

Hebrews

INTRODUCTION

The key word in Hebrews, occurring 13 times, is “*better*,” and the whole epistle has often been referred to as *The Fifth Gospel*. This letter reveals a greater and higher mystery (not known before) regarding the facts of sin, salvation, redemption, sanctification and fellowship with God. This revelation is that since Christ, the sinless One, died in full obedience to His Father's will, shed his blood and took it as a sacrifice into the Heavenly Tabernacle, He received God's complete approval, becoming the full propitiation for the sin of mankind; He then could sit at the right hand of the throne of God. There He has become for His people who believe on Him, our Great High Priest and Mediator, continually interceding for us and bringing the *very life of God* to indwell each of His believers (restoring their fellowship with Him) by the power of the Holy Spirit! He indeed is our Heavenly Leader and Forerunner, making possible what could not possibly be known under the Old Covenant (Old Testament).

The glories of our Savior/Priest/King are set before us as our eyes are fixed upon Jesus. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith (Heb 12:2) and He is crowned with glory and honor in the heavens (Heb 2:9).

Although the author of Hebrews is not known, it was written to Jewish Christians, who due to persecution, were weakening in their faith. They were starting to think that they had lost everything, such as altar, priests, sacrifices, by accepting Christianity. The writer proves to them that they had lost only the *shadow* (their Jewish rites and ceremonies) in order to be given the *substance*, Jesus Christ. The Law of Moses had been replaced by the same law written in their hearts. The writer is leading them from elementary truth into a higher grasp of the pure knowledge of God by causing them to see that in Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians can realize, not only salvation from sin, but also entrance into the perfecting work of sanctification. Finally enjoy the very presence of God Himself, dwelling in the heavenly sanctuary with Him!

Hebrews 1:1

“God ... spake” (v. 1). Deity is not speechless. The true and living God, unlike the idols of the heathen, is no dumb Being. The God of Scripture, unlike that absolute and impersonal “first Cause” of philosophers and evolutionists, is not silent. At the beginning of earth’s history we find Him speaking: “*God said*, Let there be light; and there was light” (Gen 1:4). “He spake and it was done, He commanded and it stood fast” (Ps. 33:9). To men He spake, and still speaks. For this we can never be sufficiently thankful!

“God who ... in diverse manners spake” (v. 1). The majority of the commentators regard these words as referring to the *various ways* in which God revealed Himself to the prophets—sometimes directly, at others indirectly—through an angel (Gen. 19:1, etc.); sometimes audibly, at others in dreams and visions. But, with Dr. J. Brown, we believe that the particular point here is *how* God spake *to the fathers* by the prophets, and not how He has made known His mind to the prophets themselves. “The revelation was sometimes communicated by typical representations and emblematical actions, sometimes in a continued parable, at other times by separate figures, at other times—though comparatively rarely—in plain explicit language. The revelation has sometimes the form of a narrative, at other times that of a prediction, at other times that of an argumentative discourse, sometimes it is given in prose, at other times in poetry” (Dr. J. Brown). Thus we may see here an illustration of the *sovereignty* of God; He did not act *uniformly* or confine Himself to any one method of speaking to the fathers. He spake by way of promise and prediction, by types and symbols, by commandments and precepts, by warnings and exhortation.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

The angels and prophets could never fully reveal the life, love and power of God; it took the presence of the Son Himself as the living Word of God to transmit this, and the true deliverance from sin to mankind. **Give examples of how God spoke prior to Christ’s coming.**

Hebrews 1:2

“In these last days” (v. 2). This expression is not to be taken absolutely, but is a contrast from “in time past.” The ministry of Christ marked “the last days.” That which the Holy Spirit was pressing upon the Hebrews was the *finality* of the Gospel revelation. Through the “prophets” God had given predictions and foreshadowings; in the Son, the fulfilment and substance. The “fullness of time” had come when God sent forth His Son (Gal. 4:4). He has nothing now in reserve. He has no further revelation to make. Christ is the *final* Spokesman of Deity. The written Word is now complete. In conclusion, note how Christ *divides history*; everything before pointed toward Him, everything since points back to Him. *He* is the *Center* of all God’s counsels.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

How does God show greater life and glory in the new revelation over the old?

Heb. 1:4 Heb. 10:26-29 Rom. 5:12-21 John 15:13-15 John 16:7

Hebrews 1:3

Christ is the irradiation of God’s glory. The Mediator’s relation to the Godhead is like that of the rays to the sun itself. We may conceive of the sun in the firmament, yet shining not; were there no rays, we should not see the sun. So, apart from Christ, the *brightness* of God’s “glory” could not be perceived by us. Without Christ, man is in the dark, utterly in the dark concerning God. It is in Christ that God is *revealed*.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Can the sun and the sun’s rays be separated? Can God the Father and the Son be separated?

Hebrews 1:4-5

“Being made so much better than the angels.” To appreciate the force of this we must, briefly, consider the *excellency* of the “angels.” Angels are the highest of all God’s creatures: heaven is their native home (Matt. 24:36). They “excel in strength” (Ps. 103:20). They are God’s “ministers” (Ps. 104:4). Like a king’s gentlemen-in-waiting, they are said to “minister *unto* the Ancient of Days” (Dan. 7:9-10). They are “holy” (Matt. 25:21). Their countenances are like “lightning,” and their raiment is as white as snow (Matt. 28:3). They surround God’s throne (Rev. 5:11). They carry on every development of nature. “God does not move and rule the world merely by laws and principles, by unconscious and

inanimate powers, but by living beings full of light and love. His angels are like flames of fire; they have charge over the winds, and the earth, and the trees, and the sea (the book of Revelation shows this—A.W.P.). Through the angels He carries on the government of the world” (Saphir).

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Give one or two examples of angel intervention into the affairs of mankind?

Gen. 16:7-14 Gen. 28:12 Ex. 3:2 Josh. 5:13-15 1 Kgs. 19:5-7 Luke 1:11-20 Luke 1:26-38 Luke 2:9-14
Acts 12:7-11 Rev. 1:1

The angels were made to be God’s ministers, and they could tell of God and the heavenly life. **In what ways did God’s only begotten Son surpass these heavenly creatures?**

Ps. 2:8, 9 Rev. 4:10, 11

Hebrews 1:6

The Lord Jesus was not only the first in time, but the Chief, not only among but over them. In Romans 8:29 we read, that God has predestinated His elect to be conformed to the image of His Son in order that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren, i.e., their Chief and most excellent Ruler. In Col. 1:15 He is designated the “Firstborn of every creature,” which most certainly *does not* mean that He was Himself the first to be created, as many today wickedly teach, for never does Scripture speak of Him as “the Firstborn of God,” but affirms that He is the Head and Lord of every creature. In Col. 1:18 He is spoken of as “the Firstborn from the dead,” which does not signify that He was the first to rise again, but the One to whom the bodies of His saints shall be conformed—see Phil. 3:21. In Heb. 11:28 this term is applied to the flower and might of Egypt. In Heb. 12:23 the Church in glory is termed “the Church of the Firstborn.” This title then is synonymous with the “appointed Heir of all things.” It is, however, to be distinguished from “Only begotten” in John 1:18, 3:16. This latter is a term of *endearment*, as a reference to Heb. 11:17 shows—Isaac was not Abraham’s *only* “begotten,” for Ishmael was begotten by him too; but Isaac was his *darling*; so Christ is God’s “Darling”—see Psalm 22:20, 35:17.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Explain what it means for Christ to be first-begotten or firstborn.

Hebrews 1:7-9

“Therefore, God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness” (v. 9). The Spirit is still quoting from the 45th Psalm. The enemies of God’s truth would discover here a “flat contradiction.” In v. 8 the One spoken to is hailed as “God,” on the throne. But here in v. 9 He is addressed as an inferior, “Thy God hath anointed Thee.” How could the same person be both supreme and subordinate? If He Himself had a God, how could He at the same time be God? No wonder Divine things are “foolishness to the natural man!” Yet is the enigma easily explained, the seeming contradiction readily harmonized. The Mediator was, in His own person, both Creator and creature, God and man. Once we see it is as Mediator, as the God-man, that Christ is here spoken to, all difficulty vanishes. It is this which supplies the key to the whole passage. Much in Hebrews 1 cannot be understood unless it be seen that the Holy Spirit is there speaking not of the essential glories of Christ, but of His mediatorial dignities and honors.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

God the Father calls the Son by the name of God, Heb. 1:8 (i.e., Christ *is* God), and speaks of Him seated on the throne forever and ever. Then in Heb. 1:9 He says, “Your God, has anointed you.” It is here that many false religions bring their doctrines of denial that Jesus *is truly* God. **What do you see as the root cause for anyone to deny the full deity of Christ? And, if Christ had not revealed to us the very nature and person of the Father, could we understand or grasp who the Father is? Give examples of Christ’s mediatorial work.**

John 6:46 John 8:18 John 10:30 John 16:28 Gen. 17:7 Isa. 42:6 Isa. 49:8 Isa. 53:10 Mal.
3:1 John 3:34 John 4:34 John 9:4 Eph. 1:22, 23 Col. 1:19, 27

Hebrews 1:10

“And Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth” (v. 10). The opening “and” shows that the apostle is continuing to advance proof of the proposition laid down in v. 4. This proof of Christ’s excellency is taken from a

work peculiar to God, creation. The argument is based upon a divine testimony found in the Old Testament. The argument may be stated thus: The Creator is more excellent than creatures; Christ is the Creator, angels are creatures; therefore Christ is more excellent than angels. That Christ *is* Creator is here proved; that angels are creatures, has been shown in v. 7. This verse also completes the answer to a question which v. 4 may have raised in the minds of some, namely, what is the "more excellent name" which the Mediator has obtained? The reply is "Son" (v. 5), "God" (v. 8), "Lord" (v. 10).

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Genesis 1:1 states: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". Then we see from Heb. 1:10 and other verses, such as Col. 1:15-16 that Jesus was the Creator. To help us understand the Creator we have to keep in mind that God is a triune God made up of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. How they interacted with one another in the creation can best be explained by saying: God the Father was the Great Architect in the creation of the heaven and the earth; the Son followed the Father's plan and did the work in creating the heavens and earth (Col. 1:16-17) and the Spirit gave life to the creation (Gen. 1:2,26). One God made up of three persons all worked to fulfill God's good pleasure. **Now, using this same type of analogy, explain how the plan of salvation for fallen man was carried out by the triune God.**

John 3:16 Rom. 3:10-11 Rom. 5:17-18 Rom. 8:1-39 Isa. 25:8 Gal. 3:10-13 2 Cor. 3:11-18 1 Cor. 15:42-57 Phil. 3:21 1 John 3:2 Rev. 22:3-4

Hebrews 1:11-12

"They shall perish, but Thou remainest" (v. 11). This verse makes mention of still another perfection of Christ, namely, His *immutability*. The earth and the heavens shall perish. The apostle John, in prophetic vision, saw "a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Rev. 21:1). But Christ "remaineth." He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

"And they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed" (vv. 11, 12). This emphasizes the mutability of the creature. Two resemblances are employed: first the earth may be said to "wax old as doth a garment" in that it is not to last forever, but is appointed to an end: see 2 Pet. 3:10. The longer, therefore, it has continued, the nearer it approaches to that end; as a garment, the longer it is worn, the nearer it is to its end. Second, the heavens may be said to be "folded up as a vesture," inasmuch as Scripture declares "the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll" (Isa. 34:4).

"*Thou* shalt fold them up." This intimates Christ's absolute control over all creation. He that made all hath an absolute power to preserve, alter, and destroy all, as it pleaseth Him. He is the Potter, we are but the clay, to be molded as He will. Our Lord Jesus Christ, being true God, is the Most High and supreme Sovereign over all, and He doeth all "that man may know that Thou, whose name is *Jehovah*, art the Most High over all the earth" (Ps. 83:18). "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made" (Ps. 33:6); by the same word shall they be folded up. The practical value of this for our hearts is plain; such a Lord may be safely trusted; such a Lord should be revered and worshipped. In what holy awe should He be held!

"But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail" (v. 12). "The mutability of creatures being distinctly set out, the apostle returns to the main point intended, which is Christ's immutability. It was before generally set down in the phrase, 'Thou remaineth.' Here it is illustrated in two other branches. Though all these three phrases in general intend one and the same thing, namely, immutability, yet, to show that there is no tautology, no vain repetition, of one and the same thing, they may be distinguished one from another:

" 'Thou remaineth,' pointeth at Christ's eternity before all times; for it implieth his being before, in which he still abides. 'Thou art the same' declares Christ's constancy. There is no variableness with him; thus, therefore, he says of himself, 'I am the Lord, I change not' (Mal. 3:6). 'Thy years shall not fail' intendeth Christ's everlastingness; that he was before all times, and continueth in all ages, and will beyond all times so continue" (Dr. Gouge).

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

We see from Heb. 1:11-12 that the world as we know it will perish. **How and why is it necessary to do away with this present world?**

Gen. 3:22-24 Phil. 3:17-21 2 Peter 2:4-6 1 John 2:15-17

Hebrews 1:13-14

It should awaken within us a sense of *wonderment*. The angels are portrayed as *our* attendants! When we remember who and what they are—their exalted rank in the scale of being, their sinlessness, their wondrous capacities, knowledge and powers—it is surely an astonishing thing to learn that they should minister unto us. Think of it, the unfallen angels waiting upon the fallen descendants of Adam! The courtiers of Heaven ministering to worms of the earth! The mighty

angels, who “excel in strength,” taking notice of and serving those so far beneath them! Could you imagine the princes of the royal family seeking out dwellers in the slums and ministering to them, not once or occasionally, but constantly? But the analogy altogether fails. The angels of God are sent forth to minister unto redeemed sinners! Marvel at it.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

What a tremendous thought! God, with His Son at His right hand has appointed angels, though unseen, to minister to those who would come to Him! **Give examples in Scripture of the angels caring for God’s people.**

Gen. 19:15 2 Kgs. 6:15-17 Ps. 34:7 Ps. 68:17 Ps. 91:11, 12 Dan. 6:22 Luke 16:22 Acts 12:6-9

Hebrews 2:1-4

From the beginning to the end of Hebrews we sincerely believe that the people to whom the Letter was written were genuine, born-again, saved individuals. The writer identifies himself again and again with those to whom he is writing. The pronoun, “we,” which includes himself, is used over two dozen times, as well as the pronoun, “us.” Moreover, the description of these Hebrews is one which can only fit believers.

Notice just a few examples, which we shall elaborate upon later. How can the following passage be made to mean an unregenerate professor?

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession [confession] Christ Jesus (Heb. 3:1).

Can we say this is a description of an unregenerate man? Are unregenerate sinners partakers of the heavenly calling? Is Christ their High Priest, when they have not even received Him as their Savior? Or consider another passage:

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession (Heb. 4:14).

Are these people addressed unconverted, unregenerated Hebrews who have not been fully saved? A person cannot be “half saved” and “half lost.” It is either one or the other. Which are they? If they are false professors, would the Holy Spirit admonish them to hold fast their *false* profession?

Or consider this verse in Hebrews 4:16. Can this be said to an unsaved person:

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.

The sinner cannot come to the Throne of Grace until he comes first to the Cross of Calvary.

Or listen to this passage and tell me whether these people addressed are saved or not. I have never heard a Bible teacher who did not apply this passage to believers:

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,
By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;
And having an high priest over the house of God;
Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,
and our bodies washed with pure water.
Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)
And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching (Heb. 10:19-25).

Is this admonition to believers or sinners? Does God urge an unconverted, half-saved professor to hold fast his false profession? Every author I have ever read on the subject agrees that this is addressed to believers. It is incontrovertible. By what rule of interpretation can we then say that the very next verse is addressed not to believers but to false professors?

For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins (Heb. 10:26).

“For if we sin willfully.” Who are the *we*? The same ones who in the previous verses are unmistakably identified as God’s children, who are admonished to *hold fast* their profession. The twenty-sixth verse continues without a break,

connected with the preceding verses by the word “for.” “*For if we sin willfully...*” The way to avoid willful sinning is for the believer to *hold fast his profession*.

We give just one more example. Another portion of Hebrews mentions the people who are warned against willful sinning:

For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward (Heb. 10:34-35).

This last word *reward* is the key which unlocks the secret of the Book of Hebrews. It is not written to half-saved professors who are threatened with being lost after all. Instead it is written to believers who *are saved* and *cannot be lost again*, but they can lose their *reward*. The warning is to the believers coming short of God’s best, and becoming subject to the chastening of the Lord, and loss of reward at the Judgement Seat of Christ. These Hebrews knew they had in heaven a better and more enduring substance, and were admonished by the Holy Spirit to *hold fast* their confidence.

(Studies in Hebrews, M.R. De Haan)

The writer of Hebrews gives earnest warning of the greater responsibility and greater danger in case of neglect, which greater privileges bring. **What should we do to make our calling and election sure, since it is “so great salvation?” (Heb. 2:3)**

Does God have the right to claim our absolute devotion and obedience?

Acts 4:32-5:2 1 Cor. 6:19-20 1 Cor. 7:23

Does the word *neglect* in Hebrews 2:3 mean something we already possess is being neglected?

