

# Bible Thoughts

with  
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## The letter to the Hebrews

*The thoughts and note material given on these pages are only a possible suggestion of the meaning, they must not be taken as inspired, however they are prayerfully prepared and compared with other similar material. There are many ways in which God's Word can be analyzed and none must be taken in place of the Word of God itself.*

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# **Introduction**

## **Letter to the Hebrews**

### **WRITER.**

The text does not indicate directly who the writer was, there are many thoughts on the matter but no one knows who it was.

The writer was familiar with the Jewish scriptures and knew the ritual of the Temple and was well known to the readers. It is felt that because of the way it is written Paul is not the writer, he may have had some indirect input, perhaps it was one of Paul's sermons that he had given in a synagogue, and this had been written down by Luke, the Greek used is good and some of the Greek words used in Luke's Gospel and Acts are also found in Hebrews, but this is not sufficient evidence to say Luke was the writer.

There are various other possible writers, Apollo, Silas, Barnabas being the main possibilities. Each have some suitable qualifications, by their abilities, knowledge and location at the time of writing, but again there is no real proof.

### **THE READERS**

The evidence available suggests Jewish Christians, the title is thought to have been added later but obviously is referring to a specific group. A group who had, or were going through a time of suffering. [Heb 10:32-35](#); [Heb 12:3,4](#).

The Church had been around for some time as [Heb 13:7](#) shows some of the leaders had died.

The writer constantly refers to the Old Testament, the old Covenant, seems to know that the readers would understand and know the scriptures.

However, there are some Bible scholars who feel it was intended for Greek Christians but the many references to the Old Testament scriptures seems to prove otherwise as Greek Christians would not have the knowledge.

Whoever it was written for, the content of the Letter to the Hebrews does apply to all Christians, not just this specific group.

### **REASON.**

It appears that there may have been a problem with the readers spiritual conditions, Heb 13:7 suggests that they had been Christians for some-time but were still immature, children in the faith, their spiritual diet should have been strong doctrine but they were still not ready for it. The Jewish nation had by now turned against the Christians, they were not allowed to worship in the Temple, this was affecting the readers. They may not have separated fully from Judaism nor fully taken on the Christian teaching so the writer sets out to prove that though both faiths were from God the Christian faith is the better and right way.

### **DATE.**

There is no external evidence of the date except Clement of Rome referred to it about A.D. 96.

The Temple of Jerusalem still appears to be in use so that places it before 70 A.D. when Titus invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple. The Christian Church had been in existent for some time, the situation mentioned in [Heb 10:32](#) is thought to have taken place in 49 A.D. Other evidence has brought it to be somewhere around 60 A.D. and 65 A.D., the later date is normally accepted.

### **The letter is broken up as follows:**

The Introduction. - Hebrews ch 1:1-4

The Son is better than the Angels. - Hebrews ch 1:5 to ch 2:18

The Son is better than Moses. - Hebrews ch 3:1 to ch 4:13

The Great High Priest. - Hebrews ch 4:14 to ch 5:10

Spiritual growth. - Hebrews ch 5:11 to ch 6:20

Christ the Priest, Ministry and Sacrifice. - Hebrews ch 7:1-28

Encouragement. - Hebrews ch 10:19 to ch 12:29

Final Encouragement. - Hebrews ch 13:1-25

# **Chapter 1**

## *1:1-4 Introduction*

The aim of this letter is to show that the revealed Son is more superior to anyone or anything and His action is to allow man and God be brought back together.

v1 God has in many ways spoken to man, He did not give a full revelation to any one person, just small bits of information by dreams, visions, by angels to Abraham, to Moses, to the prophets.

v2 There are eight direct statements about Christ in v2 to v4. He is absolute Deity, a visible appearance of God and His glory, the eternal Son of the Father. He was "Creator," "Sustainer" (keeps things going) and the "Final" and the "End."

The last message from God occurred 400 years before the birth of Jesus. But now God has spoken in the "last days," the Greek shows that it would be better put as "at the end of these days," with Christ came a new age. Previous prophecies were now being fulfilled, for Jesus was the heir of all things, the Lord of the universe. "He made the worlds" The word in the Greek "worlds" has the meaning of "ages"

v3 Jesus reveals God's glory, He reveals God to mankind. By his Word, Christ holds together and controls all things. But once He had died for the sins of man He sat on the right of God in heaven. v4 The Jewish nation were very interested in angels but this verse shows that Jesus was greater than angels. The term "*is made*" is not against His eternal existence, it is referring to His act of redemption on the cross, He was then exalted (lifted up) to take the throne in heaven, so becoming more "*excellent*" than any angelic powers.

v5 Angels, as a group, have been called "sons of God" but no one has ever been called "Son of God" apart from the Messiah.

The writer now uses seven Old Testament quotations to support his arguments. v5-14. The writer seems to assume that the readers have accepted Jesus as the Messiah as he quotes [Psalm 2:7](#). "I have begotten Thee." must be talking about "*eternal Son ship*" and not an earthly king which some of Psalm 2 could be referring to. There never was a time when the Father could not say this to Him. On the cross and following resurrection things changed slightly as He became the firstborn in glorified humanity, exalted Man. The Son is therefore superior to the angels.

v6 "He bringeth in the First-Begotten into the world," [Rom 8:29](#); [Col 1:15, 18](#). As v2 states the world was created by the Son then He must have been before the foundations of the world, He was the eternal Son of God who took on a human form, was made flesh, and lived with us. [John 1:1,14](#). Then was the first to be first born from the dead for eternity.

As Creator and Redeemer, though He had been made lower than the angels for a while, they must now worship Him.

v7-9 The next two quotations [Psalm 104:4](#); [Psalm 45:6,7 show](#) that the angels operate and fulfil their services by the use of wind and fire, in a material world, the Son is on the Throne of God for ever. The symbol (something which stands for something else), the sign is righteousness.

v10-12 The sixth quotation show that the Son is the creator. The creation may age,

wear and die, but the unchangeable Lord will remain for ever, no aging, no wear, no death. [Psalm 102:25-27](#)

v13 the seven quotation from Psalm 110:1 shows that the Son is superior (higher in position, rank) to the angels not only because He is God the Son but that God the Father is now doing for Him as the God Man, the Messiah, He will have complete triumph (victory) over everything.

v14 The angels are sent from the throne as servants to those who will one day share in the glorious salvation of Man, "heirs of salvation," the people of God.

## **Chapter 2**

### **A Warning**

v1 The chapter opens with "Therefore" showing that the following passage is connected to the previous chapter. Because we have just been told the superiority of Jesus then the reader must "give even more earnest heed," take even more notice of the coming facts spoken by the Lord.

The letter to the Hebrews was written to Jews who were under pressure from trials and were turning away from the truth of the Gospel. [Heb 5:11,12](#)

v2 The writer is talking about the Mosaic Law, under it every wrong doing, disobedience or actually breaking the law received its just punishment.

v3,4 The author places himself in the same position by using "we" and gives a question for all "how shall we escape " if we chose to ignore the offer of salvation. Note that a day of judgement was indicated (point out or show).

God was the author of this new law, the gospel, which offers salvation not condemnation (punished as by the law). This Gospel came not through angels but by His own Son. This message was also confirmed by God also acting as a witness by allowing signs (confirmed the words preached), wonders (unusual events), many miracles (proving that divine powers were involved) and finally the gifts given through the Holy Spirit. These were given by divine pleasure and not by human choice. [1 Cor 12:1-12](#) These are not the same as signs, wonders etc as the gifts included gifts of prophecy, wisdom, knowledge and ability to recognize wrong and right spirits.

