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# **THE BOOK OF HEBREWS**

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# INTRODUCTION

The Book of Hebrews is often likened the Book of Romans. Both are “so deep that an elephant can drown when likened to its depth of thought and yet shallow enough for a baby to wade in.” I hope to take these great chapters and make them simple enough so we can all apply these truths to our practical, day by day lives.

## A. Theme

The main theme of this book is the absolute superiority of Jesus Christ to everyone and everything. Our secular institutions are trying to make us believe that Jesus is irrelevant and we no longer need Him. It’s ironic that they curse His name and yet deny His existence as well as everything He has done and is doing. Isn’t it foolishness to attempt to remove God from His rightful position and try to replace Him with our limited intelligence and feebleness?

# HEBREWS

|                          |   |   |                                       |
|--------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Prologue (1:1-4)</i>  | <p><b>Jesus Christ:<br/>Superior in His Person</b></p> <p><b>Superior to:</b><br/>Prophets<br/>Angels<br/>Moses<br/>The Sabbath<br/>Other priests</p> <p><i>CHAPTERS</i><br/>1:1-4:13</p> | <p><b>Jesus Christ:<br/>Superior as Our Priest</b></p> <p><b>Better than:</b><br/>Earthly priesthood<br/>Old covenant (Mosaic system)<br/>Animal sacrifices<br/>Daily offerings</p> <p><i>CHAPTERS</i><br/>4:14-10:18</p> | <i>Epilogue (13:20-25)</i>            |
| <b>Emphasis</b>          | Instruction   |   | Exhortation                           |
| <b>Key Words</b>         | “Much better than” 1:4  | “Better” 7:19   | “Let us” 12:1                         |
| <b>Warnings</b>          | 2:1-4   | 3:7-4:13  | 5:11-6:20      10:19-39      12:25-29 |
| <b>Theme</b>             | The absolute superiority of Jesus Christ  |   |                                       |
| <b>Key Verse</b>         | 4:14  |   |                                       |
| <b>Christ in Hebrews</b> | Jesus is the absolutely superior revelation of God and our eternal High Priest (1:1-14; 3:1).   |   |                                       |

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Leaders in every aspect of life (politically, educationally, financially, militarily, agriculturally, judicially, scientifically and even spiritually) are quickly realizing they have no way of defeating the increasing problems ravaging our world without Christ. Our frailty is clearly exceeding our abilities to think and act rationally. Law and order are being mocked and God’s patience is quickly being replaced by His warnings and upcoming swift judgement. It’s time to summon God’s people to join in unison and proclaim with clarity whom the God is that we serve.

## Outline of Hebrews

|                 |                              | Chapters → 1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10    11    12    13           |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------|------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Doctrine</b> | <b>Christ Is Better Than</b> | Ministering angels<br><small>1:4-2:18</small>  | Faithful Moses<br><small>3:1-4:13</small>  | The non-Levitical high priest Melchizedek<br><small>4:14-7:28</small>  | Any earthly Levitical high priest<br><small>8:1-10:13</small>                                |  |  |  | The saints lived by faith focusing on the future promises |  |                                  |  |  | You are not suffering like the saints - endure<br>This is how you faithfully endure in your walk |  |  |
|                 | <b>Since He Is ...</b>       | Son of God<br>Divine Rabbi<br>Son of Man<br><small>1:4-2:18</small>                    | Faithful<br>Faithful Son<br><small>3:1-4:13</small>  | Sympathetic<br>Eternal<br>Perfect<br>Appointed a priest after the order of Melchizedek<br><small>4:14-7:28</small> | Such a high priest<br><small>8:1-10:13</small>   |  |  |  |   |  |                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                 | <b>Even Though</b>           | He was lower than the angels<br><small>2:9</small>                                     | He suffered for us<br><small>3:5-6</small>   | He is the appointed Son who is perfect forever<br><small>7:11-14</small>   | He died to provide us better promises<br><small>9:14-15 &amp; 10:10</small>                  |  |  |  |   |  |                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                 | <b>This Means He Is ...</b>  | Our merciful and faithful high priest<br><small>2:17</small>                           | Our Great High Priest<br><small>3:14 &amp; 8:1</small>   | Our mediator of a better covenant<br><small>8:6</small>  |  |  |  |  |   |  |                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>Warning</b>  | <b>Be Careful And</b>        | "do not drift away"<br><br>"Do not neglect so great salvation"<br><small>2:1-4</small> | "Do not have an evil unbelieving heart in failing away from the living god"<br><small>3:7-4:13</small> | "Do not fall away for it is impossible to renew [you]"<br><small>5:11-6:12</small>                                 | "Do not go on sinning"<br><br>"Do not throw away your confidence"<br><small>10:26-39</small> |  |  |  |   | "Do not refuse him"<br><small>12:25-29</small> |                                  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                 |                              | <b>So You Must</b>   | "Pay close attention to what you have heard"   | "Consider Jesus"<br><br>"Hold fast your confidence"  | "Be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises"                  | "You have need of endurance, so that ... you may receive the promises" |  |  |   |  | "Be faithful and show gratitude" |  |  |  |  |  |

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### B. Writer

Never make the mistake of saying that any person authored a single book of the Bible. God is the author of the entire Bible. He inspired men of God to write the words to blend into such harmony even though it took thousands of years and was written by prophets, priests, kings and disciples/apostles.

