

Hebrews: The Book

of Better Things

Part 2

Chapters 8-13

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Syllabus

1. Review of first seven chapters
2. Chapter 8 The Heavenly Tabernacle
3. Chapter 9 A Shadow of Good Things to Come
4. Chapter 10
5. Chapter 11 Men and Women of Faith
6. Chapter 11 Continued
7. Chapter 12 Practical Applications
8. Chapter 13 Practical Applications

Chapter 8

In chapter 7 we had an unveiling of the Melchisedec priesthood. Our Lord Jesus (and His sons) were called to be priests after the order of Melchisedec. He is our high priest, all will agree. And the Bible tells us plainly that He has made us kings and priests, a kingdom of priests unto God and His Father. It is certainly not the Levitical order to which we are called. Rather it is this Melchisedec order, as we are conformed to the image of Christ.

Now as we come to chapter 8, the first thing we hear is: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum". This is the key to this chapter, which sums up the following things:

We have a high priest, seated in the heavenlies.

He is a minister of the true tabernacle, pitched by God.

Moses' tabernacle was made after the pattern of heavenly realities. He saw this pattern while he was on Mt. Sinai.

Christ has a more excellent ministry than that of the law.

Christ is the mediator of a better covenant, established on better promises.

The old covenant had faults, waxes old, and vanishes away.

The new covenant is written into the hearts and minds of God's people.

"On the Right Hand of the Throne"

The right hand is the hand of ministry, the hand of power and authority. The throne speaks of the place of dominion and rulership. Verse 1 is telling us that our high priest, Jesus, is now set in the place of absolute authority, that He might minister to His people. "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Let me remind you that chapter 6 told us that Jesus was a forerunner for us, as He entered into that glorious place.

Christ is the minister of the true sanctuary. Moses pitched a natural tabernacle, with vessels of gold, silver, wood and brass. But here we are told that there is a tabernacle which man did not pitch. Moses had nothing to do with the construction of this tabernacle. The Lord pitched this tabernacle. It is the house of the Lord, and the vessels in this house are not made of natural wood and gold. "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Timothy 2:20-21).

The priests that served in the Levitical order worked on an earthly plane, and they could affect a man's earthly life, but they could never give him eternal life. God has a priesthood that serves in that heavenly realm. Only through Jesus Christ can there be forgiveness of sin, and the impartation of eternal life. The earthly priests only serve as a shadow and example of the reality that is found in Christ. What they do in offering up the blood of bulls and goats, as well as the fulfilling of the feast days and other laws, only represent the work of the true priesthood in Christ.

"Shewed to Thee in the Mount"

Verse 5 quotes from Exodus 25:40 where God admonished Moses to be sure and build the tabernacle exactly according to the pattern for the tabernacle, as He was the pattern for the body of Christ. Every bit of the construction of the tabernacle, every piece of furniture, and every utensil, had its counterpart in the heavens.

Everything that takes place in the body of Christ in the purposes of God, has its origin in Jesus our Lord. He is the pattern. Born of a virgin; religious and political leaders attempt to kill him in infancy; called out of Egypt; raised in obscurity; preceded and introduced by a prophetic ministry; comes to full maturity and enters the waters of Jordan; defeats Satan and puts him under His feet; and then enters a glorious life-giving deliverance and teaching ministry. Can you see how that every phase of His life is reflected in the birth, growth, and ministry of the sons of God? If it happens to us, then it first happened to Him.

Conformed to His image. This is the promise. Made according to the pattern. So there must be a people in the earth just like Jesus. He is the pattern Son. This is what the great harvest is all about, and this is why He has not yet put in the sickle. It has not yet come to full maturity.

"A More Excellent Ministry"

"Now hath He obtained." Verse 6 makes it plain that Jesus did not come into the world at Bethlehem with that better ministry. It was something He attained to, something He apprehended. We read in Revelation 5:5, "Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, HATH PREVAILED to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." And Jesus said. "I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne". (Revelation 3:21). There was a goal set before Him when He came into the world, and He overcame. He pressed forward until He won the prize. Hebrews 6:20 tells us that Jesus, the forerunner, has entered into that within the veil and has been made an high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

We see Jesus, in His childhood, His boyhood, His young manhood, and finally standing face to face with Satan in the wilderness temptation. facing every temptation common to man.

Yet without sin. He overcame. It was not an easy way for Him. But it was the way to glory! He pressed toward the mark. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps". (1 Peter 2:21).

As we follow Him, we find there is a prize to be won, a goal to reach. We know that eternal life is the gift of God, a gift of His love. It cannot be earned or won. But in Philippians 3:12-14 we see Paul pressing in to attain a prize. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The word "mark" here means a goal. To win a prize. Jesus has won it. He hath prevailed.

Paul recognized that we were to follow in His steps, and also attain. At the close of his earthly journey, he told Timothy: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown." (2 Timothy 4:7). He exhorted the church at Corinth: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." (1 Corinthians 9:24). Is all this running, and pressing, necessary in order to make heaven? Of course not. You cannot earn or win your way into heaven. We are saved by grace. There is a more excellent ministry to obtain, a high calling to gain.

"Upon Better Promises"

"He is the mediator of a better covenant". God made a covenant with Israel under the law. There were promises of blessings and prosperity and victory over their enemies. But they could not keep their part of the covenant. They failed miserably to keep the law. So the covenant was of no value. It was based upon the frailty of Adam's human nature. And the Law exposed it's weakness. So there had to be a second covenant.

This new covenant was not based upon our ability to keep the law. Not on what we could accomplish in our flesh. It was based upon the love of God operating through Jesus Christ toward us. His blood shed on Calvary, and His resurrection power. And on this foundation it could not fail. And now He not only fulfilled this covenant with the Father, but He became the "mediator" of this new and better covenant to us. In other words, he is able to give to us that which He apprehended by overcoming. "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33). "Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32).

This covenant has been established. Upon better promises. What are those promises? Not just prosperity and dominion on the earthly plane. Not just rain on our natural crops. But an eternal life, ruling and reigning with Christ. Coming into His nature and His likeness. A

promise of bearing His image. "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly". (1 Corinthians 15:49).

God knew before He ever laid the foundation of this world that the first covenant would not work. For Jesus was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And verse 7 tells us that if the first covenant had been capable of working, there would have been no need for the second covenant. No need for Christ to die on the Cross. But the law could not work, and God knew that. So Jesus came. And God makes it plain that this covenant is not like that first one.

"Write Them in Their Hearts"

He is God's great purpose in the earth. This is His promise. He will have a people in this earth who have the laws of God (NOT the law of Moses) written in their minds and in their hearts, so that it becomes natural, or their nature, to do that which pleases God. He had one man on earth like that. His name was Jesus. But He is not to be the last. 'For whom He did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.' (Romans 8:29). If a corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies (and He did), it will bring forth a great harvest.

Think of a world full of people who do not have to be constantly preached at. For it is their nature to please the Father. His laws are written in their minds, and it is inscribed on their hearts to do His will, from the least to the greatest. Impossible, you say? Don't you read it here? Isn't it in the Book? Yes, it is the new covenant. And I don't read anywhere in this chapter that this is effective only when we all get to heaven where we couldn't sin if we wanted to. The implication here in this scripture is that this covenant is made effective and takes place right on this earth.

And I want to tell you, loud and clear, that this is exactly what shall take place. This is the ministry of this Melchisedec order, Jesus and His sons. He is the mediator, the dispenser, of this new covenant. Your unbelief cannot disannul His purposes. Thank God! Just as Aaron and his sons passed through the veil of the tabernacle, year by year, and placed the blood of the goat on the altar, thus dispensing new life to the people. just so shall that priesthood which passes through the veil of the flesh into the Shekinah glory of God, bring the liberty of Romans 8 to a groaning and dying creation. Right here on this earth there will be a demonstration of the reality and effectiveness of this new covenant working in the hearts of men.

The apostle is again assuring them of the futility of serving under the law of Moses. The very fact that this new covenant has been put in effect, makes the law of Moses of none effect. The law has decayed, and waxes old. And here he is pleading with them to forsake the temple worship, the offering of the blood of bulls and goats, the burning of incense on the golden altar. Jesus has replaced all of this. Some heard, some did not. But only 6 years

later, the Roman general, Titus, captured Jerusalem, destroyed the temple and its altars. And in 1900 years it has never been rebuilt, and never will. Jesus predicted its destruction, but He never predicted its restoration.

What is to be restored is the living temple of that new covenant. Jesus was a living temple in which that new covenant operated perfectly. But they crucified Him, destroyed that temple from off the earth. He said to the Jews: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up But he spake of the temple of His Body". (John 2:19, 21). "Now ye are the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27). He sent word to Herod: "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and **THE THIRD DAY I shall be PERFECTED.**" (Luke 13:32).

Beloved, we are now moving into that third day. It is the hour for the perfection of His body. It is the hour for the demonstration of that new covenant in living vessels. There will be a people who live to please the Father, even as Jesus did. They will go about doing good, and healing all who are oppressed of the devil, as Jesus did. They will cover this earth with the message of the Kingdom. Thus saith the Lord!

The Pattern Ministry

Just what kind of ministry will this people have? First of all, it will be a ministry of **COMPASSION**. Everything Jesus did, He did it because He loved the people. He saw their needs, and had compassion. The word "compassion" is found in the Gospels more than twice as many times as in all the rest of the New Testament combined. It is a word directly relating to the ministry of Jesus. 5 times it tells us that Jesus "was moved with compassion." This word "moved" means to motivate, to cause one to act out of a feeling of compassion. Where it says that Jesus was moved with compassion, the word "move" is a Greek word "splanchnizomai". This word is not used any place else in the Bible except where it speaks of being "moved with compassion". It means to have pity, to feel sympathy, to have the bowels yearn.

The motivating power of Jesus' life was the great love and compassion He had for the people, and for their needs. Oh, God, give us ministries like that today! And He will! Hallelujah! For this is the mark of that Melchisedec ministry, that "more excellent ministry" that comes forth after the pattern. There are many great and successful ministries that have been motivated by the desire to be successful, by the need for more money, or a hunger for power and fame. But the only true motivation recognized by God as a reason for going into the ministry, is that overwhelming, gripping love and compassion for His Body. That is not to say that a true ministry cannot be successful and prosperous. It should be. But that should not be the motive for ministry.

"Things that Please the Father"

Another great motivating force in the life of Jesus was His desire to please the Father. He lived to do the perfect will of God. "And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please Him". (John 8:29). So shall it be with that more excellent ministry that comes forth in His likeness. They do not need laws, rules, and regulations. They do not need to be warned of the consequences of disobedience and rebellion. For it is not in them to rebel. It is their nature to please God, it is the driving force in their lives. The law of love, love for God and others, causes them to live and conduct themselves in such a manner that the law cannot touch them. The law of love is written in their hearts, into their minds. It is not a strain for them to be holy, not a struggle to do that which is right. It is their nature, it is the way they think and feel.

With this kind of motivation, this "more excellent" ministry has no lack of power and authority in the heavenly realm. Disease, death, demons, and even the forces of nature all are subject to them. Look at Jesus. No disease or affliction could remain in His presence. By His word of command, death released the victims. Devils trembled and obeyed. The wind and the waves, the fig tree, the fish, and all nature were merely His servants. Such is the pattern set for us, and such is the ministry unveiled here in Hebrews 5.

The key word in Hebrews is "better". A better realm, a better nature, a better dominion, a better priesthood, a better ministry. Yes, the new covenant which Jesus brought is far better than the old. And as we go into chapter 9, we find an unveiling of the truths concerning that high calling in God... the Holy of Holies.

Chapter 9

The Heavenly Tabernacle

We close chapter 8 with the promise that the new covenant is far better than the old. Now as we open the ninth chapter, we see a description of Moses' tabernacle with its furniture. A full explanation of what divine truths these pieces of furniture symbolized would take an entire book in itself. And that is not our purpose in this message. The first 5 verses take us through the tabernacle, from the candlestick (or lampstand) in the sanctuary, into the Holy of Holies and the cherubims of glory. The next 5 verses go on to show that all these things were only types and shadows imposed upon us until eternal reality came, which is Christ.

Let me give you just an example of the depths of truth contained in these few verses. Let us take just once piece of furniture, the Golden Altar of Incense, and see a beautiful revelation in this ninth chapter. You will notice in the King James translation, that the Golden Altar is not mentioned as being in the tabernacle at all. But when we begin to examine the word in verse 4 translated as "golden censer", we uncover a marvelous mystery. But first let us see what the Bible says about "censers".

The Work of the Censers

There were censers of brass (Numbers 16:39), and the censers of pure gold (1 Kings 7:50). The brass was to be used in the outer court, and the gold in the sanctuary. The true fire of God that was to be put into the censer and carried to the Golden Altar of Incense, was to come from the fire put under the burnt offering on the Brazen Altar. This shows us that no worship or intercession is acceptable unto God unless it comes as a result of a work of Calvary in the life of the believer. "Strange fire" comes from the works of the flesh and the operation of the carnal mind. The true fire of God results from a crucified life, through a true knowledge of the work of Calvary.

The censer was a small vessel used to carry fire from the Brazen Altar to the Golden Altar of Incense. There were times when the incense was put right into the censer while the priest carried it, as in Numbers 16:46, where Aaron took fire from the altar, put it in the censer, put in incense and ran among the people to stay the plague. A marvelous picture of intercession for a people under judgment.

Since there was no place provided on the Golden Altar for fire to be placed or ashes to be carried out, no fire pans, shovels, etc., It is obvious that the priest took the censer of live coals and sat it on top of the Golden Altar. He then dropped the incense into the censer sitting on the altar, and a cloud of incense would rise up out of the fire. This is the picture we see in Revelation 8:3-4, where the smoke

of the incense ascended up "out of the angel's hand", or from the censer. This was what the Golden Altar was for, a place to set the censer in the Tabernacle, for it was not to be set upon the floor. There was a crown around the edge of the Golden Altar, to keep the censer from sliding off. That is why they took the Golden Altar behind the veil into the Holiest of Holies on the Day of Atonement.

Where was the Golden Altar?

Perhaps that last statement surprised you. Just where did they put the altar? And was it ever moved? Why? What is this symbolic of? Let us look into the scriptures. Turn to Exodus 30:1-10. "And thou shalt make an altar to burn incense upon: of shittim wood shalt thou make it." (verse 1). Where to put this altar is given in verse 6: "And thou shalt put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony, where I will meet with thee. And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning". Let us read that same scripture in the Amplified translation: "You shall put the altar of incense in front and outside of the veil that screens the ark of the testimony, before the mercy seat that is over the testimony (the law, the tables of stone), where I will meet with you. And Aaron shall burn on it incense of sweet spices; every morning when he trims and fills the lamps he shall burn it." We find King Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:19) standing beside the incense altar with a censer in his hand, ready to burn incense. Azariah the chief priest, and 80 other priests were there with him, so we know that this was not in the Holiest place. It was in the sanctuary. So these scriptures make it plain that the regular resting place of the Golden Altar was in the holy place with the lampstand and table of shewbread where the priests ministered daily.

But now we see what seems to be a conflicting scripture in Hebrews 9. For in verses 1 through 4 we read: "Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly (earthly) sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holies of all; which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." Now notice, please, that the Golden Altar of incense is not mentioned as being in either place. And what is this "golden censer" which is said to be in the Holy of Holies? The word translated "censer" here is not the same Greek word used for censer in Revelation 8:3-5. The word censer is only found 3 times in the New Testament. 2 times in Revelation 8 it is the Greek word "Libanotos", which means a small vessel for burning incense. But in Hebrews 9:4 it is the Greek word: "Thumiasterion" which is a place of fumigation, i.e.: altar of incense in the temple.

So we see that Hebrews 9 tells us that the Golden Altar of incense was actually located behind the veil, in the Holy of Holies. Now to confirm this, let me read from other translation, Hebrews 9:3-4:

PHILLIPS: "Inside, beyond the curtain, was the inner tent called the Holy of Holies, in which were the GOLDEN INCENSE ALTAR and the gold covered ark of the agreement."

REVISED STANDARD VERSION: "Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of

Holies, having the GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE, and the ark of the covenant."

NEW ENGLISH BIBLE: "Beyond the second curtain was the tent called the Most Holy Place. Here was a GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE, and the ark of the covenant."

BECK: AN AMERICAN TRANSLATION: "Behind the second curtain was the part of the tabernacle called the most holy place with the GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE and the ark of the covenant."

Moffatt: "But behind the second veil was the tent called the Holy of Holies, containing the GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE, and also the ark of the covenant."

WILLIAMS: "But behind the second curtain is the tent that is called the Holy of Holies, with its GOLDEN INCENSE ALTAR and the chest for the covenant."

WEYMOUTH: "And behind the second veil was a sacred tent called the Holy of Holies. This had a GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE, and the ark of the covenant."

ROTHERHAM: "But after the second veil a tent, that which is called the Most Holy: having a GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE and the Ark of the covenant."

AMPLIFIED NEW TESTAMENT: "But inside, beyond the second curtain or veil there stood another tabernacle (division) known as the Holy of Holies. It has the GOLDEN ALTAR OF INCENSE and the ark (chest) of the covenant."

So here we have 9 different translations plus Strong's Concordance and Berry's Interlinear Greek-English New Testament that confirm the fact that the Greek word "Thumiasterion" translated in the King James as "golden censer", is actually the Golden Altar of Incense. And it is located inside the Holy of Holies, behind the veil.

Why in the Holy of Holies?

Is there a contradiction? We read that the Golden Altar was to be placed outside the veil, in the sanctuary, and that the priests were to minister before it daily. Now in Hebrews we read that it is inside the veil, in the Holy of Holies, where no one but the high priest is allowed to enter, and that only once a year. Notice also that in Revelation 8:3 the Golden Altar was "before the throne", which is behind the veil. (Read Hebrews 9:7).

The answer is given by several authorities. ALFORD'S GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, WUEST'S STUDIES IN HEBREWS, the AMPLIFIED NEW TESTAMENT, as well as the Jewish MISCHNA all explain that the Golden Altar was not kept permanently in the Holy of Holies, but taken in on the Day of Atonement, the 10th day of the 7th month, when the high priest went in to make atonement.

The reason was that the high priest might have a place to set the censer of burning coals of fire from the brazen altar, so he would not have to set it on the ground inside the Holy of Holies. Most certainly he would not set it on the mercy seat. He could not hold the censer of fire in his hands while he ministered the blood upon the mercy seat.

We get the picture in Leviticus 16. When the Day of Atonement comes, the day when someone passes through the veil and all sin is removed from Israel, we see the high priest washed and properly dressed. All the other priests that usually minister in the sanctuary before the candlestick and the shewbread, are moved back out to the outer court. First he takes the Golden Altar behind the veil. Then he brings the censer of burning coals from the brazen altar and puts it on the Golden Altar. He then comes in with both hands full of incense (Leviticus 16:12 Amplified), which he puts on the fire, creating a cloud of incense. He then brings in the blood of the bullock and sprinkles it on the mercy seat. Then he kills the goat of the sin offering and brings his blood in to put on the mercy seat also. (Leviticus 16:12-15). In addition to putting the blood on the mercy seat, he also puts some of it on the horns of the Golden Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:10). Meanwhile, while all this is going on, NO PRIEST IS ALLOWED IN THE SANCTUARY (Leviticus 16:17), but all must retreat to the outer court.