*The birth, suffering and death of The Son of God* v5-13

Many thought that Jesus was just a man who had suffered and died and was therefore inferior (lower) than angels. Angels were between God and man, how then could Jesus, a man, be a mediator (a go between in an argument)

v5 [Heb 1:13,14](#) God has ordered that the angels are to serve the heirs of salvation and not be rulers of the future world. Man has a glorious future. God's children should be constantly in hope of that coming time.

v6 [Psalm 8:4](#)

v7,8 By God's divine purpose Man started out a little lower than the angels, but God's final purpose is to give him glory and position over everything, including the angels.

v9 This is all in the future but right now we can see Jesus, the God Man, who is now crowned with glory because He was made a little lower than the angels, humbled to become a servant, and so allow the Plan of Salvation through His death. [Phil 2:6-11](#)

v10 To the Jew the cross was a problem and to the Gentile just foolishness, but it really was a wonderful act of God. By His eternal nature He has allowed a way back to Him for sinful man, He has provided a saviour, by going through this suffering He has allowed man to come into his true glory. [Rom 3:23-26](#); [Rom 8:8-11](#); [Rom 8:29,30](#)

v11 Jesus the Son of God is the "Captain of their salvation" and through His actions have sanctified (made holy) the sons of God who have been brought to glory. [Heb 10:10](#); [Rom 5:1,2](#); [Eph 2:8,18](#) Even though Jesus is higher He is please to call them brothers and be one with Him.

v12,13 Three Old Testament verses are used to prove that Christ is not ashamed to call those He has sanctified "My brothers." [Psalm 22:22](#), a Psalm which is closely connected with the passion of Jesus.

The second quotation is from [Isaiah 8:18](#) The prophet and Christ have full trust in their God.

*Christ's suffering makes no difference to superiority v14-18*

v14,15 The children are human, made of flesh and blood, Jesus also willingly became human so that He could be the Saviour of Man. The writer now links two actions with this act of sacrifice for Man, that the act will destroy the Devil, and remove the power of death because of the Devil making man sin from the beginning. The writer does not say that this has removed death, only that His death has removed the power of death, separation from God, natural death still exists [1 Cor 15:55-57](#)

v15,16 The reason for all this was to save Man from the power of sin, not anyone else so Christ did not take on the nature, form of an angel but the nature of mankind, a human nature with all the problems of the "seed of Abraham" Though this appears to only apply to those who were of the direct family of Abraham, it also applies to those who by faith have taken the offer of salvation [Gal 3:7,9,29](#).

v17,18 To do all this He became a man, taking on human flesh so that He could become their High Priest, made the required sacrifice for sin and make it possible for people to come back into the presence of God. As part of taking human form He also had to be exposed to all the bad things man is exposed to, suffering and temptation. Having been through all that man can experience He, as High Priest knows how to help those in difficulty.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Son is Superior to Moses**

Again the "Therefore" start tells us that this is connected to the previous chapters.

"Partakers of the heavenly calling" shows that the writer and readers had had a spiritual experience through Christ and this had made them sons of God. The Jew claimed that they were a chosen race through Moses, now there is a person more superior to Moses calling to an eternal kingdom.

Jesus has taken on a two fold office of Apostle and High Priest. Under the Old Testament covenant these two offices were first held by Moses and Aaron. Both these people were held in great admiration and respect by the Jews. But now there was a greater who came with the message from God of the Gospel of Salvation, this replaced the Law which came through Moses and Aaron.

v2 Moses was faithful in the task he was given by God, so to was this Man Jesus who obeyed The Father God who appointed Him. The use of the word "appointed" shows that Jesus was not created.

v3,4 The writer uses an example of the building of a "house," the house being the whole people of God. Moses was just a member of this house hold while Jesus was the builder, showing the superiority of Jesus.

In v2 the house is God's house, in v3 the Builder is Christ, yet in v4 the "Builder of all things" is God. There is no distinction between God and Christ.

v5 Moses is a faithful servant in this "house," he had a time limit, not eternal, but he faithfully gave evidence and witness of those things which were to come, he showed the way.

v6 But Christ was superior because he is "Son of the house," more important than a servant. The Builder of this House is the true Messiah. We are this house if we take God's gift of salvation in an unfailing faith.

#### *Another Warning v7-19*

v7-9 (Psalm 95:7) Not everyone who left Egypt with Moses were faithful, they gave in to the wilderness temptations, turned away from God (harden their hearts) [Ex 17:1-7](#); [Numbers 14:1ff](#) and because of this they saw the grace of God for 40 years as they wandered in the wilderness.

v10,11 Because of their continued unbelief and rejecting God's goodness, they choose not to seek the ways of God, God is angry with the generation and so God said that this generation would not enter the promised land. Worth noting [Heb 10:31](#)

v12 "Take heed," could suggest that the writer felt that the readers were not responding to his warnings, see also Heb 12:25. It appears that the readers were not taking on the full teaching of the Gospel and because of this they may have been developing an "evil heart" due to their unbelief.

v13 Give comfort each other daily, so making you stronger Christians. The word used "today," may have showed that the writer felt that a time of trouble about to come upon the readers.

"deceitfulness of sin" Sin blocks the mind to spiritual truth, perhaps the readers had turned away already from the truth of the Gospel, living in the past covenant.

v14,15 They had become part of Christ by faith. The Christian life has to grow, you must not stay as you were at the beginning, you must grow in faith. Again the writer warns against ignoring the voice and guidance of God.

v16-18 Three questions are asked, "who were doing the provoking? (deliberately making someone angry), it was those who came out of Egypt, who heard the message, experienced God's redemption and miracles, yet did not believe. As a result they suffered for 40 years and God brought judgement on them.

v19 Those who provoked God did not enter because they did not believe. God cannot work if there is unbelief, [Mark 6:1-6](#)

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Promise of Rest v1-13**

v1,2 God made a promise that He will supply "a place of rest" for His people the Jews,

this promise was first given when they left Egypt. The writer is now warning the readers that this promise might be lost by their unbelief. The readers had heard the message of salvation and were also receivers of this promise, some had rejected the Word of salvation just like the promises made to their fathers in the wilderness.

Those who had believed the Gospel brought by Christ will be able to enter into this promised rest. This "rest" had been available since creation was completed by God, after the work was finished God rested on the seventh day. God cannot actually be resting at this time as the work of spreading the message of salvation as well as controlling all the universe is still going on.

v5,6 The Jews had entered the "promised land" of Canaan but God makes the same promise of rest in Psalms, so showing that the rest is not an earthly place.

v7 God (Holy Spirit) speaks through David telling that on a certain day man will enter into the rest, as long as they do not turn away from Him.

v8 The rest that came through Joshua was not the true promised rest,

*"And the LORD gave unto Israel all the land which he swear to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein.*

*And the LORD gave them rest round about, according to all that he swear unto their fathers: and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand."* [Joshua 21:43,44](#). But this was not what God meant by His promise. [Psalms 95:6-11](#)

v9 The word used for *rest* changes to a word meaning *Sabbath rest* in this verse. Some feel that this shows that the "rest" offered through Moses and the Law had now been changed to a "rest" through the New Covenant. Clearly God intends His people to share His own *Sabbath rest*. This is the reward that has been reserved for them.