That being said, the simple answer to the identity of this writer is one of many speculations but with little agreement. Therefore, it is considered best not to surmise because there is no specific claim in the writing like the other Gospels and Epistles.

## B. Writer (Contd.)

In the earlier years it was thought of to be written by the apostle Paul or one of His associates. This began in the Eastern church (by Clement of Alexandria) and spread to include the Western church (Jerome and Augustine). Others also believed it may have been written by Luke (by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Thomas Aquinas; John Calvin), Barnabas (Tertullian), Clement of Rome (by Clement of Alexandria; John Calvin), Apollos (Martyn Luther), Priscilla and Aquilla (Harnack), Silas, Epaphras or even Timothy.

## C. Date

Once again we have to speculate. It appears that Clement of Rome had a near quotation so that would place it before AD. 96. We see in Hebrews 2:3 that its readers were just second generation Christians. It also had to happen before great persecution broke out (Hebrews 12:4). That would normally be linked to either Nero (AD. 64) or Domitian (AD. 81-96).

Another important clue is that there is no mention of the destruction of Herod's Temple which took place at 70 AD. by Emperor Titus. It would surprise me to think that there is an elaborate reference to the set up and priestly duties for the Tabernacle of Moses (including a specific mention of their regular duties) if the temple had been completely destroyed. Wouldn't it also seem reasonable to mention this destruction (40 years after Christ began His ministry) recognizing the 40 years of testing the children of Israel in the wilderness was mentioned (Hebrews 3:7ff; cf. Psalm 95:7 ff).

I believe it was written just before the outbreak of persecution in AD. 64. It would be like believing that something as catastrophic as the terrorist attack had happened (September 11, 2001) and the New York Times or Washington Post did not make it front page news.

*"I class it without hesitation among the apostolical writings (in authority rather than in authorship)," he said; I do not doubt that it has been through the craft of Satan that any have been led to dispute its authority. There is indeed, no book in Holy Scripture which speaks so clearly to the priesthood of Christ, which so highly exalts the virtue and dignity of that only true sacrifice which He offered by His death, which so abundantly deals with the use of ceremonies as well as their abrogation (annulment or repeal), and, in a word, so fully explains that Christ is the end of the Law. Let us therefore not allow the Church of God or ourselves to be deprived of so great a benefit, but firmly defend the possession of it."*

A quote from John Calvin quoted by FF. Bruce  
"The Epistle to the Hebrews"  
p. xlvii

## **D. A Perfect Blend**

I enjoy drinking a well blended cut of coffee. There are those who analyse the different types of coffee beans. They also study the climate they are grown in, the soil makeup as well as the distinct way they are harvested and roasted.

This word of exhortation (Hebrews 13:22) carefully selects portions of the O.T. and blends them into this N.T. writing.

*“The O.T. is the N.T. concealed  
The N.T. is the O.T. revealed.”*

The duties of the O.T. priesthood would be mostly meaningless without the revelation of Jesus Christ. These pages of combined scripture reveal the incredible truths that God continued to build upon over millenniums of time. The greatest revelation of Jesus Christ is still to come when eternity is completely unveiled for us.

### **WHAT A DAY THAT WILL BE**

There is coming a day  
When no heartaches shall come  
No more clouds in the sky  
No more tears to dim the eye  
All is peace forever more  
On that happy golden shore  
What a day, glorious day that will be

What a day that will be  
When my Jesus I shall see  
When I look upon His face  
The One who saved me by His grace  
When He takes me by the hand  
And leads me to the Promised Land  
What a day, glorious day that will be

Author Jim Hill

**LESSON 1**  
**Hebrews 1:1-4**  
**Jesus is Superior to Angels - Part 1**

1. *“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,*
2. *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*
3. *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*
4. *So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.”*

*Hebrews 1:1-4*

The Holy Bible records the complete and final revelation of whom God is, what He has done and what He will do in the future. These inspired Scriptures begin by describing the creation of a vast universe in which only a VERY TINY PORTION is our earth and everything it is composed of and also everything that lives in or on it or above it.