What Does this Mean Today?

We see from this that there is an hour coming when a people pass through the veil of this adamic nature, this human covenant, and into the presence of almighty God. They will no longer minister in the "part realm" of Pentecost. No one will be in the area of the candlestick in that day. Those who do not go on in God, will revert back to the outer court ministry of sweat and judgment. "When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away". (1 Corinthians 13:10) And the glory of God shall be manifested in it's fulness!

Here we are studying about the tent, or tabernacle, of Moses. Later a greater and more glorious temple was built by Solomon, and a new order established on Mount Moriah. We see inverse 4 that at this time (of the tent), the Ark of the Covenant contained 3 things: the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the 10 commandments or tables of the covenant. But at the dedication of Solomon's temple in 2 Chronicles 5:10 we find that there was nothing in the Ark except the 2 tables of the covenant. This is confirmed in 2 Chronicles 6:11. Where was the pot of manna? And Aaron's rod? An answer to that will be found in another message entitled: "The Hidden Manna".

The New Order

Verses 8, 9 and 10 make it plain that the glory of that old order was only temporary. And the way into the Holy of Holies was not even revealed as long as that first order stood. No wonder the temple

and it's order of worship had to be destroyed. Jesus said: "Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down". In Moffatt's translation, verse 8 says: "By this the Holy Spirit means that the way into the Holies Presence was not disclosed so long as the first tent (which foreshadowed the present age) was still standing." Verse 10 tells us that those carnal ordinances were imposed on them until THE TIME OF REFORMATION, or "setting things right." Moffatt says: "till the period of the New Order". And in the Amplified Bible it says: "Until the time of reformation, of the complete NEW ORDER when Christ, the Messiah, shall establish the reality of what these things foreshadow, a better covenant".

And now the next few verses show that Christ has come as a high priest of the good things to come. He did this by coming through a greater and more perfect tabernacle. The tent He used was not one made with hands, but a tent, or body, given to Him by God. "A body hast thou prepared me." He took the blood from that "tabernacle" right into the Holiest place and offered it up for our sins. His blood was offered once, and once for all. Nothing more was needed. Hallelujah!

In verse 12 we find that Christ has "obtained eternal redemption for us." Then inverse 15 it says that "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." Without eternal redemption there can be no eternal inheritance. For we are children of Adam, and can only inherit his nature and his promise, which is death. But when Christ redeems us, buys us back from Adam's fallen state, we then receive Christ and He gives us the right or privilege to become sons of God (John 1:12).

The Conscience Purged by the Blood

Through the eternal Spirit, Christ offered His own blood up for us. And that blood has the power to cleanse our sins and purge our conscience. No use now to continually beat ourselves for our past sins. If the blood has been applied, our conscience is clean, no matter how horrible our sins have been. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). Yes, Jesus saves from the "guttermost to the uttermost"!

Dead works will never do it. The blood of Christ is the only cleansing agent, administered by the Holy Spirit. Then we can truly serve the living God out of a pure heart. Though the memory of sins committed linger on, yet our conscience is no longer tormented. Praise God! When I see people who are continually tormented and torn by their conscience, it is evident that they have not applied the blood of Jesus to those sins.

This is why Jesus had to die. The testament had no power (verse 16) until the death of the testator. Even under the old covenant, all things had to be purged with blood. In that case it was the blood of animals. But in our case, to receive eternal redemption and eternal inheritance, it was necessary for us to have better blood. We have the precious blood of Jesus!

The Three Appearances of Christ

In verses 24, 26, and 28 we read that 3 times Jesus appears FOR US. Past, present, and future. In verse 26 (Amplified) we see that Jesus HAS ALREADY appeared to put away sin by means of Calvary. "But as it now is, He has once for all at the consummation and close of the ages appeared to put away and abolish sin by His sacrifice of Himself". This was His appearing in a flesh and blood body here on this earth. Living among men, being mocked, scourged and crucified. He appeared. It was a very real appearance. He was really tempted. He really suffered pain. He was made like unto us, "made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7). But never again shall He appear in this body of humiliation. For now He has a body of glory. Once and once for all He poured out His blood and suffered death. Never again. Once was enough.

Now (verse 24) he appears in Heaven, in the very presence of God, for us. "FOR US"! That says to me that He intends to bring us eventually unto that very place. So until we get there, He is now appearing there for us. This tells me that the man Jesus was really resurrected, and is really appearing in His body of glory, there in heaven itself. Glory to God! It confirms without denial that we, too, shall put on a body of glory and appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4). Some shall come forth from the grave, and others shall pass from this mortal into the immortal. Not all shall die. Some shall pass from this corruptible dying life into the glorious life of God. And to insure that this is so, He appears NOW, for us, in the very presence of God.

To Full Salvation

His final appearance shall be when out of the glory of that presence He appears upon earth again, to bring the Kingdom of God victoriously to earth. Verse 28 in the Amplified makes that so clear that no one should misunderstand: "Even so it is that Christ having been offered to take upon Himself and bear as a burden the sins of many once and once for all, WILL APPEAR a second time, not carrying any burden of sin nor to deal with sin, BUT TO BRING TO FULL SALVATION those who are eagerly, constantly and patiently waiting for and expecting Him."

The second time. But didn't we say this would be the third time He appears? Yes, but only the second time that He appears on this earth. He did appear on the earth. He does now appear in heaven. He will yet appear again on the earth. And every time He appears, it's for us! And this final appearance is to bring us to full salvation. Full deliverance from every earthly bondage. This is that "final salvation" spoken of by Peter in 1 Peter 1:5 (Amplified), where it tells us that there is an inheritance reserved in heaven for you "who are being guarded by God's power through your faith till you fully inherit that FINAL SALVATION that is ready to be revealed for you in the LAST TIME."

Come Out of her, My People

So chapter 9 starts by showing the glory of the old covenant, then proves that glory has to fade and be replaced by the permanent order of reality in Christ. Then we close by seeing that the return of Christ to this earth, His appearance to those who look for Him, is to bring them to full salvation or deliverance. Not to escort them to a home up in heaven somewhere, but to bring His salvation, His inheritance, and His reward to them here. (Revelation 22:12).

For those who hear His call and come out, there is a final salvation, a full deliverance. He will appear to them once again. Glory! Get ready for chapter 10, for here we shall find some strong warnings and tremendous promises. If you feel we have not done full justice to chapter 9, you are right. But we are not trying to give a complete commentary or dig out all the revelation in this great chapter. We are only trying to open some doors, so that you may continue the study and dug out more glorious truths for yourself. Press on, saints of God! It has been glorious thus far, but there is much more ahead for us!

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Chapter 10

A Shadow of Good Things to Come

The last few chapters of this book of Hebrews constantly refers to "good things to come". Chapter 6 says: "let us go on unto perfection". Then chapter 7 speaks of a new priesthood for us, made "after the power of an endless life." Chapter 8 unveils the new covenant for the last days, where He will write His laws in our minds and in our hearts. Then all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. Chapter 9 says that "Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands." Then chapter 10 tells us that "the law having a shadow of good things to come". When we get to chapter 11, we will see that "God provided some better thing for us". Finally in chapter 12, "we receive a kingdom which cannot be moved".

The Heart of the Proposition

God is sending this letter to the Jews, and He does not waste words. Judaism is exposed as a failure. Verse 1 and 2 make it plain, with unassailable logic, that if the blood sacrifices of the Old Testament Law had taken away sins, they would not have had to continue offering the same sacrifices every year. For once the passover lamb had been offered in the beginning of the year, and the blood of the sin offering and the burnt offering been placed on the mercy seat on the day of Atonement in the end of the year, all sin should have been purged. Therefore, there would be no more conscience of sins. But it is plain that this is not the case, for they continued this routine every year. This shows that the blood of those animals was ineffective in taking away sin. They were only a shadow of good things to come.

The writer of Hebrews does not apologize or compromise. He plainly says that it is an impossibility for the Jewish rituals or offerings to take away sins. Quoting from the book of Psalms, he proves that God has done away with the first covenant, that He might establish the second. Then he simply declares that the only way to deal with sin is through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is More than a Man

The greatest danger to the Jewish believer was not the Sanhedrin who tried to stamp out belief in Jesus through violent persecution. This only made the believers more determined, and spread the faith throughout the world, as many fled from Jerusalem. Far worse than this was those who claimed to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, accepted His teachings, and became part of the local churches, yet

clung to the traditional law of Moses as necessary to salvation. What they were saying in effect was: "Accept Jesus, receive the Holy Ghost and speak in tongues, but stay in the old order and be a better Jew". The counterpart of that today are those who urge people in the old dead historic traditional churchianity to receive the "Charismatic experience", but "don't leave the church". By that they mean, don't leave the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, etc., denominations. Speak in tongues, but keep going to mass and confession. Keep praying to Mary, burning candles, baptizing your infant babies into the body of Christ. Be loyal to the Pope. Be a better Catholic. But speak in tongues, and be a charismatic too. Well, beloved, it didn't work in the early church, and it won't work now. The Spirit is still crying: "Come out of her, my people".

"A Body Hast Thou Prepared Me"

Now, as then, the central issue at stake is the real body of Christ, the visible working body of Christ on earth. And you can't mix it with the old order. This is a prepared body, a cleansed body. The enemies of the Gospel back then were trying, with quite a bit of success, to keep the Christian believers in bondage to the law. They did this by tradition, condemnation, and fear. It is difficult to tear down 1500 years of law in one generation. Through men like the Apostle Paul, the Gospel had set out to destroy their faith in the temple, the offerings and feast days, the blood of animals, etc.

What the Judaizers were saying was: "Sure, go ahead and worship God through Jesus Christ on the first day of the week. But remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. Come up to Jerusalem for the feast days. Bring your Passover lamb, and your peace offerings, etc. Come to the temple for the burning of the incense. Don't bring sin into the Christian faith by breaking the Law. And make the Law of Moses stronger and more effective by adding Jesus Christ to it." And the Jewish believers were eating this up. It sounded good to them. It seemed to give them safety on both ends. How could they lose? Acts 6:7 says that "a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." And in Acts 21:30 they were putting the pressure on the Apostle Paul to assert his faith in the Law, when they said: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and **THEY ARE ALL ZEALOUS OF THE LAW.**" Thus the necessity of writing this book of Hebrews, this letter to the Jewish believers who were zealous of the Law. It was to let them know that they could not continue to hold on to Moses and Christ. It became evident again that "Moses my servant is dead. Now arise thou, and all this people, and go over this Jordan."

Yes, there is an active, living, Spirit-filled body of Christ on the earth. It has not yet come to it's full maturity, at least not at the time of this writing. But God is adding to it daily, such as should be brought in and prepared for the great Day of the Lord. The Jews might hang on to the Law, and the glory in their temple, but 6 years after the book of Hebrews was written, the Roman general, Titus, destroyed Jerusalem and burnt down the temple, just as Jesus said would happen, in Matthew 24. And today you might hang on to the old church traditions of spiritual Babylon, refusing to leave and come into the wilderness with the true body of Christ. But Babylon will fall, and be burned with fire. And those who continue to support her sins, will suffer her plagues. (Revelation 18:4).

Sin is Taken Away

I was talking with an orthodox Jew about the futility and failure of the Law, and the reality of Jesus Christ. As I read from the Old Testament to prove that Jesus was the Messiah and the substance of the Old Testament shadow, he ran upstairs to get his Hebrew Bible to see if it read the same way. I said: "David, the Jews have no way to get rid of sin. According to Moses' law, removing of sin comes from shedding of blood, and putting that blood on the mercy seat in the temple. Now you Jews don't have an altar, a temple, or a mercy seat. According to Moses, in whom you trust, how can you get rid of your sin?" "Oh", he said, "we no longer believe in blood sacrifices. We don't kill animals as blood sacrifices anymore, and wouldn't even if we had a temple (which they are not expecting to have). We only believe in the ethical law of Moses now." But when I asked him what about his sins, and how he would deal with that, he had no answer. There is no answer, outside of Jesus Christ. That is one reason why a majority of the Jews in Palestine today are atheists. They see no reality in God, as taught by the Judaizers. Only a small remnant remain faithful to the traditions of the fathers. The rest are only Jews by nationality.

There have been many rumors about the Jews getting ready to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. I want to declare that it shall never be done. The only temple the Jews will be a part of is that glorious temple Ezekiel saw, and the only way they will enter it is when they are saved through Jesus' blood, and become a part of the Body of Christ. Those rumors about another physical temple in modern Jerusalem are being spread by wishful thinking on the part of those fundamental dispensationalists who have turned most of the promises of God over to the natural Jew. Israel has been a sovereign nation again since 1948 and they have had possession of all of Jerusalem since the 6 day war, years ago. But a Moslem mosque still sits on the site of the old temple, and nothing has been done about it. Why? Because God is not interested in the reestablishment of the old Mosaic Law, the Levitical priesthood, or the rituals and blood sacrifices. He has "taken it away", that He might establish a better covenant. "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, circumcised in the flesh. He is a Jew which is one inwardly, circumcised in heart" (Romans 2:28-29). So the Israeli in Palestine today is not a "Jew", be he atheist or orthodox. The real Jew, Abraham's true seed, is that blood-washed, born-again believer in Jesus Christ. That's the way it is today, and that's the way it was in the day of the writing of this book of Hebrews. The order has changed, permanently. Jesus prophesied (Matthew 24) that the Jewish temple would be destroyed until not one stone would be upon another. Period. Not one word that it would ever stand again. There is now a new temple. It is the true body of Christ. Living stones. And the glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former.

Till His Enemies are His Footstool

Now we come to the glorious part of this chapter that takes us into the heavenlies. When God takes

away something, He always gives something better. If folks could just believe this, no one would complain about the stripping process of the Spirit. In verse 12 a truth is brought out that should have gladdened the heart of every Jewish Christian. "Once sacrifice for sins forever". Hallelujah! "It is finished"! No more labor, sweat, condemnation. Jesus has brought rest. Get in Him, stay in Him, live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and there is therefore now no condemnation. Nothing more for you to do, no more sacrifices. He has done it all. We are free from sin, and not under sin's bondage to walk any longer therein. We are now free to walk and live in the Spirit, which is not only life eternal, but also a lot more fun here on earth.

It also tells us that after offering Himself as the sacrifice for sins, Jesus then sat down "on the right hand of God" (meaning the place of authority and ministry). "From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." (verse 13). One translation reads: "from then on anticipating". The Amplified Bible says: "then to wait until His enemies should be made a stool beneath His feet." Praise God that the lowest member of the Body of Christ (the Feet), shall be above (higher, stronger) than the strongest enemy, even sin, Satan and death.

He is waiting. That means it hasn't been accomplished yet. In Him all things have been accomplished and are finished. But these things must also be done in His body on the earth. And until they are, He will continue to sit on the right hand of God. The Bible says that heaven must receive and retain Jesus until the restitution of all things spoken of by the prophets (Acts 3:21). This verse in other translations says: "Until the time of the great Restoration", "When all is restored anew", "until the whole world is re-created", "until the final recovery of all things from sin"" Until that time, Jesus remains in heaven, sitting on the right hand of God. Until everyone in His body is above every enemy (even death). The shadow in the Old Testament is the Day of Atonement. Sin is removed, thus death is annulled, and the Jubilee trumpet begins to blow. This is why the whole creation is waiting, "standing on tip-toe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own". (Romans 8:19 Phillips). Because the manifestation of the sons of God, the putting of all enemies under the feet of the body of Christ, is the Jubilee trumpet for all creation to be delivered from it's bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And no one can stop this from happening! They can call it heresy, false doctrine, strange and weird, free-love, doctrines of devils, etc., etc., but it is still going to take place. And even those who are fighting this truth will be benefited by it, along with the rest of creation. And Jesus now sits on the right hand of God, expecting, waiting, until all this takes place. Until every enemy is under our feet. A footstool under his body. Many other scriptures confirm this, but this is one thing that had to get across to the Hebrew Christians in order to deliver them from adherence to and dependence upon the Law of Moses. You can call it brutal or call it crude, but that old order had to be smashed, destroyed. Some tell me I am wrong in being so outspoken and so strong against the old order system of religion in the world today. But I must cry out, and use all means to deliver those who will hear. Because soon the judgment of God will fall upon all the kingdoms built by men, and many will fall with them.

Sanctified and Perfected

It tells us plainly in verse 14 that by the offering of His own body, Jesus has eternally perfected those whom He has chosen and set apart for Himself. Well, I don't feel perfected. And those closest to me can tell you that they love me, but they know I am not yet perfect. But we see through human eyes, and we see human faults and failures. God looks at us, and He sees the offering that Jesus made for us. Ephesians 1:4, 6 tells us "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love □ wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved". We look at each other in the light of today. God sees us in the light of eternity, in His eternal purpose.

But shall this perfection ever be manifested in the earth realm, where men can see? Oh yes! Verse 16 holds the key to this. God will write His laws into our hearts and minds. Then we will not need rules and regulations to keep us on the straight and narrow, and to condemn us when we fail. For it will be as natural for us then to do the right thing, to be righteous, as it is now to breathe. And verse 17 goes on to say that through the blood of Jesus, the remembrance of sin is wiped out forever. And no more need for another offering. Therefore, what need did they have for the temple services, blood sacrifices, etc.? God will accept no more offering for sin. Jesus paid it all. And the full victory over sin, death, and all other enemies, must be demonstrated here on earth. In the sight of principalities and powers. The nations of earth must know. The knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Into the Holiest

Now we come to one of the most tremendous statements in all scripture. Verse 19 says: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus". There is no other way in. The Old Testament made it plain that the High Priest could not enter the Holy of Holies without blood, lest he die. There are many religions in the world. Most of them are designed to do good for people, through social action, brotherhood, charitable activities, etc. But only through the blood of Jesus Christ can you come into the presence of God, and have the life of God. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"" (Acts 4:12) So the bloodless religions, the Gurus, the occult philosophies, paganism, good works and all other substitutions are all in vain. They cannot give life. There can be no co-existence between real Bible Christianity and other religions. Some say "It doesn't really matter what you believe, as long as you are sincere". It matters. It's like saying that it doesn't matter what you eat, as long as you are hungry. But it does. Poison will kill you, no matter how hungry or sincere you are. We have to state openly and without apology, that Jesus is the only way.

Now these verses are talking about Sonship. He is not talking to unbelievers or nominal half-hearted Christians. He is talking to those who are sanctified and perfected, those who are dying to self and passing through the veil into the holiest. Many people cannot understand the deeper portions of the Word, because they are not living in the Spirit in the same realm that is being written about. If there

are truths being brought forth that you don't see, and cannot comprehend, don't jump up and denounce it as false doctrine. Just admit that you are not living in the realm of the Spirit where these deeper truths apply. Then ask God to bring you in.

