

CB - 9/23/73 a.m.

HEBREWS--ITS PURPOSE AND PLAN

Scripture reading (but not the text of the message): Heb. 1:1-4. This message is introductory.

Intro: The book of Hebrews is undoubtedly one of the most important and certainly one of the most fascinating of all of the books of the Bible.

Brooke Foss Westcott, who was Bishop of Durham and who taught at Cambridge University in England, one of the greatest Greek scholars of all time, wrote in his introduction to a commentary on Hebrews, published in 1889, that "no work in which" he had "ever been allowed to spend many years of continuous labour" had for him "the same intense human interest as the study of the Epistle to the Hebrews" (p. ix).

R. V. G. Tasker, in his book, The Old Testament in the New Testament, says, "No book in the New Testament reveals the unity of Scripture to a greater extent than the Epistle to the Hebrews" (p. 103), and that "with the possible exception of the Gospel of Matthew no book links together the Old and New Testaments so closely as the Epistle to the Hebrews" (p. 117).

Strangely, this is the one book of the NT which is uncertain as to its writer. Paul has probably been mentioned most as the writer. It was placed among the Pauline epistles in early copies of the NT, but the style is different and his name is not attached to it. Some believe Paul wrote it in Hebrew and that it was translated into Greek by Luke. But no copy of the original Hebrew (if such were the case) has ever been found, and so this is not really taken seriously.

If Paul was not the writer, it is surprising that we are not given the name of the one who received such an amazing revelation of the Person and Work of Christ. But we must say that we do not really know who wrote it--although it is hard to give up on Paul.

But, just as we do not know the writer, neither do we know what group of people were the original recipients of the letter. There seems to be little doubt but that they were Hebrew Christians. Most people who have studied this feel that it was probably written for the Jerusalem church since only there would it be likely that the congregation would be so exclusively Jewish. But, it must be pointed out that there is no mention of the Temple in the epistle.

So again we must say, "We do not know."

WE DO KNOW, however, that it is a vital part of the Word of God, and, from its chapters (which can be read in less than an hour) we can tell THE PURPOSE and THE PLAN of the writer. This is what

we want to consider this morning.

I. THE PURPOSE.

Why was this epistle written?

We might at first say,

- 1) To explain the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to show how superior He is to all others--angels and men!

Or,

- 2) To show how the work of Christ fulfills and does away with priesthood and sacrifices of the OT.

Or,

- 3) That some book should deal with the present ministry of Christ in heaven, and that this is what this epistle does.

The book of Hebrews does all of this, and more, but none of these explains why the book was originally written. To understand its purpose we must note the practical exhortations throughout the book and see how they are related to the great doctrines which we find in the book.

First of all, let me point out that there are two major divisions to the epistle to the Hebrews:

- 1) Doctrinal: Hebrews 1:1-10:18.
- 2) Practical: Hebrews 10:19-13:25.

But, there are some practical sections along with the doctrine, just as there is some doctrine along with the practical exhortations in the latter part of the book. These practical exhortations help us to understand WHY the epistle was written!

There are too many of these practical exhortations to mention this morning, but it is important to note that no less than five times in the epistle the writer digresses to issue warnings. These warnings indicate that spiritually these Hebrew Christians were not what they should have been. They were:

- 1) Careless.
- 2) Slothful.
- 3) Indifferent.
- 4) Unbelieving.
- 5) Spiritually, babes.
- 6) Ignorant of much truth they should have known.
- 7) In some cases, sinful.
- 8) Inclined to glory in angels and men.
- 9) Hanging on to the Law.
- 10) Determined to carry on the OT sacrifices, etc.

Some of them in this particular Church may not have even been

saved! This epistle was written to give them the truth that would help them to understand salvation so that they would go on from where they were spiritually "unto perfection" (Heb. 6:1).

The five warnings (which we will consider in detail as we come to them) are found in the following passages:

- 1) Hebrews 2:1-4.
- 2) Hebrews 3:7-4:13.
- 3) Hebrews 5:11-6:20.
- 4) Hebrews 10:26-39. Note that this is in the practical section of the book.
- 5) Hebrews 12:14-29.

Note: Although the people who received this letter were Hebrew Christians, the problem is just as prevalent among Gentile Christians. Nor is this problem limited to first century Christians. It has been the major problem of every generation from that until this. The Church needs this epistle today. The major problem in the Church today is spiritual immaturity. The book of Hebrews was written to give us the solution to this problem.

II. THE PLAN.

How does the writer seek to achieve his purpose?

Concerning the Scriptures we might be more accurate in asking, How does the Spirit of God direct the writer to meet the needs of these Hebrew Christians and of all who are spiritually immature?

This answer will unfold for us in all of its glorious detail as we move through the book, but let us make some general observations this morning.

A. He directs their thoughts, first of all, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

All spiritual immaturity stems from a failure to give our Lord His rightful place. We do not know Him as we should, nor do we understand His work as we should. A reading of this epistle would lead us to believe that these Hebrew Christians talked more about angels and Moses and Abraham and Aaron than they did about Christ.

The writer bring them immediately to Christ.

But, in reading through the epistle, note how the writer speaks of our Lord with respect to His Person:

- 1) He is, first of all, the "Son." Cf. Heb. 1:2, 5, 8.

This would mean equality with God, or Deity. Cf. John 5:18,

"Therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

- 2) He is, secondly, "Jesus." The writer's use of this name of our Lord is one of the distinctive features of the epistle. This emphasizes His humanity, that He is our representative, that He is thus able to be "merciful" to us because He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

For some of the references, cf. Heb. 2:9; 3:1; 10:19 (the beginning of the practical section); 12:2.

More could be said about our Lord in the epistle as "Christ" and "Lord," but it is enough for the present that we see that:

- 1) The emphasis is clearly upon our Lord.
- 2) That the emphasis focuses upon both His Deity and His humanity. There can be no salvation, and certainly no growth, unless we are clear on these points.

- B. The second emphasis is upon the office which our Lord fills, and what He has done.

In the book of Hebrews the Lord Jesus Christ is presented as our "great high priest" (Heb. 4:14).

What is a priest's job? It is to minister to the Lord for people, especially concerning the problem of sin. (Contrast the priest with the prophet.)

These Hebrew believers were familiar with the OT priesthood of Aaron, but they were not familiar with the distinctive priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ which was "after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 5:6, 10)--not after Aaron.

One of the major points of the book of Hebrews is to compare what Aaron and the high priests who followed him did as compared with what our Lord Jesus Christ did. We come to the following words when the work of Christ as our priest is described:

- 1) Eternal.
- 2) Heavenly.
- 3) Perfect.
- 4) Better.

Note the following passages:

- 1) Heb. 1:3b.

- 2) Heb. 7:23-27.
- 3) Heb. 9:11, 12, 24-28.

C. Finally, the practical emphasis following from such truth centers in three things: faith, hope, love and good works. Cf. Heb. 10:19-25, esp. vv. 22, 23, 24.

Concl: After seeing these things, will you believe that the answer to your spiritual problems is in the book of Hebrews?

If so, will you read it and read it and read it--until the truth of the book grips your heart as perhaps nothing ever has?

And will you pray that the Holy Spirit will open our eyes to the truth of this book as we consider it week by week. No one of us can possibly measure the spiritual impact that this book could have in our lives, on our church, and in our city if we will give ourselves to understand this book and then live according to what we learn.

CB - 9/30/73 a.m.

GOD'S FINAL WORD
Heb. 1:1-4

Intro: In getting acquainted with the book of Hebrews last week we found that the main reason for the writing of this epistle was to help a group of immature Hebrew Christians to start to grow in the Lord. The latter part of Heb. 5 tells us that those who were saved had been saved long enough to be teachers, but that they were still only capable of understanding the milk of the Word, i.e., the basic truths which they had to know in order to be saved.

The writer's admonition to them in Heb. 6:1 is, "Let us go on unto perfection."

Whenever a condition like this exists, there is always the possibility that some may not even be saved, i.e., they may not really know the Lord as Savior. This is the reason for some of the other appeals you find in the epistle.

We do not know who the writer was, nor do we know who the people were to whom he was writing, but this problem is so common in every generation that it is very necessary for us to have a book like this in the Bible.

How is the writer going to be able to meet their need?

He is going to teach them in the greatest detail that we have any place in the Word of God the high priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE FOUNDATION OF ALL SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRUTH OF THE WORD OF GOD. THE VERY HEART OF THAT TRUTH IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST--WHO HE IS, AND WHAT HIS WORKS ARE. Therefore, as we come to our text this morning, we find in the first four verses a summary, a survey, of all that we are going to find in the epistle. To get the truths of these verses firmly established in our hearts and minds is to get off to a good start.

Will you notice that in these four verses (in fact, in the whole first chapter) there is nothing for us to do? The writer is concerned, first of all, with what we need to know. And, in particular, it is what we need to know about Christ!

I. GOD'S TWO MESSAGES (Heb. 1:1, 2a).

They are His first message, and His final message. There are only two, and there never will be any more.

A reading of these two verses will show us that the two messages are to be found in the Old Testament (for the first one) and in the New Testament (for the final one).

Some people attempt to separate Christ and our knowledge of Him from the Scriptures. Never make that mistake. THE ONLY PLACE WE CAN GO FOR AUTHORITATIVE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS TO THE WORD OF GOD. God has spoken in His Son, but all of what He has said is in the Word of God.

Before we consider what God has said, let us think for just a moment about the fact that He has spoken.

- (1) It is possible that we could be entirely in the dark regarding God. If He had not spoken, we would be because it is impossible for man to discover the things that we have in the Bible.
- (2) Secondly, the fact that God has spoken through so many people in so many different ways and over such a long period of time (at least 1600 years) is evidence that God is reaching out for man. For Him to speak means that He wants us to hear. There would be no other purpose in His speaking. It is important for us to see this.
- (3) But, now, we need to ask ourselves the question: Have we heard, or are we going to hear, what God has said? As we go through this book of Hebrews, will our hearts really be open to the Word of God? Or, will we finish about as lacking in understanding as we were when we started.

The Holy Spirit is the only One who can teach us.

For us to have our hearts open to Him not only means that we want to know, but it means a willingness to act upon the truths which we learn from the Word. JUST AS THE BOOK OF HEBREWS HAS A PRACTICAL SECTION (Heb. 10:19-13:25) AS WELL AS A DOCTRINAL SECTION (Heb. 1:1-10:18) MEANS THAT ALL DOCTRINE, OR TEACHING, IN THE SCRIPTURES IS TO HAVE PRACTICAL RESULTS IN OUR LIVES.

God has spoken. Let us be sure that we hear what He has said.

What about God's two messages?

A. The first one (Heb. 1:1).

This is the writer's description of the OT.

God spoke at different times in different ways through different people, BUT IT WAS ALWAYS GOD WHO WAS SPEAKING.

Let us be sure to get this. It makes the Bible different from any other book that has ever been written. IT IS THE WORD OF GOD!

But, who were "the fathers"?

They are the men to whom we look back as having had a foundational part in all that God has been doing from the beginning. The Bible speaks of men such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David as "the fathers."

Now here is an important point--a point which will be emphasized as we go through the epistle: If God spoke to the fathers so that what they knew did not originate with them, **THEN WE CAN CONCLUDE THAT THE WORD WHICH GOD SPOKE HAS EVEN GREATER AUTHORITY THAN THE FATHERS THEMSELVES.**

This is a very important point to keep in mind.

B. The last one (Heb. 1:2a).

We must speak of it as the last message instead of the second one BECAUSE THERE WILL NOT BE ANY MORE. The New Testament contains God's final word to man because He has no more to say that He has said "in His Son."

Keep in mind that it is still God who is speaking.

"In these last days" is lit. in the end of the days. We are now in that period of human history which can be described as the last days, or the end days, or the end times. God has nothing more to say. This speaks of the culmination of all things which will be brought about by the coming of the Lord.

This makes it even more important that we hear what God has said.

BUT NOTE: THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VERSES 1 AND 2 IS THE MEANS BY WHICH GOD HAS SPOKEN THESE TWO TIMES.

The first time He spoke, lit., in the prophets; the last time, in such a One as a Son. Bishop Westcott says that "the absence of the article fixes attention upon the nature and not upon the personality of the Mediator of the new revelation" (p. 7).

Nothing could possibly emphasize the importance of what God has said than this. **HE HAS SPOKEN IN HIS SON!**

God's messages have a progressive relationship to each other. They are not in conflict. Instead, the last completes the first. They stand to each other like a promise and its fulfillment. But let us notice here at the beginning of the epistle that nothing could be more tragic than for us to miss what God has said in His Son and about His Son.

II. THE DETAILS OF GOD'S FINAL WORD (Heb. 1:2b-4).

It all has to do with the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we need to remember that the Sonship of Jesus Christ speaks of His absolute equality with the Father.

- A. The Son's relationship to the "all things" of creation (Heb. 1:2b).

Notice how the writer speaks of the end first, and then speaks of the beginning.

Christ is The Heir, and Christ is The Creator.

The object of all creation is that God might have an inheritance to give to His Son. To guarantee that this would eventually come about, God through His Son made the ages--the world considered from the standpoint of the successive periods of time through which it passes!

History is His story. What God started out to do He is going to accomplish.

- B. The Son's relationship to the Father (Heb. 1:3a).

This is one of the great passages of the NT dealing with the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do not think of Jesus Christ as a creature--even as the first one. He did not begin to exist when He was born of the virgin Mary. He is the "I am," the One who is without beginning and without ending.

The difference between these two expressions seems to be indicated by the two words, outwardly and inwardly.

1. Outwardly: Christ was "the brightness of" God's "glory."

There were many revelations of God in the OT, but no one in himself was a revelation of God in all of His fulness like the Lord Jesus was.

2. Inwardly: Christ was "the express image of God's nature."

He possessed all of the divine attributes. The divine essence is His!

Thus, there could be no greater revelation of Father even if the Father Himself had come in the flesh!

C. The Son's relationship to our salvation (Heb. 1:3b).

In v. 2b we looked at the future and the past; here, we look at the present as well as at the past.

1. The Son of God is moving things toward God's ultimate purpose for all things: "upholding all things by the word of his power."
2. He "purged our sins." He has done all that God requires for our cleansing from the defilement of our sins, i.e., our forgiveness.

We do not help Him. He left nothing for us to do. His work is finished and perfect. This is the message of the epistle!

3. At the present time He is seated "on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Cf. 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.

This indicates that His work for our salvation is:

- 1) Finished.
- 2) Accepted.

We are not now concerned with a Christ on the cross, but with Christ on the throne!

D. The initial consequence (Heb. 1:4): He is "better than the angels."

"Better" is one of the key words of the epistle. It is used 13 times. Among them are:

- 1) "A better hope" (7:19).
- 2) "A better testament" (7:22).
- 3) "A better covenant" and "better promises" (8:6).
- 4) "Better sacrifices" (9:23).
- 5) "A better country" (11:16).
- 6) "A better resurrection" (11:35).
- 7) "Some better thing" (11:40).
- 8) "Better things than that of Abel" (12:24).

"Better" means better than something else that is good.

Angels were instrumental in the giving of the Law. They have a good name, but not as good as the Son has. His is better.

Concl: Make sure that you know these truths. These are the truths that will unfold before us in Hebrews--truths which we must know if we are to grow in grace and go on to the maturity that should be ours in Christ.

CB - 10/7/73 a.m.

A QUESTION THAT DESERVES AN ANSWER
Heb. 1:5-14

Intro: There are many things in the Word of God that we cannot understand. We accept them and believe them, but many things go beyond our finite ability to explain. Cf. Heb. 11:3

But there are many things that we can understand.

Often in reading the Word of God we are impressed with the "sweet reasonableness" of Scripture, as one has referred to it. The writers of Scripture, although directed by the Holy Spirit, were men who wrote with a desire to be understood. You can follow their thought and see how they arrived at their conclusions.

This is very obvious in books like Romans and Hebrews--and in many others.

In our opening messages on Hebrews we have noted that the writer was writing to Hebrew Christians who were far from what they should have been spiritually. The main purpose of the epistle is to get them going and to get them growing! To do this, we have before us in these chapters the most complete revelation of the priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ that is given to us any place in Scripture.

Obviously, one of the reasons that these believers had not grown was that they did not hold right and proper views of the Lord Jesus. Their high views of angels, of Moses, of Abraham, of Aaron, and of many others, kept them from seeing the greater importance, the greater glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, verses 1 through 3 of chapter 1 raised some questions immediately--a question which is anticipated in v. 4!

Here we see the reasonableness of God in His Word. To those early Hebrew believers, this was A QUESTION THAT DESERVED AN ANSWER! It might not bother Gentiles, but it did bother Jews. The question is this: How could a human being be greater than angels?

Two things were behind this question:

1) The Psalms actually taught that angels are greater than men. It is found in Psalm 8, and the writer of Hebrews quotes from it in Heb. 2:6, 7.

Therefore, this would mean that Jesus was less than an angel.

2) It was commonly known among the Jews that the Law had been given to Moses by angels.

a) Acts 7:53 tells us that Stephen described the fathers of Israel as those "who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

b) Gal. 3:19, Paul's words:

"Wherefore, then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."

c) Heb. 2:2, the writer of Hebrews refers to the Law in these words,

"For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast . ."

From all of this the problem could be stated this way:

IF JESUS CHRIST WAS A MAN, AND MEN ARE LESS THAN ANGELS,
THEN NO GOSPEL OF HIS COULD POSSIBLY BE AS IMPORTANT AS THE
LAW OF MOSES WHICH WAS GIVEN TO MOSES BY ANGELS.

And so you can see that, before the writer of Hebrews can talk much about what Jesus Christ has done, he must show who Jesus Christ is, and prove beyond any doubt that Jesus Christ is greater than angels.

Now be sure that you understand this or the first two chapters of Hebrews will not make sense to you.

How does he go about proving it?

Here is an important lesson for all of us: HE PROVES IT BY CITING CERTAIN PASSAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. If Jesus Christ is as important as the writer of Hebrews has indicated in vv. 1-3, then we can expect to find it supported by the rest of Scripture.

And what Scripture would appeal to the Hebrew Christians?

The Old Testament.

And so the writer of Hebrews goes to the Old Testament. Again you have evidence of the reasonableness of the Word of God.

In our text this morning we have quotations from 7 OT passages, and the purpose for quoting each one is to prove that Jesus Christ is greater than angels!

The passages are:

- 1) Psa. 2:7.
- 2) 2 Sam. 7:14.
- 3) Deut. 32:43, LXX.
- 4) Psa. 104:4.
- 5) Psa. 45:6, 7.
- 6) Psa. 102:25-27.
- 7) Psa. 110:1.

The use of these passages:

- 1) Confirms the authority of the OT.
- 2) Shows the teaching value of the Psalms.

Now we are ready for the proof.

The question boils down to this: What effect did the incarnation have upon the nature of our Lord? When He became a man, did He cease to be God?

Before we look at the verses in detail, note how the writer refers to the Lord Jesus Christ in this chapter:

- 1) V. 2, "Son."
- 2) V. 5, "Son" (2x).
- 3) V. 8, "Son," and, "God."
- 4) V. 10, "Lord."

That "God" and "Lord" indicate Deity is obvious. Concerning "Son," note the following passages:

- 1) John 5:18,
"Therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."
- 2) John 10:30-33,
"I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shown you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."
- 3) John 19:7, when our Lord was before Pilate, the Jews said,
"We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

How does our text establish that Jesus Christ, the Son of God who became man, was still, because He continued to be the Son of God, greater than angels?

- I. THE FACT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS ADDRESSED AS THE SON OF GOD, WHILE ANGELS NEVER ARE (Heb. 1:5).

These two quotations are from Psalms 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14.

Never do you find God declaring Himself about angels as He does about Christ. Cf. Luke 3:22 at our Lord's baptism, and Luke 9:35, at His transfiguration. Paul uses Psalm 2:7 in Acts 13:33 of Christ's resurrection. Cf. Romans 1:4, "declared to be the Son of God . . ."

2 Samuel 7:14 speaks of our Lord's reign on earth, yet future, and still a Son! No angel was ever so honored!

- II. THE FACT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS TO BE WORSHIPPED; ANGELS ARE TO WORSHIP HIM (Heb. 1:6).

The other night Mrs. Custis and I were with one of our families, and before we left their home we read together Rev. 22--the last chapter of the Bible. And this is what we read in vv. 8, 9,

"And I, John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then saith he (i.e., the angel) unto me, See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren, the prophets, and of them who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

An angel said that! Never are we told to worship angels. But angels are told to worship the Son of God. AND THIS PASSAGE IN DEUT. 32:43 (LXX) REFERS TO THE TIME OF OUR LORD'S SECOND COMING!

So, if He is greater than angels then, He must be greater now.

III. THE FACT THAT ANGELS ARE SERVANTS; THE SON OF GOD IS KING (Heb. 1:7-9).

V. 7 is from Psa. 104:4; vv. 8, 9 are from Psa. 45:6, 7.

Angels have a permanent place of service, serving the Lord like "wind" and "fire."

The Son is called, "God." His throne is forever. And God has anointed the Son "with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Our Lord's "fellows" are those who have served the Father as He did in His earthly ministry, BUT NO ONE WHO HAS EVER SERVED THE FATHER AMONG EITHER ANGELS OR MEN HAS BEEN EXALTED TO THE PLACE THAT HE HAS!

IV. THE FACT THAT THE SON IS THE CREATOR; IT IS IMPLIED THAT ANGELS WERE CREATED--and they were (Heb. 1:10-12).

This is a long quotation from Psa. 102:25-27.

Not only does the writer call the Son, "Lord," but He shows how He is always distinct from what He has created. Created beings will change, but the Creator will always remain the same--a thing which could only be true of God!

And then, finally, the writer comes back to the theme of His epistle when he returns to what he had written in Heb. 1:3--that our Lord, the Son of God, has now been seated "on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

And so we have the writer's final point in the proof:

V. THE FACT THAT NO ANGEL HAS EVER BEEN ASKED TO SIT AT GOD'S RIGHT HAND--BUT THE SON IS THERE NOW (Heb. 1:13, 14).

) This is the proof of all proofs. Angels even serve those who will be heirs of salvation (v. 14). How could we ever begin to think that they are greater than the Lord Jesus?

Concl: In v. 4 the writer of Hebrews wrote that the Son was "so much better than the angels."

He is not minimizing the importance of angels. The elect angels are good; BUT HE IS ETERNALLY BETTER!

Has this chapter proven the greatness of the Son of God to you? Do you believe that He is greater than angels?

I wish I could go on to chapter 2 this morning. But since I cannot, let me urge you who do not know the Lord to open your hearts to His Word. You know the 10 commandments, but do you know John 3:16 or John 14:6? If you know them, have you acted on them? If not, won't you this morning?

) For those of us who do know the Lord--how we need to read and re-read this important chapter until the majesty and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ overshadows the glory of men and angels until we can see that there is no one like He is. To understand this is not only the key to the book of Hebrews, but it is the key to a life of joy and blessing and triumph through all of the experiences of our lives in this world. He is greater than all!

CB - 10/14/73 a.m.

THE SOLEMN APPLICATION OF AN IMPORTANT TRUTH
Heb. 2:1-4

Intro: In chapter 1 we have seen that the Lord Jesus Christ is greater than angels. They are good; He is better.

The proof has been given by means of 7 OT passages of Scripture.

Such proof was necessary because the Law had been given to Moses through the ministry of angels. Cf. Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19. But note also Psa. 68:17,

"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place."

It was the humanity of Jesus Christ that raised this question. However, the point of chapter 1 is that His incarnation did not in any way affect His Sonship.

Thus, the superiority of Jesus Christ over angels is the important truth (see subject); now we see how that truth is to be applied. We need to look always for the practical implications of any truth that we learn from the Word of God.

I. WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO (Heb. 2:1).

The writer puts himself with the readers to show that this applies to all. But he is concerned especially about those who have not placed their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

"Ought" could be better translated, must. Such clear evidence cannot be set aside, and must not be set aside.

Instead, we must hold our minds to it until we understand it and respond properly to it.

"The things which we have heard" is, lit., the things which WE HAVE BEEN MADE to hear, as though God had sovereignly gotten the message through to them even though they were not particularly interested in it.

What was the danger?

It was not that the truth would slip by, but that man would drift by the truth.

Man is pictured as being in the stream of life. He is floating toward destruction. Cf. Heb. 6:19, 20. "A strong current or wind was threatening to make these" people "drift away from the harbor of salvation" (Lenski, p. 64). By their lack of attention to what they had heard, they might be

carried past their last hope of safety!

HAVE WE REALIZED WHAT A SOLEMN THING IT IS TO HEAR ABOUT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND TO HEAR THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL? It is not an accident that we have heard it. And we cannot lightly set it aside without placing in jeopardy our entire eternal destiny. Oh, that this word "must" would grip your heart this morning.

II. WHY WE MUST DO IT (Heb. 2:2-4).

Briefly the answer is this: BECAUSE THERE IS NO OTHER WAY OF ESCAPE!

We do not like to hear this, but the solemn fact that faces every person is that all men are under the judgment of God. As our Lord said, we do not have to do anything to be condemned because we are "condemned already" (John 3:18). Paul warned the Romans in Rom. 2:5 that no man can by his own excuses "escape the judgment of God."

We do not even have to reject the Gospel; all we need to do is to "neglect" it, and the judgment will eventually come to us.

Do you understand this?

Both the law and the Gospel serve as a warning to us.

THE LAW TEACHES US THAT MAN CANNOT VIOLATE THE WORD OF GOD WITHOUT TAKING THE CONSEQUENCES. "The word spoken by angels" is the Law.

The Law was "steadfast"--inviolable, firm, unchangeable.

"Every transgression" (a known violation where the offender oversteps or passes over the limits of the Law) "and every disobedience" (a failure to hear, or a failure to hear it rightly--which was no excuse) "received a just recompense of reward." THE LAW PROVED THAT GOD JUDGES SINS AND THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL ILLUSTRATES THIS. Cf. Acts 7--Stephen's message.

So the Law did not save; it condemned! This is the lesser of the two messages when the Law is compared with the Gospel.

But notice the reasoning.

If the lesser message brought such severe judgments, what can we possibly expect but an even greater judgment by our failure to give heed to that which "at the first began to be spoken by the Lord"?

Cf. the same thought in:

- 1) Heb. 10:28, 29.
- 2) Heb. 12:25.

Note the words "so great salvation." Before we notice why it is called great here, be sure to pay attention to the word, "salvation," itself. It means to be delivered from something.

There are many reasons why it can be called, "great."

- 1) It is great because of what it saves us from.
- 2) It is great because of the One who provided it.
- 3) It is great because of all who are included in it.
- 4) It is great because of how it can be obtained.
- 5) It is great because of how long it lasts.
- 6) It is great because of how we have become aware of it.
- 7) It is great because of what it results in.

But how does the writer here indicate its greatness? In three ways:

- 1) It was that which "began to be spoken by the Lord."

This does not mean that the Lord was the first to preach the Gospel, but that the Gospel was what He preached. He did not preach the Law as the way of salvation.

Going back to chapter 1, if the Lord is greater than angels, then we must recognize the superiority of His message over theirs.

- 2) It "was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."

"Confirmed" is related to "steadfast" in v. 2.

Here are the witnesses--not just one, but many. And this is enough to confirm it according to the Mosaic Law. Cf. Deut. 17:6.

Note that the words here indicate that we are dealing with second generation believers.

- 3) Finally, "God also bearing them witness."

The word that is used here for "bearing . . . witness" is used nowhere else in the Bible. It means to witness WITH and IN ADDITION TO the others who have witnessed.

God has done this! How?

- a) "With signs." This describes the miracles as pointing to something beyond themselves. They were our Lord's credentials, as the Gospel of John shows.
- b) "And wonders." Again, referring to the miracles, but here as causing them to wonder in such a way that they could never forget the amazing things which the Lord did.

- c) "Divers miracles." The word, powers, would perhaps be better here. It speaks of works which men could never have done by themselves. They were supernatural powers, heavenly powers, manifested on earth.
- d) "Gifts of the Holy Spirit." The third Person of the Trinity is now brought in even though He distributes these "gifts" according to the will of God. This is a part of God's confirming witness for the Gospel.

Concl: How many of us here this morning need to pay attention to this warning before going any farther?

Even the Law serves as a warning to us.

And this has been given added confirmation:

- 1) Because it was the message the Lord preached.
- 2) Because it was confirmed by witnesses who heard Him.
- 3) Because God has confirmed the work of His Son through the miracles and through gifts distributed to believers through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

What more could He have done to emphasize the importance of this "so great salvation"?

There is no escape apart from Him. If you have never trusted Him, will you not trust Him now?

CB - 10/28/73 a.m.

THE MAN WHO IS GREATER THAN ANGELS
Hebrews 2:5-13

Intro: In chapter 1 of Hebrews the writer begins this wonderful epistle by showing that the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son, is greater than angels.

Sonship in this sense means DEITY.

Since He is greater than angels, you have the warning which was given in 2:1-4. His word, i.e., the Gospel, is therefore greater than "the word spoken by angels," i.e., the Law.

Because this is true, a warning is issued to those who have neglected the Gospel by failing to give Jesus Christ the consideration which He deserves. Cf. 2:1-4.

As we come to 2:5 we are still comparing the Lord Jesus Christ with angels, but in another way. Now we are going to show that He is even greater than angels in His humanity, i.e., greater as a man. He is THE MAN WHO IS GREATER THAN ANGELS!

How does the writer of Hebrews prove this?

Note what he writes about . . .

I. "THE WORLD TO COME" (Heb. 2:5-8).

V. 5b indicates that this is one of the major reasons for the writing of this epistle. It is concerned with "the world to come." This would mean both the Millennial and then the Eternal Kingdoms. We are looking to the end of things.

A. What has not been said (Heb. 2:5).

It is never said in the Scriptures, either Old or New, that "the world to come" would be under the authority of angels.

Therefore, the Jews were wrong in exalting angels and in exalting the message which was given through angels. "The world to come" will not be the result of the Law. The Law will not bring in the Kingdom of God.

This point must be fully recognized.

B. What has been said (Heb. 2:6-8a).

The passage is so well-known that neither the book nor the writer needs to be identified. And this would serve as a rebuke that the readers should have known this without being told!

Psa. 8:4-6 indicates clearly that God's purpose from the beginning was to place all things under a man--not angels.

This is also obvious from Gen. 1:26-28,

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

In spite of the fact that man, according to the expression in Psa. 8, is insignificant, weak, and for a while inferior to angels, God has been

1) "Mindful of him," and

2) Has visited him.

God has been concerned about man in thought and in act.

Be sure to catch the force of, "What is man . . . 2"

The quotation from Psa. 8 ends at the beginning of v. 8 in our text. The next sentence reinforces what the Psalm has said:

"For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him."

THIS HAS BEEN GOD'S PLAN FOR THE WORLD FROM THE BEGINNING, AND HIS PLAN HAS NEVER BEEN CHANGED.

C. A progress report (Heb. 2:8b).

Do you really need this? Couldn't you really come up with this yourself? "But now we see not yet all things put under him." After 2,000 years this statement still stands!

Think of all of the things that keep life on the earth from being what it should be:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1) War. | 11) Power shortage. |
| 2) Crime. | 12) Fuel shortage. |
| 3) Greed. | These are causing other |
| 4) Immorality. | shortages. |
| 5) Disease. | |
| 6) Poverty. | |
| 7) Inflation. | |
| 8) Disasters. | |
| 9) Corruption in government. | |
| 10) Pollution of our air and water--and lots of other things are polluted, too. | |

If anything, we are farther from solutions today than we have ever been.

More than that, IF THINGS ARE LEFT UP TO MEN AS WE NOW KNOW THEM, GOD'S OBJECTIVE WILL NEVER BE REACHED.

Why?

For just one reason: S . . . I . . . N!

As long as man is what he is, and what he has been since Adam first sinned, God's objective will never be reached!

At this point we need to remember that God is GOD! He never starts something, or decrees something, but what He intends to carry it right through as planned.

How is He going to fulfill this?

The answer is simple: BY SENDING HIS SON INTO THE WORLD AS A MAN. Note carefully what follows.

II. THE MAN WHO WILL BE LORD IN "THE WORLD TO COME" (Heb. 2:9-13).

A. The Man and His work (Heb. 2:9).

All would be hopeless if we could not say, "But we see Jesus."

Note His name: "Jesus." Cf. Matt. 1:21, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS; for he shall save His people from their sins."

This is = to Joshua in the OT. It means Jehovah is Savior, or salvation. And this name is one of the

important features of the book of Hebrews, i.e., the many times it is used. Cf. 3:1; 4:14; 6:20; 7:22; 10:19; 12, 2, 24; 13:20.

How wonderful it would be if our liberal friends would use the name as it is used here: "for the suffering of death . . . that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."

Can you say this morning, "But we see Jesus"? This means that you understand Who He is and why He came.

This is the secret of all peace and joy--to see Jesus, to know why He came, and to have trusted Him as the One who can take care of your sins.

Note: What He did was . . .

- 1) "By the grace of God."
- 2) "For every man."

B. The Man and our relationship with God (Heb. 2:10).

Here he wants to show that such a thing is what we would expect of God--in His grace.

He makes us His "sons."

He gives us a position like that of His Son.

But in doing so, it was necessary for the one who was "the captain of their salvation," i.e.,

- 1) The originator.
- 2) The leader who goes ahead so that we can follow, would attain unto His perfection as our Savior "though sufferings." *This has nothing to do with sin in Him. HE HAD NONE!*

"Perfection" (another important word in Hebrews) means He is completely qualified to take care of all that is necessary relative to our salvation. (It is a word which can be absolute or relative, but is always absolute in the case of our Lord.)

C. The Man and our relationship with Him (Heb. 2:11-13).

If He makes us "sons" of God, and He is the Son of God, then it is still amazing but not beyond understanding that HE IS NOT ASHAMED TO CALL US HIS BRETHREN.

"Glory" has been used in vv. 7, 9, 10. (Explain.) Here we have the word, "sanctifieth." The Lord is the One who sanctifies; we are the ones who are sanctified.

It is better to say that we are being sanctified. But sanctification and glory are related like the means and the end, the process and the product.

All of this comes from God who is doing the work of salvation. Cf. v. 10.

The proof that the Lord is not ashamed of us (although many times He has reasons to be) is to be found in three OT quotations, taken from two passages:

- 1) Psa. 22:22, in v. 12.
- 2) Isa. 8:17, 18 in v. 13.

The LXX figures into both of these passages.

These passages are designed to give assurance regarding our salvation, and to show that this has always been the plan of God regarding "the world to come."

Concl: We are not finished speaking of what the Man, Jesus, has done for us. We will see more about that next week, the Lord willing.

Just make sure that you understand what we have covered so far--make sure that you really understand that JESUS is the Son of God who became Man to fulfil what God has always planned to be fulfilled through Him.

Make sure that you know Him as your Savior. No angel can begin to compare with Him--even in His humanity.

If you know Him, what a lot of truth we have here to be digested, and then to be turned back to the Lord in ceaseless praise. Never be ashamed of the name, Jesus. It is only because He became a Man that you and I can know Him as our Savior and Great High Priest.

CB - 11/4/73 a.m.

WHY THE SON BECAME A MAN
Heb. 2:14-18

Intro: Here in chapter 2 of Hebrews the writer is concerned with the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

) Therefore, for the first time in the book we have the use of His Name, "Jesus."

We also have at least 3 statements which describe the fact that He became a man. We speak of it as His incarnation. Those three statements are:

- 1) V. 9, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels." In v. 7, quoted from Psa. 8, we have this statement describing man at creation.
- 2) V. 14, "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."
- 3) V. 17, "Wherefore, in all things it behooved him to be made like his brethren."

And, in connection with each of these statements we have a reason stated for His incarnation. Note again:

- 1) V. 9, "that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."
- 2) V. 14, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," and in v. 15, "And deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage."
- 3) V. 17, "that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation," or better, propitiation, "for the sins of the people."

Therefore, we could say that the writer gives us 4 good reasons why the Son of God (of chapter 1) became a man.

This morning, however, I want to put them all under one heading, and I want to do it by using two verses in our text this morning which I have not yet referred to: vv. 16 and 18:

- 1) V. 16. Our translation seems to make this a 4th statement of the incarnation. (Read it.) But you will notice the italics. It is better to read it like this:

"For verily He, our Lord, did not take hold of angels, but he took hold of the seed of Abraham."

Now what does it mean?

It means that He did not come to help angels, but he came to help "the seed of Abraham," who were men.

This same verb is used in Matt. 14:31 where it is translated, "caught":

Peter has been walking on the water, and suddenly

he begins to sink. "And immediately Jesus stretched for his hand, and caught him," i.e., took hold of him, "and said unto him, O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?"

Our Lord helped Peter, or he would have drowned in the sea.

- 2) V. 18. Here we actually have the word "succour," which means, to help. Cf. NSRB. The NASB has, "He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."

So, in developing my subject, WHY THE SON BECAME A MAN, the main answer is that man needs help and "Jesus" came to provide that help for us.

Concerning our relationship to God, how do we need help? The four answers are given in vv. 9, 14, 15, 17, and 18.

All of these verses have to do with His incarnation, i.e., the time when He became a man, when He became "JESUS."

They all have to do with His suffering and death.

But I want you to see that the emphasis in each one is slightly different:

- 1) In v. 9 we are concerned with the Cross. That is where He tasted death.
- 2) In vv. 14, 15 we are concerned with our Lord's resurrection (although it is not mentioned). Other passages, such as 1 Cor. 15 make it clear that death has been conquered by resurrection.
(The resurrection of Christ is only referred to once specifically in this Epistle: Heb. 13:20.)
- 3) In vv. 17, 18 we are concerned with our Lord's present ministry in heaven as our "merciful and faithful high priest."

AND ALL OF THIS IS INVOLVED IN OUR SALVATION. We need His death. We need His resurrection. We need His present ministry in heaven. Without any of these our salvation would not be complete and certainly would not be eternal!

Let us notice now the details.

- I. THE SON BECAME A MAN TO DIE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR OUR SINS (Heb. 2:9).

I am not going over this again since we considered it last Sunday. But just let me repeat: This is the foundation of it all. We need someone who can take our place, and God has provided that One in His Son, the Lord of glory who became the Man, Jesus.

It was through His death, not just His life, that God has been satisfied. And it is only through "Jesus," the Son of God, that I have any hope at all that my sins have been removed and forgiven--forever!

II. THE SON OF GOD BECAME A MAN TO DELIVER ME FROM TWO MORE ENEMIES (Heb. 2:14, 15).

In v. 9 I learn that "Jesus" delivered me from sin and everything connected with it.

Here I learn that He has delivered me from:

A. The devil (Heb. 2:14).

What does "devil" mean? It means that he is an accuser, a slanderer.

Rev. 12:10 is referring to the devil when it says, "The accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night." That is why he is called, "the devil."

But our text tells us that he has been destroyed! What does this mean?

It means, not that he has been annihilated, but that he has been stripped of his power. NO WAY OF SALVATION COULD MEET OUR NEED UNLESS IT COULD TAKE CARE OF OUR ENEMY, "THE DEVIL." And our Lord has done just that!

He can no longer hold me in his power, and His accusations before God no longer can make a case.

But that is not all. Notice what v. 15 has to say about

B. Death (Heb. 2:15).

Death is also a conquered foe. We have not only been delivered from death, but from the "fear of death" which keeps men in bondage.

Cf. 1 Cor. 15:55-57,
"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But this is not all!

III. THE SON OF GOD BECAME A MAN THAT HE MIGHT BE OUR HIGH PRIEST (Heb. 2:16-18).

Now we have come to the theme of our Epistle.

Do you know that this the only book in the N.T. that calls "Jesus" our high priest? And did you know that this is the major emphasis in this Epistle?

Note the adjectives that are used to describe Him:

- 1) "Merciful"--which means that He feels the misery we experience which is the consequence of our sins.
Does sin make you happy? Has it ever made you really happy? NO! Sin brings misery. But "Jesus" knows what that misery is, and His heart is filled with mercy toward us. I speak now of believers.
- 2) "Faithful"--which means He can be trusted. He will do all that He as a high priest is required to do about your sin and mine--in seeing that it is removed.

That is the reason we read here, "to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

Bishop Westcott says about this expression in the original,

"The one(eternal) act of Christ . . . is here regarded in its continuous present application to men."

God is satisfied. That is what propitiation means. Cf. 1 John 2:1, 2.

This is why we can say that we are saved eternally. It no way means that we are sinless, but it means that we have a Savior who understands our deepest needs, and who is our high priest to represent us before God.

Concl: I sought to show in beginning this morning that our passage teaches that the Son of ch. 1 became the Man, Jesus, to help us.

"Help" in v. 18 of our text has a very special meaning. It means to run at the cry of someone. It is just like a parent responds to his child. This is how the Lord responds to us. "He is able"! Cf. Heb. 7:25; Jude 24; 2 Cor. 9:8; 2 Tim. 1:12; Eph. 3:20.

CB - 11/11/73 a.m.

CHRIST, GREATER THAN MOSES
Heb. 3:1-6

Intro: As we go through the epistle to the Hebrews we need to remember the reason why this letter was written. IT WAS WRITTEN TO GET IMMATURE BELIEVERS (primarily Hebrew) TO GET GROWING AND GOING IN THE THINGS OF THE LORD!

One of the things which always keeps the people of God in a state of immaturity spiritually is a failure to give the Lord Jesus Christ the place He should have. Therefore, we find the writer of this epistle placing heavy emphasis upon CHRIST--both upon Who He is, and what He has done and continues to do.

In chapters 1 and 2 we have the Lord Jesus Christ compared with angels--in two ways:

- 1) In chapter 1 He is compared with angels as the Son of God, or, in His Deity. And we find that the Son of God is infinitely greater.
- 2) In chapter 2 He is compared with angels as the Son of man, or, in His humanity. And we find that even in His humanity He is infinitely greater. This is where we come to the use of His Name, Jesus, for the first time.

The comparison with angels is necessary because of the part they had in the giving of the Law. Cf. Heb. 2:2; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19.

There is a passing reference to the fact that the Lord is greater than Abraham in 2:16, but we come back to Abraham later.

This morning we come to chapter 3.

After seeing what we have seen in chapters 1 and 2, it is not surprising that we now come to a comparison between our Lord and Moses.

In these comparisons we need to notice one unusual thing: WHEN OUR LORD IS COMPARED WITH ANGELS OR MEN, WE DO NOT THINK LESS OF THOSE WITH WHOM HE IS COMPARED--BUT MORE!

The same will be true of Moses, as it was of angels.

There is one way in which Moses was like our Lord. See v. 2.

We also note in this passage that Moses was careful to fit right in with what was going to be done by our Lord. In other words, Moses was not in competition with the Lord (as the Jews made him out to be), but Moses was looking for the Lord. Note what even our Lord had to say about him in John 5:45-47:

"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?"

Moses was a great man of God--one of the greatest! BUT, in comparing him with the Lord Jesus Christ, we find that the Lord Jesus was infinitely greater, even as a man. (Note the right translation of His Name in v. 1.)

But now, let us note this as we think of the purpose of the book of Hebrews as a whole: ONE REASON FOR THE FAILURE OF THESE HEBREW CHRISTIANS TO GROW AS THEY SHOULD WAS THAT THEY GAVE MOSES A GREATER PLACE THAN GOD GAVE HIM. THEY GAVE MOSES A GREATER PLACE THAN THEY GAVE TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

They had done this with angels, too.

This should lead us to ask as we come to this passage this morning, Is there anyone, or anything, that is more important to me than the Lord Jesus Christ? (I am speaking to those of us who know the Lord.) If there is, then we, too, are not where we should be spiritually, nor can we be as long as this is true.

Let us look at the help that is given to us in the passage before us this morning. There are things we need to know.

I. WE NEED TO KNOW OUR POSITION BEFORE GOD (Heb. 3:1a).

There are obviously ways in which we as the people of God are different, BUT WHEN IT COMES TO THE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS WE HAVE (in any age) AND TO THE STANDING WE HAVE BEFORE GOD, WE ARE ALL ALIKE. I have no reason to think more or less of anyone else.

We are all "holy brethren." We are all "partakers of the heavenly calling."

On "brethren," cf. Heb. 2:11, 12, 17.

In this sense, not even we are less than Moses. We are not for the moment talking about how we show what we are, but simply the wonderful truth that these are terms which describe what all of the people of God are.

Cf. Eph. 1:3-14.

II. WE NEED TO FIX OUR ATTENTION ON "THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF OUR" CONFESSION, "JESUS" (Heb. 3:1b).
2

This is what it means to "consider."