v10 When a person enters this "rest of God" then their own work will cease. This appears to be in the future, but Matt 11:28,29 shows that with salvation comes an experience of this "rest."

v11 So the writer points out that we must all work towards that rest, why because if we fail to live for the Lord we could "fall" by a lack of faith.

v12 God's Word has the same attributes (features of a person) as God Himself, being living, active and full of power. The Word of God is active and never fails to fulfil what was intended. Salvation or Judgement are the normal result. The verse describes Word as a "sword" which can cut in either direction, able to cut into the soul and spirit of a man, right down to the thoughts and desires. A very powerful weapon.

v13 When a man is touched by the Word of God then the man is also being touched by God. All the world is under His control and cannot hide from His vision, everything is striped bare by His Word. When we hear the Word then we have to do something to answer it, either by responding and obeying or rejecting and ignoring it. One day we will all have to stand before God and to give an account of our response to the Word. *Christ our Great High Priest* Hebrews 4:14 to 5:10

v14,15 The words "we have a great High Priest" Jesus, this shows that some of the readers may have been claiming that Christianity did not have a priesthood like the Mosaic Law, not only does this priest exist but He is also very different to the Aaronic priesthood as He has moved into heaven, a position and person far superior to Aaron,

this High Priest is in the presence of God for eternity, not in a temporary building, the tabernacle on earth. This is a complete change in the Priesthood, the priest was only allowed into the Holy of Holies under special conditions, a physical relationship against a spiritual relationship.

The name "Jesus the Son of God" has also joined humanity with God encourages the readers to keep their faith strong, their confession of belief in Jesus.

Infirmities (physical weakness, illness) is not necessarily due to sin in this passage, neither is suffering, the passage is talking about all human nature. This High Priest was exposed to all these human natures yet did not fail and sin. It also reminds us that Christ knows what His children are going through and can suffer with them. Consider Acts 9:4 Paul's "hunting" of Christians was "persecuting" Jesus.

v16 What a wonderful verse, because of our High Priest's sacrifice we can come right to the throne of God where the glorified Saviour sits, at this throne we can find mercy and the grace of God, they are available for us to use in our daily life until we reach His rest.

## **Chapter 5**

This continues from Chapter 4.

*The required qualifications for a priest. v1-4*

There are two conditions listed as essential for becoming a priest, the sympathetic (able to show kindness, likable) human nature v1-3, appointment is divine. v4.

v1 Three characteristics (abilities, features) of a Jewish priesthood are here listed:

Taken from among men, chosen from men

To act for men in things of God

To do this job he has to be able to offer sacrifices and gifts to God for the sins of man

v2,3 The priest must also have compassion (bear gently). There should be no lack of feeling by the priest for any who have fallen into sin and wrong ways, neither should he be disturbed by the wrong as he would not be able to be gentle, he must remember that he also has a sinful weakness. Because of this he has to offer also atonement (something done to make up for a wrong life). However, neither can he ignore sin in himself or others as God never overlooks sin.

. v4 A final characteristic for a priest is that he does not take on the office by himself but he is chosen and appointed by God. Unfortunately history has shown that this is often not the case and corruption or fraud can occur.

*Christ's claim for priesthood v5-10*

Jesus has fulfilled the conditions as set out above, he was divinely appointed v5,6, and was able to function as listed v7-10.

v5,6 Jesus does not glorify himself [John 8:54](#). It was God which did the honouring. In [Psalm 2:7](#). It was God's voice again which said "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." [Psalm 110:4](#) Melchizedek was a priest / king. (Melchizedek will be looked at in ch. 7)

v7 Christ the High Priest is now in glory, but when He was in human form He had trials and persecution and prayed to the Father [Luke 22:44](#); [John 11:41,42](#). His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane shows a prayer of desperate help as He saw the sin of the world coming on Him and the Father having to turn away from the sin He became. v8 In all this, "though He were a Son" He submitted (gave in, obeyed) the desires of the Father.

v9 We are now told that Jesus was suitable for the position, he was "made perfect," "made mature" or "complete." He offered the perfect sacrifice on the cross and because of His resurrection and exalting to glory was now able to offer eternal salvation to those who submit to Him. (This last phrase shows that there is no *universal salvation*.)

v10,11 When Jesus returned to Heaven God gave Him the title as High Priest "after the order of Melchizedek." The writer tells the readers there are many things about this they should know about but they are weak in understanding.

v12 When they should be teaching others of this wonderful message their attitude had made them go backwards in their understanding and faith, they needed to be told again the basic message of salvation.

v13 Milk has to be given to babies because their body cannot deal with normal food, a young Christian cannot understand the full truth, as they mature they can move onto "real" food "strong meat," reaching "full age" or maturing to an adult in spiritual understanding, able to understand the deep mysteries of the Word of God. This can only be achieved by taking in suitable "food" and so grow, regular teaching from the Word of God.

"When you reach maturity," the writer says, "you will be able to judge good and evil, right from wrong." All this knowledge still needs faith, they grow and go together.

## **Chapter 6**

The readers had somehow become connected with the Christian Church and had made a confession of faith, but not grown in the faith, they had moved from Judaism but had only taken on the basic Christian faith of repentance. The writer urges the readers not to turn back but go on in the faith.

v1,2 You must move away from being a spiritual baby, "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ," "leave behind the beginning in Christ" and go forward to spiritual perfection (maturity). "not laying again the foundation," refers to the basic truths on which the repentance and faith are built.

Man's relationship with God involves repentance and faith, a change of attitude. "*Dead works*" could be talking about them depending on the Judaism teaching.

"Baptism and the laying on of hands" is a symbolic relationship with the church beliefs, "baptism" is died to the old life and the "laying of hands" was the gift of the Spirit.

v3 The writer is probably not prepared to lay this "foundation" again, but this is according to God's will.

### *The Third Warning v4-8*

v4-6 Some of the readers had continued onto maturity but some had fallen away. Those who had received the "foundation" and turned away were now becoming enemies of Christ. They had *tasted* the good Word of God and the Holy Spirit but by falling away they were in effect going to crucify Christ again for their sins.

v7,8 An illustration from nature is given showing the wrongness of those who turn away. Two pieces of ground are given the same treatment, one grows good crops and is blessed by God, the other just weeds who will finally be burnt as not of any use. The unfruitful ground proved unfruitful for God even though it had received all the blessings as the other ground.

This passage suggests that you can lose your salvation but this is not confirmed elsewhere:- [John 5:24](#); [John 6:37](#); [John 10:27-30](#); [Rom 8:1](#); [Heb 8:12](#). Were the people who were turning away not real Christians, like Judas Iscariot? Maybe but they appeared to have known the saving grace of Jesus. The writer may have just been saying that if a falling away does happen Christ would have to die again, that's impossible, was he just trying to correct wrong ideas? All we know is that you cannot lose your salvation but God may have to give punishment (weeds burnt v8) to those who have turned away from Him.