A New and Living Way

The way into the holiest has been consecrated for us by Jesus Christ. He did it by the rending of His own flesh at Calvary. When He died, the veil of the temple was torn in two pieces, ripped from the top to the bottom. (Matthew 27:51) Notice that it was not torn from the bottom. Man did not do it. It was God who sent Jesus to the Cross. The human will of Jesus was to live, to continue to do good for people on the realm of healing, teaching, etc. But that human will submitted to the higher will of Deity, and went to the Cross. It was the only way that creation could be completely delivered from the power of sin and death. "Not my will but thine be done". Notice also that it was torn completely in two. Nothing more for man to do, except to pass through. Some say that there are still some threads they must tear for you □ baptism, confirmation, church membership, etc. But nothing else is required. Only His death, the rending of the veil.

But this is not a dead way, such as the Old Testament offerings. For after Calvary, Jesus took His life up again by the power of resurrection life. A new and living way. So when we pass through that veil, it means that we come to the end of our Adamic life, nail it to His Cross. Then we take on His resurrection life as we pass into the Shekinah glory of His presence forever. Glory to God!

Through the Veil

This is part of the manifestation of the Sons of God. For there can be no manifestation of the true life of Jesus, the Son of God, until Adam is dead. Sin must be destroyed, and also death. For 2,000 years since the Spirit was poured out upon the early church, we have been in the sanctuary, in the realm of the oil-filled candlestick (lampstand). This part of the tabernacle where the candlestick resided, was 20 cubits long, 10 cubits wide, and 10 cubits high. As you can see, $20 \times 10 \times 10 = 2,000$; and 2,000 years is how long it has been since the church entered this realm. We are now at the door of the holiest, ready to enter in, as we are being urged to do here in Hebrews. This Holy of Holies (which had the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, the rod, and the hidden manna) was 10 cubits long, 10 cubits wide, and 10 cubits high. $10 \times 10 \times 10 = 1,000$; and I want to declare to you that as soon as we pass through this veil, a thousand year period will begin during which we shall rule and reign on this earth. And it shall be in tabernacles of clay. Yes, we will someday receive glorified bodies, and the dead in Christ are coming back for their resurrection bodies. But first there must be a demonstration of the victory of His sinless life in vessels of clay. Don't get in a hurry. Heaven is still there, and it will not go away. But a battle is being fought on earth, in these earthly bodies. And a victory must be

won here. Then in the ages to come, God will show His grace and kindness to us through Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 2:7).

It was absolutely necessary for Jesus to die in the manner He did. Not because God was some blood thirsty tyrant screaming for revenge on mankind, and Jesus had to pour out His blood to satisfy Him. Oh no. One of the basic principles of life is "the life of the flesh is in the blood". We get our blood from our father, all the way back to Adam. So it is Adamic blood in us, Adamic life and it cannot enter the Kingdom of God. But Jesus did not get blood from Joseph. His blood came from His Father. It was incorruptible blood (1 Peter 1:18). We had to have His life if we were to live eternally. He brought that life down to earth, poured it out for us in the form of His blood. So our Adam life is replaced with the Christ life. A blood transfusion, a complete exchange. One must increase, the other decrease. That is why the blood of Jesus is so important to us.

Our Great High Priest

The house of Israel had a high priest, after the order of Aaron. Our great high priest, Jesus, is of the order of Melchisedec, made effective by the power of an endless life. Therefore, he says having boldness to enter the holiest; having a new and living way; and having a high priest over God's house let us draw near, and let us hold fast without wavering. "The profession of our faith". We have something to declare to the world, and we have no reason to waver. God has given the promise, and He will fulfill. How long is forever? Well, that's how long Jesus is called to be a priest (Hebrews 5:6, 6:20, 7:21). As a high priest in the ages to come, what kind of ministry will He have? He is our high priest, and He will be ministering the life of God to us, from glory to glory. Beloved, it is beyond our minds to comprehend what glorious things God has planned for His people. Hallelujah!

"Let us consider one another". What a beautiful statement in verse 24. This is the guiding principle in our relationship with one another in this great body of Christ. Everything we do or say, should be done in the light of "how does this affect my brother?" No one lives to himself, we are members of the same body. We are partakers of the same covenant. The Amplified Bible expresses this verse so beautifully: "And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities."

"Provoke one another". Yes, I know that it is not difficult to get provoked with your brother sometimes. But we are not to provoke him to anger, but to love and good works. This is not a matter of just nagging him to keep doing helpful deeds and noble activities. We are to give one another good reason to love us, and to be wanting to do good deeds. This is something that has to be worked at. But the more we love the brethren, the easier it becomes.

As Ye See the Day Approaching

Verse 25 deals with a problem as real in the early church as it is today. "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is." Then, as now, there were those who either became so super-spiritual, or else so dead and cold in spirit, that they didn't feel the need to meet with the rest of the body of Christ in worship, praise, and teaching meetings. And one extreme was about as bad as the other. The end result was the same.

We have had those preachers come by with claims to super revelations, who tried to tell us that the day of having church was over, that meeting in a regular building for that purpose, at regularly appointed times was "old order". And so was praying for the sick, prayer requests, altar calls, singing and worship, etc. However, they always seemed to like the idea of having a church building and a body of believers to preach that garbage to. And it never was "old order" to take them an offering. They claimed to be past the "gift" realm and the "in" thing was Sonship (their brand). Well, as a pioneer in the present day "Sonship" message, I want to tell you that what they've got is not real Sonship, but a smelly substitute. I have discovered that no matter how high sounding and spiritual their preaching seems to be, it never produces any life in a congregation. We didn't waste much time on this sort of thing, and we don't have the welcome mat out for these "wandering stars" who preach contrary to Hebrews 10:25. Unfortunately, some folks have run into this brand of "Sonship", hear them using some of the same terminology and expressions as the rest of us use, and then identify us with this false message and wrong spirit. This is unfair. If I am to be judged, I want to be judged on what I believe and preach, not on the basis of some garbled message bring propagated by those with whom I'm not even associated. However, it's a waste of precious time to try to protect and defend myself from all the accusations flying around. So I leave that with the Lord. If anyone hears anything they'd like to know about for sure, the answer is as close as their telephone. My number is in the phone book, it's not unlisted, and I have no reason to tell you anything but the truth about what I believe. In fact, I'm trying to put everything I believe into print, as fast as I can, and with over 100 messages on end time truth already written and printed, there should be no doubt as to where I stand on issues. I don't want to keep hidden, or under cover, anything I believe to be truth. If I can find it in the Book (Bible), I'm going to preach it, loud and clear.

As Ye See the Day Approaching

And one of the things I find in the Bible, and am preaching by pulpit, press, and radio, is the need for strong local churches. I mean bodies where people have strong commitments to one another in love. We who are partakers in the covenant of God, need to have a covenant with each other. We need to recognize ourselves as local members of His body. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together."

Many people write me and ask, "How can this apply to me, when there is no one else in my city who believe these truths, and no local church to attend?" And the problem is whether they should attend

regularly, and give support to a dead Babylonian system of religion. My heart grieves for those in this situation, and I wish there was an easy answer to this. All I can say is, that if you truly are willing to submit to an God-ordained and Spirit-led local order, I firmly believe God will raise one up in your area, even if He has to use you to do it. When we moved our publishing office to Springfield, Missouri, some years ago, there was no local group standing in the truths of Sonship. There were some individuals hungry for divine order and deeper truth but no leadership to gather them together. I tried to find a local church where I could fellowship, and finding none, we started having meetings in our living room at home. Soon the room was full and after about 18 months, we had to rent a building. A year later we bought another building, and when it was packed out we were forced to build a larger building for the church and Bible school.

The Word of the Lord came to me through a prophet, that I was not limited in my ministry to the local church here, but that my church was those thousands of hungry saints scattered abroad this nation and around the world who get their spiritual food from our books, tapes and printed messages. I witnessed to that word, and I have tried to fulfill that calling. Yet I realized that even this type of ministry needed the government, encouragement, and restraint of a local body. For my own protection, and for those who read and accepted my writing ministry, I needed the commitment to a local body of believers who could discipline me in case I got into false teaching or over-emphasis on some phase of truth. And I knew that this kind of government could not be a "one man show". There would have to be a body of elders with strong enough ministries to challenge me if I were wrong. Because, you see, I don't want to be wrong. I owe it to God's people, and to the Lord who called me, to do everything in my power to stay in the center of the flow of the Spirit, and not get off on some tangent. This in no way hinders my ministry, or restricts the free flow of divine revelation. But after nearly 40 years of pentecostal ministry, it has been my observation that most of those good men who fell into Satan's snares (whether it was love of money, sex, or false doctrine) did so because of a lack of a covering. Some belonged to a religious system rampant with dead tradition and power-hungry religious politicians, unable to provide proper spiritual covering for a servant of God. Others had come out of the system, now determined never to be in bondage to any kind of government, thus leaving themselves open for the attacks of a cunning enemy.

Therefore, I needed both a local body of elders familiar with end-time truths, and Spirit-anointed traveling ministries strong enough to give me a "thus saith the Lord". I asked God for this, and He provided abundantly. And there are pastors in other cities who love this ministry and this servant of God enough to pray for him and help keep him straight. When God would call some of those local elders to ministry in other localities, He would send others in.

The Day Approaches

So much for my testimony on assembling ourselves together. I realize that a body of believers such as we have here in Springfield is not to be found in every city. But hold on saints, it is coming! The Day of the Lord approaches. Let your heart be open for that which God is sending. According to

verse 25, "the day" that was approaching had not yet taken place at the time of the writing of this book. It did not happen at Calvary, nor on the day of Pentecost more than 30 years prior. The destruction of Jerusalem, the Dark Ages, the Reformation, the latter day outpouring of the Spirit, have all come and gone. And yet I declare to you today that there is yet a "day" approaching. It is the great day of the Lord. All the more reason for us to gather together to exhort one another.

Paul in Ephesians 6, calls it: "that evil day". Joel calls it: "the great and terrible day of the Lord". Malachi calls it: "the great and dreadful day of the Lord". Many other prophets refer to it simply as "the day of the Lord". A previous message written on this "day" entitled "Day and Night", is available for the asking. Write for it. No need to rewrite that message here, except to say that verse 25 is telling us that it is a good reason for us to "consider and give attentive continuous care to watching over one another", and to meet together for worship and instruction regularly. Unteachable, independent spirits are in great danger in these days in which we live. For your own sakes, find a covering.

No More Sacrifice for Sins

Now we come to a very perplexing portion of scripture. Some have thought that this might be referring to the "unpardonable sin". Such is not the case. Lest anyone think that God is weak and uncertain in dealing with those who spurn the blood of Jesus as the only offering for sin, the writer has some very strong words about judgment. Moffatt's translation says: "How much heavier, do you suppose, will be the punishment assigned to him who has spurned the Son of God□"

The issue here is not whether Jesus' blood is able to cleanse all our sin, past or future, but whether or not there is any other offering to take away judgment, in case we spurn the blood of Jesus as the remedy. The Bible makes it plain that there is no other offering. Spurn the blood of Jesus, and you are left with nothing to look forward to but the wrath of almighty God. "Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord□ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Someone says: "That doesn't sound like a God of love". Let me tell you that God loves us so much that He will never permit us to spend eternity in a heaven polluted by sin and sinners who reject the only cleansing. They have a different destiny. The wrath of God is the love of God in operation against the negative powers of darkness and death.

So if we receive the knowledge of the truth concerning Calvary and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and still reject that truth and try for heaven and eternal life some other way, we have no hope. For God will accept no other sacrifice than the one that has already been paid. The Amplified Bible says: "There is no longer any sacrifice left (when we have rejected Jesus) to atone for our sins, no further offering to which to look forward." There will not be another Lamb of God. Jesus is once and forever the only salvation from sin.

This truth was necessary for those Christian Jews who were being told by the Judaizers that they

could bring another lamb at the Passover season, and God would accept it for their sins. Strong language, yes, but needed, then and now. There is no other way, no Guru, no philosophy, no works, nothing. It is Jesus then, now and forever! Glory to His great Name!

A Better and Enduring Substance

In verses 32 through 34, we find a beautiful and tender picture of the love that existed in the early church among the saints of God. Here he refers to the "former days", obviously days when they were on fire for God, when revival fires were burning in the camp. It was a time of great persecution, and the saints were sharing everything they had with one another. Now I don't believe in a communistic or a communal form of life, such as is practiced in Red China. I believe God's ordained way of life for His people is the family unit, with a man and wife as the head of their own home, and children leaving father and mother to get married and form their own home, yet always ready to share with the saints anything that is needed. Whether it is car, clothes, furniture, food, tools, or money, we having nothing that "we might call our own". But it all belongs to God and His family, and we are only the custodians. And being a faithful steward means that I must be wise in how it is used or given away, and not waste it on moochers or interfere with the dealings of God in the life of someone He might be trying to mature. Sometimes it is necessary for young saints to grow up to where they are self-supporting, and not forever be dependent on hard-working and big-hearted relatives or friends. Everyone should carry their weight, as much as they are able. Paul says: "they that do not work, shall not eat." Those who are sick, or having hard times, or trying to get a start will find much love and care in the body of Christ.

Those who are "illuminated" with this truth, will not hesitate to share their substance with others who are in need. And those who do not have anything, will want to "labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth". (Ephesians 4:28). I believe the writer of Hebrews to be Paul the Apostle, and here he speaks of his bonds, and the compassion the Jewish saints had for him at that time. And those who sympathized with him suffered great loss in material things, and their goods were spoiled. Also they were made a gazing stock, suffered great reproaches and afflictions, and were identified with other such "heretics".

"Ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." 5 things are said here that I want to emphasize. First, we "have" this substance. Not hope to have it, not maybe, but "we have it". It is already ours. The title deed to this is already made out to us. That makes me a rich man, in things the world knows nothing about and can never have except through Jesus. Secondly, it is a "better" substance. Better than what? Better than anything the world can give or take away from us. Better than all the "goods" we might have lost through following the Lord. Better than the opportunities we might have had to make a fortune in this world. Third, it is an "enduring" substance. It shall never fade, rust, rot or be stolen. Cars we used to enjoy now sit in some junkyard. Houses that were once the pride of the owner are now being torn down or becoming part of a ghetto. Things in this world do not endure. Even our life is all too short. But we have an enduring "substance". Fourth, it is a

"substance". It is not a doctrine, a fantasy, a fairy tale, a wild hope. It is a substance. Something real, more real than the things we see about us. And finally, we have this "in heaven" where no one can take it from us. The Apostle Peter tells us that we have "an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you □ ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:4).

The last few verses of this tremendous chapter now encourages the saints to have patience and confidence in that which God is doing. For, he says, there is great reward in this kind of confidence. Some were in danger of casting this confidence away, thus losing their reward. They had, in time past, done the will of God. But it takes patience to then receive the promise. Then he quotes for these Jewish believers a portion of the Old Testament, to show them that what he is saying is according to the written scriptures. Verses 37 and 38 are quotations from the prophet Habakkuk. "Yet a little while"; "He will come and will not tarry"; "The just shall live by faith"; and "If any man draw back". Can a man draw back unto perdition? Yes, it is very plain. But we are not of those who do this.

What he is saying to us here is "hold on, beloved, keep believing and keep pressing on. It may seem long and hard to bear. But the promise is ours. And the reward is great. We are victors on the field! We cannot see all the results, for we live by faith. We walk by faith. But faith is a substance, a substance of things hoped for. And with these words, we are introduced to the great chapter on faith, chapter 11. Here we have a "Hall of Faith" for those noble patriarchs and saints who endured many afflictions and temptations in their walk with God, yet received a good report. This brief message has only scratched the surface of the great truths here in this glorious chapter 10 but we must leave it with you to dig in and make further study, led by the Spirit. For we must continue on to the next step in our journey through this great book of Hebrews.

Remember, the Law is a shadow of better things to come. The substance is in Jesus Christ. Only through His precious blood is there salvation from sin. And the door is open for us to enter the holiest place in God. Therefore, we should consider one another in this body of Christ, for the day of the Lord is now upon us. None of earth's goods are worth holding on to. We have a desire to share what we have with those we love, and we have a better substance in heaven. What a Saviour! How great is our God! And now, let us press on □

Chapter 11

Men and Women of Faith

We approach God's great Hall of Faith with trembling hearts, as we recognize one of the greatest chapters of the Bible. Many have been the messages written on the subject of faith. And it would take several messages to cover the truths contained in this tremendous chapter. But the first strong impression we get as we take a general overlook at this entire chapter, is that God deals not with theories, but with men and women of God. For the Lord does not spend a lot of time telling us about theoretical doctrines of faith, but rather of the exploits of Old Testament saints who were filled with the faith of God. 15 of those Old Testament heroes, including 2 women, are mentioned by name in this one chapter.

Notice that in the first 28 verses we see faith working in the lives of special individuals, such as Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Then in the next 10 verses it shifts to a view of faith in the corporate people of God in the Old Testament. For Moses was the divine catalyst that took the descendants of the sons of Jacob, slaves in Egypt, and made of them one great nation. After 40 years of the ministry of Moses, this nation of Israel came forth as a people led by the Spirit, under divine government, walking in obedience and faith, and winning battles by the miraculous power of God. They were feared by all the nations about them, not because of their numerical strength, but because of their God, and their faith in Him. Finally, at the end of this chapter, we see the emphasis change from the corporate people of God in the Old Testament, to the ultimate purpose of God in a New Testament Church, which becomes a new creation man in Christ Jesus! And as Moses was the catalyst to bring together that one nation in his day, it is Jesus Christ who brings into being this new creation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar treasure unto God.

I would have you notice all the great exploits accomplished by Old Testament faith, things which the greatest of modern day evangelists are not equaling, such as passing through the Red Sea, bringing down Jericho's walls, the dead raised, kingdoms subdued, armies defeated, the mouths of lions stopped, and great persecution endured. Yet, verse 40 tells us that all these things are inferior to that which God has provided for us, the new creation man. God has a "better thing" for us, and then immediately we go into chapter 12 where it begins to tell us about God's dealings with His sons.

"Now Faith Is"

This is universally known as the "faith" chapter, and for good reason. The word "faith" appears only twice in all the entire Old Testament, yet is seen 24 times in this one chapter of Hebrews. That is more than any other chapter in the Bible, and more times than any other entire book, except Romans.

Since this book is written to the Hebrew Christians, who were avid students of the Old Testament, it is an outstanding commentary on the purpose of this book, and this chapter in particular, to see that faith is mentioned 12 times as much in this one chapter as in all the writings of Moses and the prophets combined.

Here we see that the writer of Hebrews, inspired by the Holy Ghost, was leading the people from the old order realm of law, into that "better" place of faith and grace. So, he begins at the beginning□ the creation. God left unmistakable evidence of His work in it. Men void of faith still cannot accept the creation story. To them it is a myth and a fable, a superstition carried down from primitive times. But to those who have touched the realm of faith, the creation is seen as a work of God, with indisputable evidence to back it up. It is not blind faith, just believing what you have been taught. There is actual physical proof of the Genesis account of creation. But a man without faith is blind to these facts, blinded by the dark void in his life due to the absence of a living faith.