John 15:4-8 1 Cor. 16:13, 14 Gal. 5:16, 22-26 Gal. 6:14 Eph. 3:17-19 Eph. 4:1-3, 32 Eph. 5:1, 2, 8-11

Explain how these verses relate to Phil. 2:12, “work out your salvation with fear and trembling”

2 Cor. 5:10 1 Cor. 3:13-15 Heb. 12:1-2 Heb. 12:11-13

Hebrews 2:5-8

The true interpretation and application of Psalm 8; the verses quoted from it in Heb. 2 (specifically Heb. 2:6 “What is man”) refer not to Adam, not to mankind as a whole, nor to Christ Himself considered alone, but to His redeemed. The Holy Spirit, through the Psalmist, was looking forward to a *new order of man*, of which the Lord Jesus is the Head. In the Man Christ Jesus, God has brought to light a new order of man, One in whom is found not merely innocence, but *perfection*. It is of this “man” that Eph. 2:15 speaks: “to make in Himself of twain (redeemed from among the Jews and from the Gentiles) *one new man*,” and also Eph. 4:13: “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a *perfect man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” As God looks at His incarnate Son He sees, for the first time, a perfect Man, and us in Him. And as we, by faith, “see Jesus crowned with glory and honor,” we discover both the proof and pledge of ourselves yet being “crowned with glory and honor.”

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

How is the dominion restored that man originally had?

Gen. 1:26-28 Heb. 2:16 Heb. 2:10 2 Tim. 2:21

Man has received from God a spiritual life capable of partaking of His own life and spirit, His will and His holiness—capable of likeness to and fellowship with Himself—toward the eventual goal of sharing His throne and dominion over all creation. And Jesus, as the Son of God, became man, not counting it unworthy of His divine glory for Himself to work out that glorious destiny for man. **At this time what things are not put under man’s feet (Heb 2:8)?**

Heb. 2:15

What will that new kingdom under the righteous rule of our Lord be like?

Isa. 2:2-4 Isa. 11:6-9 Zech. 14:16 Rev. 20:2, 3

Hebrews 2:9

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." (Heb. 2:9)

It was God Himself who was "manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). The One born in Bethlehem's manger was "The mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6), and heralded as "Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). Let there be no uncertainty on this point. Had He been "emptied" of any of His personal excellency, had His divine attributes been laid aside, then His satisfaction or sacrifice would not have possessed infinite value. The glory of His person was not in the slightest degree diminished when He became incarnate, though it was (in measure) concealed by the lowly form of the servant He assumed. Christ was still "equal with God" when He descended to earth. It was "the Lord of glory" (1 Corinthians 2:8) whom men crucified.

"And took upon him the form of a servant." That was the great condescension, yet is it not possible for us to fully grasp the infinity of the Son's stoop. If God "humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth" (Psalm 113:6), how much more so to actually become "flesh" and be amongst the most lowly. He entered into an office which placed Him below God (John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 11:3). He was, for a season, made "a little lower than the angels" (Hebrews 2:7); He was "made under the law" (Galatians 4:4). He was made lower than the ordinary condition of man, for He was "a reproach of men, and despised of the people" (Psalm 22:6).

What point all this gives is to "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). How earnestly the Christian needs to seek grace to be content with the lowest place God and men assign him; to be ready to perform the meanest service; to be and do anything which brings glory to God.

(Gleanings In The Godhead, A. W. Pink)

Explain the apparent contradiction between what is said of Christ being better than the angels in Heb. 1:4 and then being made a little lower than the angels in Heb. 2:9.

Hebrews 2:10

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings (Heb. 2:10).

The phrase, "it became him," may be translated, "it was becoming on him." We say a hat or a dress is becoming on a person, meaning it fits the personality of the wearer, and it looks good. So the love of Christ in dying for us was becoming to Him, for it exactly fitted and expressed His personality. Nothing else could do. If Jesus is to restore Adam's lost inheritance, it must be by the suffering of death. Again we must be reminded *who* it was, and *who* did all this. It was the One "for whom are all things, and by whom are all things." It was the sovereign Creator, and He was made perfect through sufferings.

(Studies in Hebrews, M.R. De Haan)

If Christ was already Perfect God and Perfect Man why the statement "to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10).

Heb. 2:18 Heb. 5:1-6

Hebrews 2:11-18

However great the dignity of the substitute, or however deep his voluntary humiliation, atonement for us would not have been possible unless that substitute became actually, as well as legally, one with us. In order to ransom His church, in order to purge our sins, Christ must so unite Himself with His people, that their sins should become His sins, and that His sufferings and death should become their sufferings and death. In short, the union between the Son of God and His people, and theirs with Him, must be as real and intimate as that of Adam and his posterity, who all sinned and died in him. Thus did He, in the fulness of time, assume their flesh and blood, bear their sins in His own body on the tree, so that they, having died to sin, may live unto righteousness, being healed by His stripes.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Was is necessary for Christ to become human in order to purge our sins and unite Himself with His people?

Explain how Christ was human but without sin or in other words another man not like the first man.

Ps. 51:5 Isa. 9:6 Matt. 1:20 Luke 1:35 John 14:30 Heb. 7:26

Hebrews 3:1-5

The history of Moses was remarkable from beginning to end. The hand of Providence preserved him as a babe, and the hand of God dug his grave at the finish. Between those terms he passed through the strangest and most contrastive vicissitudes which, surely, any mortal has ever experienced. The honors conferred upon him by God were much greater than any bestowed upon any other man, before or since. During the most memorable portion of their history, all of God's dealings with Israel were transacted through him. His position of nearness to Jehovah was remarkable, awesome, unique. He was in his own person, prophet, priest and king. Through him the whole of the Levitical economy was instituted. By him the Tabernacle was built. Thus we can well understand the high esteem in which the Jews held this favored man of God—cf. John 8:28, 29.

(*Exposition of Hebrews*, A. W. Pink)

Name as many ways as you can to show how Christ was superior to Moses.

Hebrews 3:6

The expression at the close of verse six has given trouble for many, in view of our salvation by grace. But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end (Heb. 3:6). On the surface it seems that this verse indicates that the believer can ultimately be lost, for being the house of God is made dependent upon holding fast. However, this passage is not dealing with salvation, but with assurance, confidence and rejoicing in hope. The danger was not that these believers could lose their salvation, but they could lose their assurance, their confidence, their joy, and finally the reward for faithfulness. It is not "if we hold fast our *salvation*," but if we "hold fast our *confidence*." And this is in perfect harmony with the central theme of the epistle. These Hebrew Christians were hated and despised, looked upon as the refuse and offscouring of society, and were gravely tempted to go back to the easier path of compromise. If they surrendered their separated position and cut the corners and toned down their testimony, it might save them persecution and criticism. But in doing so they would lose their confidence, hope and assurance. They would put a stop to their growth in grace and like the Galatians slip back into legalism and remain in spiritual infancy. Instead of fainting under the testings and trials resulting from our faithfulness, we need to heed the words of Peter:

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy (1 Pet. 4:12, 13).

(*Studies in Hebrews*, M.R. De Haan)

Explain why it is important not to look as much at our sufferings but more at what it will accomplish at the end of the road of time and eternity.

Rom. 8:18 Heb. 10:35-37

Hebrews 3:7-9

We are to guard against an evil heart. If the heart were in a right condition, faith would be as natural to it as flowers in spring; or as smiles on the face of healthy, innocent childhood. As soon as the heart gets into an evil state—harboring sin; cherishing things which you would not excuse in others, but condone in yourself; permitting unholy thoughts and desires to remain unchecked and unjudged; then, beware! For such a heart is no longer able to believe in God. Its head turns dizzy; its eyes are blinded; and it is in imminent peril of falling irretrievably.

(*The Way Into The Holiest*, F. B. Meyer)

How did David cultivate an honest and good heart?

Ps. 32:1-5 Ps. 51:10-13 Ps. 139:23, 24

Hebrews 3:10-19

The tragedy is that many believers are perpetual infants, suffering from undernourishment and arrested development and malnutrition, lacking joy and victory and reward. It is no use denying the fact that too many believers are no farther along today than they were five years ago. This is not God's will, for He has something better. It is possible to know an undisturbed rest and peace, an attainment of victory over self and the world, which passeth all understanding. Why then go on defeated and discouraged, when the fullness of the abundant life can be yours? We trust these studies in Hebrews will show you the way. Jesus said:

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full (John 15:11).

Again He says in John 16:24:

. . . ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

It is then possible to be saved and never come to the fullness of the joy of our salvation here below. As a striking example of, and solemn warning against this tragedy, the author of Hebrews calls our attention to the experience of Israel, quoting from the ninety-fifth Psalm. Israel was a redeemed people, delivered by God from Egypt. It was all of grace, by the death of a lamb and the shedding of the blood. They were now out of Egypt, but their goal was Canaan and victory. They were delivered from slavery of Egypt, but had not yet conquered the giants of, Canaan. Between the two lay a wilderness which could have been crossed in eleven days, but instead it took them forty years, and the great mass of them died before ever seeing victory in Canaan. Out of Egypt but never knowing the fullness of the joy of victory in Canaan!

(Studies in Hebrews, M.R. De Haan)

God had redeemed Israel out of Egypt (type of the world) from bondage and slavery—by blood and power. They were never to return again—but that was only the beginning of the journey—God not only wanted them *out* of Egypt, but *in* the land of Canaan, which they were to possess. **As Christians where is the beginning and ending of our journey here on earth?**

Ps. 95:6-11 John 16:33 Gal. 3:1, 3 Heb. 2:1 Eph. 5:15-16 Eph. 4:14-15

Hebrews 4:1-11

"Since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful [let us therefore fear, KJV] that none of you be found to have fallen short of it" (Hebrews 4:1). This is founded especially on the typical connection between Joshua, the ancient leader of Israel, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Captain of our Salvation. The word "Jesus" here used in the King James (4:8) undoubtedly refers to Joshua, which was the Old Testament name of Jesus. The Land of Promise into which Joshua brought the people of God was simply the type of the better inheritance into which Christ the great Captain of our salvation is bringing His people. Certainly it did not refer to our future heaven, for there, there will be no Canaanites and no conflicts. It was the type of the present rest into which Christ is bringing His willing people. It is of that He says in this passage, "Since the promise of entering his rest still stands" (4:1), and we who have believed do enter into rest. There is for us in Christ an inheritance of reality, of victory and of peace as different from the condition of the average Christian as the Land of Promise was different from the weary wanderings of the wilderness. Now there is a promise left us of entering into this rest. That promise is repeated over and over again in God's Word. "You will keep in perfect peace/ him whose mind is steadfast" (Isaiah 26:3), is the ancient Hebrew form of the promise. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), is Christ's new edition of the promise turned into a great request. "The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). This is the bequest divided among the children, and proved in the actual experience of life.

Now if this is left to us it becomes a very serious thing for us to fail to receive it. It would be a very serious thing to allow your father's will to go by default and waste the great inheritance which amid sacrifice and toil he spent his life accumulating for his loved ones. And how much worse is it to waste the purchase of the precious blood of Christ and allow to be of no effect His costly sacrifice and His infinite gift of love! "How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3). How serious it is even to seem to come short of it! It is not the danger of a life of open wickedness that is here pointed out; it is a life that just barely misses God's best. It only comes short, but loses it just the same.

Was there ever a more pathetic story than that of the tribes that marched behind the pillar of cloud and flame, that came right up to the gates of Canaan, and yet right there at the very threshold failed to enter in? Was there ever a sadder spectacle than those ancient millions turning back into the desert day after day and year after year, in that endless round of fruitless wandering, until at last they sank and perished in the sands? They just came short, that was all. They reached the borders of the land. One day more and they would have been across. But they hesitated, they doubted, they feared, they disobeyed and they failed. They were willing enough next day to go, but God refused to let them. They had missed their opportunity. They had come too late. Well may we fear this coming short of entering into His rest. Well may we "make speed" to enter in.

It marks the difference between two classes of Christians—the one, the wanderers in the wilderness, the other, victors of the Land of Promise; the one ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, ever seeking and never obtaining, with just enough religion to make them wretched, just enough light to know how much they have lost. But the saddest part of it is not merely its influence upon themselves, but its influence upon others. Not only do they lose, but their work suffers, their testimony for Christ is in vain, their prayers are unanswered, and their lives are a reflection upon their Lord as well as a disappointment to themselves and everybody else.

"Let us, therefore, make every effort [labor, KJV] to enter that rest" (4:11). There is such a thing as laboring for rest. The struggle of war is necessary to bring the victory of peace. The toil of busy years is the prelude to affluence, retirement and repose. The full surrender in which we die to some strong self-will is the pathway through which we rise to a new and better life. There are some things that we must let go in order to keep. There are crisis moments through which a soul must pass in the throes of a great conflict ere it can find lasting peace. And so there is a moment in every life when we meet God, and by a supreme surrender enter into His sovereign will and His perfect peace.

John Bunyan tells us of his significant dream when his soul was struggling to enter into the better life. He saw a company of happy women dwelling in a region of celestial light, and bearing upon their faces the expression of infinite rest and blessedness. Many of them were faces that he knew among the saints of God. But he was not among them. A great wall rose between, shutting him out in the cold and cheerless darkness. He wept and struggled to find some entrance, until at last he discovered the secret passage under the wall, but so narrow that he could not get through with all his belongings. But then he heard their voices calling him and telling him that if he was willing to part with all, he, too, could pass within the narrow gate and enter in. At length after a painful struggle he was able to leave his impediments and possessions, and slowly pressing through the narrow passage he awoke to find himself in this Land of Light. "Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest" (4:11). God has been leading you up to it all your days. There is some decisive act, some supreme surrender, some great letting go or taking hold which He will show you, which probably He has shown you, and in which you will find the problem solved, the die cast, the door opened and the land possessed. So may He help you to labor to enter into His rest.

But the word translated "labor" has a slightly different literal meaning. "Make speed," is its exact force. It calls to instant action, and thus it harmonizes with the previous message, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (3:15). There are some things which in their very nature must be done quickly or they lose their effect. There are processes that will bear slow, deliberate action, but there are great decisions that must be instantly made, and advance movements that must be carried forward as the walls of the fortress are stormed by swift and sudden assault. When God is calling to some great decision there is no time for Paul to confer with flesh and blood, for Elisha to go home and bid his friends farewell or for the young disciple to wait until he has buried his father. It is today, "As was said before: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts' " (4:7). It is the moment when God is speaking. It is the moment when the resources of grace are waiting to carry you through. That is the time, the only time for action, and God will not brook delay. Is He so calling you today? The moment to answer is the moment He speaks. Oh, then, "Today, if you hear his voice" make speed to enter into His rest. Go forward, step out into the Jordan of death to do all His will: step out into the act of obedience which is calling you on; step out to trust Him in the dark and stand waiting for Him to vindicate you and to carry you through.

Therefore, beloved, since God "in these last days . . . has spoken to us by his Son" (1:2), let us "pay more careful attention ... to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away" (2:1).

Let us take heed "that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God" (3:12).

Let us today if we would hear His voice harden not our hearts (3:15).

"Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of [us] be found to have fallen short of it" (4:1).

And, finally, let us make speed "to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience" (4:11).

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Hebrews four opens with the warning: Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. This is similar to the exhortation given in Philippians 2:12b "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." But fear alone will not get us to where God wants us; we have to go further with Him.

Explain what labor is to follow the fear in order to get to the place where God wants us. Keep in mind Philippians 2:13: "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Ps. 37:5 Ps. 37:7 Isa. 26:3 Rom. 15:3 Heb. 11:1

The unawakened are unconcerned about the glory of God and indifferent as to whether their conduct pleases Him. They have no concept of the sinfulness of sin and no realization of how completely sin dominates them. Only when the Spirit of God illumines their minds and convicts their consciences do they see the awfulness of their state; and only then, as they try to reform their ways, are they conscious of the might of their inward foe and of their inability to cope with him. In vain deliverance is sought in resolutions and endeavors in our own strength. Even after we are quickened and begin to understand the Gospel, for a season (often a lengthy one) it is rather a fight than a rest. But as we grow more out of ourselves and are taught to live in Christ and draw our strength from Him by faith, we obtain a rest in this respect also.

As the believer realizes more clearly the sufficiency of the finished work of Christ, he is delivered experientially from the Law and sees that he no longer owes it service. His obedience is no longer legal but evangelical, no longer out of fear, but out of gratitude. His service to the Lord is not in a servile, but in a gracious spirit. What was formerly a burden is now a delight. He no longer seeks to earn God's favor, but acts in the realization that the smile of God is upon him. Far from rendering him careless, this will spur him on to strive to glorify the One who gave His own Son as a sacrifice. Thus, bondage gives place to liberty; slavery, to sonship; toil, to rest. And the soul reposes on the unchangeable Word of Christ and follows Him steadily through light and darkness.

(The Nature of God, A. W. Pink)

Hebrews 4:12-13

The "soul" is the seat of the emotions (1 Sam. 18:1, Judges 10:16, Gen. 42:21, etc.). It is that part of our nature which stirs into exercise the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." The unregenerate man is termed "the *soulical* man" (1 Cor. 2:14), the Greek word there being the adjectival form of "psyche" or "soul." That is to say, the unregenerate man is entirely dominated by his soul, his lusts, his desires, his emotions. Spiritual considerations have no weight with him whatsoever, for he is "alienated from the life of God." True, he *has* a "spirit," and by means of it he is capable of perceiving all around him the evidences of the "eternal power and godhead" of the Creator (Rom. 1:20). It is the "candle of the Lord" (Prov. 20:27) within him; yet has it, because of the fall, *no* communion with God. Now at regeneration there is, literally, a "dividing asunder of soul and spirit." The spirit is restored to communion with God, made *enrapport* with Him, "reconciled." The spirit is raised from its immersion in the soul, and once more functions separately: "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my *spirit*." (Rom. 1:9); "my *spirit* prayeth" (1 Cor. 14:14) etc.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

What will the Word or Sword be cutting in your life in order that the spirit life may reign?