### *God's promised comfort and hope v9-20*

Following a severe warning the writer now shows that God is full of mercy and grace. v9 the writer is convicted that the readers are genuine and better things are to come for the saved. Christ's justice always includes mercy and grace.

v10 God knows the truth about your hearts, how you have served Him. Obviously their open confession had been more obvious at one time.

v11 The readers had become lacking in energy for the work of the Lord, this was making them lack their assurance (certain) in Christ. To get over this they must throw off spiritual laziness and become followers (copy) the great heroes of faith and their inheritance of the promises, this idea the writer develops in great depth in chapter 11.

v13,14 Abraham is chosen as a great example of faith. The final promise of the Lord to Abraham is in [Gen 22:16](#), God confirms the promise and blessings to Abraham on Himself as there is no higher and it is eternal.

v15 "he obtained the promise" must be referring to the giving of the promise as it would be impossible for Abraham to see the fulfilment of the promises [Gen 22:17,18](#). The first was a great nation in his name, the second one involved the incarnation of Jesus and the sacrifice on the cross.

v16 When people make a promise they may add an oath (a promise which involves a greater power), there is no greater than God, and this is used in a court of law (I promise to tell the truth etc.). "an end to all strife." shows the serious intention of the person giving the oath.

v17 This human way of making promises has been taken up by God to show how sincere He was with the promise, it would be fulfilled.

v18-20 God's promise contains two unchangeable statements, it is "impossible for God to lie" or deceive. The Word of God is always trustworthy and even better, if possible, with an oath.

The passage now refers to two metaphors (a word or passage is applied to an object or action which cannot really apply). In [Numbers 35:9ff](#) people who commit an accidental death can run to certain *cities of refuge*, if they stayed in the city they would be safe until the High Priest dies. This is like a sinner fleeing from the judgement of sins to the safe place of refuge in Jesus, the High Priest is eternal so never be punished. The second metaphor is of an anchor dropped from a boat which holds it safe. The hope of a Christian is in the safe anchor of Jesus the *Forerunner*, our link and promise, who has entered into the presence of God *through the veil*, the King / High Priest like Melchizedek acting as the go between Man and God.

## **Chapter 7**

The superiority (being greatest, the best) of Christ over the three religious ceremonies of the Jewish religion, the priesthood, the ministry and the sacrifice are now talked about.

The Priesthood of Christ is greater than the Aaron priesthood because it is setup according to those under the conditions of Melchizedek, the king of Salem. This is examined in Chapter 7.

Christ's ministry is greater because it is spiritual and eternal compared with earthly and only to exist for a short time, discussed in Chapters eight to nine

Finally the sacrifice of Christ is greater for by one final sacrifice only offered once compared with many sacrifices. Chapter 10.

### **The Christ Priesthood is the greatest. v1-28**

v1-2 The characteristics (features, qualities) of Melchizedek and the fact is greater, superior to Abraham. The Jews had a great respect for this person Melchizedek, he is only mentioned twice in the Old Testament Gen 14:18-20 when Abraham returned from rescuing his nephew Lot, and Psalm 110:4.

Melchizedek has two titles, *king of Salem* and *Priest of the Most High God*. Under Jewish religion this joining of the two positions was not allowed as priesthood was separated from kingship. The mention in Psalms shows that in the writers mind was placed the thought that the full title of Christ would be *King-Priest*.

Melchizedek was not a Jew but Gentile, yet Abraham accepted him as a true priest of the God of Abraham and was given a "tithe" or a tenth of the things captured in the battles, this action showed that Melchizedek was greater than the "father of the Jews." As a priest Melchizedek had the right to "bless the people in the name of the Lord." Melchizedek was also a king, a *King of Righteousness* and a *King of Salem* so making Melchizedek a type of the Messiah.

v3 The fathers and mothers of the Levitical priesthood could all be traced as this was carefully recorded, without a proof of a proper family line they could not be a priest. [Ezra 2:62,63](#); [Nehemiah 7:63-65](#). Melchizedek does not belong with any priestly family, his priesthood does not depend on his parents, also it had no *beginning or end*, eternal. Christ, as God, He had no beginning, no parents and was timeless, Melchizedek resembles The Son of God.

### **The Melchizedek Priesthood is superior (greater) v4-10**

The writer now gives four reasons why Melchizedek is superior.

v4-6 1) Abraham gave him tithes (tenth) which means he accepted Melchizedek as a priest and superior to him.

v6,7 2) Melchizedek blessed Abraham, even though God had promised that the world would be blessed by Abraham's seed. As a priest of God Melchizedek had been appointed by a divine act, the greater blessing the lesser(lower).

v8 3) The Priesthood according to Aaronic rules was temporary, but Melchizedek priesthood was before and eternal.

v5,9 4) Levi, who received tithes from the sons of Abraham when he was born, also paid tithes to Melchizedek through the action of Abraham.

*Legal and spiritual priesthood compared* v11-28

The writer now makes a bold statement, the Levitical priesthood was to be replaced, as this is part of the Mosaic system of law, the removal of the priesthood also means that the Mosaic law must also go v11-14. So a spiritual and royal priesthood will replace the formal(following ceremony) and legalized(following rules)v15-17.

The spiritual is greater because of the following reason, v18,19 we can draw nearer to God; v20-22 It is confirmed by a divine promise; v23-25 The Priesthood of Christ is for ever and will never change.

v11-13 The Melchizedek priesthood appeared in [Genesis 14](#) and was referred to in [Psalm 110:4](#) but disappears even though it was superior(greater) than the Levitical which appeared later but was restricted to the Jews. Yet it was through the Levitical priesthood that God was to bring salvation to the world.

The Levitical Priesthood is not perfect for it failed to make the covenant eternal and only gave limited access to God. It was through and under the Levitical priesthood that the Law was given. Now we are told that another Priest has appeared under the order of Melchizedek and not according to the order of Aaron. In addition this new priest was not of the priestly tribe Levi. Both the Old Testament prophecy and the Gospels show that this tribe is the "royal tribe of Judah." [Isaiah 9:6,7](#); [Isaiah 11:1-5](#); [Micah 5:2](#); [Matt 2:5-6](#); [Rom 1:3](#). v13 As Christ was not of the tribe of Levi He could never minister as a priest at the Jewish altars.

v14 Though it was prophesied that the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah this verse shows that He grew like a plant. (sprang from the roots of Jesse [Isaiah 11:1](#)).

v15-17 Under the Law the qualifications for priesthood were physical, the new priesthood of Christ is very different, it is eternal and had the power to bring full salvation, not an animal sacrifice. (v25). This New Priest-King, like Melchizedek, cannot only bring men to God (v19) but also save them completely.(v25)

v18,19 This introduction of a new Priesthood by God also cancels out the old priesthood, which was not perfect, and not permanent (eternal). Because of what Christ has done we can now see how poor the old law and priesthood were, completely powerless. [Rom 7](#); [Rom 8:3](#); [Gal 3:23,24](#). The writer is thus teaching the readers not to depend on this old priesthood.

v20,21 The new priesthood was created with a divine oath (promise) and so cannot be changed. An oath made by God is as eternal as God. A priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

v22 The priesthood of Christ has been guaranteed (promised it will complete) by God.

v23,24 We now have the last reason for the superiority. Under the Mosaic Covenant

the priests were many because of their physical limits of death, under the new one there is one priest only and He is for ever.

v25,26 Because this new High Priest is eternal then He is able to save completely those who come to God and also act as the mediator (go between) of Man and God. This High Priest is holy, will not harm those who seek Him. He is now separated from sinners and cannot be made unclean, unlike the Aaronic priests. All these qualifications mean He is worthy of the greatest honour, "higher than the heavens."

v27 The writers are referring to the old priests who had to offer a sacrifice for their own wrongs before offering for the people but Christ, who was sinless and perfect, only needed to offer Himself in place of Man once for ever.

v28 The law made priests who were not perfect and weak, but the oath made by God made His Son consecrated (made for use of God only) for evermore.

