

Hebrews

1. The book of Hebrews presents the only full discussion in the New Testament of Christ as the believer's High Priest.
2. The author is unknown.
 - a. There are three suggestions:
 - i. Paul
 1. Early church believed he was author
 2. Because of the characteristics of the closing 13:25; 2 Thess 3:17,18
 3. "The just shall live by faith" an Old Testament quote used by Paul in his other letters.
 4. Because of Peter's statements where he writes that he is addressing the same people that Paul had written to. (The Jews) I Pet 1:1, 2 Pet 3:1)
 5. Because it was written in Italy by a friend of Timothy who was in prison at the time. (13:23,24; 10:34) This would tie in with Paul's imprisonment.
 - ii. Barnabus
 1. Because he was a Levite and the book seems to be written by a Levite
 - iii. Apollos
 1. Because of the eloquent Greek style of Hebrews.
 2. Because the Old Test. Quotes were taken from the Septuagint, while Paul usually quoted from the Hebrew Old Testament.
3. The book of Hebrews has been called the fifth gospel. The first four describes what Christ did while he was on the earth, while Hebrews describes what he is doing in heaven.
4. Hebrews 10:11 reveals that the book was written before the destruction of the temple in AD 70 by Titus.
5. Hebrews has been compared to Romans.
 - a. Romans reveals the necessity of the Christian faith
 - b. Hebrews reveals the superiority of the Christian faith.
6. Six key words in the book:
 - a. Perfect (14 x's)
 - b. Eternal (15 x's)
 - c. Better (13 x's)
 - d. Heaven (17 x's)
 - e. Priest, high priest (32 x's)
7. There are 86 direct references to the Old Testament in Hebrews, taken from 100 passages.

I. Christ – The Superior Person (1:1 – 5:10)

a. He is better than the prophets (1-3)

- i. Prophets had parts of God’s Word, Jesus could declare the full message of God.
- ii. Because of the Father’s description of Him.
 1. He was the heir of all things (Ps 2:8, Jn 3:35)
 2. Through Him God made the ages (Jn 1:3)
 3. He is the absolute expression of the collective attributes of deity (Jn 1:18; Rom 9:5)
 4. He is the “brightness of His glory”.
 5. He is the upholder of all things (Col. 1:17).
 6. He is the purifier of sins.
 7. He is now at God’s right hand
 8. Names of Christ in Hebrews
 - a. Author (12:2)
 - b. The Apostle (3:1)
 - c. Captain (2:10; 12:2)
 - d. Christ (3:6)
 - e. Finisher (12:2)
 - f. Firstborn (1:6)
 - g. Forerunner (6:20)
 - h. God (1:8)
 - i. Heir (1:2)
 - j. High Priest (2:17)
 - k. Lord (2:3)
 - l. Mediator (8:6)
 - m. Shepherd (13:20)
 - n. Son (1:2)
 - o. Surety (7:22)

b. He is Better than the angels. (1:4 – 2:18)

- i. Because of His rank – “He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than any.” (4)
- ii. Because of His relationship and because of this The Father commanded that the angels should worship him. John Bunyan wrote, “If Jesus be not God, then heaven will be filled with idolators.”
- iii. Because of His reign. “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.”
- iv. Because of His righteousness. “A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom.” (1:8)

Hebrews contains 5 warnings. This is the first.

(First Warning) about disregarding God's Word. (2:1-4)

the
God's Word

The argument is if Israel in Old Testament times was punished for disobeying word of angels, how much greater would be punishment for disobeying as spoken by His Son. (Gen. 19; Deut 33:2; Ps 68:17; Acts 7:54; Gal 3:19)

v. Because of His redemptive ministry (2:5-18)

1. Why did Jesus find it necessary to take upon Himself a body of flesh?
 - a. In order to capture our lost destiny (2:5-9)
 - i. Man was originally created to rule over things.
 - ii. He was put on probation (made a little lower than the angels) for awhile.
 - iii. Due to his sin, he has not yet been able to rule over all things.
 - iv. Jesus came to complete man's original purpose for him.