So, he proves to the Jews that there are some things we understand that are not covered by Moses' law. It is a higher order than most people in the Old Testament lived under. Yet, he shows that in spite of the fact that faith was not often preached in the Old Testament days, the greatest men of Israel lived by it. It was the prophet Habakkuk who said: "The just shall live by his faith". And it was by the power of faith, not law, that Caleb and Joshua brought back a good report from the promised land. And because of their good report, produced by their faith, they lived to enter in and possess the land. Praise God!

Both the Amplified and the Wuest translations say that faith is the "title deed" of the things we hope for. Now when you get a title deed to a property, you know that it belongs to you, although you may be many miles from it, and unable to see it. If someone sent you a title deed to 1,000 acres of land in the lush San Fernando Valley of southern California, you would be rich. It might take a long trip and many days for you to get to your inheritance, set your foot in it, and eat the fruit thereof. But every time you looked at the title deed, you would KNOW that it was yours and that you were rich! So it is with faith. There are things in our inheritance we have not yet feasted on or walked in. Yet, we see them in the Word, and we believe it, and faith becomes our title deed, letting us know of our riches. Hallelujah!

Abel

Many evangelists keep faith on the level of the prosperity cult. If you have faith (and send the evangelist your offerings) you will drive the finest automobile, live in a plush home, and eat of the fat of the land. If you are deprived, or poor, or just do not lust after the material things of the world, it is because you do not have faith, they say. To them, faith is only a means of receiving something. But look at Abel's faith. By faith Abel offered God a sacrifice. And the better your faith, the better your sacrifice to God. And it cost him his life. No, his faith did not make him more prosperous than Cain. But he received something far greater□ a witness from God that he was righteous.

So, Abel's giving faith did not make him prosperous in this world, but it gave him a better and eternal relationship to God. Moffatt's translation says: "He died, but by his faith he is speaking to us still".

Enoch

Enoch did not live in a time or place where faith was being preached. In fact, the word faith does not appear in the Bible until the children of Israel are ready to cross Jordan into the promised land, more than 1500 years after Enoch left the earth. Yet, living faith entered his heart to such a degree, that he believed that he could by-pass the grave, and go into heaven without dying. He had no example to follow. No one had escaped death. Men were dying all around him. But faith!

There is a doctrine called "soul-sleep", which teaches that we do not go to heaven when we die, but that our souls lie unconscious in the grave with our bodies until the resurrection. When I asked them about Enoch, they answered that he died. They said that verse 5 simply states that he did not "see" death. That is, that he died without being conscious of death approaching, and that he did not have the usual death pangs. But notice how other translations give us a clearer look at this scripture, and expose this false doctrine. Phillips translation: "It was because of his faith that Enoch was promoted to the eternal world without experiencing death." New English Bible: "By faith Enoch was carried away to another life without passing through death." Moffatt translation: "It was by faith that Enoch was taken to heaven, so that he never died." Amplified Bible: "Because of faith Enoch was caught up and transferred to heaven."

Some have tried to say that Enoch was a type of the saints who get raptured from the earth before the tribulation. But I want you to notice that Jesus did not say, "As it was in the days of Enoch, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of man". What He said was, "As it was in the days of Noah." Noah escaped the flood, God's judgments upon the earth in his day, by building and entering into an ark, not by being raptured or translated to heaven. Enoch's translation had nothing to do with escaping judgment, as the flood did not come for hundreds of years later. In fact, it was longer from Enoch's translation to the flood, than it is from the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus to this present day. No, he was not a type of the "pre-tribulation rapture".

It was by faith that Enoch pleased God. That should be the aim of our faith. Jesus lived to do the Father's will, and to please Him. Let the sons of God who aspire to Christ-likeness have the kind of faith that we see in Enoch. A life void of faith cannot please God, regardless of how many good works are produced. The burden of the writer of Hebrews is to show the Jews that they cannot please God with the works of the law, even if they did the impossible and perfected them all. Only by a life of faith is God pleased. His logic in verse 6 cannot be refuted.

Noah

Up to this point, faith has related only to God's dealings with an individual. But beginning in verse 7 we see other people, plus the animal creation, saved through the faith of this one man. Now it does not say that Noah was warned by faith. We do not know the means by which God warned Noah of the judgments coming. It may have been by a dream, a vision, an angel visitation, audible voice, or a prophetic word coming to his spirit. But we know that God spoke to him. "And God said unto Noah" (Genesis 6:13). Verse 7 in the Amplified Bible says: "Prompted by faith Noah, being forewarned of God concerning events of which as yet there was no visible sign, took heed". So, when Noah started building an ark, there was no visible reason for him to do so. Does this sound like God's dealings with you at times? Times were good, the crops were bringing in plenty, men were building houses and looking toward a safe and secure future. How foolish Noah must have looked! But he had heard from God. Yet, even that was not enough. Hearing from God is one thing, but having faith to act upon that word is an entirely different matter. I wonder just how many there are who had a word from God yet continue to live in spiritual poverty because they would not move out in faith on that word. It might look foolish to family and friends. That did not stop Noah. It was not his hearing that built the ark, but his faith. Yet, his faith came by hearing the word. One creates, the other performs. Both are necessary. Many people have faith in certain doctrines that are false. This is faith created by something other than the Word of God. And it will not perform. Movements and churches and leaders come crashing down, the people's faith is smashed, and in the midst of the chaos they wonder, "what happened?". They had faith, but they had not heard from God. They were following the teachings of men or the deceptions of devils. And this kind of faith cannot produce. Real living faith comes by hearing the word of God. Noah heard from God, and his faith saved his house.

Abraham

This portion needs an entire book written about it. But let us for now just skim through and hit the high spots. Here was a man who lived in the midst of a people that followed Nimrod and built the tower of Babel. Yet, he walked with God and saw a higher realm of life than this earthly creation. His vision went far beyond any earthly city, even of Babylon with its hanging gardens.

The word of the Lord came to him to leave his family, friends, home, and go where? He wasn't told. Just go. And he went. But it was an imperfect start. His father went with him. This was not in the contract. Not even Lot was in the call. But they went. By the time they got close to the promised land, but not quite in it, Abraham's father was ready to settle down. So, he built a city and called it after the name of his other son, Haran, who had died in Ur of the Chaldees. So many people are like that, especially religious leaders who have not heard the call of God. They recognize the anointing

upon those who have heard from God, and they want to go with them. But only so far, not all the way. And soon they settle down to build their own little kingdom, making it just like something they left behind in Babylon.

Terah, the father of Abraham, died in Haran. He had built himself a city, his progress had stopped there, and he died there. Now, let me share a peculiar and hidden truth with you. Genesis 11:26 and 32 tells us that Abram was born when Terah was 70 years old, and that Terah died in Haran at the age of 205 years. This would make Abram 135 years old when his father died. Now, Genesis 12:4 says that Abram was 75 years old when he left his father and departed from Haran. But Acts 7:4 tells us that Abram did not leave Haran until his father was dead. Is this a mistake? No, the Word of God does not make mistakes. It is simply telling us that Terah was dead to God and to Abram for 60 years before they finally buried him. Oh yes, he walked around on the earth until he was 205 years old. But when Terah was 145 years old, settled in Haran and determined to go no further in God's promises, the call of God burned in Abram's heart until he had to count his father dead to him and to the purposes of God. So Abram, "when his father was dead" (Acts 7:4), departed Haran and followed the call of God. By faith. Yes, faith will separate you from those who settle for less than God's best. It separated me from a pentecostal denomination, the only religious fellowship I knew anything about. And I did not know where I was going, only that I had to follow the call of God. And even though Terah lived until Abraham was 135 years old, and until his son Isaac was 35 years of age, I never see Abraham visit his father again, not for a family reunion, nor to show him the promised child, Isaac. As far as Abraham was concerned, Terah was dead. Can you see, dear one, that this is the life of faith?

In 1958 while we were living in Kansas and going through great trials of faith, the general superintendent of the denomination I had left wrote me a warm and gracious letter, inviting me to come back into the fold. But I could not return. My "Terah" had died to me. I could not go back to that which I had buried. I had to go on in God. Was Abraham bitter at Terah, his father? Of course not! Neither am I bitter at those I had to leave behind in their "Haran". But only those who truly hear the call of God will go on to the fulness of His purposes.

Lot left Haran with Abraham. He is like those who want to go all the way into the promised land, but only for their own gain. And they end up losing all. We see that God would not take Abraham into the mountains and show him his inheritance (Genesis 13:14) until after he had separated from Lot. The desire for self gain and profit must go from us before we can even see our inheritance clearly.

Obedience

Besides faith and vision, the thing that stands out in Abraham's life is his great obedience. When it came to leaving family and home, he obeyed. When it came to offering his son Isaac upon an altar, he obeyed. He must have had a tremendous confidence that he was truly hearing from God. Much of this comes by experience with God, by walking with Him until you know Him so well that other

voices cannot fool you. It does not come easy, that I can tell you.

In 1949 I heard the Lord say to me, "Go to Florida". I knew no one in Florida, had no invitations to come that way, and had only one man's name and address. And he wouldn't answer my letters when I wrote him. I had just bought a home in Springfield, Missouri, was a pastor of a church in the Springfield section of our denomination, had two more years of post-graduate work paid for in a local Bible school, and roots were deep. But I heard from God. We had two small children, and my wife was six weeks away from having the third one. But we left for Florida. When we arrived in St. Louis to bid farewell to my wife's parents, we had \$4 (four dollars) to make the trip. We told no one of our need, but God knew. We determined to start for Florida, and go as far as our \$4 would take us. But God determined to take us to Florida. We had exactly \$4 when we arrived in Florida, knowing no one, and no place to sleep. 3 nights later I was preaching a revival in a church I ended up pastoring. The path from then to now has been long, painful, and glorious. And it has proven one thing for sure □ the path of obedience is the only way to go. Hallelujah!

Forgive me for the personal reference to my own experiences, but God used men's experiences in this chapter to explain how faith works. And I know more about my own experiences than I do anybody else's. One more.

In early spring of 1962, I heard God say to me, "It's time for you to move back to Springfield". At the time, I was co-pastoring a church in Louisiana. We were living in the rear of the church, in the old Sunday school rooms. We had no money, and hardly an income. Now, there was my wife and I and 4 children. I wrote to a Christian real estate agent in Springfield and asked him if he had a large house for sale, with basement for my printing press, and a large living room for prayer meetings and services. In a few days, I had a letter saying there was a house on north Grant Street available. No other details. I had never seen the house, did not know just where it was. God spoke and said, "This is the house I want you to buy". At the time I could not have raised more than \$10. I phoned the real estate man and told him I would buy the house, to send me the contract and tell me how much down payment was needed. I decided that if I was really hearing from God, He knew about the money needed, and would supply when due. The contract came for me to sign, with a note that I could get the house at no down payment on a G.I. loan. There would be about \$300 closing cost, he said. I signed the contract, and that week I had 2 letters from 2 preachers. One was on the west coast, and his letter contained a check for \$200, saying that it was for a need I had. It was the first and last time he ever sent me anything. The other letter was from a missionary on the foreign field who sent a check for \$120. The \$20 was for tapes I was to send him, and the \$100, he said, was to go on a house I was going to buy. No one knew of our plans except my wife and I and the real estate agent, not even our children. If that wasn't enough, I had 2 letters from prophets with a word to make the move, one of them even naming the city, Springfield, twice in the prophecy. It took several miracles of supply, but we moved to 1910 North Grant, and have lived here since August 1962. We shook and we trembled at times, but we obeyed. Glory to God, it works!

Dwelling in Tabernacles

Verse 8, 9 and 10 constitute one of the mountain tops of scripture. It tells us here that Abraham was called, he obeyed, and he did not know where he was going. Then it goes on to say that it took faith for him to stay in that land. There were enemies every where. There was always the temptation to build himself a city, with high walls to keep out the enemy. That's what every religious movement seems to end up doing, from the historic churches, fundamentalists, pentecostals, business men's groups, and what have you. But Abraham avoided that trap, because he had already seen the plan of God. He had seen the city of God. And nothing he could build would come close to comparing with that. I have been asked at times to either join or start a "fellowship" of end-time bodies. But friends, I have caught a vision of the great body of Christ on earth. I have seen how it operates, and had a glimpse of it's glory, and I cannot settle for anything less. No man can build this thing. God is building it Himself! And I promise you that I will have no part in creating or belonging to any denominational hierarchy over a group of local churches. I will minister to an help straighten out the affairs of any local church that invites and accepts my ministry. But I will not be a "lord" over God's heritage. Jesus is the Lord, and He alone is the head of His church.

Not only Abraham, but Isaac and Jacob as well, dwelt in tabernacles (tents), and none of them ever built a city. They always had their tent stakes ready to pull up if and when God called. And Sarah, bless her heart! She watched faith work in this husband of hers until she appropriated enough faith of her own to give birth to a son at 90 years of age. She held on to the promise of God, and judged God faithful. Has God given you a promise? Have confidence that God is able to fulfill it.

In 1950 a prophecy went over me that God was anointing my hands to write, and that I would write, and He would bless it. Ten years went by before I started writing and sending out tracts. During that time, in times of trial and depression, I would pull that prophecy out and read it to the devil, and declare that God's word would be fulfilled. There were no open doors, and it seemed like the word would never come to pass. But I never threw away the prophecy. Finally, in 1960, we started getting some messages printed and mailed out to a few hundred names. God was in it, and in a short time we were hearing from people in various parts of this and other countries. Now the books and tapes are going to all 50 states and 50 foreign nations. They have been translated and published in several other languages including: Spanish, French, Portuguese, Korean, Dutch and others. And some of the messages have been reprinted in dozens of other papers and magazines in England, India, New Zealand, and USA, for we have no copyright on anything we send out. It belongs to God. And He has blessed the work, for we counted Him faithful who promised. That's what gave Sarah new life. And it will give you new life too, just to have faith in what God said.

We dwell in "tents" (temporary dwelling places, always ready to move on) because we see no permanent kingdom in this realm of life as we know it now. There is a progressive unfolding of the purposes of God, and each revelation causes us to pull up some stakes and move on. Hebrews 13:14 tells us that here (on this present realm) we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. This is what kills every denominational system. As soon as it organizes into a man-made order, it builds a city, lays a strong foundation, puts up it's doctrinal walls, and stagnates. There is an order of God that goes far beyond anything that can be produced within this Adamic structure. That is God's order,

the city of God, and we must attain to it.

A Better Country

In verse 12 it speaks of the seed of Abraham as being as the "stars of the sky", and also, "as the sand which is by the sea shore". This speaks of both the spiritual and natural seed of Abraham. Yes, God is interested in both. It was through the natural seed of Abraham that God brought Jesus into the world. But it was through Jesus that God brought the spiritual seed of Abraham into the world.

The next verse tells us that these heroes of faith did not receive the "promises". They saw them "afar off", and they embraced them. Wuest translation says: "These all died dominated by faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off and greeted them". The Amplified Bible says: "These people all died controlled and sustained by their faith, but not having received the tangible fulfillment of God's promises, only having seen it and greeted it from a great distance by faith." Yes, they were a long ways from perfection, a great distance from the ultimate that God has purposed for His people. But they saw it and greeted it. Glory to God! It is there, folks, I know it is there for us! Have you seen and greeted it?

Strangers and pilgrims on the earth. They confessed it. Let the people of the world enjoy the things of this world. Don't envy them. It is their world, their age. We are strangers in this place of death, sin, and decay. Our citizenship is in a realm of life where there is no defeat, no pain, no sin, and no death. Philippians 3:20-21 tells us that this present life is a place of humiliation for us. Wuest translations says that Jesus Christ "shall transform this body of ours which has been humiliated by the presence of indwelling sin and by death and decay, so that it will be conformed to His body of His glory". Yes, we are citizens of life, living in a foreign land. And we are humiliated when we get sick, grow old, die and decay. For we do not belong to such a state. And our time has arrived. We have desired "a better country", and it is finally at hand. Praise the Lord! And God is glad to have this kind of people claim Him as their God. "God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city". And the truth of it is, they are that city.

Verses 17, 18 and 19 deal with Abraham's great trial of faith when he had to take his son Isaac to a mountain and offer him for a sacrifice. This was something he could not understand. God wants a human sacrifice? It went against everything that Abraham knew about God. Have you ever faced a test that went contrary to everything you believe about God and His ways? Well, Abraham could not anticipate what God had in mind. Abraham had a solution figured out, but God had a different plan. Don't try to second guess the Lord but learn to hear and obey.

From Faith to Experience

There is a tremendous truth contained in this 11th chapter of Hebrews that we must understand, if we are to know the difference between revelation and reality. Many misguided souls think because they have a revelation from God and have seen some glorious truth, that they can now claim to have entered into that realm in experience and reality. They therefore claim to be "manifested sons", immortal, infallible, kings, equal to Jesus Christ, etc., and are bringing great reproach upon the true end-time message. Because of these loud and boastful claims, many sincere, truth-seeking people are shying away from any mention of "Sonship", "the manchild company", "immortality", "the life message", "Christ in you, the hope of glory", and other glorious truths that we all should be pressing into.

This chapter of Hebrews brings out very clearly the difference in seeing the promises of God, and entering into them in reality and fulness. Verse 13 tells us that these heroes of faith died in faith, "not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them" The Amplified Bible expresses it thus: "These people all died controlled and sustained by their faith, but not having received the tangible fulfillment of God's promises, only having seen it and greeted it from a great distance by faith." It goes on to say in verses 39 and 40 that all of these did not receive the fulfillment of what was promised, "because God had us in mind and had something better and greater in view for us, that they should not come to perfection apart from us, that is, before we could join them."

A Vision of Perfection

The promises they had seen and embraced involved perfection in spirit, soul, and body, as well as victory over all our circumstances. We know that we have deliverance from the guilt, penalty, and dominion of sin over us, through the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have obtained eternal life, praise God! "By His stripes we were healed!" But perfection is not attained by an imperfect, decaying, dying body receiving a healing upon occasion, when needed. Perfection is when death has been defeated and destroyed, and there are no more sick bodies to be healed. Right here, on this earth, my friends.

The fact is that these heroes of faith had seen these promises, embraced them, and their faith in God's promises caused them to do enough exploits to fill the pages of the Old Testament. 1 Peter 1:12 tells us that the prophets of old searched to know the time when these things would come to pass, "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven."

Abraham and His Seed

Turn with me to Galatians 3:16, 18, 29 □ "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." So the promise of the inheritance was given to Abraham and to Christ (the many-membered corporate body of Christ). Abraham and the saints of old SAW the promise by faith, but it is the glorious body of Christ that receives and WALKS in that promise in reality.

