

HEBREWS

CHAPTER ONE

1) In times past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets in many parts and in various ways, 2) [but] during these final days He has spoken to us through His Son [Note: This period refers to the Christian age (See Acts 2:14-36)], whom He appointed to be heir of all things [and] through whom He created the universe. [See John 1:3; Col. 1:16]. 3) This Son expresses the radiance of God's splendor and represents His very Being, and He sustains everything by His powerful word. After He had provided cleansing for [man's] sins, He sat down at the right side of the Majesty [i.e., God] on high [i.e., in heaven]. 4) He had become as much superior [in rank] to the angels as the name He inherited [i.e., A Son.@ See next verse] was superior to theirs [i.e., the name A angels.@ means Amessengers@]. 5) For, to which angel did God ever say [Psa. 2:7], A You are my Son, today I have conceived you? And again [II Sam. 7:14], AI will be His Father, and He will be my Son? 6) And again, when God sent the Firstborn One [i.e., Jesus. See Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18; Rev. 1:5] into the world, He said [Deut. 32:43 LXX], A And all of God's angels should worship Him.@ 7) But God said [this] about the angels [Psa. 104:4 LXX], A He [i.e., God] makes His angels to be [like] winds and His servants [like] flames of fire.@ [Note: The idea is probably that angels obediently serve God's purpose similar to the way wind and lightning do]. 8) But God says [this] about the Son [Psa. 97:7], A Your throne [i.e. kingdom], O God [Note: "God" is here applied to Jesus], will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter [i.e., the standard for ruling] of your kingdom. 9) You have loved what is right and hated what is wrong, therefore God, your God [i.e., the Father], has placed you above your companions when He anointed you [i.e., specially chose you] with the oil of joy [i.e., your selection as king was a joyous occasion].@ 10) And [Psa. 102:25-27 says], A Lord, in the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hand. 11) They will be destroyed, but you will remain. And they [i.e., the heavens and earth] will all wear out like an article of clothing. 12) And you will

fold them up like a robe, and they will be changed like an article of clothing. But you will stay the same and your years will never end.@
13) But which one of the angels did God ever say [this] about [Psa. 110:1], AYou should sit at my right side until I put your enemies [in full subjection] beneath your feet@? 14) Are not all angels ministering spirits sent out [by God] to serve those people who will inherit salvation?

CHAPTER TWO

1) So [then], we [Christians] should pay closer attention to the things we have heard, so that we do not drift away from [believing and practicing] them. 2) For if the message spoken through angels proved to be binding [Note: This is a reference to the Law of Moses. See Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19], and every violation [of it] and disobedience [to it] received a just penalty, 3) how will we escape [punishment] if we neglect such a great salvation? [For it was] first announced [to people] by the Lord and then confirmed to us [i.e., the writer and other Christians] by those who heard Him [i.e., the original apostles]. 4) God also testified, along with those people, by [giving them] both signs and wonders and various miracles, and by [supernatural] gifts distributed [to them] by the Holy Spirit, as He desired.

5) For God did not place the coming inhabited world [Note: AThe coming inhabited world@ here probably refers to the present Christian age. It was viewed as Acoming@ from the perspective of Old Testament times], under the control of angels [and] that is the world we are talking about. 6) But someone has testified somewhere [Psa. 8:4-6], AWhat is man, that you [i.e., God] should remember him? Or the son of man [i.e., mankind], that you should care about him? 7) You made him a little bit lower than the angels [i.e., a little less exalted]. [Note: Although these Psalms passages referred to mankind, they are here applied to Jesus. See verse 9]. You crowned him with splendor and honor {some ancient manuscripts add Aand placed him as ruler over what you made@}. 8) You placed everything under his feet [Note: This is true of both mankind (Gen. 1:26-28) and of Jesus (Eph. 1:22-23)]. For in subjecting everything to him, God did not leave anything that is not subject to him. But at the present time we do not see what all has been subjected to him. 9) But we do see

Jesus, who was made a little bit lower than the angels [i.e., by suffering death as a human being], and was crowned with splendor and honor because He suffered death. It was by God-s unearned favor that He would experience death for every person.

10) For it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, in order to lead many [of His] children to glory [i.e., heaven], would make the author [or, pioneer] of their salvation [i.e., Jesus] completely [qualified] through [His] sufferings. 11) For, both the One who makes people holy [i.e., Jesus], and those who are made holy [i.e., Christians], all come from one [Father], and for this reason Christ is not ashamed to call them His brothers, 12) for He says [Psa. 22:22], [Note: In the following three Old Testament quotations the writer represents Christ as the speaker] **AI will declare your [i.e., God-s] name to my brothers, [and] in the presence of the assembly I will sing [a hymn of] praise to you.@ 13) And again, [Isa. 8:17 LXX], AI will place my trust in God.@ And again, [Isa. 8:18], ALook, [here] I am with the children whom God gave me.@ 14) Therefore, since the children share in [bodies of] flesh and blood, Christ also, in the same way, took on a human body so that, through His death, He could destroy [the dominion of] him who had the power to cause death, that is, the devil. 15) And [also He could] release all of those people who, because of their fear of death, were [kept] in bondage all their lives. 16) For certainly Christ does not [intend to] help angels, but He [intends to] help the descendants of Abraham [i.e., the Jews]. 17) So, for this reason, He had to become like His brothers in every way [i.e., except that He never sinned], so that He could become a merciful and faithful Head Priest in things related to God-s [service], [and] that He could provide a means of purifying [Lev. 16:30] for people-s sins [i.e., make atonement for them]. 18) For since He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is [also] able to help those who [suffer when they] are tempted.**

CHAPTER THREE

1) Therefore, holy brothers [and sisters], who have been called [by God] to share in heaven, think about Jesus, the Apostle and Head Priest, whom we have confessed [as Savior]. 2) He was faithful to God who appointed Him, just as Moses was [also]

faithful in [serving] God's household [i.e., the Israelites]. 3) For Jesus has been considered deserving of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house deserves greater honor than the house itself. 4) For every house is built by someone, but God is the Builder of everything. 5) Now Moses was a faithful servant among all of [those belonging to] God's household [i.e., the Israelites], as [one who gave] testimony about the things which [were to be] spoken [by him], 6) but Christ [was faithful] as a Son over God's household. And we [Christians] are that household, if we hold on to our confidence [in Christ], and to the boasting [i.e., joy] of our hope [in God], firmly to the end [of our lives].

