

*A Study on  
the Book of  
Hebrews*

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## **Bible Study Guides for the New Testament**

Writing a book was not on my mind when this effort was initiated some years ago. In fact, it began when a member of my Sunday School class commented that his son had talked about committing suicide the previous week. As a result, I felt an urge to see what the Bible had to say about hope, with a view toward helping his son cope with his suicidal feelings. The result of that effort was an article entitled: “Hope and the Miraculous Three Pound Computer,” located in Chapter 6 of the book [After the Big Bang](#). My next writing endeavor was a fallout from a Sunday School class discussion about temptations, or trials, and their purpose in our lives. An article entitled “The Trials of Job” located in Chapter 7 of the same book resulted from that effort. After this I began to feel a prodding from the Lord to continue studying and writing. The chapters in this book document what I subsequently learned about two of God’s greatest and most marvelous creations: earth and mankind, who He made to exercise dominion over it.

Some of the material presented in these New Testament Bible Study Guides conflicts with commonly held viewpoints, and differs as well on the definitions of some words used to explicate them. One thing I have learned through this effort is that the meaning of many of the words used in the Bible is not uniformly agreed to by expositors, and in many cases, not agreed to by the various versions of the Bible. For example, in the KJV of the old testament (OT), the word “soul” is used over 780 times. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words notes that in over 400 of these uses, the Hebrew word used is misinterpreted. I mention this not to heap criticism on the KJV, for it is my personal Bible, and I love it dearly, but to point out the importance of consulting Hebrew and Greek sources, and good conservative lexicons, when trying to understand difficult scripture. The meaning of some words is not absolutely clear even then. Nevertheless, this is the process I have followed in this effort.

I am a retired engineer: my education and work experience sparked a great interest in details. I found that to understand the technical difficulties and problems that arise in the operation of complex machines, a good understanding of the details of the design is absolutely necessary. What is presented here—  
[A Study on the Book of Hebrews by Jesse C. Jones available on scribd](#)

in is an analysis of important details in God's creation of the earth and man: his habitat and milieu. However, no description is completely adequate to portray the unbelievable complexity and efficacy of tripartite man. Scientists and engineers have tried to duplicate the various subsystems in God's design of man for years, with limited success. Part of the problem is that we do not understand many of the operational details, but the greatest impediment is probably the fact that man is composed of three parts: spirit, soul, and body, two of which (spirit and soul) are immaterial, and are thus largely beyond the scope of scientific and medical analysis. The third part, the highly complex body, is strongly influenced by these two immaterial parts. God has given mankind a great challenge in trying to understand tripartite man. What better model could we find for our study than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: spirit, soul and body in perfect relationship. When Jesus came to earth He emptied Himself, and was formed in the likeness and fashion of a man. Like us, He was a tripartite being, but without a sin nature. Thus, He was the perfect man, the ideal for all to emulate.

I read a book several years ago by Watchman Nee in which he made the observation that one of the primary ways God speaks to us is through our intuition. [\*A Study on the Book of Hebrews by Jesse C. Jones available on scribd\*](#)

ition. After that I began to try to follow the guidance I received in this manner, and what is presented herein is largely a result of that attempt. I hasten to add that all readers will not agree with my conclusions. I have learned much about God's creation, and His design of man through this effort: that may be the primary purpose He had in mind. My hope is that readers will find new ideas in these words that drive them to the absolute authority: God's Word - the Bible.

As references I have used the King James Version (KJV), the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the Revised Version (RV), and Recovery Versions of the bible, as well as the Interlinear NIV Hebrew - English Old Testament (OT), and the Interlinear Greek - English New Testament (GNT). I have also used Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament, Moulton's Analytical Greek Lexicon, the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, and Webster's New World Dictionary for word interpretation. Unless otherwise noted, scripture passages quoted are from the KJV.

The John A. Dickson New Analytical Bible and Dictionary, Authorized King James Version, Chicago 1950, was a primary reference source. This Bible was given to my wife and I in 1957, and is one of my dearest treasures. It has been rebound once, and is in need of a repair job at the present time. Thus, the reader can appreciate the usage it has had over these 62 years, most of which has been during the last 25 years. The book introductions have been generally quoted from this source, with changes (mostly grammatical) made only when considered necessary.

Finally, I want to recognize the lady that takes everything I have written, and makes the necessary changes for placing it on the internet. Ms. Sandra Crosnoe is the daughter of two of my, and my deceased wife's, dearest friends, Ted and Jimmie Crosnoe (also deceased). When God moved us (my wife and I), to a Methodist Church in Pasadena, Texas, in 1962, Ted, Jimmie, and their two daughters were among the group of several families in the church that were touched by God in a mighty way that led to a weekly Bible study, that resulted in many changed lives. As the years passed by, and the families went in different directions, we were not able to maintain the close relationship we had in Pasadena. We settled in Lubbock, Texas, in 1982, and I got the call to start [A Study on the Book of Hebrews by Jesse C. Jones available on scribd](#)

writing on the Bible. Sometime after that Sandra was in Lubbock and we got together for dinner. When she learned of my involvement in writing on the Bible she immediately volunteered to help in making it available by publishing it on the internet. She may not have known what she was getting into, for God has not ceased from giving me Bible subjects to study and write about. This series on the New Testament has been our greatest undertaking, and Sandra's help (as always) has been essential. She has corrected my grammar, argued with me on interpretation, prepared the pictorial cover pages, and generally polished the appearance of the various books in ways that I could never have accomplished on my own. Without her help, this (and other) documents would never have been made available to the general public. I do so appreciate all her work. I believe Ted and Jimmie will give her a "well done" when she joins them in heaven. Her personal website is [Finding Gems and Sharing Them](#).

These bible study guides are available at no charge to read, print, download and share on a platform called Scribd (no membership is required to read/download). They are all listed and linked as a group in [Bible Study Guides by Jesse C. Jones on Scribd](#). Upon completion, most of them will contain study questions in the Appendix. Other works available are listed and linked with [\*A Study on the Book of Hebrews by Jesse C. Jones available on scribd\*](#)

[Books for Believers and Seekers](#). If you hit a pop-up page on Scribd asking you to become a member to read free, simply click the 'x' in the upper right corner to remove the pop-up and continue to our links on Scribd. My personal website is [Revealed by Fire - Jesse's Studies](#) if you wish to see my latest articles and updates.

It is my sincere hope that these works will guide you to a personal ongoing relationship with Jesus and a life led and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

*JESSE JONES*

## **A Study on the Book of Hebrews**

We know that this epistle must have been written before the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD by the Roman general Titus Vespasian, for there is no mention of this calamitous event within the text. Hebrews 13:23 mentions the release of Timothy from prison, and if we assume that this letter was written during, or shortly after the intensified persecution of the Emperor Nero, a likely date would be 67 - 69 AD.

The author of the Book of Hebrews remains unknown, although many early Bible expositors have attributed its writing to Paul. For instance, John Owen, a leading pastor and theologian of the 17th century, expresses no doubt that Paul was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. However, some of the methods used in Paul's writing in other epistles are not used in Hebrews and, therefore, other expositors doubt Paul's authorship. Whoever was the scribe in this work, we know that the actual source of the thoughts and teachings in the Book of Hebrews came from the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

The Book of Hebrews sets before the Jew the claims of Christianity through Jesus Christ. Thus, we know it was written to Hebrew Christians: no mention is made of Gentile Christians in the Book of Hebrews. The emphasis is on Jesus' fulfillment of the institutions of the Hebrews in the OT, and how they have been abrogated by the coming of the Messiah in the NT. The Book of Hebrews is certainly one of the most helpful books in the NT in showing how certain OT institutions were but a foreshadow of their fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The preparation of this study grew out of a series of Men's Home Group meetings in early 2007. During several months of lively discussions (we reasoned together) we found our way through the Book of Hebrews. I believe it is the general opinion of the group that we all grew spiritually during this time. I believe that anyone who dedicates themselves to studying the Book of Hebrews with an open mind, eager to be taught by the Holy Spirit, will have a similar experience.

There are many difficult passages in this Book. The discussion included herein documents the interpretation of God's Word to the Hebrews as received by ordinary laymen. I pray that I have been a faithful scribe in documenting this effort.

Bible references are from the King James Version (KJV) unless noted otherwise.

## The Preeminence of Jesus Christ

In the OT God spoke to men through the prophets, but the Book of Hebrews begins by making the point that Jesus Christ the Son now represents God the Father as heir over all things. Christ is heir of everything that was made because He was the Father God's designated Creator. Everything that was made was made by Him. All the laws and purposes that guide the creation and government of the universe reside in Him. Two fundamental theorems of Information Science state that: 1) "Information only arises through an intentional act," and 2) "Information comprises the nonmaterial foundation for all technological systems and for all works of art." We know that Jesus Christ was the creator of all "information," and He holds all creation together through the power of His Word. He speaks the Word, and gravity is created to hold the universe together. He speaks again, and the strong nuclear force is created to hold the atomic nucleus together. In short, everything that is, was spoken into existence by Him. The Holy Spirit was His helper in all of this, as well. On

the authority of the Father, Jesus spoke the creative act, and the Holy Spirit brooded over it, bringing into being whatever was spoken.

Jesus represents the brightness of God's glory and goodness, and is the express image of the Father. The essential being of God set its distinct stamp on Jesus, coming into definite and characteristic expression in his person, so that the Son bears the exact impression of the divine nature and character. If we know Jesus we know the Father, and if we are His bondservant, we have Jesus and the Father within us through the Holy Spirit.

Jesus completed His work on earth in AD 30 when, after death and resurrection, He ascended to the Father and sat down at His right hand, where He intercedes for us, and acts as mediator of the new covenant. As mediator Christ guarantees the benefits of the new covenant for those the Father has given Him (John 10:29). His intent is to conform us to His image, and to insure that we receive eternal life (John 10:28). Some of the ways the "mediator" cares for His saints are listed below :

1) He strengthens and fortifies our hearts against sin, and then tests us by allowing Satan to bring enticement.

2) He often provides a way of escape when the enticement grows so strong we cannot resist (2 Peter 2:9), but He may give us more grace and allow the temptation to persist (2 Corinthians 12:9).

3) He gives us wisdom to make a right, holy, and spiritual use of all temptations (James 1:2). Peter tells us that it is sometimes necessary to be left in temptation (1 Peter 1:6).

4) He supports us with mercy and pardon when at any time we are overcome by temptation, so we will not sink utterly under the burden.

5) He shows compassion for us in all our afflictions (Isaiah 63:9; Colossians 1:24). His compassion is revealed in two ways: He intercedes with His Father (Zechariah 1:12), and He avenges His elect on those who cause them to suffer (Luke 18:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:6).

6) He has a plan for the believer's life, and He tries to keep us on the right track to fulfill that plan. To do this He opens some doors and closes others. We must learn to recognize and pass through the open doors, and turn back from those that are closed.

7) He is constantly nurturing us through training and discipline to make us more like Himself.

When we overcome our lusts and pride the Holy Spirit can manifest Christ through our bodies (Philippians 2:13). In all this effort He seeks to bring us “home,” where we will be with Him for eternal life.

The remainder of Hebrews Chapter 1 compares the majesty and authority of Jesus Christ to the angels. Jesus Christ is God’s Son, and as such He has a greater name and inheritance than do the angels. Hebrews 1:6 says, *“And again, when he brings the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.”* Many expositors of God’s Word say that this refers to Christ’s second coming, but that is difficult to accept since we know that all angels, authorities, and powers, were made subject to Christ after His resurrection, when He returned to heaven and took His place at the right hand of God the Father (1 Peter 3:22). This more likely refers to the entire span of Christ’s life on earth, beginning with His birth, but deferred for a short period of time in order for Jesus to suffer crucifixion, so that He might experience death for all mankind (Hebrews 2:9). Hebrews 1:7 says, *“And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.”* According to rabbinical thought this scripture relates to the variableness of angelic nature. Angels live to minister . . . God uses his angels however he wills. Psalm 104:4 (Interlinear NIV

Hebrew-English Old Testament says): “*He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants.*”

Hebrews Chapter 1 leaves no doubt about the fact that Jesus Christ is above all angels, for to which of the angels did God say, “*Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they (angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that will be heirs of salvation?*” This is an encouraging passage of scripture for it says that those whom God has chosen will be assigned an angel to minister to them while they are being drawn to Christ, and it does not indicate that this ministering angel leaves after salvation has been received.

## Jesus Christ Our Faithful High Priest

“Because you have received a revelation superior to that of the old dispensation, given to you through One who is superior to the angels, you should give earnest heed to the things you have heard,” (Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament). Hebrews 2:1-4 speaks of the problem of turning away from belief in the salvation provided through Jesus Christ. The unanswered question here is, were these immature believers who were warned about the danger of neglecting God’s Word, or were they still in the “drawing” process, not having yet received salvation? In Hebrews 3:1, those addressed are referred to as *“holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,”* from which we infer they were believers. If that is the case this book is a warning about apostasy to immature believers, emphasizing the imperative of becoming holy through the sanctification process. Vincent’s says, “Lapse from truth and goodness is more often the result of inattention than of design. Drifting is a mark of death: giving heed, of life. The log drifts with the tide: the ship breasts the adverse waves, because some one is giving earnest heed.”

Whether a person can fall away totally from belief into Jesus Christ, and become an outcast from the kingdom of God, is a question in many Christians' minds. Many Christians believe that if they are once saved, they are always saved. There is a considerable volume of scripture that seems to imply that this is so, although I do not know of any particular scripture that says this, unequivocally. There is absolutely no question that it is God's will for every one that He chose, and gave to Jesus Christ, to progress in sanctification, leading to holiness in Christ's image (John 10:28-29). Sadly, men have been failing to follow God's will since the Garden of Eden. For those that accept the fact that God chooses those that receive eternal life, the question as to whether this passage in Hebrews refers to believers, or not, is mute. For them, the question becomes whether someone that God has chosen can fall away, regardless of whether they were being "drawn," or had already received salvation. Whatever your belief is about this subject it is clear that God is giving us another warning about the importance of diligence in seeking to know, and become more like Him.

The remainder of Chapter 2 of the book of Hebrews concerns the high priestly nature of Christ's ministry. The new order of things wrought in Christ is in pursuance of the purpose of creation: universal dominion was given to

man, not to angels. Jesus Christ, in becoming a man, was temporarily subject to the earthly administration of angels. Now being exalted above angels, Christ is the mediator (administrator) of the new covenant, and He will give overcomers lordship over angels in His earthly reign on earth during the millennium. Thus, we see that Christ is temporarily subordinate to the angels, and later permanently exalted above them.

Jesus was perfected through His sufferings, for He is the captain (leader) of our salvation. For Him to be able to deliver us holy and without blemish to the Father He had to become one with us. Thus, He had to come to earth as a man, suffer the indignation of becoming a partaker of flesh and blood, and go to the cross in order to taste death for us. He went to Hades in our place, and took the keys of hell (Hades) and death away from Satan, so that we would not have to suffer the sting (deadly fear) of death. This He did so that He could become our merciful and faithful high priest, reconciling us with the Father when we continue to commit sins, and succor us when we are tempted. He guides and protects us through the sanctification process, which is essential for us to receive the end of our salvation (eternal life). He is our intercessor and mediator.

### **Jesus is Compared With Moses**

Chapters 1 and 2 of Hebrews stated that Jesus was preeminent over angels; beginning here in Hebrews 3:3, Jesus is shown to be worthy of greater glory than Moses. The pre-incarnate Jesus built the house of Israel, whereas Moses was part of that house. He that builds the house is worthy of more honor than those of the house itself. Hebrews 3:6 adds that we (contemporary believers) are part of this house if we are faithful to the end. This statement again reminds us that we must continue to abide in Christ or we may not be counted as part of His house when the end comes: faithfulness is proof of real faith, but how do we remain faithful?: by continually allowing the Holy Spirit to renew our minds, and conform us to the image of Jesus Christ.

The mind is the software of the brain, and, as such, it is part of the biblical heart. When God measures a man he looks on his heart (1 Samuel 16:7), which is part of the body. The body is the part of tripartite man (spirit, soul, and body) that is material in nature, and under man's control. This is the part of man that God works to recover during the sanctification process through the renewal of our minds (Romans 12:2). For when we were unregenerate our

hearts were evil continually (Genesis 6:5). The body cannot enter heaven for it is flesh, and not perfect in God's eyes; but if we allow the Holy Spirit to work through our bodies we will gradually make them more holy, and we will receive a reward in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:14), and that reward will be manifested in some way by the immortal body that He gives us at his judgment seat after rapture/resurrection.

Hebrews 3:8-19 speaks of the consequences of hardening our hearts. To do this is to undo one of the things God promised when we believed into Christ: take away the stony heart out of our flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). There are two separate and distinct ways that we accept something as real and true, and believe it will come about. Sense knowledge demands physical evidence that we can see, touch, smell, hear, or taste in order to accept something as real. It is through our five senses that most of our dealings with the everyday world occur. After years of using our senses to sort out reality from fiction, the real from the unreal, we begin to subconsciously resist acceptance of anything that does not come to us in this manner. I believe this is the *hardening of the heart* mentioned in Hebrews 3:8, and spoken of many other places in God's Word.

This hardening of the biblical heart is the greatest enemy of faith and effective prayer. Mark 6:5-6 records the fact that Jesus could do no mighty works

[\*A Study on the Book of Hebrews by Jesse C. Jones available on scribd\*](#)

in Nazareth because of their unbelief, or lack of faith. Our reluctance to accept anything that does not come through our five senses seems foolish when you consider the fact that just about everything we learn in school we accept, at least initially, on something like faith. After we begin to apply what we have accepted based on the trustworthiness of the teacher and/or textbook, we realize that it must be factual and true, for it works. This is exactly the same way that faith from God works. First, we accept that the thing we are hoping (and praying) for will come to pass, based on the trustworthiness of God. God then sets in motion events that begin to attack long-held beliefs that have resulted in *hardening of our hearts*. In effect, our hearts (minds) become capable of receiving, weighing, and responding to evidence that previously would have been rejected. B. B. Warfield, in his book entitled: “Studies In Theology,” uses the example of musical appreciation to demonstrate this principle. He says where musical taste is lacking, no evidence which derives its force from considerations of melody can work conviction. In other words, if the mind is not capable of responding to the evidence, conviction will not occur. Warfield goes on to say that this is the basis of responsibility for developing faith, and maturing in the Lord. “. . . it is not merely a question of evidence but of subjectivity; and subjectivity is the other name for personality. Our action under evidence is the

touchstone by which it is determined what we are. If evidence which is objectively adequate is not subjectively adequate the fault is in us.” When we refuse to let the Holy Spirit renew our minds in this way it is primarily due to hardened hearts, so the question becomes, “How do we remove the stones and soften our hearts?” God is the only One that can bring this about, so we need to turn to Him in prayer asking that He bring lessons, trials, teachings, discipline, or whatever will initiate this process within us, and then pray that His desire will work within us, causing us to do His “*good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13). This is nothing but the sanctification process in action. If we do not allow the Holy Spirit to proceed with this process we will be like those that came out of Egypt who provoked God, and thus, could not enter into His rest (Hebrews 3:19).

## God's Rest

Hebrews 4:1-11 continues the discussion about God's rest. Neither those that were brought out of Egypt by Moses, nor those of David's day, entered into God's rest due to unbelief resulting from a lack of faith. Hebrews 11:13 says that those under the old covenant who died in faith, and who were persuaded of the "promises" (though not having received them), will enter God's rest. Although this "rest" was established at the foundation of the world, it is going to be fulfilled (in totality) in the future, and it is provided for those that receive the Word and mix it with faith.

There are two different Greek words that are interpreted by the English word "rest" in this chapter. The Greek word most often used is "*katapausis*," which means reposing down, abode, or rest. The Greek word less used is "*sabbatismos*," which means the repose of Christianity (as a type of heaven). Although we get a "taste" of God's rest when we receive Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, it will be received fully when believers join Christ in the clouds at rapture/resurrection. It would seem that the rest we enter when we receive Christ, and die to our old sin nature, corresponds to the Greek word, "*sab-*

*batismo*,” the Sabbath rest; whereas, the rest we enter at resurrection/rapture corresponds to the Greek word “*katapausis*,” which means abode, resting place, and ceasing from labors. The human bodies of believers under the new covenant who are still alive at rapture will be “changed” into spiritual bodies at that time (1 Corinthians 15: 51-53). The spiritual bodies (1 Corinthians 15:44) of those who are resurrected at that time (died before Christ comes), will join their spirit/souls, which will come with Christ in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:14).

Romans 10:17 refers to the faith required for salvation, which comes by hearing the spoken word of God: “*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” Romans 10:14 in the Recovery Version is also helpful in understanding this: “*How then shall they call upon Him into whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe into Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without one who proclaims Him?*” It is clear from the context of this verse that Paul is talking about “saving” faith that comes from hearing the spoken Word of God, and making it your own. We often think of preaching and teaching when the spoken word is mentioned, but all believers have a responsibility to proclaim the Word of God in spoken word, as well as by their actions, and actions usually speak louder than words.

Hebrews 4:2 says that some that heard the gospel preached did not respond because the Word was not mixed with faith: *“For not all men have faith”* (2 Thesalonians 3:2). We see this repeated today, some people respond to hearing the Word, and some do not. Those that respond will receive “saving” faith, those that do not respond will not receive, at least, not at that time. Thus, it seems appropriate to define “saving” faith as the measure of faith necessary to receive the Word of God as righteous and true, and accept it as being given to us as individuals. Hebrews Chapters 10 through 12 describe faith at some length, but I do not know of a scripture that clearly describes when “saving” faith is given to man. I believe we may get some insight on this from John 6:44, in which Jesus is recorded as saying that no man can come to Him unless the Father “draw” him mentally and morally. I think that this “drawing” is, at least in part, the breaking down of the hard places in our hearts, as discussed in Chapter 3. It will usually be a process that takes place over a period of time. This “drawing” process seems to be referred to in other scriptures as “washing” by the Word (Ezekiel 36:25; John 3:5; Titus 3:3-5). When God gets us “mentally washed” and “morally drawn” so that we can receive the Word, then He gives us “saving” faith (that element of persuasion), with which the Word can be mixed, resulting in belief. This involves a lot of work on our heart, as described by Ezekiel

36:26-27. He then often arranges an encounter of some sort to bring us to Christ, and this will usually be something different for every person. After we have believed into Christ, and have received the Holy Spirit, He then takes up the task of perfecting our faith through sanctification. Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Hebrews 4:12 says, *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* Vincent interprets this as saying, “Soul and spirit cannot be said to be separated in any such sense as this, and joints and marrow are not in contact with each other. Joints and marrow are not to be taken in a literal and material sense. Joints and marrow are to be taken figuratively as joints and marrow of the soul and spirit. The form of expression is poetical, and signifies that the Word penetrates to the inmost recesses of our spiritual being as a sword cuts through the joints and marrow of the body.” From this interpretation we see that the Word of God can penetrate to the inner being of man to convict and to teach.

Hebrews 4:14-16 refer to Christ’s ministry of intercession and mediation at the right hand of God, helping us to hold on to our profession of faith. He has been touched with infirmities and temptations just as we, and He understands [\*A Study on the Book of Hebrews by Jesse C. Jones available on scribd\*](#)

when we fail. Thus, we can come into the Father's presence with boldness, and ask for mercy and grace in time of need, for we are in Christ, and are authorized to use His name.

## **Jesus, A High Priest After The Order Of Melchisedec**

High Priests were called of God to offer gifts and sacrifices for the sins of men. They needed to have compassion for those that sin in ignorance, and on those who are seduced or wander from the path of virtue, for they were also compassed with infirmity. Because these men were like other men they needed to offer sacrifices for themselves as well as others. Men cannot take the honor of priesthood to themselves, but must be called by God. Thus, God the Father called Christ to be a High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Psalm 110:4 says, *“The Lord hath sworn, and will not repeat, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”* Melchisedec is first introduced in the Bible in Genesis 14:18, when he came forth to meet Abraham after Abraham had freed Lot and recovered his goods from the four kings that had overrun Sodom and Gomorrah. Melchisedec brought bread and wine and blessed Abraham, who then gave him tithes of the goods he had recovered. Melchisedec is described in Hebrews 7:1-4, as being the king of righteousness, and king of Salem (or peace). He was without father or mother or genealogy, without beginning or end of days, and, like Jesus Christ the Son of God, a priest in perpetuity. Although the Bible

does not clearly state that Melchisedec was an OT manifestation of the Son of God, it seems highly likely that this was the case.

Hebrews 5:7-9 refers to the suffering that Jesus endured in His passion, leading to death on the cross. We know that Jesus was sweating blood in the Garden of Gethsemane before He was taken into custody, and these scriptures describe the fact that He was offering up prayers to God with strong crying and tears. His prayers were heard (actually answered) because of His godly fear. Although Jesus was not delivered from the cross, God did sustain Him in the anguish of death, and gave Him strength to suffer the Father's will. God also delivered Him from death by raising Him up in resurrection. Jesus learned obedience by the things He suffered, and, being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey Him.

Hebrews 5:11-14 refers to the spiritual condition of the recipients of this letter. They are described as being dull of hearing because they are still babes in the Word. They needed to be fed milk instead of the strong meat that the book of Hebrews contains. They needed to again be taught the rudiments of the Gospel, rather than the strong meat that mature Christians, who can discern good and evil, relish. These babes in Christ are unskillful in the word of righteousness. Sadly, this is the condition of churches in our day as well.

Watchman Nee lays the blame for this on ministers who have not experienced crucifixion within themselves, and are therefore unable to minister the meaning of the cross of Christ and the power of resurrection.

## Apostasy

Note: The teaching on Apostasy in this Chapter is taken from a book by Jesse Jones entitled “Can God’s Thoughts Be Known?”

Hebrews 6:1-6 says: *“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on into perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”* I believe God is warning believers in this passage of the importance of going on unto “*perfection*,” which is a deeper relationship than that of merely understanding the doctrinal principles which include: repentance from dead works, faith in God, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. Many today who identify themselves as Christians would have considerable difficulty with even these fundamental principles:

there is so little teaching of what is here identified as the “*doctrine of Christ*,” in churches today. Nevertheless, these principles were considered basic to believers in the first century church. This passage goes on to further distinguish those who are the focus of this teaching by adding that they were once enlightened (had received spiritual enlightenment), had tasted the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost (received the Holy Spirit), had received teaching from the Word of God (the Bible), and had experienced (in some small measure) things characteristic of the world to come. This passage of scripture would certainly seem to be describing believers, but notice there is no mention that these believers had entered into the sanctification process: being transformed by the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:2). God intends for all believers to undergo this transformation, for it leads to that most important goal in a believer’s life: conforming us to the image of Jesus Christ. As a believer’s mind is progressively renewed by the sanctification process they become more holy. Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words says, “Since every believer is sanctified in Christ Jesus, (1 Corinthians 1:2; Hebrews 10:10), a common NT designation of all believers is saints, *hagioi*, i.e., sanctified or holy ones. Thus, sainthood, or sanctification, is not an attainment: it is the state into which God, in grace, calls sinful men, and

in which they begin their course as Christians (Colossians 3:12; Hebrews 3:1).” God sees all believers as being *in Christ*, totally holy and clean when they join Him in death and resurrection (1 Corinthians 1:30), but the process of sanctification is continually ongoing for the rest of the believer’s life. This process begins after the Holy Spirit enters the body, and concludes at physical death. The problem with the believers in Hebrews 6:1-6, was that they never “*presented their members as servants to righteousness unto holiness [sanctification]*” (Romans 6:19). We must desire and strive for the Holy Spirit’s renewing of our minds, and be willing (with God’s help), to take authority over those three great weaknesses of mankind: lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.

We now come to the crux of this passage of scripture: Hebrews 6:6, says: “*If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*” This seems to say that if those described above fall away into apostasy, they cannot be restored or reconciled to God, for Jesus was crucified for the sin of man only once for all eternity (Hebrews 7:27). This describes believers who had been born again by joining Jesus in His death and resurrection, but later had fallen away, rejecting their relationship with Jesus, and through their words and actions brought shame and ridicule on our Lord. Although it is not stated in this verse, it

seems apparent that such apostates would be guilty of rejection, or blaspheme of the Holy Spirit, since His mission within the body is to bring it into conformance with the image of Jesus Christ: to make the believer holy. Blaspheme of the Holy Spirit is clearly stated by Jesus to be the only unforgivable sin (Matthew 12:31). Since these apostates cannot be restored again to repentance, this seems to be the only logical explanation of their spiritual condition. John Owen's book entitled: "Apostasy From The Gospel," has this to say about Hebrews 6:1-6, "It is a great mercy, a great privilege to be enlightened with the doctrine of the gospel and to have its truths impressed on our minds by the inward work of the Holy Spirit. This great mercy and privilege may be lost by the sin of neglect, which will serve only to increase the sinfulness and condemnation of those who were once made partakers of this privilege. Where there is a total neglect of this great privilege, with no attempt to grow in the knowledge of the gospel, the condition of such persons is very dangerous and could lead to final apostasy, from which they will find it impossible to repent."

Owen's book discusses apostasy at great length, and I would recommend it highly to anyone seeking to understand this deeper teaching of God's Word.

Some of the weaknesses of the flesh that can lead to apostasy are given below:

1. Failure to recognize and honor the truth of God, manifested in Jesus Christ, who identifies Himself as the truth (John 14:8). The destiny of all liars is the lake of fire and brimstone (Revelation 21:8).

2. Lack of understanding of the majesty and glory of God: who God really is (see Job 37), and the insignificance of man in comparison.

3. The human spirit (the real you), which is given to man by God, and returns to Him at physical death, must be regenerated for man to have any fellowship or communion with God, or to receive teaching for renewal of the mind. It is through our human spirit that the Holy Spirit works to renew (sanctify) the mind, and it is absolutely essential that we join wholeheartedly in the sanctification process, for if we do not Hebrews 12:14 says we will not “*see the Lord*”.

4. Failure to see that joining Jesus Christ on the cross and dying to oneself means that man’s sinful nature dies: man is no longer a slave to sin. This death does not mean that man no longer commits sins, for the part of man that Satan approaches with his enticement to sin (the id) is still active through lust and

pride. Believers must decide (or will) to act on wisdom from the Holy Spirit, and take authority over these enticements to overcome these urges of the id.

5. Belief that man is not under the power of original sin, but is naturally good. Failure to realize that every imagination of natural man's heart is evil continually (Genesis 6:5), and that we must be born again through the spiritual man, Jesus Christ, for our hearts to be changed.

7. Failure to act on our commitment to God, and be doers of the Word and not hearers only. This is the way the faith of God grows powerful in our lives: by exercising or using it.

8. Failure to abide (submit, stand) in Christ, and find our place within His earthly body (the church). Only by abiding can we share the Holy Spirit's gift(s) and bear fruit in our lives.

9. Failure to believe in the divine and absolute authority of the Bible: the Word of God.

10. Failure to join with other saints in assembling together to worship God, and provoke members of the body unto love and good works (Hebrews 10:24-25).

11. Failure to give earnest heed to the things we have heard from the Word of God through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:1-3).

In dealing with the church at Sardis in Revelation 3:4-5, the Lord states that He will not blot out the names of those who had *“not defiled their garments”* (sullied the purity of their Christian life), from the Book of Life. It seems clear from this statement that the Lord can blot out names from the Book of Life under certain circumstances, one of which is soiling their Christian character. Revelation 17:8 states that those that dwell on the earth, *“... whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, ... will wonder, seeing the beast that was and is not, and yet is”*. This states clearly that God did not write some names in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world. These will be cast into the lake of fire at the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:15). Ephesians 1:4 adds: *“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, ...”* Thus, we know that names written in the Book of Life are those that God chose before He spoke the world into existence.

The difficulty in accepting the idea that God would blot names out of the Book of Life comes from the belief that if we are once saved, we are always saved. This belief is often attributed to doctrine of the Baptist church, but it is widely accepted by believers of all faiths worldwide, and it is based on a considerable volume of scripture. I held to this belief for much of my life, and have only recently begun to question it. In seeking a clear-cut answer to this

question from God's Word I have not been able to find a specific statement in the Bible that says a believer cannot lose his or her salvation. On the other hand, John's gospel includes two statements by Jesus that could possibly be construed to mean that salvation, once received, cannot be lost. John 6:39-40 states that it is the Father's will that none of those He has given Jesus should be lost. From this we see that it is the Father's will that no believer should fall into apostasy or unbelief, but nevertheless we know that man has been acting contrary to the Father's will since the time of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. John 6:40 GNT says, "*This is the will of the (One) who has sent me, that everyone seeing the Son and believing into Him should have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*" There are several important points to be made here:

1. The "*will*" of the Father expressed in this verse is better understood to mean the "desire" of the Father. In John 7:17 Jesus said, "*If any man will (willeth to) do his will . . .*", but the GNT gives this as, "*If anyone desires to do his will . . .*". This reflects the fact that men do not always follow God's will. Jesus, when praying in the Garden of Gethsemane said, "*. . . not as I will, but as thy wilt,*" which seems to further imply that God's will does not always rule man's decisions. However, in this case Jesus accepted the Father's will over that of His own. There are many other examples of this in God's Word leav-

ing little doubt that the Greek word “*thelo*,” interpreted by the English word “*will*” in John 6:40, expresses strong desire of the Father, not an edict that He enforces.

2. Everyone “*seeing*” and believing “*into*” the Son should have everlasting life. This is such an important point often missed entirely by many versions of the Bible. In their commentary on John 3:16, the Recovery Version of the Bible states, “Believing into the Lord is not the same as believing (in) Him. To believe (in) Him is to believe He is true and real, but to believe into Him is to receive Him and be united with Him as one. The former is to acknowledge a fact objectively; the latter is to receive a life subjectively.” A contemporary phrase often used to describe believing into the Lord is “having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.” In many, if not most, uses of the phrase “in Christ” in various versions of the Bible, the actual wording in the Greek Bible is “into Christ”.

3. Another important point here is the use of the phrase “*should have eternal life*.” It is difficult to determine the exact meaning of this phrase, for it could be interpreted to mean that believers into Christ are responsible for entering eternal life, but it could also be interpreted to mean that entering into eternal life is not an absolutely sure thing for believers. The English word

*“should”* in this verse interprets a Greek word “ἔχῃ” (epsilon-chi-eta), that is difficult to define in the English language. One definition seems to give the meaning as “to have, have ready, be furnished with” (Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised by Moulton). Different versions of the Bible have used different English words here: e.g. the KJV uses the word “*may*,” the Geneva Bible uses the word “*should*,” and the NIV uses the word “*shall*.” Strong’s New Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words says, “This word stresses that one has the means to accomplish a task.”

John 6:40 does not say that it is impossible for believers to become apostates, even though it clearly is the Father’s will (desire) that no believer should. John 10:29 states that no one can “*pluck*” those that are given to Jesus out of the Father’s hand. From this we conclude that no one can forcefully seize another from God or Jesus (snatch or *pluck* them out of His hand). Whether the believer, of His own volition, can fall into apostasy and unbelief is not clearly established here.

Many scriptures in the Bible record the fact that those who belong to God can fall into apostasy, even though it is not the Father’s will (Isaiah 1:21; Jeremiah 2:11, 21; 1 Corinthians 15:10-12; Galatians 3:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:2-4; Hebrews 6:4-6, 10:26-29; and Revelations 2, 3). There [\*A Study on the Book of Hebrews by Jesse C. Jones available on scribd\*](#)

are also some specific scriptures that indicate it is possible to have your name removed from God's Book of Life. A few of these are listed below:

**Exodus 32:32** - Moses asks to be blotted out of God's book.

**Exodus 32:33** - God answers Moses and says that whoever sins against Him He will blot out of His book.

**Psalms 69:28** - David in praying to God about his enemies says, *"Let them be blotted out of the book of the living (life), and not be written with the righteous."*

**Revelation 22:19** - Says that God will take away from the Book of Life the part of anyone that takes away from the words of the book of Revelation.

In addition, there are a few scriptures that seem to indicate that it is possible to lose our fellowship with Christ:

**Matthew 25:1-13** - In the parable of the ten virgins Jesus refuses to admit the five virgins that did not maintain oil in their lamps to the marriage feast of the Lamb. In verse 12 He says that He does not know them.

**Hebrews 6:4-6** - This scripture says *"it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away, to renew them to repentance; seeing they crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame".*

[A Study on the Book of Hebrews by Jesse C. Jones available on scribd](#)

**Hebrews 10:26-29** - *“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins . . . Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace”?*

**Matthew 7:21-23** - *“Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

Although it may be difficult to believe that a person can lose fellowship with Christ and have Him say to us at judgment, *I know you not*, these scriptures seem to be absolutely clear: we ignore them at our own peril.

In John Owen’s book referred to above he says, “. . . enmity of heart is the first cause and reason why so many fall away from the doctrine of the gospel after receiving it. The only way to prevent this falling away from the gospel is to love the truth and experience its power in the heart. . . . Evangelical doctrine must be understood by the mind, loved by the heart, and willingly and gladly submitted to by the will (Romans 6:17).” Owen goes on to say that apos-

tasy arises from men's refusal to accept evangelical truths on God's authority alone, "Today there are many in the church who subject Scripture to man's finite, limited and corrupted reason. It is man's reason and not God's infallible revelation that determines what is true and what is false, what is good and what is evil. This has been so since this principle was first taught to man in the garden of Eden. The poison of these principles is greatly diffused in the world, and the gospel is greatly corrupted. Such doctrines as eternal predestination; the total depravity of man concerning spiritual things; the power of Christ's grace in the conversion of sinners, regeneration, union with Christ, the imputation of Christ's righteousness for justification; the need for internal evangelical holiness; the need for the grace and help of the Spirit; and the divine authority of the Scriptures are all rejected. Reason can see no logic in these things."

To return to the church at Sardis, although members of this church were apparently believers, they had not allowed the Holy Spirit to renew their minds, and consequently they had no (or few) works that Christ considered acceptable. Christ tells them that when He comes (unexpectedly), they are not going to be prepared to meet Him. Some of these may be like the five foolish virgins in Matthew 25:1-12: they will hear those fateful words "*I know you not.*"

The contemporary church in America has largely failed to preach the full message of the Bible. I believe this has happened as a result of the way which churches are organized and managed under the hierarchical arrangements of the various denominations. Churches have, in the main, become businesses, and there are some that qualify as big businesses. Businesses must make money, stay in the black, offer promotional opportunities and fringe benefits for their employees, maintain a friendly relationship with (largely unbelieving) general society, and build large and impressive buildings in order to convince potential customers that they are successful. None of this seems related to lifting up Jesus Christ, becoming a servant to those in need, preaching the gospel to the poor, healing the brokenhearted, preaching deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, and setting at liberty those that are bruised (Luke 4:18-19). The church no longer seems to provide the salt that society needs to retain its savor, and, as a result, society has gone “flat.” There was a time in our country when the church of Jesus Christ was such a positive influence on society that even those outside the church, the unregenerate, refrained from doing the evil that is now so common. To these unbelievers it was a choice: they could do whatever their wicked hearts imagined and face the rejection of friends, acquaintances, and society; or they could live by the soci-

etal standards prevalent in the locale in which they lived, and be accepted.

Most chose to live peaceably and conform to the moral and ethical standards of those around them. As hopeless as it now appears, God still holds out a way for the church to regain its former purity: repent, and open the door, so that Christ may come in and sup (have spiritual communion) with us.

If God chooses us, how is it possible to fail to believe, or fall into apostasy? Owens' book says that this subject is apparently too controversial for our facile age to be able to deal with. If it is to be dealt with at all it would have to be brought up by preachers and teachers of God's Word, and how many sermons (or teachings) have you heard lately on the subject of apostasy, or of the chosen's failure to believe? Election and apostasy: is it possible for both of these teachings to be truly applicable to the destiny of man? To answer this question I believe we need to begin with Jesus' teaching to the Pharisees in Matthew 12:31-32: *"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blaspheme shall be forgiven unto men: but the blaspheme against the Holy Ghost [Spirit] shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."* Mark 3:29 says, *"But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation [but* [\*A Study on the Book of Hebrews by Jesse C. Jones available on scribd\*](#)

*is guilty of eternal sin]*". Blaspheme is defined as "to speak evil of," and in the Bible it often refers to attributing the work of God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit to Satan, or vice-versa, attributing the work of Satan to God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. Blaspheme against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven: Christians who have not received the Holy Spirit need to heed this cautionary warning and ask in accordance with Luke 11:13. From the above scriptures we know that *utter* blaspheme cannot be forgiven and must therefore result in a reprobate life: separation from God in both this life and the next. We know this applies to the unregenerate, who have not received the Holy Spirit, but can it also apply to believers who fall into apostasy? Can believers backslide (fall into apostasy) to such a degree that they end up rejecting the Holy Spirit? In the passage quoted above from Matthew it seems from the context that Jesus is speaking of those that reject salvation; however, in Acts 26:10-11, Paul tells King Agrippa about how he tried to compel the "*saints*" to blaspheme before he met Jesus. Although blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not specifically mentioned here, it seems from the context that Paul is referring to these saints renouncing their belief into Jesus Christ, which would seem to be tantamount to rejection of the Holy Spirit. The OT also includes several references to God rejecting Israelites who had blasphemed His name (see Isaiah 65:7). From these examples we as-

sume that it is possible for believers to fall into apostasy, renounce their faith in Jesus Christ, and reject (blaspheme) the Holy Spirit. Whether mature, committed Christians who have joined in Christ's death on the cross and subsequent resurrection, who are well along in the sanctification of their minds by the Holy Spirit, who have found their place in the body of Christ, who have Spiritual gift(s) operating in their lives, and who manifest the fruit of the Holy Spirit, can fall into this condition may well be another question: one that may not be answered unequivocally in God's Word.

I do not believe that total apostasy happens overnight; it creeps upon you by micro-inches, and Satan seems particularly adept at nurturing its growth to the place where he can pull the plug on "the big one." We are all aware of notable believers who have succumbed to enticements, and have fallen in disgrace. I once had a personal friend who I considered very close to God: I had placed him on a pedestal (so to speak), partly because he was a prophet used mightily in encouraging and strengthening many saints. We moved to another state and he and his wife came to visit us and to minister in a local meeting of Full Gospel Men's Fellowship. I noted a difference in him at that time, and my wife told me later that his wife told her that he had been spending a lot of time alone in their bedroom, and had recently been attending movies that many

Christians would consider inappropriate. Not too long after they returned to their home he was enticed by Satan through an attractive woman in his church, and eventually fell away into apostasy. This was great blow to me, and many others, who had grown to love and revere this man. Brothers in Christ came to minister to him in prayer, but he was adamant in rejecting their prayers. I suppose this was the first time that I began to wonder whether it was possible for strong believers to become apostates. Of course, there have been many other such “falls from grace” by ministers over the intervening years. Enticement through lust of the flesh is a strong tool in Satan’s arsenal, and that is why it is so important for believers to be diligent in not overlooking those vices thought to have little, or no negative impact on their relationship with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). We must be constantly aware of the Holy Spirit’s presence within us when we are tempted in any way whatever, even in idle and unprofitable thoughts: do not grieve the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 6:19-20 says that hope is an anchor of the soul through which we enter into that which is within the veil. Jesus tore down the veil of separation between us and God when He was crucified, and when we are in Him we can go right into the presence of God the Father in the Holy of Holies. This seems to say that hope is in (or attached to) our souls, and thus hope must be given to

us by God. Ephesians 2:12 indicates that if we are without Christ, we have no hope, Romans 8:24 states that we are saved by (or in) hope, and 1 Peter 1:3 indicates that we receive hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## Priesthood After the Order of Melchisedec

This Chapter continues the discussion first introduced in Chapter 5, where Jesus was identified as a priest after the order of Melchisedec. Hebrews 7:1-21 describe Melchisedec and how the priesthood of Jesus was not of the Levitical order, but was in similitude like that of Melchisedec. Melchisedec is described as the king of Salem, a priest of the most high God, without father, without mother, without genealogy, and having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but being like the Son of God in that the order of his priesthood is eternal. It is difficult to read this and conclude that Melchisedec was anything other than an OT appearance of the Son of God. In the OT Christ was identified as “the angel of the Lord,” and “the messenger of the covenant” (Malachi 3:1). In Genesis 22:11-12, the angel of the Lord stayed Abraham’s hand when he was about to slay Isaac on the altar, and John 8:58 seems to imply that this was the pre-incarnant Jesus Christ Himself when He said: *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad.”*

It is important to distinguish between “an” angel of the Lord, and “the” angel of the Lord. The KJV mistranslates this important phrase in Matthew 1:20, 28:2; Luke 2:9; and Acts 8:26, 12:7, 23. The expression “the angel of the Lord” does not appear after the birth of Jesus. John MacArthur’s Study Bible says that in John 8:58, Jesus identifies Himself as Yahweh of the OT. Although there is reason to be confused at times about when the OT is referring to God the Father, or Jesus Christ his Son, I do not believe the OT Hebrew word Yahweh (interpreted Lord in most versions) should be understood to refer to Jesus. Without question Jesus was called Lord in the NT, but the Greek word interpreted as Lord in almost all cases is *kurios*, which means supreme in authority, and by implication God, Lord, master, Sir.

Vincent’s Word Studies in the NT assumes that Melchisedec was a man designated as the priest of Salem, or Jerusalem. He maintains that statements about his father, mother, and genealogy, were merely recognizing that any record of these had been lost. I believe that when you consider the entire text it seems to indicate something more than this: why state that he had no beginning of days nor end of life, and was made like the Son of God with eternal priesthood? If Melchisedec was an OT appearance of the Son of God it would be appropriate to ask, “What purpose did it serve?” The three reasons I can

think of are: 1) to establish the principle of tithing, 2) to further validate the priesthood of Christ as being from the beginning to eternity, and 3) to show that even Abraham, and through him the Levitical priesthood, was lower than the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Asimov's Guide to the Bible adds another one: he says it may have been God's way to have Abraham offer tithes at the spot of the future temple.

The principal purpose of Chapter 7 is to clearly establish that Jesus Christ was the surety of a better covenant. To do this it was necessary to prove that the old covenant was based on a law of carnal (worldly) commandments, which were imperfect and unprofitable. The Jews received the law through the Levitical priesthood which was temporal, and when the priesthood changed to that of Christ, the law also changed to that which was eternal (the power of an endless life). Although Jesus states that He came to fulfill the law, He is referring to the law as He interpreted it in Matthew 5-7, and in other places in the NT, as well as in the ten Commandments from the OT. Whereas the sacrifices of the Levitical priest for his own, as well as the people's sins was required daily, the sacrifice of the Son was offered once for all, eternally. The law made men high priests in the OT who were weak and unrighteous, but God appointed His Son who was consecrated forever.

Hebrews 7:26 introduces an intriguing phrase: “*For such an high priest became us, . . .*”. The GNT uses the phrase “*fitting for us,*” which seems more appropriate. I am reminded that believers represent Christ to the world, and we are often referred to as “little” Christs. If we are totally “in Christ” it is actually the Son of God sitting at the right hand of the Father that is manifested through our bodies: we are but vessels for Christ to use in fighting the battle against Satan and evil. If He is totally in control of our lives we will be holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens, because we are *in Christ*, as He is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. We no longer need an earthly high priest to intercede and mediate for us, for Jesus took care of that when He died on the cross: the veil into the Holy of Holies was torn, giving believers the freedom to enter into the Father’s presence, for we are a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:9).

### **Jesus Christ is Mediator of the New Covenant**

Hebrews Chapter 8 continues the discussion of Christ's role as our high priest, and mediator of the new covenant. He is now seated on the right of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. He is minister of the Holy of Holies, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord has built: not man. This is referring to the spiritual temple, represented on earth by the body of Christ, and in heaven by the tabernacle of God (Revelation 21:3). Overcomers are identified as pillars in the temple of God in the new Jerusalem (Revelation 3:12).

The word "mediator" is not used in the KJV of the OT, but is used seven times in the NT, all translations of the same Greek word. The uses of this word are all clearly references to Jesus Christ, except for Galatians 3:19, which refers to Moses standing between God and the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, when the law was given. The meaning of the word "mediate" in the Bible is to be an intermediary or conciliator between God and man. From this we recognize that Moses was an intermediary between God and the Israelites, for the Israelites were afraid of encountering God *"by reason of the fire."* Three of the seven uses of the Greek word interpreted "mediate" in the NT relate to Christ's role as

mediator of the new covenant (or testament). Hebrews 9:15-18 makes an interesting point: *“And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament [covenant], that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which were called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither [even] the first testament [covenant] was [hath not been] dedicated without blood.”* This passage of scripture says that Jesus Christ’s work as mediator of the new covenant began (or started) at His death on the cross, and the purpose or goal of His effort as mediator is to cause those that are called (elected) to receive eternal inheritance (life) after physical death. Thus, we see that Christ’s role as mediator is to act as our advocate to the Father, representing us in all things related to receiving our eternal inheritance. Our betrothal to Jesus Christ is consummated when we meet Him in heaven, and He delivers us to the Father as His bride, but the work of conforming us to His image is finished at our physical death. The works of the Holy Spirit in our bodies are finished when we die, and these works are the building materials for our immortal bodies, including clothing, that Christ gives us when we join Him in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:13-15; Revelation 19:8).

Since Jesus Christ is the mediator of the new covenant we need to understand what the new covenant represents in the life of a believer. The most complete description of the new covenant is given in Ezekiel 36:25-27, 29:

**1.** God washes us with clean water to remove all our filthiness. This washing process continues throughout the believer's life on earth (much like the husband's responsibility for washing his wife with the water of the Word), but here He is describing the initial cleansing that goes on as the Father draws us to Jesus Christ (John 6:44).

**2.** He gives believers a new heart of flesh, and removes the stony heart. This refers to removing the "hard" places in our heart. There is a certain amount of reprogramming in our Biblical hearts, actually in the mind (brain software), that must be accomplished for believers to be able to process the guidance they will receive after baptism in the Holy Spirit.

**3.** He gives believers a new human spirit: actually He "quickens" the human spirit we already have. Whereas, our human spirit was dead to God due to Adam's sin, He gives it new life, or "quickens" it, so that believers can receive God's guidance provided via the Holy Spirit.

**4.** He gives us His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the very Spirit of God the Father and Jesus Christ. He gives us His Spirit based on our worthiness or our asking Him (Luke 11:13).

**5.** By the renewal of our minds (sanctification), He conforms us to the image of Christ (makes us holy). Ezekiel explains this by saying He causes us to walk in His statutes and to keep his judgments. He also adds that He will save us from all our uncleannesses and insure that we do not go hungry.

**6.** In sanctification He makes us holy by:

1) Strengthening us against the sin that assaults us by fortifying our hearts. He then tests our strength by allowing Satan to bring temptation.

2) Removing the temptation entirely when it grows so strong and violent that we do not know what to do (2 Peter 2:9). He sometimes gives more grace as temptations (trials) grow and continue to increase (2 Corinthians 12:9).

3) Gives us wisdom to make a right, holy, and spiritual use of all temptations (James 1:2). Peter tells us that it is sometimes necessary to be left in temptations (1 Peter 1:6).

4) Supports us with mercy and pardon when at any time we are overcome by temptation so that we will not sink utterly under the burden.

5) Shows compassion for us in all our afflictions (Isaiah 63:9; Colossians 1:24). His compassion is revealed in two ways: He intercedes with His Father (Zechariah 1:12), and He avenges His elect on those who cause them to suffer (Luke 18:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:6).

6) Has a plan for the believer's life, and He tries to keep us on the right track to satisfy that plan. To do this He opens some doors and closes others. We must learn to recognize and pass through the open doors, and turn back from those that are closed.

7) Constantly nurtures us through training and discipline to make us more like Himself. As we die to our lusts and pride the Holy Spirit can increasingly manifest Christ through our lives. In all this effort He seeks our ultimate good.

Hebrews Chapter 8 closes by reaffirming that the old covenant based on law and the Levitical priesthood has vanished and is replaced by the new covenant: repentance for sins and belief *into* Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

## **Blood of Christ Purges the Conscience**

Hebrews 9:4 indicates that the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies within the tabernacle contained the golden pot of manna (Exodus 16:33-34), and Aaron's rod that budded (Numbers. 17:10). The KJV of the OT never actually says that these two emblems were in the Ark, but instead they were placed "before" the Testimony (tablets of the Law). 1 Kings 8:9 further emphasizes the fact that nothing was placed in the Ark other than the tablets of Testimony. This is apparently the result of some disagreement as to the meaning of two Hebrew words. In my study of God's Word I have come across a few instances where the interpretation is slightly different between the Old and New Testament. I have also noticed this in reading the Gospels: the interpretation may be slightly different from one to the other. What I have found is that to understand an incident entirely you need search all the scriptures that pertain thereto. If you do that, I have found that the truth becomes evident: the Holy Spirit hovering over the writing of the Bible insures that truth is contained therein, but, depending on the particular scripture under consideration, it may

require considerable digging for the real nuggets of gold (truth) to surface, and the true truth to be evident.

The priests under the first covenant sacrificed and prayed for the sins of the people at the altar of incense, and once each year the high priest entered the Holy of Holies to sacrifice and pray for the sins of themselves and all the people of Israel, their sacrifices could do nothing to cleanse the conscience of man. They only provided a temporal cover for sins committed. Notice that sin can only be cleansed by the shedding of blood, whether under the old covenant or the new. This is of course the reason Jesus Christ came to die on the cross: the sinless blood of God's Son only could provide for the remission of sin. Corinthians 15:56 says the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. The Recovery Version comments on this verse saying, "Death is of the devil (Hebrews 2:14), and through sin it stings us to death (Romans 5:12). In God's redemption Christ was made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21) in order that God might condemn sin through Christ's death (Romans 8:3), thus abolishing the sting of death. Then, through Christ's resurrection death is swallowed up by the resurrection life. Sin brings to us a curse and condemnation, both in our conscience and before God, through the law (Romans 4:15, 5:13, 20; 7:7-8).

Hence the law becomes the power of sin to kill us (Romans 7:10-12). Since

Christ's death has fulfilled the law's requirements on us (1 Peter 3:18, 2:24), the power of sin has been annulled. Through the death of Christ sin has been condemned and the law has been annulled, and through His resurrection death has been swallowed up." Verse 15 adds that His death provided forgiveness of transgressions (sins) committed under the first covenant, and gave the promise of eternal life for those having been "called out".

Only Jesus Christ's sacrifice of Himself, the perfect Lamb of God, was sufficient for purging man's conscience of dead works, and cleansing it of evil to serve the living God. Jesus Christ entered a spiritual tabernacle not made with hands, to sacrifice Himself for the sins of mankind. For this reason He is designated the mediator of the new covenant, which came into effect upon His death. As mediator He mediates between two parties, God the Father and man, with a view to producing peace. In this He insures that those the Father has given Him make it home to heaven, to live eternally (John 6:47). This is a significant point: Christ's role as mediator did not begin until after His death.

*"For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: other wise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."* I had mistakenly felt that the bulk of Christ's work was done

while He was on earth, and He was merely interceding for us in heaven to in-

sure that important prayers were answered. I now have an entirely different view of Christ's role at the right hand of the Father. On earth Jesus reconciled us to God the Father and opened the pathway to sanctification: in heaven He is insuring that we stay on the path and make it to the end to join Him in the Father's rest. Hebrews 9:27 says, "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die. but after this the judgment.*" This seemingly applies only to believers, for Revelation 20:6 speaks of a second death, which refers to those cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

Hebrews Chapter 9 closes by reminding believers that Christ's sacrifice was once offered to bear the sins of many, and that He will appear a second time "*without sin unto salvation.*" I believe this means that He has unloaded (at Satan's doorstep) the sin that he took with Him at death, and He now appears (without sin), to finish (or complete) the salvation of those that belong to Him by bringing their fully sanctified bodies from earth to join their spirit/souls in the clouds (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). This obviously refers to the rapture/resurrection, when believer's immortal bodies are resurrected, and those that are raptured have their bodies changed in the twinkling of an eye, to meet Him in the clouds. The phrase "*without sin unto salvation*" applies to these resurrected and changed bodies as well.

## Christ's New Covenant Replaces The Law

Chapter 10 continues the discussion relative to the Old versus the New Covenant. Hebrews 10:4 says, *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.”* In Isaiah 1:11, God asks to what purpose is the multitude of the Jew’s sacrifices, and in Psalm 40:6, David prophesies, *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire ... burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.”* It seems clear from these scriptures that the offerings of the Israelites, through the priests, became merely form, not from the heart. Thus, God sent his own Son to sacrifice Himself for all past sins (Romans 3:25). Through Christ, God the Father made a new covenant with the Jews (first), and then with the Gentiles, who were grafted into the tree, and made partakers of the righteousness in Christ, and adopted into Abraham’s covenant family. Hebrews 10:16 refers to some of the stipulations of the new covenant that God made. The most complete list of these commitments of God is provided in Ezekiel 36:25-30: He will wash us from our filthiness and idols, give us a new heart and spirit, give us His Holy Spirit, cause us to walk in His statutes and keep His judgments, and save us from all our uncleannesses.

Norman Grubb, in his book “The Spontaneous You,” has an interesting description of why God gave the Law to the Israelites, and through them to the world: “Law, then, is not God’s frown in us; it is the first form of His love. The Bible calls law elementary religion. It is the delicate way in which God reaches us on the only level upon which we could be reached, for love always adapts itself to situations. Being self-satisfied and self-reliant, we would see no point in being told we need God. Very well then, God meets us where we are in our self-centeredness. ‘You know what you ought to be. You say you can be it. Well, be it. Here is the law. Keep it. You aren’t conditioned yet for true religion; well, have a religion on your own level--the law.’” He goes on to say that we must have the wrong way shown to us before we are conditioned to desire, or receive the right. The only way we seem to learn is from our mistakes. The point he makes is that God gave us the law out of His love for us, and through His knowledge of what we could and could not receive. Until we learned what sin was, we were in no position to be delivered from it.

Hebrews 10:14, 17 summarizes what Jesus Christ did for believers: He perfects forever those that are **sanctified**, and their sins and iniquities He remembers no more. Notice that the Bible uses the word sanctified here, and not believed or saved. I think this is extremely important to those who believe

in Jesus and have received His forgiveness for sins, but who have not participated in His death and resurrection and entered into the lifelong process of mind-renewing sanctification through the Holy Spirit. We can do no work ourselves that will “*abide*,” only works done by the Holy Spirit through our sanctified vessel are worthy to receive a reward at the judgment seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:13-14). 1 Corinthians 3:15 goes on to say that if a man’s work is burned he will suffer loss, but he himself will survive, yet as by fire. So when we meet Christ at the judgment seat we do not lose salvation if we have nothing to show for what He did for us in His death and resurrection. This seems to me to be a pitiful response to the suffering and sacrifice that He endured on our behalf; but even this may not be the worst outcome of not being sanctified. We are warned repeatedly in God’s Word of the danger of falling into apostasy, and the way this seems to happen is through apathy, and partial apostasy can lead to total apostasy.

This brings us to Hebrews 10:22 which says, “*Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*” Watchman Nee in his book entitled: “The Normal Christian Life,” says that the barrier between God and unregenerated man is due to this evil conscience, and the old Levitical covenant was unable to deal

[A Study on the Book of Hebrews by Jesse C. Jones available on scribd](#)

with the conscience. Now, through the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, that barrier has been removed, and God makes this known to us by documenting it in His Word. When we believe and accept that the conscience is cleansed, the sense of guilt is removed, and we no longer have an evil conscience toward God. I have known men who, having encountered Jesus Christ as a real live entity in their lives, changed immediately, and walked away from evil habits that had plagued them for years. I have also known those that returned to evil habit(s), but found that something was different. One of my grandsons received Jesus several years ago, but then, like the dog returning to its vomit, he returned to his old habit of smoking marijuana, excessive drinking, and related vices. Now that he has “come to himself,” he says that after his encounter with Jesus Christ he could never enjoy the partying in quite the same way, and when he recovered he always felt guilty. This is a cleansed conscience at work. Until Christ cleanses our evil conscience we can sin and our conscience will not bother us. We may have to pay something in physical discomfort, but when we recover we are usually ready to sin all over again. This is not the case in the life that Jesus Christ has entered: He will do whatever it takes to keep us from returning to our previous filthy habits.

Hebrews 10:24-31 reminds believers of the necessity of coming together with other members of Christ's body to provoke one another unto love and good works, and to strengthen and build each other up. I do not believe this is well understood by most church members, and it may be because there is a lack of love and encouragement manifested when their particular part of Christ's body does get together. If this is so it is a sad commentary on the "temper" of the contemporary body, compared to that of the body in new testament times, when they went to extremes to love and care for one another. Hebrews 10:38 seems to say that the end result of this lack of fellowship in Christ's body can lead to "drawing back," and God has no pleasure in those that do. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to strengthen the body of Christ, and if we are not part of the body surely no gift will be manifested through us, and we will be severely limited in our usefulness to Christ.

Hebrews 10:26 GNT says: "*For [if] we [are] willfully sinning after receiving the full knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice concerning sins.*" This is certainly a jaw-dropper for many of us for it seems to say that there is no more forgiveness for sinning that we willfully commit after receiving the truth of the Word. This seems to imply that the sinning referred to here is a "course" of sinning, and not an individual sin.

## Faith

Note: Much of the material on faith in this Chapter is from a book entitled: “God’s Gift of Faith” by Jesse C. Jones)

The difficulty in understanding faith is the fact that it is ethereal, not earthly. It comes from God, for Romans 12:3 says “. . . *God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*” We also know that faith is both a gift and a fruit of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9; Galatians 5:22). Thus, faith originates with God, not man; however, we can grow the faith God gives. We cannot see it, touch it, smell it, or test it, nor can we examine it under a microscope. Only God can test a man’s faith, and He does this to show us the strength or weakness of the faith working within us, as well as to see for Himself whether we will follow His will, or do our own thing. We can expose ourselves to temptation, and, in doing so, gamble that we can control the lust of our eyes, the lust of our flesh, and the pride of life. But this is sheer foolishness, for if a man is not abiding in Christ he has no protection against evil, and he cannot resist the wiles of Satan. James 1:14-15 has this to say about temptation, “*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it*

*bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished (full-grown), bringeth forth death.”*

When we let our lusts and pride determine our thoughts we encounter temptation, and, if nurtured, the thought can turn to action, resulting in sin.

There are two separate and distinct ways that we accept something as real and true, and believe it will come about. Sense knowledge demands physical evidence that we can see, touch, smell, hear, or taste in order to accept something as factual. It is through our five senses that most of our dealings with the everyday world occur. After years of using our senses to sort out reality from fiction, the real from the unreal, we begin to subconsciously resist acceptance of anything that does not come to us in this manner. I think of this as *hardening of the heart*, spoken of many times in God’s Word. This hardening of the biblical heart is the greatest enemy of faith and effective prayer. Mark 6:5-6 records the fact that Jesus could do no mighty works in Nazareth because of their unbelief, or lack of faith. Our reluctance to accept anything that does not come through our five senses seems foolish when you consider the fact that just about everything we learn in school we accept, at least initially, on something like faith. After we begin to apply what we have accepted based on the trustworthiness of the teacher and/or textbook, we realize that it must be factual and true, for it works. This is exactly the same way that faith from God

works. First, we accept that the thing we are hoping (and praying) for will come to pass, based on the trustworthiness of God. God then sets in motion events that begin to attack long-held beliefs that have resulted in *hardening of our hearts*. In effect, our hearts (minds) become capable of receiving, weighing, and responding to evidence that previously would have been rejected. I see this as being the way that we grow our faith: actually we remove the impediments to faith flowing in our lives. B. B. Warfield, in his book entitled: “Studies In Theology,” says that our action under evidence is the touchstone by which it is determined what we are. If evidence which is objectively adequate is not subjectively adequate the fault is in us.” This explanation is not just for “saving faith,” but it is the principle for “growing faith” as well. When we see something we had hoped for come about we are usually amazed at the way God chooses to answer. It is always a better solution than we could have thought of on our own. When the answer comes it breaks down some of the *stones* in our hearts, strengthens the flow of faith (power), and makes the next challenge easier to believe for. This is one of the ways God uses to renew our minds, and transform us, so that we are not fashioned according to this world, but to the image of Christ (Romans 12:2).

Romans 10:17 talks about the faith required for salvation, which comes by hearing the spoken word of God, *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* Romans 10:14 Recovery Version is also helpful in understanding this scripture: *“How then shall they call upon Him into whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe into Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without one who proclaims Him?”* It is clear from the context of this verse that Paul is talking about “saving faith” that comes from hearing the spoken word of God. We often think of preaching and teaching when the spoken word is mentioned, but all believers have a responsibility to proclaim the word of God in spoken word, as well as by their actions, and actions usually speak louder than words.

Hebrews 4:2 says that some that heard the gospel preached did not respond because the word was not mixed with faith. We see this repeated today, some people respond to hearing the word and some do not. Hebrews 10 through 12 describe faith at some length, but I do not know of a scripture that states clearly where, or how, this “saving faith” is given to man. I believe we may get some insight on this from John 6:44, in which Jesus is recorded as saying that no man can come to Him unless the Father draw him. I think this “drawing” process is, at least in part, the breaking down of the hard places in our hearts.

In other places in the Bible this “drawing” process seems to be referred to as “washing” by the Word: a fitting description of the mind-changing process described above. When God the Father gets us “washed” and “drawn” so that saving faith can flow within us, He then does whatever it takes to bring us to Christ, and this will usually be something different for every person. Christ then takes up the task of perfecting our faith by teaching us through trials and tests that continue to break down the hard places in our hearts.

Romans 12:3 seems to indicate that God gives a measure of faith to every believer. Although the KJV says “*to every man*,” the GNT says “*to each*” that is among you (to all in the church body at Rome), so we know that Paul is addressing believers here. The magnitude of this measure is seemingly determined by the particular spiritual gift that each member of the body is given: various gifts seem to require varying degrees of faith. We are cautioned to not think more highly of ourselves than is warranted, for all members of the body are equally important, and God is the One that dispenses the gifts. These gifts are given to benefit all members of the body, and the body is to function as a unit, with all the various parts (members), functioning as God has given grace, with one mind and with one mouth glorifying God. It seems that the more humble a member of the body is, the greater the gift, and stronger the flow of

faith. This seems reasonable, for the humble man has very few strongholds, or hard places in his heart, and thus, the flow of faith has few impediments. To question or to envy the measure of faith in another member of the body is to question God's wisdom and authority to dispense spiritual gifts according to His assessment of the condition of the heart. He knows the degree of purity and holiness in the member's heart, and the level of faith required for the gift to be manifested.

It is important that we not think of the different scriptures about faith as describing different types of faith, but as describing different levels, or measures, of faith. Faith is clearly defined in God's Word as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Thus, faith determines the level, or measure, of conviction we have that something hoped for will be realized.

This is the only definition of faith we are given in God's Word so we know that what we have discussed above is different levels, and not different types of faith. We know that the level referred to as saving faith responds to hearing the Word of God, and, if the word is assimilated by "saving" faith in the hearer, he or she will find salvation. After we receive the Holy Spirit the process of increasing, or growing, this initial faith is started. This occurs as we hear God, act on His spoken word, and see the word bear fruit. Then we are ready for

the next faith lesson, which will probably be more difficult. When God manifests one (or more) of His spiritual ministries, operations, or gifts in us, He does this to benefit of those in the body of Christ (the church). He does this through the mind-renewing process, by continuing to break down the hard places in our hearts, thus increasing the power of faith working in us. That could be great faith, such as that shown in the lives of such men as Rees Howells and Smith Wigglesworth. Oswald Chamber's daily meditation on Hebrews 11:6 says, "Faith must be tested and tried before it becomes real in your life. . .so that no matter what happens, the transforming power of God's providence transforms perfect faith into reality. Faith is the entire person in right relationship with God through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

We all need to grow the faith that God can manifest in us by boldly acting on the guidance we receive from the Holy Spirit. *"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Christ."* (1 Peter 1:7 ).

Hebrews 11:13 answers the question about how the OT saints managed to get into heaven without knowing Christ: *"They all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth."* Hebrews 11:40  
[\*A Study on the Book of Hebrews by Jesse C. Jones available on scribd\*](#)

adds that God provided a better thing (Christ) for us, and we, together with the OT saints, will be made perfect.

## Faith, Patience, and Godliness

Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus is the author and finisher (perfecter) of our faith. This passage of scripture seems to support the idea that our faith is a work in progress, and that Jesus Christ, from His position at the right hand of God, is the One who is directing this work through the Holy Spirit within us.

1 Peter 1:7 refers to the trial (or testing) of our faith. Our faith is something that is intended to grow, and Christ continually tests it to measure and affirm its growth. This concept of growing faith is also supported by Romans 1:17, *“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith. . .”*. This seems to say that we go from one test of faith to the next, and each subsequent test is more difficult than the last one, but the increased difficulty aids and validates the growth process, much like the learning process we undergo in school. Hebrews 10:38-39 is a warning to those that shrink back from these tests of faith.

The two parables in Matthew 25 relate to the principle of constantly using and growing the ministries, operations, and gifts that God gives us. In the parable of the ten virgins, five of them did not keep their lamps full of oil, and when the bridegroom came they were not prepared, and were thus not allowed

into the marriage feast. These five foolish virgins are like believers that fail to grow in their walk with the Lord by renewing their minds, and, as a result, their vessel will not be full of the Holy Spirit when the Lord comes. The second parable concerns the master that distributed his goods to his slaves in varying amounts before he left on a long trip. When he returned he found that one of the slaves failed to earn an increase in the amount he was given, and, as a result, the goods previously given to him were taken from him. This parable also concerns the principal of Christian growth (sanctification) that God expects us to follow. As we become more Christlike in our Christian walk our faith increases, and we are able to believe and do greater and greater things. 2 Corinthians 3:18 says we are being transformed into the image of the Lord from glory to glory. Stated in another way, we are transformed by success in overcoming the world to an even more difficult challenge of our faith. As Paul says in Philippians 3:13-14, let us forget the things which are behind and reach forth unto the things which are before us that we might claim the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ. Romans 12 lists the attributes we must develop and manifest in order to do this: liberality, diligence, mercy, cheerfulness, love, abhorrence of evil, steadfastness in that which is good, not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, steadfast in

prayer, given to hospitality, blessing those that persecute you, rejoicing with those that rejoice, weeping with those that weep, minding not high things, condescending to men of low estate, not being wise in your own conceits, not returning evil for evil, being honest in the sight of all men, living peaceably with all men, not avenging yourself, feeding the hungry, providing for those that thirst, and overcoming evil with good. All these things we should do because of what Jesus did for us, and we should not grow weary and give up, for we have not resisted unto death. We must also remember that God chastens those that He loves: those who have not received chastening are not sons of God. Chastening is never pleasant but it yields peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that endure.

Hebrews 12:12-13 encourages members of the body of Christ to be sensitive to the needs of other members of the body, to lift them up when they are down, and to share your own strength when they are weak. God has a plan for every one that belongs to Him, and we are told to keep our eyes on the goal, and follow a straight path so that those that are lame will not be turned out of the way. Vincent's says the meaning of this is: "Make the paths smooth and even, so that the lame limb be not dislocated by stones or pitfalls. Do everything to avoid aggravating the weakness of a fellow-Christian. Rather try to

heal it.” He adds that this may refer to an individual or to a section of the church which is weak and vacillating. Proverbs 4:26 says, “*Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy feet from evil.*”

Hebrews 12:14 brings up a very serious consideration, almost as an afterthought: “*Follow peace with all men, and holiness [the sanctification], without which no man shall see the Lord.*” This says that unless a person undergoes some degree of sanctification, they will not “see” the Lord. Matthew 5:8 says, “*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*” We could gather from these two passages that sanctification leads to a pure heart. Moulton’s Analytical Greek Lexicon gives this as: “to be admitted into the more immediate presence of God.”

I am not sure that I fully understand the meaning of this, but I suppose it could be saying that those that do not enter into sanctification (become holy) will not be admitted into the full presence of God. They may be restricted to seeing Jesus Christ as judge, whereas the one that is holy may see Jesus at various other times. I certainly want to “see” Jesus, and I cannot imagine a life without “knowing” Jesus spiritually now, and looking forward to seeing Him in His heavenly body at rapture/resurrection. We know that no unclean thing can enter into heaven, so if we do not manifest holiness in our lives we do not have

the very attribute that God says is necessary to enter into the spiritual tabernacle in heaven that He has prepared. 1 Corinthians 3:15 says that if a man's works are all burned he himself will still be saved, but by fire. If we consider both of these scriptures the teaching would seem to be that it is necessary for man enter into sanctification to see Jesus, but if he does not allow the Holy Spirit to do any works through his life, he will still be saved, but he will suffer loss. A. W. Tozer in his book entitled: "I Call It Heresy," says that holiness is a positive quality including kindness, mercy, purity, moral blamelessness, and godliness. In reality whatever holiness is in our lives is actually God's holiness, effectuated through the Holy Spirit's renewal of our minds. If we do not reflect His holiness in our lives we either do not have God's Spirit within, or we have not given the Holy Spirit freedom to manifest His fruit through us.