## **Chapter 8**

During the previous chapters the writer has shown that Christ has all the correct and true qualifications of the new priesthood and is superior to the Aaronic Levitical, and also superior as an High Priest.

We now examine the ministry of this new High Priest over the next two chapters.

### **Where is the High Priest? v1-6**

v1-6 we find that this High Priest ministers from the right side of God's throne in heaven. This priest is not in the temple "holy of holies" but in the sanctuary (holy place of God) of God in heaven. Having offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin v2,3 His ministry cannot now be in an earthly temple which was only available to priests selected by the law. The ministry of this High Priest now operates from the true sanctuary of God, performing [intercessions](#) and the prayers of His children before the Father. v4,5.

"The True Tabernacle" mentioned in v2 has been suggested to be the Church, the Body of Christ [1 Cor 3:16-17](#); [John 2:21](#) and the temple of the Holy Spirit. There are points for and against this idea.

This ministry is "more excellent," the covenant between Man and God, for which He is the superior mediator, rests on "better promises." v6. The ministry of Christ as the High Priest does not have any earthly restriction, the "mediator" priest, as a result of the Moses covenant, was very poor being a covenant fixed to the law, the new covenant is a God given promise for ever.

### **Two Covenants v7-13**

v7-9 The first covenant had problems so a second covenant was introduced. This promised the forgiveness of sin, v12, the power of overcoming Man's weakness, v10 and finally a promise of close relationship with God v11.

The first covenant could show the sin of man but was not able to remove it neither could people keep the covenant properly, so God had to introduce the second covenant.

v10-12 The new covenant is spiritual and inward "I will put My laws into their minds and write them in their hearts," The old covenant showed good and evil but no power to resist evil. [Romans seven](#) shows that a person can be delighted by the law but still not submit to it. The power in the new covenant comes from the Holy Spirit through

the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. The new covenant gives full and complete assurance that God can promise "their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

v13 The new covenant replaces the old covenant because it has become old and is expiring of old age. The writer has written as if the Jewish legal and ceremonial system of worship was about to disappear, which it did in AD 70 when the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans.

## **Chapter 9**

### **A description of the first tabernacle v1-10**

The writer looks at the physical parts of the earthly tabernacle v1-5 followed by the limits of the priestly ministry v6,7 and the sacrifices they offered. v9,10

v1 The [ordinances](#) had the mark of divine authority on them but the tabernacle and the instructions belonged to the visible world and were imperfect and temporary.

v2 The tabernacle was divided into areas, the outer part contained the candlestick, the table, the showbread (shewbread) and altar of incense, not mentioned here. The priests were allowed to enter this area but were not allowed to enter the next area, the Holy of holies beyond the veil.

v3 The *Holy of holies* was only entered by the High Priest once a year on the Day of Atonement. The veil represented the barrier between a holy God and evil Man.

v4-5 The *Ark of the Covenant* was a box about 4 feet( 3.3m) long, 2 1/2 feet( 2.9m) height and width. It was covered with gold, on top of the box (ark) was the mercy seat, above this two cherubim's whose wings covered the mercy seat. In Solomon's Temple we are told that there were three treasures kept inside the ark, a pot of manna, ([Ex 16:32-34](#)) Aaron's rod that budded, ([Num 17:1-11](#)) and the tables of the Covenant ([Ex 25:16ff](#)).

v6 There was a daily service by the ordinary priests. These priests were only allowed into the outer area of the tabernacle, they had a daily task of lighting and attend to the lamps, replace the 12 loaves of bread every week on the Sabbath ([Lev 24:5ff](#)) and burn incense on the golden altar ([Ex 30:7,8](#)). They were also the [representative](#) of the worshippers, offering sacrifices and worship in their place.

v7 Only the High Priest was allowed into the Holy of holies on the day of atonement. [Lev 16:11-16](#) shows that he entered twice on that day, once to offer a blood from the sacrifice for himself and then a second blood sacrifice for the people.

v8 The way for all people to enter into the presence of God was not allowed until the final sacrifice by Jesus was made, the tabernacle was not now needed, the veil had been torn in half at the death of Jesus, access to the Holy of holies had been made. The temple was still used by the Jewish nation as a place of worship until 70 A.D. when it was destroyed by the Romans.

v9,10 The tabernacle and later temple had been a symbol of the future heavenly tabernacle, but it was not a perfect example, gifts and sacrifices had no power to remove the sin of Man. All these were able to do was give the worshippers a certain physical 'cleaning' from sin.

The writer now examines the characteristics of the sacrifice of Christ and the eternal effect that they have on those who take Him as Saviour. He achieves this by again comparison with the Levitical forms of sacrifice and service.

v11 By the sacrifice of Himself Christ made His entrance into the presence of God as the High Priest of sinful man, His aim has been to restore and secure this relationship and communion with God.

v12-14 By this action Christ obtained *eternal redemption for us*, setting us free from the defilement and death of sin through His blood, *purging(cleaning) the conscience of man* and set them free to *serve and worship the true and living God*. The previous blood of animals had not been able to achieve any of this.

Christ, being God and Man, was still able to act as Man at His death and so take the punishment in our place.

v15 Because He was able to achieve this He has become our *Mediator of the new testament*, the new covenant, with God, He is able to set us free from the penalty of *transgression* produced by the first covenant and we have been given a promise of the *eternal inheritance*.

v16,17 The word 'testament' or 'covenant' means an agreement between two people but it can also have a juristic(legal)sense and means 'will.' Though a 'covenant' does not necessarily involve death, a 'will' does. For the 'will' to be operate the person who wrote it has to die, before that it has no meaning or power. Christ had to die to pass on the promised inheritance.

v18 The writer now uses the name 'covenant' in the general meaning, The Mosaic covenant was created with a death taking place, Moses took *the blood of calves and goats and sprinkled the book and the people*. [Exodus 24:3-8](#). V20 echoes the words of Jesus when He instituted (started) the Lord's Supper [Matt 26:28](#) but the writer does not refer to this event in all of Hebrews.

v21 Moses appears from this verse to have also 'sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and vessels' but the tabernacle did not exist until later, it was still to be built. Was he referring to the later time when sacrifices were taking place?

v22 It was the normal principle of the law that, almost without exception, purification involved blood, *without shedding of blood there is no remission*.. See [Numbers 31:21-24](#) and [Leviticus 5:11-13](#) for event which did not involve blood.

v23 The completion of the atoning work of Christ is explained, heaven itself was made free from the infection of sin, Man's or Satan's because of the blood of Christ, Satan lost his power at the death of Christ, Satan had been given the rights to earth when Adam disobeyed God but Christ had bought it back.

v24 The sanctuary on earth under the old covenant is compared with heavenly sanctuary of the new covenant, as the High Priest entered the Holy of holies, so our Lord Jesus Christ entered the heavenly Holy of holies through His sacrifice. He did not enter to make a sacrifice, that was done on earth on the cross. He entered into God's presence to act as our mediator.

v25 The old covenant High Priest had to offer the sacrifice every year, with the blood of animals, the sacrifice demanded a pure and spotless victim, the High Priest was far from being pure, Christ the pure, perfect great High Priest needed to do it only the once.

v26 The sacrifice of Christ was perfect and only needed the once, full atonement has been made, sin has been paid for, *sin has been put away*.

v27,28 To prove that Christ's action was completed, man is born, lives then dies just the once, only God's judgement remains when a man will give an account of his life for judgement and eternal death. So Christ was born once, lived and died the once, never to be repeated. His resurrection proved that He will not be judged, God has accepted the sacrifice. One day Christ will appear back on the earth not to make a sacrifice but with eternal life for all believers who have believed.