Let me ask you a question this morning: How much time do you

give, or have you given this week, to thinking deliberately continuously about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ill. This past week Dr. Howard Hendricks has been in the city. He is the Professor of Christian Education at Dallas Seminary, and was here for the opening of the new Christian Supply Center headquarters. I talked to him about an assignment he gives in one of his classes for the first year men at the Seminary--finding 75 things, different things in Acts 1:8!

Do you read your Bible like that--looking for everything that you can find about the Lord Jesus Christ?

Do you know what it means that He is "the Apostle . . . of our confession"?

Do you know what it means that He is "the . . . High Priest of our confession"?

The one speaks of where He came from, and why; the second of what He did here and what He is doing now.

MANY CHRISTIANS REMAIN IN A STATE OF SPIRITUAL INFANCY BECAUSE THEY THINK MORE ABOUT OTHER THINGS AND OTHER PEOPLE THAN THEY DO OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

If this has been your problem, will you BY THE GRACE OF GOD begin to change it today?

III. WE NEED TO KNOW SOME OF THE REASONS WHY OUR LORD IS GREATER THAN MOSES (Heb. 3:3-6a).

Beginning with v. 2 we have the use of the word "house"--down through v. 6. In all, 7 times.

The reference all the way through seems to be that the "house" is God's "house." Cf. 1 TIM. 3:15 - "the house of God, which is the church of the living God."

The first time this expression is used in the Bible is in Gen. 7:1 when God told Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark . . ."

"House" means family.

The points of comparison between Moses and Christ (see the change from "Jesus" in v. 1 to "Christ" in v. 6):

- 1) The Lord built the house; Moses was in it.
 - 2) Moses was a servant; the Lord was the Son.
 - 3) Moses was in it; the Lord was over it.
- Building "the house" includes furnishing it completely!

Therefore, in every respect, Christ was and is greater.

But this is not all. The passage closes with a conditional statement, and this in turn leads to the warning which we have in 3:7-4:13. But this is the final thing in our passage that we need to know.

IV. WE NEED TO KNOW THE PROOFS THAT WE ARE IN THE HOUSE (Heb. 3:6b).

Note how this verse speaks of assurance.

To "hold fast" means that we do not let go, we do not give up.

"Confidence" is boldness--an important word in the epistle: 4:16; 10:19, 35. According to Westcott (p. 78), this also expresses itself in word or act.

"Hope" is another important word in Hebrews: 6:11; 7:19; 10:23; 11:1. It points to the goal of salvation. See 9:28. There is to be boasting in this.

This kind of assurance which produces a corresponding stability marks one out who is a true child of God. WE DO NOT "HOLD FAST" IN ORDER TO HAVE, BUT BECAUSE WE HAVE.

Concl: Does this describe you?

Let me make two points in closing:

- 1) Make sure that you really know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. The "if" of v. 6 is not to shake our confidence, but to show us that we need to be sure.
- 2) For those who know the Lord--how we need to have our hearts and mind occupied with Christ continually. Take v. 1 as your verse for the week. Think about the Lord. Meditate upon what it means that He is your "Apostle and High Priest." This is the only way that there can continue to be true spiritual growth and the kind of joy that is expressed at the end of the passage.

CB - 11/18/73 a.m.

A WARNING OUT OF THE PAST
Heb. 3:7-19

Intro: The writer of this Epistle is writing for those who were spiritually immature--in this case, Hebrew believers.

They were immature because they were still attached to the Law of Moses, and because they had not come to understand the far-reaching effect of the work of Christ.

To show them the greater glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, the writer of Hebrews begins to draw some comparisons:

- 1) In the introduction (1:1-4), we see that Christ is greater than the OT prophets.
- 2) Through the rest of chapter 1 and all of chapter 2, Christ is shown to be greater than angels.
- 3) Last Sunday, in 3:1-6, we saw that Christ is greater than Moses.

This last comparison was introduced with a command to fix their attention upon the Lord Jesus Christ--called here simply, Jesus.

But, remember, these comparisons do not make us think less of those who are compared with our Lord, but more!

Moses was faithful, and so was Christ. BUT THE PEOPLE UNDER MOSES WERE NOT FAITHFUL, AND THE SAME DANGER FACED (AND FACES) THE PEOPLE WHO WERE (AND ARE) UNDER OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

And so, with the 7th verse, we come to another digression, another warning. It continues down through 4:13. We will go only as far as the end of chapter 3 this morning.

The first thing we have is . . .

I. AN OLD TESTAMENT QUOTATION (Heb. 3:7-11; cf. Psalms 95:7-11).

Some copies of the OT attribute this Psalm to David. ^{Cf. 4:1} The writer of Hebrews goes back to its original source, bypassing the writer, and attributes it to the Holy Spirit--to give it its full force and authority!

It was needed in the Psalmist's day; it was needed when this Epistle to the Hebrews was written; it is still needed today!

The Psalmist shows one reason why we have the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy. We need to remember what happened to the people who were led out of Egypt by Moses "lest" (v. 12) the same thing happen to us!

What are the main features of this OT quotation?

This passage implies that Christ was the One who spoke to Israel in OT times just as He speaks to us today!

There are four:

- 1) Who said it? The Holy Spirit.
- 2) The possibility of hearing--TODAY!
- 3) The danger of hardening our hearts.
- 4) The hazard: God's irrevocable judgment. (and "Swore."
"Rest," a key word is defined in 4:10.

II. THE PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS (Heb. 3:12, 13).

There are two of them.

The first calls for examination; the second, for exhortation.

The first looks back to the Word, and then within the individual's heart; the second looks around to make sure that the same thing is not happening to others!

"Take heed" means turn your thoughts to this, consider it, contemplate it, look at it (lit.), weigh it carefully, examine it. Cf. Thayer, 103.

"Departing" is a word related in the original to "our confidence" in v. 14.

On "the living God," cf. Deut. 5:26; Josh. 3:10; 1 Sam. 17:26, 36; Isa. 37:4, 17.

Note also the relationship in the Greek between unfaithful and unbelieving.

What is the safeguard?

One is the personal encouragement which we receive from each other. See v. 13. And note that this is to be day by day. The danger is that we might be "hardened through the deceitfulness of (lit., the) sin."

III. THE CAREFUL EXPLANATION (Heb. 3:14-19).

In this we have first . . .

A. The two sides of the truth which we need to understand (vv. 14, 15).

1. What we have become, and the evidence (v. 14). Cf. the same emphasis in v. 6.
2. What could happen any day (v. 15). We cannot lose our salvation, but we can lose out on our fellowship and our rest.

B. Three important questions (Heb. 3:16-18).

Read these verses in the NSRB or the NASB rather than just the KJV.

The three questions bring out the truth that we need to recognize:

- 1) How many of them provoked God? For the record, "all."
And this was in spite of two facts:
(1) That they had been redeemed from Egypt--the type.
(2) That Moses had been their deliverer!
- 2) What, speaking generally, did they do? They "sinned."
We see this before we are told again of the specific nature of their sin.
- 3) Finally, what was the specific nature of their sin?
They "believed not." They were unfaithful even though they were redeemed.

In reading this 3rd chapter we should not leave these questions unanswered. And the answers should sink deeply into our hearts.

- C. The end of the matter (v. 19). "Unbelief" includes two things:
- 1) A failure to believe, or trust.
 - 2) A refusal to obey.

Concl: The "rest" spoken of in this chapter is not heaven. It is rest of heart here and now. It results from believing the Word and obeying the Lord. We can be saved, but not have this as our daily experience.

Do you have it?

It is not a once-for-all decision, but a daily relationship with the Lord as we respond each day in faith and obedience to His Word.

CB - 11/25/73 a.m.

REST FOR GOD'S PEOPLE
Heb. 4:1-13

Intro: "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God" (v. 9). What wonderful words these are! There is not a child of God who does not need them. But there may be many who are inclined to feel that, for them, this rest is just not possible.

Let us begin this morning by taking God at His Word, and then look together into this passage to learn about the rest which is discussed so fully in chapters 3 and 4--and only in Hebrews in these two chapters!

We are in the middle of a digression which the writer began in 3:7 and which continues through 4:13. It is the second one we have come to so far. The first was in 2:1-4.

The writer is obviously writing to meet some needs, and he wants to be sure that his readers are coming along with him spiritually.

He has been pointing back to the experience of the children of Israel in the wilderness, or desert, after they were redeemed from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. (He had been comparing Christ with Moses in 3:1-6.)

) Two times he has mentioned the necessity of holding on to our confidence (see vv. 6b, 14b).

And, he has given them two commands: vv. 12, 13.

As he comes to the end of the passage (in ch. 3) we find him linking together two words: disobedience and unbelief (vv. 18, 19).

The point is this: What happened to the Israelites could easily happen to those who first received this epistle.

What we are interested in is that it could also happen to us today! God has provided a rest for us. Are we enjoying it? If we are, then we can be sure that it is because we are believing, or trusting, the Lord, and that our trust in Him is being manifested by our obedience to His Word.

BUT IS THIS REST SOMETHING FOR THE PRESENT, OR IS IT FUTURE?

It seems that it has to be both present and future. We enter into it now, but we will experience the fulness of it when we are with the Lord.

Note the following things:

- 1) If the generation that came out of Egypt under Moses had entered into Canaan, they would have entered into rest. Since Canaan is not a type of heaven, it points to a present possession.
- 2) Our entrance into heaven is not dependent upon our daily obedience to the Lord (which is often imperfect), but upon our acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Savior. If we were to deny that this rest is present, then we would have to place salvation on another basis--that of obedience.
- 3) The whole point of the book of Hebrews thus far has been to exalt Christ by comparing Him with the prophets, with angels, with Abraham (very briefly), and now with Moses. In v. 8 He is compared with Joshua.

What is the point of these comparisons?

It is to show that Christ is greater, and that He is greater, not ^{just} because He was and is the Son of God, but because He is the fulfillment of all that they did and looked for.

Here in ch. 4, even Joshua did not bring them into "rest" or God would not have been still speaking of it to David! "He" in v. 8 should be capitalized, and "afterward" refers to Psalms 95 when "the Holy Spirit" (see v. 7) spoke to Israel again through David.

So we come to the conclusion that this rest has always been something which the people of God were to enjoy, but which they so often failed to enter into. But that rest, regardless of how wonderful it could have been in the past (and was for those who enjoyed it), could not have been at all, nor enjoyed as much, without the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In what sense is it rest?

It is resting in the Word of God and in the ways of God. See vv. 7-9 in ch. 3, and then v. 10.

This is why this warning is inserted here where the writer is dealing with the high priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is in understanding these great truths and living our lives in accord with them that rest is ours--rest in the assurance of our salvation, and rest in the mercy and faithfulness of our High Priest day by day!

Now let us turn to our passage.

I. A MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN (Heb. 4:1, 2).

"A promise" means that this is still a promise which God has for us as He had it for the saints of the Old Testament. Note how v. 2 confirms this.

Our salvation is the same as theirs. It has been validated now and fully completed by the work of Christ so that "rest" is just as much for us as for them--and perhaps even more so!

"Fear" means to show the greatest concern lest the same thing happen to us that happened to them. To "come short" is like losing out in a race. It does not have to do with salvation, but with our rest in salvation.

II. THE HISTORY OF THIS GREAT TRUTH (Heb. 4:3-10).

All doctrine progresses in Scripture from that which is incomplete to that which is complete--never from what is inaccurate to accurate.

Therefore, we can note the progress of this doctrine as we look back over the following OT times:

- 1) God's rest following creation.
- 2) Moses and the Israelites in the desert following their deliverance from Egypt.
- 3) Joshua's day. This did not even satisfy the full meaning of the truth, or He, God, would not have spoken of it later to . . .
- 4) David in Psalm 95.
- 5) And now in Hebrews we have it again.

After tracing this history in these verses, we come to the conclusion which is stated in vv. 9, 10 of our chapter. NOT ONLY IS THERE REST FOR US TODAY, BUT IT MEANS CEASING FROM OUR OWN STRIVINGS AS GOD DID FROM HIS AFTER CREATION.

THE FOLLOWING VERSE (v. 11) MIGHT SEEM TO BE IN CONTRADICTION IF WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS TO REST. We still work, but we do it with out confidence in the Lord, not in ourselves!

III. THE PRACTICAL SIDE (Heb. 4:11-13).

Here is the seeming contradiction. We must labor to enter into rest.

"Labor" means to be diligent.

The principle is illustrated in Col. 1:29, although Paul does not use the same words:

"For this I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

BUT . . . if we are to do this, there are two needs we have:

- 1) We need "the word of God" (v. 12).
- 2) We need God Himself (v. 13).

"Rest" is impossible apart from the Word. Note the characteristics which are mentioned in v. 12. Our failure to rest is not due to outward circumstances, but to the inner condition of our hearts.

And the Word always brings us to GOD! See v. 13.

This means:

- 1) He always knows our need.
- 2) He recognizes when we are trusting Him.
- 3) He also sees our unbelief which we may be trying to hide from Him.
- 4) He sees also when we are, by our own efforts, trying to bring ourselves to a place of rest, instead of trusting Him to bring us there.

Concl: These warnings, which come as digressions in this epistle to the Hebrews, are an indication that we need to stop momentarily before going on to check up on something. This is continually true as we read or study the Word of God. We need to let the Lord show us what our need is in the light of what we are reading.

How do you need what is here this morning?

Are you enjoying God's rest in your own heart? If not, why not? Do the problems seem too great? Have you sought it, but it has seemed to be unattainable?

It comes by faith, you know, and it is maintained by faith. That is the reason the Lord has given us His Word. "Faith comes by hearing . . ." (Rom. 10:17).

God will be faithful--which always means true to His Word. And He knows what your need is right now. Trust Him to give you that rest because of Who His Son is and because of what His Son has done for you, and you will find that that rest, that peace, will be yours regardless of how difficult the circumstances in your life might be.

"There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God."

There is no rest for those who do not know Him, but there is rest for those who do! And, when we get to heaven, the rest will be perfect, but it will be the perfection of the very same rest which we have been enjoying here on earth!

CB - 12/2/73 a.m.

SYMPATHETIC, BUT SINLESS

Heb. 4:14-16

Intro: In the last 3 verses of chapter 4 we are back to the main subject, but with an emphasis that carries over from the warning which we have just had. Believers today are restless and inclined to be faithless. Their lives can be just like the lives of Israel in the past--even though we have the Word and even though we have their history to warn us!

Where is our hope for rest?

It is in the fact that we have, and continue to have, "a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God."

On Christ as our high priest, cf. 1:3; 2:17, 18; 3:1.

This all means that . . .

I. CHRIST IS OUR GREATEST POSSESSION (Heb. 4:14a).

He is "great" because of:

Comparisons.

- 1) Who He is. There is none other like Him! Emph. in chs 1,
- 2) What He has done: He has cleansed us from our sins 2. (1:3).
- 3) Where He is: He is seated "on the right hand of the majesty on high" (1:3; cf. 8:1; 10:12; 12:2).
- 4) What He is doing for us now. Cf. 7:25. But this brings us also to our text this morning.

II. THREE REASONS FOR HIS GREATNESS (Heb. 4:14m, 15).

There are obviously more reasons than these 3, but these are among the most important!

- A. Concerning the past: He has, lit., passed through the heavens (Heb. 4:14m).

This undoubtedly speaks of His exaltation. Cf. 9:24.

It ties in with 1:3 and the other key verses. Also 7:26. And Eph. 4:10,

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things!"

But it also brings to our attention the fact that there are three heavens:

- 1) Cf. Gen. 1:6-8, the first heaven.
- 2) Cf. 2 Cor. 12:2, the third heaven.
- 3) Although it is not mentioned as such in Scripture, the second heaven could easily be the dwelling place of angels.

Cf. Col. 2:15,

"And, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

All that men and angels could put in His way, He overcame, and passed through the heavens to the right hand of the Father. His victory was complete!

- B. He was, and still is, "Jesus, the Son of God." Cf. 4:14m.

He is still Man; He is still God. What has been said in chs. 1 and 2 is still true! His humanity did not change His Deity; His Deity did not keep Him from being human. This is very important for our salvation, and it is very important concerning the emphasis which our writer is about to make.

- C. For us He is sympathetic, but sinless (Heb. 4:15).

The double negative is used for two reasons:

- 1) It makes the statement as strong as it can be.
- 2) It anticipates two objections:
 - a) If He is God, how can He know what we go through?
 - b) If He is man, how can He possibly meet our needs?

Begin by accepting these statements as true. Do not argue with Scripture. The Scriptures teach:

- 1) The thorough temptation of our Lord. In fact, no one has ever been tempted as He was. His temptation was to prove that He was without sin.
- 2) The absolute sinlessness and the absolute impossibility that He could sin. Cf. the following testimonies:
 - a) Peter's: 1 Pet. 2:22,
"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."
 - b) Paul's: 2 Cor. 5:21,
"For He hath made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."
 - c) John's: 1 John 3:5,
"And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin."

He, therefore, can "be touched" with our needs. He can lit. suffer with us, can sympathize, can be affected with the same feelings we have and then can have compassion on us because of "our infirmities"--our inability to keep ourselves from sinning.

He is the One, and the only One, we need!

III. TWO THINGS THAT WE SHOULD DO (Heb. 4:14b, 16).

A. "Let us hold fast our confession" (Heb. 4:14b).

Cf. 3:1; 10:23. This is usually a public confession. It means that we have no reason to be ashamed of the claims that we have made concerning our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many Old Testament passages have the same emphasis:

1) Psa. 2:12b,

"Blessed are all they who put their trust in Him."

2) Isa. 30:18,

"And therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all they that wait for Him."

B. "Let us, therefore, come boldly . . ." (Heb. 4:16).

"Boldly" means with confidence, with assurance. Note that assurance is based upon truth. Cf. 3:6; 10:19, 35.

God's throne is a place of absolute sovereignty, a place that is characterized by "grace," and a place where you will find both God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ --cf. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.

The reason for coming is twofold:

1. "That we may obtain mercy." Lit., in order that we may receive mercy.

Always put misery and mercy together. God's mercy is for our misery, AND OUR MISERY IS CAUSED BY OUR SIN!

Cf. 2:17.

This is all for sins that are past, sins that need to be forgiven.

2. "And find grace to help in time of need."

This is to keep us from sinning in the future!

Just last night I was reading in James 4:6,

"But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." A quot. from Prov. 3:34.

Concl: If . . .

the Lord Jesus continues to be what He has been,
and if . . .

His work continue to be acceptable to God,

and if . . .

He has mercy to take away the misery that I have for sins of
the past,

and if . . .

He can give me grace to keep me from sinning in the future,
CAN YOU FORESEE ANY TIME WHEN YOU WILL NEED ANYONE ELSE BUT THE
LORD JESUS CHRIST?

All of this, and much more, our passage this morning teaches.
If we have Christ, we have all we will ever need; if we do not
have Him, then nothing else will possibly be enough to meet our
needs.

Before you turn away from the Lord Jesus Christ, make sure that
what you are turning to will provide you with more than you have
in Him--which can never be!!!

Do not be like the disciples referred to in John 6:66-69,

"From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked
no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye
also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom
shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we
believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of
the living God."

CB - 12/9/73 a.m.

THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD: DOES CHRIST QUALIFY?
Heb. 5:1-10

Intro: As the book of Hebrews begins, the writer shows that Christ is greater than angels. Then he gives a warning based upon that truth--that He is greater because He is the Son of God.

Then, in chapter 2 He is greater than angels also because He is the Son of man, i.e., in His humanity. "The world to come" will not be under angels, but under a man, the Man Christ Jesus.

When we come to chapter 3 we learn that Christ is greater than Moses.

And this leads to the extended warning in 3:7-4:13.

After that warning we come back to the main subject which we have followed from the first, the high priestly ministry of our Lord. See 4:14-16.

But at the end of chapter 4 the thought seems to be that a declaration has been made without much proof. Christ may be greater than angels. He may be greater than the prophets. He may be greater than Moses. He may be greater than Joshua, and greater than Abraham. BUT THIS DOES NOT MAKE HIM A HIGH PRIEST! Does He qualify? This is the question that must be answered now.

And so let us inquire as to . . .

I. THE OFFICE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE HIGH PRIEST
(Heb. 5:1-4).

- A. The Office (Heb. 5:1). By this we mean, his responsibilities. What was the high priest supposed to do?

He was "ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins."

He was to work on behalf of men in connection with their relationship to God--and he was to be concerned with their sins.

To secure the forgiveness of their sins he offered "both gifts and sacrifices" as indicated under OT Law. He was involved with God and man. The problem was sin. The remedy was "gifts and sacrifices"

--which probably means meal offerings and blood sacrifices.

B. The Qualifications (Heb. 5:2-4).

There are three. The first one leads on into the second.

1. He had to be a man. See the first part of v. 1, and then notice that it is involved in vv. 2, 3.
2. He had to be sympathetic. Cf. vv. 2, 3.

If the offering of sacrifices had to do with his work outwardly, this has to do with his attitude inwardly.

Compassion is really balance between "undue severity and undue leniency" (Vine, p. 48). It is "one who is not unduly disturbed by the errors, faults, sins of others, but bears with them gently" (Thayer, p. 407).

There can be two kinds of sinners here, or one can lead to the other: the ignorant, and those who have gone astray.

Why is he sympathetic? Because he is faced with the same weaknesses. In fact, he must also offer sacrifices for his sins as well as theirs.

3. He must be called of God (Heb. 4:4).

This does not just mean to have a call like Aaron had, but to be of Aaron's family. There could be no other high priests. They were the ones who were called of God.

II. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF JESUS CHRIST (Heb. 5:5-10).

A. He was called of God (Heb. 5:5, 6).

The gist of these two OT quotations, the first of which we have in 1:5, is that the God who has identified Him in Scripture as His Son has also identified Him in Scripture as a priest.

The first quotation is from Psa. 2:7; the second, Psa. 110:4.

Both Psalms are identified as Messianic, and the

quotations are cited as authorities.

We are not concerned about when these were done, nor about the full meaning (especially of the latter), but just about the facts that they state.

- B. Jesus Christ became a man (Heb. 5:7a): "Who, in the days of his flesh," i.e., His life here upon the earth.

This has already been taught in chapter 2, i.e., about His humanity.

- C. Jesus Christ is sympathetic (Heb. 5:7b, 8).

Here is one of those passages which we cannot fully explain, but that does not keep us from believing it and profiting from it.

Undoubtedly the emphasis here is upon what happened in Gethsemane.

Note: "PRAYERS AND SUPPLICATIONS WITH STRONG CRYING AND TEARS." Westcott quotes a Jewish saying, "There are three kinds of prayers each loftier than the preceding: prayer, crying, and tears. Prayer is made in silence; crying with raised voice; but tears overcome all things ('there are no doors through which tears do not pass')" (p. 126).

"From death" is lit. out of death. There can be no other meaning to this except resurrection. He was not saved from dying, but from death.

"And was heard," meaning, He was answered.

"In that He feared" according to Alford means, "by reason of His reverent submission."

BUT ONE INTERESTING THING ABOUT THE STATEMENTS THAT ARE MADE HERE COMES AT THE BEGINNING OF VERSE 8:

"Though He were a Son." We could better translate it, Who being a Son. At no time during all of our Lord's life on earth did He ever cease to be God in the fullest sense of the Word.

And yet He learned "obedience by the things which He suffered."

Do we not often have our deepest and best lessons in obedience in our times of suffering. The Lord knows

exactly what we are going through in our sufferings and is able to enter with us into our sufferings.

D. Concerning His office (Heb. 5:9, 10).

What was the purpose of His sufferings here?

V. 9 is similar to 2:10. Westcott explains the difference between "captain" and "author":

"In ii. 10 the word corresponding to is . There the thought was of Christ going before the 'many sons' with whom He unites Himself. Here the thought is of that which He alone does for them. In the former passage He is the great Leader who identifies Himself with His people: in this He is the High-priest who offers Himself as an effectual sacrifice on their behalf."

Our Lord is the cause--the One who is solely responsible for our salvation, FROM START TO FINISH!

This is the reason it is an "eternal salvation," the only kind God ever bestows!

But note: What is the condition? "Unto all them that obey Him." Does this mean salvation by our obedience? No! The writer is dealing with a problem which is very common today: people who have made a profession, but that is all you see. Cf. Rom. 1:5,

"By whom (Christ) we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name."

True faith is not something just to talk about; it is seen in our obedience to the Word of God.

And then, before our third digression, the writer re-affirms this all important point:

"Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek."

Here he is formally giving the title to the One to whom it belongs.

Concl: Thank God, Jesus Christ does qualify. In fact, in all of the qualifications, He has more than anyone else has ever had.

And there is truth here for the persons who does not know the Lord, as well as for the one who does! (Apply to both.)

CB - 12/16/73 a.m.

THE CHURCH'S NUMBER ONE PROBLEM
Heb. 5:11-6:3

Intro: Twice before in this epistle the writer has digressed:
in 2:1-4, and then in 3:7-4:13.

In our text this morning we come to Digression #3.

Why? What is the reason for it? The passage itself explains the reason.

I. THE PROBLEM STATED (Heb. 5:11-4).

After announcing his subject in 5:10, the writer is forced to recognize that he faces a problem--a problem (it is safe to say) that every teacher of the Word has faced from that day until this, and even before that day.

The Church of Jesus Christ has always had many problems.

- 1) It has always needed those who would work.
- 2) It has always needed greater financial resources.
- 3) There has usually been a need for a stronger testimony to the world.

BUT THE NEED THAT HAS ALWAYS OVERSHADOWED EVERY OTHER NEED AND HAS USUALLY BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OTHER NEEDS IS THIS: THE CHURCH'S NUMBER ONE PROBLEM IS THAT SHE IS SPIRITUALLY IMMATURE! That is, people get saved, but they do not grow.

Verse 11: He is ready to tell them about the Melchizedek priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ and suddenly recognizes that he is faced with a problem. They have not always been, but they have become "dull of hearing," a person who apprehends with difficulty. The same word is translated, "slothful," in v. 12.

Because of this his subject was difficult to explain with words, exposition was difficult.

Sometimes a teacher is limited and hindered because he does not know his subject. But that is not the case here. HE IS LIMITED HERE BECAUSE SPIRITUALLY THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HE HAS TO SAY.

Cf. what our Lord said in John 16:12,

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."

The Lord does not give us everything at once. We take in more of the truth as we grow!

Verse 12: Growth takes time--but they had had time! They had time enough so that they could have been teachers. Instead, he points out their need under two fig-

ures of speech:

- 1) Learning.
- 2) Eating.

Instead of being teachers, they needed to go back to the very beginning to learn "the first principles," the a b c's, all over again!

And, as regards eating, they were still only capable of drinking milk instead of eating solid food.

Now this tells us something very important about the Word of God: There is the milk of the Word, and there is solid food. You start out with young Christians, newly born Christians, with milk. There is nothing wrong with that. But when a person has been a Christian for a long time and still is only capable of taking spiritual milk, this is tragic!

Verse 13 tells us about milk; verse 14 tells us about solid food.

Verse 13: "Unskillful" means inexperienced, untried. The Word has not been used.

"The word of righteousness" is a term describing the Word of God. It is a Word which produces righteousness. And here he is not talking about the righteousness we have before God, but the righteousness which the Word produces in my life, the practical righteousness that men are able to see!

This leads us to recognize this truth: Spiritual growth is not measured by the length of time that I have been saved, nor in terms of what I know about the Bible EXCEPT AS THAT KNOWLEDGE HAS AFFECTED AND CHANGED MY LIFE. My spiritual growth is seen in what I am spiritually.

"A babe": an infant, or a very little child. Cf.:

- 1) 1 Cor. 13:11,
"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."
- 2) Eph. 4:13, 14--which leads us in our transition from v. 13 to v. 14 in our text: from spiritual babyhood to maturity.

It is important to read the Word. But spiritual growth is not determined by how many times you and I have read it; it is determined by what we have allowed God to do in us through the Word--not our going through the Word, but the Word going into and transforming us! Cf. 1 Cor. 3:1 ff.

Verse 14: "Full age" Christians are mature Christians, a

word related to "perfection" in Heb. 6:1.

"Perfection" is really another word for sanctification, and it is referred to in Scripture in three stages:

- 1) The complete perfection that is ours in Christ when we are saved--our standing.
- 2) That increasing perfection which is related to our experience, a perfection which grows and grows as we grow --our state.
- 3) Our perfection which will be complete when the Lord returns.

Note: It is not sinless perfection, but, in the sense in which we are talking about it, it is our spiritual growth, our maturity in Christ.

How does a child of God become mature?

It is what he has become "by reason of use."

Ill. An accomplished musician, an outstanding athlete. They did not become what they are just by sitting and wishing. They are what they are "by reason of use," i.e., by practice, by habit, "a power acquired by custom, practice, use" (Thayer, p. 224).

Westcott says (p. 135) that we are not looking in this expression at the process, but at the product. They have "exercised" to become what they are. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:7, 8, "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Cf. also Heb. 12:11.

But what are the exercises of a Christian?

They have to do with the way he uses his senses--his mind, his heart, his will. And all of this is related to the Word of God so that he will be able "to discern," to distinguish, "both good and evil."

Let us go back to our illustration about the musician and the athlete.

What is good for a musician? It is anything which makes him a better musician. What is evil for him? It is anything that keeps him from being his best. The same can be said of an athlete, a doctor, a preacher, etc.

Do you know the exercises that you need to make you a growing

Christian? Obviously it has to do with the Word--reading it, understanding it, obeying it. It also has to do with prayer. It has to do with service. It has to do with fellowship with other believers. And so on and on!

BUT IT ALSO HAS TO DO WITH CHAPTER SIX!

II. THE REMEDY STARTED (Heb. 6:1-3). All of chapter 6 deals with this subject of spiritual maturity.

A. What we need to do: "Let us go on."

This has been translated three ways, and we perhaps need all three translations:

- 1) "Let us go on," the KJV, which means that we need to do something, to get going, not to stand still spiritually--ever!
- 2) "Let us press on" (the NASB and many modern translations). It shows that effort needs to be put into what we do, that there will be obstacles and difficulties, but we need to persevere in spite of them.
- 3) "Let ^{us} be borne on," the Greek, indicating that we cannot do it ourselves, that we need the enabling power of the Lord.

B. What we must go beyond (Heb. 6:1b, 2).

It would seem that the following things fall into the category of being "milk," not in the sense that we never have any more to do with them, but in the sense that they are the foundation which many believers never get past.

The six terms fall into three categories:

1. THE GOSPEL:

- a. "Repentance from dead works."
- b. "Faith toward God."

Cf. Acts 20:21,

"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

Some Christians never get beyond the Gospel.

2. CEREMONIES:

- a. "Doctrine of baptisms." This was probably OT washings, John's baptism, and the emphasis which

they had in the Corinthian church as to who did the baptizing.

- b. "Laying on of hands."

Cf. Acts 6:6; 8:17; 9:12, 17; 19:5, 6.

When ceremonies become an end in themselves, you have CEREMONIALISM, or RITUALISM.

3. PROPHECY.

- a. "Resurrection of the dead," Christ's, the Church, Israel and the Nations, the Wicked.

- b. "Eternal judgment."

To deal with prophetic truth is not a sign of maturity, although many very mature Christians deal with prophecy. But some people never get beyond this. Announce a message on a prophetic theme, and the church is filled. Announce a message on the spiritual life, and only the regulars come!

- C. What we need to understand: that there is a human side and there is also a divine.

1. "And this will we do" - the human side.

2. "If God permit" - the divine side. All spiritual growth has to be under the blessing of God.

Concl: Where do we stand in all of this?

Are we ready for Melchizedek, and Christ?

What about our spiritual growth? Are we exercising ourselves toward godliness, and toward perfection, toward maturity?

Let us take stock of our lives to make sure that we are not trying to lay the foundation over and over, but that we are going on with the Lord and learning more and more of Christ.

CB - 1/13/74 a.m.

THE BASIC TRUTHS OF SALVATION
Heb. 6:1-8

Intro: It has been **four** weeks since we have been in Hebrews.
Therefore, we need to refresh our minds on the truth
that we have been learning in this wonderful epistle.

This is the book of the Bible which deals especially with the high priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is here that we see Him not only as our Priest, but as the Sacrifice as well. And, we are not only taught what He did when He was here on earth, but also we are taught what He is doing now in heaven. Cf. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2. See also 7:25.

The main reason for teaching this truth is explained for us in the last passage we considered together: Heb. 5:11-14. The spiritual life of these Hebrew believers was at a very low ebb. The writer is seeking to get them to go on in their relationship with the Lord. Christians need to grow spiritually. This great truth is at once their greatest need with respect to their growth, and at the same time it was a problem for the writer to write what he needed to write because of their immaturity.

We have seen how the writer is exalting the Lord Jesus Christ, and seeking to focus attention upon Him. He is:

- 1) Greater than the Old Testament prophets.
- 2) Greater than angels:
 - a) As the Son of God in ch. 1.
 - b) As the Son of man in ch. 2.
- 3) Greater than Abraham.
- 4) Greater than Moses.
- 5) Greater than Joshua.
- 6) Greater than Aaron.

He is the One they need to know and love and trust and obey. And so we come to chapter 6--considered by many to be the most difficult section of the epistle.

In vv. 1-8 we have three things:

- I. The Exhortation (vv. 1-3).
- II. The Explanation (vv. 4-6).
- III. The Illustration (vv. 7, 8).

I. THE EXHORTATION (Heb. 6:1-3).

It is both positive and negative--the negative to show what the writer does not mean!

In the exhortation we have what they were to do, not how; and what not!

- A. What they were to do (Heb. 6:1a). Lit., Let us be borne along...

They were to go on toward spiritual maturity.

B. What they were not to do (Heb. 6:1b-3).

One of the things which often happens when a Christian learns that he has not been growing is that he begins to feel that he may not even be a Christian. THEREFORE, HE FEELS THAT HE SHOULD BACK UP AND START ALL OVER AGAIN.

From this has arisen the idea and the teaching that the solution for backsliding or for spiritual immaturity is to be saved again. Thus, we have the amazing situation where people claim to have been saved many times.

What does the writer say? He says that we are not to go back to lay the foundation over and over again, but we are to build upon the foundation and go on unto perfection.

The 6 points of the foundation can be divided into 3 groups:

1. They were not to go back to the Gospel again.
 - a. "Repentance from dead works."
 - b. "Faith toward God."
2. They were not to go back to the beginning ceremonies.
 - a. "The doctrine of baptisms" -- Christ's, John the Baptist's, the Church's. Remember Corinth too.
 - b. The "laying on of hands" -- Acts 19:5, 6; also 6:6; 8:17; 9:12, 17.
3. They were not to deal exclusively with prophetic truth.
 - a. The "resurrection of the dead."
 - b. "Eternal judgment."

Note: Prophetic truth and the knowledge of it is not a sign of spiritual maturity. It can be the other way.

So here we have the basic exhortation, giving us the foundational truths of salvation. We are not to go back to them, but to go on from them, building upon them. Cf. v. 3.

II. THE EXPLANATION (Heb. 6:4-6).

The word, "For," in v. 4 shows that this is an explanation. The writer is showing why there can be no such thing as being saved a second time, or a third, etc.

The expressions here are too strong for one who is only under conviction.

And we know that this does not mean that you can be brought under conviction only once. The Spirit of God may deal with a person many times over a long period before he finally trusts the Lord.

TO PROVE HIS POINT THE WRITER IS SETTING UP A HYPOTHETICAL CASE. The point is not that this could take place, but IF IT COULD, then this is the only conclusion you could come to.

The word "impossible" is very emphatic by the position that it has in v. 4--right at the first of the sentence!

A. The identification of a true Christian (Heb. 6:4, 5).

1. "Once (for all) enlightened." Cf. Heb. 10:32.

Darkness signifies ignorance and sin. That is all changed when we come to know the Lord.

2. "Tasted of the heavenly gift."

"Tasted" means:

- 1) To partake so as to experience.
- 2) To enjoy it.

"The heavenly gift" -- cf. John 4:10; Rom. 6:23. It is heavenly in origin and nature.

3. "Partakers of the Holy Spirit." No unbeliever has the Holy Spirit. Neither does a person under conviction have the Holy Spirit. Cf. Rom. 8:9.

On "partakers," cf. 2:14: 3:1, 14.

4. "Tasted the good word of God."

"Tasted" -- see #2 above. Also 2:9.

"Good" means that it does what it is supposed to do, what it promises to do.

"Word" is not the whole revelation, but some particular part of it -- probably the Gospel. And it is "of God."

5. "Tasted . . . the powers of the age to come." Cf. Eph. 1:19; 2:7. This looks ahead to the culmination of salvation. The potential is ours from the very moment we receive the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The supposition: "IF."

The writer does not mean that they can; he is saying, "Suppose they can! WHAT THEN?"

- C. The conclusion of the argument: They can never be saved again because it would mean the re-crucifying of the Lord, something which cannot and will not take place. Therefore, the person would be hopelessly lost for all eternity.

This is all to show that a true believer in Christ cannot go back to the foundations again.

III. THE ILLUSTRATION (Heb. 6:7, 8).

Even nature itself illustrates that there are only two possibilities, and that one does not go from one to the other. In reading v. 8 put "the earth" (understood) from v. 7 in as the subject at the beginning of the verse.

-) Concl: We have here the basic, the distinctive, truths of salvation. It is in knowing these that we are able to understand our own relationship to the Lord. For those who know the Lord the only answer and the continuing great need is to "go on unto perfection."

How?

The book will tell us, but it begins by getting our eyes off of ourselves and our bewildering experiences, and to the Lord who is the One to Whom we are being conformed!

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CB - 1/20/74 a.m.

THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION

Heb. 6:9-20

Intro: The book of Hebrews was written to a group of Hebrew believers who had not grown spiritually, who were spiritually immature! Cf. Heb. 5:11, 12.

As is always the case when a condition like this exists among the people of God, there was great uncertainty in the hearts of the people regarding salvation. Some evidently felt that they needed to be saved again. In vv. 6-8 we have seen that this is impossible.

The writer does exhort them to do two things -- one is negative; the other is positive:

- 1) They must not try to lay the foundation of salvation all over again. See 6:1.
- 2) They must go on from where they are "unto perfection," or maturity.

In our passage this morning we have two things:

- 1) The things that he has to say regarding this particular group of the people of God:
 - a) His conviction regarding them -- in vv. 9, 10.
 - b) His concern for them -- in vv. 11, 12.
- 2) The confirmation that God has given to us regarding His purpose in salvation. See vv. 13-20. "Counsel" in v. 17 can be translated, purpose. It is His deliberately established will in connection with salvation.

In these two sections:

- 1) We have a practical emphasis -- in vv. 9-12.
- 2) We have a doctrinal emphasis -- in vv. 13-20.

I. WHAT HE HAS TO SAY ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF GOD (Heb. 6:9-12).

A. His conviction regarding them (Heb. 6:9, 10).

"Beloved" -- the only time this is used in the epistle. How important it is to speak the truth in love. Cf. Eph. 4:15. He has been very forceful; he wants to do it with great tenderness.

He is not in doubt regarding their salvation because HE HAS SEEN THE EVIDENCE -- the "things that accompany salvation."

If a person is saved, there will be certain evidences of salvation in his life. These people had two:

- 1) Service for the people of God.
- 2) Love for the people of God.

Note: 1 John 3:14; 4:7, 8.

We may not have all of the evidences that John writes about, but we must have some if we are genuinely saved.

The writer had noticed these, and he could assure them that God would not overlook them. "God is not unrighteous . . ."

Isaiah had stated this same principle, or truth about God, in Isa. 42:3,

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth justice in truth."

So this much was encouraging.

But we have another thing here:

B. The writer's concern for them (Heb. 6:11, 12).

Note carefully: Service for the people of God and love for the people of God are evidences of salvation, but they are not in themselves the means of spiritual growth!

Therefore, he now exhorts them to "show the same diligence" in another direction: toward the word of God, AND ESPECIALLY TOWARD ITS "PROMISES."

And it is here that we come to the word, "hope."

It refers to the full realization of our salvation, the ultimate completion of all that began when the Lord first saved us.

Phil. 1:6 is an expression of our hope. So is Heb. 7:25.

What they needed was assurance, "the full assurance of hope." Cf. Rom. 4:21,

"And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform."

IF we have "the full assurance of hope," IF we are fully convinced regarding our "hope," THEN our life will be described in the words of v. 12.

"Slothful" in v. 12 is the same word as "dull" in 5:11. It means slow or stupid. They were this in their hearing; there was the danger that they would become this also in their very characters. What they needed was to become "followers of them who through faith and patience, lit., were inheriting at that very moment, the promises."

Heb. 10:22, "Full assurance of faith."
Col. 2:2, "Full assurance of understanding."
Also 1 Th. 1:5.

One of the greatest things any child of God can do is to find some other believer who is walking with the Lord, AND THEN BECOME HIS FOLLOWER.

But how can we know that the promises of God are trustworthy? This is the question that is being answered in vv. 13-20.

II. THE CONFIRMATION OF GOD'S PROMISES (Heb. 6:13-20).

To do this we must go back to Abraham, and especially to Gen. 22:16, 17.

A. God and Abraham (Heb. 6:13-16).

God made His promise originally to Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3. He confirmed it with an oath in Gen. 22:16, 17 -- after Isaac had been born! So, while Isaac was involved in the promise, Isaac in himself was not the fulfillment of the promise. The promise had to do with salvation.

God's oath was to give "full assurance of hope." It put an end to all discussion, and to all opposition. Cf. v. 16.

And because there is no one greater than God, He placed His character and His entire Word on the line when "He swore by Himself."

The only reason that Abraham could even think of offering Isaac as a sacrifice is because of what we are told in Heb. 11:19,

"Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which also he received him in a figure."

B. God and "the heirs of promise" (Heb. 6:17-20) -- which included the believers to whom this epistle was written, and it includes us today!

Note that we are still thinking about "the full assurance of hope."

God did a most extraordinary thing!

His promise would have been enough -- because He is God! But because He wanted every heir of salvation to be fully assured beyond any doubt, He confirmed His promise with His oath. The two "immutable," not to be transferred, not to be altered, fixed, things added up to an immutable purpose (v. 17).

The result: We have "a strong consolation," i.e., the

comfort, the encouragement, which will withstand all assaults.

And then note how he describes our salvation:

- 1) We have "fled for refuge" -- abandoning every other support.
- 2) "To lay hold upon the hope set before us." It is in our sight (by means of the promises of God), and it is that for which we have been appointed.

Remember "the joy that was set before" our Lord, according to Heb. 12:2. It has the same meaning.

As a result we have two things -- and here we see that everything regarding our "hope" has its fulfillment in our Lord Jesus Christ:

- 1) "Anchor of the soul" -- to hold us in all of the storms which attack our faith. It is:
 - a) "Sure" -- because it is "undisturbed by outward influences" (Westcott, p. 163).
 - b) "Steadfast" -- because it is not subject to any inward change. It is "firm in its inherent character" (Ibid.).

And all of this has entered "within the veil," i.e., into the very presence of God suggesting its acceptance by God.

- 2) "Forerunner" -- "one who comes in advance to a place where the rest are to follow" (Thayer, p. 538). Our Lord, "Jesus," is there "for us."

This last statement emphasizes the importance of the theme of this epistle--that our Lord is seated at the right hand of God (Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2), "made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Concl: What more could we possibly want?

Note: Our assurance of salvation, "the full assurance of hope," is not the result of our feelings primarily, but because of two other things:

- 1) The immutable, unchanging Word of God -- especially its promises.
- 2) The work of our Savior -- past and present!

It is only as we get straightened out here that there can be any stability or any progress in our growth toward maturity and the ultimate perfection that will be ours when we are with the Lord.

CB - 1/17/74 a.m.

WHO WAS MELCHIZEDEK?
Heb. 7:1-10

Intro: We are back with Melchizedek this morning. He was first mentioned in Hebrews in Heb. 5:6. Next, in 5:10. At this point the writer digresses and he does not mention Melchizedek until 6:20. This brings us to chapter 7 where he is mentioned in vv. 1, 10, 11, 15, 17, 21.

He is not mentioned in any other book of the NT.

He is mentioned in two OT books: Genesis and Psalms. The exact references are Gen. 14:18 and Psalms 110:4.

The three references have been distinguished by Dr. Griffith Thomas in this way:

- 1) Genesis 14 is historical.
- 2) Psalm 110 is prophetical.
- 3) Hebrews 7 is doctrinal.

Let us read the two Old Testament passages as well this morning since what we are trying to do is to get acquainted with Melchizedek. Who was he?

(Read Gen. 14:17-24, and then Psa. 110. Note that the emphasis in Psa. 110 seems to be on His coming reign as King, while the emphasis is upon His priestly work.)

I. SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

Often I am asked to give some suggestions for the study of the Word, and I would like to do that this morning.