**1:1** -The Old Testament consists of 39 different books while the N. T. consists of 27 books by different writers at different times and different places. They consist of prophets, priests, kings, judges, shepherds, tribal leaders, musicians, singers, apostles/disciples. Basically the Scriptures were written in two major stages. **This Divine revelation was therefore, progressive.** It contained God’s promises to the fulfilment of those promises. It progressed from **God’s spoken word to His written word**, through Psalms and other forms of writings (sayings, poems, visions, & letters) to **His Living Word (Jesus Christ).**

Every word was true, worthy of our trust, and **fully mature in its day** but not complete. God built upon His Word just as we grow in our understanding of many aspects of life. Children know that a baby grows in mummies’ tummy while an obstetrician understands the complete process and knows everything including the danger signs while the baby matures from conception to birth. God’s simple truth grew to become a very complex truth that could only be understood by those who have been born again (I Corinthians 2:1-14).

**1:2-3** - As we begin to read the N.T., we quickly are introduced to the Son of God in the form of a baby. He grew and matured just like we do with the exception that He had laid aside (emptied Himself - Philippians 2:5-11) His eternal and divine attributes to help us identify with the Godhead (John 5:19; 10:30)

## There are seven facts that state the greatness and complete revelation of God

1. Jesus was “*appointed heir of all things*” - This truth is also proclaimed in Psalm 2:8. We can be born naturally into royalty but yet not be appointed as an heir of the kingdom. My 34<sup>th</sup> grandfather was Richard I known as the Fearless [933-996] (Count of Normandy). His wife Emma who was the sister of the King of France. Richard’s second wife was Gunnor gave him eight children. Our family is related through her third son, Mauger, Count of Corbeil.

Richard had many other children through mistresses. Our family is related to Godfrey, Count of Eu and Guillaume (William), Count of Eu. Richard gave titles and land to all of his illegitimate children. One castle still remaining in our heritage is Okehampton Castle in the southern tip of England.

Another in my family tree was Emma of Normandy who was the queen of England, Denmark and Norway through her marriages. It takes a death AND a legitimate last will and testament to make anyone an heir. Since we were born long after their deaths, we cannot claim any rights to their estates.

Jesus was appointed the heir of ALL things because he could prove His “lineage.” We can claim to be one of God’s children and heir of His kingdom (Galatians 3:26-4:7)

2. “*and through whom he made the universe*” - This includes the whole universe consisting of space and time (cf. - John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).

3. “*The Son is the radiance of God's glory*” - *The Greek word for “radiance” is “**apaugasma**” which is also translated as “**effulgence.**”* It describes the radiance that shines forth from a light source.

“Just as the radiance of the sun reaches the earth, so in Christ the glorious light of God shines into the hearts of men.”

F.F. Bruce  
“*The Epistle to the Hebrews*”  
p. 5

4. “*the exact representation of his being*” - The RSV translates it as “**he bears the very stamp of his nature.**” The Greek word “**charaktēr**” is only used here to denote the exact nature not just the image of God (John 14:7-9).

5. “*sustaining all things by his powerful word*” - He doesn’t simply carry the world on His shoulders like is depicted with Atlas, He enables the world to keep functioning in an orderly manner.

6. “*After he had provided purification for sins*” - No one else in the history of the world could purify us from our sins. Jesus was the ONLY spotless Lamb of God that could take away our sin (John 1:29).



**1:4** - 7. *“he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven”* - This is also described in Psalm 110:1. There is no physical throne or right hand of God. It is used to speak of Christ’s exaltation and supremacy. If we contrast the Aaronic priesthood, we clearly see that the O.T. priests continually stood because their work was never completed. They were used to atone (cover) for sin while Jesus came to forgive sin and wipe it away.

The Aaronic priests were **“never seated”** while Jesus as the perfect sacrifice is **“ever seated.”** He was sacrificed once and for all (cf. - Hebrews 10:11-14; Romans 6:10).

**Jesus is the greatest prophet - God has spoken His final Word**  
**Jesus is the greatest priest - God has accepted His final sacrifice**  
**Jesus is the greatest king - God has allowed Him to sit in majesty on high**

Now we will look at the final ten verses of this chapter that quotes seven O.T. passages to emphasize that the Son of God is superior to the angels. The word **“better”** is used thirteen times to describe the difference between the world before Christ’s birth, death and resurrection and the one after His act of obedience.

**LESSON 2**  
**Hebrews 1:5-14**  
**Jesus is Superior to Angels - Part 2**

5. *For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father?" Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son?"*
6. *And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."*
7. *In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire."*

Out of the seven O.T. verses used, there are five taken from the Book of Psalms, one from the Prophets and one from the Torah.

**1:5** - The first verse quoted comes from Psalm 2:7 (cf. Acts 13:33). The Scriptures make it clear that angels together are called "*sons of God.*" But not a single angel is called the Son of God. Gabriel brought a message to Mary that Jesus would be called the Son of the Most High (Luke 1:32).