7) So, even as the Holy Spirit said [Psa. 95:7-11], AToday, if you hear His [i.e., God's] voice, 8) do not have a stubborn heart like you did when you provoked [God] during the time you tested [His patience] in the desert, 9) where your forefathers tried me and tested [my patience] when they saw what I did for forty years. 10) Therefore, I was angry with that generation of people and said, >They always go astray in their hearts, and they did not understand my ways.= 11) So I vowed in my anger, >They will not enter a state of rest with me.=@

12) Pay attention, brothers, so that there will not be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, [resulting] in falling away from the living God. 13) But [instead], encourage one another each day, as long as it is [still] called AToday,@ so that none of you becomes stubborn [as a result] of the deceitfulness of sin. 14) For we have become sharers with Christ, if we hold firmly onto the confidence [we had in Him] from the beginning until the end [of our lives]. 15) As it has been said [Psa. 95:7], AToday, if you hear His [i.e., God's] voice, do not have a stubborn heart like you did when you provoked [God].@

16) For who were they who heard [God] and provoked [Him]? Was it not everyone who was led out of Egypt by Moses? 17) And who was God angry with for forty years? Was it not with those people who sinned, whose bodies fell [dead] in the desert? 18) And to whom did God vow that they would not enter a state of rest with Him? [Was it not] those who were disobedient to Him? 19) And [so] we see that they were not able to enter [a state of rest with God] because of [their] unbelief.

CHAPTER FOUR

1) **So, as long as God's promise of entering into a state of rest with Him [still] remains, we should fear that someone among you will appear [in the end] to have fallen short of [attaining] it.** [Note: In this section **entering into rest** refers to Israel entering Canaan (verses 6, 8) and to Christians entering heaven (verses 3, 9). The **Sabbath day rest** is presented as a type of both]. 2) **For we [Christians] have had the good news [about resting with God] preached to us, just as the Israelites [had good news proclaimed to them. See 1:16-19]. But the message they heard did not benefit them, because it was not coupled with faith by those who heard it.** 3) **Now we who have believed [will someday] enter that rest, even as God has said [Psa. 95:11], **So, I vowed in my anger, >They will not enter a state of rest with me, although God's works were completed since the creation of the world.**** 4) **For God said this somewhere about the seventh day [Gen. 2:2], **And on the seventh day God rested from all His work.**** 5) **And again, this [is recorded, Psa. 95:11], **They will not enter a state of rest with me.**** 6) **So, since it still remains for some people to enter into that rest, but those to whom the good news was previously proclaimed [See verse 2] failed to enter it because of disobedience [See 3:18]** 7) **God again identified a certain day, [calling it] **Today, in David's [writings], a long time later (just as it was referred to above) [Psa. 95:7-8], **Today, if you hear His [i.e., God's] voice, do not have a stubborn heart.****** 8) **For if Joshua had given the Israelites rest, God would not have spoken about another day later on [i.e., **Today** in Psa. 95:7].** 9) **[So] then, a Sabbath **rest day** [still] remains for God's people [i.e., for Christians, in heaven].** 10) **For the person who has entered into a state of rest with God has rested from his own work also, just as God rested from His.** 11) **So, we should do our best to enter into that state of rest, so that no one fails [to do so] by following the same example of disobedience [i.e., as seen in the Israelites. See verses 2, 6].**

12) **For God's word is alive and active and sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates [deep enough] even to divide [a person's] soul [from his] spirit, and his joints [from his] bone marrow [Note: This is figurative language describing the penetrating effect of God's word into a person's spiritual, inner being] and is able**

to judge the thoughts and intentions of a person's heart. 13) And no created being is hidden from God's sight, but everything is laid bare and is openly visible to the eyes of God, to whom we must give account.

14) Since then we [Christians] have [such] a great Head Priest, who has passed through the skies [i.e., ascended to heaven. See Acts 1:9], Jesus, the Son of God, we should remain true to our profession [of faith in Him]. 15) For we do not have a head priest who is incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but One [i.e., Jesus] who has been tempted in every way that we have, and yet without sinning. 16) So, with confidence we should approach God's throne of unearned favor, so we can receive mercy and obtain that favor to help us when we need it.

CHAPTER FIVE

1) For every head priest is chosen from among men, and is appointed on behalf of people, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2) He is able to gently put up with ignorant and wayward people because he himself is subject to [the same spiritual] weaknesses. 3) And because of this he is obligated to offer [sacrifices] for his own sins also, as well as the people's sins. 4) And no one takes on himself the honor [of head priest], but [he is appointed only] when he is called by God, as was the case with Aaron. 5) So, Christ also did not take on Himself the honor of becoming head priest, but God said to Him [Psa. 2:7], "You are my Son; today I have conceived you." 6) And He says in another place [Psa. 110:4], "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." [Note: This is the first mention of this mysterious Old Testament priest who, throughout this book, is represented as a type of Christ].

7) During His life on earth Jesus offered up prayers and special requests with loud crying and tears to God, who was able to save Him from dying, and He was heard because of His [earnest] devotion [to God]. 8) [And] although He was a Son, still He learned obedience from the things He suffered, 9) and after becoming perfectly [qualified], He became the source of never ending salvation to all those who obey Him. 10) [So], God declared Him to be a Head Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

11) [Now] we have many things to say about Melchizedek, but because of your slowness to grasp things, they are hard to explain. 12) For certainly enough time has elapsed so that [by now] you ought to be teachers, [but instead] you are in need of having someone teach you again the basic principles of God's message. You have become people who need Amilk@ and not Asolid food.@ [Note: The fundamental truths of Christianity are here figuratively spoken of as Amilk,@ while the more advanced teaching, such as Christ's priesthood being like Melchizedek's, is called Asolid food@]. **13) For everyone who has to drink Amilk@ is inexperienced in the teaching about righteousness, for he is [still] a [spiritual] baby. 14) But Asolid food@ is for mature people, who because of using their [spiritual] senses have become able to distinguish right living from evil.**

CHAPTER SIX

1) So, we should leave the basic principles of Christ's teaching and go on to maturity. [We should] not lay again a foundation of repentance [i.e., turning away] from deeds of death [i.e., acts that lead to spiritual death or that spring from a spiritually dead person], and of faith in God; 2) and of teaching about immersions [Note: The use of the plural word here suggests teaching on the distinctions between Jewish washings and John's and Christian immersion, whether in water or the Holy Spirit. See Acts 19:1-7], **and about placing hands on people** [Note: This act was practiced in the appointment of church leaders, in healing sick people and to impart supernatural gifts], **and about people being raised from the dead and about never ending judgment. 3) And we will do so [i.e., go on to more advanced teaching] if God allows us to.**

4)-6) For it is impossible to get people who have [completely] fallen away [from God] to repent again, because they [continue to] crucify for themselves God's Son all over again, and hold Him up to contempt. 4) [These are people] who were once enlightened [by the Gospel message], who had experienced the gift from heaven [i.e., forgiveness, never ending life, etc. See Rom. 6:23], who had partaken of the Holy Spirit [See Acts 2:38], 5) and who had experienced the good teaching of God and the powers of the coming age [i.e., they had already received some of the blessings of the Christian life, perhaps even miraculous signs]. 7) For God blesses land

that has soaked up the rain which has fallen on it, and it produces a profitable crop for those people for whom the land was farmed. 8) But if the land produces [only] thorns and thistles, it is worthless and in danger of being cursed [by God], and will end up being burned.

9) But, my dearly loved ones, even though we talk this way, we are persuaded that you will do better than that [i.e., you will not fall away from God], and will end up being saved. 10) For God is not [so] unjust as to forget the work you are doing and the love you have shown for Him, as you ministered to the saints [i.e., His holy people] and continue to minister [to them]. 11) And it is our desire that each one of you shows the same eagerness [to live for Christ], so as to be fully assured of your hope [in never ending life] until the end [of your days]. 12) We do not want you people to be [spiritually] slack, but to imitate those who will inherit [God's] promises because of their faith and patience.

13) For when God made a promise to Abraham, since He could not make a vow by anyone greater, He vowed by Himself, 14) saying [Gen. 22:16-17], I will certainly bless you and will multiply [your descendants].⁶ 15) And so, after waiting patiently, Abraham received what [God] had promised.

16) For people make vows by someone greater [than themselves], and an argument is settled when someone takes an oath [that he is telling the truth]. 17) Since God wanted to show conclusively to those who would inherit the promise [i.e., Abraham and all of his spiritual descendants], how unchangeable His purpose was, He confirmed it with an oath. 18) He did this so that by two unchangeable things [i.e., His promise and His oath], (and it is impossible for God to lie), we, who have fled [to God] for refuge, could be greatly encouraged to take hold of the hope set before us [i.e., the hope of never ending life]. 19) We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, [a hope] that is safe and secure, and one that enters the curtain [i.e., figuratively, of the heavenly sanctuary], 20) where Jesus, our forerunner, [already] entered on our behalf, having become a Head Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1) For this Melchizedek was king of Salem [Note: This probably refers to Jerusalem], **and a priest of the Most High God. He met Abraham returning** [from battle] **when he defeated the kings** [See Gen. 14:1ff] **and blessed him. 2) Abraham measured out one tenth of everything he had** [taken in battle] **and gave it to Melchizedek.** (Now **AMelchizedek@** means, first of all, **AKing of Righteousness,@** and then [since he was] **King of Salem,** it also means **AKing of Peace@**). **3) He was without a father, or mother or a list of ancestors** [i.e., there was no record of his family tree] **and no** [record of his] **birth or death. Like the Son of God, he** [appeared to] **remain a priest perpetually.**

4) Now consider how great this man was, to whom the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of what he had taken [in battle]. **5) For indeed, the descendants of Levi, who are appointed to the priesthood, are commanded by the Law of Moses to collect a tenth** [of the income] **of the Israelites, who are their brothers, even though these brothers are** [also] **descendants of Abraham. 6) But Melchizedek, whose ancestry is not traced from the Levites, has collected a tenth** [of the spoils] **from Abraham, and blessed him who had received promises** [from God]. **7) Without question** [then], **the lesser** [of these two persons] **is blessed by the greater one. 8) And in the one case, men here** [on earth, that is, the Levites] **who die, collect a tenth** [from the rest of the Israelites], **but there** [i.e., in the case of Melchizedek] **it is collected by someone about whom it is declared** [by Scripture] **that he continues to live. 9) And, so to speak, Levi, who collected a tenth** [from the Israelites], **paid a tenth through Abraham, 10) for when Melchizedek met him, he was still in Abraham's body** [i.e., Levi had not yet been born as a descendant of Abraham].

11) So, if perfection [i.e., a right relationship with God] **could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood, (for under it people had received the Law of Moses), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise, according to the order of Melchizedek, who was not considered** **According to the order of Aaron@?** **12) For with the changing of the priesthood, it was necessary for a change to be made in the law also. 13) For the Lord** [See next verse], **about whom these things are being said, belonged to another tribe, from which no one has** [ever] **been appointed to serve at the Altar. 14) For it is quite evident that our Lord has**

descended from Judah, a tribe about which Moses said nothing concerning priests. 15) And this is even clearer if another priest like Melchizedek arises, 16) who was not appointed on the basis of human regulations governing one's physical ancestry, but on the strength of One whose life never ends. 17) For it is declared [about Jesus in the Scriptures, Psa. 110:4], **∧You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.**@

18) For on one hand, the previous command [i.e., the Law of Moses] was set aside because it was weak and useless, 19) (since the law did not make anything [i.e., anyone] perfect), but on the other hand, there is the introduction of a better hope [which did bring perfection through Christ], by which we draw near to God. 20) And this was not done without the taking of an oath [by God], 21) (for [Levitical] priests were appointed without [God] taking [such] an oath, but Christ was appointed with an oath by God when He said to Him [Psa. 110:4], **∧The Lord made a vow and will not change His mind [when He said], >You are a priest forever.**)@ 22) So therefore, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better Agreement [between God and mankind].

23) And on one hand, many people were appointed to be [Levitical] priests because they were prevented by death from continuing [to serve]. [Note: The idea is that Levitical priests had to be constantly replaced]. 24) But on the other hand, Jesus has a permanent priesthood because He lives forever. 25) So, He is also able to save completely those people who approach God through Him, since He lives forever to intercede [i.e., to plead to God] on their behalf.

26) For Jesus was a very suitable head priest for us [i.e., He meets our needs very well], because He was holy, innocent, without [moral] corruption, separated from sinners and [exalted] above the heavens. 27) He does not need to offer up [animal] sacrifices every day like those head priests did [Note: The head priest here is represented as being in charge of the daily sacrifices offered by the other priests], first for His own sins and then for the people's sins. For He did this once for all time when He offered up Himself [on the cross]. 28) For the Law of Moses appoints [morally] weak men to be head priests, but the message of [God's] oath, which came after that law [Note: The quotation from Psa. 110:4 (See verse 21) was written after the Law of Moses was given] appointed the Son, who was made

perfect [in every way] forever.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1) Now this is the main point [or, the summary] of what we are saying: We have such a head priest [i.e., as described in chapter 7] who sat down at the right side of the throne of the Majesty [i.e., God] in heaven. 2) He is a minister in the sanctuary, [serving about holy things] in the true tabernacle, which was set up by the Lord and not by man [Note: This sanctuary/tabernacle represents either heaven or the church]. 3) For every head priest [on earth] is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, so it is necessary that this Head Priest [i.e., Jesus] also have something to offer. 4) Now if He were [still] on earth, He would not be a priest [at all], since there are [already] those [on earth] who offer gifts according to the Law of Moses. 5) These priests serve [in a sanctuary] that is [only] a copy and a foreshadow of the heavenly one. Now Moses was warned [by God] when he was about to build the Tabernacle, for God said [Ex. 25:40], ASee that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain [i.e., Mount Sinai].@ 6) But now Jesus has obtained a ministry that is as far superior [to that of the Levitical priesthood] as the [New] Agreement, of which He is the Mediator, is better [than the old one], because it has been enacted on better promises.

7) For if that first Agreement had been faultless, then there would have been no need for a second one. 8) For God found fault with the Israelites [or, possibly with the first Agreement], saying [Jer. 31:31ff], ALook, the Lord says, the time will come when I will make a New Agreement with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. 9) [It will] not be like the Agreement that I made with their forefathers on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the country of Egypt. For they did not [continue to] keep my Agreement, so I did not regard them [as acceptable], says the Lord. 10) For this is the Agreement that I will make with the people of Israel in the coming days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and I will also write them on their hearts. And I will be their God and they will be my people. 11) And everyone will not [have to] teach his neighbor or his brother [anymore], telling them to >Know the Lord,= because all of them will know me [as their

Lord], from the least [important] ones to the most important ones. 12) For I will be merciful to their wickedness [i.e., by forgiving them] and I will not remember their sins anymore.@ 13) [So], by saying Aa New Agreement,@ God has made the first one obsolete. And that which is becoming obsolete and getting aged is ready to [completely] disappear.

CHAPTER NINE

1) Now even the first Agreement had regulations for [governing] service [to God] and an earthly sanctuary. 2) For the Tabernacle was constructed with its outer compartment containing the lamp stand and the table and the Bread of Presence. This was called the AHoly Place.@ 3) And behind the second curtain [of] the Tabernacle was [a room] called the AHoly of Holies.@ 4) It had a golden altar for [burning] incense [in it], and [originally] the gold-plated Chest of the Agreement, containing a golden jar of manna, Aaron-s staff that sprouted buds and the tablets of the Agreement. 5) Above it were the cherubim [Note: These were winged, angelic-like, golden figurines] spread out over the [Chest] covering, where sins were [symbolically] forgiven. But we cannot now speak of these things in detail. 6) Now after preparing these things [i.e., the table, incense, etc.], the priests regularly enter the outer room of the Tabernacle [i.e., the Holy Place] to carry out the duties of their service. 7) But [only] once a year the head priest goes alone into the inner room [i.e., Holy of Holies], and never without [animal] blood, which he offers [as a sacrifice] for himself and for the sins done in ignorance by the people. 8) [By his doing this] the Holy Spirit signifies that the way into the Holy Place [Note: This actually refers to the Holy of Holies, and represents heaven] had not yet been disclosed [i.e., made accessible] while the first Tabernacle was still standing. 9) [That Tabernacle] is symbolic of the present time, [indicating] that both gifts and [animal] sacrifices, which are offered [by the priests], are not able to give the worshiper a clear conscience 10) since, with foods and drinks and various [ceremonial] washings, they are only outward regulations imposed until the time when everything would be made right [i.e., under the New Agreement].

11) But when Christ became the Head Priest of the good things that have come, He entered the greater and more complete

Tabernacle, not made by hand, that is, not part of this creation [i.e., heaven, See 8:2]. **12) And He did not enter** [the heavenly Holy of Holies] **by means of the blood of goats and calves but, by means of His own blood He entered the Holy of Holies** [i.e., heaven] **once for all time,** [after] **having obtained never ending redemption** [i.e., salvation for us on the cross]. **13) For if the blood of goats and bulls, and a [burnt] heifer-s ashes sprinkled on people who had been** [ceremonially] **defiled, could purify them so as to make them** [ceremonially] **clean on the outside, 14) how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Holy Spirit** [or, His eternal Spirit] **offered Himself without** [moral] **blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from deeds which lead to** [spiritual] **death to serve the living God?**

15) Therefore, Christ is the Mediator of a New Agreement, so that [all] **those people who have been called** [by God] **can receive the promise of the never ending inheritance.** [This is possible because] **a death has taken place for the redemption of** [people-s] **sins who lived under the first Agreement. 16) For where a will exists, it is necessary to prove the death of the person who made it** [i.e., in order to benefit by its provisions]. **17) For a will is in force** [only] **when there has been a death; for it is not in effect as long as the one who made it is** [still] **alive. 18) Therefore, even the first Agreement was not ratified without blood** [i.e., without a death taking place]. **19) For after Moses had declared every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats and** [mixed it] **with water, then sprinkled both the scroll** [of the Agreement] **and all the people with a hyssop branch covered by red wool** [dipped in the mixture]. **20) He said** [Ex. 29:8], **^This is the blood of the Agreement, which God commanded you** [to observe].@ **21) In the same way he also sprinkled blood on the Tabernacle and all of the utensils used in its ministry. 22) And, according to the Law of Moses, almost everything is** [ceremonially] **cleansed by blood, for there is no forgiveness** [of sins] **apart from the shedding of blood.**

23) Therefore, it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things [i.e., the Tabernacle, its furniture and utensils, etc.] **to be** [ceremonially] **cleansed by these things** [i.e., the blood of animal sacrifices], **but the heavenly things themselves** [i.e., the church, both on earth and in heaven] **require better sacrifices than these** [i.e., the

sacrifice of Christ]. **24) For Christ did not enter the Holy of Holies made by hand, which is [only] a counterpart of the true one, but into heaven itself, where He now appears in God's presence for us.** [See verse 12]. **25) Nor was it necessary for Him to offer Himself [to God] often, like the head priest does, who enters the Holy of Holies year after year with blood that belongs to others [i.e., the blood of animal sacrifices].** **26) For then He would have had to suffer often since the creation of the world; but now at the end of the ages [i.e., the final period of world history] He has been revealed once [for all] to remove sin by sacrificing Himself.** **27) And just as it is destined for people to die one time, and [then] after that to be judged,** **28) so Christ also, who was once [for all] offered [as a sacrifice] to take away the sins of many people, will come back a second time, not to take away sin, [but] to provide salvation to those who are waiting for Him.**

CHAPTER TEN

1) For the Law of Moses was [only] a foreshadow of the good things that [were] to come [i.e., in the Messianic age], not the exact image of those things. It can never, by the same sacrifices, continually offered year after year, make [morally] perfect those who draw near [to God in worship]. **2) If it could, would not those sacrifices have stopped being offered [by now], since the worshipers would have been [ceremonially] cleansed and would not have had a sense of guilt anymore?** **3) But those sacrifices were [only] a reminder of [the people's] sins year after year,** **4) because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**

5) Therefore, when Christ came into the world, He said [to God], [Psa. 40:6-8 LXX], 'You did not want an [animal] sacrifice and an offering, but you prepared a body for me [to sacrifice]. **6) You were not pleased with whole burnt offerings and sin offerings.** **7) Then I said, 'Look, I have come to do what you want, O God, [just as] it is written in the scroll of the book [about me].'** **8) [After] saying the above, 'You did not want, nor were you pleased, with [peace] sacrifices and [meal] offerings and whole burnt offerings and sin offerings,' [although] these are offered according to the Law of Moses,** **9) He then said, 'Look, I have come to do what you want.'** **[So], Christ takes away the first [i.e., the animal and grain**

sacrifices] **in order to establish the second** [i.e., the sacrifice of Himself]. **10) By** [Christ doing] **what God wanted we have been set aside for God through Jesus Christ offering His body once for all time.**

11) For every priest stands and performs his service day after day, offering over and over the same sacrifices which can never take away sins. 12) But when this Priest [i.e., Christ] **had offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, He sat down at the right side of God. 13) From that time onward He will wait until His enemies are placed** [in full subjection] **under His feet. 14) For by one offering** [i.e., the sacrifice of Himself], **Christ has made perfect forever those people who are being set apart for God.**

15) And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for He said, first of all, 16) [Jer. 31:33f], AThe Lord says, this is the Agreement I will make with them [i.e., with my people] **after those days. I will put my laws in their hearts and I will write them on their minds.@ Then He said, 17) AAnd I will not remember their sins or their wickedness anymore.@ 18) Now where forgiveness of sins has taken place, there is no longer** [a need for an] **offering for sin.**

19) Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Holy of Holies [i.e., heaven] **by means of the blood of Jesus, 20) by means of a new and living way which He opened for us through the curtain of His physical body, 21) and since we have a great Priest** [who is] **over God-s household** [i.e., Christ], **22) we should draw close** [to God] **with a sincere heart and a fully assured faith, having had our hearts sprinkled from a guilty conscience** [See 9:13-14] **and having had our bodies washed with clean water** [i.e., in our immersion]. **23) [So], we should hold on firmly to the profession of our hope** [in God], **without wavering from it, for God is faithful to His promises. 24) And we should consider how we can stir up one another to love** [more] **and to perform good deeds. 25) We should not neglect our assembling together** [as a church], **as some people are in the habit of doing, but we should encourage one another** [spiritually], **and** [do it] **all the more** [diligently] **as you see the day** [of judgment] **coming closer.**

26) For if we go on sinning intentionally, after we have received the full knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for [our] **sins. 27) Instead, [there will be] a fearful expectation of** [coming] **judgment and of** [God-s] **raging fire which**

will consume His enemies. 28) The person who has disregarded the Law of Moses is put to death without being shown mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29) How much more severely do you think a person deserves to be punished who has trampled on the Son of God and has regarded the blood of the [New] Agreement, with which he was set apart for God, an unholy thing and has insulted the Holy Spirit, through whom God's unearned favor is shown? 30) For we know God, who said [Deut. 32:35], **ARevenge belongs to me; I will pay back [for wrongdoing].** And again [Deut. 32:36], **AThe Lord will judge His people.** 31) **It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

32) **But remember the earlier days when, after you were enlightened [to the truth], you endured a difficult struggle by having to suffer [much].** 33) **Sometimes you were subjected to public ridicule and abuse, and at other times you shared [vicariously] with those people who were treated that way.** 34) **For you showed sympathy for those who were in prison and accepted it joyfully when your [own] possessions were taken away, [because] you knew that you yourselves had a better and more permanent possession [in heaven].**

35) [So], **do not throw away your confidence, because it pays a rich reward.** 36) **For you need to be steadfast so that, after you have done what God wants, you will receive the promise [of an inheritance. See 9:15].** 37) [Hab. 2:3-4 LXX says], **AFor [it will be] only a short time [before] He [i.e., Christ], who is coming, will be here without delay.** 38) **And my [i.e., God's] righteous person will [obtain] life by [his] faith [in God]. But if he turns back [from me], my soul is not pleased with him.** 39) **But we are not like those people who turn back and are destroyed, but like those who have faith [in God] and obtain the salvation of their souls.**

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1) **Now, [having] faith is being sure of [receiving] what is hoped for, and certain [of the existence] of what is not visible.** 2) **For the men of old [i.e., the forefathers. See 1:1], received [God's] approval [for their faith].**

3) **By [having] faith, we understand that the universe was formed by God's word [See Gen. 1:1-27], so that what is seen has**

not been made out of what is visible.

4) By [having] faith, Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did. [And] because of his faith he was commended by God for being righteous, when God expressed approval of his offerings. By means of his faith, Abel still speaks [to us], even though he is dead.

5) By [having] faith, Enoch was taken [to be with God], so that he did not have to die. And he could not be found because God had taken him away. For he had been commended [by God] before he was taken away, that he had pleased God. [Note: The Hebrew of Gen. 5:24 says, *And he walked with God*]. **6) And unless one has faith, it is impossible for him to be pleasing to God, for the person who comes to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him.**

7) By [having] faith, when Noah was warned [by God] about conditions that had not yet been seen [i.e., regarding events of the coming Flood], he acted out of reverent concern [for God] by constructing a ship to save [i.e., rescue] his household [from the Flood waters]. By this [i.e., his faith which led to action], Noah condemned the world and inherited righteousness because of his faith.

8) By [having] faith, when Abraham was called [by God] to leave [his homeland] and go to a place he would later receive as an inheritance [i.e., Palestine], he obeyed God and went out, not knowing where he was going. 9) By [having] faith, he became an alien in the foreign country that had been promised to him. He lived in tents, along with Isaac [his son] and Jacob [his grandson], who [also] were to receive the same inheritance he had been promised. 10) For he was looking forward to [living in] a city with [lasting] foundations, designed and built by God. [Note: This undoubtedly refers to heaven].

11) By [having] faith, Sarah herself received the ability to have children, even though she was [sterile, being] past the age of child-bearing, since she considered God faithful to His promise. [Note: Some translations consider *Abraham* to be the subject of this highly controversial verse. See Lightfoot, pp. 222-225]. **12) Therefore, from one man [Abraham], who was as good as dead [i.e., because of having a sterile wife], were born descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the [grains of] sand on the**

seashore.

13) These people [all] continued to have faith until they died, [even though] they had not obtained [all] the things God had promised, but had [only] seen them and welcomed them from a distance. And they had confessed to being strangers and aliens on earth. 14) For those who say such things make it obvious that they are looking for a country of their own [i.e. heaven]. 15) And indeed, if they had remembered [with longing] the country they had left, they would have had the opportunity to return to it. 16) But instead, they longed for a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

17) By [having] faith, when Abraham was tested [by God], he offered Isaac [as a sacrifice]. [Even though] he had received the promises [of having many descendants], he was ready to offer his only conceived [and eventually born] son, 18) [even though] he had been told [by God, Gen. 21:12], *“Your descendants will be traced through Isaac.”* 19) [So], he reasoned that God was able to raise up [Isaac] from the dead, which, in a sense, he did receive him back [from the dead].

20) By [having] faith, Isaac pronounced a future blessing on Jacob and Esau. [See Gen. 27:26-40].

21) By [having] faith, Jacob blessed each of Joseph's sons just before he died, and bowed in worship [to God] while leaning on the top of his staff.

22) By [having] faith, when Joseph was about to die, he mentioned the Israelites' departure [from Egypt] and gave [them] instructions concerning his bones [i.e., that they were to take them back to Palestine. See Gen. 50:25].

23) By [having] faith, Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born because they saw that he was a handsome child, and they were not afraid of the king's decree [to destroy all male Hebrew children].

24) By [having] faith, when Moses was grown up, he refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25) but chose rather to suffer mistreatment with God's people [i.e., the Israelites] than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a brief time. 26) He considered suffering ridicule for Christ's sake to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking forward to his reward.

27) By [having] faith, he left Egypt, not being afraid of the king's anger, for he endured [all the rigors of wandering in the desert] because he could see the invisible God. 28) By [having] faith, he established the Passover Festival [Note: This festival was first celebrated in Egypt by the fleeing Israelites, then observed annually in commemoration of that event], and had [lambs'] blood sprinkled [on the door jambs] to prevent the one who destroyed the firstborn children from touching them. [See Ex. 12:23].

29) By [having] faith, the Israelites passed [safely] through the Red Sea as if it were dry ground, but when the Egyptians attempted to do it, they were drowned.

30) By [the people having] faith, the walls of Jericho fell in response to their marching around them for seven days.

31) By [having] faith, Rahab the prostitute was not destroyed along with the disobedient [inhabitants of Jericho] because she welcomed the [twelve] spies in peace.

32) And what more shall I say? For time would fail me if I were to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and [all] the prophets, 33) who, by [having] faith, conquered kingdoms, practiced what was right, and obtained what was promised [by God]. They shut the mouths of lions, 34) they put out raging fires, and they escaped being killed by swords. They were strengthened when weak, became mighty in battle, and defeated foreign armies. 35) Women received their dead [loved ones] back to life. Others were tortured but refused to be rescued, so they could obtain a better resurrection. 36) And [still] others experienced mocking and floggings, and were even chained up and put in prison. 37) They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were executed by the sword. They traveled around in sheepskin and goatskin clothing; they were destitute, afflicted and mistreated. 38) (The world did not deserve such people). They wandered in deserts and mountains, [living] in caves and [even] holes in the ground. 39) And all of these people were commended [by God] for their faith, yet did not receive [all of] what was promised to them, 40) because God had planned to give us something better [than they got], so that they would not be complete without us. [Note: The idea here is that these faithful people of Old Testament times did not receive the fullest of blessings until Christ came to make them available to both them and us together].

CHAPTER TWELVE

1) **Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a large crowd of spectators** [Note: Christians are pictured here as being in a crowded arena, performing in the games], **we should lay aside every [excessive] weight and sin that so easily entangles us, and with perseverance, we should run the race [of life] that lies before us.** 2) **We should fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and completer of the [or, Aour@] faith.** [Note: Jesus is here pictured as the one who completely fulfills the life of faith, or who provides us with the ability to live such a life]. [And] **because He could look forward to joy, He endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right side of God-s throne.** 3) **Now think about how Jesus endured such opposition against Himself from sinners, so that you do not grow weary and become discouraged [yourself].** 4) **You have not yet resisted to the point of [shedding] blood in your struggle against sin.** 5) **And have you forgotten the exhortation that was addressed to you as sons?** [Prov. 3:11f says], **AMy son, do not take the discipline of the Lord lightly, and do not get discouraged when He rebukes you.** 6) **For the Lord disciplines those He loves, and punishes every child He accepts.@** 7) [For the suffering] **you are enduring [is] for your discipline. God is dealing with you as He does with [His] children, for what child is not disciplined by his father?** 8) **But if you do not receive [such] discipline, like all of us do, then you are illegitimate children and not true children.** 9) **Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them [for it]; should we not much rather submit to the Father of our spirits [i.e., God], so we can live [spiritually]?** 10) **For our human fathers disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them; but God disciplines us for our [spiritual] good, so that we may share in His holiness.** 11) **No discipline seems pleasant, but painful, at the time [it is received], yet later on it produces a crop of peace and righteousness in [the lives of] those who have been trained by it.**

12) **Therefore,** [Prov. 4:26 says], **AMy son, strengthen your limp hands and weak knees;** 13) **make straight paths for your feet,@ so that crippled limbs will not remain [permanently] disabled, but rather will be healed.** [Note: The idea here is Aremove all barriers to spiritual growth so you can live a faithful life@].

14) Actively seek to live in peace with all people. And be dedicated to God, because no one will see God without this. 15) Look carefully [at how you are living] so that no one falls away from God's unearned favor, and that no poisonous plant sprouts up to cause trouble and corrupt many people [Note: This is an analogy from Deut. 29:16-18 being used as a warning against the evil influence of wicked people], **16) and that no one becomes immoral or ungodly, like Esau, who sold his right to the firstborn son's inheritance for a single meal. 17) For you recall how, even after he [later] wanted to inherit the blessing, Esau was rejected** [by his father Isaac. See Gen. 37:35-40]. **For he was not able to get his father to change his mind, even though he tearfully begged him** [or, He was not able to change the situation, even though he shed tears over his loss].