Job 5:6, 7 Job 42:1-6 Ps. 51:6 Rev. 2:12-16

Hebrews 4:14-16

He is able to sympathize with us to the fullest possible extent, "for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (2:18).

He is able to sympathize with us in our temptations. He has felt the keen pressure, and while He has not yielded to it He knows all the pain, the strain and the horrible contact with the powers of darkness. There is no form of temptation which He has not experienced, and in the hour of painful pressure He is near at hand and "able to help those who are being tempted" (2:18).

He is able to sympathize with us in our weaknesses. He knows what it is to be peculiarly susceptible to temptation. He remembers the long fast days, when, exhausted and hungry, the enemy tried to take advantage of His infirmity and make Him eat forbidden bread. And so when you are pressed above measure, in sore extremities, nervous, tired and susceptible to evil influence, He understands. He makes allowance and He will give supernatural help and deliverance if you will but look to Him and never be discouraged.

He is able to sympathize with us even in our failures. He can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way. He does not judge harshly even the sinner so long as he is willing to forsake his sin and receive the help of the Savior. His one business is to deal with sin and save the erring, and we can come boldly to Him not only when we are right but when we are wrong, for mercy to pardon as well as grace to help.

He is able to sympathize with us in our sorrows. There is no form of affliction which He has not shared. Have you mourned in bitter bereavement? He, too, wept at Bethany. Have you felt the keen pang of a false and faithless friend? He, too, was denied by the disciple for whom He had done the most. Have you been betrayed by those whom you had harbored and who had accepted your friendship only that they might have a better opportunity for deception? He, too, felt the kiss of Judas and "knew what was in a man" (John 2:25). Have you been poor and homeless? He had nowhere to lay His head. Have you ever felt the anguish of spiritual desertion and vainly sought your Father's face? He, too, once cried in darkest agony, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). There is no step on the dark path of human sorrow, not even the last deep plunge of death itself, through which the Forerunner has not passed and in which He does not come back to your side and whisper, "Fear not, for I am with you."

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Use Heb. 5:6-8 to elaborate more on how Jesus sympathizes with us.

How should we approach the throne of grace?

Heb. 4:16

Hebrews 5:1-4

"For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (vv. 1-4). Here we have defined the intrinsic nature of the priestly office.

The verses just quoted above contain a general description of the Levitical high priests. Five things are here said concerning them. First, he must be "taken from among men," that is, he must partake of the nature of those on whose behalf he acts. Second, he acted not as a private individual, but as a public official: "is ordained for men." Third, he came not empty-handed before God, but furnished with "gifts and sacrifices for sins." Fourth, for he himself was not exempt from infirmity, so that he might the more readily succour the distressed (vv. 2,3). Fifth, he did not presumptuously rush into his office of himself, but was chosen and approved of God (v. 4).

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Show how Christ meets the five priestly requirements:

1. "Taken from among men" – John 1:14, 18, 29 John 5:23

2. "is ordained for men" – Ex. 28:9, 12, 15, 17, 21, 29 Lev. 16:21 Isa. 59:2 Heb. 10:9 John 1:17 Eph. 4:18

3. Furnished with "gifts and sacrifices for sins" – Isa. 53:12 John 1:29 John 10:11, 18 Eph. 5:25 Heb. 8:3 Heb. 9:14

4. "Experienced infirmity" – Isa. 52:14 Isa. 53:5-7 Mark 15:17, 19 Heb. 5:7-9

5. "Chosen by God" – Matt. 3:16, 17 Matt. 17:5 Acts 10:38 Heb. 4:14

Hebrews 5:5-7

Let us begin by asking the question, Why did God ordain the office of priesthood? Wherein lay the necessity for it? The first and most obvious answer is, because of sin. Sin created a breach between a holy God and His sinful creatures. Were God to advance toward them in His essential character it could only be in judgment, involving their sure destruction; for He "will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. 34:7). Nor was the sinner capable of making the slightest advance toward God, for he was "alienated from the life of God" (Eph. 4:18), and thus, "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1); and as such, not only powerless to perform a spiritual act, but completely devoid of all spiritual aspirations. Looked at in himself, the case of fallen man was utterly hopeless.

But God has designs of *grace* unto men, not unto all men, but unto a remnant of them chosen out of a fallen race. Had God shown grace to all of Adam's descendants, the glory of His grace had been clouded, for it would have looked as

though the provisions of grace were something which were due men from God, because of His having failed to preserve them from falling into sin. But grace is *unmerited* favor, something to which no creature is entitled, something which he cannot in any wise *claim* from God. Therefore it must be exercised in a *sovereign* manner by the Author of it (Ex. 32:19), that grace may appear to be grace (Rom. 11:6).

But in determining to show grace unto that people whom He had chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4, 2 Tim. 1:9), God must act in harmony with His own perfections. The sin of His people could not be ignored. Justice clamored for its punishment. If they were to be delivered from its penal consequences, it could only be by an adequate satisfaction being made for them. Without blood shedding there is no remission of sins. An atonement was a fundamental necessity. Grace could not be shown at the expense of justice; no, grace must “reign through righteousness” (Rom. 5:21). Grace could only be exercised on the ground of accomplished redemption (Rom. 3:24).

And *who* was capable of rendering a perfect satisfaction unto the law of God? Who was qualified to meet all the demands of divine holiness, if a sinful people were to be redeemed consistently with its claims? Who was competent both to assume the responsibilities of that people, and discharge them to the full satisfaction of the Most High? Who was able both to honor the rights of the Almighty, and yet enter sympathetically into the weakness and needs of those who were to be saved? Clearly, the only solution to this problem and the only answer to these questions lay in a *mediator*, one who had both ability and title to act on God’s behalf and on theirs. For this reason was the Son of God appointed to be made in the likeness of sin’s flesh, that as the God-man He might be a “merciful and faithful High Priest” (Heb. 2:17); for *mediatorship* is the chief thing in priesthood.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

How does Melchizadek fit into all this?

Gen. 14:18 Heb. 7:4 1 Tim. 2:5 Zech. 6:12-13 Rom. 6:9 Heb. 7:23-25 Heb. 8:1-6 Heb. 9:1-28

Hebrews 5:8-10

But what is “obedience?” (Heb. 5:8) It is subjection to the will of another; it is an owning of the authority of another; it is performing the pleasure of another. This was an entirely new experience for the Son. Before His incarnation, He had Himself occupied the place of authority, of supreme authority. His seat had been the throne of the universe. From it He had issued commands and had enforced obedience. But now He had taken the place of a servant. He had assumed a creature nature. He had become man. And in this new place and role He conducted Himself with befitting submission to Another. He had been “made under the law,” and its precepts must be honored by Him. But more; the place He had taken was an official one. He had come here as the Surety of His people. He had come to discharge their liabilities. He had come to work out a perfect righteousness for them; and therefore, as their representative, He must obey God’s law. As the One who was here to maintain the claims of God, He must “magnify the law and make it honorable,” by yielding to it a voluntary, perfect, joyous compliance.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Give examples of Christ’s obedience to the Father?

Ps. 40:6-8 Isa. 50:6, 7 Matt. 26:39 John 4:34 John 5:19 John 5:30 John 10:18 Rom. 10:3, 4
Rom. 15:3 Heb. 9:14

Hebrews 5:11-14

If the Christian is to “increase in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10), he has to give himself whole-heartedly to the things of God. It is impossible to serve God and mammon. If the heart of the professing Christian be set, as the heart of the nominal professor is, upon earthly comfort, worldly prosperity, temporal riches, then the “true riches” will be missed—sold for “a mess of pottage” (Heb. 12:16). But if, by divine grace, through the possession of a new nature, there is a longing and a hungering for spiritual things, that longing can only be attained and that hunger satisfied by giving ourselves entirely to their ceaseless quest. “The loins of our minds” (1 Pet. 1:13) have to be girded, the Word has to be “studied” (2 Tim. 2:15), the means of grace have to be used with “all diligence” (2 Pet. 1:5). It is the diligent soul which “shall be made fat” (Prov. 13:4).

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Describe the serious disadvantage that it is for those who remain only in the “milk,” not being willing to move into the “strong meat of the Word”.

Ps. 119:105 Prov. 8:8-10, 17; 12:2-7; 19:24; 21:25; 24:30-34; 26:13-16 John 8:51 Gal. 5:7 Col. 3:10, 16
2 Pet. 1:5, 10, 11

Hebrews 6:1-12

The book of Hebrews is a book of solemn warnings. Throughout its thirteen chapters are numerous admonitions and danger signals. These Hebrew Christians were in a difficult situation, having been saved out of Judaism. It meant a tremendous sacrifice, for confessing Christ meant a virtual severing of all ties with their former fellows and associates. They were now identified with a most despised group called Christians, who were considered a sect of fanatics and the offscouring of the earth. To make a clean break with their old religion and its social implications was not easy. As a result they were tempted to compromise their position, and to straddle the fence, with one foot in the law and the other in grace. As a result they made no progress, and were in danger of losing their joy, testimony and reward.

Against this danger the epistle warns them in no uncertain terms. They are warned not to neglect their great salvation, or come short of victory, but to hold fast their confidence and go on to perfection. The incentive is the commendation of the Lord and the promise of future reward. The means for attaining the victory are the example of Jesus, the power of the Word, the availability of the services of the Holy Spirit, and of the High Priest at the right hand of God.

(Studies in Hebrews, M.R. De Haan)

It appears that these Hebrew believers had slipped from their former Christian position and were trying to regain what they had lost. They probably felt very guilty about what they were doing, just as when the Holy Spirit convicts us when we do wrong. In their mind they figured they had lost their salvation and it was now necessary to start over again, to "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh" (Heb. 6:6). With this ignorance they put Christ and themselves to open shame (Heb. 6:6). What they said by their words and actions was that Christ's first sacrifice was not sufficient to cover and deliver them from their present sins. Their main problem was they did not have a complete understanding of what happened to them when Christ delivered them from their sins. When they originally accepted Christ's sacrifice for their sins, past, present and future sins were forgiven. If they came again to Christ for forgiveness He would grant it on the fact that He shed His blood for them. It was a blood covenant He made with them when they first came to Him, and it is in effect for eternity. This is stressed again in Hebrews 10:26 "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins"; His one and only sacrifice was it. If they did not understand this and "hath counted the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing" (Heb. 10:29b), the result would be "the Lord shall judge his people" (Heb. 10:30b).

This letter written to the Hebrew believers provides them with much help on how to get back to their right position in the Christian faith. "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back into perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:38-39). This is again speaking to them to continue in their faith because they are not those who will go to perdition as the unsaved souls will. What God wanted from them now was for them to understand what He told them in Hebrews 6:1: "let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works." Don't get caught up in all the formalities like the ones stated in Hebrews 6:2: "the doctrine of baptisms, and of the laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." "And this will we do, if God permit" (Heb. 6:3). But move back into the work and labor of love that you once did (Heb. 6:10). **What does it mean to "go unto perfection" as stated in Heb. 6:1?**

1 Cor. 12:31 1 Cor. 13:1-13 Heb. 4:1

Explain what is meant by the thorns and briars being burned in Heb. 6:8.

Eph. 1:18 2 Tim. 1:12 1 Cor. 3:11-15 1 Cor. 9:24-27 1 Cor. 11:28-32 Heb. 4:1 Heb. 5:12
Heb. 12:11

How can we have "the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Heb. 6:11)?

Heb. 10:19-23, 26, 27, 35-36 Heb. 12:1-8 1 John 5:11-13, 20

Hebrews 6:13-20

After warning the believer against falling away to the point where it is impossible to be renewed to repentance, he hastens to add that this does not mean loss of salvation, but deals with God's method of finally cleansing the believer. To illustrate this security in spite of our failures, he introduces God's dealing with father Abraham. He has urged these believers to be diligent to maintain their assurance and hope (not salvation) unto the end, and through faith and patience inherit the rewards (Heb. 6:12). The incentive for this is God's faithfulness in spite of our unfaithfulness, as seen in God's dealings with Abraham.

For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee (Heb. 6:13, 14).

God promised to do something for Abraham. It did not depend on Abraham's worth, merit, works or conduct, but only on God's promise, and so He covenanted with Himself to do it. Nothing could alter this purpose in grace, and so the writer adds:

And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise (Heb. 6:15).

The possession of God's promise to Abraham depended on God's faithfulness. The enjoyment and assurance of the promise rested upon Abraham's faithfulness. And God confirmed the promise:

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability [unchangeableness] of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil (Heb. 6:17-19).

Blessed assurance! "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. 2:13).

God has promised and He cannot fail. When we fail, therefore, this then is the impelling motive for repentance, that God has made provision for our restoration and cleansing. This promise of God's faithfulness is compared to an anchor gripping the rock. We may be buffeted and dashed about by the storms, but our anchor is secure. The reason is given — it is anchored within the veil — in the most Holy Place where the Priest has sprinkled the blood upon the mercy seat. Our salvation is anchored by the Priest with the precious blood within the veil.

Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. 6:20).

(Studies in Hebrews, M.R. De Haan)

Speak about Abraham's failures and what effect they had on the promise God made to him in Gen. 15:1-6.

Explain how Christ is the anchor of your soul.

Isa. 57:20 Matt. 28:18, 20 John 10:28 John 13:1 2 Cor. 6:2

Hebrews 7:1-22

It was very difficult for a pious Hebrew to believe that anyone could succeed or supersede the imposing figure of the great high priest. And so the writer devotes several chapters to a masterly argument to prove the superiority of the Son of God as the One to whom Aaron was but the type and forerunner. In the course of this argument he brings out many points of profound interest and instruction, illustrating the connection between the Old and New Testaments, and showing with great beauty and power the blessed character of our Advocate in the heavens.

Our Great High Priest belongs to a superior order of priesthood. He is not a priest of the Levitical line, but "in the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 7:11). This is expounded and expanded with great fullness in Hebrews 7:1-17. This ancient figure looms out of the gray mists of the patriarchal age with a strange dignity and importance. He comes upon the stage of time, as the writer expresses it, "Without father or mother, without genealogy" or pedigree, "without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever" (7:3). Perhaps it is only meant that Melchizedek's descent is unrecorded, and yet there are many who believe that he was none other than the Son of God Himself anticipating His incarnation, and as Dr. Andrew Bonar once expressed it, "trying on the garments of His humanity a little in advance of the time."

His very name is typical and significant, King of Righteousness. His very office as priest of the Most High God set him forth as the forerunner of Him who came to bring in everlasting righteousness. His very capital was emblematic of his great Antitype. King of Salem, which means peace, foreshadowed the coming Prince of Peace. Meeting Abraham on his return from a glorious campaign, he blessed him in the name of the Most High God whom he represented, and received from him tithes in acknowledgment of his high official character as God's representative on earth. The most striking feature of his priesthood was that he was both priest and king, which was true of no one else in the whole history of the priesthood, except of Jesus only, of whom it was said that He will "sit and rule a priest ... on his throne" (Zechariah 6:13). Christ as our Great High Priest is also a King with power to answer His own petitions and guarantee to us the blessings

for which He intercedes. Now, this is a dignity far higher than any of the priests of Aaron's line enjoyed, and the apostle uses it to demonstrate the inferiority of Aaron to Melchizedek; for when Abraham acknowledged Melchizedek, Aaron and his sons who were then "still in the body of [their] ancestor" (Hebrews 7:10) virtually acknowledged him too as their superior, for as the writer well expresses it, "the lesser person is blessed by the greater" (7:7). If Aaron were inferior to Melchizedek he must, of course, be inferior to Christ, and so the apostle's argument is demonstrated by an inevitable conclusion, while at the same time the picture of our Great High Priest is exalted on the highest possible sublimity.

Our Great High Priest belongs to a superior tribe. Aaron and his sons were of the tribe of Levi, but Christ was born of the tribe of Judah, "For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests" (7:14). Judah was the royal tribe bearing the scepter of domination, of which it was said, "The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs" (Genesis 49:10). Judah always marched first among the tribes of Israel, and Christ's peculiar preeminence is that He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In this alone consists a distinct preeminence as well as a line of demarcation separating Him wholly from the whole line of Aaronic priesthood. Indeed, He could not lawfully belong to the Hebrew priesthood, and "if he were on earth, he would not be a priest" (Hebrews 8:4), because they all necessarily belonged to the tribe of Levi. Therefore His priesthood is of a heavenly order and belongs to the great sanctuary in the heavens and the relations of God with sinful men of every race and time.