Some wonder what the word "**today**" or "**this day**" means. This can only be the day of His Water Baptism OR the day He was crucified, died or rose again. Most writers believe it was after He had suffered and died because then He was raised to the Father's right hand.

**1:6** - The One who is worshipped is always greater than the one who worships (Psalm 89:27; 97:7). God's firstborn was not Adam because he was never born - He was created out of the dust of the earth. The second Adam was Jesus who was born of the virgin Mary.

The word for "**world**" that is used here refers to the entire inhabited universe which includes angels. The Bible never mentions any other creatures in His universe. Experts throughout the world are searching but have never found ANY forms of life outside of our earth. UFO's are simply what they are described as - Unidentified Flying Objects. Little green men are a figment of someone's imagination.

**1:7** - This fourth quote is from Psalm 104:4 emphasizes that angels execute God's commands like the swiftness of the wind and the intensity of fire.

8. *But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom."*
9. *You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."*

**1:8** - The fifth quotation is from Psalm 45:6f. Note that we now move the greatness of Jesus from the title of the **“Son of God”** to **“God”** of which He is both. He rules His kingdom with righteousness. Most leaders today rule with power and are far lacking in righteousness.

**1:9** - In contrast, God not only loves righteousness, but hates wickedness. He proved it not by just suffering upon the cross but by approaching it with joy not sorrow (Hebrews 12:3). He knew that His sacrificial death would be the only way to overcome every form of wickedness.

It is a great privilege to be even thought of as a companion of God and even greater to be called brothers and sisters (cf. Hebrews 2:10,11; 3:14).

*10. He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.*

*11. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.*

*12. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end."*

**1:10-12** - We now come to the sixth quotation from Psalm 102:25-27. Here Jesus is called **“Lord”** who was given the name **“Yahweh”** in the O.T. God is an eternal God. He created everything that is in existence. Someday both the earth and the heavens (sky and outer space) will disappear. The creator God will remain along with His everlasting Word (Matthew 24:35).

Nothing from God’s first creation will remain when He makes everything new (Revelation 21:1-5). This is not a remodelling. It is a complete removal of the old and replacing it with a brand new creation with the exclusion of the third heaven which needs no change.

*13. To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet?"*

*14. Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?*

**1:13-14** - The seventh quotation comes from Psalm 110:1. The significance of the symbolism of sitting down emphasizes that the final event is as good as completed. Jesus acknowledged this truth when He stood before the Sanhedrin prior to His crucifixion (Mark 14:62).

Angels like Gabriel are known to **“stand in the presence of God”** (Luke 1:19). Not a single angel has been given the privilege to sit before God or especially to be given the unique honour of sitting on the right hand (the position of power). We are told to sit, walk and stand (see Ephesians). Angels are told to walk and stand. Jesus is the only One who stands, walks and THEN sits.

We experience many blessings day by day. The fulness of our inheritance of salvation is yet to be witnessed (Romans 13:1; I Peter 1:5).

**LESSON 3**  
**Hebrews 3:1-19**  
**Jesus is Superior to Moses**

*“Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.*

*2. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God’s house.*

*3. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself.*

*4. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.*

*Hebrews 3:1-19*

**3:1** - We have all live lived in a house that was built by someone who had many skills in order to meet the building standards and thus protect us from danger as time goes on. Some buildings that were being raised up without maintaining the standards have fallen even before they were finished and took many unsuspected lives with them. We can also try to modify our homes after we purchase them and that is why we are required to get a permit to ensure we are not trying to cut corners.

Jesus was both the apostle and high priest of His house. He was **God’s representative among men and women** while also being **their representative before God**.

**3:2** - Both Moses and Jesus were faithful envoys who were loyal to the commission they were given. Moses served the greater part of his life leading the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt to the edge of the promised land. Jesus served the final three years of His life leading the people out of sinful bondage and finally paying the ultimate price of His life,

Moses served as the chief steward of God’s household. He was the only one enabled to stand before God seeking pardon for the people’s sin (Exodus 32:11ff, 31f.; Number 14:13ff; Numbers 12:7f.).

**3:3** - Moses was God’s chief administrator when he was set apart from his people by God. Jesus created the entire universe and everything in it. It all belongs to Him. He has been given the heritage of the household by His Father. Anything we try to do to improve it always fails to meet His standards. We may be referred to being great among our brethren, but Jesus is always greater and does not need to do anything more to prove that.

**3:4** - God not only builds the house but considers us as His greatest achievement (Genesis 1:31).

*5. "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future.*

*6. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory."*

*Hebrews 3:5,6*

**3:5** - Moses served as one who was part of the household of God. Jesus ruled over the entire household as the One and Only Son of God. Moses followed a pattern set by God to make the future improvements easily understood.