## **Chapter 10**

The writer now returns to the superiority of Christ's sacrifice, adding some additional thoughts to those shown earlier.

v1-4 Animals could not satisfy the requirements of God for the punishment of sin. The law showed an outline, *a shadow*, of the future. The system of sacrifices showed the Jewish nation of their sin and the need of atonement. A sinner was not allowed to enter the presence of God but He allowed, once a year, the High Priest to enter and make the offering for sin. So keeping visible the purity of God but a hope of future access to Him.

v2,3 If the person had been really made clean and sinless they would not have continued to sin, there would not have been the need for any more sacrifices. The worshipper was not made clean or perfect, all the animal sacrifices did was to remind the person of his sin filled life.

v4 The sacrifice of the animals was necessary at the time, reminding the worshipper of the need for punishment for sin, they were a symbol of the future sacrifice of Christ but could never *take away sin*.

v5,6 The writer quotes [Psalm 40:6-8](#) to prove that the sacrifice of a spiritual being is greater than the death of a sacrificial animal. God had no pleasure in the sacrifice of animals for a person when the person continues in the sinful life with no repentance.

v7 At the time, according to the will of God, Christ came into the world, just as prophesied in the Old Testament.

v8-10 God had to do two things first before the Christ could come and suffer the sacrifice on the cross, according to God's will. To create a human body so that He could come as a man and die in place of Man. Remove the old system of sacrifice as the sacrifice of Christ was to replace it in a once only sacrifice. Incarnation and sacrifice had to both occur, one was dependant upon the other.

v11,12 To show further superiority of Christ's sacrifice the writer points out that the Levitical priest was never allowed to sit down while making all their daily imperfect sacrifices, but Christ's one and only sacrifice was so complete He sat down on the right of God for ever, the task was complete.

v13 it seems that from the time Jesus sat down all His enemies were destroyed. This may seem difficult to grasp but we must realize that the spiritual realm of God is not restricted by human time, Death, sin were all overcome on the cross, though they may still appear to be here they have been destroyed, Satan judged, atonement and eternal life are now available to those who believe.

v14 Sanctification was made available by this one sacrifice, through faith this perfect work can be completed.

v15-18 The Holy Spirit is now added to the witnesses, who through [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#) ( already referred to in [Heb 8:8ff](#)) states that there is no more need of a sacrifice. This prophecy speaks of the ultimate aim of the new covenant, forgiveness of sins. This covenant having been set up through the blood of Christ allows God to say "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." v19-39 The writer now examines some practical results of the previous arguments.

v19 Because of the new covenant all believers have an even greater privilege than the old high priest, they are able to approach without fear and have direct access to God by the *blood of Jesus*.

v20 Our access into God's presence has been consecrated or opened for us by a new and living way John 14:6 our great High Priest has opened the veil into the "Holy of holies." Some people compare the "veil" being split with the flesh of Christ damaged on the cross, but scripture does not seem to make the link, the splitting of the veil showed the end of the old covenant.

v21 [Heb 3:1-6](#) We now have a great High Priest, a King over the house of God, all of God's people are included, those under both the old and new covenants who worship Him.

v22 *Let us draw near*, just as the Israelites approached the tabernacle under the old covenant, we who are under the new covenant, can in faith, through the sacrifice of Jesus, approach God, but our heart must still be in a condition which is not wrong with God, it must be washed and clean. Our heart must be prepared, just as the priest under the old covenant washed in the laver before entering the tabernacle. [Leviticus 8:6-23](#); [Exodus 30:17-21](#).

v23 *He is faithful who promised*, we must hold fast to our faith and hope.

v24 We must fix our attention not on our self but on *one another*, encouraging each other in the faith, we are all one in the body of Christ and any *body parts* need to work together.

v25 Developing the previous verse, the writer encourages the "body" to join together in worship. It appears that some Jewish Christians were not worshipping together, this may have been due to the pressure of persecution. *The Day approaching* could be referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 but must also include the ultimate return of Jesus.

v26-31 The following verses show the danger of not worshipping as a united body.

v26-27 *If we sin wilfully*, if we deliberately sin, if we ignore the salvation offered, having received the truth, then the writer says that there is no other *sacrifice* for them, only judgement.

v28,29,30 The writer puts emphasis on the effect of turning against God's offer of salvation. Using [Deuteronomy 17:1-7](#) as an example, where the person(s) are guilty of worshipping other god's, idolatry. Any one turning away from the living God under the new covenant, *trodden under foot the Son of God*, must expect judgement, it is a [sin against the Holy Spirit](#), true sanctification means separation from sin and dedication to God.

v30 The writer quotes [Deuteronomy 32:35,36](#). Paul also used this quote [Romans](#)

[12:19](#). *We know Him*, we know who He is, the true living God, and what He can do, He is all powerful, omnipotent.

v31 [2 Samuel 24:14](#). The terror of falling into a judging God.

v32-39 Further severe warnings.

v32,33 The writer calls the reader to remember what they were called upon to do when they first turned to the Jesus as their Saviour. Persecution perhaps by the Romans and the other Gentiles, perhaps they had been put into the Roman arenas, *being made a gazing stock by reproaches and afflictions*, though [Heb 12:4](#) suggests they had still not died for their faith.

v34 The first words of this verse have been used as evidence that Paul was the writer but the original Greek can also be translated "with the prisoners," not only had the readers suffered for their faith they were able to also help those who were in prison for their belief. They were also willing to suffer loss as they had a true treasure in heaven to look for. (the word "heaven" is not found in some originals.)

v35,36 Therefore they were encouraged not to throw away their Christian *confidence* but to continue in their faith and the Lord. To do this will one day bring rewards, but you need faith, trust and seek to do the will of God to reach the promise of God.

v37 [Habakkuk 2:3,4](#) The return of the Lord is very close, we may think that He has not come in over 2000 years and that is not very close, but to a God of eternity it is just a moment.

v38 The writer has used [Habakkuk 2:4](#) but changed the order. The person who is righteous belongs to God and if his trust continues in God and His promises, they shall live.

v39 It appears that the writer has only been making these serious warnings against apostasy (turning away from your religious faith) was hypothetical (not based on fact) The readers had not turned away from God, the writer was just warning them what might happen.