Author Ray C. Stedman writes, "The writer insists that when David says 'all things,' he means all things, everything. "Now putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control". Here is man's intended dominion. Man was made to be king over all God's universe. Surely this passage includes far more than the earth. It envisions the created universe of God as far as man has ever been able to discover it, in all the limitless reaches of space and whatever lies beyond that. All this is to be put under man's dominion. It is a vast and tremendous vision.

b. In order to recover our lost unity (2:10-13). As a result of His sufferings, Christ now unites us to the Father and becomes our elder Brother.

c. In order to reassure our lost confidence. (2:14-18)

blood,
through death

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and he also himself likewise took part of the same; that

He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

C. He is better than Moses (3:1-19) Reason: Moses was a servant in God's house, while Christ is the beloved Son. (1-6)

(Second Warning) About doubting God's Word (7-19)

1. An example: Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) (3:8-11)
2. An exhortation: Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. (3:12-13)

The word Exhort here is *parakaleo* in the Greek and means to urge someone to pursue some course of conduct.

D. He is better than Joshua (4:1-6)

“For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God” (4:8-9)

The word “Jesus” should be translated “Joshua.” Jesus is better than Joshua because the rest he gives is eternal, whereas Joshua's rest lasted a bare 25-40 years.

1. This chapter lists the first of 13 “Let us” admonitions in Hebrews.
 - a. “Let us therefore fear” (4:1)
 - b. “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest “ (4:11)
 - c. “Let us hold fast our profession.” (4:14)
 - d. “ Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace” (4:16)
 - e. “Let us go on unto perfection” (6:1)
 - f. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (10:22)
 - g. “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering” (10:23)
 - h. “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works (10:24)
 - i. “Let us lay aside every weight” (12:1)
 - j. “Let us run with patience the race that is set before us” (12:1)
 - k. “Let us have grace” (12:28)
 - l. “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp.” (13:13)
 - m. “Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually (13:15)

Three Great Principles from Hebrews:

1. No sacrifice but Calvary
2. No priest but Christ
3. No confessional but the Throne of Grace

2. The three great biblical “rests” in God’s Word.

- a. The rest of creation (4:4)
- b. The rest of salvation (4:10)
- c. The rest of consecration (4:11)

3. The power of God’s Word:

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” (4:12-13)

E. He is better than Aaron (5:1-10)

a. He possesses perfectly that which Aaron possessed in part.

- i. Like Aaron, He was taken from among men. (1)
- ii. Like Aaron, He was chosen by God (4)
- iii. Like Aaron, He had compassion (2)
- iv. Like Aaron, He learned obedience (8)
- v. Like Aaron, He prayed (7)
- vi. Like Aaron, He suffered (8) (Phil 2:8)

b. He possess perfectly that which Aaron lacked completely

- i. Unlike Aaron, He is God’s unique Son. (5)
- ii. Unlike Aaron, He is a priest after Melchizedek (6)
- iii. Unlike Aaron, He becomes the author of eternal salvation.

II The Superior Purpose (5:11 – 6:20)

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.” (6:1)

(Third warning) – about departing from God’s Word. (5:11-6:20)

A. The particulars of this danger:

a. The symptoms:

i. Apathy (11)

“Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing”

ii. Ambiguity (12)

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”

Author Ray Stedman writes:

“I read of a principle in a high school who had an administration post to fill. He promoted one of his teachers with 10 years of teaching experience to the job. When the announcement was made, another teacher in the school came to him terribly upset. She said, “Why did you put that teacher in this position? He has only had ten years experience and I’ve had 25 years, yet you passed me over in favor of him. And the principle said, “I’m sorry your wrong. You haven’t had 25 years of experience. You have had 1 year’s experience 25 times.”

ii. Apostasy

b. Hebrews 6:4-6:

Questions:

1. What is the interpretation of the following verse?

“ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

We must understand the context in which these verses were written. This book was written to “The Hebrews” or those of the Jewish faith. It speaks here of one who has received salvation, seemingly had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, were trained and disciplined in the Word of God and seemly had some type of spiritual experience in the Holy Spirit.

It seems here that these verses are in reference to those Jews who have come to a relationship to Christ and have rejected that relationship in favor of their old religious ways of Judaism. These people made a conscience decision to reject the message of Christ and became apostate. In so doing they have hardened their hearts by rejecting the Holy Spirit. Grieving the Holy Spirit to the point where he does not convict anymore.

Mat. 12:32 -“And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

2. Can a believer commit the unpardonable sin and not know it?
3. Can the believer commit the unpardonable sin and desire to repent and not be forgiven?

The believer cannot commit the unpardonable sin without knowing what he has done. If the believer desires to repent then he has not committed the unpardonable sin.

4. Can Jesus keep us from the place of committing the unpardonable sin?

- a. Yes, It is the priesthood of Christ. Jesus is described as our forerunner. This word has been associated with a small boat called a forerunner. In the ancient world large ocean vessels often experienced difficulty when approaching the shallow Greek harbors. To counteract this a small forerunner boat would often be sent out to help secure the vessel’s anchor within the harbor itself.