**3:6** - We are called upon by God to persevere in our faith. This truth is clearly portrayed in the Parable of the Sower. The one part spoke of a seed that fell upon rocky ground not rocks on the ground. They began with much joy but quickly stumble when tribulation and persecution rose up against them because of the Word of God that they had begun to follow (Mark 4:5f, 16f).

#### **Warning Against Unbelief**

*7. So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice,*

*8. do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,*

*9. where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did.*

*10. That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.'*

*11. So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' "*

*Hebrews 4:7-11*

**3:7-11** - The "**rebellion**" or "**provocation**" is "**as at Meribah**" in the Septuagint. They also "**tested and tried**" God at Rephidim because there was a lack of water. God asked them why they "**strived**" against Him (Exodus 17:2). He named the places "**Massah**" which means "**tempting**" and "**Meribah**" which means "**striving**" because of the sinful behaviour.

The time of testing was 40 years in the wilderness. If this book was written just before the temple being destroyed in 70 A.D. it was nearing the 40 years since Jesus was crucified, This would be likened to the “Exodus” of souls from bondage into rest. Instead of entering the Promised Land they criss-crossed back and forth through the area of Kadesh-Barnea.

“The death of Christ is itself called an ‘exodus,’ He is the true Passover, sacrificed for His people, ‘a lamb without blemish and without spot.’ They, like Israel in the early days are ‘the church in the wilderness;’ their baptism into Christ is the antitype of Israel’s passage through the Red Sea; their sacramental feeding on Him by faith is the antitype of Israel’s nourishment with manna and water from the rock. Christ; the living Rock, is their guide through the wilderness; the heavenly rest that lies before them is the counterpart to the earthly Canaan which was the goal of the Israelites.”

F.F. Bruce  
“The Epistle to the Hebrews”  
p. 62

12. *See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.*
13. *But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.*
14. *We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.*
15. *As has just been said: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.”*
16. *Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?*
17. *And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness?*
18. *And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed?*
19. *So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.*

*Hebrews 3:12-19*

**3:12** - It is clear that the rebellion in the wilderness and the price they paid is much less than for those of us who are living after the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The expression of “falling or turning away from the living God” speaks of a rebellion against God.

For the Christians of this time to turn back to Judaism would be seen as a rebellion of sin against the light of the Gospel.

**3:13** - The 95<sup>th</sup> Psalm is where this thought came from. It begins by worshipping God and ends by rebellion against God. We need to start well and end great. It's a word to the wise. It is like an unattended candle will eventually die out. It can then no longer lighten the pathway ahead.

**3:14** - This verse reminds me of runners who begin a race with plenty of vibrancy and a belief that they will win even though the odds are against them. They have to play by ALL the rules and keep on course and finish the race in order to gain the prize.

**3:15-18** - What will God have to say to our generation? Will we be seen as a rebellious people? Will we cross over to the “Promised Land” or will we stay in today's bondage? Where will our bodies lay? Will we enter into the rest of God for eternity?

**3:19** - The biggest danger we face is not from without it is from within. We choose to either walk in disobedience, unbelief and faithlessness. God's promises are not for the faint in heart. We must overcome to the end. Jesus told us that the way before us has both a straight gate and a narrow way and only a few will enter in (Matthew 7:13-14).

**LESSON 4**  
**Hebrews 4:1-16**  
**Entering Into God's Rest**

**A Sabbath-Rest for the People of God**

*“Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it.*

*2. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.*

*3. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,*

*“So I declared on oath in my anger,  
‘They shall never enter my rest.’”*

*And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world.”*

*Hebrews 4:1-3*

**4:1** - This portion of Scripture indicates to me that our salvation is NOT predestined by God. We have a major part to play. We can fall short of entering into the now eternal rest of God that God has made available through His sacrificial death. We DO have an important choice to make just as the children of Israel did while travelling through the wilderness.

**4:2** - The writer is speaking to those now who have heard the gospel (and most likely changed from a Judaic belief) and were considering going back to their previous beliefs because their faith in Jesus was faltering (cf. - Hebrews 2:3)

“The practical implication is clear: it is not the hearing of the gospel by itself that brings salvation, but its appropriation by faith, and if that faith is genuine faith, it will be a persistent faith.”

F.F. Bruce  
*“The Epistle to the Hebrews”*  
p. 73



**4:3** - Notice the rest that is spoken about is “my rest” or the rest that God Himself enjoys. God’s rest from creation began on the seventh day because He completed His work. He has never had to continue it because it was completed. This rest for all of us has been available since that seventh day. Just because we haven’t understood it does not negate the fact that it has been available.

*“For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: “On the seventh day God rested from all his works.”*

*5. And again in the passage above he says, “They shall never enter my rest.”*

*6. Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience,*

*7. God again set a certain day, calling it “Today.” This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted:*

*“Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts.”*

*Hebrews 4:4-7*

**4:4** - The earliest Scriptures (Genesis 2:2) conclude that God rested when He finished creating the heavens and earth and everything in it and on it.

