

Feasting On Hebrews

A LAYMAN'S COMMENTARY

I have been enjoying the green pastures of Hebrews and the living waters that flow from the unique manifestation of our Majestic Master into every dry place in my soul. I trust our Lord to enlighten the eyes of your understanding as you study, meditate, and draw from this well spring of living waters.

If I were to pick a key verse that revealed the mind and purpose of the Spirit in the setting forth of the truths of this book, I believe I would settle on Hebrews 10:35 which says, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward."

If we were to pursue the mind of the Spirit throughout these chapters of passionate outcrying to his wayward children, it would seem that there were a considerable number of folk that had abandoned their confidence, or full assurance of faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and in particular the shedding of his blood for their eternal redemption.

Chapter One

Right out of the gate, in Hebrews 1:2, these believers are told that their only hope of hearing from God is through the words spoken by Jesus Christ. They are told in verse one and two that his words supersede and have greater authority over the words spoken to their forefathers by the prophets. They are further told

in verses three and eight that not only is Jesus Christ the brightness of God's glory and the express image of his person, but that his own Father called him God. Finally, the Spirit chose to reveal Jesus Christ as the Creator of heaven and earth in verses 10-12, as well as the Redeemer of mankind in verse 3.

Heb.1:2-3: "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;

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;".

As we move forward in this book of spiritual revelation to these Hebrew sons of God, let us pray for a spiritual revelation and understanding in our lives as well. Through this earnest pursuit, may we grasp or get a feel for the heart of our Father as he seeks to shed abroad his love in the hearts of his children by the Holy Ghost. This love is manifested in intense patient instruction and warning throughout the book. He is gently, but firmly, seeking to woo them to contrition, and repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth, where FAITH IS BORN. This longsuffering and forbearing love is also revealed in the latter chapters, as we see the restraint of the chastening hand of God coming nigh unto judgment. This chastening was intended, according to Heb.12:11, to yield "the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

With all of this in mind and heart, God sets forth Jesus Christ in 1:2 as his final prophet and appointed spokesman for mankind. Truly, this truth should have riveted the attention of any among the

Hebrew believers who had the fear of God left in them, to Jesus Christ, as their only hope of hearing from the God of Abraham and Moses.

Next in 1:2, God sets forth Jesus Christ as his appointed heir of ALL THINGS. Certainly it would have been known that this included his divine power and authority, as well as him being the dispenser of all blessings, and even judgment.

Finally, in 1:2, Jesus is magnified as the Creator of the worlds and all that is therein! This truth is revisited in 1:10 in these words, "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the WORKS OF THINE HANDS:"

Keep in mind that God the Father is on a mission to etch these truths into hearts that are rapidly hardening. It is here that the Spirit uses the word as a hammer to crush stony hearts to a powder, in an effort to produce total surrender, accompanied by grief and godly sorrow unto repentance and restored faith.

We need to be reminded that we all find our hearts under the hammer from time to time, when we choose to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness, putting off the new man and putting on the old man. The answer to this dilemma for the Hebrews, as well as for us, was found in the confession of one's sins, whereby "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness." (I Jn. 1:9) It is here that we put off the old man and put on the new man, not only walking in the light as he is in the light, but walking in the same righteousness and true holiness as Jesus Christ! (Eph.4:24)

It is here, upon Spirit humbled confession of a sincere heart, that we are immediately walking in the Spirit, with the old man being crucified, and the new man being resurrected. We can confidently say, as Paul did in Gal. 2:20, "I am crucified with

Christ: nevertheless I live; (new man) yet not I, (old man) but Christ liveth in me: (Christ in us, the hope of glory) and the life that I NOW LIVE in the flesh I live by the FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Do we understand that this is exactly what God was desiring for these Hebrew sons of God? Like so many today in our Lord’s church, the life that many were “NOW” living was in the old man, which is described in Rm.8:6, as death.

Having presented Jesus Christ his Son as his final prophet and spokesman, his appointed heir, and the Creator, the Father tells them in 1:3 that his Son is the “brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person”. In John 14:9, Jesus told Philip, “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father”. Perhaps the Father is trying to tell these faithless believers that if you have seen my Son, you have seen me.

Before presenting Jesus in 1:3 as the Resurrected Redeemer sitting on his royal throne, on the right-hand side of the Father, God chose to emphasize the omnipotence of his Son in the words, “and upholding all things by the word of his power”. God knew that in the minds of these Hebrew believers, the character trait of omnipotence would have been attributed exclusively to the true and living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Though there were areas of doubt and unbelief, few would have questioned that their Jehovah God was indeed all powerful, as was revealed by his supernatural deliverance of his chosen people throughout history.

Jesus Christ is being exalted as their supernatural, all powerful Deliverer, and Redeemer from their sins in these words: “and upholding all things by the Word of his power, when he had by himself PURGED OUR SINS, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” These words carried great weight and

significance in view of the overall context of the book of Hebrews, which deals with the turbulent and traumatic transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. Keep in mind that the life that they knew, and that of their forefathers, was built around the Old Covenant, the Mosaic Law, and the Levitical Priesthood of the Aaronic Order. Conversion from Judaism to the Mediator of the New Covenant and a new great High Priest brought persecution and banishment from family, temple worship, and society in general.

We find in Heb. 2:1-3 that many of these believers, whose world had been turned upside down were beginning to neglect “so great salvation”, by “casting away their confidence” in God’s Word and the things which they had heard about Jesus Christ. In Heb. 3:6 and 3:14, we find that these believers were not holding fast their confidence, and their rejoicing, in the hope of salvation offered by Christ. By the time we reach chapter 4, they are in FULL BLOWN UNBELIEF. Sad, but true, in 9:12, we find these words, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Apparently, many had turned back and were once again embracing the religion of Judaism, and trusting in the blood of bulls and goats.

The Father knew when he inspired the penman of the book of Hebrews, where his beloved children were headed, and sought with an urgency and passion to deal with their unbelief by presenting his Son Jesus Christ in all of his glory. This is a contextual thread that is woven throughout the book.

In 1:4-14, God magnifies his Son as being “so much better than the angels”. We find in verses 4-5 that Jesus has a more excellent name than the angels, and that name being, “Son”. It is emphasized twice in verse 5.

In verse 6, the angels are worshipers of the Son, they ARE NOT WORSHIPED! It might be good in passing to understand also that there are NO SAINTS worshiped in Scripture, and this includes Mary, the mother of Jesus. This would be and is IDOLATRY. Take special note in verse 7, that angels are MINISTERING SPIRITS of the Son, and nothing more.

In verses 8-9, God's Son is seen to be the anointed King of Righteousness over his own kingdom. God reveals in Col.1:13

In verses 10-12, Jesus is exalted as the Lord of all creation, both the present Heaven and Earth, and the new Heaven and Earth.

In a final comparison of the superiority of Jesus Christ the Son of God over the angels, the angels are found to be unqualified to sit on the right hand of God with him that is destined to be the supreme ruler of the universe. Angels indeed have the honorable role of being ministering spirits to "them who shall be heirs of salvation", but it was Jesus Christ who "BY HIMSELF PURGED OUR SINS," before sitting down "on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Chapter Two

Following the weight and gravity of these glorious truths of divine splendor, the Spirit's awareness of what was already in the hearts of many of these believers issues forth the first of several admonitions, yea warnings, worded in such a way, so it seems, as to evoke the fear of God in their souls, and the faith of God in his Word.

Hebrews 2:1-3 says, “THEREFORE we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;”.

To follow the urgency or perhaps the intensity of the mind of the Spirit, as well as the heart of God for his children, we need to focus on the word “ought”. The root idea of this Spirit led translation is also found in the words “must needs be” elsewhere in Scripture, and carries the sobering implication that “ought” is not optional, but a **BINDING NECESSITY**. God is making it clear that it is their divine obligation “to give more earnest heed” to the things which they have heard about Jesus Christ as their Creator, Redeemer, Supreme Authority, and, yea, their God. Furthermore, if they fail to give the more earnest heed, there will be **INESCAPABLE CONSEQUENCES**.

Let us consider these words, uniquely chosen in the mind of the Spirit, seeking to reach the hearts and minds of those beloved saints that were presently in harm’s way, having already entered the gateway to the path of destruction. It is of interest, with purpose, that God did not simply say, “we ought to give heed”. This would have been quite in harmony, or in tune with the context, but not really in harmony with the urgency and intensity in the mind of the Spirit and the heart of God.

God added the words “more earnest” before the word “heed” with a deep passion and purpose. To give heed carries the idea of giving one’s full attention to with great awareness or caution. The words “more earnest” are tantamount to the yearning heart of

Abba Father seeking to reach his wayward children and snatch them from walking headlong into his fiery judgment. We find this alluded to in verse 3, and made very clear in Hebrews 10:27-31. The inherent meaning of the words “more earnest heed” is to give a SUPERABUNDANCE of attention to, and a DEEP CONSIDERATION to the things which they had heard in the fear of God regarding consequences.

Seeking to follow the gravity and seriousness of the mood of this passage, note the final words of this verse: “lest at any time we should let them slip.” Caution regarding consequences resonates loudly in the word “lest” as it sets forth the meaning of, for fear of, or in danger that, “we should let them slip”. The concept underlying the word “slip” is “to allow to flow carelessly by”, instead of “taking heed”, which is in essence, laying hold on the Word and locking it into the soul by the aid and power of the Spirit.

Though it may seem a lengthy dissertation up to this point, we must find and follow the mind and purpose of the Spirit in the writing of the book of Hebrews. The shirking of their divine obligation and disregard for the Word of God, as well as the God of the Word, in the person of Jesus Christ, will be found to be a contextual thread woven throughout the entirety of the fabric of this treasured document.

It is here in 2:1 that we find the birthplace of the spiritual malady besetting many of these Hebrew believers, that led to the casting away of their confidence in the things which they had heard. It might also be said that it led to their besetting sin of unbelief, because “faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”

It would no doubt be profitable to our faith to camp out for a moment by this stream of living waters. The living waters of God’s

Word will not flow through our hearts and minds, and certainly will not produce faith, if we do not understand the binding necessity and divinely imposed obligation of our giving superabundant attention and deep consideration to the things which we hear from the Word of God. A casual reading over the Word of God is not the same as reading into the Word with the guidance and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. THIS IS WHERE FAITH IS BORN. The Spirit prepares our spirit through contriteness and repentance unto the acknowledging of the truth of the Word of God. (II Tim. 2:25) "Acknowledging" is a taking possession of the truth in the heart and soul as one's very own. This takes place through Spirit enabled discernment and recognition. It is here in a repentant and surrendered spirit that not only is faith born, but humility as well. This fully broken and yielded spirit is now a reachable, teachable spirit that miraculously now desires to know more about God and his Word.

Prov. 2:1-2 says, "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom and apply thine heart to understanding".

If we do not receive God's Word God's way, it will not produce genuine faith that enables us to apply our hearts to Spirit-imparted understanding, that leads to the wisdom that we need to practice our faith. Not only will our service be in vain, but our daily sanctification will be void. Do we truly understand why it is a binding necessity and divinely-imposed obligation to give superabundant attention and consideration to the Word of God? Because of the Hebrew believers casual and irreverent approach to the Word, their faith vanished and unbelief abounded. This is a spiritual affliction all too commonly found in the church today. Faith can only be produced when the Word of God is ministered to a heart prepared by the work of the Spirit.

This rings so true when we remember that faith is a part of the ninefold fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22 that is produced in those that are completely surrendered to the work of the Spirit in their hearts. Any other life that we are living is called death in Rom. 8:6, due to the fact that if our spirit and our will are not surrendered to God through his Spirit, we are carnally minded, which God says in this verse is death.

When we are in complete submission to the Spirit and our flesh is in total subjection, we are crucified with Christ and the life that we now live, we live by the faith of the Son of God. (GAL. 2:20) We are, in this state, spiritually minded, which God says in Rom. 8:6 is LIFE and PEACE. Because we have put on the Lord Jesus Christ through this work of the Spirit, THIS LIFE of peace and total harmony with our Father is actually the resurrection life of Jesus Christ being lived by him through us! (Gal. 2:20)

Glorious, yes! BUT, we must understand that it all begins with our giving the more earnest heed to God's Word and not just reading over it, which God says in Heb. 2:3 leads to the neglecting of our "so great salvation". God warns us that these consequences of judgment shall not be escaped, no, not by one believer. This would be sad enough if it affected only us, but the obvious truth is that we evidence all too often the devastating effects of this neglect in the destruction of our marriages and our precious children. Our churches are only as strong as our families. Carnal believers that neglect or ignore and MAKE LIGHT of the word of God, as the meaning of neglect implies, are enemies of God and his church, and are potential pawns in Satan's hands.

Following God's stern warning regarding their turning a careless ear to what they had been told about Jesus being their all powerful Creator and Redeemer, superior even to the angels,

he calls their attention once more to their need to understand the purpose and person of his Son in their lives.

In Heb. 2:5-8, it is revealed that in his humanity, Jesus was “made a little lower than the angels”, yet in his deity his Father put the world to come under his subjection. (vs.5) God then went on to say in verse 8 that he had “put all things in subjection under his feet”, not only to include angels, but all principalities and powers as well. In his humanity, Jesus “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man”.(Phil. 2:7) In his deity as the God-man, Heb. 2:7 tells us that Jesus’ Father saw fit to crown him with “glory and honor”.

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

Under the compelling force of these truths, how could they or WE possibly not consider it one’s reasonable service to give one’s body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto our Father? (Rom. 12:1-2) What kind of heart could say no to this most reasonable request from our loving Father?

Would you, under the drawing power and unction of the Holy Ghost, let this moment in time become an Ebenezer moment of recommitment to the lover of your soul? Do you suppose that the Father of these wavering Hebrew children was hoping that these truths would have exactly that spiritual impact in bringing them to repentance and restored fellowship, and us as well? It truly would be hard to imagine that their grieving and yet doting Father did not have this on his mind and in his heart.

Heb. 2:10: “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make THE CAPTAIN of their salvation perfect through suffering.”

“But we see Jesus”. Do we honestly see Jesus as the “captain of our salvation” as is stated in verse 10? Not only was he “made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death”, but he also, by the grace of God, “TASTED DEATH FOR EVERY MAN”. How serious do we take that truth? Better yet, how serious does God take that truth? The answer is found in these words from II Cor. 5:14-15, “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

And that he died for all, that they which live SHOULD NOT HENCEFORTH LIVE UNTO THEMSELVES, but UNTO HIM which died for them, and rose again.”

Do we take this truth as seriously as God takes it? Not only did he want the Hebrew believers to give more earnest heed to this truth, but US as well. At the moment of our salvation, Jesus Christ became the Captain of our Salvation or Chief Leader, as the definition implies. Because he died for all, in God’s eyes, we were all dead and henceforth had no NO RIGHT whatsoever to live unto ourselves. We were and are no longer our own, having been purchased by the precious blood of our Captain and Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the significance of him tasting or experiencing death for every man? Perhaps we can draw some insight into this question from verse 14 where it says, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil”.

Praise be to our Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man that arose from the dead, that through the power of his resurrection, he made it possible that we should be delivered from the Satanic power of death unto eternal life. Surely in our minds and hearts, we desire to show through our subjection and obedience to Christ that he deserves to be crowned with glory and honor in our lives! Has he not earned the title “The Captain of our Salvation”?

Have we crowned him with glory and honor in our lives? How do we do that? The answer is as simple as taking up our cross and living the Gal. 2:20 crucified life! When we allow the Spirit of God and of Christ to humble our spirit, he will enable us by his grace to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, (Rom. 13:14) by the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new man. From this point forward, Jesus begins living his resurrection life through us to his honor and his glory. Will you crown him with glory and honor in your life by living the crucified life in the person and power of his Spirit?

This same glorious, high, and exalted Captain of our Salvation not only humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross, but we find in Heb. 2:12 and 2:17 that he chose to identify himself with us not only as our captain, or master and Lord, but as our BROTHER! Let us learn to fellowship with HIM and enjoy HIM as our Elder Brother in the presence of our Abba Father. They desire and designed this relationship at great cost.

Heb. 2:12 says, “Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.”

Let us consider the words, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren”. Jesus has always been about exalting and glorifying his Father. If we walk in the Spirit of Christ, he will continually lead us

in the way that brings glory to his Father, declaring his Fathers' name even above his own name as he did in his earthly ministry.

An insightful verse in this regard is Gal. 4:6 which says, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." What an intimate picture and portion of scripture as we see our Father sending the Spirit of his Son into our hearts and our world, wherever we might be, to have some sweet and heartwarming family fellowship with both of them. Let us avail ourselves to this inherited privilege!

When Jesus said, "Not my will but thine be done", he willingly laid down his life for the brethren, having been made like unto them, "that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people." (vs.17) God goes on to reveal in verse 18 that he not only laid down his life to save his brethren, but as a merciful and faithful high priest, he came "to succour them that are tempted". Here we see our Father sending our Elder Brother, (Heb. 2:11) who had experienced the sufferings of this world's temptations, who was touched with the very feelings of our infirmities, (Heb. 4:15) to bring relief from grief and deliverance from distress, as we find in the meaning of the word "succour".

Here, we see the lovingkindness and tenderness of our Father reaching out to his children with a compassionate and sympathetic understanding of their quest for holiness, while continually being bombarded with the unholy temptations of this evil world. He loved us so much that he sent his beloved Son to experience and literally feel our mental and spiritual anguish and suffering of soul. This was the compassionate message that God so wanted his Hebrew children to receive, and us, as well.

Ps. 103:13-14 says, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he

remembereth that we are dust.” Perhaps this will give us a renewed appreciation for the Scriptures that teach that his thoughts toward us are as the sand. We have his UNDIVIDED ATTENTION AND CONSIDERATION through the heart and mind of our personal great High Priest.

Heb.2:9 says, “ But we see Jesus...”, begging the question, do we really? Carrying the weight of these heart-warming and what should be heart-rending truths in Heb.2:17-18, God asked the Hebrew believers, as well as us, in Heb.3:1, to “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.”

Consider for a moment the meaning of this word “consider”. It means to “discover through careful and intensive observation”. Our Father has painted a beautiful portrait in chapters one and two, as only the greatest master artist could do, of the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. He does this so that the Hebrew believers might rediscover the beauty and mesmerizing majesty of Jesus Christ, as they once had, when he birthed them into his kingdom. Certainly it would not be asking too much for us to do the same!

CHAPTER THREE

The contextual thread of the casting away of their confidence in Christ that began in Heb. 2:1 shows up again in 3:6 &14.

Heb. 3:6: “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the CONFIDENCE and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

Heb. 3:14: “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our CONFIDENCE stedfast unto the end.”

We find in the opening portion of chapter three another facet of the authority of Jesus Christ that resounded deeply in the heart of the Hebrew believers, and that being the SUPERIORITY of Christ over MOSES. The establishing of this truth in their hearts and minds was both pivotal and monumental, especially considering that their loyalty and commitment to Moses was inseparable from their loyalty and commitment to the Law, and supposedly to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This was a true trial of their faith bringing to the forefront the IMPORTANCE OF THEIR CONFIDENCE in their Redeemer.

There is a GREAT LESSON to be learned here for all believers, in that their confidence began slipping when their strict adherence to God’s Word began slipping. In addition, we learn in verse 6 that unless we hold fast to our confidence, we will lose the REJOICING OF OUR HOPE in Jesus Christ. When a believer starts getting careless in giving more earnest heed to God’s Word, HIS FAITH BEGINS EBBING AWAY, followed by the rejoicing of his hope diminishing as well.

Why? Because faith and hope are vitally connected by God’s very own design. Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Faith is the operative energy of hope. “Things hoped for” is what we eagerly anticipate our God to do, yea, absolutely expect God to do based upon his written Word! We rest in our Lord’s faithfulness, which produces peace, joy and rejoicing in our soul.

Furthermore, when we neglect or make light of God’s Word and allow it to flow carelessly by, our hearts become hardened. Notice these last words of 3:7 and the first few words of 3:8, “To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts.” Is God not

telling them that if they choose not to hear his word, they are choosing to have a hard and unbelieving heart? Do we understand that we are doing the same if we make the same choice?

It seems that God purposely magnifies the intended impact of these truths in 3:12 which says, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." As we read these sobering words of warning, akin to God's first warning in Heb. 2:1, can we not also read the hopeful heart of their Father? Is he not desiring that his children would obey his plea, and deeply consider the presence of unbelief in their hearts that will separate them from the presence of their Father? Is he not trying to persuade them to turn from their careless attitude toward his Word and deeply consider the consequence of their choice? Is he not revealing to them the danger of having the same evil heart of unbelief that the children in the wilderness had, that denied them an entrance into GOD'S REST?

Of that generation of wilderness wanderers, God said in verse 10, "They do alway err in their heart". In verse 12, he further reveals that this was due to their having "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." The concept of "departing" not only involved rejecting and abandoning their God and his Word, but instigating revolt against him. We see this in the definition of the word, "departing".

Do we understand that when we get out of order with God through leaning unto our own fleshly understanding, our fellowship is broken and we are in effect, revolting against God? At this point, we have an evil heart of unbelief, having lost the fellowship and peace and rest, that faith affords us. In effect, we become faithless wanderers in the wilderness of this world.

It is more than interesting and notable that God set all these truths in place against the backdrop of his dealings with the unbelieving children of Israel in the wilderness, so that his children in the future would have a clear picture of how he deals with the sin of a careless attitude of unbelief toward his Word. We know this to be true based on I Cor. 10:11 which says, “Now all these things happened unto them (wilderness wanderers) FOR ENSAMPLES: and they are written for OUR ADMONITION, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Here again, the backdrop behind this truth in I Cor.10:11 is his dealing with the children of Israel in the wilderness regarding their sin of unbelief toward his word. Is our loving Father not crying out to his children in Heb. 3, and here in this passage, to consider what happened in the wilderness, and flee from the sin of carelessness toward his word, and the unbelief that follows?

In Heb. 3:6 and 3:14, we see the great need of these believers was to hold fast their confidence in Christ or to maintain their faith in him by giving the more earnest heed to what God’s Word said about him. In verse 6, God tells them “if” they will obey and do this, they will be the house or dwelling place of Jesus Christ. This word, “house,” is also translated “temple” elsewhere. To eliminate any confusion about the meaning of this verse, it must be understood that Christ only dwells or tabernacles in the temple of the new man, where we, through faith, hold fast our confidence and rejoicing of our hope. The joy that produces this rejoicing is produced in the new man when and only when we are walking in the Spirit.

It is here that Christ lives his resurrection life through us in the person of the Spirit of Christ. This is the life Paul was talking about when he said in Gal. 2:20, “and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” The faith required to

hold fast our profession of faith is supplied, yea produced, by the Spirit of Christ within us. (Gal. 5:22) Keep in mind that if we cast away our faith and confidence in Jesus Christ, we are putting off the new man and putting on the old man. Jesus cannot and will not make the old man of sin and unbelief his house and dwelling place.

Again, in verse 14, God reveals to them that “if” they will hold fast the beginning of their confidence steadfastly, they will be made partakers of Jesus Christ. It needs to be understood that this verse is not talking about partaking of Christ in personal salvation, but in PERSONAL SANCTIFICATION. It is taking part in the resurrection life of Jesus Christ when he is living his life through us.

God says it this way in II Pet. 1:4: “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust”. This truly is Christ in us, the hope of glory and glorious living. This is a life of a GLORIOUS REST of living by the FAITH and POWER of Christ over our old man, as well as over the world and the devil.

