

LESSON 40
Hebrews

LOGOS

A General and Light Survey of the Bible

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Lesson 40

Hebrews

- The Book of Hebrews was written primarily to Jewish Christians throughout the Middle East. who were in danger of returning to Judaism because of persecution from the Judaizers, as well as Rome.
- It was written around 70AD, but before the destruction of the Jewish Temple.
- It was probably written by Paul or Barnabas and possibly Apollos - maybe even all of them. While Paul is the traditional and most widely accepted author, this cannot be proven conclusively.
- Hebrews was written to Christians in danger of slipping back into Judaism because of persecution. It interprets the Old Testament, explaining many Jewish practices as symbols that prepared the way for Christ. It stresses that Christ was from God and is higher than angels, Moses, Joshua, and any priest or sacrifice.

OUTLINE

- The Supremacy of Jesus Christ (1-3).
 - *In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. (1:1-4)*
 - Because he was writing to Jewish Christians, the writer reminded them of their Jewish ancestry, describing the way God spoke through the prophets during the Old Testament era.
 - Everything changed when Jesus arrived.
 - Jesus is God's ultimate revelation - "God with skin on."
 - *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).*
 - Having accomplished the work of Salvation, Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.
 - *"...Christ Jesus... being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalt-*

ed him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:5-11).

- Jesus Christ is greater - supreme over everything.
 - Jesus is greater than the angels.
 - *For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father”? Or again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”? And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” In speaking of the angels he says, “He makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire.” But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.” He also says, “In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.” To which of the angels did God ever say, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? (1:5-13)*
 - No angel has ever been called Son of God.
 - Only Jesus has the titles, “Son of God,” or “Messiah.”
 - The earth and heavens will perish, but Jesus, God Incarnate, will remain.
 - *Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? (1:14)*
 - Yes, angels are very real - they are sent to serve those of us who follow Jesus.
 - Yes, this allows for the concept of “guardian angels.”
 - No, human beings do not become angels when they die.
 - *We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we*

ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. (2:1-4)

- The writer was very concerned that his readers do not drift away.
- In addition to being servants, angels are messengers and their messages are binding because they come from God.
 - An angel told Manoah and his wife they would be the parents of Samson (Judges 13)
 - An angel told Zechariah he and Elizabeth would have a son - John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-23).
 - An angel told Mary she would give birth to Jesus (Luke 1:26-38).
 - An angel told Joseph to take Mary as his wife (Matthew 1:18-24).
 - An angel told Philip to go to Gaza and he met the Ethiopian on the way (Acts 8:26-40).
- “...how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?” (v. 3)
- It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: “What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him? You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor and put everything under their feet.” In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. (2:5-8)
 - Angels will never be rulers - they are servants and messengers.
 - The writer quoted Psalm 8 to show the authority humanity has at the present time - a little lower than the angels - as well as the dominion followers of Christ will have in the future Kingdom of God under Christ.
- *But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing*

many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." (2:9-13)

- When Jesus came to earth it was a step down into humanity for him.
- However, having accomplished the work of salvation in perfect completion, he is now glorified.
- Jesus makes people holy and calls us brothers and sisters.
- *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (2:14-18)*
 - Jesus became human so that he could defeat the devil and break the power of death once and for all.
 - Jesus is our merciful high priest.
 - Angels could never do what Jesus did.
- Jesus is greater than Moses. *Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God’s*

house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory. (3:1-6)

- This would have been a very big deal for the Jewish Christian readers of the Book of Hebrews!
- Moses was acknowledged as the founder of the nation of Israel, the lawgiver, their first and greatest leader.
- However, Jesus has been found worth of greater honor than Moses.
 - The builder of the house has greater honor than the house.
 - God is the builder of everything - Christ is over God's house.
 - We are his house.
- Hard hearts. (3).
 - *So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'"* (3:7-11)
 - The writer reminded his readers of Israel's time in the wilderness.
 - do not harden your hearts.
 - *See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief. (3:12-19)*
 - The writer reminded his readers of Israel's time in the wilderness again and repeated the statement, do not harden your hearts.
 - *encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. (v. 13)*
 - Unbelief is the only thing that will keep a person away from God and excluded from Heaven.