**4:5** - The words “*They shall never enter into my rest*” is repeated three times in these few verses (Hebrews 3:11; 4:3; 4:5 from Psalm 95:11).

**4:6-7** - The divine warning that was witnessed in the days of Moses and proclaimed in the days of King David still applied to the days after Christ’s death and also for those of us today who have begun to walk in the faith of God. We must not just start well but also not waver when the trials come.

*“For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.*

*9. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;*

*10. for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his.*

*11. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.”*

*Hebrews 4:8-11*

**4:8** - The symbolism of Joshua leading the children of Israel into the promised must be carefully interpreted when comparing to crossing over from life to death, It is more correct to symbolize our lives as we accept Christ as our Saviour. Battles will still remain. Our enemy will do his best to discourage and defeat us from Going forward and “taking the land” as well as living in the rest of God.

**4:9** - It is clear that “rest” that is spoken of is not something we will achieve once we enter heaven. “There remains” is far different then there will be a day when we will enter a Sabbath-rest. Rest does not mean we are free from trouble and testing. Remember that God “prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies.” Don’t seek after a life without problems but pray to God for the ability to endure the trials and overcome the temptations.

**4:10** - We no longer have to work FOR our salvation. We work BECAUSE we have been granted our salvation based upon faith not works. The Apostle Paul made this truth very clear in his letter to the church at Ephesus (Ephesians 2:8,9).

**4:11** - The Israelite’s act of disobedience was a lack of faith to overcome their enemies (cf. Numbers 13-14). We can never enter into God’s rest while walking in fear as well.

*“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.  
13. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”*

*Hebrews 4:12-13*

**4:12** - God’s Word is always distinguished high and above our words. It has life in it and effective in diagnosing the condition of our heart. It quickly fulfills its purpose in God’s timing (Isaiah 55:11). It is not just sharp but sharper than any double-edged sword which cuts our carnal thoughts and attitudes going in and coming out. It is able to probe the inmost recesses of our spiritual being and is even able to deal with our subconscious motives.

**4:13** - We cannot conceal anything from God. His Word gives us a foundation to compare ourselves with, It is able to scrutinize and leaves us powerless in any and all of our deceit. The words for “**uncovered and laid bare**” denotes a person in a helpless condition as with someone’s neck that is bent back just before their throat is cut or also someone who is seized by their neck.

**LESSON 5**  
**Hebrews 4:14-16**  
**Jesus is Superior to the Aaronic Priesthood**

**Jesus the Great High Priest**

*“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.*

*15. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.*

*16. Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*

*Hebrews 4:14-16*

**4:14** - This chapter begins with a warning and admonition but ends with a word of encouragement. It is because of the fact of our Lord’s position in heaven that we can approach Him with confidence. He is not only made higher than the heavens (Hebrews 7:26) but He has also ascended high above the heavens.

**4:15** - In spite of the fact that God is so superior to us, He continues to be approachable for all of us. He can sympathize with us because He has experienced the same types of temptations and trials that we have. The BIG difference is that He remained sinless. He was triumphant over sin. He was not excluded from being tempted. He was not given an easier road to walk. In fact, the devil was relentless in attacking Him and He never gave in.

**4:16** - This gives us confidence in approaching His kingly, priestly throne to find an abundance of grace (we receive more than we deserve) and mercy we don’t receive what we deserve). Those who had been taught the significance of the Mercy Seat of God would find this transition of thought easy to understand. He does not just give us help but He gives us Timely Help.

**LESSON 6**  
**Hebrews 5:1-6**  
**Jesus is Superior to the Aaronic Priesthood**

*“Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.*

*2. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness.*

*3. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people.*

*4. And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was.”*

*Hebrews 5:1-4*

**5:1** - There were 2 things that distinguished the high priest in the O.T. that are highlighted in these first verses of chapter 5. The first is that he must be able to sympathize with the weakness of the people he serves. He also must be divinely appointed to his office. He must be from the people and be willing to serve the people.

Aaron and his successors were all from the nation of Israel. They lived among them. They all had to face the same trials, testings and tribulations of those they lived amongst.

He had to be taught the ways of God in order to teach and lead the people into the ways that were pleasing to God. Aaron wasn't perfect and neither were the children of Israel. The “gifts and sacrifices” were the offerings that the people gave to the priesthood and particularly the ones that offered because of their sinful words and actions.

**5:2** - We must understand how difficult it was for the priesthood not to mingle his inward feeling with his sacred work. In time he would have to face every type of sin that mankind could act upon. **Bearing gently** with those who purposely or ignorantly err from righteousness takes a great deal of self-control and patience. Our carnal nature demands that “justice” be met with no place for mercy or grace.