Our Great High Priest has a higher calling and appointment. The Aaronic priests were set apart by ceremonies of peculiar sacredness, which are described in the 29th chapter of the book of Exodus. But Christ was appointed by far more sacred authority, even by the oath of Jehovah Himself (see Hebrews 7:21). Back of the work of redemption and the gospel of salvation there is a great divine transaction known as the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son. And this is the source and foundation of all the blessings of grace far back in the ages before the angels sang or sinner fell. The Father and the Son, foreseeing the ruin of the human race, entered into an eternal covenant by which the Son agreed to fulfill all the conditions of the broken law by His obedience and death, and the Father swore that in consideration of this He would give the Son to the people whom He redeemed, and all the blessings which He purchased by His sacrifice. Therefore when He was finishing His earthly work our Lord appealed to His Father in His final prayer, claiming the fulfillment of this covenant, "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. . . . Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me" (John 17:4,11). It was in connection with this covenant that the Father pronounced the solemn oath constituting Christ our Great High Priest. In the 110th Psalm we find David referring to this covenant and oath, saying, "The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek' " (110:4). Our Savior's priesthood and our salvation rest upon a foundation as strong and sure as the Rock of Ages and the everlasting throne.

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

The all-important and inexpressibly blessed truth for us to lay hold of is that in vv. 9, 10: we have an *illustration* of the most soul-satisfying truth revealed in Holy Writ. Just as Levi was "*in Abraham*," not only seminally but representatively, so every one of God's children was "*in Christ*" when He wrought out that glorious work which has honored and pleased God high above everything else. When the death-sentence of the law fell upon Christ, it fell upon the believer, so that he can unhesitatingly say, "I was crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). So too when Christ arose in triumph from the tomb, all His people shared His victory (Eph. 2:5, 6). When He ascended on high, they ascended too. Let all Christian readers pray earnestly that God may be pleased to reveal to them the meaning, blessedness and fullness of those words, "In Christ." (A. W. Pink) **Does Christ have a pure claim on our lives that not only cannot be ignored, but also is a claim we all must earnestly reckon with?**

Eph. 1:3-14 Eph. 3:16-19 Col. 2:11-13 Col. 3:1-4, 15-17

Compare Melchizedek's ministry with that of Christ. What does his name mean?

Gen. 14:18-23 Ps. 110:1-7

Hebrews 7:23-28

Our Great High Priest holds His office by a better tenure. "There have been many . . . priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood" (Hebrews 7:23-24). With every human generation there was a new family of official priests. Some, like Aaron, were true to God. Some, like the sons of Eli, were sinful men. But our High Priest remains unchanged through the eternal years. He, on whose bosom John leaned, is just as near to us. He, whom your father and mother trusted, is still as real to you. He, who is your Friend today, will be your Friend forever. When the sun has ceased to glow and the heavens have passed away He will remain your everlasting Friend.

Our Great High Priest bears a higher and holier character than the priests of Aaron's line. "Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens" (7:26). He is absolutely

spotless, while they were sinful men. He has no guilt to atone for, while they had to offer first for their own sins. While so perfectly human that He can fully represent us, He is so perfectly sinless that all His merits become available for our unrighteousness and sin. Not only does His death expiate our guilt, but the obedience of His perfect life is credited to our account and we become invested with His merits and righteousness and stand in the same place as if we, like Him, had kept God's holy law. At the same time His greatness adds immeasurable worth to His goodness, for He is made higher than the heavens.

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Those for whom Christ died are not taken to Heaven the moment they believe, but are still left here in the enemy's country; nor are they yet glorified; instead, the "flesh," with all its defiling influences, is still left within them. Therefore do they stand in urgent need of the priestly care of Christ, that, in answer to His intercession, God might send them His Spirit, grant them renewed supplies of grace, deliver them from their foes, keep them in communication with the Father, answer the accusations of Satan, preserve them unto the end of their earthly course, and, then receive them unto Himself and "present them faultless before the presence of His glory" (Jude 24). (A. W. Pink) **Why does God allow us to remain in enemy territory following our receiving Christ as Savior and Lord?**

Jas. 1:1-6 1 Pet. 1:5-7 1 Pet. 4:1-8, 12-14

Hebrews 8:1-13

"This chapter is a continuation of the argument which has been prosecuted in the previous chapters respecting the priesthood of Christ. The apostle had demonstrated that He was to be a priest, and that he was to be, not of the Levitical order, but of the order of Melchizedek. As a consequence, he had proved that this involved a change of the law, appointing the priesthood, and that in respect to permanency and happy moral influence, the priesthood of Christ far surpassed the Jewish. This thought he pursues in the chapter, and shows particularly that it involved a change in the nature of the covenant between God and His people. In the prosecution of this, he (1) states the sum or principal point of the whole matter under discussion—that the priesthood of Christ was real and permanent, while that of the Hebrew economy was typical, and was destined in its own nature to be temporary: vv. 1-3. (2) There was a fitness and propriety of His being removed to heaven to perform the functions of His office there; since if He had remained on earth, He could not have officiated as priest, that duty being by the law of Moses entrusted to others pertaining to another tribe: vv. 4, 5. (3) Christ had obtained a more exalted ministry than the Jewish priests held, because He was the Mediator in a better covenant—a covenant that related rather to the heart than to external observances: vv. 6-13" (Albert Barnes).

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

There were two great defects in that old covenant, which arose out of the weakness of poor human nature; in the first place, it gave no power, no moral dynamics, to enable the human covenanters to do what they promised; and secondly, it could not provide for the effectual putting away of those sins which arose from their failure to carry into effect their covenanted vows (Heb. 9:9).

(The Way Into The Holiest, F. B. Meyer)

Our Great High Priest is the mediator of a better covenant. This part of his argument commences at chapter 8:6-13 and is repeated in chapter 10:15-16, so important does he deem it. It draws a striking contrast between the message of the old covenant and the new. Four particulars are specially emphasized. The first is the promise of sanctification. "I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts" (8:10). God does not demand of us external obedience merely, but He puts in us the nature, the principle, and disposition to obey. He makes His law the law of our being, and we as naturally follow it as a material body falls to the ground by the law of gravitation, or, as an acorn develops into an oak because the law of the oak is in the heart of the acorn. So He puts His will into our heart as the new constitution and impulse of our nature, and it becomes second nature for us to love it, to will it and to do it.

The second promise of the covenant is His guarantee to give us Himself first, and then to make us His people. "I will be their God," he says, "and they will be my people" (8:10). He does not condition His relationship upon ours, but ours upon His. He takes the initiative and gives Himself to us, and in consequence we give ourselves to Him.

The third promise is His fellowship, intimacy and the personal revelation of His will to us. "No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest" (8:11). He reveals Himself by the Holy Spirit to the simplest child, the most illiterate mind, and to the most humble saint, so that we are not dependent on earthly priesthoods and secondary channels for our knowledge of His will, but we know Him for ourselves as our Father, our Teacher and our Friend.

And finally, the promise of full forgiveness, constant friendship and deliverance from even the consciousness of sin is added: "I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (8:12).

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Explain why our life today should be far superior to that of the Israelites in the Old Testament in relation to a holy walk and a cleansed conscience and mind.

John 16:7, 8 Gal. 3:2, 3 Gal. 5:18-25 Col. 2:9, 10 Col. 3:1-3, 12-17

Why was it necessary for Christ to leave the earth and ascend to heaven?

John 14:16-26 John 16:7, 8, 13-16 Gal. 5:16-18, 22, 23 Heb. 9:24

Hebrews 9:1-27

Our Great High Priest brings a better offering and sacrifice. This great truth occupies a large part of the ninth and 10th chapters (9:12-14; 10:1-14). The sacrifices of Aaron's office were dumb and soulless brutes. The sacrifice of our Great High Priest is His own precious life. The sacrifices were involuntary. They were dragged as victims to the altar. His was voluntary. "Here I am," was His glad cry, as He plunged from the heights of heaven to give Himself to save ruined man. His heart was in it. His love was in it. His will was in it. "By that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (10:10). Their sacrifices had no personal merits. His was the life of the holiest Being in the universe, who had no sins of His own to atone for and whose merits are all availing for others. It was the life also of the greatest and noblest Being in the universe and it represents the infinite value which suffices to make atonement even for the sins of the whole world. "The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (9:13-14).

And finally His sacrifice was once for all completed. Theirs were constantly renewed because they never were effectual except as figures of His greater sacrifice which was to come. "But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself " (9:26). It is final and complete and now we are going to enter into all the fullness of its glorious fruition.

Finally, the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice is greater than that of the ancient priesthood. "(For the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God" (7:19). "Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy" (10:14). Their sacrifices could not take away from the conscience the sense of sin, but His sacrifice is able to "cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (9:14; also see 10:2). Their ministrations brought only temporary blessing and needed to be constantly repeated; His priesthood brings us the promise of eternal inheritance and settles every question forever (9:15). There is no limit to the blessings of His priesthood, but "he is able to save completely those who come to God through him" (7:25). What this uttermost salvation means none of us has fully fathomed. It reaches down to the lowest depths of unworthiness, helplessness and misery. It reaches out to the widest range of sinful men and the farthest circle of human experience and spiritual need. It reaches on to the remotest age of eternity, and it will not have been fully interpreted until the Millennium shall have ended and the ages of glory begun to roll. It reaches to our temporal affairs, to our physical needs, to the outermost extremity of our being, and the innermost need of our heart and life. It is an infinite, everlasting, complete salvation of spirit, soul and body for all time and all eternity. Blessed be His holy name!

Such then is an imperfect picture of the work of our Great High Priest. Saved by His death, how much more are we saved by His life! Not only did He plunge for us to the depths of death and Hades, but He has thrown His glorified life across the gulf that separated us from God and heaven.

An incident in the early life of the late Louis Agassiz, the distinguished naturalist, has been published. When he was a little boy in Switzerland, his mother once sent him with a younger brother across a frozen lake to carry some message to his father on the other side of the lake. After they had started she observed that in the middle of the lake was a great crack in the ice, over which Louis might be able to leap, but which she was quite sure the little brother could never pass, and she tried in vain to call them back, but the wind was unfavorable and she could not make them hear. All she could do was to pray and watch. At length the little fellows came to the crack, and Louis took a long look at it and seemed to be measuring the distance and the ability of his little brother to get over. Then after giving some careful instructions he threw himself across the gulf on his face, forming a living bridge over which his little brother safely passed, and then he gathered himself up and leaped across.

There is One who has for us become the living Ladder that leads from earth to heaven, the living Bridge that spans the great abyss, the Way that carries us through every dark and strange and impossible place. He has saved us by His life. Let us take His uttermost salvation and let us go forth to carry it to represent Him to the world, which so sorely needs Him, each of us in turn a living bridge over which our helpless brothers may pass to Him.

Our Great High Priest ministers in a better sanctuary. Aaron's place of service was the tabernacle in the wilderness, but "Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence" (9:24). That ancient tabernacle was shifted day by day, and after awhile it perished and

passed away. But the heavenly tabernacle is a greater and more perfect tabernacle, "not man-made" (9:11), "eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1, KJV). Not only so, but when He brings us near, He Himself becomes to each of us "a little sanctuary," and the heart of the believer becomes a holy place where God meets him as of old He met the people, and we understand the meaning of such mighty words as these: "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91:1). "Remain in me, and I will remain in you" (John 15:4). "I will put my dwelling place among you, I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people" (Leviticus 26:11-12). In our very heart of hearts we may still come to the altar of sacrifice, the laver of cleansing, the golden lamps with their perfect light, the Living Bread, the sweet incense, nay, even the innermost chamber of the personal presence of God within the veil.

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What did the Mercy Seat (Heb. 9:5) represent in the Holy of Holies? And what does it typify, or point to, in the New Testament?

Ex. 25:17 Ex. 37:6 Lev. 16:13-16 Rom. 3:25 Heb. 9:11-12 Heb. 10:19-22

Why was the Mosaic Covenant of the Law given to the people if they were provided no power in which to carry it out?

Isa. 51:4, 5 Matt. 22:36-40 John 1:17 Rom. 2:1-4 Rom. 2:28-29 Rom. 3:1-28 Rom. 4:14-16 Rom. 5:18-21
Rom. 8:2-4 Gal. 2:19 Gal. 4:4 Gal. 5:14 Jas. 1:25 Jas. 2:8

"Purge your conscience from dead works." This is one of the effects produced by Christ's sacrifice, an effect which the legal ordinances were incapable of securing. Because Christ's sacrifice has expiated our sins, when the Spirit applies its virtues to the heart, that is, when He gives faith to appropriate them, our sense of guilt is removed, peace is communicated, and we are enabled to approach God not only without dread, but as joyous worshippers. The "conscience" is here specially singled out (cf. 10:22 for the larger meaning) because it is the proper seat of the *guilt* of sin, charging it on the soul, and hindering an approach unto God. (A. W. Pink) **Since by doing "works" no one is saved, for salvation is a free gift of God received by faith and faith alone, what is meant by "dead works" (Heb. 9:14) and how do they hinder the conscience?**

Gal. 5:19-21 Eph. 2:8-10 Eph. 4:25-32 Col. 3:5-10

What does it mean in Hebrews 9:24 when it says "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands"?

Hebrews 9:28

"Without (imputed) sin, unto salvation." Hereby Christ's second advent is contrasted from His first. When he appeared the first time, it was *with* "sin" upon Him (John 1:29) as the Surety of sinners. Therefore was He the Man of sorrows, and afflicted from His youth up (Ps. 88:15). But He will reappear in a very different state: as the Conqueror of sin and Satan, the Savior of His people, the King of kings and Lord of lords. At His return, the efficacy of His once-for-all offering will be openly manifested. The question of His peoples' sins having been finally settled at the cross, He will then *glorify* His redeemed. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20, 21).

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

What do we know about Christ's return, and for whom will He return?

1 Cor. 15:51-57 1 Thes. 4:13-18

Hebrews 10:1-3

Though the Levitical offerings failed to procure an eternal redemption, yet were they by no means useless and without value. First of all, they served to keep in the minds of Israel the fact that God is ineffably holy and will not tolerate evil. They were constantly reminded that the wages of sin is death. They were taught thereby that a constant *acknowledgement* of their sins was imperative if communion with the Lord was to be maintained. In the second place, by means of these types and shadows God was pointing out to them the direction from which true salvation must come, namely, in a sinless Victim enduring in their stead the righteous penalty which their sins called for. Thereby God instructed them to look forward in faith to the time when the Redeemer should appear, and the great Sacrifice be offered for the sins of His people. Third, there was an efficacy in the O. T. sacrifices to remove temporal judgment, to give

ceremonial ablution, and to maintain external fellowship with Jehovah. They who despised the sacrifices were “cut off” or excommunicated; but those who offered them maintained their place in the congregation of the Lord.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

The Israelites had constant and perfect guidance from God on how to worship Him through the writings of the Pentateuch (Torah) written by Moses, and through the prophets. And yet the Law and these instructions did not prevent Israel from gross sin and rebellion. **Address why God’s final plan of the New Testament, including His Son and the Holy Spirit, were still needed in order for them to come back into fellowship with God and walk in obedience to Him.**

Rom. 10:4-10 Gal. 2:16, 19-21 Gal. 3:10-14, 19, 22-25 Gal. 4:3-7 Gal. 5:14, 18

Hebrews 10:4

Had God so pleased, He *could* have accepted the blood of beasts as a full and final atonement for our sins. The *only* reason why He did not was because He had decreed that *Christ* should make atonement. He determined in Himself that if He had satisfaction, it should be a full and perfect one. *Everything* must be resolved into and traced up to the *sovereign* pleasure of Him who “worketh *all* things after the counsel of His *own will*” (Eph. 1:11). It is in the light of what has just been said that we must interpret Heb. 10:4: it was “not possible” because of the eternal purpose of the Triune Jehovah. God would have satisfaction to the full, or none at all. This the Son knew, and to it He fully consented.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

What was God’s purpose in setting up the system of animal sacrifice for the sins of the people as they journeyed toward Canaan?

Lev. 16:1-3, 5-10 Lev. 17:1-11 Lev. 23 (all)

Hebrews 10:5-14

If the Levitical offerings, which were of divine appointment, were unable to really meet either the full requirements of God or the deepest need of sinners, how much less can the contrivances of man do so! How vain are the Romish inventions of confession, absolution, indulgencies, masses, penances, purgatory, and the like tom-fooleries! Equally vain are the austerities of some Protestants: the signing of a temperance pledge, giving up of tobacco, and other reformations, with tears, fastings and religious performances designed to make peace with God.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Why did God have no pleasure in sacrifices and offerings?

What was the focus of our Great High Priest in order to fully satisfy the requirements of God? And in order to do so, what did He have to offer?

John 7:17 John 17:19 Rom. 8:3, 4 2 Cor. 5:21 Heb. 9:12, 27, 28
1 Pet. 2:24 1 Pet. 3:18 1 Pet. 4:1, 2

Hebrews 10:15-18

“I will put My laws into their hearts.” This is in contrast from those who were under the old, or Sinaitic covenant. There the “ten words” were engraven upon tables of stone, not only to intimate thereby their fixed and permanent authority, but also figure forth the *hardness* of the hearts of the unregenerate people to whom they were given. But under the new covenant—that is, the *administration* of the everlasting covenant and the *application* of its grace to God’s elect in this Gospel dispensation—God gives efficacy to His holy law in the souls of His people. First, by subduing and largely removing the enmity of the natural heart against Him and His law, which subduing is figuratively spoken of as a circumcising of the heart (Deut. 30:6) and a “taking away the stony heart” (Ezek. 36:26). Second by implanting the principle of obedience to His law, which is figuratively referred to as the giving of “an heart of flesh” and the “writing of His laws upon the heart.”