18) [Unlike the Israelites at Mount Sinai] you [Christians] have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that burned with fire [See Ex. 19:12, 16-19; 20:18-21; Deut. 4:11]; **to [a place of] darkness, gloom and wind; 19) to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words [from God] that the hearers begged not to have to listen to** [anymore]. [See Ex. 20:19]. **20) For those people could not stand [hearing] the command** [Ex. 19:12f], **AI if even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned [to death].@ 21) And the sight [of all these things] was so terrifying that Moses said** [See Deut. 9:19], **AI tremble with fear.@**

22) But you [Christians] have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. [Note: These terms describe people who have entered a spiritual relationship with God as part of the church]. [You have come] **to a praise gathering of innumerable angels** [Note: Christians are here pictured as assembled in worship of God, along with angels], **23) and to the church of the firstborn ones** [i.e., those who have received an inheritance from their Father], **whose names are recorded in heaven.** [See Luke 10:20]. [You have come] **to God, who is the Judge of all people, and to the spirits of righteous people who have become [morally] perfect** [i.e., that great company of God's people who have gone on to their heavenly reward], **24) and to Jesus, the Mediator of a New Agreement** [between God and mankind], **and to the sprinkled blood [of Jesus], which says better things [to us] than [the blood of] Abel did.** [Note: The contrast seems to be that Abel's blood called for vengeance and death (See Gen. 4:10) whereas the blood of Christ provides mercy and

life@.

25) Pay careful attention so that you do not refuse [to hear] **God when He speaks to you.** [See verse 9]. **For if those people** [i.e., the Israelites] **did not escape** [judgment] **when they refused** [to hear] **Him who warned them on earth** [i.e., God speaking through Moses at Mount Sinai], **how much less** [likely] **will we escape** [judgment] **if we reject Him who warns from heaven** [i.e., Christ]? **26) God-s voice shook the earth at that time, but now He has promised, saying** [Hag. 2:6], **AI will cause not only the earth to shake once more, but also heaven** [as well].@ **27) Now the words, Aonce more@ indicate the removing of what can be shaken --- that is, the created universe --- so that those things which cannot be shaken will remain.** [Note: These Athings@ have been variously interpreted to be eternal truth, the heavenly kingdom, the new heavens and earth, etc.].

28) Therefore, we should be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken [i.e., the church. See Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:6, 9]. **So, with reverence and awe, we should serve God in a way that pleases Him, 29) for our God is truly a consuming fire.**

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1) Continue to love [one another] **as brothers. 2) Do not forget to show hospitality toward strangers, for by doing this, some people have entertained angels without realizing it. 3) Remember** [to pray for and help] **those who are in prison, as though you** [yourselves] **were in prison with them.** [Remember] **those who are being mistreated, realizing that you** [yourselves] **also share** [with them] **a physical body** [i.e., you are subject to the same kind of trials].

4) Marriage should be considered honorable among all people and its sexual responsibilities should be faithfully kept. For God will judge [and condemn] **those people who are sexually immoral and who are sexually unfaithful to their mates. 5) Keep your lives free from the love of money** [and be] **content with what you have, because God** [Himself] **has said** [Deut. 31:6], **ABy no means will I** [ever] **desert you or give up on you.**@ **6) So, we can say with confidence** [Psa. 118:6], **A[Since] the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid** [of] **what people might do to me.**@ [or, Awhat (harm) can people do to me?@]

7) Remember your leaders who told you God-s message.

[Note: This probably refers to former preachers who had since died].
Consider the outcome of the way they lived and imitate their faith.
8) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

9) Do not continue to be swept off your course by all kinds of strange teachings. For it is good for your hearts to be strengthened by God's unearned favor [upon you] and not by [keeping regulations about] foods, which do not benefit those who observe them. **10) [Now] we [Christians] have an altar [i.e., the sacrifice of Christ] from which people who serve in the Tabernacle [i.e., the Jews] have no right to eat.** **11) For the blood of the animals offered as sacrifices for sin is brought by the head priest into the Holy of Holies, [but] their bodies are burned outside of the camp.** **12) Therefore, Jesus also suffered outside of the gate [i.e., of Jerusalem] so that He could make people holy through [the shedding of] His own blood.** **13) So, we should go out to Him, outside of the camp** [Note: This probably signifies separating from the whole system of Judaism, as well as full commitment to Christ], **bearing the abuse that He suffered.** **14) For we do not have a lasting city here on earth [i.e., such as Jerusalem] but we are looking for the city to come [i.e., heaven. See 10:11].**

15) [So], through Jesus then, we should continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the expression of our lips as we confess His name [to be our Lord]. **16) But do not forget to do good deeds and share [with others], for God is very pleased with such Asacrifices.** **17) [You should] obey your leaders** [Note: This probably refers to church elders] **and submit to their oversight, for they look out for [the welfare of] your souls as men who will give an accounting [for your spiritual progress]. [Be obedient], so that they will be able to do this joyfully and not with sorrow, for that would be unprofitable to you.**

18) Pray for us [continually]. We are convinced that we [i.e., the writer of Hebrews] have a clear conscience [i.e., regarding our relationship to you] and we want to behave properly in every way. **19) And I urge you people earnestly to do this [i.e., pray for me], so that I can be sent back to you sooner [i.e., by God's providence].**

20) Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep [i.e., the church], through the blood of the never ending Agreement [i.e., Christ's blood], **21) equip you with every good deed for doing God's**

will. [May He] work in us [to accomplish] what is very pleasing in His sight through [the power of] Jesus Christ. May there be praise to Him forever and ever. May it be so.

22) But I urge you, brothers [and sisters], listen to these words of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. 23) I want you people to know that our brother Timothy has been released [from prison?]. If he comes [to me] soon, I will bring him with me when I visit you.

24) Greet all of those who are your leaders, and all the saints [i.e., God's holy people]. Those [brothers] from Italy send you their greetings.

25) May God's unearned favor be with all of you. May it be so.