How will anyone come forth and admit to their sinful actions if they are constantly attacked by others who live in a self-righteous bubble? We must be frequently reminded that “we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Just consider how difficult it was to control feelings of indignation and exasperation trying to overtake their gentle actions? We to also remind ourselves that **“there I am except for the grace and mercy of God.”** The O.T. had no provision for deliberate and defiant lawlessness (Numbers 15:28).

**5:3** - The yearly reminder on the Day of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) was that no human being was sinless. Each year Aaron and his decedents had to offer a bullock as a sin offering for himself and his family (Leviticus 16:6). This was done BEFORE proceeding to sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies. There was no room for error. Everything had to be repeated every year on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month. It was to be a Sabbath Rest and a lasting ordinance.

Jesus, as our High Priest, was excluded from this practise (Hebrews 7:27).

**5:4** - It was God who began the priesthood by “calling” Aaron and his family members as time pursued (Exodus 28:1ff; Leviticus 8:1ff; Numbers 18:1ff). This calling has set many apart for the ministry (cf. - I Corinthians 7:17; Ephesians 4:1-6). It places a greater responsibility upon those called and their family (Luke 12:48). This is NOT something to seek after. Let God seek after you and be ready to be prepared BEFORE being thrust into a ministry (I Timothy 5:22). Seek after God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). Don’t seek the gift as much as seeking after the Giver.

*5. “In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”*

*6. And he says in another place, “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”*

*Hebrews 5:5-6*

**5:5** - This verse is taken from Psalm 2:7 (cf. Hebrews 1:5). It was after Jesus’ crucifixion that the Most High God proclaimed that He was both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

**5:6** - Here we once again we have a quote from the Book of Psalms (Psalms 110:4). There is a distinct difference between Aaron and his lineage and Jesus and His lineage. Aaron is from the line of Levi and Jesus is from the line of Judah. Jesus is therefore both THE King and Priest of the nation of Israel.

Melchizedek is first mentioned in Genesis 14:18 as the king of Salem (later called Jerusalem). According to Psalm 76:2 there is a parallel between Salem and Zion. King David conquered Jebus (Heb - “threshing floor”) and renamed it Jerusalem and set aside Mount Sion (Zion) as the place his son Solomon would build the temple (II Samuel 5:6ff).

We will look into the background of Melchizedek in chapter 7.

**LESSON 7**  
**Hebrews 5:7-10**  
**Jesus is Superior to the Aaronic Priesthood**

7. *“During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.*
8. *Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered*
9. *and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him*
10. *and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.”*

**5:7** - Here is a second qualification that made Jesus superior to the Aaronic priesthood. He not only was faithful and full of mercy but He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. His crucifixion made it clear that He didn’t take an easy road to bring about of salvation.

His experience at Gethsemane was the most emotional upheaval He ever experienced. Many others have experienced agony and dismay including His disciples (Mark 10:38 f.). His deep struggle was also emphasised by the apostle John (John 12:27f.). His Father in heaven immediately responded that His name was being glorified and it would also be glorified again.

The apostle Peter was rebuked by our Lord for attempting to use a sword to stop His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Both the Garden of Eden and Gethsemane are great places to learn how to obey God during times of temptation. Jesus didn’t just submit to drinking the cup of God’s wrath toward the sin of mankind that He took upon Himself but also He did it reverently. Our attitude toward the will of God is just as important as our willingness to do so.

We all have faced the trials and misunderstandings when we face unanswered prayers. But sometimes it is even more difficult to fully understand what God is up to and accept it as His divine will without arguing with Him. It’s simply a waste of time and effort. There is so much to be gained by the example of Jesus through His humble and reverent submission.

We need to all take a moment to evaluate our past reaction to God in our prayers when we don’t like the pain it delivers. It’s much easier to say *“pain is gain”* then experience it and maintain a proper attitude toward God. We should never underestimate what God desires to do through our submissive lives. The test is not when things are going well.

**5:8** - Jesus was often questioned about his Sonship. It continued to cause the Pharisees and Sadducees to spill out their hateful words that eventually led them to call out for His crucifixion. Even though He was the Son of God, He wasn't exempted from learning through suffering. We must never forget that He was fully man and fully God.

We need to remember that this Epistle was written to strengthen those who were about to face harsh persecution. Many were required to renounce their faith in order to save their lives. The Romans continued with their aggressive assault against the early church. We are also seeing the same pattern beginning in the world.

Jesus warned the church that one of the signs of His soon return would be persecution (Luke 21:12-19). Those who hate the gospel are getting much more aggressive in the last few months. Anyone who disputes the narrative of the left are finding their social accounts being closed down. Something big is about to happen to expose the wickedness and bring glory to God. It will give the Church an opportunity (perhaps one of our last ones) to get the truth out.