## **Chapter 11**

### **The triumphs of faith**

v1 The writer states that faith deals with two types of events, the future, *things hoped for*, and *things not seen*, not things unknown, they exist but not visible. So a person who has true faith also has all that is needed for life, the power of life. He shows this by giving a list of people who have lived by faith as evidence or proof of what he has been saying.

v2,3 The Jewish fathers and heroes of the Old Testament are listed, starting from Abel they are shown to have faith so that they received a *good report* from God. From the creation of the world faith was involved, by the act of God's Word all things were created.

v4 Abel made a blood sacrifice which was acceptable to God, so showing that faith must also involve a blood sacrifice, a life of faith must involve atonement. We are not told how Abel sacrifice was accepted, there may have been a physical sign.

v5 Enoch lived a righteous life, his aim was to please God at any cost, and he was successful and Enoch was taken up to God without dying. [Genesis 5:21-24](#)

v6 States the universal application of faith, to approach God needs faith, worship and

expecting a blessing from Him in faith must start that God exists and needs to be worshipped. With this faith and seeking Him comes the reward.

v7 Noah, having received instruction from God, builds the ark. Noah believed that God was about to judge the earth, the ark proved his faith and Noah received a reward of heir of the earth.

v8-10 Abraham was called by God to leave the land of Chaldeans' [Gen 12:1-9](#) and go into Canaan. Abraham accepted the command, obeying his God, willing to live in a tent and as a stranger in the land God had promised to him and his children. *Looking for a city* with foundations, this is not reference to Jerusalem but to some future heavenly city made by God.

v11,12 Sarah, though at the beginning was full of doubt, eventually believed God's promise that she would have a child though many years past the ability to give birth of a child. [Genesis 18:1-15](#). As God promised, Sarah was the mother of a great race.

v13 These people had received a divine inheritance but never received it in their earth life. They were "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." [Gen 23:4](#)

v14-16 The patriarchs desired a place to settle, if they had wanted too they could have gone back to Mesopotamia at anytime but they longed for the promised, unseen city, built by God. "God is not ashamed to be called their God," shows how much God saw their faith and keeping of His promise of the reward because He continued to refer to Himself as "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. [Luke 20:37,38](#) v17-19 [Genesis 22:1-18](#). God tests Abraham's faith. Why put him through such a test? Perhaps Abraham was putting Isaac's future before God? We are not told but God tells Abraham to sacrifice his future and destroy the promise of God. Abraham believed that if he sacrificed Isaac God could bring him back to life, just as God had enabled a 'dead' mother and father have a child.

v20 Abraham blessed his two sons for the future,"things to come," though reading Gen 27:1-46 makes it difficult to see how he could do this, Esau was the first born and should have received the main blessing but Jacob by cheating received it instead. It was Jacob who understood the meaning of the blessing, Esau was happy "to sell it for food." [Gen 25:29-34](#) "And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." shows that it was by the will of God that Jacob was to receive the blessing.

v21 "By faith Jacob,- blessed both the sons of Joseph" Jacob blessed Joseph as if the 'firstborn' instead of Reuben. In [Gen 48:1-22](#) we see that Ephraim the younger was given the greater blessing. Ephraim became an alternative name for the Northern kingdom of Israel.

v22 Joseph as he died still looked for the future place, he wanted his bones taken to the promised land and not left in Egypt.

v23 The writer moving onto Moses but starts with the faith of his parents [Exodus 2:2](#). Somehow they sensed that this baby was special and at great danger to themselves protected him from the Egyptians. [Acts 7:20](#).

v24,25 When Moses was 40 years old [Acts 7:23](#) he chose to reject the Egyptian court, power and riches and return to his despised people of God, a group of Egyptian slaves. He had been adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, [Exodus 2:5-10](#), and could have been able

to be reach a high Egyptian position.

"pleasures of sin" Living without God.

v26 Moses chose to suffer as a servant of God and his reward rather than worldly riches, a typical example of the life of Christ.

v27 By faith he left Egypt for Midian where he was to receive God's commands. [Exodus 3:1ff](#)

v28 By faith Moses persuaded the people of Israel to carry out the Passover, to place themselves under the protection of God through the shedding of blood. God's Judgment fell on the firstborn. [Exodus 12:1-31](#)

v29 It is still by the faith of Moses but the people must also have had some faith, to walk across the seabed. Israel obeyed God, the Egyptians did not and perished. [Exodus 14:1ff](#)

v30 The writer has ignored all the failures while the tribe was in the wilderness. Jericho was one of the first campaigns in the promised land [Joshua 6:1ff](#). The whole event was an example of faith in the command's of God and His promises.

v31 Rahab was a Gentile woman and had worked as a prostitute when she helped the two spies from Israel. [Joshua 2:1ff](#); [Joshua 6:17](#).

The including of Rahab in this list of faith, a Gentile woman with a poor life style, has caused a problem for many people. But this woman believed in the God of Israel and His people.

v32-33 The writer finds many other examples of faith in Israel's history. He gives just a few names from the books of Judges and Samuel. Gideon, Judges 7:1; Barak, Judges 4; Samson, Judges 14:1ff; Jephthah, Judges 11:1ff; David and Samuel had many faith victories.

v34-38 The writer now lists many ways that these people had been able to show their faith. v35 "dead raised to life," the son of the widow of Zarephath 1 Kings 17:17ff, the Shunammite woman 2 Kings 4:1ff.

v39 These all had received a good report from God for their faith but still not received the promise. The saints of the old covenant saw fulfilment of some promises but never the eternal inheritance, not due to lack of faith but it could not happen under the old covenant, God had to provide the new covenant through Christ before redemption was available.

## **Chapter 12**

Faith and hope in the future helps us live in the present.

v1 Following the previous list of people who have given glorious examples of faith the writer moves into an area of faith and the battles of life. The writer is using a race as an example of life. The writer is including himself in this thought. He points out that we are "surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses," who by their faithful victorious lives have shown faith in action. But we may still have problems unless we "lay aside" anything which may slow us down, "a weight." To a runner their body has to be the right weight and physically fit through the correct training. Training needs patience, you cannot become fit in one day, equally life needs patience for our own spiritual health and knowing God's will for our life.

v2 We have looked at past lives of faith based upon the Judaism history, now the writer tells the reader to look to the faith of Jesus, He is both an example and the originator of faith. He begins a good work in each of us and will bring it to a triumphant finish. Jesus, knowing the final result of His action was full of joy to endure the pain and shame of the cross, and now is sitting to the right of the throne of God.

v3 We are now told to think about what we have suffered in comparison with the suffering of Christ for each of us. Our lives are a contradiction to Him, knowing what it cost Him we still sin. Also Jesus was prepared to forgive even those who crucified Him. [Luke 23:34](#)

From v4-13 The writer talks about God's chastisement, (discipline, correction), a sign of son ship. He reminds them that though they have suffered they still have not had to suffer death as a result of their faith.

v4 Some Bible students have said that this verse shows that the letter was written early before persecution occurred but the writer seems to be showing that it was due to their low commitment to the faith that had stopped real persecution.

v5,6 The letter was written to give encouragement, he asks "have you forgotten already your teachings" and quotes from [Proverbs 3:11,12](#) which shows the Fathers love for His children. God, in love, may find it necessary to make life hard, with many difficulties because it makes you turn in faith more to Him for help through each situation.

v7 The trials that come into your life are for your training, being sent by God not in anger but as the Father's love for His sons.

v8 The writers feels that if you are true sons( and daughters) of God then you must expect some sort of discipline, if you do not experience this in some way then the writer says you cannot be true sons, illegitimate, "born out of marriage."

v9 Think of your own life, if we did wrong as children our own fathers would discipline us to make us better people, we showed respect for our father for this, so will our spiritual Father do the same. By submitting to His teaching and instruction we receive not just a physical life but eternal life as well.

v10 Our earthly fathers disciplined us as children just for a short time, "a few days." The earthly father deciding, judged when to stop the discipline, "according to their own pleasure." But God will continue until we reach heaven, always for our profit, our good, to make us free from sin and become "partakers (receive) of His holiness."

v11 Any discipline, whether human or spiritual does not bring joy, but the writer centres on the divine discipline, which will always produce fruit and righteousness.

v12,13 [Isaiah 35:3](#) Pull yourself together, stop being so discouraged, go forward in your Christian path of life, do not mix Judaism with Christianity, it will make you appear "lame" and disabled, using two forms of worship, like some have already done.

v14 Do your best to be at peace with others, [Rom 12:18](#) The verse suggests that the peace should be mainly aimed at the Christian as they can only be able to involve holiness and "see the Lord."

v15 A Christian group or community must live and bring peace, be united and holy in their attitude to each other and the world.

v16 The group must also be aware and deal with anyone who may wish to take part in sensual sins, those who care more for worldly pleasures and gains than the spiritual

life in Christ. Esau sold his birthright for a meal. [Genesis 25:31](#), though there is no scriptural record of him being a fornicator Esau had no respect for his position.

v17 The Jewish readers of this letter would have known about this terrible action by Esau, The blessing was appointed to the firstborn to receive the promises given by God to Abraham and his descendants. His action showed complete disrespect for the promise, it having no value to him. Later when he wanted to receive the blessing he was rejected by God [Genesis 27:34](#) though he had many tears for his loss.