The alternative to this life of faith and confidence in Christ was a life of unbelief for these faithless Hebrew believers, as it is for believers today who neglect so great salvation by allowing the Word of God to flow carelessly by. God tells us in Heb. 3:17 that the carcasses of those that sinned fell in the wilderness. They did not escape God’s judgment in spite of the fact that he loved them! Let us not forget, as many Hebrew believers did, that though God is a God of love, he is also a God of holiness and justice. Let us also not forget that the backdrop of the provocation in the wilderness is set as an example for us. FEAR GOD!

What will it take for believers to once again have the fear of God in their lives? To neglect or make light of the Word of God is an ignorance that left the carcasses of many believers lying in the wilderness of unbelief, and will continue doing so today to those of us that neglect SO GREAT SALVATION.

Heb. 3:18-19: “And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”

This passage speaks of the Promised Land rest that was denied those wilderness wanderers of old. This Promised Land was not just a land of milk and honey but a land of promise that God would defeat all their enemies, whereupon they would live in peace and prosperity. The essence of verses 18-19 is that God made them another promise as we see in the word “sware”, that they would not enter into his rest because of their sin of unbelief.

So, what might we learn from these verses? Perhaps it would be that all promises that God makes to us regarding our personal sanctification and the blessings he has in store are based upon our believing and applying his word unto righteousness. Are not promises of peace and spiritual prosperity made to his new creatures in Christ? Are his promises not wonderful in content and scope, yet conditional and limited to those believers that walk after or in the Spirit and in the new man?

II Pet. 1:4 says, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” Does not God make it clear that his exceeding great and precious promises are given unto us based on the condition that we choose to escape the corruption that is in this world? The

only way we can do this is by choosing to put off the old man which according to Eph. 4:22, is “corrupt according to the deceitful lusts”, and putting on the new man, which according to Eph. 4:24, “is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Chapter Four

As we leave chapter three with these parting words, “they could not enter in (to God’s rest) because of unbelief”, we enter into chapter four with the words, “Let us fear, lest (in danger that) a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any should come short of it.”

Fear what? Well, a good place to start would be fearing God, followed by fearing that we would come short of our Lord’s promise of rest through unbelief. The basic premise of this context seems to be that God’s promise of rest for believers, then and now, is reserved for those that will LAY HOLD ON HIS PROMISE BY FAITH IN HIS WORD. The wonderful truth is that God will not only supply the rest, but the faith as well, according to Gal. 5:22.

The next question in a spiritually hungry and inquiring mind would probably be, what is this rest for today’s believer? It could probably be said that it is quite similar in principle to the rest promised to Israel, remembering that they were promised complete victory over their enemies and an inheritance of a land flowing with milk and honey. Furthermore, they were to be enriched with cities and homes and cattle and crops of plenty. It was a land of endless opportunity and civil justice under God or divine law. It was to be a land of peace and joy as well as praise and worship of Jehovah God, that made it all possible.

Though many a song pictures the Promised Land and crossing over Jordan as the victory that is ours over death upon crossing

over into heaven, it is much more likely that to today's believer, it is a type or picture of the victorious Christian life; a life of spiritual prosperity and rest for the soul.

It might even be conjectured that life on the Egypt side of Jordan was a type of a believer walking in the flesh as opposed to life in the Promised Land side of Jordan being a picture of our spiritual prosperity when walking after or in the Spirit. It could even be said that life in the Promised Land is a type of the life we live through the Spirit, in God's kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the greatest rest a believer can experience this side of heaven is dwelling under the shadow of his wings in perfect harmony and fellowship with the Father and Son through the communion of the Holy Spirit. Again, let it be understood that it is here that we live the crucified life by the faith of the Son of God. May we TRULY FEAR coming short of the rest that is experienced only when Christ lives his resurrection life through us, when we choose to put off the old man and put on the new man.

After reemphasizing for several more verses the danger of unbelief and the fact that these Hebrew believers fell short of their rest, God says in verse 9, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God". In verse 10, he brings forth a closing, but vital truth, that this rest will not be attained unto by man's efforts or works, but by the energy and power of God in us.

The words "own works" seem to imply, seeking God's rest in the flesh, a far too common quest of vanity among believers today. In what appears to be a final plea or admonition on the subject, it would seem from the evidence of the context that in verse 11, God is encouraging them to labor to enter into his rest, not in their own works, but through faith in God's Word and promises.

Considering that faith is a part of the ninefold fruit of the Spirit produced in the believer that is under the control of the Spirit of Christ, attaining unto this rest, and dispelling unbelief was and is quite doable. It boils down to God's children saying honestly and earnestly, Not my will, but thine be done.

We find in Heb. 4:12-14 that God obviously sees the need to magnify the power of his Word, the Word that was made flesh, "that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God", as our great High Priest. Perhaps we again see the grieved but loving heart of God seeking to rebuild their confidence in Jesus Christ to the level that would sustain them and enable them to hold fast their profession of faith, as he mentions in verse 14.

Heb. 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

After inspiring so many verses that deal with unbelief in the believer's life, it seems only appropriate that the Holy Spirit would now put the source of faith on center stage, and that being the Word of God. We find this truth in his words of inspiration in Rom. 10:17 which says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." It should be remembered that the faithlessness of these believers was alluded to and really began as a result of their careless approach to the Scriptures in Heb. 2:1.

Heb. 4:14-15: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”

Not only does God magnify his powerful and quickening, or life-giving word in the latter part of chapter four, but also his Son’s exalted role in their lives as their GREAT HIGH PRIEST, as we see in verses 14-15. This role would not carry the same weight of significance to a Gentile believer as it would in the mind and heart of a Jewish believer. Why so?

Among the Israelites, their great High Priest was a uniquely revered spiritual icon. This was the priest of all priests. This was the man that was appointed by God to enter into the Holy of Holies once a year and make an atonement for their sins. This man represented not only the forgiveness of their sins, but their hope of God’s promised blessings and prosperity for life and land in the coming year. Finally, this was the only man on earth that could enter into the very presence of God and come out alive to tell about it.

The supreme privilege of having Jesus Christ as their GREAT HIGH PRIEST was that he was not just a priest of a nation, but an individual personal priest for each believer. With this in mind, God closes the chapter in these words from 4:16, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” The very fact that they could come into the presence of Jehovah God through their own personal great High Priest and have him care enough about them PERSONALLY to minister mercy, grace, and help in their time of need had to be an ASTONISHING TRUTH to the heart and mind of a Jewish believer. This followed right on the heels of being told in verse 15 that their High Priest was so personal that he was

touched or sympathized in his heart with the feeling of their infirmities.

Can we not see the penetrating impression their Father was seeking to make on his children that were snared in the sin of unbelief? Not only do we see the heart of the Father, but the heart of Jesus Christ their High Priest as well, as he sympathizes with his brethren to the point that he can actually feel the pain and sorrow of their infirmities. What an impact this must have had on the Jewish mind and heart! In reality, should it not have a life changing effect on our lives also, if we give the proper consideration to these truths as our example?

After presenting to them, Jesus, that had passed into the heavens as their great High Priest, capable of being touched with all their infirmities in verses 14-15, God seems to give a personal invitation in verse 16 in these words: "Let us therefore come boldly (with full confidence) unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

We find in these twenty four words an unprecedented honor akin to the UNPRECEDENTED HONOR of the twenty four elders falling down and worshipping him that liveth for ever and ever in the presence of ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. (Rev.5:11-14)

"But we see Jesus"! Do we really? Would to our God that we could come boldly unto the throne of grace, overwhelmed with the worthiness of our own personal High Priest and Lamb of God, with the same spirit of awe and worship as did the twenty four elders. All of God's children have been invited to God's place of grace. If we will accept with Spirit humbled willingness, the obtaining of mercy and grace to help in time of need awaits us!

Chapter Five

As we enter into chapter five, if it might be said reverently, God seems to ride this impacting wave of living waters right on into the first ten verses of this chapter; further magnifying the heavenly office and ministry of Jesus Christ as the Hebrew's High Priest.

Perhaps a passing thought would be, why ten more verses about the priesthood of Jesus? Hasn't God made his point, and wonderfully well at that? Let us understand that not one verse in Scripture was placed where it is in vain. Every verse is placed by divine purpose and design even as he purposed and designed the placement of heavenly celestial bodies in his universe. Every word and verse was placed with the purpose of having a profitable impact in the hearts and lives of his beloved children.

Continuing to explain the priesthood of Jesus Christ, God uses a comparison of the Levitical Priesthood after the Order of Aaron to that of the PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHISEDEC, seemingly in order to show the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Heb. 5:1 says, "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins:".

We see Jesus taken from among the Godhead, having been ordained by God the Father for men in things pertaining to God. Whereas the Aaronic priesthood offered gifts and sacrifices for sins, this Christ of the priesthood of Melchisedec offered his body, which was prepared of God for this purpose, as the one final sacrifice for sins forever. (Heb.10:6 and Heb.10:12.)

No doubt, the Father desired that through this truth his faithless children would understand why Jesus was THE WAY,

THE TRUTH, and THE LIFE, and that no man could come unto the Father but through this one final sacrifice. Surely, they would be able to see in this divine comparison of priesthoods why there was none other name given among men, whereby they could come unto the Father, including the revered names of Abraham and Moses.

Heb. 5:2: “Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.”

The second comparison of the two priesthoods in 5:2 reveals that the Aaronic priesthood, which was taken from among men, could have compassion on the ignorant and the wayward, for that they too were “compassed with infirmity”. The phrase “compassed with infirmity”, means “that they (the priests) could grasp mentally the extent and limitations of man’s mental and moral weaknesses, because they had the same infirmities and weaknesses.”

Heb. 5:3: “And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, TO OFFER FOR SINS.”

Because the Aaronic priest was compassed with the same infirmities as the people he was offering gifts and sacrifices for, he had to offer sacrifices FOR HIS SINS as well.

We find in 4:15 that Jesus, having taken on the form of a man, was touched and tempted with all of man’s infirmities like as we are, yet “WITHOUT SIN”. The Priesthood of Melchisedec was superior in that Jesus, the high priest, could not only have compassion on the ignorant and the wayward, but as the spotless and SINLESS Lamb of God, be offered as the ONE FINAL

SACRIFICE for sins. He had the power and the provision necessary to bring the ignorant and the wayward to repentance and forgiveness of their sins. Let it never be forgotten that he came “to seek and to save that which was lost”, and will continue to do so through his Spirit and his children until his return.

In Heb. 5:4-5, we find God explaining that just as no man dared glorify himself by taking the honor upon himself to fulfill the ordained office of a priest, “So Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest”. It somehow seems that God is informing these believers that Jesus did not take it upon himself to come down and overthrow their religious world and usurp the authority of Moses, but according to verse 6, he received this lofty coronation to this Supreme Office of Divine Ministry to the “Order of Melchisedec” from his Father. Just as his Father said, “Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee” in verse 5, he also said with divine authority in verse 6, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

Heb. 5:7-8 says, “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;”

O that a fountain of tears could spring forth from our hearts and flow through our eyes as a sacrifice to Jesus Christ for the spiritual and physical trauma and agony that God the Son suffered so that we might become sons of God!

Was this perhaps the travail of body and soul that he experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane? Was this the first time in eternity that our Lord had encountered the soul-wrenching

suffering inflicted by that cold and heartless enemy called fear? Could there have been strong crying and tears heard by legions of angels in the throne room of the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity, who yet was also a broken hearted Father, who had the power to save his beloved Son from death?

Though all-powerful, the Father, having blueprinted the plan of salvation before the foundation of the world, knew according to verse 8 that, "Though he were a Son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered;". Furthermore, according to verse 9, he knew that his Son's suffering must be fulfilled in order for him to be made perfect and prepared to become the "author of eternal salvation". Truly Jesus Christ the Son of God and God the Son wrote the book on salvation!

If the Holy Spirit has borne witness of these truths in not only our minds, but in our hearts, how could we not be stirred to a recommitment of love and loyalty to the Lover and Savior of our souls? How could it not seem anything but our reasonable service to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto our Father?

Heb. 2:9-10 says, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the SUFFERING OF DEATH, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Heb. 2:17-18 says, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath

SUFFERED BEING TEMPTED, he is able to succor them that are tempted.”

Truly there was ONLY ONE in eternity that would ever attain unto the GREAT HIGH PRIESTHOOD of the ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC, and this one is the personal High Priest of every believer that chooses to come boldly unto the throne of grace by his shed blood, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Heb. 5:10-11 says, “Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec, Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.”

Though there were many more truths to be revealed about Melchisedec, they were “hard to be uttered”, which infers “difficulty to explain due to a self-inflicted hearing malady”. We find the nature of this malady in the word “dull”. The Greek word here is the same as for the word “slothful” in Heb.6:12. They had a lazy, sluggish ear that was MORE IN TUNE WITH THE FLESH, than the Spirit, thus inhibiting their spiritual understanding.

As we saw in Heb. 2:1, they were admonished to give the more earnest heed to the things which they had heard, lest (in danger that) they should let them slip. (flow carelessly by) Strong’s Concordance implies that this condition left them “spiritually stupid or in a senseless stupor of spiritual ignorance and insensitivity.” This characterizes our lives when we choose to walk in the flesh rather than in the Spirit. This choice puts off the new man and puts on the old man.

Heb. 5:12 says, “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles (Holy Scriptures) of God; and are BECOME SUCH as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”

Truly we are seeing the principle of sowing and reaping being manifested in this passage. They were told in Heb. 2:1 that they “ought” to give the more earnest heed to God’s Word. The word “ought” means that it is a binding necessity and an imposed obligation from God’s point of view. The words “more earnest heed” means, superabundant attention and consideration to. They sowed a casual and careless attitude toward the life producing and maturing words which they had heard, thus they are found in Heb. 5:11 with a severe hearing impairment which has set them back to spiritual infancy, in effect, sucking on a baby bottle.

Though these are stunning truths, in reality this spiritual malady is quite common in today’s churches. To add to the seriousness of this widespread impairment and malady, let it be remembered that Rom.10:17 says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” It would not be a far reach to say that the average believer today is afflicted with this malady and is simply going through the motions of faithfulness at best, yet is living in a faithless stupor of insensitivity to both the truth and the Spirit of truth.

Heb. 5:13 says, “For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.”

Now under normal circumstances, it is good and proper in God’s eyes for a new born again believer to feed upon and use the milk of the Word. I Pet. 2:2 says, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”. Let us

take note however, that in Heb. 5:12, it says, “and are BECOME SUCH as have need of milk”. The term “become such” implies “passing from one spiritual state to another”, and in this context, “passing from a higher state of spiritual growth to a lower state of spiritual growth”. What a price to pay for a careless and lazy attitude toward the wonderful life transforming Word of God.

God tells us that these lazy, careless, and faithless babies were unskillful in the use of the Word of righteousness. The word “useth” in verse 13 carries the idea of “PARTICIPATING and SHARING”. It is a binding necessity and divinely-imposed obligation for US to give super-abundant attention and consideration to the Word the Spirit of truth teaches US, such that we might participate with our Lord and share his Word for the sake and the cause of Christ. It is clear to see in this verse that God desires for us to be skillful in the use of the Word of righteousness.

We could deduce also in this verse that everyone that uses the strong meat of the Word is skillful in the Word of righteousness, for he is of full age spiritually, as we will see in verse 14. Perhaps we could also conclude that spiritual maturing or the process of coming to full age is closely tied to Spirit imparted understanding, that enables us to apply the Word to our moment by moment walk.

Heb. 5:14: “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

Herein lies what could be heralded as the “Secret of Sanctification” closely akin to the “Secret of Walking in the Spirit”,

both vital truths to coming to full age, which in function is all about becoming conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

How can we become skillful in the Word of righteousness if we do not walk consistently in the Spirit that is the revealer of spiritual understanding through the enlightening the eyes of our understanding? You cannot separate the person and work of the Holy Spirit from personal sanctification and spiritual growth.

Let us look into Heb. 5:14 and examine this select group of believers spoken of as “them that are of full age”, and itemize a few comparisons to those called “babes”.

1. The mature believers walk consistently in the Spirit, having the eyes of their understanding enlightened, while the immature believers walk in the fleshy darkness of a stupor of ignorance.
2. Those of full age are qualified to be teachers of the Word, while those that are dull of hearing have need that one teach them again the elementary principles of the Word.
3. Those that have learned to walk a reasonably consistent manner in the Spirit are quite sensitive to the witness of the Spirit within them, which enables them not only to fellowship with the Father and the Son, but to be led and taught by him. Those that have allowed the Word to flow carelessly by them with no desire to take heed thereunto, are walking in the flesh, not as friends of God, but as enemies.
4. Those that consider it a binding necessity to give superabundant attention and consideration to their God's words have a living faith and abundant life, while those with impaired hearing and an impaired heart are walking dead men, living in unbelief, misery, and spiritual death.

It should be noted that both of these groups under consideration are saints of God. Keep in mind that our Father is not willing that any should perish in their sin, but that ALL MEN saved or lost, should come unto repentance. I Thess. 4:3 says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification....". Truly it is our Lord's desire and will that we walk consistently in his Spirit, renewing us in the spirit of our minds unto righteous and holy living.

However, it is also true that there is no believer that walks in the Spirit all the time, as much as we desire to do so. Like many of these Hebrew believers, we become insensitive to the Spirit and to the Word of God at times. Gal. 5:16 says, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

The problem is, that there are seasons when we desire carnal pleasures and satisfaction, therefore, we yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness. This is called walking in or after the flesh. It is here that we too become dull of hearing due to the nature of the old man and the carnal mind. Rom. 8:7 says, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." When we choose to put off the new man and put on the old man, we choose to put on a carnal mind which hates God and his Word. At this point, we are living in unconfessed sin under God's condemnation, as enemies of God and his Son.

The solution to the problem is found in Eph. 4:22-23 which says, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation (lifestyle) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

We must believe God and accept the fact that we were deceived by our corruptible lusts! The Holy Spirit will bear witness to this truth as he reproves and convicts us of our sin. He will gently and lovingly take us by our hand, so to say, and lead us to the I Jn.1:9 blood gate, where after our contrite confession of our sin, our High Priest will sprinkle his blood on our unrighteous heart, purifying our defiled conscience, and completely forgiving us of all unrighteousness. (Heb.10:19-22)

This is exactly what these faithless Hebrews needed to do. Sad to say, they had hardened their hearts and shut their ears to the voice of the Spirit. Only God knows how many times, and in how many ways, the loving hand of the Spirit reached out for theirs, only to have them snatch their unclean hands away, despising the grace he was offering.

Now, you might be saying to yourself that this is stretching it a bit! Let us examine for a moment the words of Heb.10:29 which says, “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath DONE DESPITE UNTO THE SPIRIT OF GRACE?”

Perhaps this should be set aside as a sanctified “Selah moment” as we ponder the mind and heart of God in regards to how he views our sins against the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Prov. 29:1 says, “He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

According to the language of Heb.10, these believers could have snatched their hand away from the wooing hand of God for the last time. The word “remedy” in Prov. 29:1 speaks of no cure, no healing, and no deliverance, period! How could this be?

The answer might be found in the words, “and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace” in Heb.10:29. The word “despite” implies EXTREME HATRED with a desire to insult or injure. They were infuriated by the very presence of the Spirit and despised his reproof, conviction, and offer of grace to help in time of need. They scorned and mocked the Holy Spirit and the grace he offered. God tells us that these believers that were dull of hearing had need that one teach them again, but there is no indication that they ever again attained a reachable and teachable spirit.

This brings up an interesting question. Where do we fit into this picture? Do we have a reachable teachable spirit? Are we sensitive enough to know when the Spirit is reaching his hand out to us to lead us into the way of righteousness and true holiness? Are we easily trained to be skillful in the use of the Word of righteousness? Are we growing and maturing with a right attitude toward God’s Word?

As we allow the Holy Spirit to help us answer these questions, let us read again the words of Heb.5:14 which says, “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their SENSES EXERCISED to discern both good and evil.”

We find in this verse of amazing potential God’s focus on them that have come to full age through the use of God’s SPIRITUAL EXERCISE PROGRAM. This program guarantees an enabling to lay aside all our excess weights, and run our race unto VICTORY and GOD’S GLORY.

I Tim. 4:8 says, “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.” It would seem that there is a silent contrast here between the exercise of the body

and the SPIRITUAL EXERCISE of the soul and spirit that PRODUCES GODLINESS.

We do for sure find in Heb. 5:14 a SPIRITUAL EXERCISE PROGRAM that will produce righteousness and holiness, and thus godliness. In this context, this spiritual exercise is guaranteed by God to promote spiritual growth unto full maturity, which YIELDS CHRISTLIKENESS, or the image of Christ in us. The nature of this spiritual exercise is alluded to in the word “USE”, which means “HABITUAL PRACTICE”, speaking of the habitual practice of employing the Word of righteousness in our walk.

God goes into greater detail on the “How To” of this spiritual regimen in the words “have their SENSES EXERCISED to discern both good and evil.” With the introduction of this phrase, the INTENSITY of this exercise program has been cranked up a notch or two. We find this in the word “EXERCISE” bearing the meaning of “TRAINING BY PRACTICING NAKED.” In our amazement that the Holy Spirit chose this word, we need to understand that in the Greek culture this word would have been commonly used among athletes that were training for the Greek Olympics. It is unlikely that it was coincidental that the Hebrews were told in Heb.12:1: “let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”

The “How To” in Heb. 5:14 involved habitually practicing the use of the Word of righteousness, with every weight laid aside, RIGOROUSLY exercising the FIVE SENSES TO DISCERN BOTH GOOD AND EVIL, under the coaching and training regimen of the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps we can see the embodiment of this truth in Paul’s life in I Cor. 9:25-27, in these words, “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.”

What better way to keep under our body and bring it into subjection than to employ or use the Word of righteousness to expose ANY ENEMY ACTIVITY in the realm of our SENSES. Is it not what we see, what we taste, what we hear, what we smell, or what we touch or feel that ENTICES US and DRAWS US AWAY from righteousness, as we yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness?

The MORE DISCIPLINED our regimen of training and habitual practice of recognizing and exposing evil in our senses, under the coaching of the Holy Spirit, the MORE SUCCESSFUL we will be in obtaining the crown and glorifying our Father and his Son.

As we seek to digest the strong meat found in chapter five, let us determine to wipe our spiritual slate clean at the blood gate. May we choose to put off the old man and put on the new man, and be renewed in the spirit of our minds by the Word of God. Let us PURPOSE IN OUR HEARTS, as transformed creatures, to BECOME HIGHLY SKILLED in the use of the Word of righteousness through a Spirit controlled, reachable, teachable spirit. May we choose to make it an URGENT PRIORITY to enroll in God’s “Spiritual Exercise Program” and allow him to mature us, and qualify us as a Spirit-enabled discerners of both good and evil.

Chapter Six

Heb. 6:1-3: “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrines of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.”

As we follow the mind and the heart of the Spirit from the last several verses of chapter five into chapter six, we find that he is once again emphasizing the need of those saints that were not growing and maturing as they should have been, to come unto perfection or full age. He makes it clear that if they are going to develop spiritually, they must move on to greener pastures that provide the necessary nourishment to build them up in the faith.

He is essentially telling them to leave the milk of the Word or the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, whereupon he lists those principles for clarity.

The word “leaving” in 6:1 is also translated elsewhere as “lay aside”. The elements of the doctrine of Christ that the Spirit chose to itemize were:

1. The foundation of repentance from dead works
2. Faith toward God
3. The doctrine of baptisms
4. Laying on of hands.
5. Resurrection of the dead (Rapture?)
6. Eternal judgment

God is instructing these believers to lay aside these teachings or doctrines in reference to the context of personal sanctification or spiritual maturity. He seems to be saying that focusing on these truths will not contribute to coming to full age.