People are needing to believe that God has a limit of what He will allow to continue. Many will go against even family members. Don't expect this to be an easy time. The devil and his cohorts will not give up setting everything on place for the antichrist. The war between good and evil in ramping up quickly.

The COVID -19 virus has just been proven to be clearly linked to the Wuhan Institute of virology in China. Many have



Obama visiting NIH lab in 2014  
(Watch Steve Hilton the Next  
Revolution on Sunday, Jan 31/21)



Wuhan Institute of Virology

**5:9** - The prophet Isaiah (50:5f) wrote a key prophecy that distinguished our LORD as the Messiah. Jesus was baptised not because He had sinned but in order to fulfil all righteousness (Matthew 3:15). It began to be accomplished at water baptism and was fulfilled at His resurrection. It was during His time on the cross that He was "*numbered with the transgressors.*"

**5:10** - The order of Melchizedek will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 7. Even though our Bible has little to say about this order we have a number of directions we can take to find out more information.



**LESSON 8**  
**Hebrews 8:1-6**  
**Jesus is Superior in His Covenant**

- 1. "Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,*
- 2. and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.*
- 3. Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer.*
- 4. If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law.*
- 5. They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."*
- 6. But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises."*

**8:1-2** - At this point in our study the writer has just finished establishing his reasoning Jesus' priesthood is much more superior to the Aaronic priesthood. Now he moves to the vital basis of which it is founded upon. A priest is only as good as what he expresses. Therefore, we need to consider the difference between the Old and New Covenants; the Old Sanctuary and Heaven's Sanctuary; the Old Sacrifices and the New Sacrifice.

There are two important things to recognise in these verses as well. The first is to notice that our Great High Priest who is Jesus is sat down on the right hand of the throne of Majesty. In other words Jesus completed the work of the High Priest. The main difference between the High Priest and other priest is that He was able to enter the Holy of Holies throughout his time serving on the Day of Atonement. Jesus completed that yearly offering by dying once and for all.

The second important point is that Jesus is still serving as the High Priest in heaven. He has never stopped serving. He just doesn't need to offer a sacrifice for sin. He still needs to judge sin and continue to keep a distinct line between righteousness and unrighteousness. He is also one who continues to intercede on our behalf when we pray to Him..

**8:3** - We are reminded in this verse that every high priest offered both gifts and sacrifices. Gifts were presented to God through the priesthood as Fellowship Offerings and Peace Offerings as an example to continue to maintain a close fellowship with God. It was the people's way of tangibly saying thanks for all God was doing for them. The people also brought their tithes, offerings and alms giving on a regular basis.

The other part of the giving was through animal sacrifices such as Burnt Offerings and Sin Offerings. This again brings our thoughts into a great difference. Just consider the incredible difference just in numbers. We know that even from the time of Noah God made sure they would never run out clean animals that could be sacrificed on a seven to one basis. Lets also consider that there is no way to compare God the Creator with His creation.

**8:4** - At the time this was written the Jews were continuing to offer animal sacrifices and vegetational offerings. Even after Jesus died and rose from the grave they continued Sacrificing that was no longer needed. We know from Jewish history that the high priests gave an order to have the veil sewn back up. They should have realized that being allowed to access the Holy Place without the veil and remaining alive proved it wasn't needed. They refused to change their traditions and thereby rejected the sacrifice of our LORD and Saviour. This futile effort continued until the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman emperor Titus in 70 AD. I wonder how many futile efforts are still being done by God's people over the earth that add nothing to our praise, worship and service as a whole to God.

**8:5** - The earthly copies of the Tabernacle of Moses followed by the Temple of Solomon was the best that could be done to demonstrate the reality of the Heavenly throne. God made it clear to Moses who passed on the plan to Bazalel and Oholiab whom God anointed to do everything according to the commandments of God (Exodus 31:1-12).

I find it interesting that the word "shadow" is used to describe the action. A shadow is something that exists naturally only when the sun or moon are visible. The closer we arrive to a new moon the least a shadow can be cast. The greater the darkness the least there is a shadow. The same is true as our world becomes darkened in sin. The shadow will no longer be sufficient. A shadow can be modified by adding another figure, That is why God demanded that everything be made according to the pattern given to them. It didn't take long for the children of Israel to neglect the precise shadow and add to its pattern.

God never changes and the same is true of heaven and everything in it. There are no shadows to come. Reality is reality. It does not need any changes. The reality of God and heaven is ultimate perfection. Heaven along with God have always existed which means that the world and all that is in it came into being only at the time of creation.

**8:6** - The word "*superior*" is written all over this Epistle. The centre of that superiority is Jesus and the New Covenant (New Testament) that clearly guides the direction the church takes. Jesus is the Only Mediator (arbitrator or go-between) and is perfect in what He does.