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Jeremiah 31:31-34 speaks of a new covenant that God will work in us to produce new desires to do His will following Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice. **What changed a saved man’s desires after the new covenant?**

Jer. 31:31-34 Jer. 32:40 Ezek. 37:26, 27 Heb. 8:8-13

Hebrews 10:19-22

Under Judaism as such, the Israelites were rigidly excluded from drawing nigh unto Jehovah; His dwelling place was sealed against them. Nay, even the Levites, privileged as they were to minister in the tabernacle, were barred from the Holy of Holies. But now the right has been accorded unto all who partake of the blessings of the New Covenant, to enjoy free access unto God, to draw near unto His throne as supplicants, to enter His temple as worshippers, to sit at His table as happy children.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Although the Word makes it very plain that true believers have the glorious privilege under the New Covenant to actually enter into the Holy of Holies; i.e., into the presence of God Himself, yet in today's world it is difficult to recognize many fully enjoying this blessing. **Why? How should we make use of it?**

Deut. 6:5 Hos. 2:19, 20 Matt. 25:1-13 Eph. 5:15-17

Hebrews 10:23-25

Distance begets coldness and indifference. When we forsake the assembly of our fellow-Christians we are apt to wrap ourselves in the chill mantle of indifference. But when we see others in need, and help them; when we are willing to succor and save; when we discover that there is something attractive in the least lovable; when we feel the glowing sympathy of others—our own love grows by the demands made on it, and by the opportunities of manifestation.

(The Way Into The Holiest, F. B. Meyer)

What are ways in which we can provoke one another unto love and good works?

Gal. 5:1, 4, 16-18, 22-26 Gal. 6:1-3 Eph. 5:18-21

Hebrews 10:26-39

The Lord has graciously made forgiveness possible for the weaknesses of His children, their mistakes and errors, for their sins of ignorance, sins of omission and defilement. But for the Israelite who deliberately and presumptuously committed sin against the plain revelation of the Lord and continued therein, there was no offering provided. Nowhere in the law was "willful" sin left unpunished. A few Scriptures will make this clear.

But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die (Ex. 21:14).

Notice carefully the wording of this sin. It is a presumptuous sin, committed willfully and deliberately with full knowledge and warning of its consequences, and God says, "Take him from mine altar." The sacrifice on the altar cannot prevent such an one from paying the penalty. The same penalty applied to other presumptuous sins which had plainly been forbidden, such as smiting one's father or mother, theft, adultery, etc.

This is the law which the writer of Hebrews refers to when he says:

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses (Heb. 10:28).

And then he applies this to the matter of sinning willfully—not under the law but under grace—and continues:

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? (Heb. 10:29).

Again the all-important question is, Who are these mentioned as treading underfoot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing and having done despite to the Spirit of grace? It is an important question, for either they were unsaved or saved. It must be one or the other. They are said to be "sanctified with the blood of Christ." Can it be said by any stretch of the imagination that an unconverted sinner has been sanctified by the blood of Christ? But there is more, for verse thirty continues:

For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:30, 31).

There is no escaping the words, "The Lord shall judge his people." This is a judgment for willful, deliberate, continued disobedience until God must step in, according to His word and purpose that He will judge *His people*.

But the final argument is in the closing verse of this chapter. Notice carefully the descriptive words. In warning the believer against this danger of becoming a castaway, the writer gives this wise counsel:

But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used (Heb. 10:32, 33).

Here we have the evidence of a true work of grace, the fruits of a real salvation. They had been illuminated; they suffered for their testimony, and even became a gazingstock by reproaches. But there is much more.

For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance (Heb. 10:34).

Is this a description of an unconverted person? Think of it. These folks were not only saved, but were laden with fruit, as the evidence of it. They had compassion on the writer in his bonds, took *joyfully* the spoiling of their goods, and to crown it all, they had the *assurance of salvation*, for of them it is said:

Knowing...that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

But let us go on, and see the evidence mounting. Listen to this admonition:

Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward (Heb. 10:35).

Two words are of tremendous importance. They are *confidence* and *reward*. It does not read, "cast not away therefore your *salvation*." It is not a matter of losing salvation, but losing the *assurance*. And the danger is losing the *reward*. But the evidence mounts still more:

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise [reward] (Heb. 10:36).

The reward will be given at the judgment Seat of Christ, when Jesus comes. There the work of God's children will be judged. There faithfulness will be rewarded. The unrepentant disobedient will be dealt with and the castaways shall be saved so as by fire. One passage alone will determine this. Consider again the words of 1 Corinthians 3:12-15:

Now if any man build upon this foundation [that determines salvation] gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

It is in view of this Judgment Seat of Christ that the admonition in Hebrews ten is given. It is a reminder that a reckoning is coming.

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry (Heb. 10:37).

We are to evaluate everything in the light of Christ's coming. Then nothing else will count, and hence the closing warning:

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him (Heb. 10:38).

The warning is against drawing back, instead of pressing on for the crown. This is the impact of the opening warning:

...if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth... (Heb. 10:26a).

This is "drawing back." Now what is involved in drawing back? Does it mean such an one is lost? Or does it refer to the loss of rewards, and "suffering loss" at Jesus' coming? The answer is in the final verse. The writer, fearing that some might misinterpret the meaning of "drawing back," hastens to explain:

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul (Heb. 10:39).

Here is the final answer. Do not suppose that the believer can draw back unto perdition. He can draw back and invite the judgment of God in sickness, weakness and chastening and even commit the sin unto death, but God cannot go back on His promise, and so we are reminded that "we are not of them that draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Yes, it is possible to draw back, *but not unto perdition*.

Shall we then sin that grace may abound? Because we are saved by grace, can we then live as we please? Does the Gospel of the grace of God give us license to sin? Don't be deceived!

God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap (Gal. 6:7).

When a person receives Jesus Christ as Savior, the guilt of sin is removed forever, past, present and future. There is no condemnation for the believer. He has passed from death unto life (John 5:24). But it is possible to neglect this salvation (Heb. 2:3). He may come short of God's best for him (Heb. 4:1). Well may we be reminded, that just because our salvation is free and unearned, our responsibility to "work it out" is all the greater. There will be an accounting, and in the light of this clear revelation let us heed the warning of Colossians 3:23-25:

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;
Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.
But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.
(Studies in Hebrews, M.R. De Haan)

Who are those mentioned that have "trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29 NKJV)

Lev. 5:5,6 Heb. 10:30

What judgment could God inflict on those who sin willfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth?

Keep in mind the judgment brought upon the Israelites in the desert when they sinned—murmured against God, despised Moses' authority, lusted after the things of Egypt, set up golden calf to worship, etc.

Deut. 32:35, 36 Ezra 9:15 Ps. 19:13 Luke 12:5 Rom. 6:23 Rom. 8:13

Are we among those who go on to the saving of the soul? Here, as so often, the salvation of the soul is viewed as a process. True we are, in a sense, saved, when first we turn to the cross, and trust the Crucified. But it is only as we keep in the current that streams from the cross, only as we remain in abiding fellowship with the Savior, only as we submit ourselves habitually to the gracious influences of the Divine Spirit, that salvation pervades and heals our whole being. Then the soul may be said to be *gained* (R.V., *marg.*), i.e., restored to its original type as conceived in the mind of God, before He built the dust of the earth into man, and breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul.

(The Way Into The Holiest, F. B. Meyer)

Introduction to Hebrews 11

The eleventh chapter of Hebrews has been called the "faith" chapter of the Bible, recording for us a long register of heroes of the Old Testament who were victorious and who,

. . . through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens (Heb. 11:33, 34).

It is more than a chapter on faith, for it records the "victories" of faith. Following as it does the tenth chapter of Hebrews, it is of tremendous significance. The theme of Hebrews must not be lost sight of. It is a solemn warning against coming short of victory, an appeal to believers not to neglect their so great salvation, but to press on in spite of all difficulties. The danger of letting our opportunities of grace slip (2:1), of coming short of victory (4:1), of remaining spiritual babes (5:12) is constantly held before us, and the terrible consequences of disobedience are stated again and again. A

Christian can go so far in refusing the correction of the Lord that finally he comes to a place of "hardening," from where it is impossible to bring him again to repentance. Willful sinning, deliberate, continued disobedience and failure to judge known sin in our lives may result in our "falling away." This results in God's judgment with only one purpose in mind, that of correction, and never of damnation. If it were a matter of salvation, God would not seek to correct them by dealing so severely with them, for the Lord does not chasten the sinner. As we shall see in chapter twelve, "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

The implications are such that many might reply, If God deals so with His children, who then can gain the victory? Is there anyone who can attain and receive the commendation of the Lord? These questions are answered in chapter eleven. Yes, indeed, victory is possible if we will but heed the warning, and hold fast the "beginning of our confidence firm unto the end." Hebrews eleven gives a register of some examples to encourage us. Among others he names Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sara, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Jephthae, David, Samuel and the prophets. These all were men and women of like passion as we are, and yet they gained the victory.

None of these were perfect or devoid of temptation. With far less light than we have today, they pressed on in spite of temporary defeats, frequent stumbling and setbacks, and unspeakable oppositions. But victory implies a battle, for there can be no victory where there is no fighting. Salvation is free, but victory means sacrifice; to win the race means discipline.

(Studies in Hebrews, M.R. De Haan)

Hebrews 11:1, 2

Having unfolded the first two themes of the epistle, Christ our Apostle and Christ our Great High Priest, the writer now proceeds to the third— Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Christ our Apostle comes from God to us. Christ our Great High Priest goes from us to God. Christ the Author and Finisher of our faith brings us with Him to God in actual touch and fellowship. Faith is the point of contact, the organ of the spiritual life, the sixth sense by which we come into connection with the unseen spiritual realm all around us. The last portion of the epistle is devoted to a discussion of the nature and effects of faith, and a full unfolding of its influence in the lives of all the long array of holy witnesses who fill the pages of sacred story.

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Faith gives substance to the testimony of God. Faith rests on His promises, making them a present reality in our life. **How do we come to trust and believe that these promises are true?**

John 13:13 Acts 9:1-6 Acts 10:36 Rom. 4:13-25 Rom. 10:8-10, 17 1 Cor. 12:2, 3 Phil. 2:9-11

Hebrews 11:3

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (v. 3). There is a much closer connection between this verse and the two preceding ones than most of the commentators have perceived. The apostle is still setting forth the importance and excellency of faith: here he affirms that through it its favored possessors are enabled to apprehend things which are high above the reach of human reason. The origin of the universe presents a problem which neither science nor philosophy can solve, as is evident from their conflicting and ridiculous attempts; but that difficulty vanishes entirely before *faith*.

"Through faith we *understand*." Faith is the vehicle or medium of spiritual perception: "if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God" (John 11:40); "which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe *and know* the truth" (1 Tim. 4:3). Faith is not a *blind* reliance on the Word of God, but an intelligent persuasion of its veracity, wisdom, beauty. So far from Christians being the credulous fools the world deems them, they are the wisest of earth's inhabitants

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Romans 14:23b simply states "whatsoever is not from faith is sin." **Would you say that trusting in God's word 100% gives us the ability of fighting off Satan's daily attacks? What are the consequences if we don't trust completely in His word?**

John 16:33 2 Tim. 2:1-4, 10-13 Jas. 4:7, 8 1 Pet. 5:8, 9 1 John 5:4, 5

Hebrews 11:4a

The first thing about Abel's faith was that it recognized his sin. He came as a guilty sinner needing atonement, and bringing a sacrifice. Cain came as a gentleman to exchange compliments with God and present some fruits and flowers as a visitor on equal terms. But God would have nothing to do with him. Faith always takes the sinner's place and then claims the sinner's Savior.

The next thing about Abel's faith was that it brought a bloody sacrifice as the type of the dying Lamb of God. This must always be faith's first acceptable act, to present the blood of Christ as the settlement for our sin and the ground of our acceptance. It was for the sake of this that Abel was accepted, God testifying not of him but of his gifts. God did not look at Abel, but He looked at the lamb, and he, like us, was "accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6, KJV).

The third thing that happened to Abel was his justification. He was declared righteous. He was recognized as standing in exactly the same relation to God as his great Sacrifice and Representative. And so God pronounces us righteous and treats us as if we were as righteous as His Son and had obeyed every commandment of the law even as He.

And finally Abel received all this by faith. He did not feel it or wait to feel it, but he claimed it simply because it was God's prescribed way. He counted upon it. He took his stand upon it and God made it good to him. And so he was saved in exactly the same way as every poor sinner is today, by coming in simple faith as a sinner, claiming the promise, putting his weight upon it, and going out to act as if it were true for him. There is no finer illustration of the faith that saves than the simple testimony of Hedley Vicars the moment he accepted the blood of Christ to cleanse him from all sin and went forth saying: "If this be true for me I act from this moment as a man who has been cleansed from all sin in the blood of Christ."

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Was Cain given a second chance to bring the right offering? Are people today given a second chance?

Hebrews 11:4b

"And by it he being dead yet speaketh." The first and most obvious signification of these words is that, by his faith's obedience, as recorded in Gen. 4 and Heb. 11, Abel preaches to us a most important sermon. His worship and the fruits thereof are registered in the everlasting records of Holy Scripture, and thereby he speaketh as evidently as though we heard him audibly. There comes to us a voice from the far distant past, from the other side of the flood, saying, "Fallen man can only approach unto God through the death of an innocent Substitute: yet none save God's elect will ever feel their need of such, set aside their own inclinations, bow to God's revealed will, and submit to His appointment; but they who do so, obtain witness that they are 'righteous' (cf. Matt. 23:38), and receive Divine assurance that they are accepted in the Beloved and that their obedience (imperfect in itself, yet proceeding from a heart which desires and seeks to *fully* please Him) is approved for His sake."

"And by it he being dead yet speaketh." And *how* did he die? By the murderous hand of a religious hypocrite who hated him. Then began that which the apostle affirms still to continue: "he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit" (Gal. 4:29). Here was the first public and visible display of that enmity between the (mystical) seed of the woman and the (mystical) seed of the Serpent. Abel's death was therefore also a pledge and representation of the death of Christ Himself—murdered by the religious world. Those whom God approves must expect to be disproved of men, more particularly by those professing to be Christian. But the time is coming when the present situation shall be reversed. In Gen. 4:10 God said to Cain "the voice of thy brother's blood *crieth* unto Me from the ground." Abel's own blood "speaketh," crying to God for vengeance.

"And by it he being dead yet speaketh." Though ruthlessly slain by his brother, the soul of Abel exists in a separate state, alive, conscious, and vocal. He is among that company of whom the apostle said, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held, and they *cried* with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:9, 10). Thus, Abel is not only a type of the persecution and suffering of the godly, but gives a pledge of the certain vengeance which God will take in due time upon their oppressors. God shall yet avenge His own elect (those in heaven as well as those on earth) who cry unto Him day and night for Him *to* avenge them (Luke 18:7, 8). Let us then seek grace to possess our souls in patience, knowing that ere long God will reward the righteous and punish the wicked.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Most everyone who truly loves the Lord has been wounded or struck down by an opposition who delight in taking a vicious kind of joy in their apparent "victory" which also *appears* to wound God and His cause. **What can a Christian do to anchor his soul when it looks as if Satan has won and God apparently is silent?**

Ps. 42:1-11 Ps. 37:1-5, 28, 39, 40 Ps. 108:12, 13 Ps. 109:1-5 Ps. 112:6-8

Hebrews 11:5

Having found Christ as a Savior we next want to walk with Him as our Sanctifier and very life. And so we find the second step of faith in Enoch's life. The first thing we see about him is his walk. He has begun, now he is going on. This takes in every department of our life, our inner experiences and our outward conduct. It is all to be by faith and under the influence of God.

Next we see Enoch's companion. We are not told so much about Enoch as we are about the One with whom he walked. It was not his holiness that was so marked, but that of his Friend. This is the New Testament conception of holiness: fellowship with Jesus, union with God, Christ in the heart, "Remain in me, and I will remain in you" (John 15:4). There is no simpler, deeper, higher definition of the life of faith unless it be the Pauline edition of that truth: "Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him" (Colossians 2:6). Sanctification is the Christ life; it is to know Him, to be with Him, to have Him in us, to look to Him every moment and to lean upon Him for everything, drawing our life moment by moment entirely from Him.

Next we are told that he pleased God. The will of God was the rule of his life. The divine acceptance was his constant aim and joy. His supreme purpose was his Master's example, his Master's Word. We can please God too. The best part of it is to want to please Him. A little child full of imperfection can have a perfect heart to please its mother, and even amid all our errors of judgment and stumbling steps our hearts can still turn to Him as the needle to the pole and say: "Lord ... you know that I love you" (John 21:16).

And finally we are told how Enoch pleased God and walked with God and had the testimony that God accepted and loved him. It was by faith. He just believed in the love of God. He walked with Him in confidence. He looked to Him as a little child. He leaned hard upon His presence and dwelt in the very love-life of his Lord. So let us by faith realize the Master's precious words: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love" (15:9).

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Watchman Nee wrote a book entitled, "*Sit, Walk and Stand*" which depicts the walk of a Christian from its weak beginning to its strong finish. **What do you think he meant by setting forth the need to sit before one is able to walk?**

Ps. 23:1-6 Ps. 37:3-7, 34 Isa. 40:28-31 Eph. 1:3, 7, 11 Jas. 1:2-4 1 Pet. 2:20

"Can two walk together, except they be *agreed*?" (Amos 3:3). The term "walk" signifies a voluntary act, a steady advance, a progress in spiritual things. To "walk with God" imports a life surrendered to God, a life controlled by God, a life lived for God.