Perhaps it would be safe to say with the support and gravity of this present context that these truths do not fall into God's category of "strong meat". Is God not saying that the believer that habitually uses these "milk" doctrines in place of his "strong meat doctrines" will never become skilful in the use of the word of righteousness? Is God not revealing a vital and critical truth that the believer whose diet consists mostly of these milk doctrines will never come to full age but remain a spiritual dwarf? Is he not also revealing that they will never mature to the spiritual level that is necessary to have their five senses exercised to discern both good and evil? It would seem that the most vital and critical revelation is that they will never become conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, their Redeemer.

Just as it is today, there was in the Hebrews' lives a greater need to feed on the many facets of the doctrines of personal sanctification, beginning with the doctrine of Walking in the Spirit and allowing Christ Jesus to live his resurrection life through them. It is a foundational truth that when we got saved, we were born again by the Holy Spirit just as Jesus told Nicodemus he must be. Furthermore, we were indwelt by the Spirit, and even sealed by the Holy Spirit. We were filled with as much of the Spirit at the moment of salvation as we would ever receive. Our life was in and of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit giveth life. (II Cor.3:6)

A penetrating question would be, is it still that way today, at this very moment? Well, is it? Gal. 5:25 says, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." When we got saved, we immediately were alive in the Spirit. Our responsibility from that point forward was to walk in the Spirit, and so it is at this very moment. Gal. 5:16 says, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

God makes it very clear in the Pauline Epistles that we are either walking in the Spirit and not fulfilling the lusts of our flesh, or we are walking in or after the flesh, and fulfilling the lusts of our flesh. If we are walking in the Spirit, we are walking in the new man. If we are walking in the flesh, we are walking in the old man. We are walking in one or the other at any given moment, and it is our responsibility to know through the witness of the Word and the Spirit, which one we are walking in.

We learn in James 1:14-15 that our lusts are fulfilled when they wed with luring enticements, whereupon there is a conception that births or brings forth sin. This means that at any given moment that we are not walking in the Spirit, we are walking in sin. To walk in the flesh is to walk in sin. (Gal. 5:19-21) To walk in the Spirit is to walk in righteousness and true holiness. Where are you walking?

At this critical juncture of crisis, we are instructed by God in Eph. 4:22-24 to put off the old man and put on the new man. How do we do that? We do so by listening to the reproving and convicting voice or witness of the Spirit and the Word, and confessing our sin, or sins. I Jn. 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." At this instant, we put off the old man and put on the new man. We are also no longer walking in the flesh, but are walking in the Spirit. We find in I Jn.1:7 that we are also "walking in the light, as he is in the light," and HAVE FELLOWSHIP with the Father and the Son. Only the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness can enjoy this privilege. It is here that we bring our Father and his Son their greatest delight or pleasure!

These basic truths of sanctification are an example of the truths that the Hebrew believers needed, to go on unto perfection,

that they might come to full age. Perhaps God would consider this to be part of the strong meat of the Word of God.

Heb.6:3 and several verses that follow, are often considered somewhat mysterious, or at least difficult to interpret. What does God mean when he says, "And this will we do, if God permit"? We would no doubt agree that the general truth that is conveyed is that these believers could only go on to perfection if God allows them to, or gives them permission to.

In view of what we have already studied, we know assuredly that there will be no going on or growing on to maturity for the believer that abides in unbelief, as many of these Hebrew believers were.

Only when we walk in the Spirit will God permit us to go on to perfection. ONLY THEN are we walking in the Spirit by faith, because faith is one portion of the ninefold fruit of the Spirit that is produced in us by the Spirit. It must be further understood that this faith is only produced when we have a reachable, teachable spirit that is in submission to and submersed in the Word of God. Why so? Because, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." These same truths applied to the Hebrew believers.

Another contextual reason for saying, "And this will we do, if God permit," can perhaps be found in verse 6 in these words, "If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance". The fact is, that unless a believer is renewed unto repentance, God cannot permit them to "go on unto perfection" and conformation to the image of Christ.

Heb. 6:4-6: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

Let us begin our examination of this passage by establishing who the “those” and the “them” are. Take note, first of all, that they were “once enlightened”, telling us that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ had shined into their hearts. They had also “tasted of the heavenly gift” of salvation. The word “tasted” carries the meaning of “HAVING EXPERIENCED”. Having tasted the gift of salvation, they became “partakers” or “PARTICIPANTS” of the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost. Last, but not least, they “tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come”. It would probably not be a stretch to say that in the early days following their conversion, they tasted or experienced the transforming power of God’s Word, having become new creatures in Christ, with old things and appetites passing away, and all things becoming new, as they entered the new world of the KINGDOM OF GOD. Rom. 14:17 tells us that this is a kingdom of “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST.”

Having established the unquestionable credentials of these born again believers in that they were indeed once enlightened, we must next determine why God decided that it would be impossible to renew them to repentance, if they should fall away. Since we know for a fact that it is GOD’S WILL for all of his children to come unto repentance, we can safely say that the reason why they couldn’t obtain repentance is because of a problem with THEIR WILL.

The key here is in the words “seeing they”, which means “because”. So we see that the reason they couldn’t come unto

repentance was because they were “crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame.”

Wow! How could this be? Could it be that they had turned back to the Mosaic Law and the offering of bulls and goats to atone for their sins? It is quite apparent that they could not recrucify Jesus Christ literally, therefore they must have been doing so figuratively. Heb. 9:9 tells us that the offering of gifts and sacrifices were a “figure for the time then present.” Is it not a given that these offerings of gifts and sacrifices were a figure of the offering of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, as the one final sacrifice for man’s sins? Would not these Hebrew believers have, in a sense, been crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh in a figure everytime they offered an animal sacrifice to atone for their sins, and putting him to an open shame?

We find in Heb. 6:6 that because of their sin of unbelief, they had fallen away into a spiritual state that made it impossible to renew them again unto repentance. Our first thought might be to question what kind of spiritual state would limit God from granting repentance to his children.

Gal. 5:4-5 says, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law: ye are FALLEN FROM GRACE. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” It seems to be evident that there was an element of the Hebrew believers that had cast away their confidence in Jesus Christ and were no longer waiting on him as their hope of righteousness by faith. Christ had become of no effect unto them, as they sought to be justified by the law, just as the Galatians had. Like the Galatians, the Hebrew saints had entered into a state of spiritual death, where there was a complete absence of grace. Grace is always by faith, whether the subject is salvation or sanctification.

Rom. 5:1-2 says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." It would seem that we have scriptural authority to say that when these believers cast away their faith in Jesus Christ, they also lost their "access into this grace wherein we stand". Because of this, they were no longer standing in grace, but had fallen from grace. God makes it clear that BECAUSE OF THIS, it was no longer possible to renew them again unto repentance.

Perhaps another reason that it was impossible to renew them again unto repentance could be found in the origin and nature of repentance itself. This change of heart and mind toward one's sin always follows godly sorrow toward one's sin. This sorrow, or grievous heaviness for one's sin according to II Cor.7:10, "WORKETH REPENTANCE".

The Holy Spirit begins his work of convicting and convincing of one's transgression against one's God at the moment of the offense. He uses the hammer of the Word of God to break and pulverize to a powder the heart and stubborn spirit that has been hardened against God. We find this truth in the scriptural term "contrite" in Isaiah 57:15, where God tells us that he dwells with him that is of a "contrite and humble spirit". God's goal of love is to humble man's heart to the point of a totally surrendered spirit of obedience. The problem with these believers in Heb. 6 was that they would not surrender, because, according to Heb. 10:29, they had "done despite to the Spirit of grace", whose work and ministering was their only hope of being restored to righteousness and grace. It truly was impossible to renew them again to repentance.

Heb. 9:12-14: “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

Heb.10:4: “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.”

Heb.10:6: “In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

Heb.10:10-11: “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.”

Passage after passage, you can sense the heart of God the Father yearning upon the hearts of his children to remain confident in the offering of the body and blood of Jesus Christ as their one final sacrifice forever. Though many had fallen from grace and cast away their confidence in Christ as their hope of righteousness by faith, there were no doubt many more that were waiting, through the Spirit, for the hope of righteousness by faith, as Paul said he and many of the Galatians were doing in Gal. 5:5.

All of the faithful that were yet standing in grace would mirror the analogy given in Heb. 6:7 in these words, “For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:”. It would seem that the “earth” typifies the thirsting believer that gives the more earnest heed to the Word of God.

The “rain”, if that was the mind of the Spirit, would be the Word of God that nourishes and brings forth fruitfulness and God’s blessings.

All of the unfaithful that were no longer standing in grace, having cast away their faith and confidence in Christ, are pictured in Heb.6:8 in these words, “But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.”

I think we will find in I Cor.9:27 that winding up as a part of this crowd was one of Paul’s greatest fears. He said here, “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.” The word “castaway” and the word “rejected” in Heb. 6:8 come from the same Greek word. Let us dispel right now any thought that verse 8 teaches that a believer could, or can lose his salvation. Is it possible to imagine that the Apostle Paul ever had a concern about losing his salvation?

While some might think that the words, “is nigh unto cursing” supports this unbiblical doctrine, they actually assist in denying credibility to such a notion when understood in view of comparing Scripture with Scripture. Let us begin our examination of this phrase with the common truth that cursing in Scripture is always the opposite of blessing. Even in this context, we find the faithful receiving blessings in verse 7, and the unfaithful being nigh unto cursing in verse 8. Would we not all agree that “being nigh unto cursing” means being near unto being cursed? Would we also agree that “being nigh unto cursing” is not the same as being cursed?

As we follow this train of thought, may we consider the fact that if a man was cursed by God, that man would have no further access to the blessings of God. Now, may our attention be called

to the fact that these believers were not cursed by their God but were near to being cursed by their God.

In an effort to erase forever any thought that these faithless believers or any other believer in God's kingdom could lose their salvation or even one hundred percent of their blessings, let us remember that every believer was blessed "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" at the moment of salvation, according to Eph. 1:3. Perhaps the greatest blessing is found in Eph. 2:4-6 in these words, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus".

This great and glorious blessing, bestowed on God's children, took place in heavenly places at the moment we were born again, because God is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even though we were dead in sins.

If these truths apply to every child of God, would they not also apply to the faithless believers in Heb. 6:8? Do we understand that God cannot and would not curse that which he has blessed? To curse these disobedient children, God would have to go against his own word in Eph. 1:3 and 2:4-6. These Hebrew believers were as spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins in the old man or natural man, as they were the day they were saved, yet were still seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus! Chastened they would be, but cursed they would not be, because of their faithful and loving Father, who was still rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved them.

The final hurdle to be overcome in verse 8 is found in these words, “whose END is to be burned”. Now if we understand the main body of scriptures that teach us about the saints’ “END”, then we have no reason to believe that the word “burned” is talking about hell fire. If we are fully persuaded about what we believe regarding eternal security, then we should search the scriptures to determine how the word “burned” could relate to a saints’ “END”, which, by the way, does not refer to his soul.

It is the right and duty of every saint of God to be fully persuaded as to their spiritual understanding of a given passage or doctrine, and there is certainly no desire here to infringe on another’s persuasion. However, there is a credibly relatable passage that warrants our attention and deep consideration found in I Cor.3:11-15 which says, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

As we conclude verse 8, it seems apparent that “that which beareth thorns and briers”, though they will not lose their positional blessings granted by grace through faith, will lose all of their blessings based upon the practice of their faith, as well as any rewards granted to the faithful at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Heb. 6:9-12: “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love,

which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

It is not certain whether these faithful servants found in this passage were the remnant or whether the unfaithful believers that had cast away their confidence were the remnant. Regardless of how many faithful remained, they were responsible before God to purge out any old leaven that were in the process of leavening the remaining faithful lump.

I Cor. 5:6 says, “Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

It is obvious that leaven had entered into the Hebrew lump or assembly, or perhaps assemblies. It is also apparent based on biblical principles found in I Cor. 5:6-13, that it was a divinely imposed responsibility for the assembly to remove the leaven from their midst to stop it from spreading to the whole lump. If we assume the best case scenario, that the Hebrews that were still faithful to the Lord were obedient to these scriptural principles, there would still remain an element of residual damage. There would be those that were sorely affected by the leaven, tainted in heart and mind, but not fully persuaded to follow in the trespasser’s steps.

It could be that it was this residual element which was being admonished by these words in verse 11, “And we desire that

every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end". In verse 10, these saints are encouraged by the words, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." It is most likely that those that were sorely affected, but not fully persuaded had lost a portion of their full assurance of hope, which would be based upon their full assurance of faith. It is evident from reading chapter four that unbelief was quite common in the Hebrew assembly to the degree that many were not holding fast their profession of faith in Christ.

Can we not see a tenderhearted cry from their Father, with a yearning appeal, that they be restored to fellowship and faithfulness? Verse 9 states, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." God will go on in verse 10 to recall to their memory the good works that had accompanied their salvation in their past of ministering to the saints. These works were apparently continuing to be performed, in spite of their sorely affected spiritual state. Through restored fellowship and faithfulness, these believers could return to "the same diligence to the full assurance of hope."

It is vitally important to understand that once their fellowship was restored, their walk in the Spirit was restored as well. It is here that the Holy Spirit was at liberty to perform his ministry of producing the ninefold fruit of the Spirit, one of which was "faith". It is here also that these believers were empowered by that faith to hold fast the profession of their faith, and return to their labor of love, in ministering to their brothers and sisters in Christ. Their return to fellowship and walking in the Spirit enabled the Holy

Spirit to produce not only the faith they needed, but the fruit of the Spirit “love”, that they needed to compel them to minister.

Seeking the mind of the Spirit as we move into verse 12, let us ponder his thought that begins in verse 11 and flows into verse 12: “And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful.....”

Let us first notice that it seems that diligence is presented as the antidote to slothfulness. Surely it would be safe to say in the context of chapter 6, that diligence was a missing virtue in the life of those that were “dull of hearing.” This character flaw brought about much spiritual calamity and catastrophe in the lives of those that had fallen from grace. Certainly, they had lost “the same diligence to the full assurance of hope.” They had cast away their confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, because they had cast away their diligence in giving the more earnest heed to the things which they had heard about Jesus Christ. According to Heb. 2:2-3, they had cast away their steadfastness and were neglecting so great salvation, therefore were, by their lack of diligence, not holding fast their profession of faith.

This lack of diligence led to the spiritual malady called “dull of hearing”. Perhaps in the mind of the Spirit, when he said “That ye be not slothful”, he was drawing on his knowledge that the same Greek word was translated “dull” in 6:11. Could it be that the Spirit is saying, “Once you return to fellowship and full assurance of hope, don’t go back to being dull of hearing by letting the word of God slip carelessly by you?”

God says in verse 12, “That ye be not slothful, but be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Keep in mind that “faith” is provided by the Holy Spirit, while “patience” is “an ENABLING by that same Spirit to respond to, and endure adversity or suffering with a calm, unruffled spirit”. This ENABLING is provided through the fruit of the Spirit called “longsuffering”. A key part of the definition of “longsuffering” is “patience”. Could it be that the reason SO MANY believers become faithless and discouraged and depressed when adversity and sufferings beset them is because they were not under the control of the Spirit of Christ, disallowing the provision of faith and patience?

Perhaps this will shed light on these words from James 1:2-4 which says, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” In Heb. 6:12, the brethren were encouraged to be “FOLLOWERS of them who through FAITH and PATIENCE inherit the promises.”

Who were these “followers”? By virtue of the context and the definition of the word “patience,” they were brethren that were enduring adversity or suffering. Perhaps they were being persecuted by Judaizers for remaining faithfully confident in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. Whatever was trying their faith, they are pictured here as counting it all joy and letting patience have her perfect work, or work of perfection, in bringing them to “full age”.

Their reward for diligence, rather than slothfulness, was inheriting God’s promises made to the joint-heirs of Jesus Christ, who walk faithfully in the Spirit. You can almost feel God’s

passionate desire for his children to show the same diligent pursuit of the full assurance of hope, through faith and patience, that they may obtain the personal inheritance of his promises.

Heb. 6:13-15: “For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.”

Who better could God have chosen to use as an illustration of the obtaining of the personal inheritance of his promise but Abraham? The Hebrews had been taught this story since their youth and readily identified with its importance to Jewish history.

Is not God revealing to them that Abraham, their revered patriarch, showed the required diligent pursuit of the full assurance of hope, through faith and patience, unto the obtaining of the promise? Could they not follow the logical train of thought and come to the realization that obedience to these principles made possible the birth of the nation of Israel? Surely this would encourage them to “shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope”!

Just how important was it for Abraham to show diligence to the full assurance of hope? Gen. 22:18 says, “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; BECAUSE THOU HAST OBEYED MY VOICE.”

Heb. 6:13 says, “For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself”.

The essence and understanding of this verse seems to be found in Gen. 22:15-16 which says, “And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:’.

Heb. 6:14 says, “Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.”

The truth of this verse reaches back to Gen. 22:17 which says, “That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.”

It would seem that this is “the oath for confirmation” that is mentioned in Heb. 6:16 that God swore by himself and that was also called the promise that God made to Abraham in verse 13. This may also be the two “immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie” spoken of in verse 18.

Heb. 6:15 says, “And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.”

We, of course, know that Abraham obtained the promise through Isaac, but the emphasis here is not so much on this fact, but that through faith and patience he endured unto the inheritance of the promise. Remember that Abraham was set forth in this context as an example or illustration to the Hebrew believers to be followed; that they also should, through faith and patience, inherit the promises as we see in verse 12.

God makes it clear in verse 18 that this example was set forth that they “might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (The Hebrew believers).

Heb. 6:19-20: “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

It is interesting that we have come full circle from Heb.5:6 where we find the words, “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” God went on in 5:9-10 revealing that Jesus Christ “became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.” God said in 5:11 that he had many more things to say about this priesthood but could not because his listeners were afflicted with dullness of hearing. We know from the context of the book of Hebrews that these believers had cast away their confidence in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

As we come full circle in Heb. 6:19-20, God returns to the subject of Jesus being their High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, and is presented not only as the author of their salvation, but as the Anchor of their soul, both sure and stedfast.

Perhaps most importantly for these believers at this time, Jesus is set forth as their FORERUNNER into the Holy of Holies. We find God giving even greater emphasis and expounding on this truth in Heb.10:19 where he says, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”

Would it not be safe to say that if we want Jesus, our High Priest, to be the Anchor of our soul, we must also enter into that

within the veil or into the holiest? By virtue of the term 'Anchor of our soul', would it not be true that if we are not within the veil, our soul will be floundering on the sea of life without the hope that is "both sure and stedfast", according to Heb. 6:19?

How then do we follow our Forerunner and Anchor of our soul into the veil? Once again, we find the answer in the words, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." I Jn.1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I Jn.1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." It is here that we put off the old man and put on the new man, which is Christ in us, the hope of glory.

According to Eph. 4:24, the new man is created after God in righteousness and true holiness. With the same righteousness and true holiness as God himself, we are filled with the Spirit of Christ himself, whereupon he lives his resurrection life through us. It is here that we can truly say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." It could be said with all assurance that it is here that Christ is the hope that we have as an Anchor of our soul, both sure, and stedfast.

Chapter 7

God closed out chapter six emphasizing the fact, once again, that Jesus Christ had entered as the Forerunner into the veil having been made an High Priest for ever after the priesthood of Melchisedec. He opens chapter seven exalting the majesty and

glory of this “priest of the Most High God”. Why the continued emphasis regarding this Superior Priesthood? Let it be remembered that many Hebrew believers had turned back to the Law and the Levitical priesthood of the Aaronic Order, seeking to be justified by the works of the Law, and having their sins atoned for by the blood of bulls and goats.

In Heb. 5:1-6, God revealed the astonishing truth that the Levitical priesthood, after the order of Aaron, was being replaced by the priesthood of Melchisedec. He also reveals that his Son Jesus Christ was to be their new High Priest “for ever”. God makes it clear that Jesus did not take this honor upon himself, but was “called of God”, as per 5:4 and 5:10. He also magnified the priesthood of Jesus in that he did not have to, “as for the people, to offer for sins.”(5:4)

As we move into chapter seven, we enter into a new world, indeed an earth-shaking revelation of the end of Judaism, or Jewish religion, and its conformity to ceremonial law, rites, customs, and traditional rules. To many, having their world turned upside down was revolting, and the object of their revolt was Jesus Christ.

God pulled no punches in chapter seven. He showed the inadequacy of the Levitical priesthood, and the superiority of the priesthood of Melchisedec. Heb. 7:11-12 says, “If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the Law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?”

Just hearing these words must have made the blood of many that were loyal to Judaism and their forefathers boil over into riot. Added to their total chaos and religious confusion were these words in 7:12, “For the priesthood being changed, there is made

of necessity a change also of the Law.” We can surely almost feel their pious ire and rage as they would have crucified Jesus again if it were possible, and yet, according to Heb. 6:6, we see them doing just that spiritually in these words, “seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

God declares in verse 12 that because there is a change in the Levitical priesthood, there must be a change “also of the Law”. God knew when he said this that in the Jewish mind the Levitical priesthood revolved around the Law. Verse 18 says, “For there is verily a disanulling of the Commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.” We find in the word “disanulling” an official cancellation of the dispensation of Law. The dispensation of grace, as designed in the mind and heart of our Father, provided them and us with a High Priest that allows us to “come boldly before the throne of grace, and find grace to help in time of need”.

Heb. 7:14-16: “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet FAR MORE EVIDENT: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.”

Along with the cancellation of the Law, we see the cancellation of the Levitical priesthood as well. God seems to be implying that he is also canceling any presumed power of Moses, as it would relate to the priesthood.

Heb. 7:19 For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh to God.

Rom. 7:5-6: “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

II Cor. 3:6: “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; (new covenant) not of the letter, (law) but of the spirit (Holy Spirit): for the letter (law) KILLETH, but the spirit giveth LIFE.”

This bringing in of a better hope was essentially Christ in us, the hope of glory through his very own spirit, rather than being held hostage to shame by the Law. A new law called “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” made us free from the law of sin and death, according to Rom. 8:2.

This new law operates and functions in and through the new man under the control of the Spirit of Christ himself, thus enabling us to “serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” (Rm. 7:6) It is here that our spirit is willingly yielded to the Spirit of God and of Christ within us. It is here that we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, having our own personal High Priest over the house of God, according to Heb.10:21.

Heb. 7:20-22: “And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of

Melchisedec:) By SO MUCH was Jesus made a surety of a BETTER TESTAMENT.”

We find once again the declaration that the eternal priesthood of Jesus was authorized by an oath sworn by the Lord God himself, which divinely qualifies Jesus Christ to be made a surety or guarantee of a better testament than the Old Testament.

Heb. 7:23-24: “And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.”

It is established in these verses that Jesus is made a surety of a better testament or covenant because his priesthood is eternal and unchangeable. There will never be a time when he is not touched or in sympathy (GK. word, *sumpatheo*) with the feeling of our infirmities. His mercies and compassion will continually be renewed and ministered to us.

Heb. 7:25: “Wherefore 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.”

Could it be that this is the crowning superior quality and qualification of this great High Priest that continueth for ever?

Rom. 8:34-35a says, “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”

Do we understand that there will never be a time when we are outside the love of Jesus Christ? Do we understand further that he is our own personal great High Priest and there is not one

infirmity or weakness of body or mind that he does not sympathize with us over? Heb. 7:25 tells us that he EVER LIVETH to make intercession to his Father for us. Though we use this verse to include lost souls, they are actually excluded from this context which focuses on the ministering of the high priest to God's people.