Kenneth Wuest writes; “ The anchor of the believer is, therefore, fastened within the veil of the Holy of

Holies of

heaven. We have some rich figures here.

This present life is the sea; the soul, a ship... the soul of the believer, as a tempest-tossed ship, is held by the anchor within the veil, fastened by faith to the blessed reality within the veil.”

II. The Superior Priesthood (Chp 7-10)

It has been already stated that Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek and not after Aaron . This offers a four-fold advantage:

A. It offers a better Source:

1. Christ was given a royal priesthood. Melchizedek was a king as well as a priest. (Gen 14:18)
2. Christ was given an authoritative priesthood. Melchizedek received the tithes of Abraham.
Here the author points out that inasmuch as Levi (The founder of the Levitical priesthood from which Aaron the first High priest came) was in the loins of Abraham (He would become his great-grandson) that Levi in reality tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham. The conclusion is that under the law the Levitical priests received tithes from the people, but back in Genesis 14 the Levitical priesthood paid tithes to Melchizedek.
3. Christ was given a timeless priesthood. Melchizedek was “without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life” (7:3), but Aaron died (Heb 7:8; Num. 20:23-29)

(Melchizedek is a type of Christ in office and origin in that we have no record of his birth or death

4. Christ was given an independent priesthood. Melchizedek was ordained by an oath from God and not by the tribe of Levi. In the Old Test. No one could serve as a priest unless he was a descendant of Aaron (Ezra 2:61,62). However neither Melchizedek nor Christ came from this tribe. (Heb 7:14, 22-24)
5. Christ was given an everlasting everlasting priesthood (Heb 7:17: Ps. 110:4)
6. Christ was given an immutable (changeless) priesthood (7:24)
7. Christ was given an all-inclusive priesthood. Under this arrangement Christ was not presented as an offering but actually became one (7:27)

Author Ray Steadman writes: “As a priest, Jesus Christ could find no unblemished sacrifice that he could offer except himself, so He offered Himself as a sacrifice; there was found no other priest worthy of offering such a sacrifice, so Christ became both Priest and Victim.”

This dual arrangement can be seen by listening to his seven final sentences while on the cross. The first 3 demonstrate his priestly ministry while the final 4 speak of his sacrificial role.

8. Christ was given a holy priesthood (7:26) “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”

This is in contrast to the Levitical priesthood, whose representatives often allowed corruption, and idolatry to control their lives. (Ex. 32:1-6; I Sam. 2:12-17)

9. Christ was given a perfect priesthood. (7:19-25)

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

10. This verse is usually applied to the salvation of the lost, but in context it refers to the preservation of the saved. Thus, Christ died down here on Calvary to bring us to salvation, and now lives up there in glory to keep us saved. (Rom 8:34; Rev. 1:18)

B. It offers a better script: (From the Old covenant to the New)

The Old Test. Hebrew word for covenant was “*berit*”, meaning “to cut or divide”. This cutting was in reference to the cutting of sacrificial animals. Between these bloody pieces of flesh the two parties of the “*berit*” would walk. However, in the Genesis 15 account, God put Abraham to sleep and walked through alone., thus signifying that particular *berit* to be unconditional. This ceremony was also know as the blood covenant. This Old Test. Concept is brought out in the New Test. By the Greek word *diatheke*. A *diatheke* is a treaty between two parties, but binding only on the one, according to the terms fixed by the other. This important word appears no less than 22 times in the book of Hebrews. It is always translated by the English words “covenant” and (or) “testament.” (Lk. 22:20); I Cor. 11:25)

Another Greek word, *suntheke*, although it is the regular term employed for a treaty, is used but 4 times and always in a bad light (Jn. 9:22; Lk 22:5; Acts 23:20)

In Hebrews 8 the author contrasts the new covenant with a certain Old Test. Covenant..

1. The old covenant.
 - a. It was mediated by Moses (Ex. 19; Jn 1:17; Gal. 3:19)
 - b. It was conditional (Deut. 28)
 - c. It could not produce the necessary righteousness (8:8)
 - d. It was written on dead stones (Ex. 32:15)
2. The new covenant.
 - a. It was mediated by Christ (9:15; Jn. 1:17)
 - b. It is unconditional (8:9)
 - c. It can produce the necessary righteousness (8:11)
 - d. It was written on living hearts (8:10)

There are 4 theories concerning the recipients of this new covenant.