(Exposition of Hebrews , A. W. Pink)

Hebrews 11:6

Reckon on God's faithfulness. Look not at the winds and waves, but at His character and will. Get alone with Him, steeping your heart and mind in His precious and exceeding great promises. Be obedient to the utmost limit of your light. Walk in the Spirit, one of whose fruits is faith.

(The Way Into The Holiest, F. B. Meyer)

When in the midst of serious trial and difficulty, most believers have experienced their coming to the place of surrender, saying, "Though I don't understand, and there is no light on my problem, I *choose* to trust God and stand on His promises." Then, without any clear explanation, peace envelops that person, and though he or she sees no visible answer, the individual is able to go on in a quiet expectation of that answer coming from God. **What has happened, either in the natural, or spiritual realm, to bring this about?**

Job 19:25, 26 Job 23:10 Ps. 42:5, 11 Ps. 43:5 Ps. 46:10, 11

Hebrews 11:7

"By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith" (Hebrews 11:7). The difference between Noah and the people of his age is this, that they were living for the present world, building their houses, investing their money, forming their attachments as though the existing order of things was to go on forever, while Noah believed that his present age was condemned and soon to pass away, and all his plans and works had reference to the age beyond on the other side of the flood. They were "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" (Matthew 24:38), but Noah was building that house of refuge that was to bear him across to his true inheritance on the shores of the new world which faith continually saw before. Thus Noah's was a separated life and it was separated by his belief in the great fact which God

told him respecting the destruction of the world by the flood and the new age that was to follow. So, beloved, our lives must be separated from this present age.

What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form [that is, the stage show which is merely being acted for an hour] is passing away. (1 Corinthians 7:29-31)

The only power that can lift us into this and keep us there is the blessed hope of Christ's coming believed and realized. It will make the next age so real that the present age will lose its power of attraction and we shall live under the "power of the age to come." It is one thing to hold the theory of the Lord's coming; it is another to believe and realize it and constantly live under its power. This can only be effected through a realizing faith, a faith that condemns the world as unworthy of our affection and confidence, and gives us our inheritance in the age to come.

When the old city of Rome was abandoned as the capital of the great Roman Empire, and Constantinople was selected as the new site, then every man who was in on the secret would doubtless hasten to exchange his old possessions in the ancient city of the Caesars, for a little strip of barren sand on the shores of the Bosphorus, for he knew that in a little while the value of the latter would infinitely surpass and supersede the former. And so if we are truly believing in the Lord's return we will be turning all things into the currency of the coming age and investing our lives above. Are we doing so, and have we the faith that separates us from this present evil age and leads us like them to live as strangers and pilgrims and "looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10)?

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Moved with godly fear—saving of his house—yet condemned the world— what an all-encompassing faith moved Noah! His obedience to the Lord for 120 years brought completed salvation to those who believed and brought complete judgment to those who refused God's loving offer. **Speak to this as it moves upon your heart.**

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." Ah, here is the key to our verse, hung right upon the very door of it. Like every other one of God's elect, Noah was saved by grace through faith; and yet not by a faith that was inactive—Eph. 2:10 follows v. 9! *Faith* was the spring of all his works; a faith which was far more than an intellectual assent, one which was a supernatural principle that sovereign grace had wrought in him. God had determined to send a flood and destroy the wicked world, but ere doing so, He acquainted Noah with His purpose. He has done the same with us; see Rom. 1:18. That Divine warning was the ground of Noah's faith. He argued not, nor reasoned about its incredibility; instead, he believed God. The *threatening*, as well as the promise of God, is the object of faith; the justice of God is to be eyed, as well as His mercy!

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Hebrews 11:8-10

"By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going" (11:8). In a sense Abraham combines in his own life all the other qualities already represented. He is the overshadowing figure of ancient faith and holy character, the father of all who believe, and, as someone has said, the Christopher Columbus who first stepped out into the new realms of the spiritual world and discovered new continents of faith and blessing. The first thing about Abraham's faith is that he obeyed God. Here we see faith not trying to get God to do something for us, but faith doing something to please God. If you stop and think you may find that the reason you do not get more from God is because God has been waiting a good while to get something from you. Have you learned the obedience of faith? Have you responded to the call of Abraham's God? Let us take in some of the meaning of this great act of faith. Modern research has taught us that Ur of the Chaldees, where Abraham dwelt, was no semi-barbarous haunt, but a cultivated, wealthy and important city in ancient Chaldea. In fact, it was a great university town, and to this day there are remains to attest its importance and its culture. Here Abraham had dwelt in the midst of every earthly attraction. Probably he had a position of influence, for everything about his subsequent history attests the dignity of the Arab chief, the man of weight and culture. But he was called in a moment to part from all this and go out into a dismal desert across more than 400 miles of barren sands, without even knowing the land to which he was to go, or one step of the way. All he knew was that God had said: "I will be with you." But that was all he asked to know, for the next thing about Abraham's faith that we should note is the fact that he believed God. It was not merely the promise of God, the attraction God held out to him to recompense him for his obedience, but it was God Himself he believed. To him God was a personal reality, and it was enough for him to have God's Word, God's presence, God's guiding hand. Then when he trusted God it was easy to trust His Word. Back of true faith there is more than a truth, more

than a promise, more than a creed. There must also be the living personality and the conscious presence of God Himself. This was what satisfied Abraham's faith and made it easy for him to go out, not knowing where he was going, so long as he was going out with God. This is faith. Beloved, is it your faith?

But again, Abraham had next to learn to believe God's Word, for the promise grew more definite and explicit, and soon it became the promise of a country and the promise of a child. But even then it was a promise that, humanly speaking, seemed impossible. The promised child was to be born in his old age contrary to nature, and yet Abraham believed and waited even when men laughed him to scorn, and his faith certainly seemed the wildest fanaticism. He even dared to assume the new name of Abraham, "the father of a multitude," when it would only make him the jeer of all his friends. But still he trusted God and waited for the fulfillment of His Word, and in due time the promise was fulfilled. But once again his faith had to be tested in the severest way, and the very thing that God had given him to be surrendered and given back, although it seemed that it was necessary for the very honor of God Himself that it should be retained. Isaac, through whom the promised seed was to come, had to be laid on the sacrificial altar and God's very own Word appears to become a contradiction. But still he wavered not until every test was confirmed and Abraham stood before the ages the supreme example of faith in God and the father of all that believe.

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

"From God's training up Abraham in a course of difficulties, we see it is no easy matter to go to Heaven; there is a great deal of ado to unsettle a believer from the world, and there is a great deal of ado to fix the heart in the expectation of Heaven. First, there must be self-denial in coming out of the world, and divorcing ourselves from our bosom sins and dearest interests; and then there must be patience shown in waiting for God's mercy to eternal life, waiting His leisure as well as performing His will. Here is the time of our exercise, and we must expect it, since the father of the faithful was thus trained up ere he could inherit the promises." —Manton

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

God longed for a people with whom He could fellowship and commune, and the only way these would be gained would only be through faith and obedience. **Why do you personally believe God chose Abraham (Abram at that time) from a godless culture to become the Father of the nation of Israel?**

Matt. 7:14 Luke 9:23, 62 Rom. 4:1-3, 13-25 Rom. 8:29-30 1 Cor. 3:10 Col. 3:1, 2 2 Pet. 2:20

Hebrews 11:11-12

Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age" (Hebrews 11:11, KJV). There is something very emphatic in the language here. The pronoun "herself" seems to imply that Sarah was the very last who might have been expected to believe, for indeed she had begun by laughing to scorn the promise of the seed. But the time came when even Sarah herself could not only believe, but could take into her body a supernatural power that, like Mary, in later times gave her a glorious part in the lineage of the coming Savior. We are not told of the struggle through which she passed until at last she came to believe the word which once she had laughed to scorn, but we know that God had transformed her doubts into supernatural trust and given through her to the ages the first object lesson of that faith that can take the life of God into our mortal frame and renew our youth like the eagle's. This is the lesson which Samson's life afterwards taught and which the great apostle expresses when he says, "so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body" (2 Corinthians 4:11). This is divine healing in its truest lesson, the very life of God Himself lifting us above the human and anticipating even here the coming resurrection."

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

In the book of Genesis, when Sarah overheard the promise concerning her conceiving a child at her old age, she laughed (Gen. 18:13). Here in Hebrews her laughing is not mentioned—only her regard of His faithfulness and His promise. **Why is this?**

Ps. 107:1, 2 Isa. 51:11 1 John 1:9 1 John 3:2 1 John 5:4

Hebrews 11:13-16

The figure of the "stranger" applied to the child of God here on earth, is very pertinent and full. The analogies between one who is in a foreign country and the Christian in this world, are marked and numerous. In a strange land one is not appreciated for his birth, but is avoided: John 15:19. The habits, ways, language are strange to him: 1 Pet. 4:4. He has to be content with a stranger's fare: 1 Tim. 6:8. He needs to be careful not to give offense to the government: Col.

4:5. He has to continually inquire his way: Psa. 5:8. Unless he conforms to the ways of that foreign country, he is easily identified: Matt. 26:73. He is often assailed with home-sickness, for his heart is not where his body is: Phil. 1:23.

The figure of the "pilgrim" as it applies to the Christian is equally suggestive. Moving on from place to place, he never feels at home. He finds himself very much alone, for he meets with few who are traveling his way. Those he does encounter afford him very little encouragement, for they think him odd. He is very grateful for any kindness shown him; sensible of his dependence on Providence, he is thankful whenever God grants him favor in the eyes of the wicked. He carries nothing with him but what he deems useful for his journey; all superfluities are regarded as incumbrances. He tarries not to gaze upon the various vanities around him. He never thinks of turning back because of the difficulties of the way; he has a definite goal in view, and toward it he steadily presses.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

What responsibilities do we have toward those who are of the world, although we are strangers and pilgrims here?

Prov. 27:1 John 15:19 Phil. 1:21-23 Phil. 4:11 Col. 4:5 1 Tim. 6:6-8 Heb. 12:1 1 Pet. 2:11
1 Pet. 4:4

Hebrews 11:17-19

Here too we see exhibited another of faith's attributes, namely, the committal of events unto God. Carnal reason is unable to rest until a solution is in sight, until it can see a way out of its difficulties. But faith spreads the need before God, rolls the burden upon Him, and calmly leaves the solution to Him. "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established" (Prov. 16:3); when this is truly done by faith we are eased of many tossings of mind and agitations of soul that would otherwise distress us. So here, Abraham committed the event unto God, reckoning on His power to raise Isaac again, though he should be killed. This is the very nature of spiritual faith; to refer our case unto Him, and wait calmly and expectantly for the promised deliverance, though we can neither perceive nor imagine the manner in which it shall be brought about. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He *shall* bring it to pass" (Ps. 37:5).

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

In each of the situations below, state what type of reasoning each used; carnal reasoning or faith?

King Saul being surrounded (hedged in) by the Philistines

1 Sam. 13:1-14

David's reaction to the threats of Goliath

1 Sam. 17:26, 32

Israel's reaction when being attacked by Assyria

2 Ki. 18:13-37 2 Ki. 19:1-10

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego's reaction when King Nebuchadnezzar was determined to kill them for not worshipping his image

Dan. 3:17,18

Hebrews 11:20

But now we must face a difficult question: Did Isaac deliberately put himself against the known counsel of God? Did he defiantly purpose to bestow upon Esau what he was assured the Lord had appointed for Jacob? "Whatever may be spoken in excuse of Isaac, it is certain he failed greatly in two things. First, in his inordinate love to Esau (whom he could not but know to be a profane person), and that on so slight an account as eating of his venison; Gen. 25:28. Second, in that he had not sufficiently inquired into the mind of God, in the oracle that his wife received concerning their sons. There is not question on the one hand, but that he knew of it; nor on the other, that he did not understand it. For if the holy man had known that it was the determinate will of God, he would not have contradicted it. But this arose from want of diligent inquiry by prayer, into the mind of God" (John Owen).

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

What do you think Isaac was realizing when he said, "Yea, and he shall be blessed!" (Gen. 27:33)?

2 Sam. 6:6 Prov. 19:21

Hebrews 11:21

Jacob stands before us as the type of a life that began with poor materials and had to be cut and polished at every point by keen affliction until at last he learned obedience from what he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8), and the man of earth was transformed into the Israel of God. There is no place where we need faith so much as when God is chastening us and the heart grows discouraged and we are tempted to think that He is against us. It is then that we need to believe in His everlasting love and lie like plastic clay in the potter's hand, or like the gold in the consuming crucible and say: "When he has tested me, I will come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Are you there today? Trust Him. Let your eyes see your teachers (Isaiah 30:20). Take the lesson He is so severely teaching. Thank Him that He loves you with inexorable love and will not let you go astray, and some day you will bless Him most of all for the things that hurt you most keenly now. It was not Abraham, it was not Isaac, it was not Joseph, but it was Jacob, the chief of sinners and the meanest of men, that became God's patriarchal prince, the head of Israel's tribes and the one who gave his own new name of Israel to the race that shall endure when dynasties and empires shall have passed away.

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

"By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* upon the top of his staff." (Hebrews 11:21) **In our early years of life, how important is it to get a blessing from our parents, grandparents or close relatives?**

Gen. 1:21-28 Gen. 27:24-29 Mark 10:13-16

Hebrews 11:22

Space will not permit us to dwell on this illustrious prince further than to say that through all the depths of his humiliation and anguish which were not, like Jacob's, on account of his own sin and folly, but simply through the wrongs of others, there was one golden ray of light that illuminated every dark place. And it was this: that God was in it and above it all. "You intended to harm me," he could say to these wicked men, "but God intended it for good" (Genesis 50:20). Only when our faith can see His overruling hand, His ultimate and victorious purpose, shall we also be able to rise above our sorrows and glorify Him even in trials.

Standing once on the banks of the St. Lawrence during a summer holiday, I threw my little ships of paper and of pine into the stream beside me, and I noticed that they all flowed upward against the stream. At first I wondered, and said, "Am I mistaken, does the river run the other way?" Then I looked into the center of the stream and saw a great log sweeping down toward the rapids a little below. "Why no," I said, and I looked again and then I understood. "Ah, this is but an eddy on the shore and things are not what they seem." And so, beloved, if you look at the things immediately around you they may often appear to be going in the wrong direction, but if you will look up to God and fix your faith upon the great midcurrent of His love and faithfulness, you will find that one unvarying purpose of blessing is running through it all and you will know that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

God give us the faith of Abel that saves; the faith of Enoch that sanctifies; the faith of Noah that separates; the faith of Abraham that obeys; the faith of Isaac that endures; the faith of Jacob that learns; and the faith of Joseph that overcomes wrong and sorrow and turns every midnight into morning; and finally, above all the faith of Jesus, "the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame" (Hebrews 12:2).

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What was Joseph thinking when he asked to have his bones taken from Egypt?

Gen. 50:24-26

Hebrews 11:23

And what was it that enabled the parents of Moses to act so boldly and set at nought the royal edict? Our text furnishes clear answer: It was "by faith" they acted. Had they been destitute of faith, most probably the "king's commandment" would have filled them with dismay, and in order that their own lives should be spared, would have promptly informed his officers of the birth of Moses. But instead of so notifying the Egyptians, they concealed the fact, and though by preserving the child they followed a course which was highly hazardous to sense, yet under God it became the path of security. Thus, the particular aspect of our theme which here receives illustration is *the courage and boldness of faith*: faith overcoming the fear of man.

Normally we are to “be in subjection unto the higher powers” (Rom 13:1) but is there a time or situation when this does not apply?

Acts 5:27-29

Hebrews 11:24-29

“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time” (Hebrews 11:24-25). There comes a time when even the mother's prayers cannot be a substitute for our personal responsibility. Then we must act and choose for ourselves. Moses had the benefit of a mother's teachings as well as a mother's faith, and when the crisis hour came he was true to the convictions that she had instilled into his youthful mind, and he stepped out and assumed for himself the full responsibility of faith.

His religious life began as every life really does, in a true purpose, in a right choice. It is the will that is the helm of life. It is our choice that determines our destiny. Two lives opened before the young Hebrew standing out in clear relief and separated as far from each other as pole from pole. One was a life of honor, luxury and power; in fact, all that the world at its best could offer, for he was the heir to Egypt's throne, and there was nothing within the scope of human ambition which he might not have claimed. The other was a life of danger, affliction, sacrifice, possibly violent death through the vengeance of those whose kindness he refused; and yet withal the blessing of God and the fellowship in suffering, and reward of God's people. But the prospects and the recompenses were all in the distance. The allurements were all at hand, and only the eye of faith could make real the overbalancing value of the things of God and eternity. But Moses had that higher vision which makes the distant and the unseen more real than the present. He had respect unto the recompense of the reward, and without a moment's hesitation he made his choice. He said one eternal "No" to the world, and one everlasting "Yes" to God. He gave up a throne and a crown, and he chose his lot among the afflicted people of God, regarding "disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt" (11:26). This is the very essence of faith. This is the first principle of consecration. This is the root of piety. This is the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom. This is the crisis of every soul. This was the great temptation in the wilderness when the Master refused the devil's splendid bribe and chose instead the will of God alone. There are two sides to this great decision. There is a choosing; there is a refusing. There is a "Yes," there is a "No." Beloved, have you spoken the decisive word? Have you said "Yes" to God without reserve? Have you said "No" to the world and self and sin?