From our text we can see five very significant things:

- 1) The importance of the OT. If we did not have Genesis, we would not know what the writer is here speaking about.
- 2) The significance of names in Scripture. Two of the main points of our passage center on the meaning of "Melchizedek," on the one hand, and on the meaning of "king of Salem," on the other.
- 3) The importance of order in Scripture: "first being, by interpretation . . ."
- 4) On this last point we need to exercise more caution, but there are times when the omissions of Scripture are important. Note: We do not have the facts of Heb. 7:3 mentioned in Gen. 14.
- 5) Not everything in the historical passage is mentioned in the doctrinal passage: E.g., the fact that "Melchizedek . . . brought forth bread and wine." This does not mean that that fact was unimportant, but it does mean that it is not especially significant here.

II. A QUESTION: WHY ARE WE INTERESTED IN MELCHIZEDEK AT ALL?

And here is another principle to note in the study of the Word: The fact that something is not mentioned very often does not mean that it is unimportant! The name Melchizedek is found only two times in the OT and yet it is one of the most important themes in the OT.

- A. Because He is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Note v. 3. The fact that our Lord is a priest "after the order of Melchizedek" and that Melchizedek is "made like unto the Son of God" means, among other things, that Melchizedek is not Christ, but like Christ -- a type.

Note this principle too: There are types in the OT, i.e. pictures of NT truths.

In a book where the emphasis has been placed on the humanity of our Lord, i.e., "Jesus," it is important to see that the emphasis here is on His Deity.

- B. Because we are concerned about "perfection."

Go back to 6:1. See the problem again in 5:11-14.

These Hebrew Christians were having a hard time giving up the Law and all that went with it in the OT.

But, now, note the question in Heb. 7:11.

If perfection were to be through the Levitical sacrifices and through the Levitical priesthood, then why did our Lord come "after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?"

Some of the answer will be given later in the chapter, but at this point it can be observed that "perfection" could never have come through the Levitical priests!

PERFECTION DOES NOT COME THROUGH THE LAW, OR THROUGH THE SACRIFICES CONNECTED WITH THE LAW, BUT PERFECTION COMES THROUGH "THE SON OF GOD," THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

III. THE SIGNIFICANT LINKS BETWEEN MELCHIZEDEK AND CHRIST.

Remember that a type does not attract attention to itself, but is important only as it throws light upon that which it represents.

- A. Melchizedek was both a King and a Priest.

These offices were kept separate under the Mosaic Law,

but they were joined together in Melchizedek, as they are in Christ!

What is the difference between a King and a Priest?

- a) A king is one who rules over men for God.
- b) A priest is one who represents men to God.

Note the significance of these if there is to be perfection.

B. The meaning of "Melchizedek, king of Salem."

- 1. "Melchizedek" means king of righteousness.
- 2. "King of Salem" means king of peace. The location of "Salem" is not important, but the meaning is!

Perfection can only come on this basis, and in this order. See the following passages:

- a) Psa. 85:10,
"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."
- b) Isa. 32:17,
"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."
- c) Rom. 5:1,
"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."
- d) Rom. 14:17,
"For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."
- e) Jas. 4:18,
"And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by them that make peace."
- f) Heb. 12:11,
"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised by it."

No one can attain unto perfection and ignore righteousness. And the result of righteousness will always be peace.

C. "Priest of the Most High God."

This title is used of God four times in Gen. 14. See vv 18-20, 22. With it is linked the explanation, "possessor of heaven and earth." It shows the Lord's sovereignty over all of creation -- men as well as angels, over Jew:

and over Gentiles. Thus, perfection is not limited to the Jews.

D. "Made like unto the Son of God."

Perfection is not through even Melchizedek, but through Christ -- in His Deity!

From the beginning of the epistle the writer has been seeking to turn our attention to the Lord Jesus Christ.

E. "Abideth a priest continually."

The Lord Jesus Christ will never have a successor.

Cf. Heb. 7:15, 16, 23-25.

Concl: Did you notice that in this passage there is nothing for you and me to do? The writer is giving us things here which we need to understand and to believe.

Only in the Lord Jesus Christ is salvation, and only in Him is our perfection, our growth in grace until we become like He is.

CB - 2/10/74 a.m.

THE GREATNESS OF MELCHIZEDEK
Heb. 7:1-10

Intro: The longer books of the Bible can be read in sections as we study them, but we still need occasionally to read the book through at one sitting.

The section we can be reading now is Heb. 7:1-10:18.

It would be wonderful if all of us would read this section several times each week, and then read the whole book at least once a week. In fact, if we could read this section over and over until we commit it to memory, that could easily prove to be one of the greatest blessings of our lives.

It is in this section that we are dealing with the priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Taking the full meaning of Melchizedek's name and title we can say that:

- 1) It is because of the truth that we have here that we have righteousness: Melchizedek.
 - 2) It is in knowing this truth that we have peace: King of Salem.
-

This morning we want to respond to the injunction, the command, that we have in Heb. 7:4. (Read it.)

"Consider" means to look at something, noticing the details, viewing it attentively, with the idea of understanding what you see.

It seems that it would be very closely related to the word, "meditate," in Psa. 1:2,

"But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

This is why we want to read the Word of God, and this is the reason why we need to think about what we read.

We are to "consider" Melchizedek -- not because of what Melchizedek is all by himself, but because of the relationship that Melchizedek has to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is one who enters the pages of Scripture:

- 1) Before the Law was given (about 500 years before).
- 2) Who was not a Jew, and who was not a blood relative of Abraham.

The first shows that salvation was not by the Law, nor was it through the Levitical priesthood which was established by the Law. It also shows that salvation was not limited to the Jews. that it was for Gentiles also.

And yet he comes to us as the outstanding type of our Lord Jesus Christ (as far as men are concerned) in all of the Word of God.

He is "great," i.e., distinguished, outstanding, important.

In what ways?

For the first point let us go back just briefly to the passage we had two Sundays ago.

I. MELCHIZEDEK WAS GREAT BECAUSE HE WAS "MADE LIKE UNTO THE SON OF GOD" (Heb. 7:3).

In fact, he is so much like our Lord that many feel that he was an OT appearance of our Lord.

He is like our Lord:

- 1) In what is recorded in Gen. 14.
- 2) In what is not recorded in Gen. 14.

All of us who are redeemed will one day be like the Lord, but Melchizedek is spoken of in Abraham's day as one who was already like the Lord.

Surely nothing could be said about him that would make him any greater.

II. MELCHIZEDEK WAS GREAT BECAUSE HE WAS GREATER THAN ABRAHAM -- GREATER BECAUSE OF TWO THINGS:

A. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek (Heb. 7:4-6a).

He did this without being forced to do it. There was no Law which required such an offering from Abraham. BUT ABRAHAM EVIDENTLY DID IT BECAUSE HE RECOGNIZED THAT MELCHIZEDEK WAS "THE PRIEST OF THE MOST HIGH GOD" (Gen. 14:18).

B. Melchizedek blessed Abraham -- not the other way around (Heb. 7:6b, 7).

This information is given to us in Gen. 14:19,

"And he (Melchizedek) blessed him (Abraham), and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth."

If we were to list the great men of the OT, those who are distinguished, outstanding, important, because of the place they have in the Word of God, Abraham would probably top the list. He would appear in any Who's Who In The Word Of God.

His importance is emphasized by the fact that he is mentioned in 11 books of the NT. (David mentioned in 9 books; Moses, in 12.) There are 74 references to Abraham by name (79 to Moses). But the foundations go back to Abraham. God was known as the God of Abraham. To him the promises of our salvation were given. He really heads the Messianic line (Moses was not in it at all).

BUT HERE IS ONE WHO BLESSED ABRAHAM! The conclusion?

"And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better" (Heb. 7:7).

The NASB,

"But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater."

The NIV,

"And without doubt the lesser person is blessed by the greater."

A greater than Abraham is here!

But there is more here.

- III. MELCHIZEDEK WAS GREAT BECAUSE HE WAS GREATER THAN "THE SONS OF LEVI" (Heb. 7:8-10). This expression, "the sons of Levi," is found in v. 5.

Who is the writer referring to?

He is referring to Aaron and all of the Levitical priests.

Melchizedek comes to us in Scripture as one who was greater than they were.

Think of all of the space that is devoted to Aaron and the priests of the in OT in Exodus and Leviticus -- and in the the worship of the people of God all through the OT. Think of how important the Levites were when David moved the ark of the covenant . . . when the children of Israel went back to their land after the Captivity.

How can we prove that Melchizedek was greater? Again -- in two ways.

- A. "It is witnessed" of Melchizedek "that he liveth" (Heb. 7:8).

This is one of the major points of Hebrews 7. But it starts back in Heb. 5. Cf. Heb. 5:6, 9; 6:20; 7:3, 8, 16, 17, 21, 24, 25, 28.

What do the Scriptures witness concerning Aaron?

They tell us that he died -- when and where and how old he was. Cf. Num. 20:23-29; 33:38, 39.

The point here is not that Melchizedek did not die, but that his death is not recorded because he points us to the Lord Jesus Christ who "ever liveth to make intercession for us" as our Great High Priest.

What if you had to depend upon Aaron today? Your case would be hopeless. These Hebrew believers needed to realize this. And so does every person who is inclined to go back to the old Mosaic Law.

But Melchizedek is greater than Aaron for another reason.

- B. Levi and all of his sons (the Aaronic priests) "paid tithes" to Melchizedek when Abraham paid them (Heb. 7: 9, 10).

This shows the importance of headship in Scripture.

Cf. Adam's sin in relation to our condemnation in Rom. 5:12.

For Abraham to pay tithes to Melchizedek meant that the priesthood of Melchizedek was greater than any priesthood that would ever come from Abraham.

Thus, our writer has laid the foundation for that which is to follow.

Concl: Why are all of these things being said -- so that we will worship Melchizedek?

NO! They are being said because Melchizedek points us to Christ

Will you and I take time to "consider" (v. 4) that? Will we see that if Melchizedek is greater than Abraham and greater than Aaron, and "made like unto the Son of God," then no one can even begin to compare with our Lord Jesus Christ. He is greater than all. And the following passages up to Heb. 10:18 are going to set this before us in a most wonderful way.

But where do we stand this morning in our relationship with Him the Son of God?

CB - 2/17/74 a.m.

WHY ANOTHER PRIEST?

Heb. 7:11-25

Intro: As we come to the part in Hebrews where the writer is dealing more specifically with the high priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, he explains to us the priesthood of Melchizedek.

In Heb. 7:1-10 we learn primarily two things:

- 1) Who Melchizedek was -- from what we find and do not find in Gen. 14:18-20.
- 2) The reasons for Melchizedek's greatness:
 - a) Because he was "made like unto the Son of God."
 - b) Because he was greater than Moses.
 - c) Because he was greater than "the sons of Levi" -- meaning particularly that he was greater than Aaron and all of the high priests of Israel who were descendants of Levi.

But now we are forced to ask, But why should there be another high priest? Why was Aaron not sufficient?

I. THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION (Heb. 7:11).

Keep the chronological order of all of these related events in mind:

- 1) Genesis 14 -- Melchizedek appears, 2,000 years B.C.
- 2) Exodus 28 -- Aaron is chosen as the first high priest under the Law, 500 years after Melchizedek.
- 3) Psalm 110 -- David records God's oath with respect to the Messiah, that He would be "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

So this was not a late revelation from God; it was 1,000 years old when the book of Hebrews was written.

Why do we have this declaration in Psa. 110:4?

Because "perfection" -- the completion, the full accomplishment of our salvation -- was impossible under Aaron and his sons who were priests under the Law.

The Levitical priesthood was obviously (from Psa. 110) a temporary priesthood. There were many ways in which it was a type of Christ's priesthood. BUT, if our salvation depended upon what Aaron and his sons were able to do for us, we would have none.

This is why there had to be another priest, and why that priest could not be "after the order of Aaron."

II. A FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCE OF THE CHANGE (Heb. 7:12-14).

Here we need to recognize a very important fact: If the priesthood is changed, so is the Law. Cf. v. 12. And the Greek here indicates that they are changed at the same time -- a very important point in the teaching of this Epistle.

"Pertaineth" in v. 13 is a very important word. It is the same word that is used back in Heb. 2:14 where it is translated, "took part." It means not only that the Lord sovereignly chose to become a man, but that He sovereignly chose to be a member of the tribe of Judah -- not of the tribe of Levi!

He did this knowing that no son of Judah could be a priest like Aaron. "Moses" said nothing about Judah's sons acting as priests (and he was the great Lawgiver).

WE ARE LEARNING HERE THAT "THE LAW" WAS FAR MORE THAN JUST THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. IT HAD TO DO WITH THE PRIESTHOOD AND ALL OF THE SACRIFICES THAT THE PRIESTS OF AARON HAD TO OFFER. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT POINT FOR US TO REMEMBER. AND SO, IF THE PRIESTHOOD IS CHANGED, IT INDICATES THAT THE LAW HAS BEEN CHANGED, TOO.

III. THE PROOFS OF THE CHANGE (Heb. 7:15-24).

There are four of them.

A. The Word of God (Heb. 7:15-17).

This is always the strongest argument. If a thing can be demonstrated and proved from Scripture, there can be no contradiction!

The point made in v. 16 is one of the major points in this passage when speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we will look at it separately in vv. 23, 24. But let it be noted here that the "carnal commandment" pointed to a "physical requirement" (NASB) that the priest had to be a descendant of Levi and of Aaron.

BUT WHAT WE ARE MAINLY INTERESTED IN HERE IS V. 17 -- THE QUOTATION FROM PSALM 110:4. David, speaking under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, described our Lord's priesthood, and told how long it would last: "forever."

Regardless of how we might feel, or how the Jewish believers might feel, the Word of God settles it!

B. The failure of the Law to bring salvation to "perfection" (Heb. 7:18, 19).

Note the words "weakness and unprofitableness" in v. 18 as well as the clear statement in v. 19: "For the law made nothing perfect."

No one was ever saved by the Law. And it was impossible for the Law to guarantee anyone's salvation IF they could have been saved by it. WHY? Because the "weakness and unprofitableness" of the Law was due to the fact that it told man what to do, but it gave him no help. It placed all of the responsibility upon man.

Cf. Rom. 8:3, 4,

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

God did not abandon the righteousness required by the Law, but the Law was annulled as a system because man could not do what he had to do if salvation were to come by the Law.

The effectiveness of the new way is indicated in the latter part of v. 19.

C. God's oath (Heb. 7:20-22).

Note the argument here for expository teaching and for the verbal inspiration of Scripture. The writer here is getting more and more out of Psalms 110:4.

Now he calls our attention to the first part of Psalm 110:4,

"The Lord swore and will not repent."

Remember the oath we had in Hebrews 6:17. There it was an oath to Abraham; here it is an oath to His own Son.

The statement as it appears in Hebrews 7:17 would be enough, but this added part in v. 21 makes it certain beyond any possible doubt.

And He has not only sworn to His Son that He will be a priest "after the order of Melchizedek," but we have two added truths:

- 1) He is not going to change His mind about it.
- 2) It is a new order which is eternal. God said, "Forever"!

And what basically is the difference with regard to sal-

vation? It is this: Not only do we have (1) the Word of God and (2) the Oath of God, but we have "Jesus"! Aaron cannot guarantee salvation. We cannot guarantee it. BUT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST CAN! Our security is in Him -- "Jesus."

D. The frailty of the Levitical priests (Heb. 7:23, 24).

If salvation were ever to be brought to perfection, it could not be through men who would die; it would have to be through One who ever lives.

Aaron needed successors; the Lord Jesus does not! He is the only priest who is "after the order of Melchizedek." And, since He will never die, there is no reason for any further change in the priesthood. We now have one that remains.

Cf. Rom. 6:9, 10,

"Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."

IV. THE GRAND CLIMAX (Heb. 7:25).

Get the truth of this verse into your heart. Do not miss a word. Never was verbal inspiration more important!

"He is able" -- not Aaron, and not we! He is continually able (present tense).

To do what? "To save." Our sins have placed us in the greatest possible danger. We may not like to talk about being saved, but that is what we need anyway!

"To the uttermost" -- completely, perfectly, utterly. This is what the Levitical priests could never do. See v. 11.

But what are the conditions?

There are two:

- 1) You have to come to God. That is the only place you will ever find salvation. "Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9).
- 2) You have to come to God "by Him," or, through Him, i.e., through Christ. There is no other way. Cf. John 14:6.

And why can He make such a tremendous guarantee regarding our salvation? "Seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

"Intercession" means basically to meet with a person for a specific object. Whatever we may need, either because of our sin, or to further our salvation, finds complete and immediate expression by our Lord with the Father -- and this leads to our "perfection" (v. 11).

For His intercession, cf. John 17,

1 John 2:1,

Luke 22:32,

Rom. 8:33, 34, which reads,

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

This is the glorious truth involved in Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.

Concl: Can there be any question as to how we are saved after such a passage as this?

And can there be any question but that we are saved eternally?

The Lord is the One we need.

) If you have not trusted Him, coming to God through Him by faith, do so today!. If you do know Him, how you should praise Him that He has provided such a salvation for us!

CB - 3/3/74 a.m.

THE KIND OF A PRIEST WE NEED
Heb. 7:26-28

Intro: In many respects Heb. 7:25 contains all of the main points of truth which we have in the epistle to the Hebrews. In it we see:

- 1) That God is the Savior; we are not.
- 2) That what He wants to do is to save us.
- 3) That He is able to save us continuously and completely.
- 4) That, in order to have this salvation, we must come to God (since He is the One who saves). But we must come to Him through Christ.
- 5) That Christ is able to save forever because He lives forever.
- 6) That Christ's present intercessory ministry at the Father's right hand is a vital part of the eternal character of our salvation.

ALL OF THE ESSENTIAL TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL ARE IN THAT VERSE.

The verses we have this morning -- the last three in chapter 7 -- serve to give further explanation and emphasis to what has already been said.

The passage has to do with believers, with "us," not with the people of the world. Christ is the kind of a priest we need. And, thank God, He is the kind of a priest we have!

The Lord Jesus Christ is presented to us in Scripture as the One who became like us in His humanity so that He could be our Savior, but He is also One who will forever be different from us because of His Deity. Here we see some important points in which our Lord stands in contrast:

- 1) To all believers.
- 2) To the priests who served under the Old Testament Law.

We should note in the epistle to the Hebrews that here in chapter 7 we are in a transition in the book from Melchizedek to Aaron. The change started in v. 11. The reason is this:

- 1) In His Person our Lord is a priest "after the order of Melchizedek."
- 2) But His work is seen more (although in some respects by way of contrast) in the sacrificial work of Aaron.

Now to ur text -- remembering that this is primarily for believers, to show the eternal nature of the salvation that is ours in Christ.

I. HIS PERSON (Heb. 7:26a).

Here we need to note the four expressions: "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." In all of these our Lord

stands in direct contrast with us.

A. "Holy."

This is a different word from that which is commonly translated holy in the NT. It is the word which speaks of our Lord in His relationship with the Father -- that He always has done that which was right in the sight of His Father.

It probably finds one of its best expressions in the words of our Lord in John 8:29,

"And he that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

The emphasis in these first expressions has to do with our Lord's life here on earth. He was (and is) holy in all that has to do with His relationship to God, One who honors "covenant obligations" (Bruce, 156).

Note the contrast with us -- even as believers!

Cf. 1 John 2:1, 2 and why the Apostle John had to write such things (even going back into 1 John 1).

B. "Harmless."

This means one who is not bad by nature.

"If we say that we have no sin (note the singular), we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

But if we say that He had sin, we are equally deceived.

The Apostle John says later in 1 John 3:5b,

"And in him is no sin."

He came "in the likeness of sinful flesh," but not in sinful flesh. There is a great difference. The Lord did not have, and does not have, a sin nature.

C. "Undefiled."

This follows from the preceding word. If a person is without a sin nature, then he is without sin. And if he is without sin, then he has not been distorted or debased in any way because of sin.

How different it is with us! Sin has left its ugly ma

(or marks) on every one of us. You can see it:

- 1) In our physical bodies.
- 2) In our very nature.
- 3) In the things which we do.

But not so with our Lord. He is "undefiled."

D. "Separate from sinners."

The OT priests were separate from sinners because of their office, but they were sinners nevertheless. We see this in v. 27.

Our Lord was so completely without sin in His nature and in His life that He can never be classed with sinners.

Dwell upon these truths until the Holy Spirit has written them deeply upon your heart. If you are worried about your salvation, it is very probably that you do not understand what is behind these words.

II. HIS POSITION (Heb. 7:26b): "made higher than the heavens."

This speaks of His present exaltation -- that which followed His resurrection and His ascension. It refers to where He is now and what He is now. It is stated four times in Hebrews. Cf. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2. But it is so indescribably great that the best way it can be stated is that He had been "made higher than the heavens" -- so great that it is beyond the comprehension even of believers.

Spend some time thinking about this, too, until you are overwhelmed by the glory of it all. And then think of your own present place by way of contrast.

III. HIS PERFECTION (Heb. 7:27, 28).

We can use the word perfection in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ in its absolute sense. But I am taking it here from the word "consecrated" in v. 28 which should be translated, perfected. It means perfectly qualified to perform the office of the high priest -- qualified as Aaron and the priests of the OT never were!

Cf. Heb. 5:7-10.

There are two ways in which we see how perfect, how qualified, how equipped our Lord is to be the only High Priest we will ever need:

A. By His sacrifice (Heb. 7:27).

Note the three things that are emphasized here about the sacrifice of our Lord:

1. It was not for His sins (because He had none), but just for the people's sins.
2. It was not many sacrifices, but just one -- offered once for all.
3. It was not an animal sacrifice, but "He offered up Himself."

Because of these three points, we have the sacrifice that we need -- a sacrifice which makes all other sacrifices unnecessary.

B. By His ordination (Heb. 7:28).

Remember what we had in Heb. 7:11-22. The Law made Aaron and his sons priests. Under it the Lord could not have served as a priest because He was of the tribe of Judah -- not Levi.

But God's Law (as a system) was set aside by the Oath which was given to David (Psa. 110:4) -- 500 years later. And this Oath states that "the Son . . . is consecrated (or, perfected) for evermore."

Note the title given to our Lord here: "the Son." See also the other passages in Hebrews where this is used: 1:2, 5 (2x), 8; 2:6; 3:6; 4:14; 5:5, 8; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29.

Concl: One thing that the book of Hebrews should do for us is to give us assurance (or greater assurance) of our salvation. Assurance is based upon a knowledge of the truth -- knowledge that is imparted by the Holy Spirit. And we have it here.

The persons who knows Jesus Christ and who lacks assurance is a person who spends more time looking at himself and what he is doing or has done than he spends time looking at "the Son" and who He is, what He has done, and what He is doing right now. When you look at Him through the Word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, your heart will be filled with the assurance that

"he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

CB - 3/10/74 a.m.

CHRIST'S PRESENT MINISTRY
Heb. 8:1-6

Intro: The emphasis upon the ministry of Christ goes back to Heb. 1:3.

However, in Heb. 5:1 the writer of Hebrews really focuses his attention upon Christ as a Person. We saw there how He was qualified for the ministry He has. Melchizedek in Gen. 14 is the one who helps us to understand the Person of Christ.

Gradually the emphasis shifts from Christ's Person to His Work.

We have learned two things about His Work:

- 1) There is a work which He did in the past, a finished work which will never be repeated. See Heb. 7:26, 27 for this emphasis. It speaks of His sacrifice on the Cross.
- 2) There is a continuing work which even goes on at this hour. We saw that in Heb. 7:25.

Together these go to make up our Lord's work. They both will be explained more fully from this point in the book up to Heb. 10:18.

As we start reading chapter 8 we see that this is the main point or the principal thing that he, the writer, has to tell us -- not "the sum." He is not summarizing; he is emphasizing and enlarging upon the main theme of his epistle.

So, first of all, we have

I. OUR LORD'S MINISTRY (Heb. 8:1-3).

The emphasis is clearly upon where He is now and what He is doing now, but it is all related to the past aspect of His ministry so that we can have the complete picture.

A. What is He?

He is "an high priest."

This title is used 8 times in Hebrews in 8 different chapters -- once in each chapter from chapter 2 through chapter 9. Cf. 2:17; 3:1; 4:14; 5:10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11.

B. Where is He?

There are three parts to the answer to this question.

1. He is "in the heavens," not on earth. We had this first back in Heb. 1:3.

2. He is "seated on the right hand . . . of the Majesty."

This expression comes originally from Psa. 110:1,
"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my
right hand, until I make thine enemies thy
footstool."

This indicates a finished work. The OT priest had
no place to sit down because his work was never
finished.

But it also indicates His exaltation in the glory.
It is more than sitting down; He has been officially
seated in the place of authority and honor -- at the
right hand of the Father, called "the Majesty" here
to indicate the greatness of God.

Angels either stand before God, or fall at His feet.
They are not seated. Cf. Heb. 1:6.

Only about the blasphemous "man of sin" do we have
the following:

"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all
that is called God, or that is worshiped, so
that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God,
showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. 2:4).

3. He is "seated on . . . the throne" -- indicating that
He is not only a Priest, but also a King.

This is exactly what we have seen in the comparisons
that have been made between Melchizedek and Christ.

- C. What else can be said about Him? See vv. 2, 3.

Two things:

1. He is "a minister of the sanctuary" (v. 2).

He is in heaven because that is where "the true
tabernacle" is. It was made and put together and set
up by "the Lord, and not man."

As "a minister" our Lord is a public servant of the
state, i.e., of the Kingdom of God because, while
part of His work is finished, there is also a part
which continues.

The word, "true," is one of the important words in
this chapter, as we shall see when we get down to
v. 5. It means that it is the real tabernacle, the
original one. Any other is a copy. But more about

that is a few minutes.

2. He must have an offering (Heb. 8:3).

This is the basis work of a high priest. He offers "gifts and sacrifices" to God. Cf. 5:1. He has been "appointed" for this purpose.

"Gifts" are probably the bloodless offerings, like the meal offering; "sacrifices" are the blood sacrifices.

The uniqueness of our Lord's offering is brought out in a very special way in the Greek language. The first time the verb "offer" is used it is in the present tense, indicating that it was an offering which was made continuously, again and again. The second time the verb "offer" is used it is in the aoirist tense, meaning that it was a once-for-all sacrifice.

II. THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD (Heb. 8:4, 5).

Here we see again (as in ch. 7) why Christ's ministry had to be a heavenly ministry. The Law prescribed that Aaron and his sons, of the tribe of Levi, be priests. Our Lord was of the tribe of Judah. See Heb. 7:14.

But there is another reason which is brought out by three words in v. 5 which need to be compared with "true" in v. 2. These words are:

- 1) "The example" -- which means a copy, a figure, but not the real thing. It is something which represents something else.
- 2) "Shadow" -- "an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object" (Thayer, p. 578). Cf. 10:1; Col. 2:17,
"Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."
- 3) "Pattern" -- from which we get our word, type. This word is taken from Ex. 25:40. How God showed this to Moses, we do not know. But one thing is sure: God did not want Moses to deviate in any way from what was given to him as the blueprint for the Tabernacle. The Old Testament picture pointed to "the true tabernacle" in heaven which would be more clearly revealed in the NT.

Ill. The photograph which Lucille gave me when we were going together. It was a copy of what she was like, but it was not the "true" person. I still have the picture, but I do not look at it as much as I used to because I have the real thing!

The application to Christ in comparison with the OT priesthood and Tabernacle with its sacrifices is obvious.

III. THE COMPARISON BETWEEN CHRIST'S MINISTRY AND AARON'S (Heb. 8:6).

Aaron's ministry was "excellent"; Christ's was "more excellent."

Aaron's ministry was built upon good "promises"; Christ's, "upon better promises."

The Law was a good "covenant"; it had to be because it was of God. But the new covenant of grace is "a better covenant" as the rest of chapter 8 will show.

As we close, note two words in this verse in particular:

- 1) Christ is "the mediator of a better covenant" -- "mediator."

This is the fourth title our Lord has according to our text this morning. He is:

- 1) A high priest.

- 2) A king.

- 3) A minister.

- 4) And now -- "the mediator," which means that He intervenes between God and man to ratify the covenant and to restore peace. Cf. 1 Tim. 2:5,

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus."

Cf. also Heb. 9:15; 12:24.

- 2) The other word is "promises."

Obviously if you were going to compare the commandments of the Law with the promises under Grace, it would be better to have the promises, which depend upon God, than to have the commandments, which depend upon men. BUT EVEN WHEN YOU TAKE THE PROMISES OF THE TWO COVENANTS AND COMPARE THEM, THE PROMISES OF THE NEW COVENANT ARE FAR "BETTER."

Concl: Is the truth of this epistle really getting into your heart? Do you see how these Hebrew believers who were to receive this letter were still occupied with just the pictures of the Lord, but not the real Person?

The pictures are wonderful. Do not let anyone take the OT away from you. But as excellent as they are, as much as they may be a blessing (and should be), the reality of Christ is far better. He is the One we need, and He is the only One who can satisfy all of the demands a holy God can make before there can be peace and fellowship between us.

Do you know HIM?

CB - 3/17/74 a.m.
3/24/74 a.m.
(Vv. 8-12)

THE NEW COVENANT 3/24 - WHY THE NEW
Heb. 8:7-13 COVENANT IS
BETTER

Intro: Last Sunday we concluded with that tremendous statement
in Heb. 8:6. (Read.)

In this verse we are brought back to the word, covenant, which
has been mentioned only once before in Hebrews. See 7:22.

Then we have it in 8:7 (added by translators)

8:8

8:9 (2x)

8:10

8:13 (supplied by translators)

9:1 (supplied by translators)

9:4 (2x)

9:15 -- translated, "testament"

9:16 -- " "

9:17 -- " "

9:18 (supplied by translators) -- translated,
"testament"

9:20 -- translated, "testament"

10:16

10:29

12:24

13:30

What is a covenant?

The dictionary defines it as "a binding agreement made by two
or more individuals, parties, etc. to do or keep from doing a
specified thing" (Webster's New World Dictionary, p. 175).

A covenant can include more than one thing.

It is an agreement, or a contract, into which two or more parties
may enter.

There are many agreements which are not covenants. A covenant
is a very important, a very serious agreement. A covenant may
contain promises, but it even goes beyond the ordinary promise.

God has entered into covenant at various times with men through-
out history. He made a covenant with Noah.

He made a covenant with Abraham -- which was con-
firmed to Isaac and Jacob (see Ex. 2:24).

But, by far, the two most important covenants in the Bible are:

- 1) God's covenant with Israel during the days of Moses.
- 2) The covenant spoken of in Heb. 8:6, the "better covenant" of
which our Lord was "the mediator."

The one is called "the first"; the other is called "the second."
 "The first" is also called "old"; "the second" is called "new."

There can be factors in previous covenants that are involved in the covenant that God made with Israel through Moses, but basically these are the two important covenants of Scripture.

The Apostle John refers to them in John 1:17,

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Both have to do with salvation, but there is all of the difference between the two, and that difference is pointed out in Heb. 8:6,

"But now hath He (Christ) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

There are two things contained in the new covenant which they did not have in the old covenant:

- 1) Christ!
- 2) "Better promises." (Note: (1) the nature of a promise as compared with the Law; (2) the kind of promises contained under grace.)

Already in the book of Hebrews (especially from the beginning of chapter 7) we have had three reasons for believing that the Law was not, and could not be, permanent:

- 1) God's oath to David in Psa. 110:4. See Heb. 6:20; 5:6, 10.
- 2) The failure of the Law. See Heb. 7:11, 18, 19.
- 3) The types in the Tabernacle, emphasized by Ex. 25:40. See Heb. 8:5.

Now we have it specifically stated. Paul said it also in Rom. 6:14,

"For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under (the) law, but under grace."

NOW WE COME TO A FOURTH REASON FOR BELIEVING THAT THE LAW WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE A PERMANENT COVENANT: IT IS FOUND IN THE REVELATION GIVEN TO JEREMIAH ABOUT 600 YEARS BEFORE CHRIST. This revelation is the main part of our passage this morning. It is found in Jer. 31:31-34; it is quoted here in vv. 8-12.

We have, first of all,

I. A FACT TO RECOGNIZE (Heb. 8:7).

"Faultless" means that it would have lacked nothing. But it did lack some things -- some very vital things! And so God

"sought" a "place," or an occasion, i.e., the right time, for "the second" -- which Jeremiah (see v. 8) called, "a new covenant."

) God was going to allow man enough time to realize for himself that the Law could not meet His need. He tested the Law for 1,500 years -- from Moses to Christ. And 600 years B.C. God spoke of the new covenant through the prophet Jeremiah.

II. GOD'S REVELATION THROUGH JEREMIAH CONCERNING THE NEW COVENANT (Heb. 8:8-12).

A. The problem (Heb. 8:8, 9).

1. The fault, or lack (v. 8a). It was not with the Law; it was with the people!

"For finding fault with them . . ."

Do you remember what Paul said about the Law?

"Wherefore, the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12).

2. A new covenant promised (vv. 8b, 9a).

) Two things point out the different between what God did through Christ as compared with what He gave through Moses.

- a. "New" -- a new kind, different in character, unprecedented.
- b. The specific statement: "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers . . ."

Note Jeremiah's way of pointing out something very important -- used all through his prophecy:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord."

3. The fault identified (v. 9b): the disobedience of the people.

Because of the nature of the first covenant, when they disobeyed, God was not responsible to keep His side of the covenant.

B. The remedy: THE NEW COVENANT (Heb. 8:10-12).

Note: "Saith the Lord" is found for the third time in our text here.

See the characteristics of the new covenant which mark it as different from the first covenant:

1. It was a covenant dependent upon what God would do -- not what the people would do for God. **NOTE: "BETTER." THIS FIRST WAS HOLY AND JUST AND GOOD. COMPARISONS IN HEBREWS ARE NOT WITH BAD AND BETTER, BUT WITH GOOD AND BETTER.**
 2. It would be an inner work: **IT IS THE WILL OF GOD ENCOMPASSING ALL OF SALVATION, NOT JUST THE BEGINNING**
 - a. "Into their mind" -- meaning that they would understand it, think about it and talk about it (cf. Deut. 6:8; 11:18), and will to do it.
 - b. "In their hearts" -- so that they would love it. **THIS IS ALSO THE SOURCE OF ALL TRUE OBEDIENCE. CF. ROM. 6:7.**

Note: Compare these with the greatest commandment in Deut. 6:4, 5.
 3. It would be a permanent work: "I will write them," so that the words can never be removed. **CF. EX. 31:18.**
 4. It would be an effective work: "And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." **CF. EX. 3:6; 2 COR. 6:16-17:1 (QUOTING EZ. 37:26,27).**
- This was God's desire through the Law. Cf. Ex. 6:7:
- "And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."
5. It will do away with the need for any other mediator except Christ (Heb. 8:11).

This, of course, looks ahead to the final state of things. **BUT IT ALSO SPEAKS OF THE PRESENT. CF. 1 JN. 2:27.**

It will settle the sin question -- which is the greatest need, a need which the Law could not meet. See v. 12. **CF. 10:17,18.**

"Unrighteousness" points to departures from the Law; "Sins" speak of men turning to their own ways.

III. THE CONCLUSION (Heb. 8:13).

The old is like an old garment that needs to be replaced. See Heb. 1:11. It is like the old man of Eph. 4:22 which is replaced by the new man. The Law was then ready to disappear as a system, to vanish away, no longer in effect.

This is further proof that we are not under the Law, but under grace.

"I WILL MAKE,"
I.E. PERFECT,
ACCOMPLISH. IT
WILL NOT FAIL
LIKE THE FIRST.

CF. EPH. 2:10
PHIL. 2:13
GAL. 2:20
COL. 1:12
HEB. 13:20,21

**NOTE: IT SETTLES
IT FROM GOD'S SIDE.
THEN WE ARE FOR-
GIVEN.**

Concl: These Hebrew believers had evidently lost sight of all of this wonderful truth. Have we?

There can be no growth until we not only know this, but live according to it. Many who are saved by grace live like they are under Law -- as though their relationship to God depended upon them.

Perhaps you have never trusted the Savior -- can you see how God delivers us from our sins? There must be a inner change -- a change which only God can bring about. Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17. Come to Him, trusting Him to do for you what you could never do for yourself. God waited for 1,500 years to prove it!

CB - 4/7/74 a.m.

WHAT THE FIRST COVENANT HAD
Heb. 9:1-5

Intro: By way of review you will remember that the emphasis in the book of Hebrews from the very beginning is upon the high priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To teach us how great our Lord is, the writer of this Epistle compares Him with the greatest of the past -- both from angels and from among men!

As we get to the end of chapter 4 we begin to get into the section dealing with our Lord as a priest -- not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek.

We have this emphasis through chapter 7.

Then, in chapter 8, we find another comparison being made -- a comparison between the first covenant, or the old covenant (referring to the Law), and the second covenant, or the new one. The new one is "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:6b).

In coming to chapter 9 we are centering our attention upon the work of the priest -- both under the old covenant, and under the new. And so we find the writer resorting to a comparison again.
) AND WE MUST ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND THAT THESE COMPARISONS IN HEBREWS ARE NEVER FOR THE PURPOSE OF BELITTling THE PAST, BUT PRIMARILY FOR THE PURPOSE OF GETTING US TO SEE THE INCOMPARABLE GLORY OF CHRIST AND OF THE PRESENT ORDER OF THINGS UNDER THE NEW COVENANT.

The first division in Hebrews 9 really goes through verse 10. However, I want to take the first 5 verses this morning, and then we will take the next five verses 2 weeks from today (next Sunday we will be in our Easter Bible Conference). And in these 10 verses we have two things:

- 1) What the first covenant had -- in vv. 1-5.
- 2) What the first covenant did not have -- in vv. 6-10.

And then from v. 11 the writer will go on to show that what the people of God did not have under the first covenant they now have in Christ under the new covenant.

And so as we look at the Tabernacle this morning, the place of God's dwelling and of sacrifice in the Old Testament, let us not minimize what they had then; instead, let us see its great glory so that we will be in a position to see the even greater glory of Christ.

I. THE NEW SUBJECT: THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY (Heb. 9:1).

We will see that this is followed by the description of the earthly sanctuary, which was THE TABERNACLE.

What we are considering this morning is what the old covenant HAD. The Tabernacle was a part of it. But we must also note that there were "ordinances of divine service" which went along with it.

These "ordinances" were legally binding regulations which carried the severest kind of punishment if those regulations were violated.

E.g., cf. what happened if:

- 1) The people made oil like the holy anointing oil, or if they used it in any other way from that which God had commanded. See Ex. 30:33.
- 2) The people made incense for themselves like the incense which was to be used on the altar of incense. Cf. Ex. 30:38.
- 3) The people violated God's orders for the Sabbath day. Cf. Ex. 31:14.

And many, many more illustrations could be added to these.

What the writer of Hebrews is talking about here has to do specifically with those regulations which had to do with "divine service." This speaks of the public worship of a people who had the relationship to God that servants have to a master. They were to worship God in complete submission to His revealed will. AND IT ALL HAD TO BE DONE IN THIS PARTICULAR PLACE.

Illus: Remember how concerning the 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ tribes of Israel got when Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh built an altar like the altar of burnt offering. Cf. Joshua 22.

II. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE EARTHLY SANCTUARY -- THE TABERNACLE (Heb. 9:2-5).

If you remember the details given in the book of Exodus, you will realize that the writer of Hebrews is only speaking here of the Tabernacle proper. He says nothing about the Outer Court since that is not involved in the point that he he wants to make.

Obviously, he is writing to people who are thoroughly familiar with the details. Perhaps some of us need to go back to Exodus 25-40 to refresh our minds on these facts.

Here are the facts:

- A. In the Tabernacle there were two rooms, and each of these was called, "a tabernacle."
- B. In the first room there were three things:

1. The lampstand. Cf. Ex. 25:31-39; 37:17-24.
2. The table of showbread with the bread. Cf. Ex. 25:23-30; 37:10-16.
3. The altar of incense. Cf. Ex. 30:1-10; 37:25-29.

This is mentioned here in Heb. 9 as though it belonged in the Holy of Holies, but it did not. It simply was related to the Holy of Holies in a special way, and that is the reason for the statement as we have it here in Heb. 9.

- C. The first room was called, The Sanctuary, or The Holy Place.
- D. Between the two rooms there was a divider called, "the second veil." There was another veil, or screen, at the entrance. But this one is the most important for the point that is going to be made.
- E. The second room was called, The Holiest of all, or The Holy of Holies.
- F. In the Holy of Holies there was just one thing: the ark of the covenant. Cf. Ex. 25:10-22; 37:1-9.
- G. In the ark of the covenant there were three things (and this is the only place in Scripture where we have this information given):
 1. The golden pot that had manna. Cf. Ex. 16:33, 34.
 2. Aaron's rod that budded. Cf. Num. 17:5, 8, 10.
 3. The tables of the covenant. Cf. Ex. 25:16, 21.
This is why it was called, "the ark of the covenant."
- H. On top of the ark of the covenant were:
 1. The mercy seat
 2. With cherubim on each end.

All of this prepares us for what the Tabernacle and the Old Covenant did not have, but let us not overlook the glory that the Tabernacle did have.

III. EVIDENCE OF A PRIMARY MEANING OF THE TABERNACLE.

In order that we will not minimize what we have here we need to read carefully the following passages which are to come:

- 1) Heb. 9:8, 9.
- 2) Heb. 9:23, 24.
- 3) Heb. 10:1.
- 4) ~~Heb. 8:5.~~

Add to this another very important verse: John 1:14.

Thus we have reason to believe that even the ceremonies of the first covenant of Law anticipated the realities of the new covenant of grace.

Time does not permit us either to speak of all of them, but let us think of the ark of the covenant for a moment, especially in connection with two things: (1) its purpose; (2) what it contained.

- 1) Its purpose: the place where God was.
- 2) Its content (related to its purpose). The things in it teach us that there are three factors which are important as we think of the presence of God:
 - a) The manna: God's provision for us each day through His Word.
 - b) The rod: submission to God's authority.
 - c) The law: obedience to God's Word.

Concl: It is difficult to overemphasize the glory of the Tabernacle in the OT. It meant a great deal to God as well as to the Israelites. It is full of meaning for us even today. But it did have its limitations. There were somethings which it did not provide for Israel. This provision has now been made for all men in Christ. To understand the place that Christ has is to see why we are no longer under the Law, but that now "grace and truth" are ours "by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

CB - 4/21/74 a.m.

WHAT THE FIRST COVENANT DID NOT HAVE
Heb. 9:6-10

Intro: In studying the book of Hebrews it is good to go back frequently to the theme as it is expressed in the first four verses of the epistle: Heb. 1:1-4.

It is there that we learn of the superiority of our Lord Jesus Christ over all that preceded Him. He is:

- 1) Superior in His Person.
- 2) Superior in His Work.

To bring this out, the writer gives us a series of comparisons (and warnings) in chs. 1-4. We must remember that the comparisons are never to belittle those with whom He is compared, but, by choosing the greatest of men and angels, to show how really great He is.

Then, in chapter 5 the writer begins to deal specifically with the priesthood. And again he presents to us a comparison -- a comparison between the priesthood of Aaron under the first covenant and the priesthood of Christ under the new covenant.

REMEMBER THAT THIS IS IN NO WAY TO MINIMIZE THE FIRST, OR OLD, COVENANT. That was glorious, but the new covenant is even more glorious. Read 2 Corinthians 3:7-11,

"But if the ministration of death, written and engraved in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away, How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be more glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious."

Two weeks ago we saw in Hebrews 9:1-5 WHAT THE FIRST COVENANT HAD. And you can see by re-reading those verses how glorious the first covenant was. The first covenant and the Tabernacle go together.

This morning we are going to see in vv. 6-10 WHAT THE FIRST COVENANT DID NOT HAVE. And in this discussion we will see why there had to be a new covenant.

I. THE WORK OF THE ~~PRE~~STERS -- IN THE HOLY PLACE (Heb. 9:6).

"Prepared" is the same verb as "made" in v. 2. It means to construct or erect something with everything it was supposed to have. Thus, it was not that God left something out, or

that Moses failed to build it according to the plan, but that God fully intended for it to have just what it had, and no more!

Note: It speaks of the priests, not the people.

A lit. translation would be like this: They are continually entering always. What the priests did, they did over and over. The people came in steady streams, day after day. There was no end to it.

"Accomplishing the service of God" speaks of what they did with the:

- 1) Sacrifices.
- 2) Blood.
- 3) Incense.
- 4) Oil.
- 5) Etc.

So much for the Holy Place!

II. THE WORK OF THE HIGH PRIEST -- IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES (Heb. 9:7).

The limitations here are even greater than they were in v. 6 -- in connection with the Holy Place.

Now we read just of the high priest -- not of all the priests.

And we read of what he was allowed to do on just one day out of the whole year, not what he did every day. The background for this verse is Lev. 16.

He always had to have "blood" -- which meant more and more sacrifices.

He was not freed from sin himself because first "he offered for himself."

And then he offered for "the errors," or sins of ignorance, of the people.

NO PROVISION WAS MADE FOR WILLFUL SIN. Cf. Heb. 10:26; Num. 15:30, 31. But

"there were sins growing out of the weakness of the flesh, out of an imperfect insight into God's law, out of heedlessness and lack of due circumspection . . . , and afterwards looked back on with shame and regret" (Trench, p. 248).

Cf. Luke 23:34; 1 Tim. 1:13; Acts 3:17; contrast Psalms 19:13.

III. THE MEANING OF IT ALL (Heb. 9:8-10).

Note that all of this was under the supervision of the Holy Spirit. He was "signifying" many things, i.e., seeking to make us understand by making it evident to our minds.

Here we see the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Word. He is its Author, and He is the Teacher.

Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9, 10; 2 Cor. 4:3-6; 1 Pet. 1:11; 1 Tim. 4:1.

In Hebrews, cf. 3:7; 10:15.

The Holy Spirit intends that the ceremonies and the priesthood connected with the first covenant and the Tabernacle should teach us three things (according to this passage):

- A. "The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest" (Heb 9:8).

"Manifest" means:

- 1) It had not been fully revealed.
- 2) It had not yet been "prepared" (to use the word which the writer used in v. 6).

"The first tabernacle" in this verse has to refer to the holy place. That in particular spoke of the imperfection of the first covenant.

As long as there were daily sacrifices and a national day of atonement, the sin question had not been settled.

- B. The ceremonies of the first covenant were, lit., a parable. Cf. Heb. 9:9, 10a.

They were for that time. They were representative of things to come. All of the offerings ("gifts and sacrifices" -- cf. 5:1; 8:3) could not satisfy the conscience. Man's conscience examines and passes judgment on things. Under the Law he could never be satisfied that the sin question was settled. Cf. 10:11; 10:2. But see also 10:22.

They had to do with the purifying of the flesh. Cf. Heb. 9:10a. And see also Heb. 9:13, 14. This was the purpose of the food, drinks, and various washings -- "regulations for the body" (NASB). See the same word in Heb. 9:1.

- C. They were intended to be temporary: "until the time of reformation" (Heb. 9:10b).

Notice the two times referred to in vv. 9, 10.

"The time of reformation" is now -- under the new covenant.

"Reformation" is an interesting word. This is the only place it is used in the NT. It is a medical term and is used

Lit. this word means to be re-formed.

"prop. in a physical sense, a making straight, restoring to its natural and normal condition something which in some way protrudes, or has got out of line, as (in Hippocr.) broken or misshapen limbs" (Thayer, p. 152).

The spiritual application is obvious. Sin cripples and deforms men in their hearts. Outward ceremonies are not going to remedy trouble that is internal. Therefore, the words, "until the time of reformation," give us hope -- a hope which is explained in the verses which immediately follow.

Concl: Some may be here this morning who do not know what "the time of reformation" refers to. Therefore, as we close let us look at the next two verse: Heb. 9:11, 12.

The OT sacrifices were temporary. They were symbolic. They were "imposed" -- absolutely required. They had to be done; the people had no choice.

How thankful we can be for the word, "until"! Our answer for the sin question is not the Law, nor the Tabernacle, nor the sacrifices of the OT. The answer is CHRIST!

Cf. Heb. 10:11, 12.

We cannot re-form ourselves, but God re-forms us through Christ. Has He re-formed you?

CB - 4/28/74 a.m.

ETERNAL REDEMPTION

Heb. 9:11-14

Intro: For the past two Sundays we have been thinking about the Tabernacle in the OT. We have considered in the first part of chapter 9 (1) what it had and (2) what it did not have. We must remember that it was of God, and that it had a glory all of its own. BUT vv. 8-10 make it very clear that the Holy Spirit wants us to understand that that was not the answer to our need.

In coming to v. 11 this morning we see what God's provision for us is. Vv. 11-28 are related in the original text to the first 10 verses of the chapter by a in v. 1, a in v. 6, and another in v. 11. We might translate it, "On the one hand . . . , but on the other hand . . . , and still in another . . ."

First of all we have . . .

I. THE THREEFOLD SUPERIORITY OF THE PRIESTLY WORK OF CHRIST (Heb. 9:11, 12).

"Christ" is also the first word in the Greek text, and is there for emphasis. We turn from what the people did in the OT, and from what the priests did, to what "Christ" did.

His work is superior because of:

A. The place where He offered His sacrifice (Heb. 9:11).

It is described as a Tabernacle of greater importance and one which lacked nothing for the accomplishing of His purpose as a priest. It was not of this creation.

Cf. v. 24.

In this connection it is important to notice the first part of v. 11. It anticipates what the rest of our text is going to reveal. Christ has put in His appearance as "an high priest" and He has to do, not with things that are yet to come, but with things that are already here! In the words of v. 10, "the time of reformation" is now!

His work is also superior because of:

B. The sacrifice which He offered (Heb. 9:12a).

He did not offer "the blood of goats and calves," by which the writer evidently means to indicate the sacrifices that the priests made (1) for the people and (2) for themselves (see v. 7b). The greater glory of Christ is seen in the fact that He was not only the Priest but

also the Sacrifice -- "by His own blood."

Now we can see more clearly the relationship between the OT sacrifices and the work of Christ. They were types; His was the reality to which they pointed.

In the third place the work of Christ is superior because of:

C. What His work accomplished (Heb. 9:12b).

Begin reading v. 12 with, "but by his own blood . . ."

Three expressions are especially important:

- 1) "Once." It means once for all, never to be repeated. Contrast with vv. 6, 7. Cf. 7:27; 10:10.
- 2) "Having obtained." Lit., He found. He did what no OT priest ever did. And He did it by Himself without any assistance from anyone else!
- 3) "Eternal redemption." I want to come back to this in a few minutes, but for now notice that this is "eternal redemption." It would have to be if the work of Christ was once for all!

Note: While there certainly is an emphasis on what the death of Christ means to men, we will see in a moment that the emphasis in vv. 11, 12 is upon what the death of Christ meant to God. By way of contrast, the next two verses, vv. 13, 14, definitely indicate what the death of Christ means in one particular way to us.

II. ONE UNIQUE FEATURE ABOUT THE WORK OF CHRIST (Heb. 9:13, 14).

The writer here sounds like the Apostle Paul in Rom. 5:9, 10, 15, 17. E.g., Rom. 5:8, 9:

"But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

It is presenting an argument from something which has been done to something else which will be done or has now been done.

One place where the OT sacrifices were obviously inadequate had to do with the "conscience." Cf. vv. 8, 9. Also read Heb. 10:1, 2.

The OT sacrifices had to do with outward cleansing. See v. 10. This is the point also in v. 13. The outward may have been typical of the inward, but it was, after all, only outward. The conscience was never satisfied, and so the sacrifices continued to come.

~~But now,~~

But now it is different!

Note that we have the Trinity in this verse. Some feel that "the eternal Spirit" is a reference to the human spirit of Christ, but in view of v. 8 and also the relationship which Christ had with the Holy Spirit in His earthly ministry, why should we feel that it would be out of place for the Holy Spirit to have a part in His death too?

Every detail of v. 14 is extremely important if we are to understand the sufficiency of the work of Christ: "offered Himself -- without spot -- to God -- purge -- your conscience -- from dead works -- to serve -- the living God."

Note that the title for God, "the living God," was one of the prominent titles used in the OT. E.g., Deut. 5:26, "For who is there of all flesh, who hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?"

Also see Josh. 3:10; 1 Sam. 17:26, 36; 2 Kings 19:4; Psalms 42:2; Jer. 10:10; Dan. 6:20, 26.

Service to God follows salvation. It does not lead up to it nor does it have anything to do with obtaining it. How important it is to understand these truths.

) But, let us go back for just a moment to the term, "eternal redemption," to learn a little more about . . .

III. THE MEANING OF OUR SUBJECT: "ETERNAL REDEMPTION." The following ideas are included in the expression:

- A. The bondage of the sinner.
- B. His inability to free himself. He cannot do any work nor can he pay the price.
- C. The ransom required. It must be paid to God and satisfy His righteous demands.
- D. The freedom of the sinner from bondage by the price paid by Christ to God and this without any assistance whatever from the sinner.
- E. The fact that the sinner now belongs to the Savior and to God. Cf. 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; Rom. 1:1.
- F. The redemption is a present possession.
- G. Redemption is forever because it is "eternal."

Concl.: Three questions in closing:

- 1) Do you have this "eternal redemption"?
- 2) Are you resting in it because you understand what we have been talking about this morning? This is the ground of our assurance and our enjoyment of that which we have in Christ.
- 3) How long has it been since you have praised the Lord for what He has done for you?

CB - 5/5/74 a.m.

THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT

Heb. 9:15-22

Intro: One of the characteristic things about the book of Hebrews is its repetition of ideas and phrases and words.

- 1) Our Lord's present place of ministry: 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.
- 2) Those who are compared with our Lord to show His greatness: prophets, angels, Moses, Abraham, etc.
- 3) In 7:22 we were introduced to the word, covenant.
- 4) In 9:7, to the word, blood.

Both of these words are extremely important in the passage that we have before us this morning. And so we have, the blood of the covenant.

Cf. Mark 14:24, "This is my blood of the new testament."

Also, 1 Cor. 11:25, "This cup is the new testament in my blood."

Covenant and testament are translations of the same NT word:

διαθήκη. It, in turn, translates the OT מִוְדָּה. There has been a great deal of controversy and discussion as to which of these is the right translation. Some feel that some passages require the use of the word, covenant; others require the use of the word, testament. But there are expositors who are inclined to feel that just as the writer here uses the same Greek word throughout, the translation should be consistent. And that since also the word in the OT, מִוְדָּה, does not mean a testament, but a covenant, so our translation should reflect that meaning -- and, therefore, covenant should be our word. I am inclined toward this latter view.

One of our problems in this passage (as in many other passages of Scripture) is that we try to Americanize, or modernize, the use of words of customs. One basic principle of interpreting the Scripture is that it must be interpreted historically. We are dealing with a culture that is different from ours and so we must interpret what we have in the light of that culture.

We are dealing with the establishment of a covenant, an agreement, a contract, between two parties. The first covenant was an arrangement between God and Israel. The new covenant is with "those who are called" (Heb. 9:15).

It is true that the result is called an "inheritance," but we forget that in Bible times the inheritance did not have to wait for the death of the one who made out his last will and testament. Cf. the prodigal son in Luke 15:12. While not called his inheritance, this is what he was asking his father to give him -- before his father's death.

The same is true of Solomon inheriting the throne before the death of David, his father.

No, we are not dealing here with a last will and testament, but with a covenant! In the OT most covenants were "dedicated" (v. 18) by blood! This is the main point in the passage before us.

I. ONE RESULT OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST (Heb. 9:15).

IT MEANT THAT A NEW COVENANT WAS BEING ESTABLISHED. Every Hebrew believer especially should recognize this. With a new covenant, the first became old. Cf. 8:13.

The new covenant did not leave those under the first covenant without any hope; it did what the first covenant could not do. It has provided an "eternal inheritance."

Special note: cf. 5:9, "eternal salvation";
9:12, "eternal redemption";
here, "eternal inheritance."

These expressions mean that, if salvation were not eternal, the epistle to the Hebrews would never have been written. This covenant provided eternal security. Christ is not only the mediator (8:6 as well as here), but He is the surety, the guarantee (7:22 -- the first time the word, covenant, is used in Hebrews). As the mediator, Christ brings the new covenant into being; as its surety, He guarantees that it will last forever.

And the work of Christ is retroactive. The word "redemption" is even stronger here than in v. 12. Here it is -- a redemption from.

"They who are called" shows the sovereignty of God in salvation and should remind us of Heb. 3:1, "partakers of the heavenly calling."

Thus, this verse gives us another wonderful statement of the effect of the work of Christ like we had in v. 12. The question of sin has been answered, even as far as the OT "transgressions."

II. WHAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COVENANT REQUIRED (Heb. 9:16, 17) -- at least in most cases (cf. 9:22a).

Remember that we are talking about OT covenants. E.g., cf. Gen. 15:7-21. For our present passage, cf. Ex. 24:1-8. It is true even in Gen. 8:20-22 -- God's covenant with Noah.

"The testator" was the one who made the covenant and his death was represented symbolically in the death of the animal which was killed. Until that sacrifice was made, the covenant was not in effect. And so this tells us WHY CHRIST HAD TO DIE.

III. THE PRINCIPLE ILLUSTRATED (Heb. 9:18-22).

Although there are many points of contrast between the first covenant and the new covenant, there are also points of similarity. There were features about the first which were types of the new. This is true with respect to the blood. The first was "dedicated" -- i.e., brought into effect for the first time -- by blood.

Not all of the details spoken of in vv. 19-21 are given in the OT, but they do not need to be. The OT does not tell us everything; often in the NT additional details are given. But this should not bother us -- both were written under the direction of the same Spirit of God!

Vv. 19, 20 go back to Ex. 24:6-8. "Precept" means commandment. "Enjoined" means commanded. In the original they are from the same root. The people had heard the Law. They agreed to it. It was established by sacrifice, by blood.

V. 21 is speaking of something not found in the OT. This evidently means that, just as everything was anointed with oil (cf. Ex. 30:22-33), everything also was "sprinkled with blood."

V. 22 gives us a summary. It is twofold:

- 1) Almost everything having to do with the first covenant was "purged with blood."
 - 2) One thing was certain: "without the shedding of blood" there was "no remission," i.e., no forgiveness.
- All of these were types, pointing ahead to the sacrifice of Christ. Therefore, such insistence upon the blood of Christ for the establishment of the new covenant should not be a surprise; instead, it should be expected.

Concl: Isaac Watts put all of this into the following words of one of his hymns:

Not all the blood of beasts
 On Jewish altars slain,
 Could give the guilty conscience peace,
 Or wash away the stain.
 But Christ, the Heavenly Lamb,
 Takes all our guilt away;
 A sacrifice of nobler name,
 And richer blood than they.
 My faith would lay her hand
 On that dear head of Thine,
 While like a penitent I stand,
 And there confess my sin.

(Over)

CB - 5/12/74 a.m.

OUR LORD'S THREE APPEARANCES
Heb. 9:23-28

Intro: For those of you who are with us for the first time, or for the first time in our present series in the book of Hebrews, let me explain that we are going through this wonderful letter to the Hebrews, verse by verse.

We have found that they were attached to the things which God told His people to do under the first covenant, the covenant of Law. They did not realize that the OT Tabernacle and the priesthood were "figures of the true" (v. 24), and that their main importance was that they pointed ahead to Christ. And that once Christ had come, then we no longer have the need for those things which pointed to Him -- as wonderful as they were and as important as they are for us to know even now.

So -- from the very beginning of this book the writer has been seeking to show the greater glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

All of this is important because it has to do with our salvation. See the end of v. 28.

In our text this morning we find two things primarily:

- 1) The contrast between the earthly character of the OT order as compared with the heavenly character of the work of our Lord. Cf. vv. 23, 24.
- 2) The three appearances of our Lord. See vv. 24, 26, 28. We want to look primarily at the three appearances, but also include the contrast as it relates to these appearances.

Perhaps you have heard it said that salvation in the Bible is presented in three tenses:

- 1) Past.
- 2) Present.
- 3) Future.

We can say:

- 1) We were saved at some time in the past.
- 2) We are being saved at the present time -- a progressive and continuous work that God is doing in our hearts.
- 3) We shall be saved when the Lord returns -- the time when our salvation will be completed.

These three tenses of salvation are involved in the three appearances of our Lord. Let us consider them in the order that they are mentioned in our text

I. THE PRESENT APPEARANCE OF OUR LORD (Heb. 9:23, 24).

This is taken up ^{first} for two reasons:

- 1) Because it helps us to begin with God. ²⁾ This is the theme. Salvation always must begin with God. He must be satisfied, or it means nothing.

of the epistle: Christ's present ministry. To understand this is to know why the old order has been superseded.

Note the two things that are emphasized:

- A. The necessity for Christ's heavenly ministry (Heb. 9:23, 24a).

It is "necessary" because the OT order requires it. (See two other things that are absolutely necessary in this epistle: 7:12; 9:16. See one thing which was not necessary in 7:27.)

The earthly order of the OT was important, but it was not permanent. It pointed ahead to Christ. He is now the fulfillment of all that they pictured.

- B. The nature of Christ's heavenly ministry (Heb. 9:24b).

He is there "now to appear in the presence of God for us"

Note: He is there "for us"! He is there in our behalf! If it had not been for us, He would never have left. It was necessary that He come and go back because we have a great need which could not be met in any other way.

But now get the point: He is not there so that He can see God; HE IS THERE SO THAT GOD CAN SEE HIM. God must accept Him, or all that He has done on earth is meaningless.

This is why it is so wonderful to read 4 times in Hebrews, not only that He is there, but that He is seated at the Father's right hand. He has been accepted, and He is there as our Mediator.

In our preaching and our teaching this is the most neglected of all of our Lord's ministries, and this accounts for the fact that so many believers are uncertain as to the eternal character of their salvation.

Ill.: When Queen Esther went in to see King Ahasuerus. God the Father has extended His scepter to His Son!

II. THE PAST APPEARANCE OF OUR LORD (Heb. 9:25-28a).

The emphasis here is upon His earthly ministry and His death upon the cross for our sins.

His appearance in the past was an appearance to men. How important it is for us to recognize:

- 1) Who He was, and is.
- 2) Why He came.
- 3) The uniqueness of His coming.
- 4) What He accomplished.

God is satisfied with the work of His Son; ARE YOU?

- A. The uniqueness of His coming: "once" (Heb. 9:25, 26a, 28a). Once was enough. It will never be repeated because it does not need to be.
- B. The reason for His coming (Heb. 9:26b, 28a).

It is stated in two ways:

- 1) "To put away sin" (singular).
- 2) "To bear the sins (plural) of many."

He came not only for "transgressions" (v. 15), but for "sin" and "sins."

He not only redeemed us from our sins (vv. 12, 15 -- the latter verse has the prefix, from), but He has taken care of the sins, too. He has destroyed it with all of its effects. Again, the three tenses of salvation with respect to sin:

- 1) Past: saved from sin's penalty.
- 2) Present: saved from sin's power.
- 3) Future: saved from sin's presence.

- C. The twofold cause behind His coming (Heb. 9:26b, 28a).

1. Active of Christ: "hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."
2. Passive -- by the Father: "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Cf. Isa 53:6 2 Cor. 5:21
1 Jn 4:14

So both the Father and the Son were involved.

- D. The importance of His appearance in the past: for the approval of men -- that they might receive Him as Savior.

III. THE FUTURE APPEARANCE OF OUR LORD (Heb. 9:28b).

Behind all of these appearances is the symbolism of what the OT priest did on the national Day of Atonement in Israel -- appearing before God, and appearing before men.

"Look" here does not teach a partial rapture. It is des-

criptive of the way believers are waiting for, patiently and constantly, the return of the Lord.

This will be His third appearance, and it will be different from all other appearances. No attempt is made to distinguish between the Rapture and the Second Coming, but it would seem that the emphasis would be on the Rapture.

But when He does come there is one negative point that needs to be made, and one positive:

- 1) It will be "without sin," i.e., "not to bear sin" (NASB).
- 2) It will be "unto salvation," i.e., to bring to its final state the salvation that has been in the process of being completed in the life and experience of every child of God.

Concl: What more could be said? The whole story is right here. Anything else that you find in the Word of God has to be just an elaboration of what is in our text this morning.

The important thing is this: What does it mean to you?

Do you understand it?

Are you trusting in Christ, or do
still insist on your own hopeless
way?

Remember: This is God's Word. This is His Way. There is no other if you expect to have your sins forgiven and to enjoy throughout eternity the glorious blessings of salvation.

CB - 5/19/74 a.m.

SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE
Heb. 10:1-10

Intro: We are coming to the end of the doctrinal section of the epistle to the Hebrews (in 10:18).

From ch. 7 on we have seen a comparison between the old covenant (the Law) and the new covenant. We have learned that the old has been set aside and that the new is in effect.

However, as in all of the comparisons of the book of Hebrews, the writer is very careful not to minimize the importance of anybody or anything in the OT. It all was of God and, therefore, had to be important.

He comes back to this again after pointing out the three appearances of our Lord -- especially to show the relationship between the old covenant and Christ, as well as to show the effect of the first coming of Christ into the world.

The emphasis was on Christ's first coming in chapter 2; it is on it again here in the first part of chapter 10.

I. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES AND CHRIST (Heb. 10:1-4).

Let us not get the idea that they were not important. They were from God. They were commanded by God. Nothing was more important for the people under the old covenant than that they carefully obey everything that God told them to do in it.

But -- the relationship between these sacrifices and Christ is likened here to the relationship between an object and its shadow. The OT sacrifices were shadows of Christ. They were types (to state it another way); He is the antitype -- the fulfillment of the type.

The figure of a shadow and its substance teaches us at least three things about the relationship between the two:

- 1) They are similar. A shadow is always similar to the body which causes the shadow. This shows the importance of the shadow -- it tells you something about the body.
- 2) They are different. The shadow is not the body. The shadow does not even become the body. We have to keep them distinct in our minds.
- 3) The shadow is a guarantee of the reality of the body which is causing the shadow. Or, we can say that the shadow is a kind of a promise -- a promise that the body is not far away.

The first 4 verses of this chapter are really to tell us

about the shadow, and in this comparison we see how important the shadow was, but that it was not the reality that we need to be concerned about.

Two very strong and similar statements are made in this section:

- 1) V. 1b.
- 2) V. 4.

The shadow could not remove sin. It could not render a man complete, or "perfect," so that he would be fully accepted by God.

Instead, the OT sacrifices do two things:

- 1) Their very repetition teaches us that they did not settle the sin question.
- 2) They did not remove sin, but they kept reminding the people of God that sin had not been removed.

They anticipated, they looked ahead to One who would remove sin, but they could not do this by themselves. The value of OT sacrifices is seen in the fact that they pointed ahead to Christ. If Christ had not come, they would have been meaningless.

Since all of this is true, let us now follow our writer and teacher as he tells us about the substance, the body which casts the shadow.

II. THE COMING OF CHRIST (Heb. 10:5-10). He is the body. He is the substance. The OT sacrifices were like Him and His sacrifice, but they were not the same. They were shadows to show that He was coming.

What is told us here about the substance, defined in the dictionary as,

"that which underlies all outward manifestations; real, unchanging essence or nature . . . that which constitutes anything what it is" (Webster's Collegiate, p. 993).

A. The coming of Christ was predicted in the OT (Heb. 10:5-7).

What a powerful argument this is! All of this was not put together after Christ came; the writer is citing a prophecy which was made about 1,000 years before He came! And, though these are the words of David, the writer of Hebrews shows us that they are primarily the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What did this mean to those who read it in those days?

It is a quotation of Psa. 40:6-8.

Even then God did not desire animal sacrifices in the sense that they could meet man's need or satisfy God! A body was prepared for the Son of God. It was necessary for Him to become a man, and for Him to die! The will of God was for Christ to die. And to confirm it we not only have this quotation, but it is found written, lit. it stands written "in the volume of the book" about Him.

The OT is full of Christ. It is meaningless without Him.

- B. The effect of Christ's coming upon the Old Covenant (Heb. 10:8, 9).

Quoting again from the passage in Psa. 40, the writer shows the significance of these OT words: "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second."

"Taketh away" means abolished, abrogated, repealed, extinguished, killed.

On the other hand, "establish" means to make it stand, to put it into effect, to make it permanent so that it will always be in force and never be abolished.

We have already had this teaching in such verses as 8:13.

But there is one thing more.

- C. The result of the coming of Christ for the believer -- for the one who trusts Christ as his Savior (Heb. 10:10).

We must always be careful to note in reading the Word of God to whom and about whom the writer is writing. All can be saved, but all are not saved.

This tenth verse of Heb. 10 is one of the great Gospel verses of the book of Hebrews. Note 4 important things:

1. The origin of our salvation: "By which will" -- the will of God for His Son.

Salvation did not even begin in thought with man; it began with God!

2. The character of our salvation: lit., we have been sanctified.

There are 4 terms that are used in this passage which are similar, and yet not entirely the same, but which are used to bring out various aspects of Christ's

work. They are:

- 1) "Perfect" (v. 1).
- 2) "Purged" (v. 2).
- 3) "Take away sins" (v. 4).
- 4) "Sanctified" (v. 10).

"Sanctified" means that everything has been done to remove all that stood between us and God so that we have been set apart by Him, prepared to enter into fellowship with Him.

3. The means of our salvation: "by the body of Jesus Christ."

This is His physical body. Cf. vv. 19, 20. His "offering" tells what He did; "body" tells us what He offered.

Cf. the 3 references to the incarnation in ch. 2. The shadows of the OT required a real, physical death!

Note the following references to the body of Christ with respect to His death:

- 1) 1 Pet. 2:24,
"Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed."
- 2) Col. 1:21, 22,
"And you, that were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight."
- 3) Rom. 7:4,
"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."
- 4) 1 Cor. 11:24,
"And when he had given thanks, he broke it (the bread), and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."

So we do not save ourselves; Christ saves us. And He saves us, not by His life, but by His death and then by His resurrection.

But note one other thing:

4. The enduring quality of our salvation: "once for all."

Cf. 9:12. This note has been sounded many times in Hebrews. We must not miss it. His sacrifice was so perfect, and so completely satisfying to God, that there is now no need for any other sacrifice.

Concl: So you see that the OT sacrifices were important. They were shadows of Christ. But now that Christ has come, we do not need the shadows any longer -- except as they may be able to point out for us some of the glorious details of Christ.

But I cannot leave this passage this morning without asking if you are trusting in Christ. If not, why not? He is the only way of acceptance with God. He can forgive your sins once and for all, and He is the only One who can!

CB - 5/26/74 a.m.

"NO MORE OFFERING FOR SIN"
Heb. 10:11-18

Intro: From the beginning of chapter 10 to the 18th verse we have a recapitulation of the doctrinal section of the book, ending with that grand statement in v. 18,

"Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."

This is the doctrinal conclusion which was anticipated in the opening verses of the epistle. (See esp. v. 3 in ch. 1.)

There are four points in this summary -- proofs of the sufficiency of the priestly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are:

- 1) The weakness of the OT sacrifices (Heb. 10:1-4). Cf. 7:18, 19. They were just the "shadow," pointing ahead to the sacrifice of Christ, but utterly unable to settle the sin question by themselves.
- 2) The will of God -- as expressed in the Word of God (Heb. 10:5-10). These verses are primarily a quotation of Psa. 40:6-8. And they speak of our Lord doing the will of God in the world in "a body," i.e., as a human being.
- 3) The work of Christ -- past and present (Heb. 10:11-14). This twofold work emphasizes what He did and what He is doing, as well as the past and present aspects of the results for the child of God.
- 4) The witness of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 10:15-17). Again we have Jer. 31:33, 34, referring to the new covenant.

This is all followed with the conclusion of the whole doctrinal section: Heb. 10:18.

We have already considered points #1 and #2 above. This morning we want to look at #3 and #4.

I. THE WORK OF CHRIST -- PAST AND PRESENT (Heb. 10:11-14).

The emphasis is upon the contrast between the standing of the OT priest as compared with the sitting of the Lord Jesus Christ.

V. 12 is the third of the key verses of the epistle. Cf. 1:3; 8:1; and then 12:2.

And we have a new emphasis upon what our Lord is doing now -- taken from Psa. 110:1.

And then, finally, we see the results for us -- that which is finished, as compared with that which continues.

A. Christ compared with the OT priests (Heb. 10:11-13).

There were many of them; there is only one Christ.

They offered many sacrifices over and over; He offered "one sacrifice for sins forever."

They always stood. There were no seats in the Tabernacle. Our Lord did His work, and sat down.

Their work was never finished; His work is finished. To "take away sins" means to take them from around a person, like a garment, or like something that held them bound -- as in the case of Lazarus and his grave clothes. Cf. John 11:44.

And now our Lord is eagerly anticipating the next phase in the plan of God as seen in v. 13.

Who are his enemies?

- 1) Satan is.
- 2) Sin is.
- 3) Death is.
- 4) Sinners are.

Note: Cf. Heb. 2:14, 15; 1 Cor. 15:24-26; Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:20, 21.

B. The results of the work of Christ for us (Heb. 10:14).

This is a word of explanation, explaining why it is possible for our Lord to be seated "on the right hand of God" -- a place of

- 1) dignity and honor,
- 2) acceptance,
- 3) authority.

As His work is finished and at the same time continuing, so part of His work IN us is finished, and part continues and will be completed. We have it in the words "hath perfected" and lit., are being sanctified. Note have been sanctified (lit. trans.) -- viewed as finished.

Although the work in us is not complete from a practical standpoint, yet its completion is guaranteed so that He sits down as proof that the sin question is settled.

II. THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Heb. 10:15-17).

To get the point in this second quotation of Jer. 31:33, 34 (see the quotation of Jer. 31:31-34 in Heb. 8:8-12) we need to add either in the middle of v. 16 or at the beginning of v. 17 the words, Then He said, or, He also said.

The point is that the new covenant promised the forgiveness of sins in the words, "And their sins and iniquities will I

remember no more."

Note the word "remission" in v. 18. It means forgiveness. It is a release, fitting in with the expression in v. 11 above, "take away sins."

God forgets our sins because they are forgiven -- because of the sacrifice our Lord made when He died in His body for our sins!

III. THE GRAND CONCLUSION (Heb. 10:18).

To make this point is the reason for the writing of the book of Hebrews! If our sins have been forgiven in Christ, it is not necessary for our Lord or anyone else to continue to offer sacrifices to God. The work is finished.

We all ought to say, Hallelujah!

Concl: Is this where your hope is this morning? Or are you working on some system of your own to try to pay for your own sins?

Listen to me: If the OT system of sacrifices, established by God Himself, could not take away the sins of those who offered them year after year, then your system which cannot possibly be as good will never succeed either.

If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, will you not put your trust in Him today? If I, or any member of our Staff, can help you, we would be delighted to do so.

But there is a message here also for those of us who know the Lord: WHILE YOU REJOICE IN THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST, ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT HIS WORK IN YOU WHICH IS UNFINISHED? He has perfect you, but you are being sanctified.

He died not only to set you free from sin's penalty, but to deliver you from sin's power. Are you just as concerned about the latter as you used to be about the former?

Illus.: Putting chlorine in a swimming pool. The water is not instantly purified, but the purification is guaranteed and will eventually take place as the chlorine is circulated.

So we have the promise of 1 John 1:7.

CB - 6/2/74 a.m.

Also: 6/9/74 a.m.

"A NEW AND LIVING WAY"
Heb. 10:19-25

On To Perfection
(Dealing esp with
II. - vv. 22-25).

Intro: We come now to the practical section of Hebrews. In the Word of God it always follows the doctrinal. We learn in order that we may be and do.

Our Lord stated it this way:

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

What have we learned in the first 9½ chapters of Hebrews?

It was all summarized for us in the opening verses of the epistle: Heb. 1:1-4.

We have seen that our Lord Jesus Christ is greater than all. We have seen that He came into the world to offer Himself for our sins -- and that in doing so He became not only our Sacrifice, but also our Great High Priest!

We have also learned where He is now and what He is doing. Cf. Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2. See also 7:25.

We have seen all of the evidence we need to know that we are saved eternally -- past, present, and future.

With all that we have seen, we have seen enough to recognize that our Lord and the salvation that He has provided for us are far more wonderful than we have ever imagined, far more wonderful than we will ever be able to understand -- at least until we get to heaven.

BUT -- where does all of this truth lead us?

It brings us into a life -- a life of faith, a life to be lived to the glory of God, a life described in the benediction of the epistle: Heb. 13:20, 21.

In the verses we have this morning we have a general introduction to the practical section which is enlarged upon in the rest of the letter. And in our text we see:

- 1) What we already have (Heb. 10:19-21, 22b).
- 2) What we are to do (Heb. 10:22a, 23-25).

I. WHAT WE ALREADY HAVE (Heb. 10:19-21, 22b).

The key to the practical experience of the child of God is to know what we already have so that we will not spend our time seeking that which God has already given us.

Three things are emphasized.

A. We have a great privilege (Heb. 10:19, 20).

It is a privilege never realized by OT saints. It is a privilege that goes beyond anything that we would ever have thought that we might have: WE HAVE ACCESS TO THE VERY PRESENCE OF GOD.

Dr. Mitchell spoke yesterday to us at the Men's Retreat about truth getting a hold of us. Has this ever really gripped your heart?

Notice how the writer places himself with the reader when he uses the word, "brethren." One believer does not stand above another in this. We are not to seek it; WE HAVE IT!

And we have it with "baldness." Cf. this word in Heb. 3:6; 4:16; here; 10:35.

But it is only "by the blood of Jesus." Cf. "not without blood" in Heb. 9:7. It took His work. It is not due to anything in us.

And it is by "a new and living way":

- 1) "New" -- a word used of animals freshly slaughtered. It cannot grow old or ineffective, like film for your camera, or like medicine you may take.

Griffith Thomas says that the meaning of this word, "new," is illustrated in the words of the hymn,

"Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved, to sin no more."

- 2) "Living" -- living and able to impart life to others. It is like the Word. Cf. Heb. 4:12.

Our Lord consecrated this for us. He went ahead in the "way" that we are to follow. Cf. Heb. 2:10. Note again that He has done the work and we receive the benefits of His work!

And it was all by means of "his flesh" which was typified by "the veil" -- and this is why we read what we do in

- 1) Matt. 27:51.
- 2) Mark 15:38.
- 3) Luke 23:45.

The veil was rent in two from top to bottom!

But we have more:

B. We have, lit., a great priest (Heb. 10:21). The KJV has

translated it, "an high priest." But the word, great, is there in the original -- great in importance, great in authority, great in power!

And we will always have Him!

And He is "ever the house of God" -- a term which designates the people of God as a family and as the dwelling place of God on earth. This is what the Tabernacle was; this is what we are now. Cf. Heb. 3:1-6.

But there is still one more thing that we have in this passage:

C. We have purification (Heb. 10:22b). This expression belongs with vv. 19-21.

This is what Heb. 1:3 first told us.

Our cleansing is twofold:

- 1) Inward: "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience" -- through the blood of Christ.
- 2) Outward: "our bodies washed with pure water" -- as was the case with the priests in Ex. 29:4.

Note that the inward precedes the outward, but it is important to note that the outward is a part of it too.

Paul prayed for the Thessalonians regarding the outward as well as the inward:

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Remember what James wrote in Jas. 4:8b,

"Cleanse your hands (outward), ye sinners; and purify your hearts (inward), ye doubleminded."

In Rom. 8:23b Paul says that we are waiting for "the redemption of our body."

So salvation is not just of the soul, but it also has to do with the body. Cf. 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; Rom. 12:1.

Thank God -- WE HAVE THIS!

But now, knowing that we have all of this, we need to turn our thoughts to

II. WHAT WE NEED TO DO (Heb. 10:22a, 23-25). Again we have three things. Cf. faith, hope, love in Heb. 6:9-12
1 Th. 1:3
1 Cor. 13:13

- A. "Let us draw near . . . " (Heb. 10:22a). ACCESS

Draw near to what, or to whom?

We draw near to God, to Christ -- in the Holy Place of heaven itself. WHAT KIND OF A PERSON MUST HE BE WHO HAS ACCESS, BUT WHO NEVER DRAWS NEAR? Have you been in the Holy Place this morning? Were you there yesterday?

But we are to draw near:

Person of God.

- 1) "With a true heart," i.e., a heart that is all that God wants it to be -- the whole heart.
- 2) "In full assurance of faith." Faith is strengthened by the truth of the Word of God. Full assurance is faith fully matured -- not ignorant, or doubting, but fully confident.

So we must consider ourselves first.

- B. "Let us hold fast . . . " (Heb. 10:23).

After faith comes hope.

What is our hope?

Cf. Tit. 2:13

1 Jn 3:2, 3

Rom. 8:24, 25

To hold fast our hope is to have it securely in our possession.

This is Assurance

Purpose of God.

Hope has to do with the future. It also has to do with the truth of God, His promises. We are to hold it "without wavering," i.e., without bowing to anything else.

As an illustration, cf. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel.

The reason: "For He is faithful that promised." Cf. Heb. 11:11. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 2 Tim. 2:13

- C. "Let us consider one another . . . " (Heb. 10:24, 25).

From ourselves to the outcome we turn to others.

From faith and hope we turn to love.

ASSISTANCE

Cf. Acts 2:41-

To forsake is to leave a difficult situation.

It seems that already in the early Church there were these who were neglecting the fellowship of the saints. No child of God ever gets strong enough to do without other children of God. We need each other. We need to encourage each other. Cf. Phil. 2:1-4. See also 2 Cor. 8:1-7; 1 Tim. 4:12.

People of God.

And we need this exhortation "the more, as we see the day approaching." Cf. Rom. 13:10-14. This day must be the day of Jesus Christ, when He will come for us.

Concl: What we have in this passage this morning is obviously for the Lord's people. May I close by asking you two questions?

- 1) Do you realize what you have because you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior?
- 2) In the light of what you have, are you doing what you are supposed to do -- by His grace?

How is your faith . . . your hope . . . your love?

We need to know, but we also need to do -- not in order to be saved, but because we are! And to enjoy the blessings that can only be ours through obedience to the Word of God. Our Lord said concerning other things but applying also here,

"If ye knew these things, happy are ye if ye do them"
(John 13:17).

CB - 6/16/74 a.m.

A FEARFUL THING
Heb. 10:26-31

Intro: For the past two Sundays we have been getting started in the practical section of the book which begins in 10:19.

Heb. 10:19-25 forms an introduction to the whole practical emphasis of the book -- speaking first of all about what we have, and then about what we should do, emphasizing faith, hope, and love.

This morning we look at the other side of the coin.

Two times in this passage we have the word, "fearful." Cf. vv. 27, 31.

The only other time the word is used in the NT is in Heb. 12:21 -- so it is peculiar to this Epistle.

It means anything that terrifies a person or that causes that person to be gripped with fear.

This is the emphasis of our passage this morning.

Furthermore . . . we come in this passage to the fourth of five warnings in the book of Hebrews:

- 1) Heb. 2:1-4.
- 2) Heb. 3:7-4:13.
- 3) Heb. 5:11-6:20.
- 4) Heb. 10:26-39.
- 5) Heb. 12:15-29.

One of the disconcerting things about these warnings is that they seem to teach contrary to the emphasis of the book -- which is assurance. Cf., e.g., 10:23.

Therefore, we must approach these warnings on the basis that the Scriptures teach eternal salvation for all who have put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This must always be the basis upon which we approach the Word of God because it is so preminent everywhere -- and the Scriptures do not contradict themselves.

How can we explain, then, verses like Heb. 10:28, 29? Surely the ominous point in the warning is that hell is the only prospect, a fearful, terrifying prospect, for the person who is without Christ.

What is the meaning?

It is simply this: It is possible for a person to be numbered among the people of God without having really accepted the Lord

Jesus Christ as Savior. Some like this could even be in Central Bible Church. We have the human side as well as the divine side to consider. The two must be brought together.

In these verses we have four things:

- I. THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE (Heb. 10:26, 27).
- II. THE ARGUMENT (Heb. 10:28, 29).
- III. THE PROOF (Heb. 10:30).
- IV. THE OMINOUS CONSEQUENCE (Heb. 10:31).

I. THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE (Heb. 10:26, 27).

The writer is not talking here about a person who has been saved, but he is talking about a person who professes to be saved.

The test that must be applied to every person's life is the test of sin, i.e., what has his profession of faith done in his life as far as sin is concerned?

To "sin willfully" is to sin deliberately and continuously.

"Received" emphasizes that "the (full) knowledge of the truth":

- 1) Comes from outside of man.
- 2) Has been given as a gift since no one deserves it.
- 3) Means that it has been understood.

If, having received all of this, he continues on in his sin, there is only one other alternative. THERE ARE JUST TWO POSSIBILITIES!

Man expects to be tried before God.

And he expects to be condemned.

But the judgment is so terrible that it cannot fully be described and so the writer here uses the words, "a certain fearful looking for of judgment . . ."

"Fiery indignation" pictures God as One whose love has been spurned and the wrath which follows to "devour the adversaries."

II. THE ARGUMENT (Heb. 10:28, 29).

V. 28 makes a statement which every Jew knows is true!

To despise something as the word is used here means to treat something as though it did not exist, or as if it were no longer in effect. The aorist makes it final and decisive.

An illustration: Num. 15:32-36.

The problem we are talking about here is not one of ignorance, but of defiant rejection!

The point is: WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE IN GOD'S PLACE?

We have already seen that CHRIST is greater than MOSES. What conclusion would you draw?

There is not just one charge here, BUT THREE! And these three involve:

- 1) The Son of God.
- 2) The Work of the Son.
- 3) The Holy Spirit.

* Regarding 1), note that our Lord is referred to here as "the Son of God" as in Heb. 1:2.

He is treated with utter contempt as to His Person, as though He really had no particular value. Such a person might as well trample Him under foot with scornful neglect.

* Regarding 2), "hath counted" is a deliberate and careful judgment, although often (as here) based more on feelings than on fact!

Contrast 11:11, 26.

"The blood of the covenant" is the blood of Christ and it has to do with the new covenant.

"With which he was sanctified" -- POTENTIALLY! The expression is used like

- 1) "Propitiation" in 1 John 2:2 and
- 2) "Recenciling" in 2 Cor. 5:19.

"An unholy thing" is that which is not fit to be presented to God. They would place more value upon the blood of animals than upon the blood of Christ.

* Regarding 3), the Holy Spirit is here called "the Spirit of grace," i.e., the one through Whom the grace of God is revealed in convicting power. A person does "despite" to the Holy Spirit when he is so intent on having his own way that he pushes the Spirit of God aside, insulting Him.

IN VIEW OF WHAT WE READ OF JUDGMENT UNDER THE LAW, HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THE QUESTION IN VERSE TWENTY-NINE?

What is the true answer?

III. THE PROOF (Heb. 10:30).

There is only one way to answer such a question: By the Word

of God!

And so here we have two quotations:

- 1) One from Deut. 32:35.
- 2) The other from Deut. 32:36; cf. Psalms 135:14.

Only a part of each verse is quoted from Moses' song. But it is important to note that the writer of Hebrews is quoting MOSES!

IV. THE OMINOUS CONSEQUENCE (Heb. 10:31).

We are not dealing with each other here.

Nor are we dealing with the Church, or churches.

We are dealing with "the living God"! Cf. Heb. 3:12,
"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

Concl: This is straight talk because the issues are eternal.

No person should read this passage without stopping for some sober reflection. How do you feel today about:

- 1) The Lord Jesus Christ?
- 2) His death on the cross -- about His blood?
- 3) The Word of God?
- 4) The Spirit of God?
- 5) Sin?

To what extent can you see that the Lord has made changes in your life, OR IS YOUR PROFESSION OF CHRIST SOMETHING THAT IS JUST OUTWARD WITHOUT ANY EVIDENCE OF A SPIRITUAL CHANGE WITHIN?

Then may I warn you to pay attention to this warning? It is here for us -- all of us! Satan would deceive us. Our hearts will deceive us. Only in God's light do we see light.

Dr. W. H. Griffith Thomas is one who has written a commentary on Hebrews -- a very helpful commentary. In it he quotes Bishop Westcott whose commentary on Hebrews is probably the finest. This is what he says:

"Bishop Westcott, in his great Commentary, written twenty years ago, has these words: 'The more I study the tendencies of the time in some of the busiest centers of English life, the more deeply I feel that the Spirit of God warns us of our most urgent civil and spiritual dangers through the prophecies of Jeremiah and the Epistle to the Hebrews. May our Nation and Church be enabled to learn the lessons which these books teach while there is still time to use them'" (p. 17).

Amen!

CB - 6/23/74 a.m.

THE MINISTRY OF ENCOURAGEMENT
CB - 6/30/74 a.m. Heb. 10:32-39
THE LIFE OF FAITH Heb. 10:35-39

Intro: Warning is followed with words of encouragement.

) In 2 Chron. 30:22 (NASB) we read,

"Then Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the Levites who showed good insight in the things of the Lord."

He had warned them in chapter 29; now he encourages them.

This is what the writer of Hebrews is doing. He has had to utter the most solemn warnings throughout the Epistle, but he must also encourage those who know the Lord. In our condemnation of that which is wrong we must never forget to commend that which is according to the will of God.

How does he encourage those who are true believers?

I. A LOOK AT THE PAST (Heb. 10:32-34).

According to Heb. 5:12 this probably was several years before, but they were never to forget it. The verb in v. 32 means that they were to remind themselves of these things again and again and again!

What were they to remember? Four things:

- 1) What they did.
- 2) What had happened to them.
- 3) What their attitude had been.
- 4) Why they had peace.

A. What they did: They performed like athletes in the arena who were contending for a crown (Heb. 10:32).

They "endured." They persevered. They did not give up. They held fast to their faith in Christ. Here we have the perseverance of the saints.

The Greek word for "fight" is the word from which we get our word athlete.

B. What had happened to them: Outwardly it appeared to be total defeat (Heb. 10:33).

"A gazingstock" is a public spectacle.

Paul uses this word in 1 Cor. 4:9,

"For I think that God hath set forth us, the apostles last, as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."

They suffered "reproaches" -- their character and their claims were slandered, like our Lord in Matt. 27:40,

"If thou be the Son of God . . ."

They suffered "afflictions" -- hatred toward them had been expressed by bodily harm and by robbing them of their material possessions.

Also, they had become "companions of them that were so used." They stayed by the members of the team (to continue the figure of an athletic contest) -- a thing which Peter did not do when he was tried in Matt. 26:69.

- C. What their attitude had been: Their hearts went out to those who had been cast into prison and they "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." Cf. Heb. 10:34a.

It is lit. that they received to themselves with joy the seizure of their money, their possessions, and their property!

Cf. Jas. 1:2-4.

And then, that which is probably the most important:

- D. Why they had peace: It was because of the truth which they knew! Cf. Heb. 10:34b.

What they had in heaven was safe -- and it was better!

"Substance" and "goods" are from the same root.

Cf. Col. 3:1-4.

Remember also 1 Cor. 15:19.

Faith is strengthened by our knowledge of the Word of God. Cf. Rom. 10:17.

Looking at the past was most encouraging. But it brings to us the question: Did we love the Lord and His appearing more when we first came to know Him than we do now. Notice that they had learned at the time they were saved about "heaven." ("Heaven" not in best MSS.)

II. A COMMAND FOR THE PRESENT (Heb. 10:35, 36).

We need to recognize that this is a command so that the force of these words will hit us. To obey the Lord even when we do not feel like it is the key to blessing. The present should be just as good or better than the past.

When do we cast things away?

Illus.: Throwing things away as we remodel. We either throw things away when we have no more use for them, or when we have found something better!

The one thing we must never throw away is our assurance. If that goes, we have nothing left!

Why should he not throw it away? Because it "hath great recompense of reward."

This expression is used of judgment in Heb. 2:2; here it is used of blessing. The blessing corresponds to the extent to which our confidence, our faith, is exercised.

And then in v. 36 he lays out the order of things in God's sight:

- 1) They need to do the will of God. This is the most important matter in any time of testing.
- 2) They needed to be patient. This word has the same root as "endured" in v. 32.
- 3) They could expect the fulfillment of the promise. But the promise was dependent upon the ability of the One making the promise to do as He had said. Cf. v. 23.

As the context shows, this has to do mainly with the great promise of the Lord's return, but in principle it applies to every testing that enters into the experience of a child of God. "PROMISE" IN HEBREWS - 4:1, 6:12, 13, 15, 17; 7:6, 8:6, 9:15; 10:23, 36; 11:9 (2x), 11, 13, 17, 33, 39; 12:26.

III. A PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE (Heb. 10:37).

This verse (and v. 38) is a combination from Isa. 26:20 and Hab. 2:3.

Note: Our Lord is the promise, or the Promised One.

Here we have absolute certainty regarding the greatest of all of our Lord's promises -- that He will come again. If we can depend upon that promise, then we can surely depend upon all of the promises which relate to what the Lord is doing in our lives leading up to that point. Cf. 1 P. 1:6, 7

IV. THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER (Heb. 10:38, 39). 4:12, 13 Ph. 1:3; 10-14

"The just shall live by faith" is an expression that is found 4x in Scripture: Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; and here -- with the emphasis slightly different in each of the NT quotations.

This is the great principle that governs everything in a

On the hope of the Lord's return -
1:6, 7; 13;
3:6; 6:11, 12;
13; 7:19;
9:28

believer's life: "The just shall live by faith."

But then there are two possibilities:

- 1) Drawing back.
- 2) Believing, i.e., having faith.

This last verse of ch. 10 sounds like Heb. 6:9,

"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you,
and things that accompany salvation, though we thus
speak."

"Perdition" is the opposite of salvation. "Saving" would be
better translated, preservation.

On "perdition" cf. John 17:12; Phil. 1:28,

"And in nothing terrified by your adversaries . . ."

Concl: Some very important questions arise out of this passage
for all of us:

- 1) Can you remember better days in your relationship with the Lord?
- 2) Do you remember the time when you would stand against any opposition to the Gospel?
- 3) What has happened to your assurance?
- 4) Have you done all that you know from the Word to be the will of God concerning your life right now?
- 5) Is one of your problems that you are ignorant of the truth of the Word of God?
- 6) How important is the coming of the Lord to you?
- 7) Are you living by faith -- trusting the Lord to fulfill His promises?

We stand on the threshold of one of the greatest chapters of the Bible: Heb. 11. Here we will be looking back, not just to our own experiences (as in 10:32-34), but to the experience of others which serves to give added evidence for the faithfulness of God.

WHAT IS FAITH?

Heb. 11:1-6

Intro: As we go through any book of the Bible we are to profit from that book itself as we go along. The earlier parts help us to understand the latter parts. Words will be used and repeated as we go through a book. Other words will be related to them. So, it is by noticing these words and phrases that we come to understand more about the truth which is being presented in a book as we go along.

Such is the case this morning as we come to the word, faith.

Undoubtedly Hebrews 11 would have to be included in any list of the great chapters of the Bible! The child of God who has found this chapter will come back to it again and again to strengthen his own faith. We have abundant illustrations of the statement which comes at the end of chapter 10 (v. 38), "The just shall live by faith." (Note the different emphasis on this in Hebrews as compared with Romans and Galatians.) Obviously faith means to trust, or to believe. But what are we to trust? Or who are we to trust? This is what we want to learn this morning from all of the book of Hebrews as an introduction to this wonderful chapter which we expect to spend several weeks in during the Sunday mornings to come.

) Therefore, since this is not the first time the word, faith, has been used in Hebrews, let us notice first of all . . .

I. THE USE OF THE WORD, FAITH, AND OF WORDS RELATED TO IT IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

A. The immediate context.

The present emphasis on faith started in 10:22, continued v. 23, and then appeared again in vv. 38, 39.

If we were reading in a Greek NT we would notice also that the word, "believe," in v. 39 is from the same root as the word, "faith."

We can also see that vv. 35-37 of ch. 10, while not mentioning faith, are certainly an encouragement for faith.

So we have a lot to go on in the context.

) But let us notice another thing: There are other words that are used with "faith" that we need to notice. I have reference to:

- 1) "Hope" in 10:23, especially since the verb is in 11:1.
- 2) "Promised" in 10:23; the noun is repeated in 10:29.

See also 11:9, 13, 17; 33, 39.

- 3) Since "patience" (v. 36) is obviously involved, we can see how this is a part of the lives of those mentioned in ch. 11. But also see 6:12 (where a different word for patience is used) and 12:1.

B. The use of these words in other parts of Hebrews.

We do not have time to take up all of them, but there are a few that we must take the time to read.

- 1) Heb. 6:11, 12, and then vv. 17-20.
- 2) Heb. 7:19.
- 3) Heb. 8:6.
- 4) Heb. 9:15.

C. One other related Scripture: Rom. 8:24, 25,

"For we are saved by hope. But hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

"Hope" in these passages means expectation. "Wait for" is the same verb that is translated "look for" in Heb. 9:28!

II. A DEFINITION OF FAITH.

From all that we have seen thus far we can say that faith is our complete confidence in God in connection with what he has promised to do.

Charles Erdman has said this:

" his previous references to faith indicate that he means by it trust in the promises of God. . . . it is implied that this confidence and this conviction are based on revelations which God has made. In fact, any real definition of faith must include the idea of a divine revelation. Otherwise what is called faith may be mere credulity or conjecture. Faith is 'taking God at his word.' Faith is 'accepting as true what God has revealed.' It is man's genuine answer to the realities of divine revelation."

Cf. Rom. 10:17.

Faith is NOT some kind of a feeling that I build up in my own heart concerning something that I want God to do. Faith is my confidence in what God has promised to do. If I do not have the Word as a basis for my faith, it is not faith, but presumption -- and can only lead to the greatest possible disappointments!

From this we are now ready for our text -- the first two verses of Hebrews 11:

III. THE NATURE OF FAITH (Heb. 11:1).

This may not tell us how we receive faith, but it certainly tells us what faith is. Therefore, it has to be considered as a definition of sorts.

Two words need our attention:

- 1) "Substance."
- 2) "Evidence."

"Substance" is assurance; "evidence" is conviction.

We have a good illustration and explanation in what Paul says about Abraham in Romans 4:20, 21,

"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

"Things hoped for" are things that I can expect because God has promised them!

It is interesting that the word, "substance," is used in Heb. 1:3 to show the likeness between God the Father and God the Son. It is like comparing God's promise with its fulfillment by saying that they are just as similar to each other as the Father and the Son are!

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF FAITH (Heb. 11:2).

"The elders" are the men (and women) mentioned in ch. 11 -- those who are called "the fathers!" in 1:1.

It is a term of dignity, of honor -- and certainly must be considered as such here. God is honoring each person who is mentioned. They honored God with their faith; God honors them by showing His approval, by indicating that they pleased Him, by His "well done."

Cf. the same verb in v. 4. See also v. 6, and v. 39.

These people had the approval of God because of their faith -- not just because of what they did, but because of what they did trusting in the promises of God!

This brings us to the theme of the chapter: True faith is "something intensely practical" (Erdman, p. 107). "It is always expressed in life."

Concl: There is no greater objective in the life of a child of God than that he live his life so as to please God. See Heb. 11:5. BUT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD WITHOUT LIVING BY FAITH IN HIS PROMISES. Cf. Heb. 11:6.

Note the life ambition of the Apostle Paul: 2 Cor. 5:9 (NASB),
"Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him."

Which is the most important to you: what you do for the Lord, or what He does for you, and in you, and through you?

Are you on the way toward a good report?

THE FIRST LESSON OF FAITH
Heb. 11:3

Intro: We have come to the great faith chapter of the Bible.

Just to read it through brings spiritual blessing and strength to those of us who knew the Lord as Savior. But to look at it in depth, in its marvelous detail, uncovers many aspects of truth which make the chapter more wonderful to us than ever before.

Obviously, in such a chapter, we need to know what faith is, and why it is so important. We have these two facts in vv. 1, 2.

- 1) Not only is v. 1 a definition of sorts, but the book of Hebrews itself gives us all that we need to understand this very important Biblical expression.

We have seen that it is related to words like believe, promise, hope, patience.

To state it as briefly as possible, faith is our acceptance of and trust in that which God has given us in His Word. His promises give us our hope, our expectation. Faith is not trying to believe that things are true or that certain things will happen without any basis for such faith, but faith is taking God at His Word. Faith is accepting as true what God has revealed in His Word, followed by action that is consistent with that Word.

Therefore, faith has the Word of God as its foundation and as its object. In fact, the Scriptures even produce faith in our hearts. Cf. Rom. 10:17.

- 2) V. 2 tells us that this was the one basis on which the people of God in the OT, "the elders," were able to please God. Nothing in their lives was more important than their faith! This is the main reason that it demands our attention if we would please God and gain His approval too.

Having said the things that we find in vv. 1, 2, the writer now takes us to the book of Genesis. This is apparent because v. 3 has to do with creation, and then he proceeds to mention 8 people we read about in Genesis:

- 1) Abel.
- 2) Enoch.
- 3) Noah.
- 4) Abraham.
- 5) Sarah.
- 6) Isaac.
- 7) Jacob.
- 8) Joseph.

This morning I want to speak only about v. 3. (Read it.)

In Rom. 1:20 Paul gives us a statement which is certainly related to Heb. 11:3. This is the way it reads:

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the

world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse."

In considering our text this morning let us notice first of all

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNIZING GOD AS THE CREATOR.

Have you ever wondered why man objects so violently to believing in the divine origin of all things?

It is because, if man can eliminate God from creation, then he feels that he can eliminate Him from daily life.

Faith begins with Genesis 1 and 2 -- that which God has revealed in His Word about creation. It all had its beginning with God. If you cannot accept Genesis 1:1, you will not accept the rest of Scripture.

Rom. 1:20 adds its weight to Gen. 1:1 and John 1:3 and Heb. 11:3 so that we are forced either to accept the Word of God, or reject it!

II. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING.

"Through faith we understand . . ."

The Holy Spirit wants us to know that there is no possible way for us to understand with our minds how the created universe came into being apart from faith in what God has revealed in His Word.

Notice that faith precedes understanding.

You have this also in our Lord's words to Martha in John 11:40,

"Said I not unto thee that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

Faith rests on the Word of God. Faith exalts the Word of God. When God speaks, there is nothing more that needs to be said.

So when you come to the Word of God in faith, it is amazing what God will enable you to understand.

Faith does not do away with the mind. The mind functions its greatest capacity when it is responding to the Word of God! It is reasonable to accept the Word of God; it is a height of folly to reject it.

III. THE EXTENT OF GOD'S INVOLVEMENT IN CREATION.

Now we come to the words, "we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God."

Let me direct your attention the words,

- 1) "The worlds."
- 2) "Were framed."

Our writer does not use the word, cosmos, here. He uses the word which is better translated, ages. It is the same word that is used in Heb. 1:2 where we read that

"God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by (his) Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

It is a word which means two things:

- 1) It does, like cosmos, include the physical universe which we can see. It supports Gen. 1:1 and the other passages that have been mentioned.
- 2) It also speaks of His controlling, determining hand on the course of human history.

It is a word which speaks of His sovereignty in the affairs of the world. He is guiding the world and the universe toward the full accomplishment of His purposes --not man's!

This is further emphasized by the verb, "were framed."

This same verb is translated in Heb. 10:5, "prepared." It means to equip, to put in order, to arrange.

History is His story.

Cf. Eph. 1:11b where Paul says that we are

"predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

See also Col. 1:16, 17,

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers--all things were created by him and for him; And he is before all things and by him all things consist."

Rom. 11:36 is also related to this:

"For of him and through him, and to him, are all things to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Cf. even Prov. 16:4,

"The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked, for the day of evil."

The 11th chapter of Hebrews could never have been written

yes, even the Bible could not have been written, if this were not true. The examples cited in this chapter (Heb. 11) are not independent of each other. There is a relationship, a pattern, which is like creation itself -- not designed by man's hands, but created and carried out by the sovereign power of an omnipotent, infinitely wise, GOD!

IV. THE MIRACULOUS CHARACTER OF IT ALL.

All of this came about as it started,
 "by the word of God"
 -- the power of His spoken word!

It is like we have it in Genesis 1:3,
 "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."

Or, as we had it in our Scripture reading this morning:
 "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth . . . For he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."

Jeremiah said in 10:12, 13,
 "He hath made the earth by his power; he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his understanding. When he uttereth his voice (even now), there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasurers."

The result as far as our text is concerned:
 " . . . so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

When man makes something he has to have something to work with. God started with nothing and made all that we have in this wonderful universe of ours -- and He did it by His Word.

Illustrate with our remodeling and all of the materials that were necessary.

Concl: Where does this bring us?

It brings us to a mighty God (and to His equally mighty Son to His mighty, infallible, and unchanging Word. This is the first lesson in faith--a lesson which teaches us that God is true to His Word and that there is nothing impossible with

See how it is illustrated in the life of Sarah according to 11 and v. 12.

CB - 7/28/74 a.m.

A DEAD MAN WHO STILL SPEAKS
Heb. 11:4

Scripture reading: Genesis 4:1-8

Intro: Dr. Graham Scroggie, who during his life was the Pastor of two of the outstanding churches of Great Britain -- Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh and Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle in London -- not only ministered widely throughout the world, but he wrote extensively. He will be remembered the most for his three-volume work on the whole Bible which he named, The Unfolding Drama of Redemption.

I am not selling that wonderful set (although it would be of real value to anyone wanting to study the Word of God); I am not even going to quote from it this morning. I just want to use his title: The Unfolding Drama of Redemption. This is the title that we could give to Hebrews 11. It is the unfolding of that wonderful account of salvation which we find progressively revealed in the Old Testament, and fully expounded in the New Testament.

It is based on faith. We had that in v. 1 -- and then all through the chapter.

Then we saw that it is involved in what God did at creation. This is in v. 3. Not only did God create all things, but He charted the course that history would take. He even set the time schedule for it all. NIV - John 5:17, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

This morning we are going to begin to see how this drama unfolds. We start with Abel.

If we had not read from Genesis 4 this morning, some of you might be saying, "Who is Abel?"

Ill.: The story of the little boy who lived back in the woods of a rural community where very little from outside world ever was reported -- and his mother reaction when her boy came home from school shouting, "Mama, Mama, they killed Lincoln."

The mention of Abel in our text this morning shows us in a practical way that we could not understand the New Testament if we did not have the Old Testament. If you have never read Genesis, you ought to read it while you are reading Hebrews.

Hebrews 11:4 gives us the explanation of and shows us great importance of what took place in Genesis 4 -- as relates to salvation!

I. WHO WAS ABEL?

He was the second son of the first family ever to live on the earth.

His parents were Adam and Eve. His older brother was Cain.

All we know about him historically is contained in Genesis 4. He is mentioned by our Lord as a martyr in Matt. 23:35 and Luke 11:51, and he is referred to but not mentioned by name in 1 John 3:12. Otherwise he is not referred to in the Bible any place else except in our text and in Heb. 12:24.

Abel was a shepherd; his brother was a farmer.

But, out of all they did during their lives, the most important event for them and for us is what happened in connection with their relationship to God, and the sacrifices which they brought to the Lord.

It was because of Cain's jealousy of Abel that Abel became the first one in the Bible to die physically -- a victim of murder. There are many lessons in these facts that we will have to take up at a later time.

II. WHAT ARE WE TOLD ABOUT ABEL? I am speaking now about Heb. 11:4.

We are told this: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain."

Let us look at this statement in detail.

A. Abel's faith.

We have already learned that faith is man's acceptance of that which God has revealed. It is taking God at His Word. In short, it means that God has told Cain and Abel what He wanted them to do. Cain did not do it; Abel did!

B. What seems to have been the issue?

Both God's words to Cain in Gen. 4:7 and the words "righteous" in our text indicate clearly that the problem was how these men were to be forgiven of their sins.

C. How did Abel find favor with God?

Now let me be just as simple as I can be in case there are some here that may not understand the foundational points as this story of man's salvation begins to unfold.

1. First, it was not a matter of what they thought should be done.
2. Second, they both knew that God was the only One who could forgive them.

The Greek in our text says that Abel offered unto the God -- meaning one particular God, the one and only God. He is the God who is revealed in the Bible. Only God can forgive sin. And He will only forgive it as He has determined that it shall be forgiven.

3. Thirdly, how were they to be forgiven?

It was on the basis of sacrifice.

Now remember what we have said about faith. It was because of Abel's faith that he offered the right sacrifice. The two are always linked together.

Read again Gen. 4:3-5.

Abel believed what God had revealed and so he brought what God required.

At this point we need to remember what we have learned from Hebrews. See 10:4 and 11.

The sacrifices were not the means of salvation; they pointed ahead to the sacrifice that would be made. They were pictures; they were types. God had taught them even in that day that the only way sins could be forgiven was through death, through the shedding of blood.

If God were to forgive their sins, He was the One to say what was required.

Since all of this pointed ahead to the death of Christ and the shedding of His blood . . .

4. Notice the words used here for Abel's sacrifice.

a. "Sacrifice." By definition a sacrifice

Abel offered more sacrifice!
For the meaning see Lev. 23:9-12.
The fruit of the ground had to be followed the same day by a blood sacrifice.

"the surrender or destruction of something prized or desirable for the sake of something considered as having a higher or more pressing claim" (Random House, p. 1259).

Think of this in connection with Abel's sacrifice.

And then think of it in connection with the sacrifice God made for us!

b. "His gifts."

This is "something given voluntarily without charge, a present" (Random House, p. 596).

This idea is also in the word "offered."

Think of this in connection with Abel's gift.

And then think of it in connection with the gift that God has given to us: His Son!

These are the important things about Abel that the Spirit of God wants us to know in connection with our salvation. This is the Gospel in its simplest form. The life of faith has a starting place, and Abel shows us what that place is!

III. WHAT WAS GOD'S REACTION TO ABEL?

Notice: " . . . by which he (Abel) obtained witness that he (Abel) was righteous, God testifying of his gifts."

This is the important part -- not what Cain thought, nor even what Abel thought, but what God thought!

God gave Him a good report! God declared Abel to be righteous -- pardoned and accepted -- on the basis of the sacrifice which he offered "by faith."

Cf. Rom. 5:1.

"Righteous" is a legal term. Abel, a guilty sinner, was pardoned and accepted into the full favor of God forever!

IV. IS IT IMPORTANT TO US?

Often you hear people say, "What can an old book like that mean to us today?"

There is a very positive answer: It means everything! This is brought out by the last part of our verse: "and by it he being dead yet speaketh."

Cain did not hurt Abel by killing him. Abel was ready to die. He was ready to meet the Lord. The tragic person in this story is Cain.

But your case will be just as tragic if you do not listen to what Abel is trying to tell you. God says he is still speaking through the Word, the Scriptures. God's way of saving men has never changed. It is through faith in the One portrayed in Abel's sacrifice. There is no other God to forgive, and there is no other way of salvation.

The story of Abel tells us this. It has never been changed and never will.

See the same about Abraham in Rom. 4:23-25, "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was not imputed to him, But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus, our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification."

Concl: Do you see what amazing harmony there is between the Old Testament and the New -- a harmony that is centered in salvation.

There is only one way of salvation -- by faith in a Savior who died for the sins of the whole world.

Do not miss the message. The life of faith has a beginning when you turn to God by placing your faith in Christ. This is what Abel wants us to know so that our sins can be forgiven, too.

CB - 8/4/74 a.m.

A MAN WHO WALKED WITH GOD
Heb. 11:5, 6

Intro: We come this morning to the verses in Hebrews 11 which deal with Enoch.

Enoch is mentioned in five books of the Bible: Gen. 5:18-23;
1 Chron. 1:3;
Luke 3:37;
Heb. 11:5;
Jude 14, 15.

Historically he lived midway between Adam and Abraham -- about 1,000 years after Adam, and 1,000 years before Abraham.

The brief account of his life is given in Genesis 5.

It attracts our attention for two reasons:

- 1) Enoch only lived 365 years, while his contemporaries were lived to be almost 1,000. All of the men mentioned in Genesis 5, from Seth to Lamech (the father of Noah), were probably living when Enoch lived.
- 2) He did not die. The Genesis record simply says,
"And Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:24).
There is only one other man in the Bible who did not die:
Elijah. See 2 Kings 2:11.

The account in Jude tells us something about Enoch which is not even record in Genesis:

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these (i.e., false teachers), saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convict all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Cf. Jude 14, 15.

So Enoch was a prophet. He preached judgment to his generation. He knew about the coming of the Lord. He spoke out fearlessly against sin.

But how does Enoch fit into Hebrews 11. Why is he mentioned here?

Hebrews 11 begins by telling us what faith is. We have seen that faith in Hebrews is linked to the Word of God, to the promises of God -- which constitute our hope.

Secondly, in Hebrews 11 we learn what the proper view of creation is -- that God not only created all things, but that He determined the course of history. He made the ages!

Then, in v. 4, we are told how we enter into this divine plan. In Abel and his sacrifice we see a wonderful OT picture of the Gospel -- God's provision of a substitute to take man's place so that man could be forgiven of his sins.

Now we come to the next step in the unfolding of this divine plan. Even though Enoch was a prophet, he is not remembered mainly for his talk, but for his walk -- the life he lived in fellowship with God!

How important it is for every child of God to learn this lesson: After we come to know the Lord as our Savior, it is our walk, our life with Him, our fellowship with Him, that forms the foundation of everything else. And for this, as v. 6 indicates, we must have FAITH.

Let us look at the two verses of our text:

I. ENOCH'S TRANSLATION (Heb. 11:5a).

Three times his translation is mentioned in this one verse.

It means that he was removed from earth, was transferred, was moved from one place to another.

This is a remarkable picture of the Rapture of the Church -- before the judgment of the flood.

One difference between Abel and Enoch is that we are told first what Abel did by faith, but with Enoch we are told what was done to him because of his faith.

He "was not found" -- and the verb form indicates that they looked and looked but could not find him. (This is possibly an indication of what will follow the Rapture.)

Undoubtedly what happened to Enoch is designed by the Spirit of God to emphasize the importance of the truth we see in the life of Enoch.

II. ENOCH'S TESTIMONY (Heb. 11:5b).

Have you noticed how important this word testimony is as used in vv. 2, 4, and now here?

It is God's testimony which we are concerned about, i.e., how God evaluated the lives of His people.

This is God's testimony regarding Enoch: "He pleased God."

The parallel statement in Gen. 5:24 is, "Enoch walked with God."

Note that it does not say that God walked with Enoch. That would mean that God walked the way Enoch wanted to walk -- that God pleased Enoch. No, it says that "Enoch walked with God," that Enoch "pleased" God!

Jude 14, 15 give us a part of what this means. Enoch broke with the sin of his day, and walked in righteousness with the Lord. That is why "God took him," "GOD . . . translated him."

III. ENOCH'S TEACHING (Heb. 11:6).

This is the emphasis of a teacher (who is the writer of the book of Hebrews, and beyond him, the Spirit of God). Enoch teaches us primarily with his life.

What does Enoch teach us? One thing:

A. That "without faith it is impossible to please Him."

The tense of the verb here means, impossible to please Him at all (cf. JFB, VI, 567).

It is just as impossible as being saved two times. See Heb. 6:4.

It is just as impossible as it is for God to lie. See Heb. 6:18.

It is just as impossible as it is for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. See Heb. 10:4.

IT SIMPLY CANNOT BE DONE.

B. The two reasons for Enoch's teaching:

1. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is."

This speaks of His existence now, but it also speaks of His eternal existence, and that He exists the same as in the beginning. This is all tied in with His Name, JEHOVAH.

He changes not. He is faithful to His Word. The fathers and the prophets (with whom the epistle began), but God still is!

It is not that He was, but He "is."

Is this the way that you and I are living our living our lives? Is this what people notice about us? It was the predominant thing about Enoch!

Coming to God is spoken of in Heb. 4:16; 7:25; 10:1, 22.

"Must" speaks of an absolute necessity which "arises from a divine appointment" (Thayer, p. 126). Cf. John 3:7, 30.

2. "That He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

The "he is" in this statement is different from the "he is" that we have just considered in the preceding statement. The first speaks of that which God always has been; this second one speaks of what God becomes to His people!

What is He?

"A rewarder" -- one who pays wages (the only time this word is used in the NT, but cf. Heb. 2:2; 10:35; 11:26).

In other words, it is not in vain that we trust the Lord -- either for our salvation, or for all of the details of our lives that are related to that salvation!

But notice . . .

It is not to those who seek the reward, BUT TO THOSE WHO DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM!

Fausset (JFB, VI, 567) says,

"The reward is God Himself diligently 'sought' and 'walked with' in partial communion here, fully enjoyed hereafter."

"Diligently seek" means to seek out on all sides, to seek in some secret place.

In other words, faith does not just concentrate on the promise, but on the Promiser!

The Bible is so full of this that it is amazing that we miss it.

Of men generally, the Bible says,

"There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11b),

but there are also many in Scripture who have followed in the steps of Enoch and have walked with God! See the following verses:

- 1) Job 23:3-10,
"Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat! I would set my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me. There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered forever from my judge. Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him. But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tested me, I shall come forth as gold."
- 2) Psa. 27:4,
"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."
- 3) Psa. 63:1, 2,
"O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, To see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."
- 4) Song of Sol. 3:1a, 2,
" . . . I sought him whom my soul loveth. I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth. I sought him, but I found him not."
- 5) Psa. 34:4, 10b,
I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. . . . they who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing."

Concl: It is easy to see from v. 6 how Enoch lived -- seeking to please the Lord, walking with Him, trusting Him, and seeking Him daily.

This is God's plan for us. Are we walking with Him?

A MAN WHO BELIEVED WHAT HE HAD NOT SEEN
Heb. 11:7

Intro: Noah is the third person mentioned in Hebrews 11.

In Abel we see how men enter into a saving relationship with God. In Enoch we see the primary concern of every child of God -- his walk of fellowship with the Lord. In Noah we see the effect of our walk in the witness that it gives us to all -- our own families, and to the world.

Noah is mentioned in many passages of Scripture:

- 1) Gen. 5:29-9:29; 10:1, 32.
- 2) 1 Chron. 1:4.
- 3) Isa. 54:9 -- where God's faithfulness to Noah is cited as proof of God's faithfulness to Judah.
- 4) Ezek. 14:14, 20 (see also vv. 16, 18) -- Noah is linked as an intercessor with Daniel and Job. So we know that he was a man of prayer, and a godly man.
- 5) Matt. 24:37-39 and Luke 17:26, 27 give us the familiar, "But as the days of Noah were . . ."
- 6) Luke 3:36 lists him in the genealogy of our Lord.
Heb. 11:7.
- 8) 1 Pet. 3:20-22 deals with the spiritual and typical significance of what Noah did.
- 9) 2 Pet. 2:5; 3:5, 6 -- where Noah is called, "a preacher of righteousness."

We might add to these two statements given in Gen. 6:8, 9,
"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. . . Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."

Noah was born about 126 years after Adam died, and 14 years after Seth died. He lived for 50 years after Abraham was born. From Gen. 9:29 we find that he lived to be 950 years of age. He was 500 years old before he had his sons (cf. Gen. 5:32), and he was 600 when he entered the ark (cf. Gen. 7:6).

In our text we have a threefold division regarding what is said of Noah. First of all,

- I. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved (or better, was moved) with fear."

We have additional support here for what we have been saying about the relationship between the Word of God and the faith of His people. "Being warned of God" indicates

A. A divine revelation.

It is the word used of Moses in Heb. 8:5.

It is used again in Heb. 12:25, where it is translated, "spake."

The wise men were warned in Matt. 2:12, and Joseph was warned in Matt. 2:22.

Cornelius was warned in Acts 10:22, where the men who went to get Peter said to him,

"Cornelius the centurion, a righteous man, and one that feareth God, and of God report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee."

Originally the word meant "to advise or consult with one about public affairs." It was "used of judges, magistrates, rulers, kings" (Thayer, 671).

Therefore, it is a word which indicates that what is being done involves much more than the one person indicated (or persons). This is the word of a sovereign who is speaking officially to his subjects.

NOTE THE NATURE OF THE REVELATION: "of things not seen as yet."

This is characteristic of God's word to men. He is always speaking about things that have never happened. E.g., the destruction of Sodom and Gomerrah,
the plagues of Egypt,
Jericho,
Jeheshaphat's battle,
the virgin birth of our Lord,
the Great Tribulation,
etc.

See it for Noah in Gen. 6:13, 17; 7:4. And remember that as far as the Scriptures are concerned it had not even rained yet!

But there is more to indicate God's sovereignty.

B. A divine work: "Noah . . . (lit.) was moved with fear."

The verb is a passive -- Noah was acted upon by God. He moved to obey God because God moved upon his heart. Noah acted in submission, in reverence, in fear of God.

All of this lays the foundation for what is to follow and is very instructive in connection with our relationship to God.

II. NOAH'S WORK OF FAITH: He "prepared an ark."

All he had to go on was the word of God! He did what God told him to do even though he may have had questions and even though he had never seen or heard of such a thing before. It was enough for Noah that God had spoken.

"Prepared" is in Heb. 3:3; 9:2, 6.

III. NOAH'S WITNESS.

His witness was felt in three directions:

- 1) In his family.
- 2) In the world.
- 3) With God.

- A. His witness to his family: "to the saving of his house."
Lit. it is, unto the salvation of his house.

Do we not have more here than just a physical deliverance from the flood?

Every other time this word salvation is used in Hebrews it has to do with spiritual salvation. Cf. 1:14

2:3, 10

5:9

6:9

9:28.

It is of relatively minor significance that Noah's sons were saved from physical death; the main thing is that they were saved from eternal death!

How?

By seeing the way their father believed God and obeyed Him! There is no other way to reach our families -- our houses.

Cf. Acts 16:31; 18:8.

- B. His witness to the world: "by which he condemned the world."

"By which" refers both to his faith and to his action in manifesting his faith.

Noah's faith gave evidence of:

- 1) The world's guilt before God.
- 2) A judgment (far greater than the flood) would be executed against them.

Cf. 2 Cor. 2:14-17,

"Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other, the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, who corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

NEB: "Through his faith he put the whole world in the wrong."

- C. His witness to God: "and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

Noah is the first man in Genesis who is called, "righteous." (But cf. Heb. 11:4.)

Heirs are spoken of in Heb. 1:14; 6:17; 11:9.

We are heirs of a promise which gives us our hope. It comes to us from without. It is that which we become. We enter into our inheritance when we believe; it will be fully realized when Heb. 9:28 takes place.

Our inheritance is our unchangeable right. It speaks of our sonship.

What does it mean to be righteous?

It means that a person is what he ought to be according to divine standards.

We have it in Heb. 1:9; 5:13; 7:2; 11:4, 33; 12:11.

Concl: What an illustration this is of Eph. 2:10!

It is one thing to profess salvation, but we must also manifest by our lives that our faith is real.

Noah was "a preacher of righteousness." The Word does not say, a preacher of sin (although he undoubtedly would have to deal with sin). But the emphasis in his life and ministry were positive! And it was by his life that he had his greatest influence.

Let us today, especially those of us who are fathers, take heed and follow in the steps of Noah.

A MAN WHO OBEYED BY FAITH
Heb. 11:8

Scripture reading: Gen. 12:1-7.

Intro: We have been tracing the evidence given in Hebrews 11 and taken from the book of Genesis of the truth declared in Heb. 11:3.

We can observe as we read through Genesis the unfolding of God's plan for the world. Each step adds a little more to our understanding of "faith." The thread is never broken. The principles we learn are principles that apply for us today. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we understand what we read as we go along.

We have been learning the following:

- 1) In Abel we have the work of faith -- thinking of those words of the Lord Jesus in John 6:29,
"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."
Abel, by his sacrifice, points us to Christ, the One through Whom we enter into a living relationship with God.
- 2) In Enoch we have the walk of faith. In Enoch we see that which is most important after we receive the Lord: it is our walk.
- 3) In Noah we have the witness of faith.
We saw in our passage last week that he had a witness:
 - a) To his family.
 - b) To the world.
 - c) To God.(Note: Since we did not complete the last two, a few minutes should be taken to explain them. See notes for the preceding message.)

As we come to Abraham we come to a man who lived about the same number of year before Christ that we live after Christ. Abraham lived about 2000 B. C.

The first three men we have considered all lived before the flood. Noah lived, of course, after the flood too. But in Abraham we have the first to be mentioned who lived only after the flood. He would have known the story of the first three, and was able to profit from them as we can.

Abraham is also the first man to be mentioned in Hebrews 11 who has been mentioned before in Hebrews. No previous mention is made of Abel, or Enoch, or Noah. For Abraham,

2:16

6:13

7:1, 2, 4, 5,

6, 9.

Then 11:17.

Almost $\frac{1}{2}$ of the book of Genesis is devoted to Abraham, so it is to be expected that any chapter having to do with the outworking of God's purposes for the earth would have an important place for Abraham. From the standpoint of understanding the truth of the Scriptures, it would be difficult to name a person in the OT who is more important than Abraham!

In Abraham we see the way of faith.

Note that he is mentioned again in vv. 9, 10;
his wife in vv. 11, 12;
Abraham and his son, Isaac, in vv. 17-19.

While we are studying the life of Abraham for the next four Sundays, let me encourage you to read Genesis 12:1-25:10 as many times as you can.

Let us read our text for this morning to give us a start in considering this man of faith: Heb. 11:8.

Look, first of all, at . . .

I. HIS NAME: ABRAHAM.

If you read the chapters of Genesis that deal with Abraham, you would find a very interesting thing about his name. It is this: He had the name "Abram" before he had the name "Abraham."

"Abram" was the name his father gave him; "Abraham" was the name God gave him.

And in Gen. 12 he is "Abram," not "Abraham."

In fact, time-wise he is not named "Abraham" for almost 25 years after the events recorded in Genesis 12 -- and possibly longer than that!

Why, then, does the writer of Hebrews call him, "Abraham," at this point in his life when his name was, "Abram"?

Of course we could say that his is calling him by the name he ~~is~~ know the best. But could there be another reason? What do the two names mean?

- 1) "Abram" is a combination of two Hebrew words which mean, exalted father. Perhaps it expresses the desire which Terah had for his son -- that he would be an excellent father, a prosperous father, an honored father. He wanted him to be remembered as

one who rated high as a father! And this is certainly a noble ambition for any father to have for his son. It is sorely needed today.

And Abraham was a good father. The Lord made him that and more. But remember that we are talking about Abraham as showing us the way of faith! The trouble with this name is that it undoubtedly makes much of Abram. It puts him too much in the lime-light. That is not the way of faith.

Let us look now at the name,

- 2) "Abraham." It also is a combination of two Hebrew words -- one meaning father; the other meaning a tumult, from which we get the noun meaning a great number, or multitude.

This immediately shifts the emphasis away from Abraham to his descendants! It speaks not of Terah's purpose for Abram, but of God's will for Abraham.

In Genesis 17:1-8 we have the record of his name being changed -- when he was 99 years old! God said,

"As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee."

These are vv. 4, 5.

Why, then, does our writer call him, "Abraham," from the very beginning? TO SHOW THAT, SINCE THE AGES WERE PREPARED, PLANNED, FROM THE VERY BEGINNING (as v. 3 tells us), SO GOD'S PURPOSE FOR ABRAHAM WAS ALSO ESTABLISHED BEFORE ABRAHAM KNEW THE LORD OR HAD ANY IDEA THAT GOD'S HAND WAS UPON HIM.

This is one of the first things that we need to learn about ourselves in connection with the way of faith: "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord" (Psa. 37:23a).

The Lord said about Saul of Tarsus,

"He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

Paul had plans, but God had other plans. This is true for every child of God. We must see that it is His will that is important. Not ours, and not the plans that others may have made for us!

II. HIS CALL.

Our text simply says that "he was called." Who called him?

Gen. 12:1 says that it was Jehovah. Stephen said, when speaking of this very thing in Acts 7:2-4 that it was "the God of glory."

So this was a divine call. He did not volunteer, nor did he choose his own place. God called him. Note how the word is used in 5:4 and 9:15.

What was the nature of his call?

Note the two words: "out" and "into." This is just exactly what you have in Genesis 12:1. It was a call from all that he had known and had before to that which he had never known. It was a call to separate himself from Ur of the Chaldees unto GOD!

The actual truth is stated for us in 1 Pet. 2:9,
 "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people of his own, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you OUT OF darkness INTO his marvelous light."

The way of faith is a changed life. You cannot remain where you were, nor can you remain what you were.

Abraham was called to step out and commit himself wholly to that which God had in mind for him.

III. HIS OBEDIENCE.

How simple and yet how wonderful to read that he "obeyed." The Greek seems to give the idea that he obeyed while God was calling him. There was no argument. He simply did what God wanted him to do.

What does this mean to us today?

It means basically this: WE, TOO, ARE TO BE OBEDIENT TO THE WORD OF GOD. This is the way of faith. This is the evidence of our faith. There is to be no argument. There is to be no delay. Day by day we must give ourselves to be obedient to the things which God has told us to do, OR NOT TO DO, in His Word.

It may not always be easy, but it always will bring blessing and peace to our hearts.

IV. HIS ABSOLUTE TRUST.

Note: "And he went out, not knowing where he was going" (NASB).

This is probably the most misinterpreted verse having to do with guidance that we have in the Bible. People have used this as an excuse for doing the most ridiculous things. We are not talking about foolishness here, but about faith. And we have seen that faith stands on the Word of God. Don't lift verses out of context and justify what you want to do.

What does this mean?

It simply means, speaking of the way of faith, that we are to obey God even when we cannot see what the outcome will be.

We might call this point, Abraham's utter ignorance. It may have looked like foolishness, but he was acting on the Word of God. It may look like foolishness for a wife to obey the Word, or for a husband to obey the Word, when they are having trouble, BUT IF THEY DO THEY WILL FIND THAT GOD WILL DO WITH THEM WHAT HE DID WITH ABRAHAM -- BLESS THEM AND MAKE THEM A BLESSING!

God is worthy of our complete trust. He will never disappoint us!

Concl: God has a new name for you and for me. He has called us out . . . and into! He wants our daily obedience to His Word even though we may not be able to see what the outcome is. That is the way of blessing!

Will you follow in the steps of faithful Abraham? Our lesson this morning is 4,000 years old, but there is nothing more important for us as the children of God to learn.

THE PATIENCE AND PROSPECT OF FAITH
Heb. 11:9, 10

Intro: We have been tracing the unfolding of God's foreordained plan which He initiated at creation.

It is a plan which man is to receive and respond to "by faith."

"Faith" is defined for us in v. 1, and then the basic truth which "faith" must grasp is in v. 3. "Faith" is our believing response to the Word of God. As God has made known His will down through history, these (in ch. 11) are some of the men and women who have taken Him at His Word -- and have responded accordingly "by faith."

Last Sunday we got down to Abraham whose life teaches us the way of faith.

Previously we have considered:

- 1) Abel -- and the work of faith.
- 2) Enoch -- and the walk of faith.
- 3) Noah -- and the witness of faith.

In v. 8 concerning Abraham we see one significant thing about the life of faith: It is that Abraham obeyed God when all he had to go on was the Word of God. He went where Jehovah wanted him to go. He got into the right place. His geographical location was just as God willed that it should be.

In vv. 9, 10 we are still concerned with Abraham. In v. 9 we see his patience; in v. 10, his prospect. Or, to state it another way, in v. 9 we see Abraham (and Isaac and Jacob) waiting; in v. 10 we see Abraham watching.

In both of these "faith" is just as involved as in v. 8 -- a "faith" which sees, believes, and acts upon some revelation from God which He gives as His Word.

Note: In Heb. 11 we are concerned with the great purpose of God with respect to our salvation, but we must not overlook the practical lessons there are for us in connection with our faith. Faith, for us, also includes:

- 1) A place.
- 2) Patience.
- 3) A prospect which lies out in the future.

I. ABRAHAM'S PATIENCE (Heb. 11:9).

Again that Abraham's faith is manifested by what he did. And by putting vv. 8 and 9 together we see that it was not just in the way he started, but in the way he continued.

When Abraham got into the land of promise, the Lord did not immediately give it to him. In fact, Abraham never did possess the land -- nor did Isaac -- nor did Jacob! In fact again, the actual promise that they were waiting for never has been fulfilled to this very day! God made them wait.

But they showed their faith by the way they lived.

Note the two words: "sojourned" and "dwelling." The first speaks of what they did temporarily; the second, of what they did permanently. They believed that God was going to give them the land, but that there had to be some changes first! They lived like foreigners. They lived in tents. "Isaac" and "Jacob" were just like Abraham in this respect. They were all fellow-heirs "of the same promise."

This latter point is very important for us to understand.

Remember, first of all, the nature of a promise -- that it is something which God will do (as compared with Abraham's doing in v. 8). We have "the land of promise" -- the land God promised to Abraham and his seed, as well as the land where the promises would be fulfilled. But we also see that, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they were heirs together "of the same promise." Additional details might be given as time moved on, but there was no change in the original promise that God had given to Abraham.

And, since we are talking about this promise as being one of salvation, there has been no change in the promise up to the present hour -- nor will there ever be!

Let us read the promise as given to each man:

- 1) To Abraham -- Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 17:1-8.
- 2) To Isaac -- Gen. 26:1-5.
- 3) To Jacob -- Gen. 28:10-15.

II. THE PROSPECT (Heb. 11:10).

Bishop Westcott (p. 360) says that here we see "the growing sense of the divine purpose."

We can also add that we have a detail here about what Abraham understood about the promise of God that is not even mentioned in the account of his life in the book of Genesis!

He was living with the temporary waiting for the permanent.

"For he looked for" -- which indicates a progressive, "steady and patient waiting in spite of disappointment" (Robertson, V, 422). The verb, according to Thayer on p. 131, conveys

the ideas of 1) welcoming and 2) appropriating that which has been given as a premise.

Since God has promised it, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could confidently wait for it — the only uncertainty being when.

And our text this morning means that they lived this way all of their lives. They may have had their times of doubt and failure, but this is the divine record of the overall way in which they lived and waited expectantly.