We have divine documentation in this verse that Jesus, our High Priest, lives with a DESIRE and PURPOSE to save or deliver them that will come unto God by him, to the uttermost! The word "uttermost" implies, to the farthest distance from God, or being in the most extreme spiritual strait. Glory! Shame on us if we do not PRAISE OUR FATHER AND HIS SON from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same!

We read in verse 26 these words, "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens". The word "became" means that JESUS IS A SUITABLE OR FITTING INTERCESSOR from which we can find grace to help in time of need. He does not leave or forsake us at any moment, according to Heb.13:5."

Heb. 7:27-28: "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmities; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

Just as God established in the first ten verses of chapter seven that the Levitical priesthood was imperfect, when compared to the priesthood of Melchisedec, he closes out the chapter showing the inferiority of the Levitical high priest compared to the

great high priest of the order of Melchisedec, and that being God's Son, "who is consecrated for evermore."

God started out the chapter revealing that even Father Abraham exalted Melchisedec, as God himself, by giving him a tithe. He went on to point out that neither was Levi superior to Melchisedec, because he paid tithes to him while in Abraham's loins. The concluding summation found in verse 11 was that if perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, what further need would there have been for the priesthood of Melchisedec? The answer of course, found in the last verse of the chapter, was and is that perfection came by the priesthood of Melchisedec, in the person of Jesus Christ.

Chapter Eight

Heb. 8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

God's Spirit ties the truth found in 8:1 to the truth presented in the entirety of chapter seven regarding the superior priesthood of Jesus Christ after the order of Melchisedec. This is accomplished in the words, "Now of the things which were spoken this is the sum". He refers back to the things which were spoken in chapter seven and says in 8:1, "this is the sum", meaning that this is the main point or principal truth. He goes on to say in 8:1, "We have **SUCH AN HIGH PRIEST**, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;". This ties in with 7:26 where we find these words, "For **SUCH AN HIGH PRIEST** became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;".

After elevating our great High Priest to the zenith of glory, seated on the right-hand of the Majesty of Glory himself, God goes on, through his Spirit, to magnify the “more excellent ministry” of “such an High Priest”, revealing this priest as the “MEDIATOR of a BETTER COVENANT which was established upon BETTER PROMISES.”

Heb. 8:2 presents our High Priest as, “a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle,”. Heb.10:21 says, “And having an High Priest over the house of God”. We could safely say that the place of his more excellent ministry is a more excellent place than those ministering after the order of Aaron. It also says in verse 2, “which the Lord pitched, and not man.” The sanctuary, the true tabernacle, and the house of God of our High Priest earned the title of “heavenly things” in 8:5. The service and place of service of the Aaronic priesthood are said to be in this same verse, simply the “the example and shadow” of heavenly things,”.

Heb. 8:3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that THIS MAN have somewhat also to offer.” We find that Jesus Christ met the terms of this necessity in these words from 7:27, “for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” Note the superiority of the offering of Jesus in that his offering was only required “once” by his Father Amen!

Heb.8:4: “For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.”

Again, we see our High Priest's superiority in that he is not on the earth, but in heavenly places. The text presupposes that if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that (or because that) there (on earth) are priests that offer gifts according to the Law.

Assuming for a moment that Jesus Christ our High Priest was on earth, he could not be a priest, because the Levitical priesthood after the order of Aaron offered gifts according to the Law. He could not fulfill the Levitical and Aaronic requirements because he was of the superior order of Melchisedec.

Furthermore, he could not offer gifts according to the Law, due to the fact that he had offered himself as the one final gift or sacrifice, thus negating the requirements of the Law. We find also in Heb. 7:11-12 that there was a negating of the order of Aaron, having been replaced by the order of Melchisedec. Verse 12 tells us that because the Levitical priesthood, after the order of Aaron, has been changed (GK. "transported away or removed") there is made of necessity a change also of the Law. If Jesus were on the earth, he could not be a priest, because he literally banished the priest's calling and function or service, which was simply an example and shadow of Jesus' heavenly calling and service in heavenly places, according to verse 5.

Heb. 8:6: "BUT NOW hath he obtained a MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY, by how much also he is the MEDIATOR of a BETTER COVENANT, which was established upon BETTER PROMISES."

"BUT NOW" would seem to close the chapter on the Law of Moses that began all the way back in Exodus 20, where the Law was first given. Perhaps these words "BUT NOW" could be

considered THE EPITATH on the tombstone of the Levitical Priesthood of the Aaronic order.

Rom. 7:4-6 says, “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 ye should bring forth fruit unto God.”

For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

BUT NOW we are DELIVERED FROM THE LAW, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

Thank God for the more excellent ministry of redemption and personal sanctification of our great High Priest! The demise of the Old, or First Covenant necessitated the rise of the New, or Second Covenant, referred to as a BETTER COVENANT with a BETTER MEDIATOR established upon BETTER PROMISES.

Heb. 8:7: “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.”

The thought here is that the First Covenant wasn’t without blemish or defect. It was not blameless, because it was powerless through the weakness of the flesh to produce righteousness.

Heb. 7:18-19 says, “For there is verily a disanulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a BETTER HOPE did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.”

The bringing in of a BETTER HOPE was in essence the bringing in of a BETTER MEDIATOR of a BETTER COVENANT, which was established upon BETTER PROMISES. This better hope produced perfection through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ our High Priest, unto the righteousness of God, not just revealing our sin, but redeeming us from our sin. The better hope could make lost creatures in sin NEW CREATURES IN CHRIST.

By grace through faith, they could miraculously be created after God in righteousness and true holiness according to Eph. 4:24. This better mediator that offered a better hope could live his resurrection life continually in those believers that would choose to continually put off the old man and put on the new man at the I Jn.1:9 bloodgate. The bringing in of this BETTER HOPE, “by which we draw nigh unto God”, made the NEW COVENANT a BETTER COVENANT with a BETTER MEDIATOR between God and man.

Jesus Christ our great High Priest, obtained a MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY that not only made him a minister of the true heavenly tabernacle and sanctuary, unto the sprinkling of his blood to whosoever will, but because he offered up himself as the final sacrifice for sin, he established our righteousness and eternal life upon BETTER PROMISES.

Heb. 8:8-9: “For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt;

because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.”

It would seem contextually that the words, “For finding fault with them” refers to the fault God found with the Old covenant and the old promises. This seems to have prompted him to declare that the days would come when he would make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. He goes on to say in verse 9 that this New Covenant would not be according to or in agreement and harmony with the Old Covenant, because the people continued not in that covenant.

Though the problem seems to be laid upon the people as well as the fault of the Old Covenant, take note of the words, “I regarded them (the people) not, saith the Lord.” The word “regarded” seems by definition to imply that God was deeply aware that the blame in the failure of the people to continue in his Law must not fall upon the people alone, but on the weakness and fault of the Old Covenant itself. The word “regarded” also seems to reveal the love of God for his people. Perhaps we see this in another facet of the definition of this word which seems to say, “I am not making light of the heavy burden the Law put on my people, because of the weakness of their flesh.” It also cries out, “I do care for my people!”

Rms. 8:3-4 says, “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 showed his care by making it possible through the NEW COVENANT to fulfill the righteousness of the Law, thus allowing them to draw nigh unto God himself, if they would simply choose to walk in the Spirit, rather than in the flesh. The New Covenant was not weak through the flesh because Jesus Christ the MEDIATOR provided VICTORY OVER THE FLESH. By faith in the continual sprinkling of the blood, through the more excellent ministry of their High Priest, they could walk CONSISTENTLY in the PRESENCE and POWER of their God. They no longer had to walk powerlessly in the flesh, fulfilling the lust of the flesh, but could choose to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, as we can choose to do also.

Heb. 8:10-12: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

This passage of Scripture is taken from Jeremiah 31:31-34. This is a prophetic promise to the nation of Israel that will be fulfilled when they receive Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

Do we not see God’s faithfulness to his chosen people in two dispensations of time in chapter eight? He goes to great lengths to explain the benefits of the New Covenant to the church age Hebrews, while reaching beyond the church age to the end of the Tribulation Period and the beginning of the Millennium, when the

nation of Israel shall receive their Messiah. We find in Heb.8:11 that all shall know him, from the least to the greatest. God said in verse 10 that he will put his Laws into their hearts and minds and be a personal God to his people. He tells us in verse 12 that like the church age Hebrew believers, they will be able to obtain mercy and the forgiveness of their sins and iniquities.

Let us take note that in both dispensations, it is the New Covenant and the MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY of Jesus Christ, the MEDIATOR of the BETTER COVENANT, that brings in the BETTER HOPE by which we all “draw nigh unto God”.

Heb. 8:13: “In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”

What an appropriate closing for chapter eight. Although it may not be readily noticeable on the surface, it would seem that in God’s mind and heart, he is seeking to drive home the life giving point that the NEW COVENANT is NOW not only the BETTER HOPE, but it is their ONLY HOPE. The First Covenant is history! It has vanished away! “By SO MUCH was Jesus made a surety of a BETTER TESTAMENT.” He is “A MINISTER of the SANCTUARY, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.”

Though these are glorious and soul stirring truths to us, keep in mind that they are written by a personal God that is trying to reach his children that were casting away their confidence in their Redeemer, and crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame. He is passionately saying all that he can say with a broken heart, to create spiritual stability in some and repentance unto faith in others.

Chapter Nine

Heb. 9:1: “Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.”

In verses 2-5, God describes in detail the worldly sanctuary and its furnishings. Verses 6-10 describes the ordinances of divine service performed by the priests. He once again makes it clear that the sanctuary and the divine service were but shadows or figures for the time then present “imposed on them until the time of reformation”. (vs.10) How appropriate that the word “reformation” means “made better, improved, or NEW.”

God brought out what he intended to be a soul penetrating truth in verses 9-10 that meats and drinks, and divers washings, along with carnal ordinances “could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience”. He addresses the same issue in 10:1, emphasizing that the sacrifices that were offered year by year continually could never make the comers thereunto perfect. There was no complete washing away of sins, and purifying of their consciences unto peace, joy, and renewing and reviving of their hearts and minds.

Now to the die-hard Judaizers whose eyes were blinded by ritualism, and whose hearts were hardened by their self righteous adherence to the religion of their forefathers, these truths that God was setting forth would seem radical. However, to those faithful Hebrew believers that were earnestly struggling with this dispensational change, God’s statements regarding their never ending defiled consciences must have rang out with thought provoking credibility. Now here was truth that they could not deny, and that is the way God wanted it to be.

God is preparing to tell them in not too many verses to come, that they can draw near to God through their High Priest and have their hearts **SPRINKLED FROM AN EVIL CONSCIENCE**. They were about to experience God's amazing grace! Never had they or their forefathers experienced such supernatural merciful forgiveness! Thank God for the **MORE EXCELLENT MINISTRY** of Jesus Christ, the **BETTER HOPE** of a **BETTER COVENANT** established upon **BETTER PROMISES**, and a **BETTER SACRIFICE** (9:23).

Heb. 9:11-12: "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by **HIS OWN BLOOD** he entered in **ONCE** into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."

It would seem that "Christ being come" would identify "the time of reformation" in the closing of verse 10. This word "reformation" means in part "to straighten thoroughly", and this is exactly what the **MEDIATOR** of the **NEW COVENANT** accomplished. He was truly "an high priest of good things to come"! He had a greater and more perfect tabernacle, which according to verse 12, "he entered in **ONCE** into the holy place, having **OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION** for us". The superiority of Jesus Christ seems to reign in every verse, and especially in the pinnacle truth that he entered into the holy place, where he sprinkled his blood that was shed at Calvary on the mercy seat.

God was ever seeking to reach those believers that had been overcome by the besetting sin of unbelief in the blood of Christ, as

we can see in these words in verse 12, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by HIS OWN BLOOD...”

Heb. 9:13-14: “For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

Here again, we find the blood of Christ set forth as being superior to the blood of animals. The offering of the blood of animals could not purify the conscience and make the comers thereunto perfect, whereas the blood of Christ could purge their consciences from dead works to serve the living God. This was accomplished when their High Priest sprinkled the believers’ hearts with his blood from an evil conscience, according to Heb. 10:22.

Heb. 9:15: “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”

This verse seems to be saying that because the blood of Jesus was superior, he is the Mediator of the New Testament or Covenant. The extent of the redemption made available by the blood and the death of Jesus Christ REACHES ALL THE WAY BACK to the beginning of the First Covenant. Redemption by the blood of Christ encompassed the transgressions that were under the First Testament or Covenant, thus making it possible that they

which were called unto salvation might receive the promise of eternal inheritance through Jesus Christ.

Heb.9:16-17: “For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”

The New Covenant or Testament was established upon better promises and one of these being the promise of eternal inheritance. In order for this testament to be established and be of force (having power and validity) that believers might receive their eternal inheritance, it was necessary that the Testator, Jesus Christ, experience his death, burial, and resurrection.

God illustrates this truth in Heb. 9:18-21, revealing how the First Testament also was dedicated with blood by Moses. Moses spoke all the precepts of the Law to the people and then sprinkled the book, and all the people saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Afterwards he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

Heb.9:22-23: “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of the things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with BETTER SACRIFICE than these.”

Was not this Law of God, that all things are purged with blood, on God’s mind when he killed the animals in the Garden of Eden, and used the skins to cover Adam and Eve? Could it be that

blood was the ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF REDEMPTION unto life, because life was in the blood? This Law of God traveled through the ages all the way to the Cross of Calvary, and continues its journey, as the gospel spreads to the ends of the earth and its ages.

What is truly amazing according to Heb. 9:23, is that this Law of God traveled past the ends of the earth and into heavenly places, directly to the mercy seat of the living God. The blood of Jesus Christ is still there, as fresh as it was the day it first arrived. It would seem to be part of our inheritance, allowing us to enter into the holiest, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience as often as necessary?

Heb. 9:24-26: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

Rom. 8:34 says, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Heb. 7:25 says, "Wherefore 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."

I Tim. 2:5 says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus".

Do we understand that Christ entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God FOR US? We have already seen documented evidence that Jesus Christ our great High Priest is our MEDIATOR, as well as our INTERCESSOR.

It is sad to think that there are a host of people around the world that are praying every hour to no avail, because Jesus Christ is not their Mediator and Intercessor. There are two primary reasons for this, the first being that they have never been born again. The God of the Scriptures is not their God and he is not their Father. They do not know Jesus Christ as their Savior, therefore they cannot know him as their Mediator and Intercessor. Jn.14:6 says, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

The second reason Jesus is not a person's Mediator and Intercessor is that, though they are blood-washed, redeemed believers, they have a carnal mind. This is the mind of a believer that chooses to walk in the flesh rather than in the Spirit. To walk in the flesh is to walk in sin and rebellion. Rms. 8:6 says, "For to be carnally minded is death;". This is a spiritual death where the believer is dead to the Spirit of God and the God of the Spirit. Rom. 8:7 says, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God". The word "enmity" implies hostile feelings of hatred or that of an enemy that totally stands in opposition to.

It is astonishingly sad that the average believer today walks in the FLESH AND SELF WILL, just as so many of these Hebrew believers did. Make no mistake that all believers are capable of doing this from time to time, but it seems that it has become a common lifestyle to profess Christ as one's Savior, and yet live a life of "Not thy will, but mine be done."

Is there any hope? Certainly! We have a BETTER HOPE that is an Anchor of the soul. We have a High Priest that is also called the Spirit of Christ. Gal. 4:6 says, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Even in the times of our worst storms, when we are being tossed violently on the waves of despair and self will that leads to

self destruction, we have an Anchor of the soul. We have hope of deliverance.

Our great High Priest ever liveth to make intercession and is able to save or deliver us to the uttermost and to the guttermost. The blood on the mercy seat in the true tabernacle is still fresh and waiting to be sprinkled on our evil heart and defiled conscience. Even when we have chosen to be enemies of our Father, he sends forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father;" saying come back to Daddy, let me be your haven of rest. Let us not forget that Jesus Christ is our High Priest FOREVER after the order of Melchisedec.

Heb. 9:25-26: "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

We find in this passage that if Jesus was of the Levitical priesthood, he would have had to suffer often from the foundation of the world, offering himself once a year, and entering into the holy of holies to sprinkle his blood for the sins of the people. However, because he was of the order of Melchisedec, he appeared ONCE in the end of the world TO PUT AWAY SIN BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF.

Heb. 9:27-28: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

The words “as” and “so” are the key words to understanding God’s message to us in these verses.” “As” means “for example or in the same manner.” “So” means, “in the same way expressed in the example.”

God seems to be saying that, just as man is appointed to die and then be judged, so Christ in the same manner was appointed to die and be judged. The CRUCIAL difference was that Christ was judged for the sins of the world, which he willingly bore to the Cross of Calvary, whereupon God’s wrath was poured out upon him. Jesus Christ took our PUNISHMENT and our HELL for us.

Ps.16:10-11: “For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

Because the Holy One was resurrected on the third day, he did not see corruption just as God said here. God showed him the path of resurrection life that led to his right-hand side in the throne room, where he would experience fullness of joy with his Father. Furthermore, he would enjoy the eternal pleasures of being the Savior of lost souls, as well as being their Mediator and High priest.

Without doubt, one of his greatest pleasures is found in verse 28. Because Jesus offered himself willingly to bear the sins of all that would believe and receive him, he would be given the privilege and pleasure of appearing a second time without the sins that were judged, forgiven, and forgotten.

We find these words in I Thess. 4:16-17 describing the coming of Jesus Christ, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

CHAPTER TEN

Heb. 10:1-2: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins."

God once again wants these believers, so prone to unbelieving, to give superabundant attention and consideration to the fact that the Law, though having a shadow of good things to come, was weak and at fault in that it could never accomplish **PERFECTION UNTO TOTAL GUILTLESSNESS**. It was true in fact, that in essence, the purpose of the law was to magnify guilt. The Law had a shadow of good things to come, but it was not the true express image of those good things. It was, however, a

NECESSARY STEPPING STONE to the attainment of those good things.

Paul said in Rom. 8:12, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

So how could the Law be holy, and just, and good, and it be said in holy writ that it was weak and not faultless? Paul said in Rom. 7:14 that the Law was spiritual, but, or in contrast or opposition to that, he was carnal and sold under sin. This meant that his nature stood in complete opposition to God's Law and thus to God himself. Paul went on to say in 8:3 that the Law could not do what the Son of God could do, because it was weak through man's flesh or depraved godless nature.

Paul tells us in 7:10 that though the commandment of the Law was ordained or appointed by God unto life, he found it to be unto death. He said in 7:9 that when the commandment of the Law came, sin revived or came to life, and he died. The culmination of this tragic real life drama is found in these words from 7:13, "Was then that which is good (the Law) made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good (the Law); that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

The Law and Commandments revealed, or caused, sin to appear, and to appear exceeding sinful, manifesting man's dead and carnal nature that was helpless to subject itself to the Law of God or the God of the Law. It indeed was a shadow of good things to come, though far back in the shadows. It offered no mercy or forgiveness to man, however it did shed enough light to reveal man's utter sinfulness. It also revealed the need for a NEW COVENANT, and a new MEDIATOR between God and man that could offer mercy and forgiveness.

God establishes the reason why a New Covenant and Mediator was so necessary in Heb.10:1-2 where we are presently studying. He once again tells the Hebrew believers that the Law and its' sacrifices though offered year after year could never remove the consciousness of their sins they had committed. Because year after year, there was a continual consciousness of sin that continually left them with an evil conscience, they were obligated by the Law to continually offer sin sacrifices.

Perhaps one reason the Law was a shadow of good things to come was that it was declared by God in Gal. 3:24 to be a "SCHOOLMASTER" to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. We find in the book of Hebrews that Mr. Law, the schoolmaster, had been effective in bringing many believers unto Jesus, that they might be justified by faith, but they had become carnal and careless in their attitude toward the Word of God.

Heb. 10:3-4: "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins."

May we offer praise to our God that when we as true believers today confess our sins, the blood of our High Priest cleanses us from all unrighteousness. The sins we confess are both forgiven and forgotten forever. Each time we confess our sins, there is no remembrance in the minds of the Father and Son of our former sins, by their choice.

It is becoming apparent among believers today that post guilt syndrome following the confession of sins is a far too common problem. Could the reason for this be that we are not obeying God's Word where he says in Heb.10:22, "Let us draw near with a

TRUE HEART in FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH...”? Are we confessing our sins under the influence and conviction of the Holy Spirit, or are we simply observing a religious ritual?

Do we have a problem believing that when “we confess our sins, he is FAITHFUL and JUST to FORGIVE us our sins, and to CLEANSE us from ALL unrighteousness?” Do we firmly believe that the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins, and yet also not believe that the blood of Christ cannot take away our sins? Then why does guilt remain after we confess our sins?

Let it never be forgotten that only when we are under the influence of the ministering of the Word of God by the Spirit, will the power of the Word and the Spirit be able to produce a contrite, and humbled, broken spirit and heart. It is here and here alone that God can grant repentance and the faith needed in the midst of Spirit enabled surrender, to put off the old man and his sin, and put on the new man in righteousness and true holiness.(Eph.4:24)

You have God’s Word on it! Will you choose to believe it? Your choice will make the difference between a guiltless victorious life that glorifies God, and a defeated life of shame that mocks the blood that Christ, your own personal High Priest, sprinkled on the mercy seat for YOUR SINS.

Heb.10:5-7: “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for me:

In burnt offerings and sacrifice for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.”

The word “Wherefore” reaches back to verse 4 and joins it to verse 5, declaring the message that, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, the sacrifice and offering of these, “God would not”. Instead, he chose to prepare a human body for sacrifice.

Verse 6 says, “In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin God had NO PLEASURE”, yet we find these revealing words in Isa. 53:10 about the offering and sacrifice that God did have pleasure in, “Yet it PLEASED the LORD to bruise him (Jesus); he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.”

We find in Heb. 10:7 what could be considered the verbal acceptance by Jesus Christ of his Father’s plan of redemption and the initiation, or catalyst, of the greatest melodramatic real life production of all the ages, in these words, “I come.... to do thy will, O God.” We find the agonizing passion of this Garden of Gethsemane proclamation in these words from Matt. 26:42: “...O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, THY WILL BE DONE.”

Again in Luke 22:42, we hear Jesus’ cry of total surrender in these words: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will but thine be done.”

This real-life production that unfolds following the words, “I come to do thy will O God”, is truly the greatest love story ever known to man, yet, filled with heart rending violence as the willing sacrifice, and offering for man’s sin, drinks the cup of unimaginable suffering that would not and could not pass away.

Is it unreasonable for those of us who were the subjects of the love of God and of Christ to initiate a reciprocal real-life production, based upon our eternal life received, with the words, “NOT MY WILL BUT THINE BE DONE”? With the weight of this body of truth, WHAT KIND OF HEART would consider it MORE THAN OUR REASONABLE SERVICE to give our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ?

Let us come face-to-face, or heart-to-heart, with the answer to this question; WHAT KIND OF HEART; and deal with it through the witness of the Holy Spirit. The answer is, the kind of heart that rests in the bosom of A LOST PERSON, who plays the role of being a saved person, or A SAVED PERSON who has a carnal mind and rebellious heart that, according to Rom. 8:7, is not subject to the Word of God, or in reality, to the God of the Word.

Heb. 10:8-9: “Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

In verse 8, God chooses to reemphasize, or make it perfectly clear, that it is no longer his will and good pleasure to approve of, or accept offerings for sin under the Aaronic Order and Levitical Priesthood.