"By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible" (11:27). The time came when the will must become the deed, and the choice must be translated into action. That time came when the preparations were complete for the departure of the children of Israel from the house of bondage. It was a step of the most serious danger. Pharaoh had bitterly refused and opposed it, and his reluctant consent had been slowly wrung from him; but Moses knew at the last that consent would be withdrawn and that all the power of Pharaoh's armies would be used to draw them back, but "by faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger," and bravely marched forth until he found himself with Pharaoh's chariots behind him and the rolling flood before. And so, beloved, your decision must be proved. God will take you at your word. He will put you to the test and He will help you, like Moses, to persevere "because he saw him who is invisible."

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

With worldly values, lusts and temptations surrounding us everywhere, and endeavoring to persuade us into their mold, how do we keep a straight course with God, making the right decisions in life?

Rom. 4:20, 21 2 Cor. 5:7, 14-21

Thus they wonder at each other: the worldling *thinks* the real Christian is crazy, the Christian *knows* the poor worldling is spiritually insane.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Hebrews 11:30-31

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days" (11:30). Here we pass at a bound over 40 years of Hebrew history, and from the Red Sea to the other side of the river Jordan. The wilderness is passed, the Land of Promise is before them, the realization of their grandest hopes is about to begin, the inheritance of faith is awaiting their grasp. But it must be taken also by faith.

There is a formidable barrier lying across their path. There always is when God has some new and glorious experience for us, something too hard for us, some crisis hour, some midnight conflict, some towering Jericho which we cannot leave behind us. It is then, like Jacob, that we must get alone with God, and through the narrow place of trial come into a large place of exalted blessing and life-long victory. Perhaps some reader of these lines is there today. The struggle through which you are passing is to decide your whole religious future. It is God's opportunity for your spiritual triumph. God can bring you through, but only by faith can the walls of your Jericho fall down. The first thing is to believe that it is possible, that it is for you, that it is for you today. And then take the place of faith and stand fast through all the seven days and the sevenfold test, until the shout of victory shall ring, and prayer shall be turned to praise. Beloved, have you taken this higher step of faith? Have you not only left Egypt but entered Canaan? Will you take God for it, and will you press on until it becomes for you, as for them, a glorious realization?

You will notice that all the interval including the 40 years in the wilderness is omitted in this record. There was no faith in it and it did not count. And so all your years are lost and you have only your pains for your labor until you believe God and enter into the rest of faith and the fullness of your victory and your inheritance.

Hebrews tells us about the faith that lifts and sends the vilest sinner into the highest place of blessing and sends us forth from the fullness of our blessing to save the lost.

"By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient" (Hebrews 11:31). The story of Rahab is strangely interwoven with the victory of Joshua. The book that tells us of the highest Christian life quickly reminds us of the mercy of God for the vilest sinner, and bids us blend the work of salvation with the higher work of sanctification. The heart of God is as much concerned in seeking and saving the lost as in leading His people into a higher blessing. Let us, like Him, ever be found close to the publicans and sinners. The very best proof that we have reached the Land of Promise will ever be that we are found seeking to save the Rahabs all around and plant the Cities of Refuge for the manslayer and sinner. How beautiful to know that He who raised poor Rahab from the ranks of deepest sin to be the mother of our Lord in His human lineage still waits to lift the most lost and helpless to the very highest place of blessing!

"What are these and whence came they?" we might ask as we look upon the radiant clouds that gather about the setting sun, and the answer would be: "These were the foul and fetid miasmas that came from the swamps and marshes, but yonder sun has transformed them into the glorious forms that wait upon the chariot of his ascension." "What are these and whence came they?" we might ask about the shining pages on which the beautiful words of inspiration are printed, and the answer might be: "These were filthy rags trodden by the passing throng, reeking with uncleanness, but they have been cleansed and purified until they became the very messengers of God and leaves from the Tree of Life." "What are these and whence came they?" will be asked some day by the visitors from distant worlds as they gaze upon the faces and forms of ransomed saints around the throne, and a voice will answer: "These were Rahab the harlot, and the dying malefactor; these were vile and sinful men, but they 'have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb' (Revelations 7:14)."

This is God's great laboratory of grace, God's living miracle of love, God's sweetest, highest, most enduring work. He lets us have a part in it. Saved ourselves, let us live to save and serve, and let us remember that the secret of all our power to save is the same old secret by which we were saved ourselves—faith and faith alone.

Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home.

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Where is Rahab in Jesus's lineage?

Hebrews 11:32

The battle must be fought by faith as well as the army prepared. First, Gideon must get his token from the Lord and know that it will be victory. With a single companion he is sent to Midian's hosts to reconnoiter, and as the two listen on the borders of the camp, lo! a Midianite has awakened from his sleep and is telling his comrades the dream he has just had of Gideon's cake of barley tumbling into the host of Midian. That is enough. It is God's token of coming victory. Gideon hastens back to prepare for the assault. Surely the weapons of that warfare are weapons of faith: fragile pitchers, useful only when they are shattered into broken fragments; flaming torches and rude trumpets proclaiming the name of God and the sword of Gideon—this is all. And these still are weapons of our victorious warfare. We, ourselves, must become as broken vessels, and then the light will shine through our displacement, and the message which we ring out will become the power of God to the salvation of men and the destruction of the enemy. It is still as true as ever that the greatest hindrance to God's working is dependence on human genius, wealth, influence and power, and that the men

whom God is using today are the men that have learned to say with Paul, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

When tens of thousands were thronging Mr. Moody's meetings in London, the leading journal of England sent an experienced reporter to find out the secret of his power. He listened for several days and then declared that he could see nothing in the manner or the matter of the evangelist's addresses to interest such multitudes of people or to explain this movement. When Mr. Moody heard of it he laughed quietly and said: "Why that is the very secret of the movement, that there is nothing in it that can explain it but the power of God." It is " 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty" (Zechariah 4:6).

Barak had gone forth at the call of Deborah, willing to take second place to a woman in the work of the Lord, and to receive from her lips the keynote of his victory. Very finely does she give it in Judges 4:14. Her name signifies a bee, and there is a wholesome sharpness in her words that might well wake him up from his languor and delay. "Go!" she cries, "This is the day the LORD has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?" Here we have the very essence of faith. It is stepping out to meet a God that has already stepped out in front of us. It is not waiting for something to turn up, or hoping for something to happen, but it is instant action, accepting and not expecting.

One day I listened to a very humble African-American as he told the wonderful story of his experience and the way God had used him, which I knew to be true. He told us that all this had begun by his one day taking literally a single verse in the eleventh chapter of Mark: "Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (11:24), or, as he put it: "Believe that you take them and you've got them." Sinner, Christ meets you as He met the paralytic at Capernaum, saying, "Your sins are forgiven" (2:5). If you believe it this moment it is true for you. Discouraged and defeated one, He meets you as He met Gideon, and He says: "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior" (Judges 6:12). If you take Him at His word it becomes a living fact in your experience as it was in Gideon's. Sinful, struggling soul, He says to you: "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you" (John 15:3). If you take it, it is true for you and you go forth cleansed through His precious blood.

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What was Jephthah known for?

Jud. 11:1-12:7

Hebrews 11:33-34

"Who through faith conquered kingdoms, . . . shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; . . . who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies" (Hebrews 11:33-34). Three classes of achievements are here described. The subjugation of kingdoms refers to Joshua and David; it was by faith that they won their great inheritance. Let us not think that there are no kingdoms left for us to conquer. There are mightier victors still than Alexander or Tamerlane. "Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one who takes a city" (Proverbs 16:32).

There are kingdoms of self-conquest that cost more than a cavalry charge or a bombardment from besieging armies, and there are kingdoms of glorious service for God and the world which are being won by the heroes of faith in every age. When Robert Moffat entered South Africa as a physical and moral wilderness and left it not only one of the richest provinces of the British Empire, but one of the most successful of modern mission fields, a kingdom was subdued more valuable than the empires of the Caesars. When David Livingstone fought and won the battle of his own education and preparation for the ministry, and then went forth to traverse all the heart of Africa and win it from barbarism to civilization, commerce and Christ, and to leave upon the hearts of the natives the memory of his own high character and stainless goodness, so that for his sake the white man is still treated with kindness and reverence in the regions through which he passed, Livingstone subdued a kingdom whose worth can never be told. When William Duncan sat down amid the inhospitable regions of northern Canada and out of the wild forest and wilder Indian tribes slowly built up a settlement and a colony of civilized and Christian natives, who can be seen today in the village of Metlakatlah—an object lesson of Christian civilization, with their industries, schools, chapel and happy homes—surely it is a kingdom for which earthly heroes might well lay down their crowns. When John Geddie passed up to his great reward from the New Hebrides and left upon his tombstone this simple epitaph telling the story of 30 years of self-denying triumph: "When he came there were no Christians, when he left there were no heathen," surely it was a triumph for which angels would gladly leave their thrones. And there are such kingdoms still left in the wide field of this sinful world, if only we have the faith and love to win them for God. As Joshua said to the men of Ephraim when they asked him for a larger inheritance: "Go to the mountains and conquer for yourself all you want. You can have as much as you will subdue" (author's paraphrase of Joshua 17:17-18). So still God is saying to every aspiring soul: "I will give you every place where you set your foot" (Joshua 1:3). You may conquer your own kingdom. You may forge your own crown. You may win as much as you will dare. Never was there an age with such possibilities of heroic faith and self-denial as today.

The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain,
His blood-red banner streams afar,
Who follows in His train?

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

What are the types of dangers these saints went through? How do they compare with the type of dangers we encounter?

Hebrews 11:35-38

But why should God allow many of His dear children to encounter such terrible experiences? Among other answers, the following may be suggested. First, for the more thorough trial of his champions, that their faith, courage, patience, and other graces, might be more manifest. Second, to seal or ratify more plainly the Truth which they profess. Third, to encourage and strengthen the faith of their weaker brethren. Fourth, to give them more sensible evidence of what Christ endured for them. Fifth, to cause them to perceive the better the torments of Hell: if those whom God loves are permitted to endure such grievous and painful trials, what must we understand of those torments which the wrath of God inflicts upon those whom He hates!

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

How do we react to the thought of such vile suffering—are we glad we haven't had to undergo these as well?

Can our hearts respond to our Lord by saying, "Do to me as You will for the highest good; I choose Your way over man's way, and I then leave the results in Your wise, loving hand"? If this is the earnest and true desire of your heart, make a brief statement of where you are in this quest, rating yourself from 1 to 10, with 10 being complete yieldedness and obedience. The Holy Spirit will then teach you regarding anything that still hinders, for prayer and submission, and He also will teach you how to be a conqueror.

Hebrews 11:39-40

But after all that has been said the apostle adds that these glorious witnesses failed to receive the fullness of the promise. "God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:40). What is this better thing wherein we possess the advantage over them? Surely it is in this, that we have the Holy Spirit and the living Christ, of which they had but the promise and the occasional visitation. To us the Spirit has come to abide. In us the living Christ dwells not only as the Example, but as "the author and perfecter of our faith" (12:2). Not only are we called to look up the shining way whither the Forerunner has gone in— but He comes back to hold our hand and lead us up the steps of faith until we reach our coronation too—but all that He has won we also may claim, and where He has entered in, there we may follow.

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Most of us would like to "shortcut" the path toward obtaining the promises of God by avoiding at least some of the trials and testings. **What attitude should we have while going through the testings and trials in our life?**

Hebrews 12:1

"Let us *run* with patience the race that is set before us." We only "run" when we are very anxious to get to a certain place, when there is some attraction stimulating us. That word "run" then presupposes the heart eagerly set upon the goal. That "goal" is complete deliverance from the power of indwelling sin, perfect conformity to the lovely image of Christ, entrance into the promised rest and bliss on High. It is only as *that* is kept steadily in view, only as faith and hope are in real and daily exercise, that we shall progress along the path of obedience.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

What will keep us from losing our sense of purpose as to why we are running the race?

Heb. 11:10, 19 1 Tim. 6:11-16 2 Tim. 2:15, 19-21 Titus 2:13, 14

Let us encourage ourselves by thinking how Christ Himself ran the race.

Ps. 16:7, 8 Ps. 18:1-3, 16-24 Ps. 22:8 Prov. 3:5, 6 Mark 1:35 Luke 2:49 John 6:57 John 8:29 John
15:10 John 18:11 Gal. 5:6 Eph. 4:15 Heb. 2:10 Rev. 3:21

What are some of the weights that could hinder us? Knowing what they are could help us prevent them.

Prov. 28:13 Matt. 16:24-26 Rom. 4:19 Rom. 6:11-13 Rom. 8:13 Gal. 5:16 Eph. 4:22 Heb.
13:5, 6 1 Pet. 2:11

Hebrews 12:2-4

The epistle to the Hebrews is the working out of three magnificent thoughts. First, Jesus Christ our great Apostle, coming from God to us. Second, Jesus Christ our great High Priest, going back from us to God. Third, Jesus Christ the Author and Finisher of our faith and the Captain of our salvation, taking us back with Him to God. It is the last of these thoughts that the writer is now expounding. He has already explained the nature and province of faith, and given us four groups of examples from the Old Testament, and now he brings the series to a lofty climax by introducing the Lord Jesus Christ as the crowning witness of faith both as an example of its power and as its Author and Finisher in the hearts and lives of His people.

Christ is the Author of faith in a more direct sense, inasmuch as He inspires our faith and by the Holy Spirit puts in us the Spirit of trust and confidence. For our faith is just as much the work of Christ as our holiness, our love or any of the graces of Christian life. When He comes to abide within us He simply imparts to us His own nature and Spirit, and puts into our heart the very same sentiments of trust toward His Father which He Himself ever cherished. There is nothing so delightful as this consciousness of the very life and heart of Christ within us, the trust that springs spontaneously within our breast, the prayer that prays itself, and the song that sings its joyous triumph even when all around is dark and strange. God help us to understand this deepest secret of the Lord and to be able to say in a literal sense, "The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

There is nothing more touching in the life of the Master than the incident in which He tells Peter of the great temptation that is coming to Him. "Simon," He says, "Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:31-32).

The difference between Simon and Judas was not in the intensity of their sorrow, but in the fact that Simon's faith failed not. At the last moment there was just one cord left that held him and brought Him back to His Lord—his confidence in Christ. This was really one of Christ's own heartstrings. It was the prayer that kept the faith of Peter. And so He keeps us. Again and again in the darkest hour of life all else had failed us, but the heart could still trust. Christ was keeping our faith.

But not only does He keep it, He educates it. He lets the trial come to strengthen it and establish it. He puts us into situations where we must have more faith or be overwhelmed, and He gives us the faith in the hour of need and leads us on from strength to strength and grace to grace. Just as the eagle teaches her young to fly by hurling them from their downy nests, and compelling them to strike out with their own feeble pinions and learn to soar upon the pathless air, so Christ puts us into impossible situations that He may prove to us that all things are possible to Him that believes, and that with God nothing is impossible. Sometimes in this process He even hides His face from us, as once the Father's was hidden from Him, and teaches us to trust where we cannot trace, and walk with Him in the dark. Thus by various means He is preparing us for some future day when by faith we may perhaps be able like Him to create a world and prove the full meaning of His own mighty Word, "Everything is possible for him who believes" (Mark 9:23). Be not discouraged, tried and suffering child of God, "though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1Peter 1:6-7).

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

Explain the difference of having a fleshly faith and a God given faith?

Hebrews 12:5-15

Not all chastisement is sanctified to the recipient of it. Some are hardened thereby; others are crushed beneath it. Much depends on the spirit in which afflictions are received. There is no virtue in trials and troubles in themselves; it is only as they are blest by God that the Christian is profited thereby. As Heb. 12:11 informs us, it is those who are "exercised" under God's rod that bring forth "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." A sensitive conscience and a tender heart are the needed adjuncts.

Many make a great mistake in entertaining the thought that their spiritual life is being much hindered by the very things which should, by divine grace, be a real help to them. Opposition in the home from ungodly relatives, trials in

connection with their daily work, the immediate presence of the wicked in the shop or office, *are* a real trial (and God intends they *should* be—to remind us we are still in a world which lieth in the Wicked one, to exercise our graces, to prove the sufficiency of His strength), but they need not be hindrances or “weights.” Many erroneously suppose they would make much more progress spiritually if only their “circumstances” were altered. This is a serious mistake, and a murmuring against God’s providential dealings with us. *He* shapes our “circumstances” as a helpful discipline to the soul, and only as we learn to rise above “circumstances,” and walk with God in them, are we “running the race that is set before us.” The *person* is the same no matter what “circumstances” he may be in!

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

What are we really saying when we complain? Are we striking back at God? What did God say and do about the Israelites regarding their continual complaining? How does our attitude determine what we will learn from a trial?

Ex. 32:9, 10 Deut. 8:2-7 Ps. 106:24, 25 Lam. 3:39-43

Hebrews 12:16, 17

A sovereign God has drawn the line in every life which marks the parting of the ways. When that line is reached by the individual, God does one of two things with him: either He performs a miracle of grace so that he becomes “a new creature in Christ Jesus,” or henceforth that individual is *abandoned* by Him, given up to hardness of heart and final impenitency; and *which* it is, depends entirely upon His own imperial pleasure. And none can tell how near he may be to that line, for some reach it much earlier in life than others—according as God sovereignly decreed. Therefore it is the part of wisdom for each sinner to promptly heed that word “Seek ye the Lord *while He may be found*” (Isa. 55:6), which plainly denotes that soon it may be too late—as Prov. 1:28-31 and Matt. 25:8-12 plainly show.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Keeping in mind that God has given man a free will, has God done everything possible to draw the guilty sinner (or the backslidden Christian) to Himself and to perfect forgiveness, to give that one a new life in Christ? If so, is it only right that those who refuse Him, like Pharaoh, deserve no mercy?