- Spiritual Maturity (5-6)
 - *We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. (5:11-14)*
 - There seems to be some frustration on the writer's part because he wanted to go deeper in this letter, but they were unwilling to understand.
 - Because they were drifting in their faith these Jewish Christians needed to be taught the elementary truths of God's word all over again.
 - They were not ready for solid food.
 - *Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so. (6:1-3)*
 - At some point all who follow Jesus need to move beyond the elementary teachings of Christ and grow up.
 - Relaying the foundation of any project can be frustrating.
 - *It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned. (6:4-8)*
 - This passage opens up a longstanding theological "can of worms" - eternal security vs. freewill.
 - In this there are two schools of thought:
 - Calvinism.
 - Developed by John Calvin, a 16th-century Swiss reformer.
 - Calvinism emphasizes the sovereignty of God, the authority of Scripture, salvation by grace alone, and predestination - God has already determined who will be saved and who will not, independent of human effort.

- The TULIP:
 - Total Depravity - humanity is deeply affected by sin.
 - Unconditional Election - God chooses who will be saved.
 - Limited Atonement - Christ's sacrifice is for the elect.
 - Irresistible Grace - those chosen cannot resist salvation.
 - Perseverance of the Saints - the elect will remain faithful ("once saved always saved").
- Arminianism.
 - Developed by Jacobus Arminius, a late 16th-century Dutch pastor and scholar.
 - Arminius responded to Calvin's teaching after the Protestant Reformation and emphasized a different perspective on salvation, free will, and God's grace.
 - Arminianism does not have an acronym, but differs from Calvinism:
 - Humanity is created with freewill - the privilege of choosing for themselves to accept or reject salvation.
 - Genuine freewill is possible because God is omniscient, but not bound by time or space.
 - Universal atonement - grace is not irresistible, but available to all who choose to receive it.
 - Freewill allows those who believe to choose to turn away and be ultimately lost.
- *Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation. God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. (6:9-12)*
 - God is perfectly faithful.
 - Followers of Jesus should be diligent and faithful, never lazy, but imitating Christ and his followers.
- Jesus our Sabbath (4). *Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. Now we who have believed enter that rest... On the seventh day God rested from all his*

works... *There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience. (4:1-11)*

- God established the idea of Sabbath.
 - *“By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done” (Genesis 2:2-3).*
 - *“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Exodus 20:8-11).*
- However, Jesus redefined Sabbath - moving it away from the legalistic interpretation that existed in his day.
 - *“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27-28).*
 - Paul explained, *“When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ” (Colossians 2:13-17).*
- So, Sabbath is a gift from God established for the followers of Jesus Christ through his grace and love - we need rest physically, mentally, and spiritually!

- The word of God (4)
 - *For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (4:12-13)*
 - The Bible (the word of God) is completely unique and supersedes all other written works in that:
 - It is inspired by God. *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
 - It is *alive and active* - it lives through Christ in us.
 - We must be careful in the way we handle God's word because it is sharper than any double-edged sword.
- Jesus is our high priest (4-8).
 - *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (4:14-16)*
 - Since the days of the Exodus when God told Moses to make Aaron the high priest (Exodus 28-30), it has been the highest office in the Jewish religion and grew to be very very powerful in the government of Israel.
 - By the time of Christ the priesthood had become corrupted.
 - Jesus is our great high priest - because is is human he is able to empathize with our weaknesses... but, he did not sin.
 - *Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was. In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father." And he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." (5:1-6)*

- The order of Melchizedek.
 - *“Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, ‘Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.’ Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything”* (Genesis 14:18-20).
 - Abram’s nephew Lot was taken captive by a coalition of “...the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboyim” (Genesis 14:8) after a battle in the Valley of Siddim.
 - Abram went after them and routed them.
 - Upon meeting Melchizedek, Abram gave him a tenth of everything.
 - Melchizedek was unique for two reasons:
 - He was both king of Salem and a priest of God.
 - He was a priest for life.
- *This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything... Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! ...why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? ...The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God... Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant. (7:1-22)*
 - Abram considered Melchizedek greater than himself - that is why he gave him the offering.
 - In Christ, the former regulation is set aside. He is the guarantor of a better covenant.
- *...but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest truly meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever. (7:23-28)*

- Jesus is not only the final sacrifice, he is a permanent high priest.
 - While every other high priest including Aaron were men in all their weakness, Jesus is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.
- A New Covenant (9-10)
 - *Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover... When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order. (9:1-10)*
 - The Jewish religion of the Old Testament was a rigid complicated system established according to God's instructions to Moses.
 - God told them: (Exodus 25-Leviticus 27)
 - How to construct and set up the Tabernacle.
 - How to make and set up the furnishings in the Tabernacle.
 - How the priests were to dress.
 - Offerings and sacrifices that had to be made.
 - Feasts and festivals that had to be observed.
 - Rules and regulations for worship, as well as daily life.
 - *But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are*

outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (9:11-14)