1. The church has replaced Israel as the participant in the new covenant. This is totally refuted by Paul in Romans 9-11
2. The new covenant is with the nation Israel only. This is out of context with Hebrews 8.
3. There are 2 new covenants in this chapter. One refers to Israel and the other the church.
4. There is but one covenant which will be fulfilled eschatologically with Israel, but participated in soteriologically by the church today. Of these 4 views it would seem that the 3rd is possible, the 4th is probable.

C. It offers a better sanctuary (chp 9) from the earthly to the heavenly.

- a. The earthly sanctuary. Its inferiority:
 - i. It was of this world (v1)
 - ii. It was a temporary one (v8)
 - iii. It was a copy (shadow or type) of the real one (9)
 - iv. It was (to most) totally inaccessible (7)
 - v. It was associated with God's first work of creation (11) Here the word "building" is better rendered "creation."
 - vi. It was made by human hands (24)
 - vii. It featured the blood of animals (13)
 - viii. It was ineffective in matters of eternal salvation (9)
 - ix. It had no abiding hope. (10)

- b. The heavenly sanctuary. It's superiority:
 - i. It is of heaven
 - ii. It is continuous
 - iii. It is the real thing

- iv. It is totally accessible to all (4:16; 10:19)
- v. It is associated with God's second work of redemption.
- vi. It was made without human hands. (24)
- vii. It features the blood of Christ (12)
- viii. It is totally effective in matters of eternal salvation (12)
- ix. It has an abiding hope.
 - 1. Note these 3 phrases:
 - a. "He appeared" (9:26) – His former work as a Prophet
 - b. "Now to appear" (9:24) – His present work as a Priest.
 - c. "Shall he appear" (9:28) – His future work as king.

- 2. To this point the author of Hebrews has described the sevenfold ministry of Jesus Christ:
 - a. His incarnation (1:2; 2:16,17)
 - b. His ministration (5:7-9)
 - c. His crucifixion (6:6; 7:27;2:9)
 - d. His resurrection (13:20)
 - e. His ascension (4:4; 6:20)
 - f. His intercession (7:25; 8:1; 9:12,24)
 - g. His revelation (9:28)

D. It offers a better sacrifice (chp 10) From animal lambs to God's lamb

- a. The necessity for God's lamb:

"For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." 10:4)

These sacrifices could (for awhile) cover sin, but these sacrifices could not cleanse it. (10:6, 11)

- b. The obedience of God's lamb.

"Therefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." (5,7)

These may be considered as our Lord's first recorded words in reference to his earthly ministry, uttered perhaps as he left the Ivory Palace of Glory to join himself to that tiny mass of human flesh within Mary's womb.

- c. The accomplishments effected by God's lamb:
 - i. A completed redemption
 - ii. A current sanctification
 - iii. A coming glorification

“And every priest standeth daily ministering and often times the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.”

- d. The exhortations from God’s lamb:
 - i. Confidence concerning sins:

blood of

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more... Having therefore, brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the

Jesus... Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith
...(10:17,19,22)

- ii. Consciousness concerning saints:

Is the believer responsible for the welfare of other Christians? He is indeed. Note: “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching’ (10:24,25)

Fourth warning: About despising God’s Word (10:26-31)

“

For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

Were these verses speaking of saved or unsaved people?

III. The Superior Principle – **Faith** (Chp 11-13)

- a. **The People of Faith** (11). The author of Hebrews has just ended chapter 10 with a summary statement concerning the believer and his great High Priest. The statement is: “Now the just shall live by faith.”

Having come this far in the epistle, some of the readers might be wondering: Exactly what is this faith like? Has anyone lived like this before? The author now answers these questions. This chapter has been called the divine hall of fame and Westminster Abbey of scripture.

1. Faith Described (V 1-3)

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

- a. Faith is the confident assurance of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen.
- b. Faith enables the believing soul to treat the future as present, and the invisible as seen.
- c. According to verse 3, faith is vital if we are to go beyond the very first verse in Genesis 1.
- d. Faith is trust in the unseen, but not the unknown.
- e. Faith is the title deed of things hoped for.

2. Faith demonstrated—(V4-40)

The author now calls to memory many Old Test. People to illustrate the amazing accomplishments wrought through faith in God.

