

Jesus THE Priest

The Splendor of the Faith



MELCHIOR



ETERNAL

HIGH PRIEST

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST



© MCzarnecki 2009
seraphicrestorations.com

WORTHY



WORTHY

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Outline of Hebrews.....	4
Week 1: Hebrews 1.....	5
Week 2: Hebrews 2.....	6
Week 3: Hebrews 3:1-6.....	7
Week 4: Hebrews 3:7—4:13.....	8
Week 5: Hebrews 4:14-5:10.....	9
Week 6: Hebrews 5:11—6:8.....	10
Week 7: Hebrews 6:9-20.....	11
Week 8: Hebrews 7:1-14.....	12
Week 9: Hebrews 7:15-28.....	13
Week 10: Hebrews 8.....	14
Week 11: Hebrews 9:1-14.....	15
Week 12: Hebrews 9:15-28.....	16
Week 13: Hebrews 10:1-18.....	17
Week 14: Hebrews 10:19-39.....	18
Week 15: Hebrews 11:1-22.....	19
Week 16: Hebrews 11:23-40.....	20
Week 17: Hebrews 12:1-17.....	21
Week 18: Hebrews 12:18-29.....	22
Week 19: Hebrews 13:1-8.....	23
Week 20: Hebrews 13:1-25.....	24
Week 21: Wrap Up.....	25
Bible Study Schedule.....	26

The questions used in this study are compiled from two sources:

Manley, George Thomas., and H. W. Oldham. *Search the Scriptures: the I.V.F. Bible Study Course*. London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1955, Third Edition. Print.

Luder Whitlock, Jr., executive director; R.C Sproul, general editor, *New Geneva study Bible [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, ©1995 by Foundation for Reformation.

Introduction

Author: The author of Hebrews was skilled in Greek and Hellenistic literary style, immersed in the Old Testament (in the Greek translation, the Septuagint), sensitive to the history of redemption culminating in Jesus, and pastorally concerned for the original readers, who knew him personally (13:22, 23) and whose background he knows (10:32-34). Like his readers, he came to faith not through direct contact with Jesus, but through the apostles' preaching (2:3, 4). In addition, he was acquainted with Timothy (13:23).

But the epistle does not tell us his name, leaving a tantalizing mystery. In the Eastern church by the time of Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 150-215) and Origen (A.D. 185-253) the epistle was attributed to Paul, although both of these theologians recognized the stylistic differences between Hebrews and the Pauline epistles. In the West, Tertullian (c. A.D. 155-220) proposed Barnabas, a Levite of the Jewish Dispersion who was noted for his encouragement of others (Acts 4:36). Other early suggestions were Luke and Clement of Rome (c. A.D. 95). From the fifth to the sixteenth centuries Paul's authorship was accepted in East and West. During the Reformation Luther proposed Apollos, a Jewish Christian from Alexandria who was skilled in speech and powerful in the Scriptures (Acts 18:24). Suggestions in the modern period have included Priscilla (but Cross reference: 11:32, where the author refers to himself with a masculine gender participle), Epaphras (Col. 1:7), and Silas (Acts 15:22, 32, 40; 1 Pet. 5:12). While it is difficult to rule out many of these candidates, it is equally hard to make a convincing case for any one of them. From the standpoint of early tradition, Paul has the strongest claim, but as Calvin observed, Hebrews differs from Paul in style, teaching method, and in the author's inclusion of himself among the disciples of the apostles (2:3)—a statement at odds with Paul's characteristic claim to have received his appointment and revelation of the gospel directly from Christ (Gal. 1:1, 11, 12).

If the author is not Paul (or someone such as Luke whose other writings we have), knowing the author's name would add little to our understanding of the epistle in any case. The epistle does have theological affinities with Paul. On the other hand, John's lofty doctrine of Christ as the divine "Word" is detectable. But these combined characteristics, along with the portrayal of Jesus' suffering as described in the first three (Synoptic) Gospels, are to be expected in view of the Holy Spirit's unifying authorship of all of Scripture. While the human author of this book remains unknown, the important thing is that this writing, like the Old Testament before it, is what "the Holy Spirit says" (3:7).

Date and Occasion: Hebrews offers a fair amount of information about the original recipients and their situation, while leaving questions of date and destination without certain answers. The original readers spoke Greek and used the Greek translation of the Old Testament. They could follow arguments drawn from the Old Testament and were interested in the Old Testament sanctuary, sacrificial system, and priesthood. They had not heard the gospel directly from Jesus, but from apostles (2:3), had faced previous persecution (10:32-34) and were facing present persecution, including expulsion from Jewish institutions (13:12, 13). They were in danger of falling away, perhaps fearing death (2:14-18), although their faith had not yet led to martyrdom (12:4). In addition, they may have been undergoing a transition in church leadership (13:7, 17), and were therefore concerned about security and permanence (6:19; 11:10; 13:8, 14). Finally, they receive greeting through the author from "those from Italy" (13:24).

Drawing these features together, we conclude that the recipients were Jewish Christians of the Dispersion (the scattering of Jews outside Palestine), probably in Italy. This would take 13:24 to be a greeting sent "home" by expatriates. The earliest evidence of acquaintance with the epistle is from Rome, in *1 Clement*, a work dating from about A.D. 96. Apparently the temple was still standing and its sacrificial rituals were being performed (10:2, 3, 11). Perhaps the situation is that of the persecutions under Nero (c. A.D. 64). In that case, the suffering mentioned in 10:32-34 could have been caused by the edict of Claudius, which expelled Jews from Rome in A.D. 49 (Acts 18:2).

Subject to suffering and shame for their confession of Jesus, stripped of the familiar and visible institutions of organized Jewish religion, and confused by the hidden character of Jesus' glory (veiled in suffering when He was on earth and now hidden in heaven), the readers are tempted to turn away from the faith (10:38, 39), to fall into unbelief and so to give up their pilgrimage toward God's rest and God's city (4:1, 2, 11; 11:10, 14-16; 13:14).

Characteristics and Themes: Hebrews' high literary style and special focus on Christ's high priesthood set it apart from other New Testament books. Its unique contribution to the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ is the disclosure of Jesus' fulfillment of the sanctuary, sacrifices, and priesthood established in the law of Moses.

The author refers to his work as a "word of exhortation" (13:22). Since the same Greek expression in Acts 13:15 refers to a synagogue speech, the term may identify this "epistle" as an expository sermon in written form: Hebrews is aptly described as a "word of exhortation," for exhortation or encouragement is the heart of the book's purpose (3:13; 6:18; 10:25; 12:5). The author repeatedly calls his readers to an active and courageous response (4:11, 14, 16; 6:1; 10:19-25).

The exhortation to persevere in the pilgrimage of faith is grounded in the author's proof that the Old Testament itself testified to the imperfection of the covenant at Sinai and its sacrificial system, thereby pointing ahead to a new High Priest—Jesus Christ. Jesus is better than the mediators, sanctuary, and sacrifices of the old order. He is worthy of "more glory" than Moses (3:3). The arguments from lesser to greater of 2:2, 3; 9:13, 14; 10:28, 29; and 12:25 ("if ... how much more") underscore the greater grace and glory, and the greater accountability, which have now arrived in the new covenant mediated by Jesus. Unlike the earthly and external aspects of the Old Testament sanctuary, Jesus sanctifies us for the true worship of God, so that we draw near to heaven itself with clean consciences. He is the guarantee of this better covenant bond, for He links us inseparably with the God of grace.

Outline of Hebrews

- I. Christ Is Superior to the Angels (chs. 1; 2)
 - A. Prologue: God's Last and Best Word Is Spoken in His Son (1:1-4)
 - B. Scripture Testifies to the Son's Greater Honor (1:5-14)
 - C. Exhortation Not to Neglect the Salvation Revealed Through the Son (2:1-4)
 - D. The Son Became Like His Brothers as Our High Priest (2:5-18)
- II. Christ Is Superior to Moses (3:1-4:13)
 - A. The Son Has Greater Honor Than the Servant (3:1-6)
 - B. Exhortation Not to Imitate Those Who Disbelieved in the Desert (3:7-4:13)
- III. Christ Is Superior to Aaron (4:14-7:28)
 - A. Christ the Eternal High Priest (4:14-5:11)
 - B. Exhortation to Perseverance and Spiritual Maturity (5:12-6:12)
 - C. A Priest Forever by Divine Oath (6:13-20)
 - D. A Priest Forever After the Order of Melchizedek (ch. 7)
- IV. The Superior Priestly Ministry of Christ (8:1-10:18)
 - A. A Superior Covenant (ch. 8)
 - B. A Superior Tabernacle (9:1-10)
 - C. A Superior Sacrifice Which Cleanses the Conscience (9:11-28)
 - D. Christ's Sacrifice Once for All (10:1-18)
- V. Call to Persevere in Faith (10:19-12:29)
 - A. A Superior Covenant Implies Greater Responsibility (10:19-39)
 - B. Examples of the Life of Faith (ch. 11)
 - C. True Children of God (12:1-17)
 - D. The Heavenly Jerusalem (12:18-29)
- VI. Conclusion (ch. 13)
 - A. Final Exhortations (13:1-19)
 - B. Benediction and Greetings (13:20-25)

Week 1: Hebrews 1

(1) What statements are made about Christ in verses 2b and 3? And how do these show the salvation which is through Him to be better than all that went before? _____

(2) How do the Scriptures, quoted in verses 5-14, confirm the statement of verse 4? Show how differently God speaks of Christ, as compared with what He says of angels. _____

Notes.—(1) The emphasis laid upon Christ's superiority to angels, which to us seems obvious, is explained by the fact that, to the Jews, one of the chief glories of the Old Testament revelation was that it was given through angels.

(2) Verse 7. Angels are created beings; they are God's servants; and their form and appearance are subject to change and transformation as God's needs dictate (just think of the descriptions of angelic beings in Revelation). Contrast the royal dominion and unchanging being of the Son (verses 8-12).

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- How did God speak to people in the past? (1:1)
- What was God's means for speaking to mankind in "these last days"? (1:2)
- What works did Jesus do that only God could do? (1:2-3, 10)
- What does Jesus show us about the nature of God? (1:3a)
- What was Jesus' primary ministry on earth? (1:3b)
- What does Christ's exalted status in heaven say about His similarity to angels? (1:4)
- How is Jesus distinguished from God? (1:5)
- What is the relationship of Jesus and the angels? (1:6)
- What are angels like? (1:7)
- What name or title applies to Jesus, the Son? (1:8)
- What is Jesus' nature? (1:10-12)
- What will happen to the enemies of Christ? (1:12)
- What do angels do? (1:14)

Careful Consideration

- What difference does it make to you that Jesus is "heir of all things" and that the Father made the universe through Him?
- What impact would you suspect these words had on Jewish Christians who were considering returning to Judaism?
- What are some ways we can honor Christ?
- What difference does it make to you that Jesus sustains everything by His powerful word?
- When, if ever, have you sensed that angels were ministering to you or watching over you?
- What in your life tempts you to back away from your commitment to Christ?

Personal Practice

- What steps can you take to remind yourself that Jesus is the Son of God and worth following?
- In what ways can you honor the Son of God as God in your worship this week?
- Who can you tell today about the unique person of Jesus Christ?

Week 2: Hebrews 2

(1) Verses 1-4. What is the argument used in this warning, and against what danger is it directed?

(2) Verses 5-10. What, according to the Scriptures, is man's destiny? And how do we see God's purpose for man being fulfilled in Christ?

(3) Verses 11-18. In what respects is Christ one with us, and because of this, what three things is He able to do for us?

Note.—In this profound passage the writer is answering an implied objection, namely, 'Granted that the heavenly Christ is better than the angels, what of Christ in the lowliness and suffering of His human life?' Cross reference: 1 Cor. 1:23. To this there is a three part answer: (a) in God's purpose man is superior to angels; (b) under the old dispensation, while God and man drew nearer to each other, the two remained essentially separate (Cross reference: Hebrews 9:8), but in Christ they become one; (c) hence Christ is able to redeem man and lift him up to glory, through His cross and resurrection.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- What did the writer of Hebrews want his readers to pay attention to? (2:1)
- What happened to those who violated the "message spoken by angels" (that is, the Mosaic Law)? (2:2)
- What is the role of each member of the Trinity in delivering the gospel message? (2:3-4)
- What is our God-given place on earth? (2:6-8)
- What is Christ's present heavenly status, and what actions led to that status? (2:9)
- What is the relationship between Christ and those who experience the salvation He gives? (2:11-12)
- What effect did Christ's death have on Satan, his power, and those who were enslaved to the fear of death? (2:14-15)
- What makes Christ especially qualified to help Christians when they are being tempted? (2:18)

Careful Consideration

- How do we as modern Christians tend to "drift away" from God?
- In what specific ways can you pay greater attention to God's Word?
- What is the significance of the fact that no trial or temptation can come upon you that Christ does not perfectly understand?
- How can it help you on a daily basis to know that you have a "big brother" like Christ?

Personal Practice

- What are some ways you can nurture your attention span toward God this week?
- Knowing that Christ understands your temptations, how can you respond differently today to the difficulties you face?

Week 3: Hebrews 3:1-6

The background of the this whole section (3:1—10:18) is the redemption of Israel from Egypt and their journey to the promised land.

(1) Israel had an apostle, Moses (see note below), and a high priest, Aaron. How, in this respect, does the new covenant differ from the old? Consider the significance of the words 'holy', 'brethren', 'heavenly calling' in their practical application to our lives.

(2) Verses 2-6. See Num. 12:7. Can you find three points in these verses in which Christ excels Moses?

Notes.—(1) Verse 1. 'Apostle'—used here as meaning one sent upon a special mission. Cross reference: Ex. 3:10; John 20:21. (2) Verse 2. 'His house', that is, the people of God, in the midst of whom God dwells as in a house or household. (3) Verse 6. The word 'hope' is one of the important words of the Epistle, expressing the glorious future to be ushered in at the second coming of Christ. See 6:11, 18, 7:19, 10:23 (ESV).

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- How did the author of Hebrews address those reading his letter? (3:1)
- Who is Jesus? (3:1-2)
- In what ways are Moses and Jesus similar? (3:2, 5-6)
- Why is Jesus worthy of more honor than Moses? (3:3-6)
- What has Jesus done as God? (3:4)
- How are the people of God or the family of God described in this passage? (3:4-6)
- What qualities are necessary for us to be faithful children of God? (3:6)

Careful Consideration

- How ought our identity affect the way we live in our daily lives?
- What do you think faithfulness looks like in the life of a Christian?
- Why is it important for us to fix our thoughts on Jesus, our apostle and high priest?
- What are some of the distractions that keep you from fixing your thoughts on Christ?
- What great spiritual leaders do we look to today, much as the first century Jewish Christians looked to Moses?
- In what ways is Christ greater than our greatest spiritual leaders and mentors?
- In what way are we God's house?
- How does biblical hope differ from ordinary hope?
- How would a healthy dose of spiritual courage change the way you live on a daily basis?
- What specific behaviors, habit patterns, or attitudes need to change so that you live up to your heavenly calling?

Personal Practice

- What can you do over the next twenty-four hours to fix your thoughts on Jesus?
- What is one concrete way you can give to Jesus the honor that He deserves today?
- What Scriptural promise or biblical truth can you hold on to today to help you remain a faithful part of God's house?

Week 4: Hebrews 3:7—4:13

(1) What passage of Scripture is expounded in 3:7—19, and what warning do we receive from it? Pay close attention to the description of the danger given in verses 12 and 13 and how it may be averted; also who it was that sinned and perished in this way. See verses 16-19.

(2) By what argument is it shown in 4:3-9 that the rest of God ('My rest'), which Israel lost by unbelief remains still to be possessed? How is it defined, and what is the condition of obtaining it? See verses 1, 2, and 9.

(3) What five part description is given in 4:12 of God's word, one portion of which the writer has just been expounding? How should these characteristics of God's word, together with the fact that He knows all our heart (4:13), stir us to diligence (4:2)?

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- How is Israel's period of wandering in the wilderness described in this passage? (3:8)
- Why was God angry with the generation of Israelites who came out of Egyptian exile? (3:9)
- In light of the disobedience of the Israelites of the Exodus, what command was given to the Jewish Christians of the first century? (3:12)
- What is the connection between sin and unbelief? (3:12-13)
- How might a person show that he or she has "come to share in Christ"? (3:14)
- What happened to the generation who rebelled against God in the wilderness? (3:17-18)
- How do we know that not everyone will experience God's rest (that is, His salvation)? (4:1-2)
- Why did some who heard the promise of rest fail to enjoy that promise? (4:6)
- What rest awaited God's people after Joshua and the Israelites conquered Canaan? (4:8-9)
- How should we seek to learn from the Israelites' negative example? (4:11)
- What is the Word of God? How? (4:12)

Careful Consideration

- How do we "hear God's voice" in our daily lives?
- What circumstances or situations in your life are currently fostering an attitude of unbelief toward God?
- What prevents you from enjoying God's rest (or salvation)?
- What does God's rest have to do with one trying earn salvation with good works?
- What has the Word of God revealed about your own thoughts and attitudes of the heart?

Personal Practice

- What routine can you set up and follow in a month to help soften your heart toward God?
- What one area of your life do you need to turn over to God today?
- What steps can you take this week to learn from the negative examples of others?

Week 5 Hebrews 4:14-5:10

The writer has now reached the beginning of the central and most important part of the Epistle (see Introduction), in which he shows that the Christian faith, as a religion of redemption, is the final religion, having achieved eternal redemption (9:12). (1) 4:14-16. What two things are we told to do, and on what grounds?

(2) 5:1-10. What characteristics of a true priest are set forth in verses 1-4. concerning (a) his function; his disposition; and (c) his appointment to office? And how do verses 5-10 show that, in Jesus, these characteristics are found in perfection? See Note (2) below.

Notes.-(1) 'Profession' or 'confession' (ESV), another important word in this Epistle. The open confession of our faith is throughout insisted upon (see 10:23, 11:13, 13:13).

(2) In verses 5-10 the writer reverses the order of treatment, taking first, appointment to office (verses 5, 6); second, disposition (verses 7, 8); and third, function (verses 9, 10).

(3) Verses 7-10 give us a very sacred and very amazing insight into the earthly humility and human nature of our Lord.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- To what important spiritual leader did the author of Hebrews compare Jesus? (4:14)
- How is Jesus able to sympathize with us? (4:15)
- How does Christ respond to those who approach Him in faith? (4:15-16) Why?
- What is the role and primary duty of a high priest? (5:1)
- What makes a good high priest sympathetic to those he represents? (5:2)
- For whom did a high priest offer sacrifices? (5:3)
- Who chose Israel's high priests? (5:4)
- How is Jesus like Melchizedek? (5:6)
- In what priestly activities did Jesus engage while on earth? (5:7)
- What did Jesus' sufferings teach Him? (5:8)

Careful Consideration

- What is the difference between sinning and being tempted?
- How did suffering to the point of death give Jesus insights into obedience?
- How does the sympathy and understanding nature of Christ motivate you to turn to Him when temptations arise?
- What does it mean for us to approach God?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus has gone through the problems and temptations you face?
- For what specific area of your life do you need to approach Jesus and ask for mercy and grace?

Personal Practice

- When will you pray each day this week, approaching God through Christ?
- What steps do you need to take this week to follow the obedient example of Jesus, who did God's will even when it resulted in personal suffering?

Week 6: Hebrews 5:11–6:8

As the writer is about to begin his exposition of the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ, he is arrested by a sense of the difficulty of expounding it to people, the ears of whose minds have become dulled.

(1) 5:11-14. What is the writer's complaint about his readers? How is it with ourselves? Have we been growing in spiritual knowledge or are we still feeding upon elementary Christian teaching?

(2) 6:1-3. What teaching constitutes the foundation of the gospel? See Acts 2:38, 8:37, 17:31, 19:3-6, 20:21, 24:25.

(3) vi. 4,-8. What reason is given here for not laying again this foundation?

Notes.-(1) 'Perfection', that is, the perfection offered in Christ. Cross reference: Col. 1:28.

(2) The solemn warning in verses 4-6 (Cross reference: 10:26-31). is a difficulty to some. It is best taken as referring to those who only profess spirituality, who have 'tasted' and then rejected without letting the Word take root and change their lives.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- What are the marks of spiritual maturity? (5:11-14)
- What fundamental or basic doctrines form the foundation of our faith? (6:1-2)
- In the end, what enables us to reach spiritual maturity? (6:3)
- What is the difference between knowledge gained from the senses (*enlightened, tasted*) and belief gained from trusting Christ? (6:4-6)
- What are maturing, committed Christians like? (6:7)
- What are those who fall away from the faith like? (6:8)

Careful Consideration

- How would you describe your present level of spiritual maturity?
- What actions and attitudes would you expect to find in a mature Christian?
- How have you grown since you first became a Christian?
- What decisions are you facing that call for extra discernment?
- Of what does your spiritual diet consist?
- How does it disgrace Christ when a person lapses back into his or her old way of life?
- In what way can a Christian become useless to God?
- What can we do to move forward, or become more mature, in our relationship with Christ a little each day?
- How can you rely on the goodness of God's Word for discernment in the decisions you must make?

Personal Practice

- In what concrete ways can you strengthen your hold on Christ this week?
- What changes can you make in your daily routine over the next three days to combat laziness and exercise discipline?

Week 7: Hebrews 6:9-20

(1) What gives the writer confidence as to his readers' final salvation (verses 9—10)? But what does he desire concerning them (verses 11, 12)?

(2) Verses 13-20. What unshakable grounds of assurance have we that, if we have made our refuge in Christ, our hope will not be put to shame? Yet what qualities does a true 'laying hold' demand? See verses 12, 15, and Cross reference: 3:6, 10:36; Luke 21:19.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- What does it show when Christians help other Christians? (6:10)
- What danger did the author warn against? (6:12)
- How did God guarantee His promise to Abraham? (6:13-14)
- What do we learn from this passage about God? (6:13, 17-18)
- How did Abraham respond to God's promise, and what was the result? (6:15)
- What is the function of oaths? (6:16)
- Why did God confirm His promise with an oath? (6:16-18)?
- How was Christ able to "enter the inner sanctuary behind the curtain"? (6:19-20)
- What did Christ do on our behalf? (6:20)

Careful Consideration

- How does Abraham's patience in waiting for God's promise encourage you?
- What does it mean to you personally that God gives every believer an eternal inheritance secure in heaven?
- How does it help us to know that it is impossible for God to lie?
- How would you describe to a friend the hope that you have in Jesus Christ?
- What problems or troubles currently threaten your sense of security?
- What truths in this passage give you security in your relationship with God?
- What new insights does this passage give you about the character of God?
- In what area of your life do you need to follow Abraham's example of patience?

Personal Practice

- What step can you take over the coming week to put your sense of security in Christ?
- To what promise of God do you need to cling at this time in your life?
- In what way can you express confidence in God's promises this week?

Week 8: Hebrews 7:1-14

(1) What characteristics of Melchizedek, as he stands portrayed in Scripture (Gen. 14:18-20), does the writer mention in verses 1-3?

(2) On what grounds is Melchizedek shown in verses 4-10 superior to the Levitical priesthood?

(3) What evidence is brought forward in verses 11-14. to show that the Aaronic priesthood was essentially defective and not intended to be permanent, and that this carried with it a change also in regard to the law?

Note.-The writer does not stay to expound all the characteristics of Melchizedek which he mentions in verses 1-3, but concentrates on those which depict him as abiding a priest in perpetuity, and thus being a type of the Son of God.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- Who was Melchizedek? (7:1)
- What does the name Melchizedek mean, and why is it significant? (7:2)
- What about the Genesis record of Melchizedek's life foreshadowed or anticipated the priesthood of Christ? (7:3)
- How do we know that Melchizedek was "great"? (7:4)
- How did the Mosaic law ensure that the Levitical priests were provided for? (7:5)
- Why was it unusual for Melchizedek to receive a tithe from Abraham? (7:6)
- What did the ancient practice of one person blessing another say about the two parties involved? (7:7)
- How did the tithe collected by Melchizedek differ from the tithes collected by the Levites? (7:8)
- How did Levi--the yet-unborn collector of tithes--pay tithes to Melchizedek? (7:9-10)
- Why did a new priest from the order of Melchizedek come along to replace the order of Aaron? (7:11)
- What does a new priesthood require? (7:12)
- What made Jesus unique as a member of His tribe? How is this significant? (7:13-14)

Careful Consideration

- What point is there in seeing that the historical Melchizedek was greater than Abraham and Levi?
- What does it mean to you that Christ, like Melchizedek, is both a great king and priest?
- In what ways has Christ blessed you?
- What kind of behavior should the greatness of Christ elicit from us?
- What does it mean that Christ is a high priest forever?

Personal Practice

- What insight from this passage can you ponder today to keep you from drifting away from Christ?
- In what way will you honor Christ this week?

Week 9: Hebrews 7:15-28

(1) Verses 15-19. See Ps. 110:4 ('for ever'). What double contrast is here brought out between the Levitical and Melchizedek orders of priesthood? How does this show that the two orders are incompatible, and that the introduction of the second implies the end of the first?

(2) Verses 20-22. (See Ps. 110:4. ('The Lord hath sworn'). What is the significance of God's oath? Notice particularly the words 'will not repent', and Cross reference:6:17.

(3) Verses 23-28. How do these verses show that in Jesus we have a perfect High Priest, and that He perfectly meets the sinner's need?

Notes.-(1) Verse 16. 'The law of a carnal commandment', that is, a legal code moving in the sphere of physical qualifications, and therefore within the limitations of mortality. Contrast 'the power of an indissoluble life' in Christ.
(2) Verse 25. 'To the uttermost', both of time and of degree.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- On what basis did Christ become a priest? (7:15-16)
- Why is the new covenant superior to the old covenant of law? (7:18-19)
- Jesus was made priest by an oath of God; what does this mean about Christ's selection as priest? (7:20-22)
- How is Jesus unique among the priests who represented Israel before God? (7:23-25)
- What is Jesus, our high priest, like? (7:26-27)
- What did the Levitical priests have to do before they offered sacrifices for the sins of the people? (7:27)
- How did Jesus perform His function as high priest when he was on earth? (7:27)

Careful Consideration

- How does it make you feel to know that Jesus is praying for you at this very moment?
- What does this passage say to people who feel the need for a human priest?
- What role does the law of God play in making us right before God or giving us the power to live for God?
- What comfort can we find in Jesus' role as our high priest?
- What could you say to someone who says, "I don't see what Christ accomplished by dying on the cross"?
- How is the resurrection of Christ important?
- In what way can Christ's priesthood give us confidence to draw near to God?

Personal Practice

- How can you make a special effort each day this next week to draw near to God?
- For whom will you pray every day this week?
- How can you honor Christ as your high priest in your prayer throughout the coming week?

Week 10: Hebrews 8

The writer is now about to enter upon a new aspect of Christ's Priesthood, namely, His High Priestly ministry. In this chapter he shows that this ministry is exercised (a) in a better sanctuary, not on earth but in heaven (verses 1-5); and (b) in connection with a better covenant (verses 6-13). Cross reference: Jer. 31:31-34; Mt. 26:28.

(1) Verses 1-5. Some hearts perhaps craved that Christ might be on earth, ministering in the earthly sanctuary. What twofold answer is given in these verses?

(2) Verses 6-13. What is said here about the first covenant? And what four particulars are given of the new covenant, showing its superiority? Are these things known to you in glad experience?

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- With what title is God described? (8:1)
- What is Christ doing presently in heaven? (8:2)
- What is the "job description" for a high priest? (8:3)
- How do earthly sanctuaries and tabernacles differ from the heavenly one in which Christ is currently serving? (8:2, 5-6)
- Why would Jesus not be a priest on earth? (8:4)
- What do the terms "copy," "shadow," and "pattern" indicate about the Levitical priesthood? (8:5)
- In what ways is the new covenant superior to the old? (8:6)
- Why did God decide to initiate a new covenant? (8:7-12)
- How did Israel handle their part in the old covenant? (8:9)
- How did God say the new covenant would be different from the old one? (8:10)
- What is God's response to sin under the new covenant? (8:12)
- What became of the old covenant when the new was introduced? (8:13)

Careful Consideration

- How does it make you feel to realize that under the new covenant, you can have an intimate relationship with God?
- How motivated would you be to love and worship God if you had to depend solely on animal sacrifices offered by a stranger?
- What do we learn about God from the fact that He set aside the old covenant in favor of the new?
- What three words best describe how you feel knowing that Jesus Christ is in the presence of God representing you before your Creator?
- How much do biblical principles and God's truths govern your thoughts and actions?

Personal Practice

- In what ways can you show your thanks to God today for the fact that He remembers your sins no more?
- What can you do this week to get to know God better?
- How can you use the truths of this passage in coming days to help a friend who is struggling to earn God's approval?

Week 11: Hebrews 9:1-14

(1) Verses 1-8. In this description of the furnishings and service of the earthly sanctuary, to what feature is attention specially drawn? And what does the Holy Spirit teach us by it?

(2) Verses 9-10. In what respect did the gifts and sacrifices of the earthly sanctuary fail of effect, and for what reason?

(3) Verses 11-14. How do the service and sacrifice of Christ, both in their essential character and in their result, stand out in contrast to the service and sacrifices of the first covenant?

Notes.-(1) Verse 4. 'The golden censer'. The Greek word may also mean 'the golden altar of incense' (see 12.v. mg.), Some take the reference to be the censer used on the day of atonement (Lev. xvi. 12, 1 3). The altar of incense was not in the holy of holies (Ex. xl. 26).

(2) Verses 6 and 8. 'The first tabernacle' here means 'the holy place', as distinct from the holy of holies.

(3) Verse 9. 'As touching the conscience make the worshiper perfect' (ESV), that is, free the conscience from guilt and defilement See also verse 14.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- What aspect of the old and new covenants is compared in this passage? (9:1)
- What was in the first room of the earthly tabernacle? (9:2)
- What was behind the second curtain in the tabernacle? (9:3)
- What two objects were in the room behind the second curtain? (9:4)
- What was above the ark? (9:5)
- During the year, who typically ministered at the tabernacle, and in which part did this ministry take place? (9:6)
- What three severe restrictions were placed upon entrance to the inner room of the temple? (9:7)
- What truth was the Holy Spirit teaching through the once-a-year offering for sin under the old covenant? (9:8)
- What symbolic truth did the Mosaic tabernacle teach about sin? (9:9-10)

Careful Consideration

- From Hebrews 9:1-5 and the background information in Exodus, what is your impression of the old covenant's "regulations for worship"?
- What does the earthly tabernacle and sacrificial system tell us about Christ's once-for-all sacrifice for sin?
- How can we alter our lives to reflect the fact that God dwells only in holy places?
- What arbitrary religious rules or traditions make it difficult for you to serve God?

Personal Practice

- What are some practical steps you can take when you feel touched by a guilty conscience?
- What do you want to remember the next time you approach God in worship?

Week 12: Hebrews 9:15-28

Further instances are here given of the preciousness and power of the blood of Christ: first, in relation to the new covenant (verses 15-23); and second, as being a single sacrifice, offered once for all (verses 24-28).

(1) What was the one thing necessary for making a covenant?

(2) How does the fact that Christ offered one sacrifice prove its abiding efficacy? See verses 24-26.

(3) Observe the contrast in verses 27 and 28 between (a) sinful man — appointed to death — going to judgment; and (b) the Savior - dying for our sins - returning in salvation. Are you among those who 'look for Him'? .

Note.-It is best, as in ESV, to read 'covenant' throughout this passage, except in verses 16 and 17, where the meaning seems to be 'testament' or 'will'. The Greek word has both meanings.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- How is the heavenly tabernacle in which Christ serves as high priest described? (9:11)
- By what means did Christ enter the Most Holy Place? (9:12)
- What ritual cleansing ceremony did a high priest typically complete before he entered the Most Holy Place? (9:13)
- What benefits do believers in Christ derive from the sacrifice Christ made on their behalf? (9:14)
- What is our promised eternal inheritance? (9:15)
- What must happen in order for sins to be forgiven? (9:22)
- As a high priest, why did Christ enter heaven instead of an earthly man-made sanctuary? (9:24)
- How is Christ categorically different from every other high priest? (9:25-26)
- What fate awaits every person? (9:27)
- How will Christ's Second Coming differ from His first advent? (9:28)

Careful Consideration

- Why couldn't we receive our promised eternal inheritance apart from the death of Christ?
- Why do you think the author kept emphasizing that Christ's sacrifice was "once for all"?
- How would it change the way we live if we kept in mind the fact that we all will be judged?
- If Christ has done all these fantastic things for us, why are we so prone to stray from Him?
- What might motivate you to be more consistent in your commitment to Christ?

Personal Practice

- In what concrete way can you show gratitude for Christ's sacrifice?
- With whom do you want to share the good news this week of a Savior who offers forgiveness, freedom from sin, and eternal life? How?

Week 13: Hebrews 10:1-18

Final exposition of Christ's sacrifice.

(1) Verses 1-4, In what three ways were the sacrifices of the tabernacle inadequate?

(2) Verses 5-10. What is the new and different sacrifice offered by Christ, and what is its efficacy (verse 10)? 'Sanctified' here means brought into a relationship of acceptance and service with God forever.

(3) Verses 11—18. The difference between the two systems is here summed up. Write down as many contrasts as you can find. How has the abiding validity of Christ's sacrifice been attested by the Holy Ghost?

Notes.—(1) Verse 5. The writer here, as elsewhere, quotes from the Greek version of the Old Testament.

(2) Verse 14. 'Perfected' etc. The meaning is that by the one sacrifice of Christ everything that hinders our access to God is removed.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- In what way was the Law of Moses glaringly inadequate? (10:1-2)
- What function did the annual sacrifices serve? Why? (10:3-4)
- Why wasn't God pleased with the sacrifices and offerings of the old covenant? (10:5-6)
- What was the attitude of Christ when He came into the world? (10:7)
- What evidence of the futility and emptiness of the old covenant did the author cite? (10:8)
- What role does a believer play in earning God's approval? (10:9-14)
- What did Christ's single act of dying accomplish for those who would trust in Him? (10:14)
- How did the new covenant change the way God motivates His people to live for Him? (10:16)
- What effect did the sacrifice of Christ have on the way God views our sins? (10:17)
- Why are additional sacrifices for sin unnecessary? (10:18)

Careful Consideration

- How would you contrast the shortcomings of the old covenant with the blessings of the new covenant?
- Why do Christians still feel guilt when God says He forgives and forgets their transgressions?
- How does being cleansed of sin by Christ change us?
- What insights from this passage can we use to show that being saved from sin requires faith in Christ?

Personal Practice

- In what specific areas of your life today do you need to follow the example of Christ in saying, "I have come to do your will, O God"?
- What can you do this week to show trust in Christ's provision for forgiveness?

Week 14: Hebrews 10:19-39

Having finished his doctrinal exposition, the writer proceeds to give practical counsel for the life we are to live under the new covenant (see Introduction).

(1) Verses 19-25. What is to be (a) the believer's relation to God; (b) his witness in the world; and (c) his responsibility to his fellow believers?

(2) Verses 26-39. Consider the terrible doom of the apostate in contrast to the blessedness described in 10:19-22. What various reasons for steadfast endurance does the writer urge in verses 32-39? Cross reference: Gal. 3:4.

Notes. (1) Verse 22. As the high priest and his sons at their consecration for service in the earthly sanctuary were washed with water and sprinkled with the blood of sacrifice (Ex. 24:4, 21), so we in 'heart' and 'body', that is, inwardly and outwardly, in our whole being, have been made clean in Christ.

(2) Verses 22, 23 (ESV), 24. Note the combination of faith, hope, and love, as in 1 Cor. 13:13; 1 Thes. 1:3.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- What does the text say about the new covenant and drawing near to God? (10:19-22)
- What has Jesus done for those under the new covenant? (10:20)
- What must happen before a person can draw near to God? (10:22)
- What happens to the guilty conscience of those who put their faith in Christ? (10:22)
- Why are Christians able to persevere in following Christ? (10:23)
- What kind of behavior should believers in Christ exhibit toward one another? (10:24-25)
- What will happen to God's enemies? (10:26-27)
- Why is rejecting Christ more serious than rejecting the old covenant? (10:28-29)
- What did the author consider "a dreadful thing"? (10:31)
- How had the Hebrew Christians responded to persecution at first? (10:32-34)
- What is promised to those who persevere? (10:35-39)

Careful Consideration

- How does the complete forgiveness and help offered by Christ motivate you to draw near to God?
- When in your life have you felt the cleanest or most innocent? Why?
- How could someone best spur you on "toward love and good deeds"?
- How do you personally feel about going to church or involvement in Christian groups?
- How does the certainty of God's judgment challenge you?
- What is behind the ups and downs in your spiritual journey?

Personal Practice

- What is one small project you could complete today to encourage a Christian friend to persevere in his or her faith?
- What can you do differently in your devotional times this week to "draw near to God"?
- Since we are called to live by faith (10:38), what is one bold step of trust in God you can take today?

Week 15: Hebrews 11:1-22

The importance of faith. See also 6:12 and 10:38.

(1) In how many different ways is faith manifested in this portion? In what way or ways is faith manifested in your life?

(2) What changes were brought into the lives of the people here mentioned, and what results did faith effect?

(3) What is the ultimate end of those who live by faith?

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- What is faith? (11:1)
- What does faith help us to comprehend about the creation of the world? (11:3)
- How did Abel demonstrate faith? (11:4)
- What was unusual about Enoch? (11:5)
- What role does faith play in approaching and pleasing God? (11:6)
- What did Noah's faith prompt him to do? (11:7)
- How did faith affect Abraham's life? (11:8-12)
- How does faith change a person's focus and perspective? (11:13-16)
- What ultimate test of faith did God put Abraham through? (11:17-19)

Careful Consideration

- According to this passage, what is the only way we can please God with our lives?
- What prompts committed followers of Christ to continue to exercise faith even when He never seems to "come through" for them?
- Why do you think the author said that "the world was not worthy of" the heroes of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11?
- How do you think the individuals praised in Hebrews 11 were looked upon by those of their day?

Personal Practice

- What is one way you can remind yourself to live as an alien and stranger at work and in your community?
- With what do you need to trust God even though you can't see what the future holds? How can you show this trust?

Week 16: Hebrews 11:23-40

(1) Verses 24-27. How did Moses by faith overcome the attractions of the world, and the threats of the world? Observe the emphasis laid in both cases upon the vision that faith gives. Cross reference: 1 John 5:4; 2 Cor. 4:18.

(2) Verses 28-31. Consider in these four instances of faith how difficult it must have been to exercise faith, and the great results that followed.

(3) Verses 32-38. A summary of the achievements (verses 32-35a) and the sufferings (verses 35b—38) of faith. What challenge is presented to us by the fact that these men and women lived before Christ?

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- What hard choices did Moses make because of his faith? (11:24-28)
- What "secret" enabled Moses to persevere through rough times? (11:27)
- What were some of the victories enjoyed by faithful Old Testament believers? (11:32-34)
- How does this passage disprove the notion that faith always leads to earthly blessing? (11:35-38)
- What happened to a great many Old Testament saints who exercised faith in God? (11:39)

Careful Consideration

- Why do you think God sometimes leaves us in the dark about His will?
- What are some examples from your life of both trusting God and doubting Him?
- Which characters named in this chapter would you most like and least like to trade places with? Why?
- In what concrete ways can we demonstrate the truth that we are "aliens and strangers" on earth? (11:13)

Personal Practice

- Moses "was looking to the reward". What "reward" are you looking towards from God? What does that mean in everyday life?
- The Old Testament saints "did not receive what was promised". Have you received what you were promised? What does that look like?

Week 17: Hebrews 12:1-17

(1) Verses 1-4. What three conditions must be fulfilled if the Christian race is to be run and the prize attained? Cross reference: 1 Cor. 9:24-26; Phil. 3:13-14.

(2) Verses 5-11. How are we to look upon suffering, if it befall us, and what is to be our attitude under it?

(3) Verses 12-17 set forth what should be our attitude towards others in times of trial. What is said here about helping the weak, about pursuing high aims (verse 14), and about mutual responsibility and watchful oversight? Cross reference: 10:24-25; Gen. 4:9.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- What kind of athletic imagery did the writer of Hebrews use in this passage? (12:1)
- How is Jesus described in this passage? (12:2)
- What is the benefit of remembering what Christ has done? (12:3)
- What measures does the Lord sometimes take toward those who are His "sons"? Why? (12:5-6)
- What do we learn about God from the fact that He disciplines us? (12:6-7)
- What sobering truth can be inferred by those who never experience the discipline of God? (12:8)
- Why does God discipline His children? (12:9-10)
- In what sense does discipline have two sides? (12:11)
- To what extent are Christians to try to resolve conflicts? Why? (12:14)
- Why is holiness important? (12:14)
- What kinds of things do Christians need to watch out for? Why? (12:15-17, 25-27)
- What did Esau do that is described as godless? (12:16)
- What did Esau's godless behavior cost him? (12:17)

Careful Consideration

- How well are you running the Christian race?
- What wrong attitudes or actions tend to stop your spiritual growth?
- What do you think it means to "fix our eyes" on Jesus? (12:2)
- What are some specific ways God disciplines us?
- How can we tell when God is disciplining us?
- What roadblocks make it difficult for you to pursue holiness?

Personal Practice

- How can you focus your thinking on Christ this week?
- How could you call on your Christian friends this week to help you persevere as a Christian?

Week 18: Hebrews 12:18-29

(1) Verses 18-24. Final contrast between the two covenants. In what respects does the heavenly Mount Zion of the new covenant excel in glory the earthly mountain Sinai of the first covenant? Cross reference: 2 Cor. 3:7-11.

(2) Verses 25-29. What is the danger against which warning is here given? Try to state in your own words the two main points of the argument.

Note. Verses 22 and 23. The central words of these two verses may be interpreted either as applying solely to angels (the word 'church' meaning 'convocation') or as indicating two separate companies: the angels, and the Church. The first of these alternatives is probably to be preferred. This Epistle does not elsewhere speak of the Church as signifying the whole body of the redeemed in Christ, nor does the writer conceive of the Church as being, at the time he wrote, in heaven. The only human beings he sees there, as a separate company, are the Old Testament saints, now made perfect through Christ's sacrifice. But he does see the angels, gathered there in festal assembly, a convocation of the firstborn of heaven's citizens. His purpose is to show that whereas at Sinai the people saw only a temporary manifestation of angels, we, through the new covenant, are brought into abiding fellowship with them in their life and worship in the eternal city.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- In what ways was the old covenant intimidating or frightening? (12:18-21)
- How is Mount Sinai described--the place where the old covenant was revealed? (12:18)
- How did the author describe the new covenant? (12:22-24)
- In what way were God's thunderous pronouncements from Sinai only a foreshadowing of what is to come? (12:26-27)
- Of what kind of kingdom are Christians a part? (12:28)
- How should God's promises and glorious kingdom affect believers? (12:28)
- How should we worship God? Why? (12:28-29)

Careful Consideration

- Why is it difficult to get along with some people?
- When we have conflicts with one another, why do we typically want the other person to make the first move toward reconciliation?
- How would you counsel a friend who was extremely bitter?
- What are some ways wrong values and impulsive actions might bring heartache and grief?
- What does it mean to live at peace with everyone?
- What is dangerous about bitterness?
- How is your view of God different as a result of studying this passage?
- For which of God's acts on your behalf are you most thankful?
- What does it mean to worship God with reverence and awe?

Personal Practice

- What bitter or unforgiving attitudes do you need to confess today?
- What practical steps can you take this week to avoid becoming bitter toward someone who has hurt you?
- What actions do you need to take today so that you can truly say you have made every effort to live in peace with everyone?

Week 19: Hebrews 13:1-8

(1) What various aspects of Christian duty are set forth in these verses? What gracious promise is quoted? What should be our response?

(2) In what two ways should Christian leaders, whose life on earth has ended, be remembered (verse 7)? What is the connection between verses 7 and 8?

Note. Verse 1. 'Continue'. Cross reference: 6:10, 10:33-34.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- What kind of love are Christians to demonstrate? (13:1)
- Why did the author encourage his readers to entertain strangers? (13:2)
- What kinds of people does God want Christians to try to help? (13:3)
- Why is sexual purity important? (13:4)
- What attitude toward money ought Christians to have? Why? (13:5)
- What fact about God can foster a contented spirit? (13:5)
- How can we learn to be content? (13:5)
- How should Christians view their spiritual leaders? (13:7, 17)
- What attribute or characteristic of Christ is highlighted here? (13:8)

Careful Consideration

- Why do you think it is so difficult to be content?
- What is significant to you about the fact that Jesus never changes?
- How can we draw contentment from God's unchanging nature?
- What Christian leaders do you look up to and consider worth imitating? Why?

Personal Practice

- What can you do to show love to a person who is in prison or being mistreated?
- What one action could you take this week to practice contentment with what you have?

Week 20: Hebrews 13:9-25

(1) If, because of our confession of Christ, we must suffer the loss of former earthly fellowships, what two sources of comfort are here brought before us? See verses 12-14. and note below.

(2) What sacrifices has the Christian to offer?

(3) What is the difference between the two petitions of the great prayer of verses 20, 21? And on what massive foundations are they based?

Notes. (1) Verse 9. It would appear that the readers of the Epistle were being urged to partake of sacrificial meals, such as were common under the law, to maintain fellowship with the non-Christian Jewish community. The writer reminds them (a) that grace, not food, strengthens the soul; (b) that the sacrifice of Christ was essentially a sin offering, in connection with which, under the law, there was no sacrificial meal (verses 10, 11; Cross reference: Lev. 4:11, 12, 20, 21); (c) if they would have fellowship, therefore, with Christ, it will not be by staying within the camp of Judaism, but by going forth to Him 'without the camp'.

(2) Verse 21. 'Make you perfect', that is, repair and equip, putting into a fit condition to serve Him.

For Further Reflection:

Biblical Basis

- What illustrations did the author use to challenge his readers to resist the temptation to go back to Judaism? (13:9-14)
- What kind of sacrifices should we offer to God? (13:15-16)
- What are the benefits of obeying one's spiritual leaders? (13:17)
- What did the writer pray would happen to his readers? (13:20-21)

Careful Consideration

- What does hospitality mean or entail?
- How are you able to extend hospitality to others?
- Why do you think praise of God is so important for us to practice?
- How would you counsel a friend who was struggling in the area of sexual purity?
- What are some practical steps we can take to avoid temptations to immorality?
- How do you think you should respond if a Christian leader corrected you in a personal matter?

Personal Practice

- What Christian friend or friends can you encourage to continue walking with Christ? How?