In verse 9, God focuses on the same words of transitional truth that he spoke in verse 7 regarding Jesus’ willingness to fulfill God’s will. He provides added clarification that his will was to

abolish the old sacrificial system and establish a new sacrificial system. He obviously wants there to be no doubt among the Hebrew believers, whose besetting sin was unbelief, that he was taking away the First Covenant and establishing a Second or New Covenant.

Heb.10:10: “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

We see, for the third time, God shining the spotlight on HIS WILL that embodies these words in Rom. 11:33, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”

Having seen the essence of his will in verse 9, surely we can see the effectiveness of his will in verse 10. Surely also, we can sense the energy and voice of God’s love as it cries out between the lines, “God is not willing that ANY should perish, but that ALL should come unto REPENTANCE, being sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus.”

Following this Spirit-produced REPENTANCE granted unto “all” having a contrite and surrendered spirit unto humbled obedience to the gospel, “we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE FOR ALL.”

Here we find the eternal effectiveness of “his will”, as we are sanctified ONCE FOR ALL! We see in verse 5 the preparing of a body for the final offering for sin, whereas, we see in verse 10 the purging of sin made possible by the offering of that body. To be sanctified is to be cleansed by the blood to the point of true holiness in God’s eyes. The redemption offered by faith in the offering of this body provides the believer with a new nature called

the new man, which according to Eph. 4:24, is created in **RIGHTEOUSNESS** and **TRUE HOLINESS**.

Perhaps this would be an appropriate occasion to clarify the difference between our sanctification at the moment of salvation, which is a work of the Holy Spirit that establishes our **ETERNAL POSITION** in Christ, and our sanctification that follows our salvation, which establishes our **TEMPORAL PRACTICE** in Christ.

Heb.10:10 reveals that our positional sanctification is a “**ONCE FOR ALL**” sanctification. This sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit that takes place in us when we choose to place our God provided faith in the “**OFFERING OF THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST**”. At this moment, all our sins are cleansed and forgiven by the blood of Jesus Christ. In God’s eyes, we are declared **RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY**. This work of the Spirit is called “**SANCTIFICATION**”. This sanctification established our eternal **POSITION** in Christ, by faith through grace, not of our works, but by the works of the Spirit of God and of Christ. This **POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION** was not gained by our works, nor will it ever be lost by our works.

Once we are sanctified positionally at the moment of salvation, God’s next work of grace is **PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION**. This was the **WORK OF GRACE** that God was seeking to perform in the lives of the Hebrew believers. God’s goal of practical sanctification, or purifying unto holiness, is designed to conform his children unto the image of Jesus Christ, through **FAITH AND OBEDIENCE TO HIS WORD**. As he was with the Hebrew believers, he is seeking to mature us spiritually unto full age through our daily and moment by moment **HABITUAL PRACTICE** of the **WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

Jn.17:17 says, “Sanctify them through thy truth: THY WORD is truth.”

Put simply, no habitual practice of the WORD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, NO SANCTIFICATION! When we first get saved, we have a God given appetite to know more about the Word of God and the God of the Word, to include our Savior, Jesus Christ. As time passes, many believers find that they are losing their appetite and interest in the Word and in spiritual things. We have certainly seen this in the Hebrew believers’ lives, and we have seen the consequences, as well.

Do you find a weakness and lack of self-will to consistently read and study God’s word? DON’T PANIC! This is common to every believer from time to time and is imperfectly natural. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?! It means that it is not perfectly natural to the New MAN but it is (im)perfectly natural to the OLD MAN.

The new man, or new creature, was created at the moment of salvation. He was hungry to know God and his word, and ALWAYS WILL BE. If we have lost our spiritual appetite for God’s Word, we most likely have put off the new man and put on the old man through the sin of feeding our fleshly or natural appetites with that which entices our deceitful lusts. DON’T PANIC! There again, this is common to all believers! So what do we do to restore our hunger for God’s Word?

First, go immediately to the I Jn.1:9 bloodgate. Honestly and earnestly confess any sin the Spirit brings to your mind and heart, maybe beginning with not giving the more earnest heed to the word of God. Once your mind and heart have been cleansed and cleared, with the knowledge that you have entered through the

bloodgate into the kingdom of God into fellowship with the Father and Son, open God's word to I Jn.5:14.

I Jn. 5:14-15 says, "And this is the CONFIDENCE that we HAVE IN HIM, that, if we ask anything according to HIS WILL, HE HEARETH us:

And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, WE KNOW that WE HAVE the petitions that we desired of him."

Knowing with scriptural documentation that you are in fellowship with the Father and Son, I ask you to prove God at his Word, using these verses in regard to your need for a love and hunger for his Word. Is this HIS WILL for his children? Do you have confidence that he will hear you if you ask? If you know that he hears you, and that he is faithful to HIS WORD, will you not "HAVE THE PETITIONS THAT WE DESIRED OF HIM?" How could your Father deny you this request?

God said in I Thess. 4:4 that "this is the WILL OF GOD, even your sanctification". Remember as you rejoice in your renewed desire to study and meditate on the riches of the living Word, that the APPLICATION and HABITUAL USE of the Word of righteousness is God's ordained method to bring you to "full age". He takes upon himself the responsibility to minister personal and practical sanctification to his children. Positional sanctification and practical sanctification are manifested in our lives by the Word of God through a work of the Spirit, one unto salvation, and the other to our conformation to the image of Christ, or sanctification.

Heb. 10:11-13: "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

BUT THIS MAN, after he had offered ONE SACRIFICE for sins FOR EVER, sat down on the right hand of God;

From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.”

Once again, God drives home the superiority of the New Covenant and its sacrificial system of “ONE SACRIFICE for sins FOR EVER”, over the Old Covenant and its inferior sacrificial system, which could NEVER take away sin.

Heb.10:14-18: “For by one offering he hath PERFECTED FOR EVER them that are sanctified.

Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

And their sins and iniquities will I remember NO MORE. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”

These verses represent what might be considered an epitaph or divine eulogy on the tombstone of the Mosaic Law, the Aaronic Order, the Levitical Priesthood, and the Old Covenant. It is a powerful and authoritative, no questions left to be asked CLOSING to a deceased dispensation of Law. The words, “For by ONE OFFERING he hath PERFECTED FOR EVER them that are SANCTIFIED, introduces the heart and message of God’s new dispensation that will be managed by the auspices of the NEW COVENANT based upon BETTER PROMISES, with a BETTER HOPE, and ministered by a NEW and BETTER MEDIATOR.

To add eternal weight and gravity to this irreversible decree by HIS MAJESTY, we find God calling in an official witness of the Godhead that had testified to the establishment of this TRANSFORMATIONAL COVENANT OF GLORY thousands of years earlier to the Hebrew nation. We find this sovereign summons in these words; “WHEREOF THE HOLY GHOST ALSO IS A WITNESS TO US: for after that he had said before,

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them”.

We find these words in Jer. 31:31-34 along with the words from verses 17-18 in our present passage of study in Heb.10. They are told in these verses that their sins and iniquities will no longer be remembered once forgiven and cleansed. With there being no more remembrance of their sins year by year, there is no more necessity for an offering for their sin. The witness of the Holy Ghost to them NOW was, “And their sins and iniquities will I remember NO MORE.”(Heb.10:17)

Heb.10:19-22: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

If we could think of Heb.10:14-18 as the newly established Gateway to the New Covenant, it would then be appropriate to behold in Heb.10:19-22 the believer's RIGHTFUL and BOLD ENTRANCE through that gateway by the blood of Christ. It was ordained and consecrated as a NEW and LIVING WAY, through the flesh of the body that was prepared for Christ when he came into the world.

Once we have obtained our rightful entry into the holiest, we find in verse 21 that we may obtain our rightful possession of our own personal High Priest. The concept of personal possession can be found in the word "having". He is our own personal Savior, Lord, Mediator, High Priest and more!

To obtain our rightful personal possession of our High Priest, it must needs be that we obtain our RIGHTFUL PERSONAL PLACE before him. It is our responsibility to draw near unto him if we desire him to draw near to us. The beauty of this vibrant and budding fellowship and relationship is that he will not only put a desire in our hearts to make the holiest our permanent residence, but he will draw us to himself by the power of a faith which worketh by love. Truly, he is "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

We see a key facet of our High Priests' "more excellent ministry" in verse 22 in these words; "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." It must not be forgotten that only when we have put off the old man and put on the new man, which God calls putting on the Lord Jesus Christ in Rom.13:14, will we have a desire to draw near to our Father through his Son.

It is here also that we will be enabled to draw near with a true and sincere heart in the full assurance of a Holy Spirit produced

faith. When we draw near to our High Priest under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we readily confess any known sin whereupon our High Priest sprinkles our unclean hearts with his blood, ridding us of an evil conscience.

We find in the concluding words of verse 22, a VITAL SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLE that there can be no separation of the ministering of the Holy Spirit from the ministering of God's Word. These concluding words are: "and our bodies washed with pure water."

It would seem that these words find their intended meaning in Eph. 5:25-27 which reads: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it;

That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word,

That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

We must forever be vigilant to maintain holiness through study, meditation, and application of God's Word. There must be a perpetual flow of the living waters of his words through our hearts and minds to maintain our personal sanctification and separation from this present evil world.

Heb.10:23: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)"

Let us ponder deeply on this term "hold fast". It basically means "to grasp or seize by whatever means to keep from escaping or going away." That which these Hebrew believers are being charged to maintain possession of, at all cost, is the

profession of their faith in Jesus Christ. In addition, they are told to do so “without wavering” in their faith. They are reminded that they can place their faith in their Father of faithfulness, because he PROMISED.

Keeping in mind the Hebrew mindset and their mental and spiritual response to what they have heard, let us consider their recent history that should compel them to lay hold on Jesus Christ as their true and only hope, and Anchor of their soul.

They had been taught diligently from a child that the Anchor of their soul, yea their nation and their culture, was Jehovah God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Mosaic Law, the Aaronic Order, The Levitical Priesthood, and the Old or First Covenant Sacrificial System were synonymous with their concept of God. Suddenly, with the birth of a child through the waters of Mary, the floodwaters of change came trickling in as he grew in wisdom and stature and foremost of all, WORDS. His Words began troubling the waters of religious normalcy preceding what was to be floodwaters of change that would wash away all that defined stability in Jewish life under the First Covenant.

With the bringing in of the New Covenant and a whole new spiritual mindset centering around their new Mediator, the man Christ Jesus, the Hebrew believers are not only told that their old great high priest can no longer enter into the holiest, they are now told that THEY CAN ENTER INTO THE HOLIEST themselves, by the blood of Christ, the one final sacrifice for sins forever.

Based upon the bringing in of a better spiritual stability secured by a better sacrifice and a better hope, established upon better promises, these believers are told in 10:23 to hold fast the profession of their faith, without any wavering or indecisive unbelief. This is presented as being possible by placing simple

faith in their faithful God that had given the promises that made their spiritual stability and prosperity possible.

Heb.10:24-25: “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

It seems that God is addressing those believers that, though they had come through deep waters of unimaginable change and spiritually unsettling trials of their faith, were now grounded and settled and holding fast to the profession of their faith. He is asking them to be sensitive to the needs of other believers, who are not yet as grounded in their faith, and in their understanding of the New Covenant, and are perhaps yet struggling with the turning loose of their lifelong commitment to the old sacrificial system.

He is asking them to consider, or look deeply, into the lives and needs of other fellow believers in the assembly. With a God-given understanding of their needs, they are then to provoke or stir up their brethren unto the love of Christ and to others. Furthermore, with a faith which worketh by love, they are to stimulate and encourage their brethren unto spiritual growth and good works.

Verse 25 says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is”.

Most of these believers knew exactly what God was saying in these words and why. No doubt there were but a few, if that, that had not been affected by the departure of believers from their

assembly having cast away their confidence in the blood of Jesus Christ, and returning to the Old Covenant sacrificial system. It is a good possibility that most had family members or friends that had been swept away by the sin of unbelief, and possibly even a refusal to accept the changeover from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant.

Note the words, “as the manner of some is”. God declares that it was unacceptable behavior of believers to forsake the assembling of themselves together, and to disregard their God-given responsibility to provoke or stir up their fellow brethren to love and good works. He goes on in verse 25 telling them that it is also their duty and calling to “exhort ONE ANOTHER: and so much the more, as they see the day approaching.”

We, of course, would presume that “the day” being spoken of is the day of Christ’s coming. However, in view of the general context of Hebrews, and especially the immediate context in this chapter, could it be speaking of the impending day of God’s judgment of sore punishment on the blaspheming reprobates spoken of in 10:27-31? Could it be that the faithful and mature believers in the assembly were aware that many had sinned the sin unto death, and that it surely was just a matter of time before God chastened them? Surely they were aware of the words of Pro. 29:1 which said, “He, that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

There is no way of knowing for sure which day God is talking about, but it is interesting that immediately following Heb.10:24-25, God spends five verses talking about imminent divine judgment and fiery indignation for those that fall into the hands of the living God. One thing is for sure, both days were imminent!

Heb.10:26-27: “For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

We have all been taught that when we are seeking the proper interpretation of a verse or passage, it is essential to always consider the context in which it is found. It should also be common knowledge that we should consider not only the immediate context, but the general context as well. The immediate context is the verse where we presently are and may reach back to where God started dealing with the particular subject under scrutiny. The general context may reach back through a number of chapters and may even be the common thread through most of the book.

Hopefully, our scrutiny of these next several verses will fall within these guidelines to seek to explain through a man’s limited, but at least partial spiritual insight the truth God wants us to draw from this difficult passage.

We find in 10:26 the words, “after that we have received the knowledge of the truth”, and again in 10:32 in the words, “after ye were illuminated”, assuring us that God is directing these truths to believers. In 10:30, God calls them “his people”. Let us now step back and examine just exactly who these people might be.

It should be remembered that the focus of chapters 7-10 has been on the superiority of the priesthood of Melchisedec, as well as of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant and its sacrificial system. Stepping back into chapter 6, we find God dealing with these same believers that are now set forth in 10:26-27 before God’s judgment bar so to say. We found in 6:6 that they had fallen

away from God's grace due to exalting their will above God's will. It appears that they were in open rebellion toward the New Covenant, having returned to the sacrificial system of the Old Covenant in regards to the offering of the blood of bulls and goats. Each time they did so, they were crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh and putting him to an open shame.

They are told in Heb.10:26 that they could no longer offer a sacrifice to atone for their willful sins, as they could in the past under the Old Covenant. God makes it clear in verse 27, that if they choose to proceed forward in their unbelief and rebellion, there remaineth only God's judgment and fiery indignation. The term "fiery indignation" implies God's state of inflamed or heated anger and jealousy mingled with disgust and furious resentment. This truth is derived from the definitions of the words God chose to use in this verse. God tells them that his fiery indignation "SHALL DEVOUR his adversaries".

Though it would seem that this is about the worst place a child of God could find himself, it needs to be remembered that each time we choose to put off Christ or the new man and put on the old man, we become God's adversaries or enemies. Paul said in Gal. 5:16, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." It is here that we choose to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness and walk in the flesh in the old man. Paul said in Rom. 8:7 that the fleshly or carnal mind is enmity against God. This means that we have chosen to be enemies or adversaries.

Immediately, the Holy Spirit will begin wooing us in love and gentleness through conviction unto repentance and restoration unto righteousness. A refusal to submit to this work of the Spirit constitutes rebellion and defiant resistance just as we find in

Heb.10. Though a loving and doting Father, he is also a just God and must judge unconfessed sin in his children.

I Cor.11:31-32 lays down a key principle in God's chastening process for his disobedient children. It reads, "For if we would judge ourselves, WE SHOULD NOT BE JUDGED. But when we are judged, WE ARE CHASTENED of the Lord, that WE SHOULD NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD." The condemnation of the world, or those that have never come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior and sinbearer, is eternal damnation in the lake of fire. The condemnation of an unrepentant believer is not the second death, which is the lake of fire, but physical death as is taught in I Cor.11:30.

With these vitally important principles of chastening and judgment in mind, it should be more fully understood why no hope remained for these unrepentant believers in Heb.10, "But a certain fearful looking for, of judgment, and fiery indignation."

Heb.10:28-29: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, (New Covenant) wherewith he WAS SANCTIFIED, an unholy thing, and hath done DESPITE unto the Spirit of grace?"

We see the mind of God revealed in a stunning manner, clearly directed in outrage at these rebels. Could it be that in the back of his mind there is a larger scope in mind to warn and produce the fear of God, not only in other Hebrew believers that

were struggling with obedience to the New Covenant and its Mediator, but for future generations of believers as well? Could it be that believers today that find themselves in this same spiritual state of rebellion are on death row and don't even realize it because of spiritual ignorance?

Is it possible that we are trodding under foot the blood of Christ and counting it as an unholy thing in the eyes of God when we refuse to place our unconfessed sins under his cleansing power? Are we not making light of the purpose and value of the blood? Are we not making a mockery not only of the blood, but what it cost God to provide it?

Verse 29 says, ".....and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace". Herein, we surely find the depths of depravity and the deception of self righteousness. The term "despite unto the Spirit of grace" carries the idea of looking down upon the offer of grace by the Spirit, and his efforts to provide restoration, with hatefulness and ill will toward the Spirit of grace.

Do we understand the degree to which we become God's enemy when we choose to walk after the flesh, rather than after the Spirit? No wonder Paul said in Rms. 8:6, "For to be carnally minded IS DEATH". In God's eyes, we are dead men walking! Verse 7 goes on to say that the carnal mind is not subject to the Law of God, NEITHER INDEED CAN BE. Let us learn to walk as consistently as possible in the Spirit in the new man! If we yield our members unto unrighteousness, and fulfill the deceitful lusts of our flesh, may we learn to yield immediately to Holy Ghost conviction, and confess our sins in godly sorrow unto forgiveness, cleansing, and restored fellowship.

Heb.10:30-31: “For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.

It is a FEARFUL THING to fall into the hands of the LIVING GOD.”

God’s people need to make it a priority to know who their God is! How many live as though he is not their God until suddenly they fall into the abyss of soul-rending fear of the judgment of their LIVING GOD. It would seem that God’s law of sowing and reaping demands recompense without mercy to the full measure of divine judgment!

Gal. 6:7-8 says, “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: (By our disobedience) for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption”.

Prov. 29:1 says, “He, that often being reprov’d hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”

Beloved saint of God, don’t ever say you weren’t told! It truly is a FEARFUL THING to fall into the hands of the LIVING GOD.

Heb.10:32-34: “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

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

It appears that beginning in verse 32, God turns his attention away from the hopeless and toward the hopeful, towards the portion of Hebrew believers that are yet hoping for the fulfillment of God’s promise or promises in their life. It would appear that they are struggling with adversity and suffering, perhaps even from persecution from zealous Judaizers, that had succeeded in swaying the faith of other wayward believers.

In verse 32, God seeks to comfort and encourage the faithful remnant that perhaps was weary in well doing, and tattered from spiritual battles, to go back with him on a journey of remembrance to the “good old days”. He first wants them to consider the days after they were first illuminated. By virtue of the meaning of this word, God has called them back to the day or days in which they were made to see, or enlightened by the Spirit unto the truth of the gospel. From this unforgettable time period, he calls to their minds their unwavering faith that sustained them through a variety of fiery trials, commending their patient ENDURANCE in a GREAT FIGHT OF AFFLICTIONS.

In verse 33, God prods their memory with the nature of the battles they fought and faithfully endured. He reminds them of the hurtful memories of the days they were made a gazingstock, or public spectacle. They were accounted of, and scorned as worthless. They were despised and vilified beyond human dignity, and according to verse 34, had their earthly goods spoiled or pillaged. Not only did God commend them for their endurance, but reminded them of the days when they could be robbed of all their worldly possessions, but not of their joy, knowing in themselves, “that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.”

It is as though their Father is reminding them that they have come too far to turn back now. Is he not also saying, as he did in James 1:2-4, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, Knowing this that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

Heb.10:35-37: “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

We find in verses 32-34 what might be akin to a divine pep rally, where God was rallying the righteous remnant through remembrance of past victories over horrible and humiliating reproaches and afflictions. He is spurring them on to future steadfastness, and is now in verse 35 admonishing them not to cast away their confidence in the midst of affliction.

God might never have had to deal with this issue if the Hebrew believers had heeded earlier warnings about their deteriorating confidence in Christ in the early chapters and times of the writing of the book of Hebrews. He warned them in 2:1 that it was a binding necessity and divine obligation to give superabundant attention and consideration to the things they had been taught about Jesus Christ and who he was. He warned them that not to take heed would put them in danger of allowing these life-giving truths to just flow carelessly by. He made it clear that to neglect or make light of SO GREAT SALVATION would have inescapable

consequences. He greatly emphasized the need to hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of their hope firm unto the end.

In Heb.3:12-13, God gave them a stern admonition, if not a prophetic warning in the words, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

Now in Heb.10:35, in the midst of spiritual devastation and deadness, as well as the deceitfulness of the sinful and hardened hearts of many, God is once again pleading with his battle-wearied and distraught children to not cast away the vestige of their CONFIDENCE in Jesus Christ, and the hope of the New Covenant, which hath “GREAT RECOMPENCE OF REWARD.”

Let us consider from God’s point of view what this “great recompence of reward” might be. Let us take note that this CONFIDENCE, which carries the meaning of assurance or boldness, is what is required to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, according to Heb.10:19. What greater recompence of reward could supercede the high and holy honor of boldly entering into the HOLY OF HOLIES by the blood of Jesus Christ?

Verse 22 goes on to say, “Let us draw near with a true heart in FULL ASSURANCE of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience....”. Does this not reveal their great recompence of reward for not casting away their confidence? Is not their full assurance of faith based on their CONFIDENCE in Jesus Christ as their High Priest?

So could we not say that the MAINTAINING OF THEIR CONFIDENCE had great recompence of reward in light of fellowship with the Father and the Son in the holy place? From

the Father's point of view, this would seem to rate as the GREATEST RECOMPENSE OF REWARD, due to the value he places on fellowship with his children.

What about our point of view? What value do we place on fellowship with the Father and the Son? We might opt to "have in heaven a better and an enduring substance", while entangling ourselves with the affairs of this life, seeking the lesser and non enduring substance of this world, and its fellowship.

Perhaps we should let the psalmist David give his point of view in these words from Ps. 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 enquire in his temple."

Heb.10:36-37: "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

The question comes to mind, So what is the "will of God" being referred to in verse 36? If we stay within the immediate context, it would seem that it was God's will for the remnant to continue to patiently endure the trying of their faith joyfully, with a compassionate spirit toward others that were also struggling. They were to maintain their confidence and hold fast the profession of their faith. God stresses once again the necessity of patience, which by definition implies "enduring hardships or adversity with a cheerful and hopeful spirit of receiving the promise." It is noteworthy that in talking about receiving the promise, God offers in verse 37, the promise of the Second Coming as an incentive and motivation to press on cheerfully and

hopefully. It is possible that the promise of the great recompense of reward could be in view here as well.

Heb.10:38-39: “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

Let us seek to follow the mind of the Spirit, as closely as possible, considering the sensitivity of the issues dealt with herein. Perhaps we should begin by asking, Who are the “just” within the realm of the context we have been studying? It should be safe to say that they are the saints **THAT HOLD FAST THE PROFESSION OF THEIR FAITH.**

Two characteristics of the “just” by virtue of definition are “righteousness and holiness.” The just hold fast, or retain and maintain, their profession of faith when they “**LIVE BY FAITH**”. This faith does not find its origin or source in their human nature. It is born within the new man as the Holy Spirit ministers God’s Word to us. Gal.5:22 teaches that it is a “fruit” produced in us as we walk in the Spirit. If we come right down to it, a “just” man is righteous and holy only as he walks consistently in the Spirit. The moment he puts off the new man and puts on the old man, he is unjust without God’s righteousness and holiness.

It is vitally important to understand that when we put off the new man by yielding our members as instruments of unrighteousness, through allowing our lusts to be enticed unto sin, we “**DRAW BACK**” from faith and fellowship. When we allow the pleasure of sin into our life for a season, we draw back from our pleasure of fellowship with the Father and Son. Even worse, we deny our Father his greatly desired pleasure of fellowshiping

with us. This verse says, “....my soul shall have no pleasure in him.”

How true this is, and on more than one level. Not only can their Father have no pleasure in their fellowship, but he will also have no pleasure in having to chasten those that draw back from being just and living by faith.

This would no doubt be a prime time to make a prime point that would be appropriate, in view of the subject being set forth by the Spirit. When we choose to put off the new man, we are not under the control of the Spirit, but of the deceitful lusts of our flesh. As we move forward in the sensation of our moment of pleasure, we are drawing back from our sensitivity to the Spirit and God’s pleasures. Now we know contextually who the man is that draws back in Heb.10:38, however, we need to understand that he does so by the same disobedience to biblical principles, and in the same manner that we do. When we left these believers in Heb.10:30-31, they were in God’s courtroom facing the Judge, about to fall into his fearful condemnation. It all started with their choice to draw back from their righteousness and holiness, acquired and enjoyed in the presence of their Abba, Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Their sin, no doubt, took them farther than they expected to go, kept them longer than they meant to stay, and cost them more than they could imagine they would have to pay. It would seem that we could almost hear the grieved Judge say, “my soul shall have no pleasure in him. GUILTY!!”

God’s same system of justice through chastisement is employed in an equitable manner unto all his children. As we found in I Cor.11:30-32, where he expounds on this system, he reveals that his heartfelt desire is that his children would judge their own sin by following the system he set up in I Jn.1:9, judging their own sin, so he doesn’t have to.

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

We need to be cautious in our approach to these truths that may puzzle us to a degree, and possibly perplex us to a greater degree. We cannot abandon the content and scriptural momentum that God has developed through a variety of characters and related scenarios. For example, when God said in verse 23, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering”, did he not have in mind many that were not holding fast the profession of their faith? Do not the characters and the truth found in this verse have a bearing on verse 39, the verse presently under our scrutiny? Are not these one and the same that did not hold fast their profession, and those that drew back by casting away their confidence?

So how does this relate? Why is it important? If they are one and the same, would this not mean that these individuals at one time HAD A PROFESSION OF FAITH that they chose not to hold fast? They also at one time had a confidence in Jesus Christ as their redeemer, IF THEY HAD A CONFIDENCE TO CAST AWAY. They must have been PART OF THE JUST THAT LIVED BY FAITH if they drew back from living by faith.

We need to keep all of this in mind, as well as God’s PRESCRIBED SYSTEM OF JUSTICE, as it relates to how he judges his children, and to what extent. Let us remember that in the context of I Cor.11:28-31 where we find God judging his children, there is also some perplexing language as well. Verse 29 says, “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh DAMNATION TO HIMSELF, not discerning the Lord’s body.” This powder keg of perplexity is defused as God reveals in the next couple of verses that the damnation, or judgment that he

is speaking of is physical death, rather than eternal spiritual death.

The cornerstone principle and purpose of God's compassionately designed system of justice for his children is found in I Cor.11:32 in these words, "But when we are JUDGED, we are CHASTENED of the Lord, that we should NOT BE CONDEMNED WITH THE WORLD." To put it simply, you have God's word on it that none of God's blood washed, blood bought children, will ever be judged with the lost world at the Great White Throne Judgment. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, where God's children are judged for their works and faithfulness, our works will be tried by fire, and some will be saved, so as by fire, but praise be to our loving Father, they will not be in the fire! (I Cor.3:12-15)

Before looking at Heb.10:39b in the closing of our study in this chapter, let us examine the word "perdition" lest we leave behind any residual nagging doubts. Strong's Concordance tells us that the Greek word here bears the meaning of "ruin or loss, spiritually, physically, or eternally." It is also translated "die, destruction, damnation, perish, and even waste" in Mt. 26:7. We would be safe to say that CONTEXT WILL DETERMINE THE MEANING. In our context, it is talking about physical death, not eternal damnation.

Heb.10:39b says, "but of them that believe to the saving of the soul".

To those that would say that this portion of the verse is supporting evidence for eternal damnation, the most authoritative rule of interpretation, and that is context, might be heard shouting;

Stop beating a dead horse! There is no case for such, and certainly no biblical evidence to be found.

There are two types of saints represented in verse 39. There are those that drew back in unbelief unto ruination and destruction of their life. Then there are those who held fast the profession of their faith unto the saving of their soul. They did not hold fast or remain faithful to save their soul, for this would be works based salvation, and besides that, they were already saved. In this present context, the just that live by faith are those that do not draw back and lose their life through God's fiery indignation, but those that remain faithful to the preservation of their life. The underlying word for "soul" is "psuche" which is "the natural life of the man." The underlying word for "saving" is "peripoiesis" which is used this one time in Scripture, and carries the idea of preserving one's life or maintaining possession of one's physical life.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Heb.11:1 - If there was a besetting sin in the life of the Hebrew believers addressed in this book, UNBELIEF would have to take the limelight. Just as this sin was the major topic of chapter 4, FAITH is the predominant theme of chapter 11. It seems that God chose to take a refreshing but temporary break from dealing with unbelief and its ensuing judgment before returning to the subject in chapter 12. Though there seems to be no explanation as to why, the inquiring mind can't help but wondering what God had on his mind in the placement of this chapter, and particularly, in the setting forth of these powerful and penetrating truths about faith, couched effectively in real-life settings.

Was God's plan to fortify the hearts and minds of the believers that were being encouraged to hold fast the profession of their faith and cast not away their confidence? In the closing verses of chapter ten, God was rallying the remnant to LIVE BY FAITH, THEIR HOPE OF NOT DRAWING BACK, while bringing to light their deficiency in the area of patience.

Heb.11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

God had just challenged these believers to be faithful in doing the will of God, and ministered motivation to them with the hope of the promise of Jesus' return in just a little while. Could this have been on his mind when he said, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen?" Again, it would seem reasonable that context would flavor the meal he is setting on the table for us here.

One thing is for sure, faith is the substance or the foundational element of 'the faith', as well as the foundational principle of their hope.

Another foundational principle that should be set forth at this time is that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom.10:17) This essential truth will help us understand the relationship between faith and hope.

How so? A good working definition of "hope", verified by scriptural use is, an eager anticipation of what God is going to do, or an absolute earnest expectation of what he is going to do based upon his written Word. "Faith" believes what God says. "Hope" believes what God says and waits for him to bring it to pass with a high degree of desire, anticipation, and expectation. Truly, "faith is the substance of things hoped for", and the

essential principle that makes “hope” work. We also find in this verse that “faith is the evidence of things not seen.” “Evidence” carries the idea of “being the GROUNDS for, or the PROOF of, things not seen, or things hoped for.” There is hope for the hopeless! If God said it in his Word, it is an ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL!

Faith is not a VANISHING VAPOR of religious fantasy occasionally employed when we are pretending to be spiritual in the flesh, but SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE of that which we eagerly anticipate and earnestly expect based upon scriptural documentation and spiritual determination.

Heb.11:2-3: “For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

As God begins his Elders Hall of Faith and their Feats of Faith, he of course begins with the Elder of all elders, and that being our ELDER BROTHER, (Heb. 2:11) Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate. It might be said that there are worlds of truth packed into this short testimony of the omnipotence of Almighty God. Our understanding of this Creator, and the creation of all the elements of the framed worlds, is said to be through the simplest spiritual element of FAITH. Truly, “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Heb.11:4: “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he yet speaketh.”

The first elder and his feat of faith that God chooses to venerate is also the first man on biblical record to offer gifts of sacrifice to God. Gen. 4:4 says that “Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof.” This explains why 11:4 says, “God testifying of his GIFTS”.

The insight God gives us from this verse is that Abel offered these gifts by faith. What does this teach us? Knowing that faith cometh by the hearing of the Word of God, this teaches us that God had told Abel that without the shedding of blood, there was no remission of sin. We also find in this verse that Abel’s more excellent sacrifice was accounted to him for righteousness. So what does this teach us? Simply that faith in, and obedience to God’s word is where righteousness is born. God closes this verse by reminding us that Abel’s faithful obedience “YET SPEAKETH”.

Heb.11:5-6: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

It would appear on the surface that Enoch was spared the sting of death because of his faith in and obedience to God’s Word, to the extent that he was perfectly righteous in God’s eyes. Though we know that Jesus Christ was the only sinless and perfect man, this man would appear to have been a close runner

up. He apparently had an impeccable testimony among men and God before his translation; or pretty close to it. God was so pleased with him that he was compelled to take him from this earth. The word “pleased” means to “gratify fully.”

We find in 11:6 that God gave us what would seem to be a trailer verse giving fuller disclosure regarding how Enoch won his heart to the point of choosing not to live without him any longer. We find, first of all, that Enoch had a doubtless, unwavering persuasion that anything God said was truth. He had the kind of faith that brought God great pleasure.

Secondly, Enoch fulfilled the two critical and essential stipulations that qualified genuine faith in God, both of which are given in 11:6 in these words, “for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

Do you suppose that when God’s Spirit ordered these words to become Holy Writ, he knew that the struggling remnant of Hebrew believers, that had need of greater patience, who were also trying to come to grips with holding fast the profession of their faith, would be ministered to by these words? Would they not be prompted by the Spirit to remember that they had been admonished recently to cast not away their confidence, which hath great recompense of REWARD? Would the Spirit not reconfirm in their hearts that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him and believe that he is?

If Enoch could speak from ages past and tell us what the reward of diligently seeking him was, would he not joyfully proclaim that it was coming to him? Perhaps he would tell us that his being caught away in the twinkling of an eye was about God seeking the same fellowship and pleasure that he had with Adam and Eve before the Fall.

Heb.11:7: “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

Noah, the preacher of righteousness, according to II Pet.3:5, became “heir of the righteousness which is by faith”, as seen in Heb.11:7. Though he ranks at the top alongside Enoch and Abraham, he is the only one selected to rank with Daniel and Job in Ezekiel 14:14, in reference to his righteousness which is by faith. This verse reads as such; “Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, (the land of Israel) they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the LORD God.”

Gen.7:1 says, “And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.” What kind of man was this, to have received commendation by God as the one man on the earth to be seen righteous before God, and that, by simple faith in God’s Word, which produces righteousness of a divine sort and origin.

Gen. 6:9 says, “...Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” If we didn’t know better, we would think this man was sinless!

Gen. 6:8 says, “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.” We often say, and accurately so, that grace is God giving us that which we do not deserve. Another biblical principle that is both documented in Scripture and unquestioned is that God gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6 & I Pet. 5:5)

If we take one more step back in the field of foundational principles, we will find that man cannot author humility because it is the antithesis of his prideful old nature. If a man experiences true humility, it will be because he was humbled by God. The process of humbling takes place through a work of the Spirit called contrition that produces a contrite and humble spirit within man. The old man has no desire for humility!

Isa. 57:15 says, “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” The process of humbling is a work of the Holy Spirit wherein he effects contriteness in a Spirit aided surrendered spirit. James 4:10 says, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord.” To obey these words, one must be willing to yield to the wooing and working of the Spirit within us. God is not implying that our old man has the capability of performing this submissive act of obedience on his own.

The process of humbling needs to take place, because the spirit of man is not naturally humble, but proud. As perfect and righteous as Noah was, he had a sinful nature and had to experience the work of the Spirit, called contrition, to produce a contrite and humble spirit. At this point, the humbled condition of man’s spirit qualifies him to receive God’s grace.

The entrance of grace at this spiritual stage of God’s work in progress, precedes by design, obedience, and righteousness, which always follow humility, or the humbling of man’s disobedient and unrighteous spirit.

We find in Philippians 2:8 that Jesus, though without a disobedient and unrighteous spirit, “humbled himself, and became obedient. Obedience, righteousness, and holiness always follow a

truly humbled spirit. Grace enters Gods' plan following humility, providing the necessary divine resources that enable us to obey and serve. If we are to walk and serve God obediently, we must do it by FAITH THROUGH GRACE as did Noah.

Remembering that God giveth grace to the humble exclusively, we can be assured that this work of grace in the life of Noah is what enabled him to become an "heir of righteousness which is by faith", and to be commended by God in the words of Gen. 6:9 saying, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Gen.6:8 says, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."

Heb.11:8-10: "By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

This man Abram, later to be called Abraham, of the lineage of Shem, was chosen by God and told in Gen.12:1 "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee".

He was further told:

1. I will make of thee a great nation.

2. I will bless thee.
3. I will make thy name great.
4. Thou shalt be a blessing.
5. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee.
6. In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Heb.11:8 reveals that when Abraham was called to go out, he obeyed by faith, “not knowing whither he went”. He and his wife were separated from all that was familiar, including their surroundings and family and friends, with no knowledge of the “strange country”, that was so foreign in culture and even hostile at times. In the midst of the gods of paganism, Abraham boldly chose to trust and place full confidence in a supernatural heavenly voice that gripped his soul with divine authority. In his mind, he was placing his faith in the Words of the one true and living God. His response to God’s call was, Here am I LORD, send me!

God goes on to tell us in Heb.11:9 that he not only went out when he was sent out by faith, but he sojourned and dwelled in that strange country by faith. As we read through verse 9 and into verse 10, we find that while he was dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob as pilgrims and strangers in the land, Abraham’s faith was truly “the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.” “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Heb.11:11-12: “Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.”

It is a beautiful and instructional thing, that while Abraham and Sarahs' Father exalts them as heroes of faith, he doesn't mention their faithless moments; one of which turned into 13 years in the land of Egypt, and another where they laughed at God when they were told that they would soon become a father and mother.

Abraham literally fell on his face laughing, and leaning to his own understanding, asked God why he couldn't just let Ishmael be the promised seed. Little could Abraham have known that in the plan of God, he would become known as the “Father of us all” and the “Father of many nations”. Though there were moments of faithlessness and failure, as there will be in our lives as well, their Father fulfilled his own words spoken in II Tim. 2:25-26, where he said, “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;”. Because of their Father's love and gentleness, and willingness to patiently and meekly emphasize the truth of his Word, Abraham and Sarah made their way into the “Hall of Faith” in Hebrews eleven.

May we understand that we have the same heavenly Father, if Christ indwells us, that will work exactly the same way in our lives. Though we oppose ourselves and our spiritual welfare when we live in self-will and unbelief, God will grant us repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, if we will yield our faithless spirit to the work of contrition and humbling unto obedience. (II Tim.2:25-26) The “ACKNOWLEDGING OF THE TRUTH”, by virtue of definition is where faith is born.

Heb.11:13-16: “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared them a city.”

Abraham and Sarah, and all that sprang from them, so many as the “sands which is by the sea shore innumerable”, “all died IN FAITH, not having received the promises”. However, we have God’s Word on it that they were persuaded of them, and even embraced them, and confessed that they fully understood that they were pilgrims and strangers on this earth. They understood that they were passing through on their way to a better and a heavenly country and city, being prepared for them by their Father. God makes it clear that they could have chosen to return to the country from whence they came, but did not, because of their fully-persuaded faith in the promises of God and the God of the promises.

Scripture reveals that Father Abraham, the Father of Faith passed down his faith to those that died in faith. His testimony as given by God in Rom. 4:18-22 was, “Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations”. Verse 20 says that he staggered not at the promise of God, and in verse 21, that he was fully persuaded that if God promised it, he was

also able to perform it. Abraham's Father loved his childlike faith, so much so, according to verse 22, that "it was imputed to him for righteousness."

Heb.11:17-19: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."

Though it would be difficult to rank the individual feats of faith in the Hall of Faith, this divine trial of Abraham's faith had to hold a unique place in the Father's heart, knowing that he planned to receive Isaac as a figure, but knowing further that the unfolding of the various aspects of this temptation would also be a figure of his own Son being offered as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. Let us take note that God emphasizes that Abraham had received the promises, for which he had long awaited, in this very son that he had been told to offer up. God also pointed out that this was Abraham's ONLY BEGOTTEN SON.

In verse 18, we find a reminder that God had said to Abraham, "That in Isaac shall thy seed be called", adding to Abraham's possible perplexity. Abraham was aware of all that God had said, and the promises he had made. He knew that it was through Isaac that he would become "THE FATHER OF US ALL", and "THE FATHER OF MANY NATIONS", and one nation in particular, and that being Israel. In a moment when he could have staggered at the promise of God, "he was fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was able also to perform". (Rom. 4:21) Therefore the only answer to him was that God was going to take Isaac's

life, “Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead”. (Heb.11:19)

Heb.11:20-22: “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshiped leaning upon the top of his staff.

By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.”

In these verses, we find some feats of faith that might seem to have received honorable mention, perhaps due to the lesser degree of impact or spiritual magnitude. One thing we do know is that these men had no less integrity and spiritual character, but were simply obediently doing what God had called them to do. What they did, they did by faith through grace.

Could we not learn a lesson here about the believer’s calling and role in the body of Christ today? Eph.4:7 says, “But unto EVERY ONE OF US (that includes all of God’s children) is given grace according to the MEASURE of the GIFT OF CHRIST.”

Rom.12:3 says, “For I say, through the grace given unto me, to EVERY MAN that is among you, not to think of himself more highly that he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God HATH DEALT to EVERY MAN the MEASURE OF FAITH.”

May God help us to understand that one man is no better than another in the body because of his calling, his gifts, or his talents. We can rest assured that if God gives us a calling to perform, he will give to EVERY MAN the MEASURE OF GRACE and the MEASURE OF FAITH required to fulfill their calling. There is no

room for comparing ourselves among ourselves. God considers that foolish according to II Cor.10:12. If God was to put one of us in the Hall of Faith, it would be based on the fact that we accomplished our feat of faith based upon the measure of grace and faith he supplied, commensurate to, our ordained or appointed task. We should begin our task as a simple humble-spirited servant, and when we complete the task, no matter its immensity or impact, we should still be a humble spirited servant. Accomplishing our feat of faith with this kind of obedience and spirit brings glory to our "Task Master"

Heb.11:23: "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment."

This would seem to be a most peculiar record of entry to the Hall of Faith. Why would God commend the faith of Moses' parents for simply choosing to hide Moses from the king's executors? The answer, of course, is because they saw that he was a "proper child". What could have been so special about this child that they were willing to defy the king's commandment and incur the king's wrath, and amazingly without any fear?

Now, it would indeed seem commendable if the text had said it was because of their love for the child, for after all, the best way to show God's love is to lay down our life for the brethren. The fact of the matter is that God doesn't say that, or even allude to it.

Perhaps the definition of the word "proper" will unveil the cloak of this mystery. In this verse at hand, the word means handsome. In Exodus 2:2, in the original telling of this story, the word for proper is "goodly" which is a, "take your pick word, from sweet to

beautiful, pleasant to cheerful, and gracious to kind”, possibly carrying the meaning of all of these things.

Wow! Superchild! And that is great, but, what would they have done with him if he had not been a goodly and proper child, thrown him in the river without a basket? My point is not to be silly, but to ponder the possibility that this was somehow a divinely appointed and communicated act of faith on the part of Moses’ parents, that instilled absolute assurance that they were doing the right thing, while fostering absolute fearlessness.

Standing upon the authority of the King James Bible with unswerving confidence in the translators as divine agents of preservation, a closer look at the word “proper” and how the word was used at the time of translation will be our last pursuit of greater illumination. One old and quite obsolete definition for the word “proper” is “SUITABLY ADAPTED FOR A SPECIFIC PURPOSE.” Though it would seem that God would say “AMEN” to this definition in regards to his calling and purpose for Moses, let us learn from the parents of Moses that there is an undying living faith produced in us by the living God, WORTH STANDING ON and WORTH DYING FOR.

Heb.11:24-29: “ By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter;

Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season:

Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.”

In the opening of this passage, we find that Moses had reached a level of physical and spiritual maturity, as he had come to years. By the authority of these words of God, “By faith Moses”, it can be determined that Moses had obtained the faith of his fathers. His refusal to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter may also tell us that he had come to a level of spiritual maturity to discern both good and evil. He chose to make public the origin of his sonship, knowing he was choosing to suffer affliction with the people of God. His personal integrity and maturing godly character changed his assessment of what he really valued as true riches. He no longer found enjoyment in the pleasures of sin and transgressions against the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and more and more so, HIS GOD as well.

Moses genuinely esteemed, or attached a much higher value to the shameful reproach, and the disgraceful blame than he did to the vast treasures of Egypt that he was entitled to. He considered the reproach of Christ “greater riches”! BY FAITH MOSES!

There seems to be another related aspect to Moses’ motivation found in verse 26 in these words, “for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.” This word “respect” means “TO LOOK AWAY FROM EVERYTHING ELSE and GIVE ONE’S

FULL ATTENTION TO.” This entails not just faith and humbled obedience, but devoted LOVE and LOYALTY as well.

Moses looked away from possible, if not probable, position and power, as well as treasures and pleasures, giving his full attention to greater spiritual riches.

If there is any doubt that Moses lived on this level of spiritual maturity, take notice in verse 27, that he had absolutely no fear of the king’s wrath, but chose to patiently endure it steadfastly “AS SEEING HIM WHO WAS INVISIBLE”. His faith was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. When Moses forsook Egypt BY FAITH, he fled into the presence of God and clearly discerned him, yea experienced him, according to the definition of the word “seeing”.

Ps.27:13 says, “I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the GOODNESS of the LORD in the land of the living.” Perhaps Moses saw him who was invisible through his grace and goodness.

Ps. 31:19 says, “Oh how great is thy GOODNESS, which thou hast laid up for them that FEAR THEE; which thou hast wrought for them that TRUST IN THEE before the sons of men!” We have God’s Word on it that Moses received a GREAT portion of God’s GOODNESS, because he met both the criteria in this verse. He feared God far above his fear of the king, and he manifested his faith by trusting in God before the king, the Egyptians, and his own people. Moses remained steadfast in patience as he endured the king’s wrath, by a faith that provided strength and courage, seeing a VISIBLE DISPLAY of him who is invisible BY HIS GREAT GOODNESS.

Fearing and trusting God by faith is about as foundational as it comes. Though seemingly a lost virtue, the FEAR OF GOD is

found to be the indispensable and impregnable mortar, by which a FEARLESS LIFE OF STRENGTH AND COURAGE is built on this foundation.

God's final disclosure about the faith of Moses is found in verse 28, where, "Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them."

Let us think about the significance of the entry of this feat of faith regarding the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, knowing the supreme importance of its yearly commemoration in the minds and hearts of the Jewish people.

Could it be that God placed this entry here because of the importance of this event to the Hebrew believers, both to the faithful and unfaithful? We can no doubt rest assured that all of these New Testament Hebrew believers had been taught regarding the typology of the Old Testament Passover Lamb, and at one time or another had rejoiced in this beautiful picture of redemption. It would seem that God would surely be desirous that the remembrance of this truth be ministered to the hearts of those that were holding fast their profession of faith and hopefully to those who had cast away their confidence in the Passover Lamb.

Heb.11:29-31: "By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace."

It would seem that there is an amazing, if not mysterious truth behind the scenes, of the words, “By faith THEY passed through the Red sea...”.

Exod.14:11-12 says, “And THEY said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? whereof hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.”

Question: Where is the faith in this story that they are being commended for? Yes, amazing and mysterious! Is not God commending them for their faith in Heb.11:29? Did he not commend every person mentioned in chapter eleven for their faith, with no mention at all of their unbelief and rebellious behavior? Fascinating! Mind boggling! Perplexing!

These recipients of commendation defied Moses and his leadership in the presence of God himself! God went before them in the pillar of the cloud even as they railed on him. Where is the faith? Having said all this as food for thought, let it now be said, **THE FAITH WAS THERE, because GOD SAID IT WAS!**

So what happened to their faithlessness and rebellion? May we surmise that somewhere between the day of their faithlessness and rebellion, and the next morning when they went into the sea on dry ground, there was a **DIVINELY WONDROUS WORK OF REPENTANCE UNTO FAITH**. Let us analyze the only two verses that cover the events of that time period for any evidence of such a life-changing occurrence.

Ex. 14:19-20: “And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:

And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.”

Let us ponder the physical, emotional, and spiritually traumatic impact that these supernatural wonders would have had on the Israelites as they were thrown into a turbulent world, hours on end, that they heretofore had never experienced. The “strong east wind” in verse 21, by definition, was a VIOLENT STORM of GREAT FORCE that blew the sea back ALL NIGHT. The SOUND of the WAVES and WIND, along with a blasting spray must have been TERRIFYING and THREATENING to their welfare.

We can only imagine the physical and emotional impact of this night of fear, but what about the SPIRITUAL IMPACT that must have occurred before they went into the midst of the sea BY FAITH the next morning? Let it be understood that they were not briefed or informed of God’s order of events for their night of horror. It appears that calamity and chaos beset them without prior warning! What they were sure of was that they had rebelled against Moses and God, and now, what must have seemed like God’s wrath for their rebellion was being poured out. Could it be in the midst of their chaotic thoughts, their imaginations were going wild, becoming convinced that they would never see morning?

If this purely speculative but feasible scenario were true, what would be the ORDER OF SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES, needed to produce this overnight revival of repentance unto faith? Might we reasonably assume that the first conversion that took place was

from a fear of Pharaoh to a fear of God? Let us now consider, as was taught earlier in our writing, the biblical order of principles set in place by God to restore God's people to faithfulness in any age.

Contriteness, wherein the fear of God seems to be born, is a work of God, through his Spirit, designed to produce grief and godly sorrow unto repentance and a surrendered and broken spirit, and heart as well. Upon yielding the disobedient spirit to God's conviction and reproof, a humbled confession of sin prompts God's cleansing and forgiveness unto righteousness.

Remembering that faith always precedes righteousness, where was the VITAL TRANSITION from faithlessness to faith in our order of principles? The answer is that faith is produced at the moment God grants repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. Why so? A sorrowful and surrendered spirit of repentance involves a subjection to and acceptance of the knowledge of truth rather than rebellion toward and rejection of the knowledge of truth. This total transformation of mind and heart is fertile ground where faith comes forth by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

If we apply these principles to the camp of Israel, it would seem appropriate to assume that God manifested himself through the display of his power and loving provision for their future welfare, such that it produced contriteness and the fear of God unto repentance and faith. With fully surrendered spirits of humility and faith, they passed through the Red Sea.

Heb.11:30-31: " By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith Rahab perished not, when she had received the spies with peace."

God's plan to bring down the walls of Jericho involved detailed and explicit instructions. In order for the walls to come down, each person must perform their prescribed duty exactly how and when God said to. The men of war, the people, and the priest had specific instructions. There were to be seven priests with seven ram's horns properly positioned in relation to the Ark of the Covenant. The horns were to be blown in a particular manner and nothing was to come out of the people's mouths except a shout for seven days. They were to circle the city WHEN and HOW God said.

Is there a lesson that we can learn from this story? What does this teach us about faith? Do we say that "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" tongue in cheek, or do we say it with a reverential awe and compelling responsibility? If Joshua, the men of war, the priests, and the people had not taken their responsibility seriously and done exactly what God said, would the walls of Jericho have come tumbling down? Furthermore, if they had leaned to their own understanding and performed their duty their way, would God have said in Heb.11:30, "BY FAITH the walls of Jericho fell down..."? How can we say we are walking by faith if we are not performing our duties God's way, by God's will, exactly according to God's Word? Selah.

We find in verse 31 God's commendation of the faith of Rahab. Is this not evidence that the Father had received her unto himself as his child? She testified to the two spies in Joshua 2:11 in these words, "for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath. Sounds like a profession of faith! Note the wording in verse 31 saying that "Rahab perished not with them that BELIEVED NOT". This would seem to indicate that she was a

believer. Finally, we are told in James 2:22-25 that Rahab the harlot was justified before God by a faith that produced works.

When Rahab's heart melted within her and she came to the realization that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was the true God, apparently God granted the faith to her that was needed to save her. This faith was divine faith whose co-laborer was works. God tells us in James 2:25 that Rahab was justified in the spies eyes by her willingness to receive them, and desire to protect them by sending them out another way. She was justified in God's eyes by the faith he provided her.

Multitudes today are living a dead religion with a dead faith. True faith is LIVING! It is provided by the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation, AND IN DAILY SANCTIFICATION as a fruit of the Spirit.(Gal.5:22) God tells us in Gal. 5:6 that true faith WORKETH by love. Does ours?

Heb.11:32-34 - In these verses, it seems that God feels pressed for time to declare all of the feats of his heroes of faith. It is as though he is saying, I just can't close this chapter on the Hall of Faith without calling well deserved attention to these six prominent servants of glory and my beloved prophets, "who through FAITH subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

When the Word of God is studied and meditated on properly, not only should God's presence and guidance be sought, but his heart. If we are seeking truth in our throne room classroom, the Spirit of truth will not only bear witness or testify to the truth of a

verse or passage, but to the heart of God as well. There is a certain spiritual feel to Scripture that can add a deeper meaning or impact when we relate to God and his loving passion and compassion for those he speaks of, or those that he so desires to receive his life transforming words.

God so loved and desired to commend the faith of “Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets”. (vs.32) Not only did he love them, but he knew that their performance of faith was motivated by their love and loyalty to him.

Heb.11:35-38 - Remembering that God is no respecter of persons in regards to his compassion or commendation, God was constrained by his love to add one more select, but little known, group to the Hall of Faith. To him, this elite group that was tried, tormented, and tortured, earned the “Divine Medal of Honor” and the “Supreme Commendation” found in these words in verse 38, “(OF WHOM THE WORLD WAS NOT WORTHY:)”.

Verse 35 reveals to us that some would not accept deliverance; that they might obtain a BETTER RESURRECTION. Could it be that they would not accept deliverance because, like Moses, they had respect unto the recompense of the reward? They obviously had learned to come to God by faith, “believing that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb.11:6)

God tells us in Heb.10:34 that they took JOYFULLY the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they possessed in heaven a better and an ENDURING SUBSTANCE. Truly their faith was the SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, and the evidence of things not seen. God went on to reveal in Heb.10:35

that their sustained faithfulness had GREAT RECOMPENSE OF REWARD. Though they may not have known what all this reward entailed, we do know that these heroes of faith firmly believed it meant a BETTER RESURRECTION.

Do we firmly believe that our FAITHFULNESS UNTO OBEDIENCE means a better resurrection? Do we understand that we will soon be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ for what we did or did not do BY FAITH? Do we really understand or CARE that the time from this moment until the time that he will be judging us is as a vapor, that appeareth for a moment, and then vanisheth away? Should we not be judging ourselves in regard to our faithfulness? Is not this the first moment of the rest of our lives? Should we not be redeeming the time, knowing the evil that possesses and saturates our days, our hours, our moments, and even our own flesh? Eph.5:16 says, “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

No wonder God says in Eph. 5:17, “Wherefore be YE not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” How can we redeem the time, if we don’t even know what the will of the Lord is? In this immediate context, the will of the Lord is walking circumspectly in the Spirit, and not as fools in the flesh, without wisdom. The words of Eph.5:18 which says, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”, reveals that an understanding of what the will of the Lord is SHOULD COMPEL US to desire to be drunk on the Holy Spirit! The term “filled with the Spirit” means “crammed full.”

Like the heroes of faith in Heb.11, we should desire complete obedience to these truths because we too should have a RESPECT unto the “RECOMPENSE OF THE REWARD”, not just at the Judgment Seat of Christ, BUT NOW. God tells us in Eph. 5:19-21, that being crammed full of the Holy Spirit of Christ will

put a song in our heart unto the Lord, will cause us be a people crammed full of thanks ALWAYS FOR ALL THINGS, and finally will produce the FEAR OF GOD, evidenced by FULL SUBMISSION to one another.

NEVER FORGET that we are not talking about “pie in the sky” theology for super spiritual giants. These truths are to our Father, and should be to us, STANDARD EQUIPMENT for each child of God. He is no respecter of persons. Every believer is a unique and beloved child of his Father, as though they are the only child he has. Only God the Father and God the Son could create this supernatural relationship through God the Holy Spirit.

If we will simply respond to the Spirit’s reproof and conviction obediently in repentant confession, all our unrighteousness will be forgiven and forgotten, and we will immediately be walking in the light as he is in the light in the throne room. God puts off our old man and arrays us in the royalty of the new man, which is Christ in us, the hope of glory. We are not only walking in the light, but in the Spirit as well. We are at that moment under the control of the Spirit of Christ as we walk forward in wisdom circumspectfully. Again, we are not talking about super spiritual giants here, we are talking about us, in our Spirit humbled simplicity! Only excuses and unwillingness will deprive us of this royal privilege.

Heb.11:39-40: “And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

God having provided some BETTER THING for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

Here, we have such an appropriate closing to the dynamics of the Hall of Faith, made possible by a divine impartation of faith in the lives of sinners saved and sanctified by God's mercy and grace. God started the chapter telling us that the Hebrew elders obtained a good report BY FAITH. In verse 39, he again reminds us of the same truth, yet clarifying, that having done all, they "received not the promise".

Our first thought might be, WHAT PROMISE? Heb. 11:33 tells us that they "obtained promises", but we find in 11:39 that they didn't obtain "the promise". So was their faith not sufficient to obtain "the promise"?

Could it be that this promise could not be obtained by faith until the Promised Seed had come? Could it be that the reason they could not obtain it was that they lived under the First Covenant? Could it also be that the "BETTER THING" that God provided for the church age Hebrew believers was the New Covenant? It would seem to fit the context of this book. We find in Heb. 4:1 that the believing Hebrews had received the promise of entering into eternal rest, which is part of the promise of eternal inheritance found in Heb. 9:15, received by those that placed their GOD PROVIDED FAITH in the Mediator of the New Testament or New Covenant. The heroes of faith under the Old Covenant would find themselves in Heb. 11:13, IN THE WORDS, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

In Heb. 11:40, the writer seemed to include himself along with the Hebrew believers when he said, "God having provided some better thing FOR US, that they without US should not be made perfect." It would almost seem that it is saying here, "Because

God provided the New Covenant, with Jesus Christ as the Mediator and High Priest, our Hebrew brothers and sisters that were under the Old Covenant can be made perfect, or spiritually complete, with us.”

God made it clear in Heb. 9:15 that all that answered the call unto salvation under the FIRST COVENANT received the same promise unto eternal inheritance “by means of death” for the redemption of the transgressions that were UNDER THE FIRST TESTAMENT OR COVENANT. Though they received not the promise in their lifetime, they received the benefits of the promise by means of Christ’s death, receiving the full benefits of redemption unto perfection with their Hebrew brethren.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Heb.12:1: “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us”

The concept of “compassed about” is “to be enclosed with or encircled by”. It is as though “we” the church age saints are in the arena of Christian service running the race that God has set before us, and the great cloud of witnesses are standing before and around us, reviewing our feats of service accomplished BY FAITH. As we observe their witness, or testimony, of patient endurance BY FAITH, we are challenged, or provoked, unto love and to good works, desiring to emulate their faith which pleased God. Because of the influence of their example, the Hebrew believers are charged to determine to lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset them.

While these admonitions were primarily addressed to these church age Hebrew believers, they apply to all born again believers. The “sin which doth so easily beset us” in reference to the Hebrew believers, would in the general context of the book seem to be unbelief, with a possible variety of sins among today’s believers.

Heb.12:2: “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; 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.”

After fully establishing the superiority of Jesus Christ from the Creator to the Redeemer and Mediator of the New Covenant, the Hebrew believers are directed to look unto Jesus as the author and finisher of their faith. He is the Supreme Example to be followed when running the race with patience, remembering that patience is enduring hardships and adversity with a calm unruffled spirit that is under the control of the Spirit of Christ himself.

Jesus not only endured the cross, but he did so with a quality of faith that counted it all joy. It is as though, while being despised and rejected himself, he hated the shame, but joyfully endured the grief and sorrow because of his love for, first his FATHER, and secondly, his love for us. Note the words, “the joy that was set before him” and the words, “and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” It is clearly evident that Jesus endured the cross with the knowledge that very soon his Father would resurrect him and restore him to their heavenly fellowship. Don’t miss the INTIMATE TOUCH in the words, “SET DOWN”.

Surely it was not only Jesus’ dream of faith that his own Father would resurrect him, but that his own Father of his love, so

missed and cherished, would personally “SET” him at his right-hand side on the THRONE OF GLORY. We find this presumed truth in the word, “set”. Simply put, this word of just three letters contained a world of meaning and wealth to Jesus, understanding that it meant “the placing into one’s PLACE or POSITION BY ANOTHER.”

Can we possibly begin to see, or at least imagine, what it meant for Jesus to leave his Father’s eternal union, and this place of eternal holiness and glory, to a place of vile filth and unholiness, where he would have to choose to make himself of no reputation, and take upon himself the form of a servant, in the likeness of man? He left this place of splendor and glory to go to a place where many would be astonished, or stupified in amazement and wonder, because his visage was so marred more than any man. It was a place where he would be despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, being esteemed stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. It was a place where he would be bruised for our iniquities, wounded for our transgressions, cut off out of the land of the living. It was a place where he would make his grave with the wicked in the travail of his soul, that was made an offering for sin. Finally, it was a place where he would be forsaken by his own Father, the love of his life.

Can we yet begin to see what it meant for the Son of God to leave his Father’s eternal union and loving fellowship? If so, surely we can get a glimpse of the joy set before him of having his own Father set him down at the right hand of his throne, having accomplished his Father’s will and pleasure for the sake of all mankind’s redemption. Glory be to God that Jesus said to his Father, “not my will, but thine be done”. What kind of mind and heart would not earnestly and honestly say to this same Father

and Son, right this moment, NOT MY WILL, BUT THINE BE DONE?

Heb.12:3-5: “For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

The word “consider” means “to fix the mind on or meditate on in order to understand.” God apparently wanted them to compare their contradiction of sinners against themselves with his contradiction of sinners against himself. The word “contradiction” carries the idea of having one’s words denied or disputed. It is a “resisting and standing in opposition to, or striving against”. Upon their consideration and contemplation, it was their Father’s hope that these words of comparison would comfort them in their sufferings of mental anguish and physical affliction, and help sustain them through their battle fatigue.

Here again, it seems that God is seeking to encourage them with the thought that they had “not yet resisted unto blood” in their striving against sin, as his Son had.

Perhaps because of the weariness of their battle-torn minds, they are told in verse 5 that they had forgotten an earlier exhortation, spoken to them as children, in these words, “My son,

despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him”

It is well documented in the general context of the book of Hebrews that many had not faithfully considered Jesus. They had become weary and faint in their minds, trying to endure their persecutors, while striving to keep the sin of unbelief, and ensuing sins out of their lives. We find God speaking to them in verse 5 as a loving Father unto his beloved children regarding his parental obligation to rebuke and chasten them.

They are admonished in the latter part of verse 5 to not be irreverent or disrespectful toward their Father’s need to chasten them, and further, not to faint and become half-hearted in their spiritual resolve or determination.

Heb.12:6-8: “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”

We might entitle these verses, “The Cardinal Laws of Chastening”. The word “chasteneth” means to “train up a child”. It implies not only instruction and learning from God’s Word, but necessary discipline or punishment. Prov.19:18 says, “Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.” Prov.13:24 says, “He that spareth his rod HATETH HIS SON: but he that LOVETH HIM chasteneth him betimes.” If this is God’s

view of chastening for parents, it is his view for his children as well.

They are told in Heb.12:8 that if they profess faith in Christ, and yet are without chastisement, then are they bastards and not sons.

Heb.12:9-10: “Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which have corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.”

God reveals in these verses the seriousness of chastening that should demand sober-mindedness in regard to our response. The right response is presented to be “reverence” toward our Abba, Father. He says that if we revered or showed shamefacedness to our earthly father, should we not much rather be in subjection, through a broken and surrendered spirit, to the Father of men’s spirits?

Perhaps we should take under fearful advisement the last two words of verse 9 which says, “AND LIVE”. An irreverent response to God’s chastening is a rebellious spirit, that by all indications will bring forth judgment unto death.

Apparently the believers in Heb.10 fell into this category of rebellious spirits. They were warned in verse 27 that a CERTAIN FEARFUL looking for of JUDGMENT and FIERY INDIGNATION would DEVOUR God’s adversaries. They were told in verse 30

that the Lord would repay their irreverence with vengeance, and finally in verse 31 that, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

It seems God wanted to set the record straight in Heb.12:10 by letting it be known that he received no pleasure in chastening his children, but it was for their profit, that they might be partakers of HIS HOLINESS.

Heb.12:11-13: “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed.”

In these verses, God deals with TWO DIFFERENT RESPONSES to chastening and the spiritual effect it will have. One response is a fleshly response with a carnal mind, while the other is the proper response in the Spirit. God seems to say in verse 11 that any way you look at it, chastening is not a joyous experience, but will have a grievous impact of sadness and sorrowful grief. It will create a heavy burdensome spirit. So is the law of sowing and reaping! God will not be mocked without some measure of vengeance.

God tells us in I Cor.11:31-32 that his heart’s desire is that we would judge our own sin, so that he would not have to bring about chastening judgment. He clarifies in verse 32 that chastening is non-optional for the loving purpose that his children should not be

condemned with the lost world at the Great White Throne Judgment.

God makes it clear in Heb.12:11 that chastening for the present is not joyous, but grievous. However for those that respond submissively in the Spirit, afterward it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. The implication of the word “exercised” is that God uses chastening to instruct and train the erring believer. The end result is repentance, faith, and righteousness unto holiness, with a humbled obedient spirit. This should be the same desired result for parental chastening if it is performed biblically.

In verses 12-13, we seem to find the unrepentant believer who is not allowing God’s exercise program of chastening to bear fruit unto righteousness. It appears that their mindset of resistance is affecting their attitude and their body language, and to God’s dismay and disapproval, their leaven seems to be harming others. They are divinely admonished to straighten out their crooked paths that other believers have followed unto their spiritual detriment and affliction. God in his longsuffering, and forbearing love, lets them know that he is still willing to use them. He desires that they minister healing to those that were sorely affected by their rebellious attitude toward God and his chastening.

Heb.12:14-15: “Follow peace with all men, and holiness; without which no man shall see the Lord:

Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”

God continues his admonition to those that apparently have responded in disapproval and possible anger to God’s

chastening. This is a classic case of responding in the flesh and exalting their opinion and understanding over God's merciful and gracious ordained purpose for chastening. It is as though he is saying, "Come now, and let us reason together".

God counsels them in lovingkindness, yet it seems with more intense gravity, to not only straighten out their paths, and walk in righteousness, but to follow peace and holiness with ALL MEN. The word "follow" implies "pressing forward, even under persecution". It would seem that there was conflict with some of the brethren and it was harder to maintain the peace of God in certain relationships.

God is ordering their steps in a spiritual response to chastening which will yield righteousness, peace, and finally holiness. God wants these believers to relate to all men with a testimony of righteousness, a calm tranquil spirit of peace, and according to verse 14, "holiness". God reveals to them that without the supreme virtue of holiness, NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD in their lives.

What did the Holy Spirit have on his mind, as it relates to the immediate context, when he inspired these words? It would seem obvious in the context that God was showing his concern with how men are seeing the Lord manifested in the lives of believers that are walking a crooked path with a defeated and discouraged attitude, and foul spirit. Topping that off with an unholy lifestyle, the Lord will never be seen in such darkness and shameful living.

To understand the phrase "Looking diligently in verse 15, let us summarize the context beginning in verse 11. We find a believer or believers that had endured chastening in the Spirit such that afterward it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness in their lives. However, there were those that had responded to the divine

exercise of chastening, in the flesh, with a carnal mind of resistance.

God talks to them in verse 12 about their foul spirit and accompanying body language that was spreading their evil leaven to other weaker brethren, who perhaps were struggling with the bringing in of the New Covenant and the putting away of the Old Covenant. God, as their loving and patient Father, advised them to straighten out their crooked paths and start walking in paths of righteousness. He also counseled them to follow the peace that righteousness brings, as they relate and have their being among all men. He goes on in verse 14 encouraging them to follow holiness as well, so that ALL MEN would not be hurt, but healed and helped by their testimony.

Now, God says to them in verse 15, “Looking diligently, lest (in danger that) ANY MAN FAIL OF THE GRACE OF GOD”. The idea behind this term, “looking diligently” is to “take the oversight or supervise one’s thoughts, motives, intentions, and conduct in order to manifest a testimony of light and spiritual life, that would encourage others to STAND BY FAITH, in the grace of God.”

This spiritual discipline of looking diligently, initiated by God’s counsel, is divinely designed to not only keep other weaker brethren from falling from grace, as many other Hebrew believers had, but as we see in verse 15, to protect from the danger of any root of bitterness springing up again.

God’s concern seems to be that this could create renewed troubles in the lives of those believers that God was admonishing to “look diligently”, lest any others fail of the grace of God. He wanted them to continue focusing on ministering grace unto weaker brothers that were struggling. Looking diligently would be an urgent spiritual endeavor to prevent any further bitterness from

springing up, thereby keeping many other believers from being defiled.

This word “defiled” speaks volumes about the importance and the urgency he placed on the words “LOOKING DILIGENTLY”. A failure to do so could contaminate many brethren as the definition of “defiled” reveals. It is to corrupt upon contact! Anger and bitterness incites others to the same, and is very contagious. Truly, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump!

Heb.16-17: “Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

We find in these verses the result of the Spirit picking out a fitting scriptural illustration that supplies additional illumination or spiritual enlightening to these contextual truths. If the lame are not turned out of the way and not healed, and thereby defiled or contaminated with the corruption that is in the world, through lusts, God seems to be implying that they could become an Esau. Notice the words, “and thereby many be defiled; Lest (in danger that) there be ANY fornicator, or profane person (among them), as Esau”.

When Esau sold his birthright for a morsel of meat, in God’s eyes, and in accordance with biblical principles, Esau became both a fornicator and a profane person. Rejecting his birthright was equivalent to rejecting God and his word that established the supreme spiritual importance of the birthright. It was also a

rejection of God's authority in his life. He was selling his body and soul for carnal pleasure. It is not coincidental that this transaction encompasses the definition of the word "fornicator".

A "profane" person is one that commits acts of blasphemous irreverence and takes pleasure in being abusive toward God, his word, and his people. Esau is an appropriate type of our life when we choose to walk after the flesh, rather than after the Spirit. When we put off the new man and put on the old man, we are rejecting our birthright of being born again as a new creature or the new man. At this point, we are rejecting God's authority in our lives. We become fornicators and Idolaters because of our illicit love affair with this world.

Apparently, God felt that this illustration of the life of Esau revealed an accurate analogy to that of the lives of the lame Hebrew believers that were turned out of the way unto a defiled lifestyle. Esau, like many of these believers, could find no place of repentance, though he sought it with tears. Many Hebrew believers chose to reverence the blood of bulls and goats over and above the blood of the Son of God. They quite literally chose to worship a sacrificial system and animals above Jesus Christ, their new High Priest and Mediator of the New Covenant. This is spiritual fornication.

Heb.12:18-21: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

(For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)"

We see in verse 18 the words, "For ye are NOT COME" and then in verse 22, we find the words, "But ye ARE COME". It seems at this juncture of contextual transition that God sees the need to create a spiritual impact through their awareness of where he has brought them from, in contrast to where he has brought them to.

God tells them in verse 18 that, "YE ARE NOT COME unto the mount".....and then he describes Mount Sinai in vivid detail. In verse 22, he tells them that they " ARE COME to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God". God pictures Mount Sinai as a place of horror and yet it was a place of God's holiness. It was a place of divine terror, yet the birthplace of the divine tablets. It was a place of the fire of God's presence, yet a place of the fear of God's power. It was a place of the sound of a trumpet, yet the sound of tempestuous winds. It was a place of sovereign deity, yet a place of sudden death. It was the dwelling place of blackness and darkness, yet the dwelling place of the Light of the world.

Heb. 12:22-24: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

Indeed, it was the receiving of Jesus the Redeemer by faith through grace, that made it possible for the believing Hebrews to come unto Mount Sion, the city of the living God. God made it a point to reveal in verse 18 the simple truth that Mount Sinai “might be touched”. The idea here is that it might be sought after and handled as opposed to Mount Sion, which represents the heavenly city and kingdom of God, which cannot be touched by flesh, or shaken and removed.

Col.1:12-14 says, “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet (through the new birth) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON:

In whom we have REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, even the FORGIVENESS OF SINS:”.

It is important to understand that at the moment we were redeemed, we were translated into a spiritual kingdom that can not be touched. In Eph. 5:5, it is called “the kingdom of Christ and of God”. Heb.12:28 says, “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear”.

It would seem that this kingdom of Christ and of God, could also be the heavenly city of the living God. Note that in Heb.12:23, God the Judge of all is located in this city. We also find an innumerable company of angels, the spirits of just men made perfect, and the church of Jesus Christ. In fact, we find in verse 24 these words, “And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling”. This truly is the home of

the holy place and the house of God where abideth our great High Priest.

As we ponder the wonder of these truths, we may be asking ourselves how this could possibly be. Though not assuming to have any concrete answers, perhaps we could find a clue in the scriptural teaching of our position in Christ, received at the moment we are redeemed.

God tells us in Eph. 2:4-6, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and HATH RAISED US UP TOGETHER, and made us SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS". It appears that at the moment we believed the gospel, we were translated into the kingdom of Christ, and made to sit together with him in heavenly places, which would seem to indicate that where we are seated is in the heavenly city of the living God.

Though we are not consciously aware of these surroundings, WE SHOULD EMBRACE THEM and LEARN TO ENJOY THEM BY FAITH, which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Many believers have no clue of how to be a partaker of, and enjoy THEIR ETERNAL INHERITANCE by faith! When we walk in the flesh, we walk by sight, and actually are blind to who we are in Christ, and the benefits that are ours as joint heirs with him.

Heb.12:25-27: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

After soaring to the heights of heavenly glory in verses 22-24, we come back down to earth in verse 25 to a familiar and similar warning as the one found in Heb. 2:2-3. It says in these verses that they “ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which they have heard, lest at any time they should let them slip.”(or flow carelessly by) At this point, the author presents a sobering and what should be a frightening query in these words from verse 3: “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation”?

They are again warned in Heb. 12:25 to see that they refuse not or reject him (Jesus the Mediator) that speaketh from heaven. They are assured of impending judgment by recalling to their memory that their forefathers did not escape judgment when they refused to hear and obey Moses. They are warned that their judgment will be “much more” imminent if they turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. Warnings of God’s judgment are a contextual thread that winds its way through the book of Hebrews.

God reveals in the latter words of verse 12:25, and in verse 26, that the same voice that spoke and shook the earth at Mount Sinai in the wilderness will yet once more shake not the earth only, but also Heaven. What’s more, God assures them that this will come to pass because of a PROMISE he made in the past.

Our first thought then would be, Where did he promise this? Upon searching the Scriptures, we find these words in Isa.13:13, “Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall REMOVE

out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.” It is noteworthy that the word, “REMOVE” carries the idea of QUAKING and SHAKING.

The time period of the events in this context is the Day of the LORD, or the day of the wrath of the LORD of hosts, also known as the time of Jacob’s troubles, or the GREAT TRIBULATION PERIOD.

We find again in Joel 3:16 these words, “The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall SHAKE: but the LORD shall be the hope of the people, and the strength of the children of Israel.”

This prophecy refers to the same time period according to verse 14 as we see in the words, “Day of the LORD”. As the voice of the LORD roared out of Mount Sion in the wilderness, Joel 3:16 says that the voice of the LORD SHALL ROAR out of Zion in the Day of the Lord. God makes it known that his wrath will not be directed toward Israel THIS TIME, for he “shall be the hope of the people, and the strength of the children of Israel”, to deliver them from their enemies.

Is it possible that “those things that are shaken” could speak of Israel’s enemies? The term, “things that are made” can describe “a banding together for the purpose of vengeance”, which is exactly what Israel’s enemies do at the end of the time of Jacob’s troubles. God may be saying that their enemies will be removed, but Israel will remain. Through God’s faithfulness to his covenant people, they are not only saved from their enemies, but are saved from their sins as well.

Heb.12:28-29: “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God

acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.”

We could summarize Heb.12:25-29 with these words drawn from verses 25 and verse 29, “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh”, “For our God is a CONSUMING FIRE”. God seems to reinforce his promise of inescapable judgment, perhaps the key theme in this passage, with the inescapable judgment of Israel in the Great Tribulation. Just as he reminds the Hebrew believers from the words of the prophets that Israel would be delivered from their sin and judgment unto a kingdom in which Jesus would reign as King, THEY TOO were delivered from sin and judgment unto a spiritual kingdom that could never be shaken or removed.

God tells them in verse 28-29 that the consequence of having received this kingdom should be to serve God by faith through his grace, ACCEPTABLY with REVERENCE and godly FEAR, always remembering that their God is a consuming fire.

CHAPTER 13

The Father of his beloved Hebrew children orchestrated a powerful conclusion and collection of anointed truths that will both spiritually stabilize their lives, and make them perfect in every good work to do his will, performing that which is well pleasing in his sight. (Verse 21)

Heb.13:1: “Let brotherly love continue.”

God had already told them in 10:24 to be considerate of one another in the assembly and provoke one another to love and to good works. We can see why continuing in brotherly love would

be so important in the Hebrew assemblies in these words of Eph. 4:15-16, “But speaking the truth in love, may grow up in him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which EVERY JOINT SUPPLIETH, according to effectual working in the measure of EVERY PART, maketh INCREASE (spiritual growth) of the body unto the EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE.”

There were no insignificant believers in the Hebrew assemblies. We find this truth in the words EVERY JOINT and EVERY PART. This is, no doubt, a major reason why it so concerned God that believers were forsaking the assembling of themselves. The way he designed the church to bring glory unto himself by Jesus Christ was “by that which EVERY JOINT SUPPLIETH”. EVERY PART provides a God ordained measure of faith and grace, as well as gifts. The effectual working of this faith by God’s grace sustains the body unto the EDIFYING OF ITSELF IN LOVE. God’s desire for the Hebrew believers, as it was for the Galatian believers in Gal. 5:25, was to have a “FAITH WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE.

Heb.13:2: “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

As God was revealing that Jesus was better than the angels in Heb.1, he also revealed that they are “ALL MINISTERING SPIRITS” in verse 14. The words, “entertain” and “entertained” carry the idea of being hosts that show hospitality. God reveals that some believers have hosted angels and were not even aware of it. We know from this that they bear man’s image. We also know that they are God’s messengers and ministers. What we don’t know, and apparently neither did the Hebrews, is what the specific nature of their activities were among these believers.

Heb.13:3: “Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.”

Them that are in bonds could be referring to Hebrew believers that had been ostracized and persecuted and prosecuted for receiving Jesus Christ as their Savior. There seems to be an allusion to the fact that these prisoners were at one time members of this body of believers. They are to remember them as bound with them. Take note of these words, “being yourselves also IN THE BODY”. Is God not telling them that they have a divine obligation to love these brethren in bonds as they love themselves? Are they not obligated to pray for them and minister to their needs in any way possible, and perhaps their families as well?

Heb.13:4: “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

It may not be contextually significant, but it is interesting that the first three verses of this chapter reveal a God-given love for another. There would seem to be an element of self sacrifice, typical of God’s love. The words “as bound with them”, would seem to speak loudly, to love them as you love yourself. We find in Gal. 5:6-14 that “faith which worketh by love” does not entail the love of Christ alone, but a love for others, as well.

We find in verse 4, God’s institution of marriage being magnified as “honorable”. What does this tell us? One thing that it clearly communicates is that this is not just any relationship that this present evil world calls “marriage”. This relationship is a three way relationship with God in the center. This is HOLY MATRIMONY. This is a HOLY UNION based upon GOD’S LOVE

between a man and a woman, as was Adam and Eve. It is also, or should be, based upon a HOLY COMMUNION made possible through the HOLY SPIRIT, made possible when and only when both mates are walking in the Spirit.

A marriage that is honorable in God's sight is characterized by a Spirit provided love that is sacrificial, and a unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.(Eph. 4:3)

A marriage that does not bear these qualifying marks would no doubt fall short of God's estimation of "honorable". A marriage between a believer and a non-believer would not qualify or meet God's standard design for this holy institution. Neither can a marriage between a Spirit filled and led believer with a carnally minded believer qualify, for God said in Rom. 8:7 that the carnal mind is at enmity AGAINST GOD. When both mates walk in the Spirit, the Spirit provides the love and the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, necessary to have an honorable marriage.

It was obviously quite important to God that these Hebrew believers, as well as future believers, understand that any sexual relationship outside his institution of marriage is forbidden. Anyone practicing or involved in a dishonorable relationship were and are assured by the watchful eye of the Almighty, that they WILL BE JUDGED as whoremongers and adulterers.

Heb.13:5-6: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

So that we may boldly say, The LORD is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

God did not just reach into a drawing basket and pull out little pieces of paper with different subjects written on them to write about. He chose to address the subject of covetousness in the lives of these believers because he saw a need.

We found in Heb.10:32-34 that when these believers were first saved, many were persecuted and made a gazingstock in their community, and suffered the spoiling of their goods, or the robbery of their material possessions. We know from verse 34 that many counted it all joy when they fell into such divers temptations, but there were no doubt those that responded in the flesh, instead of in the Spirit, and became deeply bitter. It was, and is, human nature.

It is possible, if not likely, that many blamed God and felt like Jesus had forsaken them, becoming perhaps self-sufficient and greedily determined to gain back all they had lost and more. Though these speculative thoughts employ the basic definition of covetousness, the vilest characteristic of this sin entails discontentment and dissatisfaction with the person, presence, and provision of their Father and his Son. This same form of sin and its associated unbelief, or faithlessness, is quite common in our churches and lives today.

It is apparent in this verse that a number of believers had lost their contentment with the things they had, considering that God chose to address the issue. They are reminded to be content and satisfied with Jesus Christ, because they had God's promise that he would never leave them or forsake them. We find in verse 6 that they are instructed to renew their faith in Christ, so that they may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me".

Note carefully the words, "I will not fear what man shall do unto me." It would seem that their persecution and the pillaging, and

even prison, were still part of their present distress. They are encouraged to let the Lord Jesus be the Anchor of their soul as they say boldly, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER". They had been told that they had a great High Priest that could be "touched with the feeling of their infirmities", therefore to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Heb.13:7: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

We have no idea how many of these believers were immature in the faith, but no doubt there were a fair share. They are reminded to be mindful of the importance of their local assembly, and in particular, the authority and ministry of their undershepherd or overseer. God knew that one way these weak believers could be challenged to walk in faith was to follow the faith of the men that he called to love and minister God's Word to the saints.

Let us pay close attention, as God adds a qualifying statement to his instruction to FOLLOW THEIR FAITH in these words, "considering the end of their conversation." The word "considering" means to "PAY CLOSE ATTENTION to, or to OBSERVE CAREFULLY." Though they were to faithfully follow his example, they were to remember that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. No doubt, God wanted them to learn to follow their leader's faith, not blindly, but as their leader's faith lined up with God's Word. God had no desire for them to become critical in a negative sense, but to critique his walk according to the Word of God, knowing the universal truth that men might change and move away from the Word of truth.

Heb.13:8: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

It would seem proper to assume that God placed this verse in a strategic location to reinforce the prior contextual truths. Jesus Christ was our HELPER yesterday, he is our HELPER today, and he will be our HELPER tomorrow. Now here is a man whose faith we can follow with a complete absence of doubt! To go one better, Gal.2:20 teaches us that when Christ lives his resurrection life through us, the life that we now live in the flesh we live by the FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD.

Heb.13:9: “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.”

This verse so appropriately follows verse 8 where we see the Rock, the unchangeable Pillar of Truth. The term “carried about” bears the meaning of not moving or shifting one’s doctrinal position or persuasion due to outside influences. This is a common contextual thread in Hebrews due to the present distress created by believers being persecuted and blackballed in the Jewish community and culture. Sadly enough, many were succumbing to the pressures and suffering associated with being excommunicated from families, society, and the faith, so called, of Judaism.

Again, they are being encouraged and challenged to stand fast in the faith and in the biblical teachings that transformed their hearts and lives from being in bondage to the law, to being firmly established in liberty by God’s grace.

We find in the words, “not with meats” a reminder that the Old Covenant system of animal sacrifices was not what delivered them from bondage, and established their hearts in grace. God also reminds them in this verse that those that are occupied, or literally possessed and controlled, by the now strange doctrines of Judaism, have not “PROFITED” at all spiritually.

No matter how many animals they offered, they were still aware of their sin and guilt, due to a defiled conscience. Furthermore, they were never free from the black cloud of bondage and never made free to live the abundant life by grace through faith, with an undefiled conscience of purity made effective through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

Heb.13:10: “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.”

Under the Old Covenant, God gave the priests the right to eat the meat of the animals that were offered upon the altar of atonement. However, these priests that served the tabernacle had NO RIGHT to eat at the altar of these believers.

The root idea behind the word “NO RIGHT” is “not having the spiritual ability or capacity”. It also infers “not having the power, freedom, or privilege”. They did not have the freedom or privilege because they were under bondage to the Old Covenant. They had not been made free through the redemption offered by the Mediator and great High Priest of the New Covenant, Jesus Christ.

It is as though the Cross of Calvary is OUR WOODEN ALTAR where the Lamb of God was slain and shed his precious blood for our redemption.

It would seem that as ROYAL PRIESTS in a royal priesthood, we have been given the right to eat the meat of our sacrificial offering slain on the altar of the Cross.

John 6:51-58 says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have NO LIFE in you. (Leaving them dead in their trespasses and sins)

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, HATH ETERNAL LIFE; and I will raise him up at the last day.

For MY FLESH IS MEAT INDEED, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, DWELLETH IN ME AND I IN HIM.

As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he SHALL LIVE BY ME.

This is that bread that came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth this bread SHALL LIVE FOR EVER."

PRAISE GOD! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so! Truly, we born again children of God and ROYAL PRIESTS HAVE AN ALTAR, whereof the Aaronic priesthood had no right to eat.

Heb.13:11-12: “For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.”

We find in these two verses God’s closing words and final comparison of the benefits of the New Covenant over the Old Covenant, as well as the benefit of the blood of Christ over the benefit of the blood of beasts.

In the last four words of both verses, we find a comparison of the beasts which were “burned without the camp” to the Lamb of God which “suffered without the gate”.

Heb.10:1-2 says, “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year CONTINUALLY make the comers thereunto PERFECT.

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had NO MORE CONSCIENCE OF SINS.”

God makes it clear one final time in Hebrews that though they were ceremonially cleansed, the blood of bulls and goats could never “MAKE THE COMERS THEREUNTO PERFECT”, which he seems to equate to their having “HAD NO MORE CONSCIENCE OF SINS.” Ceremonial cleansing could never cleanse and free the conscience from guilt. Only Jesus could do that THEN, and only Jesus can do that NOW, and what a glorious freedom it is!

The Law of Moses with its Levitical priesthood and animal sacrifices is said to be simply a “SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS

TO COME". The New Covenant, the Mediator and great High Priest, along with a perfect conscience were "good things" that fulfilled the substance of the shadow.

In Heb.13:11-12, the beasts burned without the camp were the shadow of Jesus suffering without the gate: "THAT JESUS MIGHT SANCTIFY THE PEOPLE WITH HIS BLOOD." The word, "sanctify", means "to purify and make holy, through the purging of EVERY sin." To say that there is a sin that Jesus can't cleanse would seem to make a mockery of the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Heb.13:13-14: "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp bearing his reproach. For we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

Let us go forth therefore unto him that LOVED US and GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, "without the camp BEARING HIS REPROACH." The idea here is "to advance to the front lines of battle alongside Jesus Christ, with a WILLINGNESS to share his suffering, shame, and disgrace". Considering that Heb.13:13 is somewhat in the form of a command, it would seem treasonous to disobey. It could be said that it is a LIFE or DEATH decision. We MUST CHOOSE to lay down our life for our Elder brother, Master, and Lord. We MUST CHOOSE to give our bodies a living sacrifice. We MUST CHOOSE to take up our cross and follow him. As Paul made the decision to die daily for Christ, so must we as well, or we are not worthy of him.

Heb.13:14: “For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

As is so evident from verse 13, the Hebrews were being told that they must choose between their love and loyalty to this world, and their love and loyalty to Jesus Christ and their Father. It is as though they are being told in verse 14 that they are pilgrims passing through a world that is not their home, in search of an eternal home to come. Like Abraham in Heb.11:10, they, and we, have a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Heb.12:22 says, “But YE ARE COME unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.” So many believers know much about going to a future Heaven, but little to nothing about the portion of their inheritance in Christ now. This inheritance allows them to come unto the heavenly city, where their own personal great High Priest awaits to sprinkle his blood on their evil heart and defiled conscience. This inheritance provides a ROYAL RESIDENCE in the HOLY PLACE. This inheritance provides continual fellowship with the Father and Son, as long as we continually walk in the Spirit.

Heb.13:15: “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.”

We must remember that the believer has two natures, the old and the new, or the old man and the new man. The old man or fleshly nature has a carnal mind. Rom. 8:7 tells us that the carnal mind is at enmity AGAINST GOD. It has no desire or capacity to

praise God. On the other hand, the new man or new creature in Christ bears the divine nature of God and Christ. It is actually Christ in us, the hope of glory. It is here that the Spirit of Christ gives us a continual desire to offer the sacrifice of praise to our Father.

Heb.13:16: “But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

Again, God appeals to a sacrificial lifestyle that finds its roots in verse 13, where he directed the Hebrew believers to offer their bodies and lives a living sacrifice without the camp, alongside Jesus Christ. Only those believers that would choose to answer God’s call and offer themselves would readily and willingly offer “such sacrifices”.

The term “communicate” speaks of a spiritual union or partnership with brethren in need, for the sake of the cause of Christ. It speaks of sacrificial giving.

It will be remembered that the persecution of the followers of Jesus entailed among other things, the spoiling of their goods. No doubt some, if not many, were left impoverished, having lost not only homes and goods, but jobs as well.

I Jn. 3:17 says, “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

Does not God manifest his awareness and care for his needy children here in 13:16? In the midst of all the apostasy and blasphemy and persecution, their Father still had his watchful eye of compassion on their needs, as he does ours, as well.

Heb.13:17: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you.”

It seems that God is speaking of the role of pastors or bishops of the local assemblies, and not only of their accountability to God for the welfare of believers' souls or spiritual lives, but the accountability of the believers themselves to their pastors. God makes it quite clear that our degree and manner of obedience and submission to the pastor's authority should allow him to minister his calling joyfully and not grievously. God seems to add a subtle trailer on this verse that delivers a warning to believers that would cause grief. We find this in the words, “for that is unprofitable for you”; not a threat necessarily, but an authoritative guarantee that the offender will be held accountable.

Heb.13:18-19: “Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.”

Who is the “US”? This question is sure to be a matter of curiosity to the inquisitive believer. Though this author's answer would have to be the same as anyone else's, and that being, ‘I don't know’, there is a heavy leaning toward Paul. One interesting observation that carries little weight, is the writer's concern in verse 13 that his readers be aware of how honestly they have lived before the Hebrew believers, as a matter of credibility, so as not to detract in any way from the authority and truth of what they have written. Paul talks a great deal in his writings about the

importance of his credibility and his compelling desire to have a pure conscience, as this author does here in Heb.13:18.

The writer's primary message in verses 18-19 was his request of an urgent nature that they pray for him that he be restored to their assembly as soon as possible. We see this in Paul's writings as well.

Heb.13:20-21: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

These two verses will conclude our verse by verse study and commentary on the book of Hebrews. It is such an appropriate passage to give a wholehearted "Amen!" to not only the book of Hebrews, but to God's purpose and design in writing these delightful and insightful truths that have enlightened the eyes of our understanding.

God's heartbeat and earnest desire, as seen in these verses, is that each Hebrew believer, as the sheep of his fold, and beloved children, "go on unto perfection", as he told them in Heb. 6:1. He says in 13:21 that he wants to make them perfect or of full age in spiritual maturity in every good work that fulfills his will.

God had already told them in Heb. 5:12-15 that they had need of becoming highly skillful in the "use" (habitual practice) of the word of righteousness, and in particular, the "strong meat" of the word, that they might come to FULL AGE.

“Every good work” is any effort and energy done under the control of the Spirit of Christ that fulfills God’s Word and will. It is through this effort and energy that God would work in them “that which is WELLPLEASING in his sight, through Jesus Christ.”

Just as God the Father began the book of Hebrews magnifying his Son before the Hebrew believers, as his Divine Heir and Creator of the worlds, not failing to give him his due glory for personally purging our sins, so he closes the book with the same adoration and exaltation.

God reminds these believers one final time of the BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT shed by the resurrected GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP, saying in verse 21, “TO WHOM BE GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER. Amen.”

It would be WELLPLEASING in the sight of God the Father and his Son for every reader of these words to do some self examination before God, under the influence of his Holy Spirit.

Jesus is so wonderfully set forth as the Lamb of God, the one final sin offering, before his resurrection, and as the Great Shepherd of the sheep after his resurrection.

Scripture teaches us that Jesus came to seek and to save that which is lost. Jesus is still seeking lost sinners. If by chance he has revealed to you that you are lost, it is his desire that he be wonderfully set forth before your heart and mind as your personal Lamb of God, which suffered and shed his blood to appease God’s wrath that abides upon you. The blood of Jesus was the price his Father required to purchase you back from sin and Satan.

God so loved you that he gave his only begotten Son on the Cross of Crucifixion as your personal Lamb of God and your PERSONAL SAVIOR.

John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER (you) believeth in him should not perish, (experiencing God’s eternal wrath in hell) but HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE.”

John 1:12 says, “But as many as RECEIVED HIM, to them gave he THE POWER to become the SONS OF GOD, even to them that BELIEVE on his NAME:”

Acts 4:12 says, “Neither is there salvation in ANY OTHER: for there is NONE OTHER NAME under heaven given among men, whereby we MUST BE SAVED.”

Rom.10:13 says, “For whosoever shall call upon THE NAME of the Lord SHALL BE SAVED”.

Jesus does not want to just be your personal Lamb of God that paid God’s price for YOUR SINS, he wants you to personally call upon him just now to cleanse you from your sins, whereupon he will become your personal Savior and Great Shepherd.