What were they looking for? "A city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

It was not something purely personal, but something involving many people — "a city"!

And there are to be two unique things about this city:

- 1) It will be permanent, eternal. This is the meaning of the words, "which hath foundations."

There have been many cities built throughout history, but not one has been permanent. One is coming which will be! Our cities need to be changed. Our desire is to make them better; they always get worse — and so more changes are called for.

- 2) This eternal "city!" will have as its "builder and maker . . . GOD."

- a) "Builder" here would be better translated, Designer. God is the architect. He has drawn up the plans in eternity past. And the term emphasizes His wisdom.
- b) "Maker" is actually the Builder. And it emphasizes His power.

To have believed v. 3, we are in a position to accept the amazing truth which we find here.

It is not made by angels. Nor is it made by men. It is made lit. by the God!

See also Heb. 13:14.

Where do we read about this city?

Please turn to Rev. 21.

Note its "foundations" in vv. 14, 19, 20.

See also what it is called, and what it is -- in vv. 2, 3. It is "the holy city, new Jerusalem . . . the tabernacle of God," the place where He will dwell among the redeemed of the "new heaven" and the "new earth."

Note the characteristics of the city in v. 4, and v. 8 and vv. 23, 25, and 27!

This is why Abraham and Isaac and Jacob were willing to wait and this is what they were looking for!

Concl: What is the application for us who also are fellow-heirs with them?

Two things can be said. One has to do with the present way we live; the other has to do with that which we are looking for.

1) Cf. 1 Pet. 1:17 and 2:11.

a) 1 Pet. 1:17, " . . . pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," i.e., the fear of the Lord -- doing his will.

b) 1 Pet. 2:11, reading vv. 9, 10 with it,

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people of his own, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out (like Abraham) of darkness into (also like Abraham) his marvelous light; Who in time past were not a people but are now the people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."

The other is this:

2) Cf. Tit. 2:11-15,

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present age, Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people of his own, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee."

How are we waiting? And what are we looking for? Nothing but that which characterized Abraham can satisfy God, or us either!

CB - 9/1/74 a.m.

A WOMAN WHO BELIEVED GOD
Heb. 11:11, 12

Intro: Sarah is the first woman to be mentioned in Hebrews 11.

After Eve, she is really the first one about whom any detail is given in the book of Genesis. She is important because she was Abraham's wife, and because the circumstances of her life give even more glory to God in connection with the birth of Isaac. PERHAPS SHE WAS OUTSTANDING AMONG ALL WOMEN UP TO THAT DAY.

Sarah is mentioned by name in two other books of the Bible:

- 1) Rom. 4:19; 9:9.
- 2) 1 Pet. 3:6.

Peter tells us what kind of a wife Sarah was. He speaks of her "adorning." (Read 1 Pet. 3:3-7.)

Paul, in Rom. 4:19, speaks of the problem that Sarah faced here in Heb. 11, but Paul speaks of it from Abraham's point-of-view. (Read Rom. 4:16-22.)

We will refer to the Rom. 9 passage a little later because it is a quotation from Gen. 18:10.

In reading the story of Sarah in the book of Genesis we do not come away with a particularly good impression of her. She was responsible for the birth of Ishmael, and then she made it difficult for Hagar afterwards -- so that Hagar ran away!

Then, in our Scripture reading this morning, Sarah laughed when the message came that she was to have a child.

But the NT passages clear up any questions that we might have about Sarah. She was a very wonderful person -- an example to wives for all future generations -- a woman who stood with her husband, believing God, in spite of all of the problems which stood in the way.

So we see in Sarah, not only the place that she had in what God was doing to carry through His purposes to the end, but we see the circumstances of her life in which the Lord brought her to complete trust in Him.

At the risk of being tedious about this expression, "by faith," or, "through faith" (identical in the Greek), let me remind you that in every instance in this chapter faith has to do with the Word of God! These people were not trying to get God to conform to their plans; they were agreeing to His! Their faith was in response to some revelation of the will of God.

In some ways Sarah's position is more passive than those that we have had before. We have been told what the four men before her

did "by faith"; with Sarah, we are told what was done to her "by faith."

Since faith has to do with the Word of God, let us notice, first of all . . .

I. GOD'S PROMISE.

Quite obviously it had to do with the birth of a child. Our passage in the Scripture reading this morning gave us the promise, and Paul quotes this in Rom. 9:9. Listen to it:

"For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son."

When God gave this promise to Abraham and Sarah, they had two ways that they could take: They could believe God, or they could not believe him.

Obviously again, it is apparent from Gen. 18 that she did not immediately respond in faith to the promise. What was the problem?

II. SARAH'S PROBLEM.

Our text in Hebrews mentions one; in Genesis we see that there was another. So she had two problems which stood as an obstacle to her faith:

- 1) She was too old to have a child. We are in Heb. 11:11 that "she was past age." This meant that her situation, from a human standpoint was impossible!
- 2) The second part of her problem was that she never had had a child! If she had been the mother of children when she was able to have children, it might have been easier for her to believe God. But she had been barren. Therefore, it is easy to see why she laughed. Why would the Lord not give her children when she was younger, and now give her a son when she was old?

The answer is given when the Lord repeats the promise in Gen. 18:14,

"Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

The Lord was teaching Sarah that by faith, in response to the promises of God, the Lord takes us beyond the normal to that which for us would be impossible!

III. SARAH'S FAITH.

I have mentioned that Sarah's faith was passive, for the most part. It was. But there was an active side to it too. "She judged." This means that she gathered all of the facts

-- both from the human side and the divine side -- and she believed!

Why?

It could not have been that she had confidence in herself.

Nor could it have been that her confidence was in her husband. Paul tells us that as far as children were concerned Abraham's body was just as "dead" as Sarah's was!

No! It was neither of these. Here is the answer from our text:

"She judged Him faithful who had promised."

NOTE THAT IT WAS NOT PRIMARILY THE PROMISE, BUT THE ONE WHO MADE THE PROMISE -- THE PROMISER! At first she laughed at the promise. But when she considered the Promiser, she laughed at the problem! Why? Because "she judged him faithful who had promised."

IV. THE OUTCOME.

Here again we have two things -- two results! Sarah saw one; she did not live to see the other.

A. Isaac was born.

Here we see what God did in keeping His promise. "Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed," or better, to lay a foundation of seed. The verse probably has more to do with the birth of Isaac than with his conception. As v. 12 indicates, God was doing far more than just to give Abraham and Sarah a son. Their son was a most vital link in all that God was doing to carry out His purpose in the world.

This is nothing but a miracle performed by God Himself! The emphasis is not upon what Sarah did, but upon what Sarah "received" as a result of what God did!

But then comes the part which Sarah did not live to see.

B. THE NUMBERLESS SEED WHICH FOLLOWED.

Note the words "multitude" and "innumerable."

The context shows that this is Abraham's spiritual seed -- as does Romans 4! There are going to be many, many people saved. Notice what John says about those who are saved just out of the Great Tribulation:

"After this I beheld and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9, 10).

But there is something else here . . .

Notice that "stars" are in the heavens; "sand" is upon the earth.

We cannot say positively, but there seems to be the evidence here that the Lord, by His promise to Abraham in Gen. 22:17 (from which this is a quotation in Heb. 11:12b), was indicating that there would be an earthly seed and a heavenly seed -- like there will be a new earth and a new heaven -- with righteous ones living in both places!

Again we see how far-reaching were the ways of God with these OT saints.

Concl: May I draw a twofold application as I close?

First -- for ourselves, in our own lives from day to day, let us receive this testimony from Sarah that God will always stand by His Word. We, too, can count on the fact that He will always be faithful. The impossibilities are nothing to the Lord!

Second -- let us take the larger look with regard to the ultimate fulfillment of God's purposes. Cf. 10:23.

Abraham, and Sarah too,

"staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but" were "strong in faith giving glory to God . . . being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. 4:20, 21).

WHEN GOD IS NOT ASHAMED

Heb. 11:13-16

Intro: We have a break here to emphasize and explain, but also to introduce the four events which follow -- all of which have to do with death!

- 1) Abraham offers up Isaac (vv. 17-19).
- 2) Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in preparation for his own death (v. 20).
- 3) Jacob prepared for his death (v. 21).
- 4) Even Joseph is remembered in this chapter for what he did in connection with his death (v. 22).

All of this shows . . .

I. THE DEPTH OF THEIR FAITH (Heb. 11:13).

"All" must refer to those who had received "the promises" -- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob primarily, but also including Joseph.

They believed God so implicitly that not even their own deaths caused them to surrender the promises which God had given!

And they were followed by others! Cf. Heb. 11:35b-40.

You may remember that Heb. 6:15 says,

"And so, after he had patiently endured, he (referring to Abraham) obtained the promise."

This refers to the birth of Isaac, but it still has to be said that he "died in faith, not having received the promises" because he did not live to see all of the promises fulfilled.

The fact that they died as they did shows the depth of their faith, but they died as they did because they lived the way they lived. Let us notice how this is described in the rest of the verse. Three things are said:

- A. They died in faith "having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them" (although the second clause does not appear in the best MSS).

This means that they were so sure that they were going to be fulfilled that they looked upon them as already fulfilled.

They did not consider the unfulfilled promises of God with an if, but with a when. Cf. v. 10. They could visualize the city which God had prepared for them.

- B. They "all died in faith" because they had "embraced them," i.e., the promises.

This points to the way they received the promises. It speaks of a greeting involving embraces and kisses. They did not just take the promises and hold them with cold formality, but they welcomed them in a way that indicated that they wanted these more than anything else!

The two statements which we have just considered are personal; now we are going to see how these personal convictions affected their lives.

- C. They "all died in faith" because they had lived in faith -- publicly by their lives and by the words of their mouths confessing "that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Cf. Gen. 23:3, 4 where Abraham, after the death of Sarah said to the sons of Heth,

"I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

A "stranger" is a foreigner; he was also a pilgrim because he was not interested in becoming a citizen.

Now all of these things are written to help us in our walk with the Lord. Are these statements descriptive of us? Cf. Phil. 3:20, 21. Do people know this about us? See also Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:15-17.

How deep is our faith? To what extent does it affect the way we live?

II. THE MEANING OF THEIR FAITH (Heb. 11:14-16a).

These verses describe their faith.

- A. They made it plain, the people of Canaan could see because of the way the patriarchs lived, that they were seeking, looking for, anticipating a fatherland -- a country of their own.

Quite obviously they were going to receive that land, but the patriarchs were interested in what it would be when it was perfected! This is the meaning of v. 14.

- B. They made it plain also that they did not want to go back to Ur of the Chaldees. Cf. v. 15.

They could have easily done this. "Might" probably needs

to be translated would.

It is interesting to put the two verses (14 and 15) together because they tell us:

- 1) The patriarchs did not want what they had then.
- 2) Neither did they want what they used to have.

Note: The application to us is obvious. We do not want what we used to have, nor do we want what we have now to be the limit of what we will always have. We, too, are looking for something better!

C. They made it plain that what they wanted was "heavenly" in origin and "heavenly" in nature. Cf. Heb. 11:16a.

"Better" is one of the key words of the epistle. Cf. 1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6 (2x); 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35. What they were looking for was superior to anything that they had then, or anything that they had had before!

"They desire," or kept on desiring, means a person who desires something so much that he is reaching out to grasp it or even to touch it.

Heb. 13:7 would certainly apply to the patriarchs as they bear witness to us today. Are these verses descriptive of our lives?

III. THE REWARD OF THEIR FAITH (Heb. 11:16b).

This is introduced with, "Wherefore." (The same word is used at the beginning of v. 12.)

Cf. Heb. 2:11.

"To be called" = taking a person's surname, as is done in marriage. Here notice Ex. 3:6, 15, 16; also Gen. 26:24; 28:13. God is glad to be known as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." He is not disgraced, or dishonored, if His Name is linked with their names!

Why? Because of the way they have been living. AND -- He has done just what they thought and believed that he would do: "for He hath prepared for them a city!"

Cf. 1 John 3:1, 2.

Concl: If you are reading your Bible through, this past week you read these words:

"The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother" (Prov. 10:1).

Apply those middle words to God. How does He feel about you?

FAITH'S SUPREME TEST

Heb. 11:17-19

Intro: We come back to Abraham this morning after the 4 general verses of summary and emphasis, introducing what is now said about Abraham, then about Isaac and Jacob and Joseph. All of these verses (down through v. 22) have to do with death. And they follow what the writer tells us at the beginning of v. 13, "These all died in faith . . ."

We have already had two things pointed out to us about Abraham:

- 1) In v. 8.
- 2) In vv. 9, 10.

Now, let us look, first of all, at . . .

I. THE NATURE OF THE TEST -- AND ITS MEANING FOR ABRAHAM.

God wanted him to offer up Isaac -- the common word for sacrifices to God which is used throughout this Epistle.

But why did God ask for such a sacrifice?

Abraham was being "tested"! What does this mean?

It means that Abraham's faith was being strengthened, not that God was trying to break Abraham down.

James helps us to understand this in three passages found in the first chapter of his Epistle:

- 1) First he shows the benefits that God is after in testing our faith: Jas. 1:2-4 and then Jas. 1:12.
- 2) Secondly, he eliminates the fact that God is tempting us with sin: Jas. 1:13.

It is important to see that Abraham's faith was not so strong but what it could be stronger!

It is also important to see that the tests became stronger the longer Abraham lived. God did not start here, but this came after many other years of testing. The fact that it was a very severe test is indicated by the words,

"his only begotten son,"

-- the only one that he had who was like Isaac.

In Gen. 22:1-14 we have the historical account of what the writer of Hebrews is referring to in these verses. In that chapter, v. 2, we find that this is what God said to Abraham:

"Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the

mountains which I will tell thee of."

In the beginning of the verse especially the Lord seems to be indicating that He knew how difficult a test this was for Abraham because of his love for Isaac.

In Abraham's heart it had to be a question of his love for Isaac as compared with his love for the Lord.

Another interesting sidelight is that Abraham was now living in a land where people commonly offered their children to heathen deities. Behind this test seems to have been the question also: Did Abraham love his God as much as the heathen seemed to be devoted to their gods?

But even these were not the main reason for . . .

II. THE SEVERITY OF THE TEST.

Undoubtedly the hardest part about this test was that there seemed to be a contradiction in God's words to Abraham! This is brought out by Heb. 11:18.-- a quotation from Gen. 21:12 which had been given to Abraham just before he sent Hagar and Ishmael away.

This is a very vital question: Are there contradictions in the Word of God?

Sometimes you will think so! So did Rebekah,
Joseph,
Moses,
David,
Job, and others.

Nothing can be more disturbing to any child of God than this.

What did Abraham do? Note:

III. THE ACTION WHICH HE TOOK.

A. He took certain things into account.

"Accounting" in v. 19 must precede the action which he took in v. 17. It describes a process of reasoning whereby a person gathers all of the evidence and comes to a conclusion.

This is often what we fail to do.

1. He looked at the old promises -- which he had, lit., gladly received.

These had been the very foundation for his life.

2. He looked at the most recent word from God -- as seen in Gen. 22:2.
3. He looked at the way he had been living.

Note the similarity between, "By faith, ^{Abraham} when he was called," in v. 8, and, "By faith Abraham, when he was tested." In the Greek especially it speaks of acting immediately in obedience to that which God had asked him to do.

Was there any real reason to change?

4. He looked at God -- "Accounting that God was able." "Able" to do what? "Able to raise him (Isaac) up" - although he had no precedent for believing such a thing!

Again -- the Greek indicates that Abraham believed that God could do much more than that! Taking ch. 11 as a whole, perhaps we should recognize that v. 3 had an influence upon Abraham's knowledge of God.

IV. THE OUTCOME.

Two things can be said:

B.

~~A~~ "By faith Abraham . . . offered up Isaac."

Genesis 22 indicates that Abraham fully expected to put Isaac to death.

~~A~~ God stopped the sacrifice and gave Isaac back.

But the important part was that Abraham "received him (Isaac) in a figure," lit., in a parable, "even from the dead."

The word, "figure," which is used also Heb. 9:9, means that, in addition to strengthening Abraham's faith, the Lord had a twofold purpose in commanding Abraham to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice:

- 1) It was to be a type.
- 2) It was to be a prophecy -- as is the actual case with a type.

What is a type?

Dr. Merrill Unger in his Bible Handbook (pp. 7, 8) says that it is "the divine impress of spiritual truth upon a literal event, person or thing." It is God's way of

revealing truth ahead of time. "Rightly understood and appreciated," Dr. Unger adds, "typology offers a strong proof of divine inspiration." It is, therefore, a form of prophecy!

What is in view here?

Can anyone with any kind of an open mind read about Abraham's only begotten son who faced both death and resurrection without thinking of God's only begotten Son?

This must be the reason for our Lord's words in Jehn 8: 56,

"Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."

Concl: What wonderful encouragement there is for each of us in this testing of Abraham's faith!

- 1) There are no contradictions in God's Word. We can trust it.
- 2) Our testings are always for our blessing. Paul wrote to the Corinthians,
"For all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:21-23).
- 3) In our trials we come to know the Lord in greater and more wonderful ways than ever before.

Therefore, whatever the trial may be that we are going through, let us continue to act "by faith" in His precious Word.

Ill.: When I went to see one of our men this week, he had received some bad news from the doctor. But he had perfect peace. What did he say? He said, I have been trusting the Lord up until now, and He has never failed me, and so I am just going to keep doing what I have been doing -- just trusting Him!"

This is what Abraham did. By the grace of God may each of us do it, too.

THE FAITH OF ISAAC
Heb. 11:20

Intro: This morning I want us to consider just one verse in the book of Hebrews: 11:20.

Some may be concerned because we are going so slowly through this Epistle. I am concerned too - so much so that I took the time to figure out how long it would take us to finish Hebrews at the rate of one verse a Sunday. Without actually looking at a calendar, and not taking into consideration our Bible conferences of Missionary Conference, it would take us at least until March of 1976!

We will have to finish quicker than that.

BUT -- I hope that by the time we are finished this morning you will feel with me that it has been well worth our time to devote a whole service to this one verse.

The order of the words in the Greek text seems to me to make the verse even more forceful than it is in the English text. In the Greek it reads like this:

By faith and concerning things to come Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau.

) Some prefer to translate the word, and, as even. Then it would read this way:

By faith even concerning things to come Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau.

Still others would use the word also instead of either and or even. This would tie the verse in with what has just been said about Abraham offering up Isaac. And so it would read,

By faith also concerning things to come Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau.

Little things like this show us how rich and full of meaning the Word of God is.

BUT -- whether you read this in the Greek or in the English, the verse is very short, and you will not be in any position to understand it unless you know the story behind it.

Who was Isaac? Who was Jacob? Who was Esau? Do you know? Do you know the incidents that the writer of Hebrews is referring to in this passage? If we had not read from Genesis earlier in this service, would you have known where to look for it? This leads me to say three things:

1) The importance of the Old Testament -- because this is

where the story of Isaac and Jacob and Esau is recorded -- in the book of Genesis.

- 2) The importance of teaching the Old Testament. Are you listening, Sunday School teachers and teachers of our Children's Home Bible Classes? Make sure that those you are teaching know the stories of the Bible. If we are accurate in our understanding of the stories there is far more possibility that we are going to be accurate in interpreting the meaning of those stories.

Do you know where I first heard the story of Jacob and Esau? It was from a Sunday School teacher.

Could I slip in a word here about our Sunday School and about our Children's Home Bible Clubs? We are teaching Genesis this Fall in our CHBCs. Would you not like to be the first one to tell some child about Jacob and Esau? Or, are you doing all that you could do to get boys and girls, young people, and adults into our Sunday School so that they can be learning these OT stories -- and what they mean?

But maybe there are adults in this service this morning who could not tell us the story of how Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau. You might say, "No one ever took me to Sunday School when I was a child." For you (and for all of us) let me say this third thing:

- 3) The importance of reading the Old Testament -- and the New Testament, too. The one explains the other -- and we have an excellent example of this in the verse we are considering this morning.

Let me tell you who Isaac and Jacob and Esau were just in case you do not know.

Isaac as the son of Abraham about whom we read in vv. 17-19. Jacob and Esau were brothers -- sons of Isaac -- twins -- and, even though Jacob is mentioned first, Esau was the older of the two.

This family, starting especially with Abraham, is the first family of Scripture -- the most important family. Why? Because God chose this family as the family through whom the Savior would be born. Jesus Christ was a member of Abraham's family according to the flesh.

In any family along the line where there was more than one child a choice obviously would have to be made as to which son would be the favored one to be in that line within the family that would ultimately see the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who would make that choice? Normally it would fall to the firstborn son. He was usually the main heir. But instead,

Jacob is mentioned here before Esau, and it is Jacob who is mentioned in v. 21 indicating that for some reason the main blessing was given to Jacob, and not Esau. Why?

This is why you need to understand the OT story.

In Genesis 25:21-23 you have the answer. Listen carefully as I read these three verses:

"And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was entreated by him, and Rebekah, his wife, conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be born of thee; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger."

And in that chapter, v. 25 tells us that Esau was born first and then Jacob was born.

BUT GOD HAD PLACED JACOB IN THE LINE THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TO CHRIST.

Why did He choose Jacob?

Paul answers that question in Rom. 9:10-13. He brings out that fact that it could not have been because Esau had done something bad or that Jacob had done something especially good because the decision had been made before they were born -- "the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil" (Rom. 9:11a)!

So the only thing we can say is that God chose Jacob because that was His will.

So in coming to our text we see what we have been seeing all through Hebrews 11:

I. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WORD OF GOD AND WHAT ISAAC DID "BY FAITH."

Jacob did what he did in blessing his sons because this was God's will as He had expressed it in His Word.

This is the first thing of importance in our text.

The second thing that we need to notice about our text has to do with . . .

II. THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF ISAAC.

This blessing took place, according to Gen. 27:1, when

"Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see," and in v. 2 he said, "I know not the day of my death."

And so he wanted to bless them.

Before we look at the details, let us notice this word, "blessed." It is a word which describes a certain kind of prayer. It shows the relationship between the Word and prayer. It means to invoke the blessing of God. God is the only One who can bring blessing -- and when He does, the person who is blessed is going to be made happy and prosperous (in the way the word, prosperous, is used in the Bible).

How wonderful it is to see this old man praying for his sons -- not for Jacob only, but also for Esau!

Take a lesson, fathers. There is nothing greater that you can do for your sons than to pray for them.

But how did he pray for them?

III. THE NATURE OF HIS PRAYER: "concerning thing to come."

The longer we live the more we realize that we must not jeopardize tomorrow by what we do today.

Esau needed a lot of prayer in this regard because Heb. 12:16, 17 is going to tell us that, when he wanted to change, he could not.

This shows Isaac's faith that:

- 1) God is sovereign over all of the future.
- 2) His will is something that is certain, determined beforehand, not made up as we go along.
- 3) His will is unique -- not the same for Jacob as for Esau.
- 4) We should pray for all. Heb. 12:16, 17 indicates rather clearly that Esau did not know the Lord. Perhaps Isaac knew this. Who can say? But whatever the circumstances may have been, Isaac prayed for both of his sons. What a lesson for all of us who have children.

Isaac wanted the future to be covered with his prayers!

But there is one final thing that I must mention in my message this morning which is not actually mentioned in our text although you would know it if you are acquainted with Genesis 27. We have in our text . . .

IV. THE EVIDENCE OF GOD'S GRACE.

Here in Hebrews the Lord does not tell on Isaac. You would think that Isaac did just what God wanted him to do all the way through in blessing Jacob and Esau.

But, if you read Genesis 27, you will find that Isaac tried to give Jacob's blessing to Esau and then he could only have given Esau's blessing to Jacob.

Why did he act in a contrary way to the Word of God? It cannot have been through ignorance. It may have been because he just preferred Esau. Gen. 25:28 says that "Isaac loved Esau . . . but Rebekah loved Jacob."

Whatever the full reason, Isaac was not able to change the sovereign will of God. We cannot even believe that God needed Rebekah to do what she did. The Lord is perfectly able to work out His own purposes -- which he did!

How could it be that Isaac did this "BY FAITH" when he was doing the wrong thing?

Our text evidently points to what Isaac said in his confusion when he discovered that he had blessed Jacob instead of Esau. Notice these words in Gen. 27:33,

"And Isaac trembled ^{very} exceedingly, and said, Who? Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? Yea, and he shall be blessed."

He came to his senses and realized that you cannot work contrary to God. Have you ever tried to?

And yet a blessing was reserved for Esau too. No man will ever be able to say that he did not have a chance to know the Lord. He is a God of infinite grace.

Concl: When we look at this link in the chain called Isaac we see a strange paradox -- some things pleasing to God; other things very displeasing. But over it all a mighty God overruling in the mistakes of men so that His will is done.

However, Isaac comes to us in this great chapter with the word of faith -- a word expressed to God in prayer reflecting his own faith in that which God had said that he would do. In this way, let us follow in the steps of Isaac!

THE FAITH OF JACOB
Heb. 11:21

Intro: Let us review the distinctive nature of the faith of those whom we have been considering here in Hebrews 11:

- 1) Abel -- the work of faith.
- 2) Enoch -- the walk of faith.
- 3) Noah -- the witness of faith.
- 4) Abraham -- the way of faith.
- 5) Isaac -- the word of faith.
- 6) Jacob -- the worship of faith.

The background for our text this morning is in Genesis 48.

Joseph was the son of Jacob. Joseph's two sons, although not mentioned here, were Manasseh and Ephraim -- and born in that order.

The writer of Hebrews does not tell us what the blessing was. He assumes that we know. Nor does he distinguish between the blessings given to the two sons. He assumes that we know that also. The writer does not even tell us that Jacob blessed all of his other sons -- as he does in Gen. 49. This alone is singled out for mention in connection with Jacob as evidence of his faith.

And then it is simply said, at the end of our text, that Jacob "worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

There are three things that I would like to point out in Heb. 11:21:

- 1) The timing of the blessing.
- 2) The significance of the blessing.
- 3) The result of the blessing -- the immediate result, the result upon Jacob himself.

I. THE TIMING OF THE BLESSING: "By faith Jacob, when he was dying."

Final words are often very important words -- especially when men knew that their words are their last words.

Cf. Paul's final words in 2 Timothy; Peter's, in 2 Peter; our Lord's, in John 13-16, and also in Acts 1:8; Moses', in the book of Deuteronomy.

This blessing, and all that lay behind it, not only gives us a brief summary of Jacob's life, but it points out the most important thing that he did during his entire life.

And remember that between Heb. 11:20 and Heb. 11:21 the scene changes from Canaan to Egypt.

This marks what Jacob did "by faith" as his part in all that lead to the coming of Christ as to the ultimate fulfillment of all of God's promises regarding salvation.

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BLESSING.

What a wealth of truth is bound up in these 6 words, "blessed both the sons of Joseph." Let us take a few minutes with them to draw from them some of the important things that appear as we relate this verse to Genesis 48 and to at least one other OT passage.

A. First and foremost, as the use of the word, "blessed," indicated in v. 20, this statement indicates that Jacob prayed for his children -- here in particular, his grandchildren!

B. Secondly, the words, "By faith" and "blessed" indicate that Jacob lived and acted according to the Word of God!

Only God can bless, and He only blesses in harmony with His Word. This is something which we must never forget.

C. In the third place, this gives us evidence of the work that God had done in the heart of Jacob.

While Jacob is referred to as "Jacob" here in Heb. 11:21, the emphasis in Gen. 48 is upon his new name, "Israel," which the Lord gave him at Peniel!

Cf. his two names in Gen. 48:2. "Jacob" is used only 2x in the chapter; "Isarel" is used 7x!

D. But perhaps the most important thing about the blessing which Jacob conferred upon his grandsons as he prayed for them is what the blessing indicates about the character of God:

1. The blessing of God -- upon Joseph.

Cf. the words at the beginning of the blessing in Gen. 48:15,

"And he (i.e., Jacob) blessed Joseph."

Let us notice how the human side and the divine side are blended together in this. Let me cite two examples from the Word:

1) What the Lord said to Abraham after he had shown his willingness to offer up Isaac. The reference is Gen. 22:18,

"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."

There is no doubt but that God blesses our children if we walk with Him in ways that He would not bless them if we do not!

- 2) Further evidence of this is seen in Ex. 20:5, 6,
 "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them,
 nor serve them (speaking of idols); for I,
 the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting
the iniquity of the fathers upon the child-
ren unto the third and fourth generation of
them that hate me; And showing mercy unto
thousands of them that love me, and keep my
commandments."

THE FIRST AND GREATEST THING THAT I CAN DO TO INSURE
 THE BLESSING OF GOD UPON MY CHILDREN AND MY GRAND-
 CHILDREN AND MY GREAT GRANDCHILDREN AND MY GREAT,
 GREAT GRANDCHILDREN IS TO LIVE MY LIFE IN OBEDIENCE
 TO THE WORD OF GOD!

As an example -- we come to the second thing that this
 teaches us about God:

2. The judgment of God -- upon Reuben.

Cf. 1 Chron. 5:1, 2,
 "Now the sons of Reuben, the first-born of Israel
 (for he was the first-born; but, forasmuch as he
 defiled his father's bed, -- when in Gen. 35:22
 it is told that he committed adultery with his
 father's concubine, Bilhah -- his birthright was
given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel,
 and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after
 the birthright; For Judah prevailed above his
 brethren, and of him came the prince; but the
birthright was Joseph's)."

This is one reason why you have the story of Joseph
 at the end of the book of Genesis instead of the
 story of Reuben or Judah.

Have you ever thought of weeping for Reuben when you
 read,

"By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed both
 the sons of Joseph"?

Never forget it: It is still true today that God
 blesses obedience, but He judges disobedience.

3. The grace of God.

Do you remember something very significant about the
 sons of Joseph? Their mother was an Egyptian -- and

so Manasseh and Ephraim were half Egyptian with no right to be named along with the people of God!

Later we will be talking about Rahab -- a harlot and an inhabitant of Jericho -- and we will talk about the grace of God then, too.

This is what gives hope for all of us. Our spiritual history has to include Eph. 2:8, 9. How thankful we can be, and how thankful Manasseh and Ephraim could be, for the grace of God!

4. The sovereignty of God and the providence of God -- two truths that are very closely related.

In blessing the sons of Joseph, Jacob was indicating that:

- 1) God had the right to bless them as He wanted to -- choosing the second-born, Ephraim, for the chief place.
- 2) God was in absolute control, providentially working out His purpose even while the children of Abraham were in Egypt.

How wonderful it is to see that things are always under the sovereign, providential control of our Almighty God!

Finally,

III. THE RESULT: "Jacob . . . worshiped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

He "worshiped"! He was weak and dying, but he worshiped!

After he had prayed for his grandsons, he "worshiped" God!

ONE EVIDENCE THAT YOU AND I ARE LIVING BY FAITH IS THAT WE ARE WORSHIPING GOD! Do you know what this is? This is what puts real blessing and delight for you in your prayer life.

We worship God when we marvel at Him, when we praise Him and give thanks to Him, when we recognize His love and His power and His wisdom in all that He does.

Let us not forget to worship.

Concl: May the Lord continue to teach us more about the worship of faith as we think of Jacob and Joseph and Ephraim and Manasseh!

THE FAITH OF JOSEPH

Heb. 11:22

Intro: Of the names that have been mentioned so far in Heb. 11, we come in Joseph to the last one mentioned in the book of Genesis. In fact, our text this morning refers us back to the last 3 verses of Genesis -- as we have seen in our Scripture reading: Gen. 50:22-26.

Drawing from these two passages of Scripture, and keeping in mind that all of these people in Heb. 11 and what is said about them are links in the chain of salvation leading ultimately to Christ, let us note in the first place . . .

I. THE MORTALITY OF JOSEPH.

In Heb. 11:22 we read,

"By faith Joseph, when he died . . ."

Gen. 50:24 reads,

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die . . ."

One cannot read the story of Joseph in Genesis, from chapter 37 on without being filled with great admiration for Joseph. People seem to be always taking advantage of him, particularly in his earlier years. He is sold into exile by his own brothers. From the house of Potiphar he is cast into prison, falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, and yet wherever Joseph is . . . working for his father,
working for Potiphar,
working for the jailor, or
working for Pharaoh,

he always manifests that same faithfulness that causes people to trust him and brings the blessing of God upon his life.

And how thankful we are that, when that devastating famine hit that whole area, Joseph had such an important place in Egypt so that he could provide for his family, sparing their lives. If we are just looking at Joseph we might be tempted to say, "If it had not been for Joseph, the chosen family and the chosen nation would have become extinct and there would have been no Messiah, no salvation!"

It would be hard to find a greater example in true life of a local boy making good.

We love Joseph also because of his humility. When he told his brothers who he was, and they were so dreadfully afraid, he said,

"So now it was not you that sent me here, but God"
(Gen. 45:8a).

And then add to all of this the fact that in Joseph we have one of the greatest, if not the greatest, type of Christ to be found in all of the OT.

Surely the nation of Israel, the brethren of Joseph, could never get along without him! He must be an indispensable man!

And yet we read:

"By faith Joseph, when he died . . ."

And Gen. 50:26 tells us,

"And Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old," just as Jacob had died, and Isaac had died, and Abraham had died!

Why do we have this emphasis in Heb. 11? ONE REASON CERTAINLY MUST BE SO THAT WE WOULD SEE THAT THE FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISES RESTS ONLY ON GOD -- NOT UPON THE MEN THAT GOD HAS USED. It is wonderful to fit into God's plan according to God's will, but all of the Lord's servants are mortal, are dispensable. We come and go, but the work of God moves right on toward its goal because it is God who is doing the work!

Let us love the servants of the Lord, and thank the Lord for the way they may be used in our lives, but let us be careful not to make too much of them! The Lord's work is dependent upon God. All of the blessings come from Him. He may use all of us in different ways, but He is the only One who continues, and He is the only One who is due any of the glory.

But let us look at the second thing in our text:

II. JOSEPH'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

It is to be seen in the words,

"made mention of the departing of the children of Israel."

"Departing" in the Greek is the word, exodus. For him to "mention" it means that he not only spoke of it but that he spoke of it because he was always thinking about it, remembering it. This is what he had in mind when the time came for him to die.

How is it expressed in Genesis?

Cf. Gen. 50:24,

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

Think of it! He had been in Egypt for 93 years, BUT THE HOPE OF ISRAEL HAD NOT BEEN EXTINGUISHED FROM HIS HEART!

He knew what God had promised to do, what He had sworn that He would do -- and Joseph believed it! It was the Word of God which made him speak as he did when he was dying!

And Joseph believed it . . .

- 1) In spite of the time that had gone by without any fulfillment.
- 2) In spite of the circumstances -- that they were in Egypt, not in Canaan!
- 3) In spite of the difficulties which stood in their way -- not just the Egyptians, but even death!

Joseph would say, Amen, to what we had back in Heb. 6:17-19a.

Joseph knew the Word of God, and he believed it. And he knew that, if he died before the promise was fulfilled, that would not change the promise in any way or lessen its chances of being fulfilled!

There is nothing that will sustain us in life, or in death, but the Word of God! We need to read it, we need to understand it, we need to believe it. Let us take a lesson here from Joseph.

But Joseph did not just stop with the doctrine. If you really believe the Word, it is going to be seen in the way that you live. Therefore, note in the third place . . .

III. JOSEPH'S SENSE OF VALUES.

Here is where we see how heavily his faith weighed upon his life, and upon his death: he "gave commandment concerning his bones."

Gen. 50:25 says,

"And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from here."

"Visit" means to come to anyone. Joseph was going, but God was coming. He was coming to look after His people with kindness, to care for them as a shepherd takes care of his flock. There was no doubt about this (as the Hebrew indicates. It is expressed intensively).

But how did this affect Joseph's values?

Do you know what was the greatest honor paid to a dead monarch, like Joseph?

It was to be given a place of burial among the kings of Egypt. Where and how you were buried was important all through the OT and even in the NT. This is how Joseph of Arimathea conferred the greatest possible honor upon our Lord -- by placing the Lord in his own tomb!

Joseph said, in effect, "I don't want that. I want to be buried in Canaan -- whenever God takes you back there!"

Next week we are going to start with Moses. Notice what is said about Moses in Heb. 11:24-26. Do you suppose -- that the Lord used Joseph to help Moses make the decision which he made? After all, Moses was the one who saw to it that Joseph's desires were granted!

But let us move ahead to 1974.

We not only have the story of Joseph, but of Moses, of David, of Daniel, of Paul (to name just a few). Has the Word of God affected our lives, our decisions, our sense of values, as it did their lives? Or, are we so bound to this world that the world with its status and with its things is the main thing that influences our lives each day? Do you not only know, but are you obeying Rom. 12:1, 2 and 1 John 2:15-17?

To conclude, let us notice . . .

IV. JOSEPH'S TESTIMONY TO THE FOLLOWING GENERATIONS.

There seems little doubt but that Joseph influenced more people in his death than he did in his life. Like Abel, "he being dead, yet speaketh."

What happened?

Cf. Ex. 13:19,

"And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him (as they were leaving Egypt); for he had solemnly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones away from here with you."

And then read Joshua 24:32,

"And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a plot of ground which Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver; and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."

This has been referred to as the longest funeral procession in history!

IT WAS A TESTIMONY TO THE WAY JOSEPH LIVED, TO THE WAY HE DIED, AND TO HIS HOPE AFTER DEATH. For included in the words of the oath unmistakably is Joseph's hope of resurrection. He expected to be there and to have part in that wonderful day when God finally gives the land to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and to him! Not even death can destroy our faith or rob us of our hope.

Concl: What encouragement there is for us in this one short verse!

Will you take these lessons to heart? Admire Joseph all you want to, and pattern your life after his. You could hardly do better. BUT DO NOT WORSHIP HIM! He would not want that. Worship the God of Joseph, and be thankful that, though Joseph died, God has not died, nor has his promise. And even Joseph will be raised some day to see that he was perfectly right in placing his hopes for time and eternity in the promise that God gave for salvation in His Word!

CB - 10/13/74 a.m.

FAITH -- IN THE LIFE OF MOSES (^{Spoke only on}
v. 23)
Heb. 11:23-26

CB - 10/27/74 a.m. - MOSES AT THE CROSSROADS - Heb. 11:24-26

Intro: In coming to Moses this morning:

- 1) We move from the book of Genesis to Exodus.
- 2) We come to the second of the two men upon whom the writer of Hebrews places the greatest emphasis. Abraham was the first.

Abraham and Moses stand out because of the important role each of them had in the history of Israel.

The verses dealing with Moses may be divided into four parts (vv. 23-29):

- 1) His parents (v. 23).
- 2) His personal life (vv. 24-26).
- 3) His public work (vv. 27, 28).
- 4) His people (v. 29).

V. 30 takes us into the book of Joshua. All that is said about Moses comes from Exodus -- a very small part of the book!

Next week we will look, the Lord willing, at Moses' public work and his people; for today let us look at what his parents did and the personal choice which Moses made for himself.

I. MOSES' PARENTS (Heb. 11:23).

Their names are given to us in Ex. 6:18, 20:

- 1) Moses' father was Amram.
- 2) Moses' mother was Jochebed.

The background for Heb. 11:23 is Ex. 2:1-3. The emphasis in Exodus seems to be upon what Jochebed and Moses' sister, Miriam, did, but the writer of Hebrews makes it clear that Amram was in on it too!

We might think that what Amram and Jochebed did was just due to the prejudice of doting parents IF it were not for the words which have been used over and over again in this 11th chapter: "By faith . . ."

These words always point us to the Word of God, to the promises of God, to some revelation which God has been pleased to make regarding His will, His purpose. That revelation may not always be recorded, but we can be sure that a revelation was always involved when we read, "by faith."

Moses was "beautiful" as a baby:

- 1) "Beautiful" in appearance.
- 2) "Beautiful" in disposition.

BUT -- Stephen, in Acts 7:20, gives us the main idea when he

says that Moses was lit., beautiful unto God! (See your marginal note if you have the NSRB.)

This means, along with "by faith," that the Lord had made known to Amram and Jechebed that He had a special purpose in giving Moses to them -- a purpose that had to do with the deliverance of the people of God from Egypt.

THEREFORE, "they were not afraid of the king's commandment." For them the Word of God was mightier than the word of the king of Egypt!

Digression: Seeing this, it is not surprising that the same principle was established in the heart of Moses as he grew up so that he did what is recorded in the next 3 verses of Heb. 11.

What faith Amram and Jechebed had in:

- 1) The sovereignty of God.
- 2) The providence of God.

There is a difference between them. The first speaks of God as having power to overrule any other power; the second of the purpose that He accomplishes with the exercise of His power.

Note just a few passages which speak of this:

- 1) Psalm 2, esp. vv. 2, 3, 6.
- 2) Psa. 46:6,
"The nations rages, the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, the earth melted."
- 3) Dan. 4:35,
"And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"
- 4) Rom. 8:35-39.
- 5) Acts 11:17, where Peter is speaking,
"Forasmuch, then, as God gave them the same gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God?"

Oh, how we need to get such verses with this truth in our hearts. Then we can say,

"I will trust, and not be afraid" (Isa. 12:2).

Put the first part of v. 23 together with the last part:

"By faith . . . they were not afraid of the king's commandment."

What a wonderful beginning Moses had!

But now let us look at . . .

KEEP TWO THINGS IN MIND:
1) GOD HAD HIS HAND ON
MOSES - TO DELIVER ISRAEL.
2) THE FAITH AND INFLUENCE
OF HIS PARENTS.

II. MOSES' PERSONAL LIFE (Heb. 11:24-26).

The writer tells us in these verses about the turning point in Moses' life -- "when he was come to years" -- which Stephen tells us in Acts 7:23 was "when he was full forty years old."

L.I.T., WHEN HE BECAME
GREAT.

Thus, the decision he made was the decision of a mature man.

A. What he did (Heb. 11:24, 25).

Stating it simply, he rejected one thing; he chose another.

Notice "by faith" again. God had called Moses long before the burning bush. Moses was forced to make a choice. Would he continue to be "the son of Pharaoh's daughter," or would he cast his lot with "the people of God"?

← The one meant "the pleasures of sin for a season"; the other meant "to suffer affliction." The one meant great honor among men; the other meant reproach." The one meant "the treasures in Egypt"; the other meant "the recompense of the reward."

He had reached a crisis in his life. Two ways stood before him. Which way would he go?

L.I.T., HE TOOK
← A POSITION FOR
HIMSELF.

He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction . . ."

Outwardly what a foolish mistake this seemed to be. How Moses must have been counseled against doing this . . . then ridiculed!

The next verse tells us . . .

B. Why he did it (Heb. 11:26).

Let us go back to v. 25 for the first reason, and then look at 2 things here in v. 26.

1. He saw that "the pleasures of sin" were only passing, short-lived, temporary. They were just "for a season."

Cf. 1 John 2:17,

"And the world passeth away, and the lust of it; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Cf. 1 Cor. 7:31

No man is so foolish as the one who will give up that which is permanent for that which is only temporary. Cf. 2 Cor. 4:17, 18. You can turn away from the Lord if you want to, but the cost is probably more than you will want to pay.

2. Moses took time to evaluate his life.

"REACH" - TO
REVILE, UPBraid,
CAST IN ONE'S TEETH.

Cf. 10:33; 13:13.

You have this in the word, "esteeming." It speaks of a decision which has been reached after weighing and comparing all of the facts.

This is what Sarah did in Heb. 11:11. Contrast 10:29.

Moses was not satisfied with all that Egypt had provided for him. His hopes had probably been built up time and time again, only to have them dashed in disappointment!

He could look back to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. He could think back to his parents. The united testimony of their lives spoke of peace, joy, contentment -- even though there had been testing and affliction!

The apostles were faced with this in John 6:67 when our Lord asked them,

"Will ye also go away?"

Look at the evidence in your own heart and in the experience of others, and there will be no doubt as to what your decision should be!

But there was another factor which influenced Moses.

3. He thought of the future -- of that which would follow this life on earth.

"He had respect" means lit. to look away from one thing to another. He looked away from the present to the future. He looked away from earth to heaven.

He knew that some day he would stand before God as his judge and that his reward then would depend upon the choices that he made now.

Cf. 2 Cor. 5:10.

Concl: Dear Christian, are you tempted because of your trials and because of the attraction of the world to turn aside from the Lord. Oh, that you would look at Moses and see the decision that he made -- and then decide to walk "by faith" as he did!

Notice his
decision was
made for
Christ.
Cf. also Phil.
3:1-14.
Also 1 Tim. 6:9, 10
Cf. Job 13:15.

THREE ACTS OF FAITH

Heb. 11:27-29

Intro: The three verses we have in our text give us the last three verses in Heb. 11 which have to do with the life of Moses.

In v. 23 we see how the faith of his parents influenced his life.

In vv. 24-26 we see how Moses stood at the crossroads of his life and "by faith" cast his lot with God.

Now, in vv. 27-29 we are about to see how his faith was tested -- severely tested -- for a little over 40 years. Part of it was personal; part of it was public. Part of it related only to Moses; part of it included also the people of God in Israel.

What an amazing picture the life of Moses gives us of the sovereignty of God! We see God's sovereignty in: (Notice the c's.)

- 1) Moses' childhood.
- 2) Moses' choice at the most crucial time in his life.
- 3) Moses' circumstances -- especially when he was forced to go into exile.
- 4) God's judgment on the country in which Moses was living.
- 5) Even creation itself -- when the waters of the Red Sea opened to let the children of Israel go through.

But, from Moses' standpoint, the writer of Hebrews asks us to pay attention to his faith -- "by faith." And keep in mind: True faith is our trust in some revelation of God. For us this means faith in what God has revealed to us in the Scriptures. Faith is not trying to convince God that He ought to do what I want Him to do. Our faith must have God's promises as their object.

Notice in our text how God called upon Moses (and in the latter two instances, the people) to exercise their faith:

I. MOSES' FAITH IN THE GOD OF SILENCE (Heb. 11:27).

Since everything has been in chronological order up to this point, the reference in v. 27 must be to Moses' flight from Egypt after he killed the Egyptian -- not to the time when he led the whole nation out at the time of the exodus.

The background passage is Ex. 2:11-15. See also Acts 7: 22-30.

Heb. 11:27 is like Heb. 11:23 in that it teaches us something that is not revealed in the OT. In fact, in some respects it seems like a contradiction of what we read in the book of Exodus. One passage says he was afraid; the other

says he was not! What is the answer?

It is this: Moses did fear for his life, but he had no fear but that God would carry out His purpose regarding the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt.

But let us not let this sidetrack us from the main point of the passage.

How long did this exile last? For 40 years (see Acts 7:30).

What did the Lord have to say to Moses during this time? There is no record that He said anything. It seems to have been a period of 40 years of silence.

What was God's purpose for letting this last so long since He eventually brought Moses back to Egypt? It all seems so pointless -- even cruel!

This is where our text, Heb. 11:27, becomes such a very important verse of Scripture: "for he (Moses) endured, as seeing Him who is invisible."

"Endured" means that he received strength ("by faith") to hold out for these 40 years because God was teaching him to see what the natural eye can see: "Him who is invisible." It takes time for this to happen in any person's life.

Our text is especially interesting in view of the last thing that is recorded about Moses in the book of Deuteronomy -- Deut. 34:10-12:

"And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, In all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, And in all that might hand, and in all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel."

All of that came later. But first Moses had to learn to trust God when He had no evidence that He was there, and when He remained silent -- for 40 long years! This was 1/3 of Moses' entire life!

We need to trust when we cannot see -- and when we cannot hear! Have you ever been there? Are you there now?

It was "by faith" that Moses "endured." And the following chapters in Exodus should encourage us to see that Moses did not make a mistake in waiting and trusting. And neither will it be a mistake for us -- to hope in His Word!

II. MOSES' FAITH IN THE GOD OF SALVATION (Heb. 11:28).

The background for this passage is Ex. 12:1-13, 29, 30.

When our writer says that Moses "kept the passover," he is indicating to us that Moses did something the results of which have come down to this present day. This is because in the Passover we have the grandest, the most complete type or picture of salvation that is given to us any place in the OT.

After all, this is the main theme of Hebrews 11 -- what the Lord has done generation after generation to bring us salvation.

It is obvious that, while Moses did not fear Pharaoh, he did fear the Lord! And so he did just as the Lord told him to do -- right down to the letter!

Why?

"Lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them."

What was the most important part of the Passover, according to Heb. 11:28? There are two things, and they are both evident in the expression, "the sprinkling of blood":

- 1) "Sprinkling" is literally, pouring. It pictures not just the drawing of a little blood, but of a complete sacrifice. The animal had to die!
- 2) "Sprinkling" also indicates the application of the blood so that God could "see" it. It was not enough for the animal to be killed; its blood had to be sprinkled "by faith" around the doors of their homes.

And the important thing to remember is this: This was the only way that they could keep the destroyer out. The Lord did not ask them to understand it; He asked them to do it.

Now all of this points to CHRIST. Paul writes in 1 Cor. 5: 7b,

"For even Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us." This means that you are not safe from eternal destruction unless your faith is in the blood of Jesus Christ. He alone can save. You are not saved just because He died. You are saved because "by faith" you have taken shelter under the blood of God's Son.

It mattered not what a person had done -- either good or bad. Neither did it matter how fine a character a person might have. The only thing that could keep the destroyer out was the "sprinkled" blood of the Passover Lamb -- which was an all-important type of Christ.

Finally, we have . . .

III. MOSES' FAITH IN THE GOD WHO IS SUFFICIENT (Heb. 11:29).

The background for this verse is Ex. 14 -- the whole chapter.

The three verses of our text answer three questions?

- 1) Is it right to trust God? The answer is in v. 27.
- 2) Is it necessary to trust God? The answer is in v. 28.
- 3) Is it safe to trust God? The answer is in v. 29.

This was no time to be wrong. It was a matter of life and death. Could God take care of His people when it seemed that they had walked right into a trap -- under His guidance?

In the times when we feel that God has been very foolish we always find out that just the opposite is true: He is infinitely wise! It was because of this very time that Jeremiah prayed almost 1,000 years later,

"Ah Lord God! Behold, Thou has made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for Thee . . . O great and mighty God, the Lord of hosts is His name; great in counsel and mighty in deed . . . who hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt . . . and Thou hast made a name for Thyself, as at this day" (Jer. 32:17-20 -- NASB).

What an illustration Ex. 14 is of the truth of Eph. 3:20!

Only God could have done what He did. He would use the very way to Israel's deliverance to destroy the might of the Egyptian army.

And what a lesson this was for all of the future for the nation of Israel! It is safe to trust the Lord. He is sufficient to meet our needs. You are not leading yourself astray, and you are not leading your children astray, and a pastor is not leading his people astray -- when we trust in the Lord! That is the only wise thing, the only safe thing, to do. **THE LORD IS SUFFICIENT.**

Concl: Which of these verses describes you? Where are you in your relationship with God?

Are you in a time of silence -- of unanswered prayer?

Are you considering the Gospel? Does it still seem foolish and unnecessary to you?

Are you a believer -- wondering how far you can trust God in the circumstances you face?

Let these great words, "by faith," show you your need.

TWO VICTORIES THROUGH FAITH
Heb. 11:30, 31

Intro: The writer of the book of Hebrews has honored 3 books of the OT in chapter 11:

- 1) Genesis, in vv. 1-22.
- 2) Exodus, in vv. 23-29.
- 3) Joshua, in vv. 30, 31.

Although the events in our text this morning took place under the leadership of Joshua, as you can see, Joshua is not mentioned. But it was to Joshua that the Lord gave the instructions as to how Jericho was to be conquered, and it was Joshua who gave the command to spare the life of Rahab and all who were with her in her house.

Joshua is the OT equivalent of Jesus. The names mean, Jehovah is salvation, or Savior. Thus, we cannot help but see in these two verses that we have an OT picture of salvation. Some aspects of the Gospel are brought out in the story of Rahab that have not been emphasized in Hebrews 11 up to this point.

Clearly this is a time in which miracles were prominent in the OT. This is fitting, too, since there is no greater miracle than the miracle that took place in the heart of Rahab.

We have two victories in these two verses. Both of them were victories of faith. But the victories are quite different:

- 1) The first is the victory of Israel over Jericho.
- 2) The second is the victory of Rahab over the judgment of God.

The first shows the victory of the power of God; the second, the victory of the grace of God.

The historical background for these two victories is given in Joshua 2 and 6.

I. ISRAEL'S VICTORY OVER JERICH0 (Heb. 11:30).

We might also call this, the judgment of God upon Jericho.

Before you feel too sorry for the people of Jericho, read Gen. 15:13-16 and Lev. 18:24, 25 (but also the whole chapter). More than 400 years of grace had been extended to the people of Jericho and to all of the other cities of Canaan. Now that time had run out, and it was God who was judging them.

Note: Do not overlook the solemn doctrine of divine judgment which is found throughout the Word of God. When they come, they are always as bad (or worse) than God has said that they would be.

We do not have the details of the victory in Heb. 11:30 -- just a report of the outcome, and why!

It, like everything else in Heb. 11, was "by faith"! Why?

For two reasons:

- 1) To show that the Lord was the victor.
- 2) To show that the people did what they did because the Lord had told them to do it.

A lot of people have had trouble with this story because they have refused to see the place that the Lord has in it. But they have come up with the most ridiculous explanations -- like, e.g., the idea that the vibrations caused by the blowing of the trumpets and the shouting of the people caused the wall to crumble! Who would believe that?

It is like the explanations that men have come up to explain the universe, or the crossing of the Red Sea, or the miraculous works of our Lord Jesus Christ -- that He really did not do those things; it was just that His followers were so devoted to Him that they thought that He did! Who wants to believe that?

Granted -- it would have been the most foolish thing in the world for the Israelites to walk around Jericho once a day for 6 days, and then 7 times on the 7th day IF THE LORD HAD NOT TOLD THEM TO DO THIS VERY THING?

Why did the Lord do it this way? For two reasons:

- 1) To test the obedience of His people. (Remember what He had told Joshua about "success" in chapter 1.)
- 2) That it might be evident that the victory was His, not theirs!

What was the outcome? Read Heb. 11:30 and then read Joshua Joshua 6:20, 21,

"So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets; and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, ^{and} the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword."

For Jericho it meant destruction, overthrow, ruin!

The "faith" which the children of Israel exercised called for patience and faith, but they saw the evidence that the Lord always stands behind His Word. What an amazing story it is -- especially when you remember that it was "the walls"

that had been a major part of the circumstances that had discouraged the spies who were sent in from Kadesh Barnea (cf. Num. 13:28).

BUT NOW LET US NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THE THEME OF THIS CHAPTER IS SALVATION! When you consider how foolish this story sounds to those who do not know the Lord, and how foolish it may have sounded to the Israelites (and even to Joshua) when they first heard it, does it seem foolish to us at times to tell the Gospel story? And, is there anyone here this morning to whom the Gospel still seems to be just a relic from the past that people who call themselves Christians refuse to forget?

What about the Passover Lamb? Did that sound reasonable?

How many other times has it seemed foolish to believe and obey God, and yet God's Word proved to be true?

There was only one way for Israel to conquer Jericho. That was God's way! And there is only one way for men to be saved. That is God's way. The only alternative is divine judgment.

Remember the words of our Lord:

"He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

II. RAHAB'S VICTORY OVER JUDGMENT AND DEATH (Heb. 11:31).

This is even more amazing than the victory of v. 30.

Notice again: "By faith."

It is possible that the message about God's deliverance of His people from Egypt had been known in Jericho for 40 years! Outwardly it looked like no one believed it. BUT QUIETLY THE GRACE OF GOD WAS AT WORK.

Two things are important about Rahab:

- 1) She believed, even though all others "believed not".
- 2) She manifested her faith by what she did: "she had received the spies with peace."

To believe here means to be persuaded and so to comply with the Word of God. Notice her testimony in Joshua 2:8-13. She did not believe when they came; she had already believed before the spies ever got there! The people of Jericho knew what they should do, but refused to do it; Rahab knew, and believed!

But there is this other, very important thing about Rahab: SHE MANIFESTED HER FAITH, NOT JUST BY WHAT SHE SAID, BUT BY WHAT SHE DID. Cf. Jas. 2:25,

"In like manner also was not Rahab, the harlot, justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"

She was saved "by faith," according to Heb. 11:31. But James tells us that she manifested her faith before men by what she did! The evidence was there -- and it always has to be!

But notice: ALL OF THIS WAS IN SPITE OF THE FACTS THAT:

- 1) She was a woman.
- 2) She was a Gentile.
- 3) She was a sinner -- a harlot!
- 4) She was in a city doomed by divine judgment.

How could God possibly spare her?

This is where we see the truth which is the companion of the word, "faith"; it is the word, GRACE. Cf. Eph. 2:8, 9; 1 Cor. 15:10a; Tit. 3:5.

If there was hope for Rahab, there is hope for anyone!

What happened to her? She was taken right into the family of God -- became the mother of Boaz,
became the mother-in-law of Ruth,
became the great-great grandmother of David,
BECAME A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY FROM WHICH THE LORD
JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN. See Matt. 1:25.

My, how she could have sung,
"Naught have I gotten but what I received,
Grace hath bestowed it since I have believed;
Boasting excluded, pride I abase,
I'm only a sinner -- saved by grace!"

Concl: Rahab was like the woman of Samaria in John 4.

The Word of God is not foolish, but true. Those who have believed have found it to be true. But, what is even more important, they have been delivered from judgment -- not just a judgment like the destruction of Jericho, but from eternal judgment. Cf. John 5:24.

Have you believed? Then never cease to glorify God.

Have you not believed? Then why not believe right now? That is all that Rahab had to do, and that is all that you have to do. It is the Lord who does the saving. Cf. Acts 16:31.

CB - 11/17/74 a.m.

FAITH AND EXPERIENCE IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES
Heb. 11:32-40

Intro: At this point in Hebrews 11 the writer begins to summarize. Time will not permit him to continue being as specific as he has been up to this point.

So, first of all, we have . . .

- I. A SAMPLE OF NAMES (Heb. 11:32). These are merely representative of many other OT names which could be mentioned.

Let us examine them for a moment.

They come from three OT groups:

A. The Judges:

1. Gideon -- Judges 6-8.
2. Barak -- Judges 4, 5.
3. Samson -- Judges 13-16.
4. Jephthah -- Judges 11, 12.

Note: For the first time in the chapter the order is NOT chronological.

- B. The Kings: David -- 1 Sam. 16-1 Kings 2:11; 1 Chron. 11-29, which is the end of the book.
- C. Samuel and the prophets -- which takes us through to the end of the OT.

Samuel alone is in view in 1 Sam. 1:1-25:1. He is brought back in 1 Sam. 28:3-20.

Some observations:

- 1) All of the above were leaders.
- 2) They tell the history of Israel, in a way, and show how FAITH is dominant throughout the OT. It does NOT belong just to the NT!
- 3) They show how God has sovereignly kept His promises alive through succeeding generations because these were all men who were CALLED OF GOD.
- 4) They remind us of the particular obstacles which had to be faced in connection with each group:
 - a) In the times of the Judges -- the people did that which was right in their own eyes.
 - b) The Kings remind us that the people of Israel wanted to be like other nations -- which would pose a real

threat to FAITH and THE PROMISES of God.

- c) The Prophets remind us that there were dark times in Israel's history and that the Lord mentioned in Mt. 23:37 that generally the prophets were not accepted -- they were stoned!

And so, after some reflection, we can praise the Lord that He not only gave the promise of salvation, but He has kept it alive throughout the history of Israel until it was fulfilled in the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ!

II. A SAMPLE OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS (Heb. 11:33-35a).

The writer mentions ¹⁰ ~~8~~ things:

- A. "Subdued kingdoms" -- which applied in a special way to the first 5 mentioned in v. 32:
1. Gideon -- over the Midianites.
 2. Barak -- over the Canaanites.
 3. Samson -- over the Philistines.
 4. Jephthah -- over the Ammonites.
 5. David -- over the Philistines again, and others.

This shows how by faith the people of God triumphed over the Gentiles.

- B. "Wrought righteousness" -- as opposed to doing nothing, or going along with the moral degeneration of their times, they lived holy lives. They obtained spiritual victories over sin. Here we think of Elijah, of Josiah, of Daniel!

- C. "Obtained promises" -- given by God, but claimed by faith. David is an outstanding example of this. Cf. Heb. 6:15 -- about Abraham. Over and over again we see in the OT in all periods how faithful God was to His promises.

- D. "Stopped the mouths of lions" -- obviously this is Daniel (Dan. 6), but it also applies to Samson (Judges 14:6) and to David (1 Sam. 17:34).

- E. "Quenched the violence (the inherent power) of fire" -- cf. Dan. 3:26 with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. As far as they were concerned, the fire was out! Isaiah's promise was literally fulfilled:

"When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa. 43:2b).

- F. "Escaped the edge (lit., the mouth) of the sword" -- as God preserved David many times from Saul, and as He saved Elijah and Elisha and Jeremiah, etc. Sometimes

the promises of God have to be protected from the people of God themselves!

- G. "Out of weakness were made strong" -- as when Samson destroyed the Philistines.

This, as compared with what follows, speaks of what God does IN us.

- H. "Waxed (or, became) valiant in fight" -- or, strong in battle.

This is what happened when David killed Goliath, and when Jehoshaphat was victorious in 2 Chron. 20.

It speaks of the war -- not just the battles which make up the war.

As compared with the preceding statement, this is what God does FOR us!

- I. "Turned to flight the armies of the aliens -- when an army in battle array suddenly turns in terror, as when the Philistines fled when David killed Goliath.
- J. The last thing mentioned as far as accomplishments are concerned: "Women received their dead raised to life again."

Bishop Westcott says:

"It cannot be without significance that the recorded raisings from the dead are predominantly for women." Cf. 1 Kings 17:17-24 (when Elijah raised the widow's son); 2 Kings 4:18-37 (when Elisha raised the Shunammite's son); Luke 7:11-15 (when the Lord raised the son of the widow of Nain); John 11 (when the Lord raised Lazarus for Martha and Mary). Jairus' daughter is an exception -- cf. Luke 8:41, 42, 49-56.

Here we have FAITH and RESURRECTION linked together.

But after the first statement in v. 35 the emphasis changes completely, and we have . . .

III. A SAMPLE OF OPPOSITE EXPERIENCES (Heb. 11:35b-38). ADVERSITIES

Have you felt that the life of faith means that you always get what you want? Notice these verses. Basically they can be divided into two groups:

- 1) Those who died for their faith -- and who died in faith.
- 2) Those who lived in humiliation -- but who, nevertheless, lived in faith!

It seems that we have this twofold emphasis in vv. 35b, 36, and then it is repeated with more detail in vv. 37, 38.

A. Those who died (vv. 35b, 37a).

The reference to "a better resurrection" can mean several things, but it certainly means that they were looking for something better than they would have had if their lives had been spared.

Some died terrible deaths -- "tortured . . . stoned . . . sawn asunder . . . slain with the sword." Others may have escaped; they did not!

B. Those who lived (vv. 36, 37b, 38b).

Sometimes their suffering was inflicted by verbal means; sometimes by physical means.

The most heartbreaking thing about this is that it seems that they were even forsaken by God!

C. The purpose -- from their enemies' point-of-view.

← Notice the word "trial" in v. 36 and "tempted," or, "tested," in v. 37. These words which are from the same root have the idea of putting a person under trial to see what he is with the hope of proving that he not what he claims to be!

D. The divine evaluation: "of whom the world was not worthy."

The world's rejection of God's people was a way in which the world condemned itself. They did not want the people of God. The fact in the case was (and is): The world was not worthy of them!

IV. THE EXPLANATION (Heb. 11:39, 40).

Two things are said:

- 1) They all received a good report from God.
- 2) None of them received "the promise" -- the fulfillment, the completion, of the promise of salvation.

And this is what leads us to "Jesus" in Heb. 12:1, 2.

As wonderful as they had it, and as wonderful as their witness was, "God" has "provided some better thing for us."

Concl: Read 1 Pet. 1:3-12.

Let us not go back to what the OT saints had. Let us

realize how much they wanted what we have: the Lord Jesus Christ, or, to state it as our writer has in Heb. 12:2 and throughout this epistle: "JESUS."

"I have seen the face of Jesus,
Tell me naught of aught beside;
I have heard the voice of Jesus
And my soul is satisfied.
For He shed His blood on Calv'ry,
And He saved me by His grace;
I have found my all in Jesus,
My eternal resting place."

CB - 11/24/74 a.m.

THE GOD-APPOINTED RACE
Heb. 12:1, 2

Intro: We have just finished that wonderful 11th chapter of Hebrews. In it we have not only considered the lives of certain men and women in the OT, and how they exercised faith in God, but how that faith was related to the unfolding of God's salvation for men.

What marvelous lessons we have seen in what it means to trust the Lord!

We have seen that the life of a child of God is not necessarily an easy one, but it is a peaceful one, a triumphant one, a life of taking God at His Word and then experiencing His amazing faithfulness.

Now we come to the point when all of that in the past needs to be applied in our lives -- for those of us who know the Lord. The words, "wherefore . . . we also" are very emphatic in the original text. We could translate the "wherefore," for that very reason (A & G, p. 828).

This all takes us back also to the beginning of the practical section of Hebrews -- and to the three exhortations in Heb. 10: 22-25 with their emphasis on faith, hope, and love. You may remember that we noted at that time that we have an emphasis on:

- 1) Faith in ch. 11.
- 2) Hope in ch. 12.
- 3) Love in ch. 13.

We learned in ch. 11 that faith is our response, our believing response, to the Word of God.

But we can also see that faith is going to be tested so as to be strengthened. The point that we are coming to now in the Epistle is: How do we handle those testings of faith? What do they mean? Heb. 12:1, 2 lay the foundation for all of that.

There are several things of importance that we have in our text:

I. THE LIFE OF A CHILD OF GOD IS A RACE.

This does not mean ^{what we mean} when we often complain about the busyness of life.

It is a figure of speech borrowed from the sports world of Paul's day in which Paul wants to bring out the ideas that life requires discipline, it has a purpose, there is a goal, there are rewards, and it calls for the output of energy in an attitude of urgency.

The idea was present in one of the verses of our Scripture reading (2 Tim. 2:1-7) this morning:

"And if a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (v. 5).

Paul uses the idea of running in:

- 1) Gal. 2:2,
"And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them who were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."
- 2) Gal. 5:7,
"Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"
- 3) Rom. 9:16,
"So it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."
A very important point is brought out in this passage. When we talk about running we are not talking about how a person is saved. Salvation must precede this. Running describes the life of a believer.
- 4) 1 Cor. 9:24-27,
"Know ye not that they who run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible. I, therefore, so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" -- not for salvation, but for service!

II. THE RACE COURSE IS SET BY ANOTHER.

The runner does not run wherever he wants to. The picture here is of an amphitheatre. The course for the race was laid out. Even if it is a cross-country race, the runners know where they have to run.

It is the same with us as Christians.

Our race -- the life we live and the work we do -- is already laid out. It is "the race that is set before us." God has divinely appointed the path, the rules, the goal, the rewards. It is the same race that was run by OT saints. Therefore, it is important that we know all of these details so that we will not run, as Paul told the Galatians, "in vain."

BUT -- FOR OUR ENCOURAGEMENT (because we are now concerned with our hope) WE NEED TO NOTICE THAT OUR TEXT SPEAKS OF TWO

RACES -- ours, in v. 1; our Lord's, in v. 2!

Note that His course was "set before Him," too!

And note also that there is another similarity:

- 1) WE must "run with patience,"
- 2) HE "endured the cross."

These words have the same root in the original language. They do not mean to wait, but to persevere -- to keep going, not to stop until the goal is reached. This is the way our Lord ran His God-appointed race; it is the way we must run our God-appointed race.

We will come back to this in a moment.

Perhaps it should be said at this time that the race does not mean specifically our particular life work (although it is certainly involved in running the race). The race is the same for all of us as it relates to salvation. We are not competing with each other. It is a race we run quite apart from what others are doing.

But now we come to the main point in the passage

III. WHERE DO WE GET ENCOURAGEMENT TO "RUN WITH PATIENCE" AND TO FINISH THE RACE?

How can we have the spirit of the Apostle Paul which he expressed when he knew that he faced added trials when he went to Jerusalem? Listen:

"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24).

And then remember what he wrote as his last words to Timothy:
 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

Where is our encouragement? If you are discouraged this morning about things in your life and about your relationship to God, what can you do?

- A. First of all, it makes a great deal of difference as to what you are looking at.

Are you looking at the problems? Are you dwelling on unanswered prayer? Are you looking at what you can do,

or cannot do? THEN YOU ARE LOOKING AT THE WRONG THINGS!
Note the answers given in our text.

B. Three directions we need to look.

A. First, at the witnesses in the past.

These are not witnesses who are looking at us, they are witnesses who by their lives want us to look at them because they have something to tell us!

And there are not just one or two, but a great "cloud of witnesses" -- in chapter 11, and many more since this chapter was written.

What if you could pick out and talk to any OT saint that you wanted to seek for advice? What do you think Noah, or Abraham, or Moses, or David, or Daniel, or -- going to the NT -- Peter, or John, or Paul -- would tell you to do? Would they encourage you to quit? Or would they tell you to keep going?

Or, just think of the believers who have left CBC and are now in heaven! What would they tell you to do?

Their united testimony would be to keep on running "with patience the race that is set before us." They would tell us that our "labor is not in vain in the Lord."

How wise is the person who listens to the testimony of "so great a cloud of witnesses."

B. Secondly, we need to look at ourselves.

Our text indicates that perhaps the race is more difficult than it should be because we are carrying too much extra weight.

We all know what a runner does. He cuts his weight down and wears the least amount of clothing that he can in order that all hindrances might be set aside. He is out to win!

Our writer speaks of weights and sins!

We all know what sin is -- or we should know! Sin wraps itself around us so that we cannot move; we fall out of the race.

Is there a sin, or sins, hindering you?

Weights are those things which may be good in themselves, but they keep us from running.

For example, the time some of you men are giving to your work. It is important to support your family, but are you so concerned about making money that it has clearly come to be a weight that has made your relationship with God less than it used to be?

Or take pleasure -- so many people just work today so that they can play. We all need recreation, a change of pace, but has that become such an objective to us that it has forced us out of the race?

Look at yourself this morning, dear child of God. Maybe the race is becoming increasingly difficult because you are carrying too much weight!

- C. Finally, and most important of all, we need to be "looking unto Jesus."

When was the last time you took some time just to think about the Lord Jesus Christ -- about "Jesus" -- just to remind yourself of the way He ran the race the Father gave Him to run.

His race was God-appointed, too!

Listen to how it is described -- "Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" -- and that is where He is this morning!

What is the important thing here?

The Lord looked at the goal -- at the end -- at what He was accomplishing through "the cross" with all of its "shame."

What better illustration could we have of John 3:16 than Heb. 12:2? If He loved us enough to finish His course, should we not love Him enough to keep going.

Concl: Dr. Edman's, Too Soon To Quit, in his book, Out Of My Life, pp. 74-77.

The goal is sure, and glorious, and nearer than you think!

CB - 12/1/74 a.m.

LOOKING UNTO JESUS

Heb. 12:1-3

Intro: (This is the second message on this passage.)

As we move from Heb. 11 to Heb. 12, we learned last week that we are taking all of the past and moving it down to the present. OR, to state it another way, we are taking that which applied to OT saints and we are seeing the relationship that it has to all of us who have lived, or are living, since the Lord Jesus Christ was here on earth.

We saw that we are to do three things:

- 1) Listen to the saints of the past. This calls for reading and meditating on the OT until it is written upon our hearts.
- 2) Lay aside the weights and sins which so easily bind us -- and then RUN!
- 3) Look, and keep looking away from the people and the circumstances which distress us, "unto Jesus."

There is no greater prescription for victory (and we are talking about running) in the Word of God!

This morning I want to look further into these verses and add v. 3 to them.

From vv. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 we see that the great need in the believers life is endurance -- again thinking of our life as a race. The word means, lit., to remain under. It is to persevere, to refuse to quit.

It is perhaps illustrated more by the one who comes in last in a race than even by the winner. He refuses to quit -- or like the Notre Dame team yesterday in their 55-24 loss to USC. The announcer even said at one point, "This Notre Dame team has not given up yet" -- even when winning was hopeless. THIS IS WHAT WE HAVE HERE IN THE WORDS "patience" and "endured" (2x).

Now, if we are to endure, we have to do what we are taught to do in these verses. We will not endure just because we decide that we are not going to quit. The race is too difficult for that! NOR is it enough to know what needs to be done. We must do it!

And so let us ask first . . .

I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LOOK UNTO JESUS?

Remember that this is not^{just} looking once, or looking occasionally, but continually looking.

It means three things:

- 1) It means looking at WHO HE IS.
- 2) It means looking at WHAT HE DID.
- 3) It means looking at WHERE HE IS.

A. Who He is.

Two things can be said.

1. He is "Jesus."

Remember that this is the name of our Lord which is used prominently throughout this Epistle. It speaks of our Lord as a man, as One who has lived in this world, who has experienced all that we experience -- and far more! He is One who is described with respect to His incarnation in Heb. 2, after, But we see Jesus"!

2. He is "the author and finisher of our faith."

He is both our Example and He is the Object of our faith.

Faith lays hold not only of the promise, of the Word of God, but of the One who gave the promise, of the One through Whom the promise will be fulfilled.

There could be and would be no faith without Him!

He not only started it, but, thank God, He finishes it too. Cf. Heb. 7:25. Remember that we are talking about salvation -- its beginning, its continuation, its end! IT IS ALL IN HIM!

B. What He did.

Here is what we need: He "endured the cross"! He did not quit. He did not turn back. He remained under the burden of doing the will of God, of offering Himself for your sins and mine.

How could He do it?

"Who for the joy that was set before Him." In other words, He was looking to the end. He was looking at the thing that was being accomplished -- in three directions:

- 1) For the Father -- doing His will.
- 2) For us -- providing salvation for us.
- 3) For Himself -- as expressed in John 17:1, 5.

In this sense Abraham (Heb. 11:9, 10) and Moses (Heb. 11:24)

26) and those mentioned in Heb. 11:35b were like HIM!

Remember 1 Cor. 15:19. We must be continually "looking for that blessed hope . . ." (Tit. 2:13).

Cf. also what Paul says in Rom. 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings . . ."

C. Where He is.

Read Heb. 12:2b, " . . . and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

If the Lord Jesus Christ had quit, Hebrews would never have been written.

Can you think of a place of greater glory?

See also Phil. 2:5-11!

NOW -- these are truths that you and I must never let out of our sight.

If you are discouraged this morning, if you are thinking about quitting, if you are inclined to feel that there is nothing in this after all -- before you fall out of the race, will you take a good, long, look at "Jesus" as you see Him here?

Have you been looking at Him each day? Or, have you been so occupied with the problems that you have not looked at Him? Start looking today, and then never stop!

But there is another thing we need to see in all of this:

II. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF "LOOKING UNTO JESUS"?

IT IS SO YOU WILL DO ONE THING TO PREVENT YOU FROM DOING SOMETHING ELSE!

Read Heb. 12:3.

"Consider" means to thoughtfully and effectively calculate the value which you place upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

How much does He mean to you? How much is He worth to you?

Cf. John 6:60-69.

This is the reason Job said, "Thou He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15).

THE WRITER IS SAYING HERE THAT THE ONLY REASON YOU SHOULD EVER TURN AWAY FROM THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS IF YOU CAN FIND SOMEONE BETTER, OR SOMETHING BETTER, THAN HE IS!

Can you?

What will be the effect of such looking and such evaluating?

It will keep you, or better, HE will keep you from growing weary (outwardly) and fainting (inwardly).

Note again the wonderful words of the Savior in Matt. 11: 28-30.

Concl: See how this very truth was applied by the Apostle Paul in 2 Tim. 4:14-18.

Are you going to fall out, or look up and keep running?

Do not be looking for an experience; LOOK AT A PERSON -- "JESUS"! That will be all of the encouragement that you need -- like the Notre Dame teams when Knute Rockne charged them up to get back into the game.

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER'S DISCIPLINE

Heb. 12:4-11

Intro: Two passages give us:

- 1) The past and
- 2) The present

of the spiritual lives of those who were receiving this Epistle.

They are:

- 1) The past -- Heb. 10:32-39.
- 2) The present -- Heb. 12:12, 13.

For the encouragement of these believers the one who has written this Epistle has done two things:

- 1) He has made them look back into the OT to see the faith and the struggles of the people of God in past days. This was done in chapter 11.
- 2) He has turned their gaze toward "Jesus" in Heb. 12:1-3. He is not only our Example, but He is the Source, the Sustainer, and the Finisher of our faith. We are never able to trust God without Him.

Troubles, trials, difficulties of various kinds have always been a source of trouble to the people of God. We often cannot understand what God is doing or whether or not He is doing anything at all. Perhaps God's silence is the hardest thing for us to endure.

Our passage this morning was written to give us the help that we need when we face the trials that come to us day by day.

I. SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS OF THIS PASSAGE.

A. What is God seeking to do?

This is very clear. He is moving us from "sin" in v. 4 to "holiness" in v. 10. Or, we could say to "righteousness" in v. 11.

This is sanctification.

B. What does it take?

The word which is used over and over again in this passage is "chastening." It means education, discipline. It is more than teaching; it is the practical application of the father's teaching in the life of his son so that the son becomes the kind of a person that the father wants him to be.

C. Who supervises this in our lives?

There is a progression of thought in this connection

which can be seen in the passage we have this morning.

Note:

- 1) "The Lord" in v. 5.
- 2) "God" in v. 7.
- 3) "The Father" in v. 9.

This probably indicates the steps by which we come to recognize that our discipline, our training in the family of God is directed and controlled by the loving hands of "the Lord . . . God . . . the Father . . ."

II. THE MEANS OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

- A. There is still much to be done in our lives.

V. 4 would indicate that we still have a problem with sin. It is sin that is the reason for our troubles. It is sin that the Lord is in the process of removing from our lives -- forever!

- B. Things are not as bad as they could be. Cf. v. 4.

Think of the OT saints of chapter 11.

Think of the Lord in Heb. 12:1-3.

What if God had seen fit to deal with us according to our sins?

"Resisted" is defensive; "striving" is offensive. To what extent are we engaged in the struggle against sin?

- C. The Word (Heb. 12:5, 6). Cf. Prov. 3:11, 12. The word, "forgotten," means completely forgotten!

What an encouragement the Word is in times of testing and discouragement -- both in its promises and in its commandments.

We are not to "despise" the Lord's discipline, i.e., to count it as insignificant, unimportant. Nor are we to allow ourselves to be so discouraged that we are inclined to quit.

Instead, we are to see that the Word, in this case, teaches us one important thing: that the Lord loves us!

But there is another thing which grows out of this passage: It indicates that we are in the family of God.

This leads to several things which are designed of God for our blessing.

Note: Life in our families here on earth should prepare us for life in the family of God. One of the most damaging things that is happening in our generation is the breakdown of our homes. It leaves children not knowing what to expect in the family of God.

D. We are members of God's family.

1. Discipline is one proof.

Whenever you see a person, even though he may claim to be a child of God, going without discipline, we have reason to doubt that he ~~knows~~ ~~what it~~ is ~~to be~~ in God's family.

Therefore, the fact that God deals with us, inwardly or outwardly, is an encouragement to us.

2. As we reverenced (i.e., turned toward them) our earthly fathers, we should submit to our heavenly Father.

We can now see the value of our training in our families; how much more should we realize the value of the discipline that our heavenly Father is giving us!

3. Our heavenly Father makes no mistakes.

4. The results make it all worthwhile.

Note the "nevertheless, afterward." We may have pain now, but pain leads to peace. There can be no peace in sin. Isaiah teaches us in two passages that . . .

"There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked" (Isa. 48:22; cf. 57:21).

Concl: Alexander Maclaren once said about this passage,

"Few words of Scripture have been oftener than these laid as a healing balm on wounded hearts. They may be long unnoticed on the page, like a lighthouse in calm sunshine, but sooner or later the stormy night falls, and then the bright beam flashes out and is welcome. They go very deep into the meaning of life as discipline they tell how much better God's discipline is than that

of the most loving and wise of parents, and they give that superiority as a reason for our yielding more entire and cheerful obedience to Him than we do to such" (Vol. X, pp. 218, 219).

) In many ways this section of Hebrews is like Romans 8, reaching its peak with . . .

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

This is Romans 8:28.

"Light after darkness,
Gain after loss,
Strength after weakness,
Crown after cross,
Sweet after bitter,
Hope after fears,
Home after wandering,
Praise after tears.

Sheaves after sowing,
Sun after rain,
Sight after mystery,
Peace after pain,
Joy after sorrow,
Calm after blast,
Rest after weariness,
Sweet rest at last."

-- Frances Ridley Havergal
in In The Arena of Faith,
p. 100.

LIGHT FOR DARK DAYS
Heb. 12:11-17

Intro: The thought of running a race was introduced in Heb. 12:1, 2. The Lord is moving us from sin to holiness.

Any athlete must submit to discipline. The same is true in members of a family. These applications are made to us as the children of God. This is brought to a climax in the thought of the chapter when we get to v. 11:

I. THE CONCLUSION WE REACH -- about God's discipline (Heb. 12:11).

Note: We reach this only by divine revelation!

"Exercised" means trained. We get our word gymnasium from it. All of God's discipline is designed for the present to bring us "the peaceable fruit of righteousness."

II. THE CONDITIONING WE NEED (Heb. 12:12, 13a).

After starting in v. 11 with God's viewpoint, then we look at ourselves and our needs -- with a view to our relationship with others in this race.

The conditioning relates to three areas of our lives:

A. Our hands. SERVING

B. Our knees. PRAYING -

C. Our feet. WALKING -

EXAMPLES ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT!

Note the words "lift up" and "straight" are related. They both have to do with making straight and contain our word, ortho, from which we get orthodox.

III. THE CONCERNS WE HAVE -- for others (Heb. 12:13b-17).

The people of God are described as being:

- 1) Lame, with the possibility that their legs could be twisted out of joint.
- 2) Disturbed -- lacking peace.
- 3) Sinful -- needing to be holy.
- 4) Failing -- lacking the enabling grace of God.
- 5) Bitter -- leading to great defilement among the people of God.
- 6) And among the people of God there are always those who do not even know the Lord.

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This is a different kind of race. We are not running against each other. In fact, we are to help each other to reach the goal. We will all get to heaven, but it does make a difference as to how we get there -- the zeal, the faithfulness, the purity with which we run.

Concl: The key to the whole section is what we allow the Lord to do in our lives with . . .

- 1) Our hands -- in faithful service.
- 2) Our knees -- in ceaseless prayer.
- 3) Our feet -- in a walk according to the Word of God.

CB - 1/12/74 a.m.

THE GLORY OF THE NEW COVENANT
Heb. 12:18-24

Intro: As we get closer to the end of the book of Hebrews, it is important that we keep the purpose of the book clearly in mind: " . . . let us go on unto perfection" (Heb. 6:1).

These Hebrew believers had not grown spiritually as they should have grown. Cf. Heb. 5:11-14.

The reason they had not grown is because of two reasons:

- 1) They were still hanging on to the Law.
- 2) They had failed to comprehend:
 - a) The past work of Christ on the cross.
 - b) The present work of Christ at the right hand of the Father.

And -- along with both of these there were corresponding failures as far as their lives were concerned. The way we live will always reflect what we really believe.

We have learned that there is only one salvation. Whether we are talking about OT times, or NT times, salvation is always by faith!

BUT -- the people of God were not able to enter into the fullness of salvation until after the death of Christ. Everything in the OT is preparatory. All looks forward to the coming of the Redeemer. We are concerned with shadows, as we learned in Heb. 10:1. The sacrifices were types of Christ, offered in faith that He would come and offer the final, perfect sacrifice which would render animal sacrifices no longer necessary. It is only as this is understood that there can be spiritual growth and blessing in the lives of the people of God today. The person who still clings to the Law will always be a person who is lacking in assurance.

The spiritual need of these believers is brought out in other passages as well. See:

- 1) Heb. 6:9-12.
- 2) Heb. 10:19-25 -- the beginning of the practical section of the Epistle.

But perhaps the greatest is the one we have at the beginning of the present chapter:

- 3) Heb. 12:1, 2.

We have a race to run. There are difficulties in the way.

There is a goal to be reached. Our need is to keep our eyes on "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

"Chastening," or discipline, is necessary although it is unpleasant at the time. It is proof of God's love and of our sonship. Again -- practical matters are stressed in 12:12-17. AND THEN THE WRITER STATES AGAIN, IN ANOTHER WAY, THE DOCTRINE OF THE

EPISTLE, IN WHAT IS ONE OF THE RICHEST PASSAGES IN ALL OF THIS LETTER: OUR TEXT FOR THIS MORNING.

We are not going to get all of the way through this this morning -- it is too rich for us to hurry through. This is a passage that we need to have written upon our hearts because this tells us WHERE WE STAND, or WHERE WE ALL ARE -- SPIRITUALLY.

Note first of all . . .

- I. THE MAIN VERB -- used two times: once negatively in v. 18, the second time positively in v. 22.

We are speaking of:

- 1) "For ye are not come, and
- 2) "But ye are come."

- A. They are not commands (like we have in Heb. 10:19-25), but they are statements of fact.

Therefore, we are not to obey them, but we are to believe them!

- B. They are in the perfect tense.

This indicates something that has happened in the past (as in the case of v. 22), but continues right up to the present time.

- C. What is stated here is true of every believer -- without exception.

This corresponds with Paul's statement in Eph. 1:3!

If we would only read our Bibles carefully, and note the difference between explanations and exhortations, we would all be much farther ahead spiritually than we are.

II. WHERE WE ARE NOT (Heb. 12:18-21).

We are not at Mount Sinai!

This means: WE ARE NOT UNDER THE LAW!

As Exodus 19 and 20, and Deut. 4 also, teach us, Sinai is a place of terror, or fear, a place where the people of Israel cried out for God to speak to them no more!

Note:

- 1) Ex. 19:9-13, 16-25.
- 2) Ex. 20:18-20.

Even Moses was affected -- terrorized and shaking uncontrollably! He was literally thrown into violent fright!

The Law will show us our need, but it does not meet our need because it rests completely upon what we are able to do for ourselves.

Thank God -- we do not stand today at Mount Sinai! We are not under the Law!

III. WHERE WE ARE (Heb. 12:22-24).

This is where we stand -- all of us who know the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

This shows you the glory of the new covenant!

It means that, even though we are not yet actually in heaven and, therefore, not finally enjoying all that we have and will be in Christ, yet we can take full advantage of our spiritual blessings and can enter into the abundance of the life that is ours RIGHT NOW in Christ.

Two related Scriptures:

- 1) Eph. 2:4-7.
- 2) Col. 3:1-4.

There are 7 things here. We will only take one of them this morning -- and get the others next Sunday, the Lord willing.

- A. "But ye are come (or, have come) unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22a).

This does not bring Israel and the Church together.

It does not mean that there will be no literal fulfillment of OT promises for Israel.

But it does point to the fact that all that Israel will one day experience in the New Earth will be ours in the New Heaven -- BUT, BEYOND THAT, IT INDICATES THAT WE CAN NOW DRAW UPON THOSE BLESSINGS AND PRIVILEGES EVEN THOUGH WE READ IN HEBREWS 13:14,

"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

In this sense we are like Abraham:

"For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

The spiritual significance of "mount Zion" and "the city

of the living God," Jerusalem in the OT, as well as the description of "the heavenly Jerusalem" in the book of the Revelation, will help us to understand what these things are to mean to us NOW.

1. "Mount Zion."

There seems to be little doubt but that Zion was originally the place of the Temple -- the place where God lived and reigned among His people.

Note especially the Psalms and the references that are made in them to "Zion." See:

- 1) Psa. 2:6.
- 2) Psa. 48.
- 3) Psa. 50.

There is emphasis here upon:

- a. Access to the presence of God. This means fellowship.
- b. Dependence upon the sovereignty of God.

He is King over all -- even of the affairs of the nations of the earth.

This points to His power.

- c. The enjoyment of peace -- so that praise and thanksgiving are always in our hearts and upon our lips.

2. "The city of the living God."

Cf. "the living God" in Heb. 3:12; 9:14; 10:31.

Cf. 1 Sam.

17:26, 36 This is the basis of the meaning of JEHOVAH.
Isa. 37:4, 17

It is to bring reverence and awe to the heart of man, but it also contains some very wonderful truths. E.g., in Matt. 6 we have two things about the Lord that can bring real joy and peace to a believer's heart:

- 1) "Thy Father . . . seeth" (Mt. 6:4, 6, 18).
- 2) "Your Father knoweth" (Mt. 6:8; cf. v. 32).

3. "The heavenly Jerusalem."

Cf. Rev. 21:1-5, 10, 11, 22-27; 22:1-5.

We are not there yet in actuality, but we can

already share in the blessings of it.

Concl: If this were all that we had, it would be enough.
We could never exhaust these. But to be enjoying them now is to be moving toward maturity, moving in the direction of heaven itself.

We will see the others next week, the Lord willing. But during this week let us ask the Lord to give us a taste of what heaven will be as we taste of these heavenly realities.

CB - 1/19/75 a.m.