Prov. 8:35, 36 Isa. 56:1 Isa. 57:15, 20, 21 Mark 7:21-23 Rom. 9:14-26 Rom. 10:3

Explain how Esau fit into the category of finding no place for repentance.

Prov. 1:24-33 Isa. 55:6, 7 Ezek. 8:18

Hebrews 12:18-23

We have seen in our former studies in the epistle to the Hebrews, the Captain of our salvation bringing many sons unto glory along the pathway of faith. Now in this sublime passage we have presented to us the final goal to which He is bringing them. The figure is a strong antithesis, presenting in striking contrast the difference between the Old Testament and the New. The whole epistle has been richly laden with Old Testament allusions and quotations. The writer has taken us back to Abel and Enoch, Noah and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Melchizedek and Joseph, Moses and Joshua, Gideon and Barak, Samuel and David, the Old Testament prophets and the ancient high priest. The tabernacle in the wilderness and its imposing ritual, and indeed all the ordinances and types of the ancient Scriptures have been laid under contribution to unfold the richness of Jesus Christ in whom they are all fulfilled. Now he gathers up the substance of all these ancient types and figures in one magnificent contrast between the law and the gospel, the Old Testament and the New.

He had already told us in the close of the 11th chapter that “God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect” (Hebrews 11:40). In the present passage he shows us by this striking antithesis how much better the thing that God has provided is, and how lofty and sublime are the immunities and privileges to which we have been introduced by the gospel and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He tells us that we “have not come to a mountain that can be touched and is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm” (12:18). All this is descriptive of the terrors of the ancient law. This was the dispensation of judgment. We are not under it now. We have been delivered from it, and there is “now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). Not by the sanctions of fear and the threatenings of judgment, but by the gentle constraint of love are we held to our sacred obligations. Let us not get under the law or back to bondage, but stand firm—“it is for freedom that Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1). We are under the law of faith and not of works, and the law of faith is the law of love, and the reign of grace.

Mount Zion is the antithesis of Mount Sinai. It is the mount of mercy as the other was of judgment. Therefore the ark of God was set up on Mount Zion and the symbol of God's covenant and mercy was established there and it became significant of divine grace. The ark and the tabernacle were symbols of God's mercy and types of Jesus Christ, who came to fulfill the law and deliver us from its curse and condemnation; therefore Mount Zion stands for the grace of God in contrast with the terrors of Sinai. Let us ever remember this and dwell in the light of its mercy and so "keep [ourselves] in God's love as [we] wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring [us] to eternal life" (Jude 21).

We come unto "the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God" (Hebrews 12:22). The earthly Jerusalem was the center of God's earthly people; the heavenly Jerusalem is the home of God's spiritual people. It is a city which He is preparing out of spiritual realities, and of which His holy people are the materials and elements which He is building together, and which shall one day be seen descending from heaven as a vision of transcendent glory, more radiant than the rainbow, more precious than all the gems of earth. We have come to this city now. We are members of its glorious society. Our citizenship is in heaven and our names are written in its civic records. Faith claims our high position even here,

And hope foredates the joyful day
When these old skies shall cease to sunder
The one dear love-linked family.

We are come "to thousands upon thousands of angels" (12:22). These celestial beings are also inhabitants of the city of God and attendants upon the heirs of salvation. Already we are compassed about with them as ministering spirits, and although we see them not yet, doubtless their interposing love often rescues us from hidden dangers and snares. Undoubtedly they are the spectators of our earthly course, and are watching our conflicts and our victories with intense interest. We are to them object lessons of the government of God and the wonders of redeeming love, and they are doubtless our protectors and guardians and often the unseen messengers of answered prayer and divine blessing. Let us realize the honor of our glorious associations and walk worthy of such high companionships.

We have come "to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven" (12:23). Literally this means, "the firstborn ones." This description includes the whole company of the redeemed, the great assembly of the saints of God from every age and clime. They are all called firstborn ones; that is, they share the inheritance of the firstborn, and they stand in exactly the same position as Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and the Elder Brother in the divine family. Our inheritance as God's children is not that of a younger son, but is the same as the Elder Brother's. Jesus, the Firstborn, shares with us all His privileges, and reminds us that God is "[his] Father and [our] Father; [his] God and [our] God" (John 20:17). In what sense have we come to this general assembly and heavenly Church? Our names are written there. We are recognized already as if we also were there. We are counted one with the ransomed saints above.

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

The Gospel has not brought you into that which is material and visible, palpable and touchable by the physical senses, but only what is spiritual and can only be apprehended by faith. A "mount" is a thing *of the earth*; whereas the glory of Christianity is entirely celestial. The passage which most clearly interprets this clause is found in our Lord's discourse with the woman at the well: "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when you shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father...But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father *in spirit and in truth*" (John 4:21, 23). (A. W. Pink) As Jesus prepared for His death, resurrection and ascension, He completed His teachings to His disciples of the truth of the Gospel, especially in John chapters 14-16. **Please speak to their adjustment from knowledge on a human plane to that of the spirit, by walking in faith, and acknowledging Jesus Christ as their Savior / Messiah.**

Ps. 125:1, 2 Luke 1:33 John 14:1-3, 7-11, 15-27 John 15:3-8 John 16:5-15 1 Cor. 15:24 2 Cor. 5:7
2 Tim. 2:14, 15 1 Pet. 1:10, 11

Hebrews 12:24

We have come "to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (Hebrews 12:24). The blood of sprinkling refers to the constant provision of Christ's priesthood for our acceptance and full salvation. The blood shed was the figure of Christ's life offered to atone for our sins, but the blood sprinkled refers to the constant application of Christ's grace to our souls in sanctifying and keeping us from the power of sin. It speaks better things than that of Abel inasmuch as Abel's blood cried out for judgment against his murderer, but Christ's blood cries out for pardon even for His murderers and enemies. Perhaps also the better things may refer to the fact that while Abel's blood availed for justification, Christ's blood avails for sanctification, cleansing us from both the guilt and power of sin.

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

How does the blood sacrifice that Abel presented to God differ from Christ's sacrifice?

Hebrews 12:25-29

"See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks" (12:25). On account of these high and glorious dignities and distinctions that belong to the gospel of Jesus Christ and our standing in Him, there arises a corresponding responsibility on our part, much greater than even under the ancient law. Therefore the apostle adds, "See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?" (12:25). Let us not imagine that because the spirit of the gospel is more beneficent than that of the law, our transgression against its grace and love will be suffered with impunity. The very gentleness of that grace will but aggravate our guilt and increase our punishment. He who can despise such mercy and trifle with such love can only look for the severest punishment. The God of the New Testament, not less than the God of the Old, is a consuming fire. Only the fire seeks now to consume the sin rather than the sinner, but if the sinner refuses to part with the sin it must consume him too.

"At that time his voice shook the earth" (12:26). The goal of faith will not be fully reached until the coming of that more glorious day of which this passage speaks in the concluding verses when Christ shall come in all His glorious power. "At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, 'Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.' The words 'once more' indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain" (12:26-27). That is to say, in a little while this dispensation is to reach its close in a grand upheaval and convulsion of both earth and heaven, and in a tragedy more tremendous than Mount Sinai ever saw. Then everything that is shakable shall be shaken to pieces and disappear with the dissolving world. And so God is testing us now that He may shake out of us the things that are transient and temporal, and that we may be established in the things which cannot be shaken and which shall remain. This is the meaning of all the tests and trials of life. Christ the Author and Finisher of our faith is searching and proving our faith, and bringing to light every weakness and defect so that we may be established, and settled and prepared for the testing day. Whatever is subject to change, let it change and pass away. Let us not fear the fire. Let us not shrink from the sifting and shaking process. Let us be thankful that we have One who loves us with such inexorable love that He will not let us go into judgment unprepared, but is giving us armor proved and tried before that testing day. Let us welcome the ordeal and echo the prayer:

Burn on, O fire of God, burn on,
Till all my dross is burned away,
Burn up the dregs of self and sin,
Prepare me for the testing day.

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe" (12:28). Let faith claim her kingdom in all its fullness and glory, and let her also claim the grace and power to be worthy of it. It is all grace from first to last, and the grace that prepared the kingdom can prepare us for it and keep us true to it until the final consummation. Glory be to God, and thanks and praise for the riches of grace and the possibilities of faith!

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)

In what ways does God shake the world—in times past and yet in the future?

Ps. 93:1-5 Dan. 2:44 Dan. 7:14, 27 2 Tim. 2:19 Heb. 1:10-12 Heb. 2:14, 15 2Pet. 1:11 Rev. 1:6, 17-19

How will He shake the heavens?

Rev. 15:5 Rev. 21:1, 2

Hebrews 13:1-3

We need hardly say that *the principles* of v. 3 are of *general* application at all times and to all cases of suffering Christians. The same is summed up in "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). The sentiment of this verse has been beautifully expressed in the lines of that hymn so precious in its hallowed memories:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds

Is like to that above.
We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.”

The Lord grant unto both writer and reader more of His grace so that we shall “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Rom. 12:15).

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Do you have a favorite hymn or poem that expresses this theme for you? If not, a Bible verse?

Hebrews 13:4-9

It is not until after a person is regenerate that he takes notice of the *inward* motions of sin and takes cognizance of the state of his *heart*. Then Satan will seek to persuade that he is not responsible for involuntary thoughts (which come unbidden), that evil desires are beyond our control—infirmities which are excusable. But God says to him “*Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life*” (Prov. 4:23), and makes him realize that every lusting after what He has forbidden or withheld is a species of self-will. Therefore we are accountable to *judge* the first inclination toward evil and *resist* the very earliest solicitations. The fact that we discover so much within that is contrary to God’s holy requirements should deeply humble us, and cause us to live more and more out of self and upon Christ.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

In whose strength and power are we able to live out the life of Christ as He and the apostles have so aptly instructed us? Can we ever revert back to the mind and natural (carnal) reasoning, and still expect to walk in the ways of Christ?

Rom. 6:4-7 Rom. 7:5, 6 Rom. 8:6-13, 20, 21

Hebrews 13:10-16

In ordaining that His Son should be put to death outside the city of Jerusalem, symbolic intimation was thereby given by God to the Jews that He had *put an end to all sacrificing in the temple*, so far as their acceptance by Him was concerned: now that Christ Himself was laid on the altar, there was no longer any need for those offerings which prefigured Him. The shadow and the substance could not stand together: for the Levitical sacrifices to be continued after Christ’s death would denote either that He had *not come*, or that His offering was *not sufficient* to obtain salvation.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

What now fully replaces animal sacrifices in worship?

Ps. 34:1 Ps. 51:17 Matt. 15:8, 9 Rom. 3:24, 25 Rom. 12:1, 2 2 Cor. 8:5 Eph. 5:1, 2 Col. 1:12-14
Heb. 10:9-14

Hebrews 13:17-19

Conscience has well been termed the moral *sense*, because it corresponds to those physical faculties whereby we have communion with the outward world, namely, the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Man has an ethical instinct, a faculty or moral sensibility informing and impressing him. “It is far higher in the scale and keener in its perceptions than any mere bodily sense. There is an inner eye, that sees into the nature of right and wrong; an inner ear, sensitive to the faintest whisper of moral obligation; an inner touch, that feels the pressure of duty, and responds to it sympathetically” (A. T. Pierson).

Conscience is that mysterious principle which bears its witness within us for good or evil, and therefore it is the very center of human accountability, for it greatly adds to his condemnation that man continues sinning against the dictates of this internal sentinel. Conscience supplies us with self-knowledge and self-judgment, resulting in self-approbation or self-condemnation according to our measure of light. It is a part of the understanding in all rational creatures which passes judgment on all actions for or against them.

(Exposition of Hebrews, A. W. Pink)

Explain what an unbeliever's conscience is like.

Rom. 1:19-21 Rom. 2:14-16

Explain what a believer's conscience is like.

John 8:9 Acts 24:16 Rom. 9:1 1 Tim. 3:9 Heb. 9:14 Heb. 10:22, 23 1 Pet. 3:16

Hebrews 13:20-25

PARTING BENEDICTION

But now the full heart of the writer turns from didactic speech and personal exhortation, and pours out one burning prayer and benediction, in which he gathers up the deepest teachings of this whole blessed epistle. "May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (13:20-21).

1. The God of Peace

This beautiful expression sums up in a single phrase the spiritual results of the great redeeming work with which the epistle to the Hebrews has been occupied. We have already seen that the first great thought was the coming of Jesus Christ from God to bring us the message of His will. The next was the going back of Jesus Christ to God as our great High Priest. But the consummation of the writer's thought was the bringing of us back to God in full reconciliation and perfect fellowship, as the Author and Finisher of our faith. This is the idea expressed by the "God of peace." Jesus Christ has brought us back to God, and now He steps back from the foreground of the picture, and leaves us in the Father's house, and in direct relations with God Himself. There is no cloud between us and the eternal Father. He is to us the very God of peace.

2. The Shepherd of the Sheep

But while we recognize our reconciliation to the Father, not for a moment can we forget the blessed Mediator through whom it has been accomplished and is still maintained. Here a new figure is introduced, although it is used to express an old fact. It is the figure of the shepherd, and back of it there rises the vision of the lost and wandering sheep, of the long and loving search, of the midnight, the wilderness and the terrible cost, the glad homebringing and the peace and safety of the heavenly fold. But while this is a new figure in the epistle to the Hebrews, it is not a new figure in the Old Testament from which this beautiful epistle is so largely drawn. Indeed, it is the oldest, sweetest and most frequent image under which the grace of God has been portrayed, from Abel down to Christ Himself. And so it adds a delightful touch of tenderness and completeness to the whole epistle, to represent our Lord Jesus, in the last picture of His person and work, under the figure of the great Shepherd of the sheep.

3. The Everlasting Covenant

This expresses the security of our salvation and the solid and permanent foundation on which our relationship to God through the work of Jesus Christ has been established. It is the result of an arrangement as stable as the throne of God. Every condition of justice and equity has been met. Every possible cause of failure has been anticipated. And the interests of Christ's redeemed people are guaranteed by an everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son, in which all the conditions have been fully met, and all the contracts and promises ratified so completely that, as David expresses it, it is "arranged and secured in every part" (2 Samuel 23:5). This is one of the most helpful truths brought out in the epistle to the Hebrews, that we are saved not through the work of the law, but through a new covenant in which Christ has met and fulfilled all the conditions and bequeathed to us all the promises. As the writer expressed it in a former passage, "by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure" (Hebrews 6:18-19).

4. The Precious Blood

"Through the blood of the eternal covenant" (13:20). This covenant has been ratified by blood, and the blood runs as a crimson thread all through this evangelical epistle. It is perhaps the most prominent thought in the central portion of the letter. There is no ambiguity about the teaching of this portion of the Scriptures respecting the cross of Christ. It is the blood that purchases our redemption. It is the blood that puts away our sin. It is the blood that seals and ratifies the covenant. It is the blood that sanctifies and keeps us. It is the blood that opens the way into the holiest of all. It is the blood that pleads for us, and claims the answer to our prayers. Over every page of this beautiful book we might well write the caption, "The Precious Blood of Christ."

5. The Practical Outworking

Next there is the practical outworking of this great redemption. "Equip you with everything good for doing his will" (13:21). It is not a mere treatise on systematic theology; it is not a mere intellectual diversion; but it leads to the very highest standard of holy living. His will becomes our rule of action, perfect conformity to it our goal of attainment, and every good work our mode of reaching this lofty standard and heavenly aim. The life of faith, if genuine and sincere, will always lead to the life of holy activity and practical righteousness. But here it is more than an ordinary standard of righteousness. It is nothing less than the highest perfection that the apostle asks for his readers. Just as the faith required in this epistle is the highest confidence, so the holiness presented as our ideal is entire conformity to the will of God "with everything good." This would be impossible for us, but it is not impossible when we remember the crowning thought of the whole epistle, that Jesus Himself is the Author and Finisher of our faith, and this truth is not forgotten in the closing benediction, for in the very next clause he reminds us of the divine inworking.

6. The Divine Inworking

Then there is mention of the divine inworking which is to bring about the practical outworking. This high and holy standard is not to be reached by our most strenuous exertions, but by God's "work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ" (13:21). It is union with Christ, abiding in Christ, the heart and life of Christ within us, the realization of that fine expression which we find in Colossians 1:29: "To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me," and which we find yet again in Philippians 2:12-13: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."

7. The Doxology

And so the benediction ends in a sublime doxology: "To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Hebrews 13:21). Instead of being crushed with discouragement, and paralyzed with a sense of the impossibility of our task, we are lifted up to sublime confidence and praise by the delightful fact that it is not our working, but His, and duty is transformed into delight and the heart can only sing:

Once it was my working,
His it hence shall be,
Once I tried to use Him,
Now He uses me.

Well may we say of such a Savior and such a salvation, "to him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

(The Christ In The Bible Commentary, A. B. Simpson)