1 Peter 1:4-5 tells us that we have been begotten again unto a living hope, "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." The Amplified Bible says: "guarded by God's power through your faith till you fully inherit that final salvation that is ready to be revealed for you in the last time." Glory to God! Our inheritance is a final deliverance (salvation) from every trace of curse of sin, and every earthly bondage. It is ready to be revealed! Jesus said: "It is finished!" The saints of old saw it by faith, but they did not enter in, because it was waiting for "the last time". We are now living in that "last time", and can expect the fulfillment of this promise.

Possessing the Land

In Genesis 13 we read where God took Abram into the mountain, and then told him to look north, south, east, and west. All that he saw on that day became his possession, by promise. But the heathen still lived in it. And when Abraham's wife, Sarah, died at 127 years of age, he had to buy a field from the children of Heth in which to bury her. He possessed the land by promise, and he lived in a small part of it, but it remained for the 12 tribes of Israel to possess it in fulness. God gave me a poem one time about God giving Abram everything he could see, and I would like to share the first 3 verses of it here with you:

"Abram climbed the highest hill,
to talk to God one day;
To find the will of God for him;
To hear what God would say.
The plains of Jordan, the hills, the valleys,
All lay beneath his view;
And then God spoke, "You see this, Abram?
I'm giving this to you!

Because you heard the voice of God,
And hearkened to His call;

You left your home, possessions dear,
Your family, your all
Now look, my son, what I shall give
To him who's true to me;
Look north, and south, and east, and west;
As far as thou canst see.

The day is clear, the mountain high;
Thine eye is sharp and keen;
The fertile fields, the wooded hills,
The rivers fresh and clean;
All is thine that thou dost see,
With faith this day to claim;
The vision God hath given thee
Shall stand in His great Name!"

When God promised the land to Abraham, it was according to what he could SEE. But when the children of Israel were ready to enter the promised land under the leadership of Joshua, God promised to give them according to what they WALKED in (Joshua 1:3).

And when Joshua took the people across Jordan, they didn't buy any land from the children of Heth, or anyone else. They broke down the walls of Jericho, burned the city of Ai, conquered the land, and dwelt in it. They divided the land according to tribes, built cities, planted crops, and destroyed the enemy. Although Abraham could see the land that God had given him, yet the enemy still dwelled in the land with him. But God's instructions to Israel were to utterly destroy all the nations that had formerly occupied the land.

You may see the glorious promises of God, dear one, and you may even taste the first fruits of the land and dwell there in a tent. But the enemy is there with you. Death, pain, sickness, afflictions, discouragement, fear, poverty, and many other enemies still dwell here with the best of saints, even those with great vision of God's eternal purposes. We talk grandly about the beautiful heaven that God has prepared for His own. And surely, heaven is wonderful. But here on earth is where the enemy dwells, where the warfare has been going on since Adam. And it is here the victory must be won and demonstrated, for the glory of God! It is here that His purposes will be worked out in the lives of His people. We must, in reality and experience, walk out the revelations and truths that have been revealed in His precious Word throughout the ages.

The Head and the Feet

"The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of You" (1 Corinthians 12:21). 1 Corinthians 12:21

says that Christ is a many-membered body, and verse 27 tells us that we all are members of that body. The eyes and ears are in the head, and they see and hear the divine promises of God. But it takes the feet to walk in those promises. So the head cannot say that it does not need the feet. Neither can you say that because you have seen some divine revelations, that you do not need to actually walk in those truths, and produce the reality of what you have seen. It is necessary. The promise was given to Abraham □ "what you can see is yours". But the fulfillment of that promise was given to the children of Israel □ "Where ever you put your feet belongs to you".

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). Let me assure you that it is necessary for us to SEE what God is doing, and to know in the Spirit what He has purposed in the earth. But here is an "also". We must "also" WALK in what we are seeing. This is the difference between revelation and reality. This is where many have gone astray, and fallen. They think because they have seen something, that it is automatically working in them. The head and the feet are 2 separate parts of the body, and we need them both. The feet won't know where to go without the eyes. And the eyes can only look upon the promises, but never reach them, without the feet.

Seeing the Promises

We can look at the life of Abraham, and see what the realm of revelation will do for a man's life. First of all, hearing the call of God (Genesis 12:1-4), and seeing the divine promises (Genesis 13:14-15), causes faith and obedience to come alive within. "By faith Abraham □ obeyed" (Hebrews 11:8). It takes a living faith to obey the leading of the Spirit. The instructions of the Lord go against our natural desires, and the will of the flesh. The Spirit leads to the cross. The flesh fights for self-preservation (the first law of nature). The law of the flesh is to fight for "number one". The law of the Spirit is to do the will of God, regardless of where it leads us or leaves us. And beloved, if you are seeing the true message of God for this end-time, it will be manifested through a life-changing faith, and a greater obedience to God than ever before. Not after we all get to heaven, but now, right here on this earth. Before you ever come into the fulness of the promise, and before the inheritance is entered into, you can start having a changed life because you SEE the real truth of God. That is what true revelation will do for you.

A Right Spirit

Look at Abraham, and see what his vision produced in him. Trouble started between Lot and Abraham. The herdsmen, those on the servant level, began to fight one another. But Abraham, with the spirit of the Son, said to Lot: "Let there be no strife between me and thee □ FOR WE BE BRETHERN". He recognized that the land was full of enemies, and they had no business fighting and devouring each other. So he offered Lot first choice of the land. This may not have been good

business principles, according to the world's standards, but it was a right spirit. And God judges us according to the attitude of our spirit. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit" (Psalms 51:17). And the Lord speaks through the prophet in Isaiah 57:15 to say: "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."

One who says that he has received the revelation of Sonship, and has a proud and haughty spirit, is actually manifesting that he has not seen the real message of life. For a real unveiling and unfolding of present truth will impart to you the spirit of the Son of God. Guard your spirit. No matter that people will not believe your doctrine. Your responsibility is to see that your spirit is in harmony with God. No strife with your brethren. Declare what God has shown you, but keep your spirit right. There are things that some of my brethren are preaching that I cannot receive, because I do not believe it is in the Word of God. But if I let my own spirit become contaminated because of this, with bitterness or malice, then I am out of order, and in trouble with God. Jesus denounced the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, called them a generation of vipers, and refused to join up with their religious system. He wept over their blindness, but He kept His spirit pure. His attitude toward them was love and compassion, in spite of the fact that He opposed what they were doing.

A Robe of Righteousness

Abraham's faith may not have brought him into the fulness of the inheritance, and it may not have given him victory over physical death, but it brought him into a realm of righteousness that other men did not know. Romans 4:9 says that "Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness". His vision of God's purposes gave him a relationship with the Lord that cleansed him from the sin of the heathen nations around him.

Please don't tell me that you have a pure revelation of what God is doing in the earth, while you are content to be living an impure and sinful life. True vision will change your life. It will cause you to hunger after righteousness. Jesus had the strongest, purest insight into the truths of the Kingdom of God of any man that ever lived. And He also had the purest, cleanest life of any. "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." (Hebrews 1:8).

There are those who have brought the greatest reproach upon the Sonship message, because while they had the right terminology and could quote the scriptures on Sonship fluently, they allowed their lives to become corrupt and evil. When they fell into the snare of the devil, instead of repenting and seeking the blood of Jesus to cover their sin, they excused their sins and covered up by trying to prove from the Bible that they were right in God's eyes. Doctrines of devils were devised to cover their corrupt practices. "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:2). Doctrines such as free love, soul mating, "I am God", "grace and liberty with license to sin", etc., were devised by Satan to allow corrupt men to continue in their sin while thinking they

have a right to preach end-time truths. Charismatics from the historic churches who were never taught to live righteously and godly in the present world, now think they can receive the Holy Spirit without causing a radical change in their life style. Some sit around in informal group meetings speaking in tongues, and discussing the deep truths of God, while they smoke their cigarettes and sip their cocktails and beer. Charismatic priests, widely advertised and sought after as "experts" in the Holy Spirit, are seen with their pipe in one hand and a can of beer in the other. Instructing the faithful in how to be "filled with the Spirit". They themselves need to be taught the first principles of how to live this message. Saints of God who have the real message of Sonship working in them by faith, have been grieved at this "sloppy agape" type of living. No, I'm not getting legalistic. But it's time that those who say they have the message of life begin showing signs of a changed life. The kind of faith and vision that Abraham had will produce righteousness.

A New Word

As with Abraham, the revelation of divine purpose will bring to us a word of life. In Genesis 22, Abraham spoke a word to the young men servants: "I and the lad will go yonder, and worship, AND COME AGAIN TO YOU." In the face of God's directions to slay Isaac on that mountain, Abraham was declaring that they both would come down from their worship. Because he had a divine revelation that his seed was to come through Isaac, and was to bless the nations. And he could speak a word of faith in the dark hour of death. To Isaac he said: "My son, God will provide". That was a living word of faith.

When the true message of the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God breaks upon us, it gives us a word that cannot be refuted. I am not the smartest man in the world, by far, and certainly not the best preacher but when the revelation of Sonship came, I preached it openly and boldly to preachers and teachers in camp meetings all across the country, and no one could come against it. True vision will give you a true word. Because our vision is limited, our word also is limited. So we don't have all the answers, but what we do know, we really know. That is why we need the rest of the body of Christ. Don't depend on following one isolated man or ministry, and expect to have a full understanding of God's purposes for this age. God is spreading His truth throughout the body, to force us to come together because our mutual need of each other.

This is a word that comes by "seeing" the promise, and it is a word that does its work in us NOW. I'm not talking about after we are glorified, resurrected, gone through the veil, etc. If you have the true message of Sonship, you will be able to speak life. Words of criticism, gossip, lying, backbiting, discouragements, etc., are products of poor spiritual vision. When you see the inheritance, as Abraham did, your tongue will come under submission to the Holy Spirit.

New Life--New Fruit

It was physically impossible for Abraham and Sarah to produce a son. But they had a revelation from God, a vision of His purposes for them. And here on this hard earth, with it's facts and it's logic, in the midst of their enemies, they were participants in the impossible. True vision brought forth new life, and fruitfulness. Isaac became a reality. Out of the deadness of their bodies came fruit. The son of promise.

True vision and real revelation will produce fruit in your lives. Now, here, on this earth with all it's problems. Jesus said: "herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." And when a branch bears fruit, He purges or cleanses it, that it may bring forth more fruit. How does He cleanse it? With the water of His Word. Glory to God! The true message will cause you to bear fruit. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) will come forth from your life in abundance. The winning of souls will become a normal part of your life.

What is the Isaac, the son of promise, that God wants from your life? It will come in spite of every earthly and physical hindrance, as you let the floodlight of God's end-time purposes fill your soul. A true vision may take 25 years, as with Abraham and Sarah, but it cannot be denied. A prophecy had come to me in 1950 that I would write for the Lord. I carried that word for 10 years without seeing any progress toward fulfillment. But in 1960, I wrote, mimeographed, and mailed out our first message. God took it from there. No "Madison Avenue promotions", no solicitations or pleas for money. No fleshly generated Ishmaels. We just left it in the hands of God, and He took over. The promise came into manifestation.

Don't Wait Till Tomorrow

You don't have to wait till heaven, or the "rapture", or the manifestation of son, to enter into the blessings of the end-time move of God. Some have criticized the Sonship message, claiming that we are always looking ahead to another day, and not doing anything about "today". And yet, in most cases, those who criticize are doing far less today than the "visionaries" they talk about; and their lives are not nearly as conformed to the image of Christ, as those saints who have seen the revelation of end-time truth.

Some will even say that the Sonship message will destroy your missionary vision. But I would like to point you to our little church here in Springfield, where thousands of dollars are sent to foreign missionaries each year, and where no less than ten of our brethren either are, or have been, on the foreign mission field. True vision makes you realize that this world is just one big ripe harvest field, and gives you great desire to go reap it for our Lord.

Yes, the message of "tomorrow" does something for you today. Your life will change in many ways. You may not have received the fulness of the inheritance yet, and you are not obligated to make great

boastful claims. But your vision and your revelation will bring you closer to our Lord Jesus, more conformed to His image, and more fruit for His glory. Hallelujah!

"Walk It Out"

What about the reality of His promises? When shall we enter into the fulness, and what will it do for us? When? "In the fulness of time". God has a time table, and He is not one bit behind schedule. He will not be late. Years ago, in Florida, I was a radio announcer. I opened up the station at 5:25 a.m., and "ran the board" until noon. Then I had a special half-hour Gospel disc-jockey program each afternoon at 4 p.m. Sometimes I would be very busy at that time of the day and would make a mad dash for the station at the last minute. With my car radio on, I would hear the other announcer say: "Here is Captain Bill and the Old Ship of Zion". He would then start my theme song on record, and walk out of the studio, with me still driving frantically toward the station. Many times I would pull up in the parking lot, jump out of the car, dash into the studio, open the mike and start talking just before the theme song went off. Can't ever remember being late and missing the program, but I was a borderline case, with some "cliff-hanging" experiences. Not so with the Lord. He is not in a hurry, and He will not be late. Everything is working exactly as He planned it in the beginning. We are a privileged people to be living in that last hour, when the prophecies of the end-time are coming to pass.

What is it that the "feet company" actually walk out in experience, when the day of manifestation comes to pass? Let us turn our attention now to Israel. Standing here on the banks of Jordan (Joshua 3), was the many-membered son (Hosea 11:1) that God had called out of Egypt. Not an individual now who was "seeing" the promised land, but a holy nation, a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9) that was about to put their feet on the soil of God's Canaan.

But "death" had to first be defeated for them. The river Jordan (a symbol of the waters of death), was flooding its banks at this time of harvest. On the shoulders of the priests, the Ark of the Covenant first went down into the waters. As the feet of the priests touched the water, the waters rose up as if held back by a great dam. This cut off the waters below, and 2,000 cubits behind the Ark, the people of God crossed over on dry land. Now 2,000 years after our living Ark, Jesus, defeated the powers of death, we prepare to cross over, putting death under our feet. There must be a victory over death for the firstfruits company before our feet can walk in all the promises of God. I know that death is the last enemy to be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26), but before it is destroyed for the whole human race, a company of overcomers must demonstrate the victory over him who had the power of death, the devil (Hebrews 2:14).

To defeat death, sin must first be dealt with. This is not the Passover. The Passover was when Jesus died on the Cross, and our sins were covered by His blood. But this is the Day of Atonement, when all sin is removed from the human heart, and the carnal Adamic mind is replaced by the mind of Christ. Yes, we have already confessed these things, but it has been a confession of faith, for we have

not seen it work. Saints are still subject to temptation and sin, and still die the same as sinners. The Day of Atonement removed all this, and with that comes the victory over death. The Overcomer then eats the hidden manna (Revelation 2:17). That means there will be no more eating of the bread of healing for them, for there will be no sickness to heal. Divine life and divine health will be ours to enjoy. He will manifest His grace and love to usward through the ages to come (Ephesians 2:7).

Yes, the Israelites crossed over Jordan dry-shod, and so shall we. It was a day of miracle, for no one could have managed that in the natural. They had to know that God had done it. And there will be no boasting for those who pass through the veil into never-dying life. For all will know that it is nothing that we have done or deserved, but only the grace of our wonderful god. Praise His Name!

The Walls of Jericho Fall

Immediately upon entering the promised land, they found themselves in great conflict. If you think that the coming of Jesus is going to zap you out of this world, off this planet earth, and place you in a nice quiet garden to meditate, then you have not seen the purpose of God in His church. The gates of hell shall fall before His church, just as the walls of Jericho fell before Israel. With the appearing of Jesus, Jordan shall be crossed over, and the real battle of the ages with principalities and powers shall begin.

Every enemy shall be put under our feet. No cancer, no crippling affliction, nor any power of darkness shall stand before those who have crossed Jordan. Jesus was our example of one who walked in the inheritance, just as Abraham was of one who saw it. Never a mistake in His life, never a failure in His ministry. Oh friends, what God hath planned for us!

I am convinced that there will be a revival, an evangelistic sweep, that will touch every country, province, city, village, or individual before it is finished. I feel I have heard from God that the thrust and heart of this revival will come from those who have crossed over Jordan and started walking in the promises that Abraham saw. You will notice that the walls of Jericho fell through their willingness to remain silent, and just walk. Until the day of the shout; and then they all shouted together. So shall it be today. We are silent, as it were, producing nothing in comparison with what we see. But we shall walk in the inheritance. And He shall come with a "shout". Praise God! The walls shall come down with a crash, and Babylon shall fall. Every enemy shall be destroyed. It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, the vengeance of His temple (Jeremiah 50:28).

A Permanent Life in Canaan

Back in the 13th chapter of Numbers we find a ruler from each of the 12 tribes of Israel, 12 men in all, making a journey into the promised land. It was to spy out the land, and it was the time of the

first-ripe grapes (verse 20). They could not at that time stay in the land and make their home, they could only taste of the first fruits of the land. So it is with us. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we have the first fruits. But we do not have the full inheritance. Romans 8:23 says in the Amplified bible: "We ourselves too, who have and enjoy the first fruits of the Holy Spirit--a foretaste of the blissful things to come---groan inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies from sensuality and the grave, which will reveal our adoption, our manifestation as God's sons." Then in Ephesians 1:13-14 the Amplified Bible makes it so plain when it tells us that we have been "stamped with the seal of the long-promised Holy Spirit. That Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance--the first fruit, the pledge and foretaste, the down payment on our heritage--in anticipation of its full redemption and our acquiring complete possession of it, to the praise of His glory."

Joshua and Caleb, a type of the pentecostal saints who saw there was more than just a first fruits, tried to get the people to go in and possess the land. But those other 10 "pentecostal preachers" said: "No, we cannot go any further. It is dangerous. We might get into false doctrine, go off the deep end, and get captured by the giants. We must be satisfied with the first fruits, stay here and wait for the resurrection or the rapture." Sound familiar? Not only would they not go in, but they were ready to stone those who suggested that they should possess what God had promised. They died in the wilderness, and only those who had the faith to press on to the fulness, lived to cross over Jordan.

Friends, we cannot remain forever in the wilderness. Even though we've had some wonderful experiences, eaten manna from heaven, drank water from the Rock, and been led all the way by the cloud and pillar of fire, we must still press our way into our inheritance, the fulness of God. Paul the Apostle prayed for you that "you might be filled with ALL the fulness of God!" (Ephesians 3:19).

Israel conquered their enemies, and then they divided up the land by tribe, built cities, planted farms, and occupied the land. They acted as if they were going to make it a permanent home, and not a 90 day vacation! Praise God! What God is bringing us into is for all eternity. Rule and reign with Christ forever. This is what comes by walking in the promises. Seeing the revelation of His Word is wonderful, and if you have a true revelation, it will change your life. But walking, actually experiencing, these revelation truths brings a fulness and a permanence. Move on, saints! Possess the land! It belongs to you.

So, dear ones, try to recognize the difference between "seeing" and "walking". These saints in chapter 11 of Hebrews saw the promises, and embraced them by faith. But they died without entering in and receiving the promises. That part was left to us, the last day church, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Thank God for the hour in which we live, and be thankful for the god in which we live and move and have our being.

"By Faith Abraham"

Since so many of God's glorious truths are invested in the Old Testament men and women of God,

and so often revealed in their lives, it is no wonder that this 11th chapter of Hebrews contains so many end-time truths. For more Old Testament saints are mentioned here than in any other chapter in the New Testament. 16 are mentioned by name, and many others referred to.

It would be impossible to deal with all the truths contained in this chapter, and this is not really our purpose in this book. Many are sermons that have been preached from some text or other in these 40 verses. You have God's permission to go prospecting in this rich area, for "there's gold in them thar hills!"

One portion we must deal with before we leave this chapter, is found in verses 17-19. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac□ accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure".

The Impossible Mind

Through a miracle of life, God had given Abraham and Sarah a son. And a promise had been given, that "in Isaac shall they seed be called". This was a sure word. God had made Abraham to know that His blessing would not come through Ishmael, son of the servant girl, but through Isaac, son of promise.

Now Isaac is growing to maturity. Not rebellious and troublesome, like Ishmael, son of Hagar the bondwoman, but a son in whom his father delights. As Ishmael is a type of Israel under the law, so Isaac is a beautiful type of Christ, the son of God. The story of Isaac as a burnt-offering is told in Genesis 22. There we see God speaking to Abraham, instructing him to offer Isaac on a mountain in Moriah. Isaac is not told that he is the sacrifice, until they reach the top of the mountain. There, I believe, Abraham sat down with Isaac and told him what God was requiring of them both. With Abraham it was that he had to give up his son, and with Isaac it was his life. Because Isaac was a type of Jesus Christ, I believe he willingly agreed to the will of God. Hebrews 11:9 tells us that he was an heir of the same promises as Abraham. At any rate, he was bound and laid on the altar. He was a strong young man, possibly from 25 to 33 years of age, strong enough to carry the wood for the burnt offering up the mountain. Abraham was well over 100 years of age. I cannot accept the thought that Abraham had to overpower him and put him on the altar against his will.

What could Abraham been thinking of at this time? God had given him this son, with the promise that he would carry on the seed line. As of yet, he was not married, and had no seed. So if he were sacrificed, would that not mean the first word was a lie? Abraham operated on the principle that nothing God said was a lie. As far as he could see, there was only one solution: God would raise Isaac from the dead, and the book of Hebrews says that, in a figure, he did receive him back from the dead. As far as Abraham was concerned, Isaac was dead. For in his heart, he had already made the offering. The deed was done. Then God intervened.

What Meaneth This?

What does this story of Isaac have to do with Jesus Christ, or with our Sonship? First, let us take a review of Abraham in the scripture:

Genesis Chapter:

- 11□ Abram is first mentioned in scripture.
- 12□ Abram is called to go into the promised land.
- 13□ Abram and Lot are separated.
- 14□ Abram meets Melchisedec, and is blessed by him.
- 15□ God makes a covenant with Abram.
- 16□ Ishmael is born. A human effort to fulfill the promise.
- 17□ At age 99, his name is changed to Abraham. God promises Sarah a son.
- 18□ A son is promised again, he pleads with God for Lot and Sodom.
- 19□ Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 20□ Abraham's lapse of faith at Gerah.
- 21□ Birth of Isaac. Ishmael and Hagar cast out.
- 22□ Isaac is offered on Moriah and resurrected--(in a figure).
- 23□ Sarah dies and is buried.
- 24□ Abraham send to get a bride for Isaac. Isaac is married to Rebekah.
- 25□ Death of Abraham, Isaac inherits everything.

Please notice the sequence of events. In chapter 21, when Isaac (Christ) is weaned, Ishmael (the Law) is cast out. Then Isaac is offered as a sacrifice, brought back from the dead in a figure, and in the next chapter his mother dies. Only after this does he get a bride and bring forth seed. God had promised Abraham a seed line through Isaac, but it could not come until after his "resurrection".

For you see, he was a picture of what Jesus Christ was going to do when He came to earth. It has always been God's purpose ("the eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus") for Christ to bring forth a seed line of the nature of deity. But he started from an impossible premise. In Abraham's case, the impossibility was that his wife was 90 years of age, and he was nearly 100, both past the age of bearing children. With Christ, it was that He was starting with a sinful humanity, to bring forth a people in the image of God. Most impossible. But He was able to do it by the sacrifice of Himself, and by planting His own divine life as a seed in the earth of Adam's creation.

Only Resurrection Life

Notice that Isaac did not get a bride or have children until after he was "raised from the dead" at Moriah. In a figure, he was a resurrected man. And from this state of being, the nation of Israel was born. In Hosea 11:1 we discover that Israel was God's "corporate son" in the Old Testament. God referred to the whole nation of Israel as "a child", and "my son".

In spite of the false teaching of a very strong religious group, the truth is that our Lord Jesus was never married while here on earth, and never had any children after the natural order. For 4,000 years the human race had been bearing the image of Adam their father. "All had sinned, and come short of the glory of God", and there "was none righteous, no not one". God had determined to have a people in His own image, but Adam could not produce it. They were all of "the earth, earthy".

Then came the virgin birth, and Jesus appeared on the scene bearing the image of His Father. He was the image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). He was a new creation. There was not another like Him on the earth. Oh, he was made in the likeness of men, and even had the form of a servant (Philippians 2:7), but He did not have the sinful nature of the first Adam, and would not receive the curse of sin. There was a vast difference. And therefore He had dominion over all the forces of nature, and over all demonic powers.

At this point, God could have said: "This is what I have been looking for, this is the son in whom I am well pleased. So now I will find another virgin, bring forth a sinless woman who can be His bride, and let Him populate the earth with His own likeness, while I destroy this wicked humanity". But He had not purposed it in that manner. In the first place, that would have left us out. And God loved us too much for that. In the second place, every seed brings forth after it's own kind, and Jesus could only have produced earthly sinless children with the same limitations that He had while He was here in the likeness of men. For being glorified and exalted at the right hand of the Father in heavenly places did not come until after His resurrection (Ephesians 1:20).

The Spirit Poured Out

The sons that Christ is bringing forth will not be produced just in the image of that man in human form, walking the shores of Galilee. Even that would be wonderful, walking in His holiness, His authority and power, healing the sick and raising the dead. But He has something far beyond that in mind for us. We read in John 7:37-39 □ "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as, the scripture hath said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

Did you get what it said in verse 39? "The Holy Ghost was not yet given". Doesn't it say that John

the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb? And even his mother and father were also filled with the Holy Ghost? (Luke 1:15, 41, 67). And didn't the Holy Ghost come upon the Old Testament prophets? Then what does it mean that "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified"? The answer is that John 7:39 is speaking of the Holy Ghost coming into the church for the purpose of producing a many-membered corporate son in the likeness of Christ, with His life and nature. In John 16:7 Jesus tells us that it was necessary for Him to die, and be resurrected and glorified, in order for the Spirit of the glorified Christ to come to us. For this is the likeness He is producing in us. Glory to God!

This truth is so clearly brought out in Romans 8:14-15 □ "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (NASB). Now look at verse 15 in the Amplified bible: "For the Spirit which you have now received is not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of Adoption--the Spirit producing sonship--in the bliss of which we cry, Abba! That is, Father!" Think of it! We have received the Holy Spirit that produces sonship in us. But it is the likeness of the Son who has been resurrected and exalted to the throne, which we are to bear. But let us check some other translations to see if we are on the right track.

Moffatt's translation says (Romans 8:15): "You have received the Spirit of sonship". New English Bible: "The spirit you have received is not a spirit of slavery leading you back into a life of fear, but a spirit that makes us sons". Rotherham says: "Buy ye have received a spirit of sonship". And the very accurate Wuest translation says: "You received the Spirit who places you as adult sons". For you see, the word "adoption" used in Romans 8, Ephesians 1, and Galatians 4 means to take your own child who has finally come to full maturity, and place him in a place of authority as a full grown son. By the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have been reconciled to God and brought to a new birth. By the outpouring of His spirit, He is producing His own likeness in us, making us mature sons.

What a powerful and glorious statement is made in 2 Corinthians 8:9 concerning the place to which He would bring us □ "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." What did it take for Him to be rich? A mansion in heaven? The cattle on a thousand hills? Oh no, my friends, nothing so carnal as that. The thing that made Him rich was "being in the form of God" (Philippians 2:6). Wuest translation expresses it so strongly: "did not after weighing the facts, consider it a treasure to be clutched and retained at all hazards, this being on an equality with deity (in the expression of divine essence), but himself He emptied, himself He made void, having taken the outward expression of a bondsman, which expression comes from and it truly representative of His nature (as deity), entering into a new state of existence, that of mankind." His treasure was that He was in the form of God, and that was the treasure he gave up, in order to make us rich, that is, to share that same treasure with us.

In His prayer in John 17:4-5, Jesus said: "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." What was it that Jesus had before the world began that

He did not have while on this earth? It was the glory of "thine own self", or the glory of the divine essence. He "made himself poor", or gave that up, that He might "make us rich". Matthew 13:44 tells us that He "selled all that he hath", that He might buy an earthen field in which He had found a treasure. So because He was willing to make Himself poor, "you are bought with a price". And He is bringing His purchased possession unto Himself. John 17:22 says that the glory which the Father gave him He has given to us, that He might "make us rich". "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ". Or do you really know His grace? Are you willing to believe that He would do such a thing for you? Have confidence in Him. He loves you so much!

By the Power of an Endless Life

In Hebrews 7 we already discussed the Melchisedec order. We know that Jesus is the high priest of that order forever, but also that He is bringing His sons into that Melchisedec order of king-priest (Revelation 1:6, 5:10). Now notice that the power of that priesthood (Hebrews 7:16) is resurrection life, endless life.

That is why Jesus could not bring forth sons until after He was glorified. In Hebrews 11:13, 19 we read that the Old Testament saints did not receive "the promise". They did many great exploits of faith by the power of the Spirit. But they could not produce His likeness or come into sonship until after He was resurrected. Jesus said that of those born of women, there was none greater than John the Baptist. But John was not as great as the "least in the kingdom". It is an entirely different realm, and goes far beyond being empowered by the Spirit to do mighty deeds of faith.

So Abraham sent to "a far country" to get a bride for Isaac. He would not accept a bride from the Canaanites that dwelled all around him. They were of a different breed, and he wanted a bride from among his own people. He ended up getting a virgin girl from his own kinfolks. Hebrews 2:16 says that Jesus took not on Him the nature of angels, but that He came to take on Him the seed of Abraham. "He came to His own". Though in a far country, not in His realm, yet we are His "kinfolks".

Notice that Isaac would not go to Rebekah's realm of life, she had to come to him. She had to make a long journey, but it was well worth it. And friends, we have a long journey, with the Holy Spirit to guide us, to get to His realm of life. But it is only then that we can produce His likeness in this earth. "He tasted death for ever man", therefore we don't have to go through a death, burial, and resurrection to come into this. He is the one who defeated death, and He pours this victorious life into us. This enables us to come forth out of the grave, or be transformed here into immortality, by the power of His victory.

So this is sonship. Far beyond anything the human mind can conceive or imagine. Paul heard things concerning this realm that he could not even discuss (2 Corinthians 12:4). Peter said (1 Peter 1:3-4) that we have been begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance

ready to be revealed in the last time. Other messages will be written about this, but for now, let us concern ourselves to Hebrews 11.

The Reproach of Christ

One of the greatest things said about Moses is (verse 26) that he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. What great faith it took to turn his back on the riches of the mightiest nation on earth at the time. But he got a vision of the purpose of God in Christ. He refused to be identified with Egypt's royalty. He chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. He forsook Egypt, and "he endured". He saw Him who is invisible.(verse 27).

There is a real blessing of faith in enduring. Many start the race, but God will see to it that you are faced with something you must endure. It is part of the victory. It seems that there are always "casualties" and "survivors". Which group are you in? Can you endure? Do you have a spirit to survive? In order to do so, there must be a forsaking of Egypt and the pleasures of sin. Faith must operate.

So much could be said about Moses and his faith. The stories of Rahab the harlot, and the men of faith mentioned in the remaining verses, are found in the books of the old Testament. This chapter does not go into detail about their exploits of faith. What is God saying to us here? It is all summed up in the last 2 verses: "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." "Some better thing". The perfection, or maturity, of Sonship which we have received had to come through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, of which Isaac was only a type. No matter how great their acts of faith, they could not make it to the promise. Verses 33 through 38 tell of victories of faith beyond anything we see happening about us today. We do not have to compete with those things to receive the promise. We have it in His victory at Calvary and the open tomb. Bless His wonderful Name! There is to be no pride in those who come to maturity and full Sonship, as though they had accomplished something in their own strength, for "it is not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord". "That no flesh should glory in His presence". Hallelujah

Chapter 12

Previous chapters have shown us the passing away of the Law, the futility of further blood sacrifices, the power of a simple faith, and the better realm of the Sonship and priesthood of Jesus. Now we come to the chapter that spells out clearly that Sonship is for us, and how to come into it. This is one of the outstanding chapters in the Bible on the sons of God, and the kingdom that shall not be shaken or pass away.

The last 2 verses of chapter 11 make it plain that those heroes of faith won the approval of god, but did not come into the realm of perfection that we are speaking about. Let me read that from the amplified Bible: "And all of these, though they won divine approval by means of their faith, did not receive the fulfillment of what was promised, because God had us in mind and had something better and greater in view for us, so that they (these heroes and heroines of faith) should not come to perfection apart from us, that is, before we could join them." (Hebrews 11:39-40, Amplified).

Obviously, God has something for us that goes far beyond what can be obtained by faith. It is far greater than opening up the Red Sea, crossing the Jordan River dry shod, calling fire down from heaven, crumbling the walls of Jericho, closing the mouth of lions, and subduing kingdoms. All these things were done by those saints in chapter 11, through the power of living faith. Yet the perfection, the full maturity of God's plan could not come by that. This greater realm had to wait for the Body of Christ to be formed and matured. The birth and formation of that body was not enough. It came forth on the Day of Pentecost. But as the Feast of Pentecost so clearly points out, with it's bread baked with leaven, that early church was not the perfect order. It was the body of Christ, but it was far from maturity. So for two days (2,000 years) God has left that body in the earth. Now, in the dawning of the third day, the world is going to discover that the stone has been rolled away, and a perfected glorious church without spot or wrinkle has appeared in earth. The garments of religious covering that have covered us through the night of the age of darkness, are left in the tomb. They are nicely wrapped and folded in their man made order, but there is no life in them. A new day has dawned, and the real church is coming into visibility.

"Wherefore□"

Chapter 12 starts with a word that ties what it is about to say, with what has just been said in the previous chapter. "Wherefore□" or because of that glorious witness of those in the faith realm, and because the word makes it plain that we have come to something far higher, let us strip off all encumbrances and run the race to win.

These first 2 verses are beautiful and powerful in the King James, but have additional beauty and

impact in the Amplified "Therefore then, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses who have borne testimony of the Truth, let us strip off and throw aside every encumbrance--unnecessary weight--and that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us, looking away (from all that will distract) to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith (giving the first incentive for our belief) and is also its Finisher, (bringing it to maturity and perfection). He, for the joy (of obtaining the prize) that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God," (Hebrews 12:1-2, Amplified).

"Wherefore" the gateway from faith to perfection, from heroes of faith to sons of god. Chapter 11 makes it clear that no one can please God without faith. And those who think they can find the perfection of sonship without walking it out in the life of faith, will find that they have missed the gateway to glory.

The Old Testament saints did tremendous exploits, and the key word was "faith". The end-time sons of God shall do the "greater works", and the word here is "dominion". Dominion and authority over all creation was the realm that Jesus walked in while He was on earth demonstrating the power of Sonship. The early church entered only into the firstfruits of this, through the power of the Holy Spirit. And the apostles continually reminded the churches, in the epistles, that the fulness of Sonship was yet ahead of them. "Praying that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." "Till we all come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". "Unto an inheritance ready to be revealed in the last time". "Press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption" (the placing as full grown sons). "Wherefore" let us, upon whom the end of the age has come, strip ourselves of all encumbrances, and run this race with patience.

A Great Cloud of Witnesses

"A great cloud of witnesses" could also be expressed "a cloud of great witnesses". For truly our brothers and sisters who walked such victorious lives in faith prior to the Day of Pentecost, set us an example that should put us to shame. They did not have the baptism of the Holy Spirit as we know it today. They did not know the glory that is now invested in the Body of Christ, except in types and shadows. They had no local churches where they could gather to worship in the Spirit. Their form of worship consisted of a stone altar, a tabernacle, or a temple, depending upon the times in which they lived. Their sins were dealt with at the end of each year, as the high priest took the blood of a goat into the Holy of Holies to be placed on the mercy seat. And yet, in spite of walking in the shadows, in spite of the lack of the reality of Christ, they made a full commitment to god by faith, even to the laying down of their lives. And now, being surrounded by witnesses such as these, how much more should we be willing to do? Too often, a few little discomforts and trials of life cause us to complain bitterly and to throw up our hands in abject defeat. God help us to run this race.

Why does the scripture call them a "CLOUD" of witnesses? Throughout the Bible the term "cloud" signifies witness or ministry. In 2 Peter 2:17 and Jude 12 it speaks of false ministries being "clouds without water" Like the fig tree with leaves but no fruit, they give the appearance of life and ministry, but there is no life in them. Proverbs 25:14 says: "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain". What a picture of some present day ministries. Winds of doctrine (Ephesians 4:14), and clouds without water. Wanting only to float through the heavens and to be seen of man. But no willingness to be a poured out life to bless the body of Christ.

The picture of a true life-giving ministry is found in Ecclesiastes 11:3 "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth." These are the kind of clouds, or witnesses, we are surrounded with. And these are the clouds that Jesus is coming back with. Many people seem to be waiting to meet Jesus on top of a cloud somewhere a few thousand feet up in the sky. And they think it will be one of these natural rain clouds. I would have you notice that the Bible never says that Jesus comes "to the clouds", or returns to earth "on a cloud". The Bible is careful to tell us that He comes "in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 24:30, "coming in a cloud with power and great glory") (Luke 21:27), "sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64). He is also said to come "with the clouds of heaven" (Daniel 7:13), "Behold, He cometh with clouds" (Revelation 1:7). But never does it say that Jesus returns "to the clouds of earth", or to the natural rain clouds.

In speaking of the fate of those who died in faith, and who are now with the Lord, 1 Thessalonians 4:14 tells us that when Jesus returns to earth "even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him" Yes, He is coming with clouds, and He shall appear in the clouds of heaven, that great cloud of witnesses. Not only those listed by name in Hebrews 11, but many others known only to Him. Faithful witnesses, life-giving ministries, poured out lives, these are His clouds which He wears like a garment of glory (Revelation 10:1). Yes, when you see Him, you will first of all see Him in them.

Weights and Sin

"Strip off and throw aside that sin which so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to and entangles us." Wait just one minute! Is he talking to sinners here, or is he addressing sons of God? How can he be talking to sons, consecrated saints of God, and dealing with sin which clings to and entangles them? Do you mean that these "super-spiritual, sanctified, manifested untouchables" actually have problems resisting sin, just like the rest of us human beings? The fact is, that verse 1 here is speaking to the most spiritual of God's people, since they are just as human as the rest of us. There are no "untouchables" in the Adamic race. Take a close look at chapter 11, and you will find that those heroes of faith mentioned by name produced such sin as drunkenness, lying, unbelief, scheming, stealing, disobedience, murder, adultery, and revealing the source of God's power to the enemy. These sins did not come from the Philistines or Amalekites, but from God's choicest servants. Why did God record their failures for us to see? To let us know that none of us are above being tempted to

do the same, so that we be not high-minded, but realize that our hope of real holiness is in Jesus Christ. Only by the grace of God can we overcome the enemy's subtle attacks. We do not condemn Samson, David, and the rest of those precious people. We see some glorious victories in their fight against sin. But as we approach the realm of sonship, we cry out for the power to obey verse 1 and "lay aside every weight and sin." For the example we have as sons is not found in chapter 11 of Hebrews, but in the life of Jesus Christ. And in His life there was no failure, no clinging sin to be cast aside. He was stripped when He came into the world, stripped of everything except the nature of His Father. And through exceeding great and precious promises, we are also made partakers of that same nature.

So be patient and loving and forgiving with those who still manifest the weakness of the human flesh. And set for our own personal goal, the perfection of Jesus the son of God, stripping ourselves of all that would hinder our attaining that goal.

"Run With Patience"

There is a race set before us. We have too many people who seem to think it is a 50 yard dash. They come streaking through the heavens like a comet, making a big blazing light for a season, then disappearing into oblivion. "Mushroom Christians", they pop up all of a sudden, are "experts" on any spiritual subject, in submission to no one, and just as suddenly they are gone. In the U.S. Marines we had some young officers who had taken a 3 month course in military technique, had no leadership experience, and no combat. Yet they came flying in with their shiny new second Lieutenant gold bars, giving orders to the troops. We called them "90 day wonders". There are far too many of these in the army of God.

Some of our young officers in the Marines grew up quickly under fire, in combat. And God is putting some young recruits in the midst of hot spiritual battles, to mature them quickly for leadership in the Kingdom of God. But his training is a time when much patience is needed. It is a race where endurance is a necessary quality. We are constantly being bombarded by young zealots who declare that all we need is "faith", and we can enter all the promises of God. In this computerized age of instant everything, there are those who want "instant sainthood" and immediate Sonship. It doesn't work that way. Back in Hebrews 6:12 we read that we are to be "followers of them who through faith AND patience inherit the promises."

Salvation from sin is not a prize to be won in a race. It is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. The prize of the high calling of God (Philippians 3:14) is not heaven. But there is a race to be run, and a prize to be won. It is to overcome, and sit down with Him on His throne. Glory to God, what a promise!

So much for verse 1 of Hebrews 12. This portion of scripture is so profound and so deep in spiritual truths, unless we step up the pace, we will never finish the chapter.

Looking unto Jesus

As we run this race, we must keep our eyes upon the goal— Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. Now there is a false doctrine that uses these terms to try to prove that Jesus was the first Adam as well as the last Adam. They say that he was the one who fell in the garden of Eden, and God is giving him a second chance to come back and overcome temptation and redeem his people. That doctrine is false, right from the pit. Jesus was not the first sinner, the one who brought death upon the human family, and chaos upon creation. Scriptures such as "Adam, the son of god" (Luke 3:38), Jesus "the last Adam", the "beginning and the end", etc., are twisted to try to put the blame for original sin upon our Saviour. Jesus was the lamb without spot or blemish. Adam reincarnated could never be the offering for our sin, for he was not without blemish.

Looking unto Jesus! What a strength to keep us going in troubled times! Such a sight for souls in combat— looking unto Jesus! Back in the days of plowing behind a mule, the farmer was trying to teach his son how to plow a straight furrow, "Just set your eyes on a goal on the far side of the field, and keep the mule going straight toward that goal, and when you get across the field you'll have a straight furrow." Well, the young son tried that. He picked out a big brown cow grazing on the other side of the field, but when he got across and looked back, he had a very crooked furrow. For the cow had wandered about in her grazing, and he had been following a moving goal. "Wandering stars" are not goals to be followed. "Follow me as I follow Christ", Paul said. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So we can safely keep our eyes upon Him as our goal, and our lives will be straight.

The word "author" here in verse 2 means "leader, originator, source." All we get in God, we get through and from Jesus Christ. There is no other source of life. Neither Judaism, Islam, Eastern occult philosophies, TM, nor any other religion can produce eternal life. It only comes through the source, Jesus! That is why we look only to Him. There can be no co-existence, no compromise in this fundamental truth. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Narrow minded, you say? Yes, narrow is the way, and strait is the gate, but it leads to life. Glory to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith!

The Joy Set Before Him

Jesus had a goal set before Him, a goal that was to bring Him extreme joy. This joy set before Him gave Him strength to endure the awful suffering. He did not let the shame of that cross, hanging naked and condemned before the eyes of wicked humanity, keep Him from attaining that goal. But at

least, you say, He can take comfort in the knowledge that He was innocent, wrongfully condemned and not worthy of the death He suffered. Oh no, my friends, that is not so. He was guilty of death, and suffered the penalty that was due Him. In fact, He hung on that cross, guilty of murder, rape, incest, arson, robbery, homosexual vice, and every other sin known to man. They were not His own sins, for He lived a pure and perfect life. But He voluntarily accepted and took upon Himself every sin committed by human beings from the creation to the great white throne judgment. So that now, when sinners go to hell, they don't go there because of their sins, for Jesus died for their sins and judgment has been requited. People miss eternal life because they reject the only source of life—the Saviour, Jesus Christ. Some may ask if that would not encourage some to accept Jesus and then continue on in their sin? Of course not! For only those who have not accepted Jesus can feel comfortable in sin. Romans 6:2 points it out so clearly: "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" The life of Jesus coming into our hearts wipes out the desire for sin. And we cast from us those sins that so easily beset us.

So as He hung on that cross for 6 hours, dying a slow tortuous death, He had become sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). That knowledge of sin, that contact with all the filth of the world, was greater suffering than even the horrible physical pain He endured. But He endured it all for the joy set before Him.

What was that joy? It was in "bringing many sons unto glory" (Hebrews 2:10). It was in presenting to Himself "a glorious church, Not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing—holy and without blemish." (Ephesians 5:27). It was in giving to us the glory the Father had given Him (John 17:22). And glory to God, "It is finished". No more for Him to accomplish. All the work is done. The wheels of God's purposes are grinding everything out to the Ultimate of what God has ordained and spoken. Nothing can stop it, not the attacks of the enemy, nor the unbelief and apathy of mankind. It has been spoken, the work has been accomplished by Him who endured, and it shall surely come to pass. He is not struggling for power, or fighting any battles. He sits on the right hand of the throne of God. That simply means that He is now in the place of absolute authority. Everything in the lives of men and nations is in His control. He is in complete charge. For those who trust Him there is nothing to fear. All things work together for our good, to bring us to His highest. We are in His hand.

Whom the Lord Loveth

In verse 3 he begins dealing with those who were getting weary with the trials and persecutions. In the Amplified Bible we read: "Just think of Him who endured from sinners such grievous opposition and bitter hostility against Himself--reckon up and consider it all in comparison with your trials--so that you may not grow weary or exhausted, losing heart and relaxing and fainting in your minds."

Looking unto Jesus helps us to see that our problems are small in comparison with what He endured to bring us to Himself, to Sonship. From this point the scripture begins to illuminate the truths concerning the source of our chastening. It is not the devil who chastises us, it is God our Father.

And it is not because He hates us or is mad at us, but because He loves us and wants to bring us to full mature Sonship. He emphasizes, verse after verse, that chastening is necessary. It is of the Lord, and is a result of our relationship to Him as sons.

Verses 5-6-7 tell us a great deal about the proper attitude toward chastening. We are not to despise chastening, nor are we to faint because of it. It is a mark of His love, and a sign that He has received us as sons. But neither are we told to enjoy the chastening, but to endure it. Seeing how Jesus endured the cross for us, it seems a small thing for us to endure chastening from our Father. The 3 verses, beginning with verse 8, are especially eloquent in the Amplified: "Now if you are exempt from correction and left without discipline in which all of God's children share, then you are illegitimate offspring and not true sons at all. Moreover, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we yielded to them and respected them for training us. Shall we not much more cheerfully submit to the Father of spirits and so truly live? For our earthly fathers disciplined us for only a short period of time and chastised us as seemed proper and good to them, but He disciplines us for our certain good, that we may become sharers in His own holiness." So that is the purpose of the discipline. That we might share in His holiness, His nature. Glory to God! Rejoice in your chastisements, sons. It is a means of bringing you into the likeness of your Father.

The next few verses are exhortations for the discouraged, defeated, downhearted people of God to realize who they are, and to rise up in victory. Yield the fruit of righteousness, lift up holy hands, walk in straight paths, follow peace and holiness, stay in the grace of God, and don't let bitterness of any kind enter your heart. Using Esau for an example, he warns us not to throw away our precious eternal inheritance for one wild fling at sin. This does not mean that God will not forgive some truly repentant heart for falling into sin. But there is a danger for those who carelessly trample the precious things of God under their feet, like Esau, that they will not be able to repent of what they have done. There is a vast difference between getting caught red-handed in a crime, and being sorry that you got caught, than in having real godly sorrow over your sin, and repenting and turning away from it voluntarily. The criminal is very sorry that he got caught, wished he had never committed the crime, because he doesn't like going to jail. The Christian is sorry he committed the sin, repents and turns away from it, because he knows that it displeases and hurts the One he loves the most. Esau could not find that kind of repentance, though he sought for it. He wanted the benefits of his inheritance, but there was a hardness in his heart. His attitude toward the things of God had not changed. This is a warning to us not to play around with sin, not to handle the promises of God carelessly.

Ye Are Come to Mount Zion

The writer of Hebrews is speaking to Jewish Christians. They are proud of their history. And the happenings at Mount Sinai are an outstanding part of their national life. It was here the Law was given, with much supernatural manifestation of the mighty presence of God. He reminds them what a dreadful and solemn day that was. Then he points out that we, as Christians, have come to something far greater.

Hebrews is the book of "better things". Earlier we learned that Jesus was better than Moses, the priesthood of Christ is better than the Law, and that sonship is better than the realm of Old Testament faith. Now he begins to unveil a better kingdom, one that cannot be shaken.

In verse 18 he describes the awful gloom, darkness, and the raging storm, all associated with the giving of the Law at Sinai. They had just come out of Egypt, a disorganized bunch of slaves, mumbling and grumbling all the way. Here He put the fear of God in their hearts. They could not endure the presence of Almighty God in the awesome glory of His judgmental power. Even Moses, who knew God and had talked with Him before, was "terrified, aghast and trembling with fear." (Amplified) What he is saying is "Aren't we glad that we don't have to face such as this in order to come into our kingdom?"

Now we get a beautiful picture of the realm of the Spirit reserved for us, of those that are there, and a warning that we should not fail to hear Him that speaks from heaven. With the dreadful things that happened at Sinai, God made sure that He had their attention, so that they could hear what He was saying to them. Our calling is much more heavenly, more glorious, and our ears should be even more alert to God's voice today. Verse 23 tells us that we have come to the church of the firstborn who are registered as citizens in Heaven. Philippians 3:20 also tells us that our citizenship is in heaven. Glory to God, no wonder I don't feel at home in this old world anymore! I'm a citizen of a heavenly country. (Hebrews 11:16). It confirms here that though men's bodies may lie in the grave, their spirits are in heaven, now made perfect.

We have also come to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant. The Amplified says: "and to the sprinkled blood which speaks of mercy, a better and nobler and more gracious message than the blood of Abel which cried out for vengeance."

A Kingdom Which Cannot be Moved

The next 5 verses bring us face to face with one of the most powerful prophecies in the Bible relating to the end-time. After dealing with our personal Sonship earlier in the chapter, and our individual chastening, now he begins to deal with the corporate kingdom of God, and the fate of the nations. There is to be a shaking such as the world has never seen before.

First of all, be sure you hear the One who is speaking from heaven. There was judgment for those who refused to hear His voice in the Law. They refused the Law, they were dealt with by the Law. So let us not refuse the heavenly voice. At the giving of the Law, His voice shook the earth. Now He will shake not only the earth, but also heaven. At the giving of the Law, God dealt with the Adamic race, of the earth, earthy. But in these last days God will shake the heavens, and deal with the principalities and powers in heavenly places. He will cast down the thrones of those who dwell in the heavens, the rulers of the darkness of this age. Yes, Satan will be bound. Satan's kingdom will fall, his power will be destroyed.

Verse 26 quotes from Haggai 2, where God deals with the rebuilding of the temple, and gives a promise of the glory of this end-time revival. All of those things made by carnal man will be shaken, that those things brought forth by the Spirit may remain. According to Haggai, the world has never seen anything so glorious as the end-time body of Christ, that restored temple, the dwelling place of God Himself.

This chapter closes with the certain promise that we are receiving a kingdom that is not of man, and cannot be shaken. It is far beyond our comprehension to know what He has prepared for us. Therefore, we should have grace to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. Dear ones, we should never take our God lightly. I shudder when I hear men joke about god in a light and frivolous manner. Sometimes I see the people of god becoming very casual about the presence of God. I have seen them prophesy in such a careless and casual way, as though they were sharing the neighborhood gossip over the back fence. These things are sacred, and we must hold all the things of God in deep reverence. Remember, our kingdom cannot be moved! What a security that should give us. We need fear for none of the things that are coming upon the earth, for nothing is going to shake the kingdom that is ours. Let the kingdoms of man fall, and they shall. Do not fret thyself about them. For thou shalt speak the word, and men shall know that thy God reigneth!

A Consuming Fire

Fire is light, fire is cleansing, fire is warmth, and fire is consuming. What does God consume? He will consume and destroy all sin, and the curse that is upon the earth through Adam's fall. He will consume all the Adam that is still in us, and bring us forth in His own likeness. Thus saith the Lord!

Chapter 13

The previous chapter closes with the shaking of heaven and earth, an overall view of the greatness of God's kingdom, and our receiving this kingdom that cannot be shaken from our God who is a consuming fire. Glory to God, what a vision to set before the church!

Now we come to the last chapter of this great book. It is a chapter of relationships. It deals with our relationship to our brothers in the Lord, to strangers, to husbands and wives, to our elders in the church, and to the Lord.

Verse 1, which says, "Let brotherly love continue", is brought out beautifully in the Amplified Bible: "Let love for your fellow believers continue and be a fixed practice with you--never let it fail". There are no conditions in this verse. Just simply "love the brethren". "Let it continue" means that it is already there, placed in each heart by the Holy Spirit when He comes into that life. How beautiful it was, at conversion, when you rose to your feet from the altar and looked upon the smiling faces of the saints. You felt as though you had never seen such beautiful people, and a tremendous love sprang up in your heart for them.

The key to this verse and to our relationship with our brethren is "let love continue". He does not say, "Try to begin loving them". The Holy spirit creates a love in our hearts for our brethren in the beginning. The problem is trying to continue to love them after you learn to know them better, and find out some of the weaknesses of their human nature. Rubbing shoulders in a close "family" relationship often causes the sparks to fly. In many modern churches, the only time you see the other church people is for a brief hour on Sunday morning, and the only contact is a possible handshake as you leave. There is no problem getting along with folks like this. For you never discover their frailties and personality problems.

But the early church was a close knit family, lined up together against a persecuting world system. They ate together, walked together, suffered together, and laughed together, as well as worshipping the Lord together. In a situation like this, there was ample opportunity for personality clashes, to butt heads over minor differences. And the enemy takes advantage of this situation to destroy love, if he can.

What God is doing today, in preparation for great persecution and attacks from the devil, is to bring together local bodies of believers who are bonded together in the spirit as a family of God. So this scripture begins to mean a lot to us. "Let love of the brethren continue". In spite of our doctrinal understanding, our differences in age or personality, or our different life styles and appearance, let it continue. One thing we are going to find that we need desperately in these end times, is the love of our brethren. So let it continue.

Angels Unawares

People have always been wary of strangers. We seem to fear the unknown. In the large cities, if your brother or son was attacked by thugs, you would rush to his rescue, calling for the police, etc. But if it was a stranger being attacked, the general feeling is to cross the street, turn your head, "don't get involved". We just don't have a feeling for those who are not our own. This is what makes war easier to bear, when those we shoot are just "gooks, nips, cong, or Charlie". They seem less than human somehow. They are strangers to us.

God's attitude toward strangers is to extend them hospitality. Thank God, that when we were strangers, aliens to the way of life, He took us in, cleansed us, fed us, and made us a part of the family of God. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God." (Ephesians 2:19). Therefore, as we bear His image, we should be happy for each opportunity to share our blessings with others in the family of God, even if they are strangers to us. The amplified Bible expresses it thus: "Do not forget or neglect or refuse to extend hospitality to strangers in the brotherhood--being friendly, cordial and gracious, sharing the comforts of your home and doing your part generously". It is a qualification for eldership, "given to hospitality."

God gave us our big home in Springfield more than 5,400 days ago (15 years) and during that time, I am confident that there have been more than 1,000 people who have shared our hospitality, sometimes for one night, sometimes much longer. I learned how it felt to be on the road myself with no place to sleep, and no money for motels. I have at times slept in the car by the side of the road, or just continued to drive all night. What a blessing it was when some saint opened up their home, and provided a nice bed and a good meal. So I determined that our house would be a place where even "strangers in the brotherhood" could find a refuge and hospitality. It is not easy on a wife when a carload arrives sometime past midnight, with 2 couples and 4 or 5 children, all hungry and sleepy and needing baths. But my wife and I have opened our hearts because we love the Body of Christ, and god has abundantly blessed us for it. Praise the Lord!

Real Angels?

Verse 2 (Amplified) says: "for through it some have entertained angels without knowing it." I guess that if they didn't know it, there was no way they could verify whether or not these were real angelic beings, or human "angels". I believe that many of god's saints have actually had angelic beings in their homes, more times than they realize. And many more have had some of God's special "messengers" (human "angels"), and have been greatly blessed because of it. I know that I asked God for (and received) the privilege of blessing (in the name of the Lord) those who blessed us with their hospitality and gifts. I felt it was my right to do so, and god granted me the authority to bless those who bless His messenger. I have seen spiritual, physical, and material blessings come to many in this

way, and I am no longer surprised when it happens.

So it doesn't really matter whether or not it is one of God's heavenly angels, or an earthly one. The fact is, some angels come wrapped in unusual packages. We've had them come in faded blue-jeans and worn out tennis shoes and oversized coats, some with long hair and beards, even. But they were sent to us by God. And we loved them.

Prisoners of Hope

Remember that we are speaking of relationships in the body of Christ. So when he tells us to feel a oneness with those in prison, He is not speaking of the murderers, rapists, and thieves. It is the saints who are in prison that God wants us to hold up in prayer, to learn to share their sufferings with them. Some saints are in prison on false charges, persecuted by the anti-christ forces. Others are in prison from a crime they committed, but have been converted while in prison. Now they find themselves, a brand new babe in Christ, living in the midst of a situation inhabited by a wild pack of human animals of the vilest sort. Their lives are in constant danger, and temptations abound on every side. Violence, drugs, homosexuality, and physical intimidation are present everywhere in the prison system. Many of God's children in prison are ill-treated daily, suffer adversity, and we are admonished to stand with them and give them strength in the Lord by our prayers for them. One of my dear friends, now in her 70's, has had a rich and rewarding ministry in the prisons, regularly visiting and corresponding with "her boys". God will never forget that. I have no idea how many men have been brought to Christ through her ministry. But God knows. She has won more souls to God than many men who stand behind a pulpit. We have heard from some of these, for she passes out much of our literature among the prisoners.

Marriage is Honourable

The New American Standard Bible says (verse 4): "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." What a message from the Word of god for this licentious age in which we live. "Let marriage be held in honor". When a man cheats on his wife, he is not holding his marriage in honor. And God will judge him. Thus saith the Lord.

This verse is talking about the sexual relationship in marriage. It is reserved for husband and wife, it is undefiled, and God honors it. There is prevalent in our land today 2 very wicked attitudes towards sex and marriage. They are the 2 extreme and opposite poles from the beautiful and normal relationship that god intends for a man and a woman. These 2 evils are: "Sex without marriage", and "marriage without sex". The first one involves fornication, adulterer, free love, and the so-called "new morality" of the anti-God world. The second, marriage without sex, generally evolves from

brutality toward the wife, lack of communication, frigidity, or desire for the celibate life. There is a teaching, direct from the pit of hell, that says that the celibate life, or "virgin purity", is more holy than the marriage relationship, and that God only allows marriage sex for the non-spiritual Christians, and only for the procreation of children. They say that in order to be in the bride of Christ, you must either remain single, a virgin or eunuch, or to remain married without any sex-life. Some wives, either tired of a brutish husband, or frigid, or deceived by false doctrine, have used this idea to avoid any sex with their husband, This is not holding the marriage in honor.

Now there are some practical reasons why some men remain single, or why some couples abstain from the marriage bed. Some men, like Paul the apostle, who spend their lives in constant hardship and travel, in and out of prisons and shipwrecks, would be completely out of order trying to maintain a home with wife and children. But this situation, then and now, is very unusual. As for married men, Paul instructs them as to times of abstinence. "Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you."

Many years ago, in the earlier days of my ministry, 2 young people of my acquaintance were married. She was a beautiful young lady, very much in love with this young minister, and he was a homosexual. Only after they were married did she discover that he did not marry her because he wanted her, but to remove the reproach upon him as a single young man in the ministry. The marriage did not last, for it was not built upon God's order. He did not hold his marriage in honor.

Then there is the very practical problem of age. God has very wisely ordained that the sex drive and ability to bear children diminish as old age comes along. But even that is over ruled at times by the Lord Himself. Consider Abraham and Sarah. When at age 89, Sarah heard the angel say that she was to have a child, she laughed, saying: "After I am waxed old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" It had been a long time since they had the God-given pleasure of sharing the marriage bed together. Not because of some false doctrine, or a desire to be "more holy", but simply because of age. As I told one elderly minister in his 70's who preached the celibate life for married folks: "At your age it is not wrong to practice celibacy, but it is wicked for you to preach it to young married couples, brining them under either condemnation or temptation." Yes, there is some very practical living in verse 4 of this 13th chapter of Hebrews. A lot more than we have realized. Many do not realize that there is a very spiritual relationship between husband and wife in the marriage bed. You see, God does not use the Bible to teach unspiritual things. This truth is not based just upon physical sex-lust; but in the union of husband and wife, there can be (and should be) a spiritual strength and blessing available to each. Let me say to the husbands and wives, if you do not have this, you are missing one of the greatest things in marriage. When two are truly made one, then the strength of each is multiplied ten-fold. It is true.

"The Lord is My Helper"

The next subject dealt with here in this scripture is contentment. This is really only possible with those who know that they have all eternity to enjoy far better things than earth could ever offer. Therefore, if they have nothing during their whole lifetime of the things men fight for here on earth, what does it matter? To illustrate what I'm saying, think of a young lad sitting at his school desk, bored to tears, waiting 15 minutes for the bell to ring that signals the start of summer vacation. And the 15 minutes of boredom compared to all summer of liberty is still a weak comparison to this life and eternity. When I see people, especially children, who are blind, crippled, or in constant pain, my heart really goes out to them in compassion. To know that crippled or retarded children can never enjoy the games and have the fun that more fortunate children around them have, is heart rending. But to know that God has all eternity to make it up to them, and that He surely will, takes the sting out of the hurt.

"Let your way of life be free from the love of money". No one can really be content if they love money, for this disease creates an insatiable thirst that can never be quenched. For one who loves money can never be satisfied. The more he gets, the more he wants. "For the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). It is not having money that hurts you, it is loving it. When you can have money without loving it, then you are free to share your blessings with others. And God is free to continue to pour out material blessings upon you. He wants you to have plenty, but He does not want you to love it. He wants your love for Himself. Love God, for He is your helper. Money can vanish, sometimes overnight, but God will always be there. Having Him is the real true riches of life. When you have Him, there is nothing that man can do to you.

Because of this, I have learned not to be afraid of any man, but only to be sure that I have the Lord on my side. I have had powerful people try to destroy my ministry, and sometimes my life, also. But as long as I knew that I was walking in the Spirit, and was in the will of God, there was no fear. I volunteered for the Marine Paratroopers in world War II, and was sent to the South Pacific. I knew that if we were dropped behind enemy lines we would be the prime targets of the enemy. But the thought in my heart was simply that "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." On a ministry trip to new Zealand, my pilot and I were forced down in a light plane during a storm, and had to land on a beach. Had it not been for the Lord, it could have turned out to be a serious crash. We got front page headlines in the local newspaper, and national T.V. and radio coverage. When the reporters asked me if I was scared while circling the city in the storm, trying to find a place to land, I had to stop and think about it, and I came to the conclusion that fear had not entered into the situation. I told the reporters: "I had a good pilot, and the Lord at my side, why should I be afraid?" This is simply the way of life for sons of God. It is the way of faith.

"Those Who Have the Rule"

In this 13th chapter of Hebrews, verses 7, 17, and 24 do not set too well with those who don't believe

that God has set leaders in His church with authority to rule. And that word "rule" means "to guide". 1 Timothy 3:5 says that if an elder cannot "rule" his own house, how can he "take care of" the church of God? So to those who are the head of a house, or an elder in a church, and think that ruling means to boss everyone else around with an iron hand, let me say that it really means you have the responsibility to take care of the members of your family, or the people in the church. And dad, or elder, God will hold you responsible for how you take care of them and guide them through the hard places in life. Those who are called to speak the word of God, are to lead God's people into the good life. In verse 17 the people are commanded to submit themselves to their leaders. Then the verse goes on to reveal what a tremendous responsibility rests upon the leaders for the faithful performance of their ministry, and how they must give an account to God for the people to whom they ministered.

Dear ones, don't be afraid, or rebellious, of those "who have the rule over you". They are God's gifts to you, to help bring you to perfection (maturity). Treasure them, love them, and pray for them. And the Bible also says: "obey them". God's true ministries would not harm you in any way, or bring you into bondage. You must learn to discern between the shepherd and the wolf. Sheep are supposed to be rather dumb animals, but even they knew that difference. And God's people certainly should be able to know those who have ordained themselves, and have not been sent by the Holy Ghost. If you have not already read the previous message on "shepherds", dealing with discipleship and submission, please send for this free booklet now. It is an important message on this controversial subject.

"Yesterday--Today--Forever"

Right in the middle of all this teaching concerning relationships, verse 8 shouts out a tremendous statement of faith and fact: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever!" No instructions here as to what we should do about it, or how it applies to us. Just a plain and glorious statement. He is the same, always has been, always will be. What He did back then, He is doing today. Some are not seeing it, but of course, some did not see it then, either. Therefore, if He confirmed His Word with signs and wonders and miracles in the days of the early church, He will do the same in the last day church. So let us preach His Word, and expect Him to do His part.

A whole sermon could be preached on this verse alone, and many have been. But while meditating on this glorious scripture, I saw a principle concerning us, His church. As sure as He is unchangeable, just as sure we are being changed. Just as He is now what He has always been, so we who started out in the image of Adam, shall be changed into the image of Christ Himself. Anything less than this is unscriptural, and degrading to His plan and purpose for us. Hallelujah!

Yesterday--Lost in Sin

Paul makes it very plain in the book of Romans that in this flesh there is no good thing. Humans seek after such things as physical beauty, dynamic personality, intellectual achievements, popularity, fame and fortune. But these things are fading flowers on the lower plane of carnal life and pleasure. The fact is, until Christ comes in, the whole human race is lost in sin, under judgment, in rebellion against God. There is none righteous, no not one. This is where we were, yesterday. And except for Christ sharing His life with us, there was no possibility for a change in that situation. Lost, forever. We can all see this is where we've been, the pit from whence we were digged (Isaiah 51:1). This was our yesterday. But thank God it is not us who are the same yesterday, today, and forever. We are being changed. Glory to God.

Today--Alive in Christ

"We have borne (yesterday) the image of the earthy and we shall bear (forever) the image of the heavenly" (1 Corinthians 15:49). Looking back we see the image of Adam, lost in sin, corruptible. Looking forward we see kings and priests ruling with Christ forever in the Melchisedec order. But where does that leave us today? We are in the process of change. Not yet perfected, not yet on the throne, nor behind the veil. But we are on the way! We are alive in Christ, and entitled to all the privileges due the sons of God.

Today God's people live far beneath their privileges, in too low a realm of life for those who have been redeemed and ordained to the life in the Spirit. We do not have to wait for tomorrow, to live in victory today. As one dear saint said: "I know I'm not what I'm going to be, but I sure ain't what I used to be!" It is true that I may not be ruling over the nations with a rod of iron today, but there is no reason why I cannot rise in the Spirit to a place where I can rule my own spirit. Now. Today. This is where we are living, this is the present field of battle. Quit dreaming about pie in the sky, and recognize what you can be in God today. You are sons of God. Act like sons, think and talk like sons. Walk tall. We are victors on the field of battle.

When you see Christians depressed, defeated and discouraged, it is because they are either leaning back toward yesterday's life of being dominated by the powers of darkness, or they are drawn into a little shell of dreaming of a better tomorrow. I want you to know that today is a day of victory! You will be amazed at how much dominion you now have over your circumstances and battles of life, if you just dare to believe and speak a word of faith in every situation. Stop drowning in your efforts to bail out your little boat rise up and speak to the storm with a voice of authority. You can do it! Yes, today is a glorious day. But thank God, we will not forever be in this state of wrestling with the principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age. There is a glorious tomorrow for us. We are still being changed. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. But as for us, tomorrow holds another marvelous change.

Forever--Kings and Priests

So what does tomorrow bring to the sons of God? I would not be so presumptuous as to try to tell you that I understood all the mysteries of God, and that He had revealed all His future plans to me. And beware of that man who says he now has it all figured out. He will lie to you about other things, too.

But just let me share a little of what God has unveiled to us about His plans for His church, His glorious church, in the age to come. First of all, let me say that the new age is upon us, the rule of Satan is at an end, the age of darkness is about over I know that the world situation doesn't look that way, but we are now at the climax of the war of the ages, and the forces of evil are going all out with a last roar of defiance.

There are certain words and statements in the bible that give us clues as to what lies ahead. Words such as "overcomer", "Melchisedec priesthood", "immortality", "manchild", "kings and priests", "in His throne", "glorious church", and "manifestation of the sons of God" bring truths to us that are little understood in most of the pentecostal churches, to say nothing of fundamental and modernistic churchianity. These words are not dealing with what happens out there in the ages of the ages, millions of years from now. These are things dealing with the very near tomorrow of the kingdom age about to begin. But there is a change involved in our very state of being, before we can enter all that is suggested by these terms.

The very greatest human being in the "yesterday" realm of sin cannot measure up to the eternal blessing of the least of one of the "today" saints who have been redeemed and become a part of the kingdom of God. Just so, the greatest of the saints in the "today" realm cannot be compared with the glory of one who has passed into the "forever" of God's eternal purposes. So there is no way to illustrate, by comparison, the things that God has prepared for us. They have to be revealed by the Spirit. Those who look forward to a beautiful city with streets that are paved with a soft yellow metal, or long for a huge house in the sky, all their own and no mortgage, have some wonderful surprises coming. For God's eternal tomorrow shall greatly exceed anything our minds could possibly conceive. The "yesterday" of the Adamic image is past for us. The "today" of a redeemed life of victory and joy is ours now. But we are still being changed, getting ready for a maturity and perfection that will put us on His throne with Him. Authority to rule and reign, bringing order and glory out of the chaos and destruction and death of this present world, and even the creative power of sons, are just some of the things before us. Makes the trip worthwhile, doesn't it? An entire book could be written about that one word "forever", and what it means to us. But we will have to go on, to see what else this glorious chapter has to say to us.

"Divers and Strange Doctrines"

In this chapter of relationships, we come in verse 9 to a word dealing with our relationship to God's

written word. "Divers and strange doctrines" is expressed in the NAS Bible as "varied and strange teachings". There is a lot of difference between "new" teachings and "strange" teachings. Everytime they hear something new and fresh, some people apply this scripture to it. Not so. God has always been faithful to give us fresh manna from heaven, a new and exciting revelation of Himself and His plans for His church. The word "strange" here has the meaning of something weird and out of harmony with the Bible, rather than something we just haven't known previously.

In this verse, He connects "strange doctrines" with being occupied with foods. Then as now, people spent a lot of time trying to figure a way to reach immortality and escape death by certain eating habits. But the scripture says it is unprofitable. There is certainly nothing wrong with eating good food, and with being sensible in your eating habits. Your body will benefit from it. But to establish strange doctrines, and be occupied with weird diets or food fads, is not profitable. "Do not be carried away" by these things. This lets us know that there is a force involved that can carry people into wrong doctrines and weird spirits. Don't play around with it, or you will be overcome by a spirit of deception and find yourself convinced that this is the only way to purity and perfection. Long before Ponce de Leon landed on Florida shores, seeking the "fountain of youth", men were deceived into thinking that somewhere there was something they could put into their bellies to make them live forever. And some still are. Beloved, don't be carried away. Such foolishness is unprofitable, and a waste of time. There is a better way to establish your hearts with the grace of God. This is a glorious and heavenly life, but it is a very practical way. It takes good common sense to be a successful son of God. Jesus was the most practical person that ever lived. Everything He did had a good purpose behind it. "He went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

We Have an Altar

Now, in verses 10 through 16, he uses the Old Testament altar and sacrifices as illustrations of what we have in Christ today. Long before the religious people of Jerusalem crucified the Lord Jesus, and long before denominations of men cast out saints who wanted more of God, God ordained that the bodies of the sacrifices be burned outside the camp. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." (verse 13). Yes, dear ones, when men cast you outside their camps, or you go outside voluntarily, it is not your own reproach you are bearing, it is His! Glory to God! This verse was a great comfort to me more than a quarter century ago when, as a young preacher determined to follow the Lord, I was judged and condemned and cast out by the councils of men. It was good for me to know that God had already planned it that way.

One of my favorite revelations is found in verse 14: "Here we have no continuing city". In this realm of mortal life, we need not build our own little "city", for nothing is permanent on this plane of life. Abraham was a pilgrim on this earth. He never built a city, none ever bore his name, for he had seen a city which had foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And once you have seen the city of God, you never try to build one of your own. Men build great organizations and denominations, and lay foundations for their cities which continue on long after all the inhabitants are dead. They do this

because they have not seen the city of God. But here, in this age, we have no continuing city. But there is one that is permanent. It is in the "forever" realm. It is the one we seek.

"Therefore" (because of this city of God), "let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually". This is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to God for all that He has done for us. Our sacrifice is far different from the kind the Old Testament priest offered. He is showing here how much better this new way is than the temple worship. Once more the writer of Hebrews is trying to wean the Jewish Christians away from the Jew's religion with its blood sacrifices. Since Jesus came, we no longer offer up the body of beasts. There is no value in that, in fact, it displeases God very much, and now falls into the same category as idolatry. But there is great value in lifting up our voices and praising the Lord. This is a sacrifice He will accept. Hallelujah!

Verse 16 brings out another means of offering sacrifices to God with which He is well pleased. "Do good", and "communicate" (which means to share what you have with others). This is something that pleases God, and is considered a good sacrifice. Jesus set the example, He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38). I know that had He had a home, a car, or a refrigerator, He would have shared those things also. He gave people what He had, life and healing and truth. "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee", said the Apostle Peter to the lame man. What he had, he shared. And in doing so, he offered up a sacrifice to God. This can even be done with material things, money, labor, and other earthly possessions. And especially, rich or poor, we can give people what they need more than most anything else, our love and concern for their needs. If your heart is full of love, share it with others. If you are filled with hate and bitterness, don't give it to anyone else. God to Calvary and be delivered and cleansed.

A Loving Good-Bye

"Pray for us" (verse 18). What a humble confession on how much we need each other. A great desire is expressed that he might live honestly and honorably before the Lord. Even the saints still live in human bodies, and with all the temptations and pressures around us, it is not an automatic thing to live right and with honor. It takes a real desire and a lot of effort, along with the help of the Holy Spirit. In the next verse he expresses his hope that he can be restored to them soon. This is an indication of the great love that existed in the early church, and how they desired and needed to be with other saints, in a world full of sin and unbelief and hatred. I can't tell you how many times some of our saints in the body of Christ in Springfield have returned home after an extended time elsewhere, relating how that they had never really appreciated the blessings of being in the family of God, until they were separated to themselves for a period of time. We sing a chorus: "There is a love among the brethren", and it is really true. This letter to the Hebrews closes with such a tender note, and with such a beautiful expression of the love of God.

Reference is made in verse 23 to "our brother Timothy", who obviously has just been set free after a time of imprisonment. Verse 24 mentions the saints in Italy. It is possible that this letter was written

to the Hebrew Christians by Paul while in Rome. He indicates that he is free to come and see them, if Timothy comes with him. So he is not in prison himself at this time. Scholars disagree as to who the author of this letter is, but some feel there is indication in the style of writing and teaching throughout the letter that it was written by the Apostle Paul. Although his call was to the Gentiles, he still carried a heavy burden for Israel. And he was the most opposed, and the most outspoken, against the old Jewish law, of any of the New Testament writers.

This entire book of Hebrews has been an effort to show how much better the New Covenant is than the Old. This chapter has shown the better relationships in the body of Christ, better sacrifices, a better city, and a better future. It is beautiful to see how that after all the strong forceful arguments and logic put forth in previous chapters, he ends the letter in such a tender and personal manner. And dearly beloved, may I add here that this love still exists in the true body of Christ. And this body of Christ, scattered throughout the world, in many local expressions, salutes you. Pray for us.