MORE ABOUT GOD'S GLORIOUS COVENANT

Heb. 12:18-24

Intro: We rise no higher in the book of Hebrews than we do in chapter 12, verses 22-24. Spiritually, this is where we already are! We already share in these blessings. This is the Hebrews version of what Paul says in Ephesians about our being raised with Christ and made to sit with Him in the heavenlies! We will make little progress in the spiritual life until we understand these great truths.

What assurance such a passage provides for us! Our position in Christ is so sure that for us that

"the future is already present. In today we possess tomorrow. On earth we own heaven" (Sauer, In The Arena Of Faith, p. 170).

In fact, the child of God is really the only one who possesses anything -- and we possess our blessings in Christ so intimately that they are a very part of us. For the one who does not know the Lord -- he comes into this world empty, and he goes out the same way!

NOW -- our spiritual position and blessings are not represented by Sinai! That is what we are taught in vv. 18-21.

BUT -- we do find them in vv. 22-24: seven wonderful things which are the present possession of every true child of God.

Last week we looked at the first. I am sure that all of us who were here could agree that, if that were all that we had, it would be more than we would ever need.

This morning we want to look at the remaining six! These complete what we have here concerning the glory of the new covenant.

- I. We have come, we now share in the victory celebration of "countless hosts of angels" -- as Westcott translates it (Heb. 12:22).

The expression, "to the general assembly," belongs with the angels, not with the "church of the firstborn." It speaks of a victory celebration.

Angels rejoiced at creation. We learn that in Job 38:7.

They rejoice when one sinner repents. Cf. Luke 15:10.

Likewise they rejoice NOW in anticipation of the ultimate victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over all of the forces of evil -- the inward and the outward!

We have this in Rev. 5:11-13:

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

Do you suppose they are singing it like Handel wrote it?

This reminds you of what Isaiah saw and heard as he was permitted to look into heaven and to hear what was going on. Cf. Isa. 6:1-3,

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

How could they say this? Because they are able to rejoice in what most certainly will be. If our ears were tuned to receive heavenly sounds, we would hear the angels this morning. "Ye are come . . . to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly," as the NIV states it.

This fits right in with the idea of the race in the first part of the chapter. "The general assembly" is a victory celebration. And this is the key to victory NOW!

II. "THE CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN, WHO ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN."

The word, "firstborn," in the Greek text is in the plural, so it does not refer here to Christ, but to the people of God.

This is what we are. We are seen here as already in glory!
It is so certain that we will be there that it can be said that we are!

As "the church" we are a called out group. We are "the firstborn" in the sense that we all are heirs and all have a double portion of the inheritance. We are "written in heaven" because we are enrolled there as citizens!

What a tragedy that we do not live to show what we are!

"For our citizenship is in heaven . . . " (Phil. 3:20).
Or,
"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; And if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ--if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:15-17).

But right now we can enter into our rights and privileges as "the firstborn."

III. "TO GOD, THE JUDGE OF ALL" (Heb. 11:23).

"To God" -- let the words sink deeply into our hearts! Not only is He "the living God" as in v. 22, but He is "the Judge of all." However, there is nothing of the fear in our hearts that there was in the hearts of the Israelites as expressed in v. 19 above!

Why?

Because the wrath of the Judge has been turned away. He is satisfied with the work of His Son.

Cf. John 5:24,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life."

IV. "TO THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PERFECT" (Heb. 12:23).

"Spirits" speaks of the inner man. "Just" means righteous. "Made perfect" means that the work of salvation is finished. They are all that they should be. This is the fulfillment of such verses as Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2.

So certain that we will eventually be like Christ that it is possible for us to say that we have already come to that place and to that condition.

V. "TO JESUS, THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT" (Heb. 12:24a).

I have been waiting for Him. Haven't you?

Cf. Acts 1:11 and Heb. 13:8.

This is His primary name in Hebrews. Cf. 2:9; 3:2; 6:20; 7:22; 10:19; 12:2; here; 13:12. See also 4:14; 13:20.

Here our dear Savior is seen as "THE MEDIATOR" -- the One who has intervened between a holy God and sinful men, removing that which stood in the way of their harmonious fellowship with each other.

And it is "A NEW COVENANT" that He has established FOREVER!

Cf. 8:6; 9:15. Here "new" is a different word from what we have in 8:6 and 9:15. In those verses it meant new in character; here in 12:24 it means most recent. Therefore, we have been told in Heb. 8:13 that the old has passed away.

This one will stand forever -- is the meaning of our verse -- a covenant that rests upon "Jesus," not upon us!

VI. "TO THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING, THAT SPEAKETH BETTER THINGS THAN THAT OF ABEL." Cf. Heb. 12:24b.

This takes us back before the Law.

In Hebrews, this takes us back to Heb. 11:4. Although the faith of Abel's sacrifice still speaks, it speaks only as a type. "The blood of sprinkling," the blood of Jesus offered for our sins, speaketh better things than that of Abel" because it speaks for all eternity of a finished work.

We have come to it now -- a further ground of assurance.

Concl: Recently I have been reading a great deal of Spurgeon's works -- and expect to read more. He was born in England on June 19, 1834. He ascended to glory on January 31, 1892.

He made an impact upon this world that is surpassed by none.

Erich Sauer records the following about Spurgeon:

"The well-known preacher of the gospel, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who for many decades preached Sunday by Sunday the message of salvation to thousands of hearers in his vast Tabernacle in London, was undoubtedly one of the most gifted and most learned among God's servants. Spiritually and intellectually his person and ministry stood out in a most remarkable and unique manner. What, however, was his confession at the end of his blessed life? When he lay upon his death-bed, after so many years of fruitful service, he said to his friends who visited him: 'My brethren, my theology has become very simple. It consists of four words: "Jesus died for me."'"

We have come there now. We will never get away from it through all eternity. Let that be our joy and assurance NOW!

CB - 1/26/75 a.m.

2/9/75 a.m. AND YET THERE IS MORE

Heb. 12:24

STILL MORE ABOUT THE PRESENT GLORY

Heb. 12:22-24

Intro: (Note: This is the third message on this passage.)

In vv. 18-21 we have that which had to do with the earth; in vv. 22-24, with heaven. In vv. 18-21 we have a covenant dependent upon man; in vv. 22-24, one that is dependent upon God. In vv. 18-21 we have that which can never be done; in vv. 22-24, that which is already done. In vv. 18-21 we are speaking of the past; in vv. 22-24, that which is future -- and yet so certain that we speak of it as present!

Notice again the same verb which begins vv. 18 and 22 -- the first time it is negative; the second time, positive:

- 1) "For ye are NOT come" -- lit., "For ye have not come . . ."
- 2) "But ye are come," -- lit., "But ye have come . . ."

Ill. Some time ago there was an historical series on the television entitled, YOU ARE THERE! It sought to portray history in such a way that you were taken back into history and made to feel that you actually lived at that time and personally experienced those historical events.

In Heb. 12:22-24 we have the same emphasis -- only instead of it being past, it has to do with the future. AND instead of it being make-believe, IT IS ABSOLUTELY TRUE!

These are things that will be true in actuality at a later time, but so guaranteed that we can live in the reality of them NOW!

We have considered 3; we have 4 more to go.

(Review the first three.)

I. "BUT YE HAVE COME . . . TO GOD, THE JUDGE OF ALL" (Heb. 12:23m).

Under the Law men wanted to get to God, but could not and were even afraid to. Because of all that Christ has done for us, we are already there. We have come to "the Judge of all" and have found:

- 1) Forgiveness.
- 2) Acceptance.
- 3) Approval.

Our case has already been decided. The outcome is known. And the Lord Jesus Himself has given us some wonderfully assuring words in John 5:24:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life."

He is the Judge -- the only Judge. As such He is
"the one who tries and decides a case . . . passing
judgment on the character and deeds of men, and re-
warding them accordingly" (Thayer, p. 362).

It is no wonder that Paul revels in this truth in Rom. 5:1,
"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace
with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We do not wait until we get to heaven to get this; we have
it now. And if we do not have it in this life, we will never
have it!

II. "BUT YE HAVE COME . . . TO THE SPIRITS OF JUST MEN MADE PER-
FECT."

The preceding statement assures us that we are just, i.e.,
declared righteous by "God, the Judge of all." Now we are
to see how extensive and complete that work is.

We have the word, "spirits," in v. 9 -- "the Father of
spirits." And there it is contrasted with the "flesh." We
are not only flesh, but we are also spirit. There is not
only that which is outward, but that which is inward. AND
-- all of us know that it is the inward that is the source
of all of our trouble.

Haven't you ever been grieved because you are what you are?
Haven't there been times when you have wept over your sins?
Isn't one of the reasons that you look forward to being in
heaven the fact that then sin will be a thing of the past --
that you will then be changed inwardly and outwardly?

Here is good news!

Lit. we could translate this: YE HAVE COME . . . TO THE
SPIRITS OF JUST MEN WHO HAVE BEEN MADE PERFECT. We can count
so assuredly on the fact that we will one day be completely
perfect, finished, brought to the end for which the Lord has
redeemed us, that we can treat it even now as an accomplish-
ed fact.

Please turn to Phil. 3:12-16. Notice that he says in v. 12
that he (Paul) is not perfect, and then in v. 15 he says
that he is!

We are, and yet we are not! We will be, and yet we have not
actually experienced it yet. But it is so certain that in
God's sight it is already done!

Here is the answer to our need -- the answer to our sinning.
Here is a perfection that takes care of the inner man -- a

perfection which, though future, can have a most transforming effect upon the life of every person who knows Jesus Christ as Savior.

Sin is still a possibility, but it is not a necessity. AND, THANK GOD, SOME DAY, WHEN WE ARE WITH THE LORD, SIN WILL NOT EVEN BE A POSSIBILITY!

But there is more.

III. "BUT YE HAVE COME . . . TO JESUS, THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT" (Heb. 22:24a). ^{THIS IS THE MAIN POINT OF VERSES 13 + 22; "YE HAVE NO COME."} I have been waiting for this. Haven't you? . . . YE HAVE COME.

"JESUS" -- the wonderful name of our Savior that runs right through this Epistle. Cf. 2:9; 3:2; 4:14; 6:20; 7:22; 10:19; 12:2, 24; 13:12, 20.

Our chapter began with, "Looking unto Jesus" (v. 2).

Do you remember why He was named, "Jesus"? Cf. Mt. 1:21, "And she (Mary) shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins."

He is "the mediator of the new covenant" -- He, all by Himself, without any help from us! He has done all that God requires and all that man needs -- and He has done it by Himself. The "new covenant" is now in full effect. Read about it again in Heb. 8:6, 10-12.

He stands between God and us as our "Mediator" -- as 1 Tim. 2:5 teaches us also,

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus."

Moses is also called a "mediator" in Gal. 3:19, but he could not do what the Lord Jesus Christ has done.

"Ye have come . . . to Jesus." Let those words sink deeply into your hearts.

Some day we will actually see Him. But even now we can rejoice in all that it means that we have come to Him.

Finally . . .

IV. "BUT YE HAVE COME . . . TO THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING, THAT SPEAKETH BETTER THINGS THAN THAT OF ABEL."

Sprinkled blood is an expression that come to us from the OT.

We have it in Lev. 1:5,

"And he (the priest) shall kill the bullock before the Lord: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

And so what are we to understand by, "the blood of sprinkling"? Three things:

- 1) It is the blood of Jesus.
- 2) It is the blood of Jesus which He shed on the Cross.
- 3) It is the blood of Jesus which was thus sprinkled, or presented, to the Father for your sins and mine.

Why is it "better" than the blood that was shed by Abel? Because the sacrifice that Abel made:

- 1) Was only a type, a prophecy, of Christ's sacrifice.
- 2) Had to be repeated over and over and over again -- as the OT shows.

What about the sacrifice of Christ? Cf. Heb. 9:12b; 10:1, 12-14.

"Speaketh"!

A THEME OF THE BOOK - 1:1,2; 2:1,2
4:1

- 1) In Heb. 11:4 -- Abel's faith yet speaketh of the necessity of shed blood, a life given up to God as a sacrifice.
- 2) In Heb. 12:24 -- the blood of Christ speaketh of a work that is finished and never needs to be repeated.

Cf. 1 John 2:1, 2. Have you heard it?

Concl: Could you ever expect to hear or to read about anything that is more wonderful than what we have here?

Let me say in closing that when the writer of this epistle says, "But ye have come," he is not including all men. Many have come, but many have not!

Have you?

If you have, then do not hesitate to enter into the reality, the joy, the assurance, the resources that are yours right now in Christ.

If you have not, you may -- right this moment! There is nothing to do, nothing to pay. All you need to be concerned about is that by faith you have placed your trust in Jesus Christ as the One who died for you so that your sin could be forgiven and you could stand approved right now before "God, the Judge of all."

How ominous are those words of the Lord Jesus Christ in John 5: 39, 40,

"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think that ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

Charlotte Elliott has captured this truth in words which most of us know so well and have sung often. Let me read them to you before we go this morning:

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my sould of one dark blot,
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

The Bible closes with this invitation to come in Rev. 22:17,
"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

If you have not come, will you come now?

A DIFFERENT KIND OF A PROMISE

Heb. 12:25-29

Intro: The book of Hebrews begins with one fact which is supported by all of Scripture. It is this: God has spoken.

He has spoken in two ways:

- 1) Through all that "the prophets" of the OT have given us in history, in type and ceremony, and in other forms of prophecy.
- 2) Through His Son -- the final and complete revelation of that which God has been saying from the very beginning!

Beyond the fact that God has spoken, we have this indicated in our text this morning: He has spoken so that men can understand what He has said!

And even beyond that -- God continues to speak through His Word!

Obviously, since this is true, the message that we have from God (since He is God) has to be more important than any message that men have ever, or will ever, receive.

With this in mind, the writer of Hebrews gives us:

- 1) A solemn warning -- in vv. 25-27.
- 2) An urgent need -- in vv. 28, 29.

And in both cases he gives us reasons for following his instructions.

I. A SOLEMN WARNING (Heb. 12:25-27).

Knowing that God has spoken, there are two possibilities:

- 1) We will accept what He has to say -- and act on it.
- 2) Or, we will reject what He has to say -- and refuse to do what He wants us to do.

"See" is translated in Heb. 3:12, "Take heed." It means to be careful, beware. As we read and consider the Word of God this morning, God is speaking. Everything depends upon the response that you give to that Word.

The warning is: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."

And then he gives us two reasons why we should not reject the Word of God:

- 1) From the past -- in v. 25.
- 2) From the future -- in vv. 26, 27.

There are contrasts all through the three verses which explain the warning. Note:

- 1) In one case we have a message spoken on earth; in the

- other, one spoken from heaven.
- 2) In v. 26 we see a "then" and a "now."
 - 3) The same verse tells us that in the past God shook only the earth; in the future it will be both the earth and the heaven.
 - 4) In v. 27 we have things which can be removed, and then things which cannot.

In v. 25 we see one big reason why we need the OT. If I do not know what happened to men in the past who rejected the Word of God, refusing to obey Him, then I do not know the dire consequences awaiting me if I do the same -- especially since . . .

. . . they rejected the Word given through Moses, but
. . . we are rejecting the Word given directly through the Son of God!

If they did not escape from that which was given to them, how can we expect anything but greater judgment by rejecting the Word of Christ?

But notice another reason in vv. 26, 27 . . .

If God shook the earth once, it is possible that He will do it again. And since He is God, He can shake more than that if He wants to. We have a prophecy which says that He will! AND IT COMES IN THE FORM OF A PROMISE -- A DIFFERENT KIND OF A PROMISE -- A PROMISE OF COMING JUDGMENT!

The prophecy is found in Haggai 2:5, 6,

"For thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens; and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts."

There has never been anything like what God did in Exodus 19 and 20! The fact that He has done it before is evidence that He can do it again -- only worse the next time!

This is the solemn message in every earthquake! Note the two in connection with the death and resurrection of our Lord:

- 1) Matt. 27:51-53.
- 2) Matt. 28:1-4.

God has given us a promise concerning floods, but not about earthquakes!

Now notice in v. 27 . . .

We have already said that God speaks so that men can understand what He has to say. But notice the grace of God in v.

27: He has even here explained what He meant in Haggai's prophecy.

Note the evidence also of the importance of the words which God uses -- verbal inspiration! It is only two words in the Greek. We could translate it, Yet once-for-all! It speaks of one, final change. There will only be one!

When?

At the rapture? NO! At the second coming of Christ? NO! IT WILL COME AT THE CLOSE OF THE MILLENNIUM WHEN GOD MAKES ALL THINGS NEW. Cf. Rev. 20:11 and 21:1, 5,

"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.

"And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful."

Our Lord once said,

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

What we have now is temporary; what God will do then will "remain," abide.

Jim Eliot, who died seeking to take the Gospel to the Aucas, once said,

"He is no fool who gives up that which he cannot keep to get that which he cannot lose."

The Apostle John wrote,

"And the world, lit., is passing away, and the lust of it; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:17).

What are you doing about the Word of God in your life -- whether you know the Lord, or not?

But let us see how this matter is concluded. We are thinking about what God is going to do, and about what He has already done. In view of this, we have . . .

II. AN URGENT NEED (Heb. 12:28, 29).

It is expressed in the exhortation, "let us have grace." And indicated in these last two verse we have the reasons why we must have the grace of God. This marks the difference

between believers -- some have it; others do not!

There are three reasons:

- 1) Because we are in the process of receiving "a kingdom which cannot be moved" -- where the standards and the requirements are too far beyond what we can do in ourselves.

Notice the word, "kingdom." This is the realm over which a king reigns with absolute power. So the first requirement of all subjects is absolute submission to His will. IT TAKES THE GRACE OF GOD FOR THAT!

- 2) Because only through the grace of God can we "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

The word "serve" and its cognates are used several times in Hebrews: 9:1, 6, 9, 14; 10:2; 13:10. Our service is voluntary, worshipful, priestly -- but it must be pleasing to God.

To do this requires "reverence" -- to do things diligently, not leaving anything out, not adding anything new, rebuking those who would treat any detail as insignificant, assuming that God has made it a simple thing to please Him -- but absolutely essential!

It also requires "godly fear," or apprehension.

"In the sweet fear of Jesus,
Let me begin each day,
Fearful lest I should grieve Him,
Fearfullest I should stray,
Fearfullest earthly longings
Ever my heart should share,
Taking the throne of Jesus,
Placing an idol there.

"In the sweet fear of Jesus
Let me begin each day,
Serving or resting, always
Under His gentle sway;
All that I say directed,
All that I plan, conceived
With the remembrance present
Jesus must not be grieved."

- 3) Because "our God is a consuming fire."

This not what He was; this is what He is. He has not changed. It is not true that you have a God of wrath in the OT and a God of love in the NT. He is both in both places.

This verse comes from Deut. 4:24 and Deut. 9:3 -- from Moses.

"For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."

He will not tolerate any competition for our affections.

Concl: How are you treating the Word of God? What do you know about His enabling grace? Our text demands that we give our answers!

CB - 2/23/75 a.m.

THINGS ACCEPTABLE WITH GOD
Heb. 13:1-6

Intro: The practical section of Hebrews is a very strange one because it goes back and forth between things that are doctrinal and things that are practical.

However, the last two verses of chapter 12 bring us back to the practical after we have been dwelling upon the marvelous blessings spoken of in vv. 22-24 of chapter 12. The God who has spoken is the God we must hear -- and this means that we must not only believe Him, but we must obey Him.

How do we "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear"? Chapter 13 (down through v. 17) gives us a sample of some of the details. Let us note carefully this morning what is given in the first 6 verses.

There are three main themes in these 6 verses:

- 1) Some things that we must do (vv. 1-3).
- 2) One thing that we must NOT do (v. 4).
- 3) An attitude that we must have at all times (vv. 5, 6).

I. SOME THINGS THAT WE MUST DO (Heb. 13:1-3).

There are 4 of them:

- A. Brotherly love must not perish; it must continue to be (Heb. 13:1).

Link this with the last word of Heb. 12:27 -- the same verb in the original (although not the same form).

Our relationship with ourselves is next in importance with our relationship with God. "Brotherly love" is mentioned in Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Pet. 1:7. See also another related word in 1 Pet. 3:8.

It is not a love based upon the way we attract each other, but upon our mutual relationship to God and to the Lord Jesus Christ. Cf. 1 John 3:14.

- B. We must show hospitality to those we do not know (Heb. 13:2).

What an important thing this is for us to remember even in connection with our times here at the Church. It is often very hard for outsiders to get in with us. That should never be. They should not be trying to get in; we should be drawing them in.

Our great example in this is Abraham (and Sarah). They

had not idea that they were entertaining the Lord and two angels. See the story in Genesis 18 and 19!

- C. Some had been imprisoned for their faith (as some are today); we must not forget them (Heb. 13:3a).

As long as things like this are going on in the world, there is always the possibility that it could happen here.

- III. Note the letter to "Dear Abby" this past week in the Oregonian.

- D. Others were suffering adversity (Heb. 13:3b).

This same word is used in Heb. 11:37 where it is translated, "tormented."

Let us remember that as long as we are in the body, we are vulnerable! That is the reason the writer of this epistle has added here, "as being yourselves in the body."

Thus, it is obvious that every child of God should be deeply concerned about all that is going on in the world -- especially as it relates to the testimony of the Gospel.

The closer we get to the end, the more attention will we need to give to the first four things in this chapter.

- II. ONE THING WE MUST NEVER DO (Heb. 13:4).

No one can be alive today and not notice that one of the greatest threats which hangs over our heads is the threat to the home.

In fact, it has gotten to be such a major problem that we are going from Hebrews to Ephesians.

Where does this get started? It gets started in the breakdown of the sacredness of the marriage relationship itself.

People talk publicly and proudly these days about their affairs. You are old fashioned if you think that you should wait until you are married. But this is where we need to think clearly according to the truth. V. 4 sounds a warning that every Christian needs to hear -- that all American need needs to hear. It includes illicit relationships before marriage and after marriage, between those of the opposite sex as well as those of the same sex: "fornicators and adulterers GOD WILL JUDGE."

Such behavior may be generally accepted by the public. It may even be legalized. BUT IT HAS NEVER BEEN APPROVED BY GOD AND NEVER WILL BE! THEREFORE, THE MAN OR WOMAN WHO ENGAGES IN SUCH THINGS IS FACED WITH THE JUDGMENT OF GOD!

Cf. 1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

III. THE ATTITUDE WHICH WE MUST HAVE AT ALL TIMES (Heb. 13:5, 6).

Perhaps the greatest explanation for the joy and peace that Paul had in his heart when he wrote to the Philippian church from a Roman prison is to be found in his words in Phil.

4:11,

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

What a rare characteristic this is, even among those of us who know the Lord! The word, "conversation," does not mean just our speech (although speech would be included). Nor does it mean just the way we live (although that is a major emphasis). But to show that this must be a genuine attitude this is an expression that points to our character -- that which we really are and that which we truly want!

How can we become people like this when it is so natural for us to be wanting things?

The Spirit of God helps us in these very verses.

As is always the case, we are pointed to that which God has said in His Word. There are really three possible sources for this quotation. It seems to sum up the main thought instead of being a quotation of any particular passage. But the three are:

- 1) Genesis 28:15.
- 2) Deuteronomy 31:8.
- 3) Joshua 1:5.

"Covetousness" here emphasizes the storing up of money. It points to the person who feels that he does not have enough and never will have enough. He is so afraid of the future and of emergencies that he cannot be at rest.

What a difference it makes when a person has his eyes on the Lord and the promises that God has given us in His Word!

THIS ALSO SHOWS HOW PROMISES IN THE WORD OF GOD WHICH HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO OTHERS CAN ACTUALLY BE CLAIMED BY ALL OF THE LORD'S PEOPLE!

First, God speaks. We listen to the Word of God. We believe the Word of God. Then, we speak. Note Heb. 13:6.

This is a quotation from Psa. 118:6,

"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"

Probably Heb. 13:6 should be translated the same way:

- 1) First, a statement of fact.
- 2) Second, a statement of faith.
- 3) Third, a question -- reflecting the deep peace which has replaced former anxieties.

"The Lord" starts the expression; "man" concludes it. We will have the right attitude toward "man" if we believe the word of "the Lord."

"Helper" is, as in Heb. 2:18 and 4:16, One who runs at the cry of those who are in danger.

Concl: If we want to "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear," then we must know that these some of the main things that are pleasing to Him!

CB - 3/2/75 a.m.

ON THE WAY TO THE CITY

Heb. 13:7-14

Intro: These last words of the epistle to the Hebrews are intended to be words of encouragement. It is obvious from the epistle itself that:

- 1) those who were receiving this epistle, Hebrew believers, were suffering because of their relationship with the Lord, and
- 2) that, because of their difficulties, they were inclined to want to quit.

As we often see in such cases in the Word of God, the writer has his readers looking in three directions:

- 1) back at the past,
- 2) now at the present,
- 3) then at the future.

Everything in this chapter seems to lead up to v. 14 -- our ultimate destination and destiny!

We must remember the instructions we had last week. A time of testing is no time to let down. In fact, we must stand more firmly for the things we believe and the things that we have been taught than ever before.

) And notice how explanations abound in Hebrews 13.

You have the little word, "for" (which is also only 3 letters in the Greek), in vv. 2, 5, 9, 11, 14.

In our text this morning we have three more things to add to what we had last Sunday in the first 6 verses -- things to help us as we make our way to the city! They are:

- I. THE REMEMBRANCE OF OUR TEACHERS AND THEIR TEACHING (vv. 7, 8).
 - II. THE REJECTION OF ALL "VARIOUS AND STRANGE DOCTRINES" (v. 9).
 - III. THE RECOGNITION OF THE TRUE STATE OF THINGS -- as it relates to the reproach of Christ (vv. 10-14).
- I. THE REMEMBRANCE OF OUR TEACHERS AND THEIR TEACHING (Heb. 13: 7, 8).

"Them that have the rule over you" are mentioned again in vv 17 and 24.

) A great deal depends upon the teachers we have had and upon the teaching they have given us. The exhortation here is to be continually thinking about them, what they have taught, and how it affected their lives -- and even their deaths!

This is brought out by the expression, "the end of their manner of life." However, this can mean simply the issue, the outcome, the result of their lives.

Notice that teaching comes first . . . that it includes not only doctrine but practical exhortations . . . and that the lives of the teachers are inseparably bound up with their teaching!

And so he says, "whose faith follow." The Greek word means to imitate. Cf. Phil. 4:9; 1 Cor. 11:1.

"Faith" takes us back to Heb. 11, esp. v. 6, and also to Heb. 12:2.

BUT NOW WE NEED TO ASK: WHY IS IT THAT THE TRUTH WE TEACH AND THE WAY WE ARE TO LIVE DOES NOT CHANGE? After all, it has now been almost 2,000 years since this epistle to the Hebrews was written. Can we be serious about accepting its teaching today after so many years?

The answer is, YES! The reason: v. 8. (The NSRB has indicated the relationship between verses 7 and 8 by the ":". Our teaching does not change nor does the practical emphasis because the One who is the sum and substance of that teaching, "Jesus Christ," is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (or, lit., unto the ages).

When He changes, the truth will change. As long as He remains the same, so will our teaching. AND HE WILL NEVER CHANGE. This is why the past is so rich in its encouragement for every child of God!

Since this is true, we must now go on to . . .

II. THE REJECTION OF ALL "VARIOUS AND STRANGE DOCTRINES" (Heb. 13:9).

You will notice that the reference to "meats" or "foods" takes us right back to the problem concerning the Law and all of its sacrifices.

To be "carried away" suggests anything that even picks us up contrary to what we know and believe, and carries us away from the truth, or beyond the truth, or even that which may cause us to neglect any part of the truth.

It is extremely important to know the relationship between OT truth and NT truth. We are not under the Law as a system of worship, but under "grace" (which is mentioned again here as we had it in 12:15, 28).

One important thing to keep in mind about any truth which deviates in any way from the Word of God is that it does not do for those who follow it what they hope it will do. Note: "which have not profited them that have been occupied with them." Lit., it is those who have walked in them.

But, those who were followers of the Judaism of the day would say, What are you going to use to take the places of the ceremonies if you give them up?

Note what we had back in Heb. 9:7-10.

This brings us to the final part of our passage for the morning where we see that there must be . . .

III. THE RECOGNITION OF THE TRUE STATE OF THINGS (Heb. 13:10-14).

Here we need to go back to Leviticus 4 where we learn about the sin offering -- where you have that wonderful picture of Christ and what He would eventually do for the sins of the whole world.

This is where the knowledge of the OT helps us in understanding the NT.

What about "the bodies" and the "blood" of the sin offering? Did either the priests or the people eat the bodies of the animals which were offered for sin?

The answer is, NO!

The "blood" was presented in the Tabernacle before God; "the bodies" were taken outside of the camp of Israel and burned up!

If there is an emphasis upon either the blood or the bodies it has to be upon the blood!

What does the fact that the bodies were taken "outside the camp" indicate?

It indicates the humiliation of our Lord. He was rejected by the Judaism of His day. They would not have Him. He made provision for the people to be sanctified, i.e., cleansed and forgiven of their sins, by His death outside of the city.

And it seems that from that day to this men have been trying to make something respectable out of that which is forever marked with shame and disgrace and reproach!

The Gospel does not appeal to the people of the world. Jesus Christ is not Citizen #1. Even Isaiah taught 700 years be-

fore Christ came that

"he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

This is Isa. 53:2b, 3.

Is it any different today? NO!

Will it ever be any different in the present order of things?
NO!

Will true Christian living ever have the approval of men in the world? NO!

What is our conclusion then? See vv. 13, 14.

Concl: How important it is for us to get this truth into our hearts so that we will not be deceived nor discouraged by the things that we experience from day to day in this world.

But you might say to me, "Pastor, how does this explain my feelings about Christ? He is the most wonderful Person in all of the universe to me. There is no one that I love like I love Him!"

Our Lord answered that question when He said to His disciples in Matt. 13:16,

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear."

After 2,000 years the reproach of Christ still stands. You and I cannot change that — and we must not even try. We are to preach the Gospel as it is, trusting the Spirit of God to open the eyes of people to see their true need, and to see Christ in His humiliating death and shame as the only means by which their needs can be met.

"For ^{here} we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

CB - 3/9/75 a.m.

THE SACRIFICES THAT PLEASE GOD
Heb. 13:15-19

Intro: All through the epistle to the Hebrews we have been learning about the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

) Now, as we approach the end, we are suddenly introduced to the priesthood of believers. PROTECTION FROM WRONG SACRIFICES IS THROUGH UNDERSTANDING THE TRUE.

V. 15 sheds more light upon v. 10 where we read, "We have an altar." It is not just "an altar" to which we come as the OT saints came to bring their sacrifices to the priests of that day, but it is "an altar" to which we come as priests ourselves, bringing the sacrifices that please God.

Our "altar" is not like the altar of burnt offerings which was in the Tabernacle, nor is it like the altar of incense. Our altar is not some piece of furniture before which we must stand in line to present our gifts to God. Our altar can be any place where we meet with God. It is not only different for every believer today, but it can be different at different times for each of us.

Actually, when you read through this passage (as well as our Scripture reading of the morning: 1 Pet. 2:1-9), the important thing is not "the altar," but what we bring, and how we bring it, and why!

) The writer of this Epistle actually mentions three sacrifices, and then he adds the words at the end of v. 16, "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." This expression means that these are sacrifices which He will accept, sacrifices which He wants us to bring. These are just as important to us as the five offerings of Leviticus 1-7 were to the people of God in the OT.

In considering vv. 15-19, let us notice:

- I. The character of the sacrifices (vv. 15, 16).
- II. The condition required for those making the sacrifices (v. 17).
- III. The consequence (vv. 18, 19).

When we speak of the priestly ministry of believers, we are dealing with the highest possible ministry that the Lord has given us to do -- and the whole passage this morning deals with this. It really indicates that this is the purpose behind all that we have been learning in the Epistle.

I. THE CHARACTER OF THE SACRIFICES (Heb. 13:15, 16).

Here he is telling us what they are. It is like Lev. 1-7 was to OT saints. This is not an exhaustive list, but we have enough here to allow us to see the nature of our work.

A. The sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15).

Every word in this verse is very important. There is nothing here that we can overlook.

The word, "therefore," points us back to that which has led us up to this point. It means that as a consequence of all that our Lord, "Jesus," has done for us, and because of all that He is, "let us offer . . . to God," etc.

And note: The only way we can approach God is "by Him," i.e., by Christ.

It is only on the basis of what He is and has done for us, as well as His present enabling power for such a ministry as we have.

What is the first sacrifice? It is the sacrifice of praise!

NO NEED
FOR SACRIFICES
FOR SIN.

This is the only time this particular word for "praise" is found in the NT, but the verb is found a number of places:

- 1) This is what the angels did in Luke 2:13.
- 2) This is what the shepherds did in Luke 2:20.
- 3) This is what the disciples did in Luke 19:37, 38.
- 4) This is what the church did in Acts 2:47.
- 5) This is what the man who had been lame from birth did in Acts 3:8, 9.
- 6) This is what is prophesied about the Gentiles in Psa. 117:1 and which Paul quotes in Rom. 15:11.
- 7) This is what the saints in heaven will do according to Rev. 19:5.

To whom do we present this sacrifice? Not to angels, not to men, not to apostles, not to pastors or teachers, but "to God" -- AND "TO GOD" ALONE!

How often? "Continually." Lit., it is through all.

What actually is it? "The fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." Two things are important here:

- 1) Since it is "the fruit of our lips" we need to remember the words of our Lord in Matt. 12:34b,
"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

So this really speaks, not of something that is just outward and external, but that which is inward and deep and genuine.

- 2) "To His Name" means that by our praise we give testimony that God is all that His Name implies that He is

Are you doing this? Have you done this today? Do you do it in times of trial as well as in times of obvious blessing?

This comes first -- and it always indicates a deep confidence in God and a recognition that everything is in His hands.

B. The sacrifice of doing good (Heb. 13:16a).

The first has to do with God; the second has to do with people.

Paul wrote in Gal. 6:10,

"As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

It means doing things that will benefit other people -- good works -- which are, nevertheless, sacrifices offered "to God." Cf. Matt. 25:40.

When was the last time you did something to help somebody else?

C. The sacrifice of giving (Heb. 13:16m).

First, we have speaking. Then we have doing. Finally, giving. The order is important.

The word here is the word for fellowship -- which is used with the basic idea of the word which is sharing. It is used for giving in 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:13.

Cf. Phil. 4:18,

"But I have all, and abound. I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."

Have you ever seen this emphasis with regard to your giving? Are you regularly making this sacrifice "to God"?

But, as we move from v. 16 to v. 17 we see that there is one, main condition which govern the offering of these sacrifices if they are to be well-pleasing to God.

II. THE CONDITION REQUIRED (Heb. 13:17).

There must be obedience to the Word of God!

But here that obedience is in connection with the teaching of "them that have the rule over you," i.e., the pastoral, teaching ministry -- mentioned in vv. 7 and 24 as well as here in v. 17.

The difference between v. 7 and v. 17 seems to be that in v. 7 the writer is referring to pastors they used to have, and in v. 17 he is speaking of those which they had at the present time.

What is a pastor doing? He is a soul-watcher. It is a work that requires that he be awake, and sometimes it keeps him awake when he should be sleeping!

The true pastor works with the day of accounting always before him. And so he teaches and warns and encourages and prays -- as we will see next week!

What are the people to do?

In so far as their pastor teaches them the Word, they are to "obey" -- which means that they listen and watch and then do what he says. But they are also to "submit" -- which is like a wrestler giving up, resisting no longer -- like Jacob did in Gen. 32.

Are you just a hearer, or are you also a doer? The extent to which we enter into v. 17 will determine our joy and blessing in the things asked of us in vv. 15, 16.

Finally, this leads to another part of our priestly ministry. And so we have . . .

III. THE CONSEQUENCE of all that has gone before (Heb. 13:18, 19).

Pastors and the spiritual leaders, the teachers of the Church need prayer more than they need anything else! He does not ask for their gifts for himself, but he does ask for their prayers.

He assures them that his ministry is a sincere ministry: "for we trust," i.e., we know, we are confident, "we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live" (or, walk) "honestly."

And he requested specific prayer: "But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner."

No pastor or teacher will ever be able to know in this life how much he owes, under the blessing of God, to the prayers of the people of God who have been faithful in upholding him in prayer to God!

Concl: How important it is for us to learn the lessons of this passage! In their order, the second would be first; the first would be second; the third last: Obedience, sacrifices, prayer.

-) Conclusions to a NT epistle may not seem very important, but here we have truth that is of the utmost importance. May the Spirit of God enable us to evaluate our lives in the light of these things, and then, trusting Him, to conform to these things which can only result in great blessing in these days in which we live.
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A PASTOR'S PRAYER

Heb. 13:20-25

Intro: We come today to the last 6 verses of the epistle to the Hebrews.

I would like to look briefly, first of all, at the last 4 verses, and then come back to spend most of our time on verses 20, 21.

V. 22 is really the writer's description of the epistle. He calls it "the word of exhortation." This is an expression which has two meanings:

- 1) It means to encourage them to do certain things -- as our word, exhort, would indicate.
- 2) But it also means to comfort, to console, or to encourage.

In v. 22, the words, "beseech," and, "exhortation," are from the same root.

The writer wants them to "suffer," or "bear with" what he has written. This does not mean what Spurgeon used to say to his students in his school in London -- that every preacher should be forced to listen to his own sermons. If they did, Spurgeon said, every preacher would cry out, "My punishment is greater than I can bear."

No -- this word "suffer" means to hold themselves back, to listen and think and wait before reacting. He evidently felt that some because of their immaturity or because of their prejudices would turn away from the epistle without giving it their serious and prayerful consideration.

Vv. 23, 24 give us some historical information, but not enough for us to know all that we would like to know about the background of the epistle. Note:

- 1) Timothy evidently had been imprisoned, but now was free. Where or when this took place the rest of the NT gives us no hint.
 - 2) Does the reference to "they of Italy" mean that this letter was written from Rome?
 - 3) Is it possible that this was another of Paul's epistles written when he was a prisoner?
 - 4) Was this letter written to the believing Jews in Jerusalem?
- These are things which we cannot say dogmatically. But we can see that the writer hoped (from v. 19 also) to follow up his letter with a personal visit. Evidently, too, the letter was written to the people of the church, wherever it was, rather than to their leaders -- probably because the leaders were having some trouble with the people, as vv. 7, 17, and 24 would indicate.

V. 25 brings in "grace" just as we have "peace" in v. 20. This

last verse is also a prayer -- for all of the blessings of God to be theirs.

These closing verses are evidence that a pastor needs to follow his teaching with his prayers.

But now to verses 20, 21 -- one of the greatest of the NT prayers and one which is greatly needed today.

There are four things in the prayer that I would like to direct your attention to:

- 1) The main subject of the prayer.
- 2) The way God is addressed.
- 3) The request that is made.
- 4) The purpose of the prayer.

I. THE MAIN SUBJECT OF THE PRAYER (Heb. 13:20a).

It is "peace."

This, you will remember, was the popular Hebrew greeting -- and it still is! Thayer in his Greek lexicon says that it included:

- 1) Security.
- 2) Safety.
- 3) Prosperity.
- 4) Happiness.

When you put spiritual meaning to these terms, you can see how vital "peace" is to every child of God.

There must have been a lack of peace among these Hebrew Christians -- a lack that could be observed in their personal lives, as well as in their church life! The prayer indicates and the epistle indicates that there cannot be a full experience of peace if:

- 1) Our understanding of the Gospel is deficient, and if
- 2) Our spiritual growth has been slowed down as a result.

So -- this shows one of the main reasons why we have this epistle, especially when you take all of these two verses into consideration.

II. THE WAY GOD IS ADDRESSED (Heb. 13:20).

First notice that it is to "God" that this prayer is addressed.

And "God" is called, "the God of peace" because He is the originator of all peace, like He is the Creator of the world, and He is the only One who can bestow peace upon us!

This name of God, "the God of peace," is used several times in the NT epistles. And one significant thing about it is that Paul is the only one who uses this title -- unless Hebrews was written by someone else. Note a few of them:

- 1) Rom. 16:20, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."
- 2) 2 Cor. 13:11, "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."
- 3) 1 Thess. 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

So peace is always related to a godly life -- never to Satan nor sin!

But notice the rest of v. 20 in which God is described: He is "the God of peace, that brought again (or, up) from the dead (the most specific reference to the resurrection in the book -- probably including also the ascension and present glory) our Lord Jesus (or, our Lord, Jesus -- emphasizing for the last time His human name) that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."

IN ONE VERSE THE WRITER HAS SUMMARIZED FOR US THE WHOLE MESSAGE OF THE EPISTLE. "PEACE" IS POSSIBLE ONLY BECAUSE OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US THROUGH THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST -- "through the blood of the everlasting covenant" -- "everlasting" because:

- 1) It will never be superceded.
- 2) It will never be revoked.

Cf. Heb. 12:24; 9:11-15.

SO ALL THAT IS ACCOMPLISHED IN OUR LIVES AFTER WE ARE FIRST SAVED GOES BACK TO THE CROSS AND TO THE BLOOD OF OUR SAVIOR WHICH HE SHED FOR US!

Our Lord is the "shepherd"; we are "the sheep." He is such because He provides for us, protects us, controls all of our circumstances for our good.

Three adjectives are used to describe the Lord Jesus as our "shepherd" in the NT:

- 1) One is from John.
- 2) Another is from Peter.
- 3) The third is in our text.

Here they are:

- 1) In John 10:11, 14 we find the Lord calling Himself "the good shepherd." "Good" refers to HIS PERSON. "Good" to the Greek meant beautiful or attractive in this way:

"the harmonious completeness, the balance, proportion, and measure of all the parts with one another . . ."
(Trench, p. 389). Everything about the Lord Jesus was (and is) exactly as it should be in the sight of God! It points to His absolute moral perfection!

- 2) In 1 Pet. 5:4 our Lord is called by Peter, "the chief Shepherd." In John we have HIS PERSON; in Peter we have HIS POSITION. No one is greater than He in His authority over His sheep.
- 3) In our text our Lord is "the great Shepherd" -- and here we see HIS POWER. If the sheep are to have peace, then the shepherd has to do things for the sheep which they cannot do for themselves -- and this term, "the great Shepherd," indicates that He is able to do all that is necessary.

III. THE REQUEST THAT IS MADE (Heb. 13:21a).

This takes us down in the verse through the words, "through Jesus Christ."

Here we have a request that "God . . . through Jesus Christ" will work inwardly so that they may do outwardly "His will."

Note first: "Make you perfect . . . working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight."

To "make . . . perfect" is a verb which is translated "prepared" in Heb. 10:5 and "were framed" in Heb. 11:3. It means to put things in order, to make things what they ought to be, to arrange, to adjust.

It is to make us "good" like our Shepherd is declared to be in John 10:11, 14.

Sin puts everything out of adjustment in man, and even after a person is saved, it takes time to get it in order. Every person without Christ should have a sign around his neck: OUT OF ORDER. But unfortunately some believers need to wear such a sign, too.

When are things back in order?

When "God" works "in us (according to the best MSS) that which is well-pleasing in His sight."

What does this include? Cf. Heb. 13:15, 16; 11:6; Rom. 12:1, 2; Eph. 5:1-10 (see v. 10); Col. 3:20.

And what does this lead to?

The inward work of God produces an outward effect in our

our lives: "in every good (work) to do His will."

This is the only way there can be peace:

- 1) First, by being saved.
- 2) Second, by the inward work of God upon our hearts.
- 3) Third, by the outward obedience to the will of God -- which is found in the Word of God.

IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE PRAYER (Heb. 13:21b): "to Whom (God) be glory forever and ever. Amen."

This means not only now, but for all eternity!

If God is not glorified, we will not be at peace.

This is the grand object in all that we are and in all that we do -- a goal utterly impossible apart from the redemptive work of God!

Remember 1 Cor. 10:31, "Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

We love Eph. 3:20, but do we love v. 21 equally well? We love Phil. 4:19, but what about 4:20?

- 1) Eph. 3:20, 21, "Now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
- 2) Phil. 4:19, 20, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever. Amen."

It is only when this becomes a reality with us that the peace of God will fill our hearts.

Concl: Do you hold back from doing the will of God?

The last word of v. 21 is, "Amen." It means, let it be, so be it, may it be fulfilled.

In the synagogue of our Lord's day, and also in the early church there seems to have been a custom which it might be good for us to revive today -- if it did not become a formality. The teacher would conclude his teaching with the word, "Amen" -- which incidently is pronounced exactly the same in Hebrew and Greek and English (and possibly in other languages, too). It showed the teachers agreement with and acceptance of the teaching. But then the Jews in the synangogue, and later the Christians in the Church would respond to their teacher with, "Amen." May that be our united response today and our prayer!