I cannot overemphasize the importance of this teaching for Christians. I have never (to my knowledge) heard this preached in any church or Christian meeting I have ever attended. Rather, I have always heard that the only requirement for receiving eternal life is belief in Jesus. The operable word here may be the word "in", used in most versions of the Bible. Actually, the Greek word interpreted "in," as used in such scriptures as John 3:16, literally mean "into," which is certainly a more thought provoking relationship. A common

response given when trying to describe the difference between an “in” and an “into” relationship is that an “in” relationship is objective: knowing about Jesus; whereas, an “into” relationship is subjective: knowing Jesus personally, and having Him involved in running your life.

In Romans 6:19-23 Paul clarifies the meaning of the holiness we inherit when we let the Holy Spirit sanctify our bodies: “...even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness [sanctification]. For when ye were servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in these things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of these things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end is everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” It is not enough to merely recognize Jesus as our savior and believe that He took our sins on the cross. This is just the first step in our future life as a new person. We must join Jesus on the cross and die to our old “sin” nature: become a new creation in resurrection, one who has the very Spirit of God and Christ within. This is the second step in our walk toward eternal life, at this point our human spirit has been “quickened” (given life), and we are now equipped and ready to start anew. From here on the work God does in us is focused on reclaiming our bodies, the only part of our tripartite being that is ma-

terial in nature, and sinful because of our inheritance through Adam. This is what the Bible refers to as sanctification, and its purpose is to make us holy, conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. The goal in this is to get us to give up our “right” to ourselves totally, and seek to follow the guidance we receive from the Holy Spirit, and to give Him complete control of our lives to do whatever He sees fit. This means dying to the rule of our ego, and the associated lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life: a tall order indeed. I use the word “dying” here because the process of sanctification (making me like Jesus) is certainly an ongoing process.

Hebrews Chapter 12 closes with a reminder and warning of the importance of following Jesus Christ, who is now our mediator sitting at the right hand of God the Father. He speaks from heaven to shake the things on earth that can be shaken. The things that can be shaken are those that are made, the material things of earth. The spiritual things are the things that cannot be shaken, and thus we must honor and receive the spiritual and reject the material. The kingdom that believers into Christ are receiving cannot be shaken, and nothing that can be shaken will enter that kingdom. *“Our God is a consuming fire.”*

## Godly Admonitions

Hebrews 13:1-17 review the godly attributes that all believers into Jesus Christ should manifest. We should be kind to strangers for we may be entertaining angels sent by God to determine the condition of our heart. We should remember those in prison, and those that suffer adversity, considering the fact that if it were not for the grace of God we could be in their place. Marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled, but those who have sexual relations outside of marriage will be judged by God. We should not love money, for if we belong to God He will provide what we need and are capable of handling. We need to be content with what we have for if we have Jesus we are extremely blessed. We need not fear what man can do to us for man can only kill the body. He has no power over the spirit/soul which represents the “real” us. God either allows or causes whatever things come into our lives. We should not be carried about with divers and strange doctrines, for the heart of man is established with grace, not with ceremonial trappings. Let us remember that Jesus suffered outside the camp, where the bodies of sacrificial beasts were burned. Our

desires and goals must be focused on spiritual matters and not on worldly things: even things that are thought of as “good”. Our sacrifices should be the praise of our lips, giving thanks and making confession to God. We need to obey the ones that rule over us, unless they try to force us to do something contrary to God’s Word. Remember that they can do nothing to us that God does not know about.

## Questions from Hebrews

### Chapter 1

1. Explain the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in creation.
2. What does Romans 8:17 mean when it says if we are to be joint heirs with Christ we must suffer with Him?
3. Explain what Jesus is doing seated at the right hand of the Father. Is there any significance in whether He is sitting or standing?
4. Explain the meaning of Hebrews 1:6.
5. Explain the relationship between Jesus Christ and angels in the OT, and in the NT.
6. Hebrews 1:14 says that God sends ministering angels to those who **will be** heirs of salvation. Explain.
7. Do Christians have ministering angels? If so, what do they do?

## Chapter 2

1. If God chooses us is it possible to apostasize to such a degree that Jesus will say He never knew you? (see Ex. 32:32, 33; Ps. 69:28; Matt. 7:21-23, 25:1-13; Heb. 6:4-6, 10:26-29; Rev. 22:19)
2. God gave witness to the disciples by signs and wonders, and diverse miracles. Is He still doing this? Have you seen any?
3. If Jesus was made a little lower than the angels (Heb. 2:7), explain why angels would worship Him?
4. Why did Jesus have to suffer to become the captain of our salvation?
5. Explain Heb. 2:14.
6. Explain Heb. 2:15.
7. What is the significance of Jesus being our high priest?

## Chapter 3

1. Why do you think this Chapter of Hebrews compares Jesus with Moses?
2. What is God warning us about in Heb. 3:8, when He says, “harden not your hearts”?
3. Discuss the significance of “hardening your heart” in light of God’s promises in Eze. 36:26.

4. From Hebrews Chapter 3, what may be the consequences of “hardening our hearts”?
5. What are some of the ways in which we can soften our hearts?
6. What is God’s rest, and what is necessary for us to enter it?

## **Chapter 4**

1. What does Hebrews 4:1 mean when it refers to coming short of God’s rest?
2. What is God’s rest?
3. What does the discussion in Heb. 4:1-11 about failure to enter into God’s rest say about belief in eternal security?
4. In your own words give your understanding of the biblical word “faith” as compared to “saving faith.”
5. Explain Heb. 4:12.
6. In what ways was Jesus tempted by lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, and the pride of life?

## Chapter 5

1. Explain Heb. 5:2.
2. Why does the Book of Hebrews emphasize Christ's high priesthood since He did not perform any priestly duties, claimed no special privilege of access to the temple, and contradicted the whole Jewish conception of the priesthood?
3. Explain the use of the word "feared" in Heb. 5:7.
4. Why do you think Melchisedec appeared in Gen. 14:18 of the OT? Do you think Melchisedec was an OT manifestation of Christ?
5. Hebrews 5:9 seems to say that Jesus was not perfect until He suffered on the cross. Explain.
6. What can be done to teach and encourage "baby" Christians so they can be fed with "strong meat".

## Chapter 6

1. Describe the word “apostasy” in your own words.
2. What was (or is) the spiritual condition of the people described in Heb.

6:1-6?

3. How do these verses seem to refute the idea of “once saved, always saved”?

4. What are the two immutable things referred to in Heb. 6:18?
5. How do these immutable things relate to Christians in our day?
6. Where does hope come from?
7. Explain Heb. 6:19-20.

## Chapter 7

1. Why did Abraham tithe to Melchisedec?
2. Explain Heb. 7:3.
3. Do you believe that Melchisedec was the pre-incarnant Son of God?

Give reasons.

4. List instances of Christ appearing in the OT.
5. Explain the connection between the law and the Levitical priesthood?
6. What purpose did the law serve?

7. Did Jesus abolish the law as well as the Levitical priesthood with the new covenant?

8. Does Heb. 7:26 have any connection to Phs. 2:7?

## **Chapter 8**

1. Explain Heb. 8:2.

2. What are the gifts and promises that Christ has to offer those that are under the new covenant?

3. Explain Heb. 8:8-10.

4. Explain the difference between Christ's role as mediator and intercessor.

5. Explain Heb. 8:15-17.

## **Chapter 9**

1. Explain the difference between the OT High Priest dealing with the sins of the Israelites, and Jesus Christ dealing with our sins.

2. Explain what exactly happened when Jesus took the keys of hell and death from Satan after He died on the cross.

3. What is Jesus Christ's role as mediator of the New Covenant?

4. How does the blood of Christ purge our conscience from dead works?

5. What does the statement in Heb. 9:15 about redemption of transgressions under the Old Covenant mean. Compare this statement with Rom. 3:25.
6. Heb. 9:28 states that Jesus will appear a second time without sin unto salvation. What do you believe happened to the sin Jesus took on Himself on the cross?

## **Chapter 10**

1. What was the purpose of the old covenant?
2. Why is it important for believers to enter into the process of sanctification?
3. Explain 1 Cor. 3:13-15.
4. Explain the significance of having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
5. Why is it important for believers to assemble themselves together?
6. Explain the purpose of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
7. What is the meaning of the word “tempered” in 1 Cor. 12:24?

## **Chapter 11**

1. How does faith in spiritual matters differ from the process of learning something new in the public schools? How is it alike?
2. Is faith involved in the act of believing into Jesus Christ? If so, where did it come from?
3. Explain the difference between faith and hope.
4. What does the Book of James say about faith?
5. Why do you think God tests the level of faith operating within us?
6. Is it possible to “grow” our faith? How is this done?
7. How did the OT saints get into heaven without having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ?
8. Do all men have faith?

## **Chapter 12**

1. Who are these witnesses referred to in Hebrews 12:1, and what does it mean that we are surrounded by them?
2. What does Hebrews 12:2 mean when it says that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith?

3. What do you think it means if we are not receiving chastening and scourging from the Lord?
4. Explain Heb. 12:12.
5. Does Heb. 12:14 say that those who do not enter the process of sanctification will not receive eternal life?
6. Explain what a “root of bitterness” is.
7. Explain Heb. 12:27.
8. Explain the meaning of the word holiness.

## **Chapter 13**

1. Have you had any encounters with strangers that may have been angels? Describe.
2. How is Hebrews Chapter 13 like Matt. 25?
3. What does Heb. 13:4 mean when it says, “...and the marriage bed undefiled”?
4. Do you accept the belief that man can do nothing to believers that God does not command or allow?
5. Why is praise considered a sacrifice?
6. How should a believer comply with an unbelieving ruler’s edicts?

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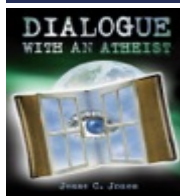
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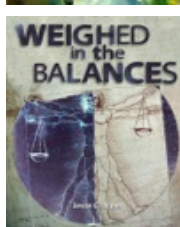


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