- Jesus fulfilled and improved the whole system when he arrived.
 - He is the perfect, final high priest.
 - He is a more perfect tabernacle.
 - He is the ultimate, final sacrifice.
- *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. (9:15)*
- *For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (9:23-28)*
- Christ the ultimate and final sacrifice.
 - *The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God.'" (10:1-7)*

- Remember, Jesus said, *“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them”* (Matthew 5:17).
- Paul wrote, *“...The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me’”* (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)
- On that same night Jesus said, *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”* (John 13:34-35).
- It was never about the sacrifices! *First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”— though they were offered in accordance with the law... He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. (10:8-14)*
- It has always been about our relationship with God.
 - *The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.” And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary. (10:15-18)*
 - The writer of Hebrews quoted the prophecy of, Jeremiah 31:31-34, *“‘The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will make a new*

covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant... This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,' declares the LORD. 'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,' declares the LORD. 'For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.'"

- Perseverance (10).
 - *Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (10:19-25)*
 - The writer of Hebrews referred to the spiritual metaphor of the tearing of the curtain that separated the Holy place from the Most Holy Place in the Temple when Jesus died.
 - *“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people” (Matthew 27:50-53).*
 - We have access to the Most Holy Place in Christ!

- Therefore, *let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.* (vv. 19-25)
- A warning to persevere in the faith. *If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* (10:26-31)
 - Judgement will come for all of us.
 - Judgement and punishment is completely in the hand of God.
- *Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For, “In just a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay.” And, “But my righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.” But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.* (10:32-39)
 - It was incredibly hard to be a Christian in the first century.
 - Followers of Christ must persevere even in the face of hardship.

- Faith (11-12).
 - *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. (11:1-2)*
 - Faith is not knowing for sure or being certain.
 - Faith is hope and trust.
 - The Honor Roll of Faith.
 - The writer of Hebrews listed a number of examples of faith from the Old Testament (11:4-31).
 - *By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did...*
 - *By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death...*
 - *By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family...*
 - *By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going...*
 - *... by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise...*
 - *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future...*
 - *By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff...*
 - *By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones...*
 - *By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict...*
 - *By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter... By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger... By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel...*
 - *By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned...*
 - *By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days...*

- *By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.*
- *And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated — the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. (11:32-38)*
 - These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. (11:39)
 - None of the people listed got to see the arrival of Christ, the promised Messiah.
 - Perfection will be achieved when we are all gathered together in Heaven.
- *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (12:1-3)*
 - We have a rich spiritual heritage - a great cloud of witnesses.
 - let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.
 - *let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus...*
 - *Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*
- Followers of Christ can use our rich spiritual heritage as a reliable source of encouragement.

- God's discipline (12).
 - *In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son."* (12:4-6)
 - We all struggle with sin.
 - God disciplines us because he loves us.
 - *Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.* (12:7-11)
 - It is a good thing that God treats us as his children.
 - Good parents always discipline their children.
 - No one likes discipline, but it is always good for us.
- Specific instructions (12-13).
 - *Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.* (12:14-17)
 - *live in peace with everyone*
 - *be holy*
 - Help one another so that no one falls short of the grace of God
 - Make sure no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.
 - Do not be sexually immoral.
 - Do not be godless - undisciplined and short-sighted like Esau was.
 - *You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it*

begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. (12:18-27)

- God is no longer unreachable!
- In Christ, we can approach God without fear.
- *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." (12:28-29)*
 - The Kingdom of God is unshakable - and we get to be part of it!
 - be thankful
 - worship God acceptably with reverence and awe...
 - Never forget God is a consuming fire.
- *Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?" Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (13:1-8)*
 - *Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters.*
 - *Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.*

- *Continue to remember those in prison...*
- *Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.*
- *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have...*
- *Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.*
 - *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*
- *Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by eating ceremonial foods, which is of no benefit to those who do so. We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat. The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you. Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon. (13:9-19)*
 - Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings...
 - ... let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name.
 - ... do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
 - Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.
 - Pray for us.

- *Benediction (13). Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (13:20-21)*
- *Personal (13). Brothers and sisters, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for in fact I have written to you quite briefly. I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you. Greet all your leaders and all the Lord's people. Those from Italy send you their greetings. Grace be with you all. (13:22-25)*