- a. Heroes:
 - i. Abel
 - ii. Enoch
 - iii. Noah
 - iv. Abraham

- v. Sarah
- vi. Isaac
- vii. Jacob
- viii. Joseph
- ix. Moses
- x. Moses' parents
- xi. Joshua
- xii. Gideon
- xiii. Rahab
- xiv. Barak
- xv. Samson
- xvi. Jephthah
- xvii. David
- xviii. Samuel
- xix. Others

b. The Home Runs of Faith:

- i. By faith the proper sacrifice was offered by Able.
- ii. By faith a rapture took place to Enoch
- iii. By faith 8 escaped the flood waters (Noah and family)
- iv. By faith difficult commands were followed by Abraham
 - 1. Abraham obeys by faith when he did not know where, when he did not know how, when he did not know when, and did not know why.
- v. By faith a barren woman named Sarah gives birth.
- vi. By faith great predictions were made concerning the marriage and family of Jacob by Isaac. Concerning the tribal line of the Messiah by Jacob and concerning the Exodus by Joseph.
- vii. By faith a baby was hidden by Moses' parents for 3 months
- viii. By faith a nation was delivered from slavery by Moses
- ix. By faith a city was shouted down by Joshua
- x. By faith a harlot named Rahab was saved.
- xi. By faith military reformers named Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah delivered Israel.
- xii. By faith a shepherd boy named David was anointed king.
- xiii. By faith kingdoms were subdued by David
- xiv. By faith many righteous acts were performed by prophets, priests and kings
- xv. By faith many Old Test. Believers obtained promises
- xvi. By faith lion's mouths were shut by Daniel
- xvii. By faith fire was quenched by the three Hebrew children
- xviii. By faith believers escaped the edge of the sword
- xix. By faith weakness becomes strength
- xx. By faith many waxed valiant in war
- xxi. By faith women received their dead
- xxii. By faith many endured torture

xxiii. By faith many endured imprisonment
xxiv. By faith some endured temptation
xxv. By faith some endured martyrdom

3. Faith deposited:

What could have sustained the faith of these aforementioned? (V11:13-16, 38-40)

They deposited their faith in the vaults of the celestial city, “which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

B. **The Pattern of Faith**: (Chp 12)

1. Look to the Son of God (V1-3)

- a. The author of this book, assuming it is Paul, likes to use sports analogies to get his point across. Examples:
 - i. Wrestling: “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Eph 6:12)
 - ii. Boxing: “I have fought a good fight.. (II Tim 4:7) “So fight I, not as one that beateth the air” (I Cor. 9:26)
 - iii. Racing: “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that yw may obtain ... I therefore run...” (I Cor. 9:24,26)
- b. Here in Hebrews 12 Paul chooses the third analogy – That of a footrace.
- c. “We also are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses” (V1)
 - i. *Great* – We often feel that we are alone, as Elijah once did
 - ii. *Cloud* – This underlines the word “great.” The Greek here is not *nephele*, which refers to a detached and sharply outlined cloud, but *nephos*, speaking of a huge mass of clouds, covering the entire visible space of the heavens.
 - iii. *Witnesses* – Who are these witnesses? They are not angels, for the Greek word is *marturos*, referring to one who has both seen, heard, and performed something, usually while suffering at the time. It speaks of well-qualified experts.. The context strongly suggests that these witnesses are the faith heroes mentioned in Chapter 11.

- iv. *Let us lay aside every weight* – (V1) Here the word is *onkos* and refers to a bulk or mass. The concern of the Greek runner was not simply whether something was immoral or moral, but rather how would it affect his race. Thus, the enemy of the best is not often the worst, but the good.
- v. *And the sin which doth so easily beset us* – The word “beset” means “to surround, to cleverly encircle, to ambush.” It speaks of a loosely-fitting robe. Paul may have had in mind the sin of unbelief here, but it also refers to any sin that the believer allows to upset him.
- vi. *Let us run with patience the race that is set before us* –
 1. Every believer has been entered in this race by God himself. Note: the usual word for race (*dromos*) is not used here, but rather the Greek word *agon*, from which we get our English word “agony” This is a serious race.
 2. The pace of each runner is set by God
 3. The object of the race is to please God and win rewards. Its goal is not heaven.
 4. Every runner is expected to win.
- vii. *Looking unto Jesus* – The phrase here speaks of a steadfast, intent, and continuous gaze. How easy is it to get our eyes off him and look to the left of the right. Perhaps to our left we see another runner behind us. It may be that the runner of our right is far ahead of us. This then can produce pride (as we view the left runner) and envy (as we view the right runner). Both are sin and cause us to slow down. We are instead to keep focused on Jesus.
- viii. *The author and finisher of our faith* – (V2) