὰ παντὸς τῷ θεῷ, τοῦτ' ἔστιν καρπὸν χειλέων ὁμολογούντων τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ – Christians' sacrifice and offering to God is the acknowledgement of all that Jesus is about as the Messiah and high priest, thus praising God for His provision of an eternal king and intercessor at the judgment. The implication is that the offerings of the Mosaic Covenant simply are inadequate to gain God's love and mercy.

³⁸⁷ τῆς δὲ εὐποιίας καὶ ἑκκοινωνίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε τοιαύταις γὰρ θυσίαις εὐαρεστεῖται ὁ θεός – While Christians do “bring” one particular sacrifice to God, i.e., their belief in Jesus, they also bring the sacrifices and offerings of pursuing morality and caring for one another by sharing what they have that is necessary for life here on earth. Notice the lack of mention of communion, baptism, spiritual disciplines, or any other religious practice, because these are completely unnecessary for living authentic Christianity. Again, it is loving other Christians that will bring attention to them and puts them in a position where they are courting persecution and suffering.

³⁸⁸ πείθεσθε τοὺς ἡγουμένους ὑμῶν καὶ ὑπέκτετε, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀγρυπνοῦσιν ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν ὡς λόγον ἠποδώσοντες, ἵνα μετὰ χαρᾶς τοῦτο ποιῶσιν καὶ μὴ στενάζοντες ἀλυσίτελές γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῦτο – Apparently the leaders of the Jewish believers are continuing to follow the truth of Jesus as Messiah and high priest, while those whom they are leading are considering giving up their belief and going back to focusing on the Mosaic Covenant, which is causing the leaders to groan with disappointment. It would definitely be eternally unprofitable for the readers to abandon their belief in Jesus, as Paul has explained in this letter. So who are these leaders? Are they the same people as in v. 7? Probably not. Otherwise, why repeat this kind of exhortation. Therefore, these leaders are still present with the readers but are having trouble convincing those who are following them to stay dedicated to the apostolic message of the leaders of 13:7.

This does not directly apply to Christians after the time of the apostles, because it was only these leaders, according to Paul an apostle, who could be trusted to provide the truth of the gospel.

³⁸⁹ προσεύχεσθε ἵνα ἐπιτρέψωμαι ἵνα ἔρθω πάλιν ἵνα ἡμεῖς ἴδωμεν ἅπαντας ὑμᾶς ἐν ἑσπέρῃ – Paul would have his readers pray for him, that he may return to them soon and continue teaching them truth in contrast to what they have been hearing from the unbelieving Jews (cf. v. 19). Paul is persuaded that he and his co-workers have a good grasp of the gospel and therefore can continue to live it and proclaim it as they should.

³⁹⁰ περισσοτέρως δὲ παρακαλῶ τοῦτο ποιῆσαι, ἵνα τάχιον ἀποκατασταθῶ ὑμῖν – Apparently Paul knows these people personally and has been with them before. Thus he wants his Jewish readers to pray for him and his co-workers to be released quickly, and then he will be able to help them with their understanding of the gospel.

³⁹¹ ὁ δὲ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης, ὁ ἀναγαγὼν ἐκ νεκρῶν τὸν ποιμένα τῶν προβάτων τὸν μέγαν ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης αἰωνίου, τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν ἁγίου – Speaking of the New Covenant, that saves eternally, as opposed to the Mosaic Covenant, whose purpose is temporary.

³⁹² καταρτίσαι ὑμᾶς ἐν παντί ἵνα ἀγαθῶς εἰς τὸ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ποιῶν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ εὐάρεστον ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας ἁπάντων αἰῶνων, ἀμήν – Paul’s desire is that God grant his readers the strength to be like David and do what He desires just as He grants to Paul and his associates the strength to be pleasing to him as they all move forward to participate in the eternal nature of the New Covenant through Jesus the Messiah, who died and was raised from the dead after qualifying to be the Messiah and high priest of authentic believers. This is different from a perspective that thinks that God is waiting for people to act first in order that He can work in their lives. Paul’s view is that God is the one who creates the belief and perseverance in sinful human beings. And Paul does not use merely the word “eternal” but the phrase “into the ages of ages” (considering that the Majority Text is correct (cf. Galatians 1:5, “To Him be the glory into the ages of ages”). Thus, the narrative of God will go on with drama and interest designed into it for each qualifying human being from age to age to age, etc.

³⁹³ παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἀνέχεσθε τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως, καὶ γὰρ διὰ βραχέων ἐπέστειλα ὑμῖν – Briefly? In the sense that Hebrews is a word of exhortation while the note that he is appending is brief, and he would prefer to write more on a personal level.

³⁹⁴ γινώσκετε τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν Τιμόθεον ἀπολελυμένον, μεθ’ οὗ ἐὰν τάχιον ἔρχηται ὄψομαι ὑμᾶς – Timothy must have been in prison and yet now has been released. Thus, when Timothy visits them, it will be as if Paul is visiting them.

³⁹⁵ ἀσπᾶσασθε ὅλους τοὺς ἡγουμένους ὑμῶν καὶ ὅλους τοὺς ἁγίους. ἀσπᾶζονται ὑμᾶς οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας – Just as in Romans 16 where Paul exhorts the Roman Gentile Christians to greet the Jewish believers who are returning to Rome and bringing his letter to them, he encourages his current readers to greet their leaders who are returning with this letter. In addition, those believers who have traveled from Rome to visit Paul send their greetings to his readers.

³⁹⁶ ἡ χάρις μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν. ἁγίου – The bottom line of all understanding regarding how sinful human beings acquire God’s eternal mercy—His gracious and independent activity toward them that changes them inwardly and frees them from pursuing religious performance, even under the Mosaic Covenant, as the basis for the good standing before God.