The thoughts of the writer now turn to emphasizing that the new covenant also has greater responsibilities, the experiences are very different from the old covenant.

v18-21 In the wilderness the Israelites saw the physical signs of the covenant, they stood at the bottom of a mountain covered in fire. The area was covered in clouds and darkness and they heard trumpets and a voice.

The experience was so terrifying that the people asked for it to stop. Even if an animal came to near the mountain they had to be stoned or speared to death for entering a sacred area. [Exodus 20:18ff](#) The people feared for their lives.

V21 The writer said that Moses was also terrified though apart from [Deuteronomy 9:19](#) when we are told that Moses feared for the Israelites because of their behaviour and sin, there is no mention of Moses fear at Sinai. It does say all were frightened, so the writer may have included Moses in this statement.

v22 How different is the new covenant, we can come into His presence with no fear through Christ, to the very throne of grace in heaven. A heaven full of an uncountable number of His angels.

v23,24 *Firstborns* indicates special and privileged people, heirs to God's promise, the Church of Christ who now have the right to enter the heavenly realm, their names are written as citizens. [Luke 10:20](#); [Rev 21:27](#). These people have come to Him as Judge, who is God over all, sovereign over all nations and people. These people have not received judgement but grace. They had not been judged because of their [Mediator](#) Jesus, His blood covers the hearts and sins of believers. Abel's blood cried only for vengeance according to Jewish tradition.

v25,26 A final warning that if the readers, who knowing of the new covenant through the Son of God speaking on earth, but by disobeying God in heaven, then they will suffer a greater punishment. Do not turn away from hearing the Word of God, which shook the earth, just as the Israelites did at Sinai. The Israelites begged God to speak only through Moses not directly to them. [Exodus 19:18ff](#). The Words of God will not just shake the earth one day but also the universe.

v27-29 These Words will destroy the things which are temporary, to create the new heaven and earth, an eternal order. We must therefore be grateful for God allowing us to become part of this, serving Him with reverence and godly fear. God cannot allow sin, so make sure His fire does not consume you, serve Him in holiness to survive His judgement.

## **Chapter 13**

Final urging and encouragement with duties towards other Christians and duties within the church.

v1-6 **Practical Christian duties.**

v1 *Brotherly love* was a new teaching in the world, a nearly impossible situation but it

was necessary as the persecution was about to grow for the Christian.

v2,3 The writer reminds the reader that there are two ways to show *brotherly love*, the first was to be friendly with strangers and freely given acceptance and entertainment of these guests or strangers. The Jews were not receptive to any Christians who travelled on business or for the church, but the writer was trying to encourage them to give accommodation, reminding them that "some have entertained angels," not necessarily supernatural beings but special messengers from God. Note [Matt 25:44,45](#), taking care of His servants means you are caring for The Lord Himself.

Secondly to remember those who are prisoners, think what it would be like to suffer if you were also in prison, what help would you want? [1 Cor 12:26](#)

v4 Marriage is important as a divine instruction. "Let marriage be held in honour, do not defile the marriage bed" is a better translation, it applies to married and unmarried alike. Failure to do so will involve God's judgement.

v5,6 The Christian's way of thought and life, especially their attitude to money, shows their true character, the love of money can damage a spiritual life. We must be satisfied with what we have, God has promised to care for us. [Phil 4:11-13](#); [Rom 8:31](#)

#### v7-17 **Religious duties**

. v7 Remember your leaders who have finished their course, possibly the disciples of the Lord mentioned in [Hebrews 2:3](#) who had received and preached the Word of God. See how they lived in faith for their Lord.

v8 Christ is unchangeable, it is the same Lord the disciples served as we now serve.

v9 The message has not changed. We are not told what the various "strange doctrines" are, the "meats" reminds us about Paul's letters [Rom 14:2,14,21](#); [Col 2:8,16-13](#) may give some indication. The Jew had not benefited from outward religious ceremonies in the past, Christians will certainly not benefit today.

v10 Christians have a place of worship, an altar, the cross of sacrifice, which cannot be accessed by those of the old covenant with their tabernacle worship on the Day of Atonement.

v11,12 The animal sacrifice of atonement was offered on the altar in the tabernacle and then the blood taken into the sanctuary by the high priest, the remains of the sacrifice was not to be eaten and were taken outside the camp and burned. The Jews were able to share the benefit of the sacrifice offerings, forgiveness through the blood. Christians can obtain the benefits of the work of Christ through His blood, and just as under the old covenant we cannot physically take of His body, it was "outside the camp."

v13 Christ was rejected and cast out by those of the old covenant. Salvation was not now available through the old covenant, Judaism. A person must come to the 'cross of shame,' a place of disgust for the Gentiles and a place of shame and curse for a Jew. [Gal 3:13](#). The readers must be prepared to go with Jesus "Outside the camp" and share His rejection.

v14 The writer explains why should they be willing to join with Him in rejection. On earth there is no "continuing city," they are strangers and pilgrims Heb 11:13 looking for a future city yet to come.

v15,16 The reader is encouraged to offer to God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, the praise, thanks and worship with heart and lips. The praise has to be real, true, with love, a sacrifice of praise. Our praise will also be shown by the way we live. This will please God.

v17 In v7 they were encouraged to remember the teachings of their leaders now with the Lord. In this verse the writer urges them to submit to their present spiritual leaders who are teaching the true doctrine in their group. These leaders are keeping watch over your souls and will have to give an account of their lives and behaviour before God one day. May they be full of joy on that day, the writers asks that they will be able to bring many to salvation and not have suffered pain and problems due to the church members behaviour.

v18,19 The writer now ask's for prayer for him and others with him. For him to live a pure life and that he will soon visit them. He was obviously well know to the readers. The word "restore" does not suggest he was in prison because in v23 he writes of his freedom, there was some other reason why he could not visit them at the time. We are not told of the problem.

v20,21 Final benediction to the readers. May the God of peace, with the resurrection of Christ suggests "a God who obtains peace through destroying evil." Yet these people were suffering persecution and not apparently receiving victory or peace but the writer reminds them of the new covenant through the blood of Christ, who died for His sheep but is now alive through God. Nothing is impossible.

May this God make you live a life pleasing to Him in word and action, always living in His will.

v23 You know Timothy is now free from prison. I hope to bring him with me when I visit you.

v24,25 Greetings from they of Italy to you and your leaders. (the Greek words used 'Those from Italy' can mean *residents of Italy*, indicating that the writer is writing from Italy, or *those who belonged to Italy*, i.e., not at present living in Italy, so the writer is outside Italy writing to those in Italy.) We have no idea where the writer was.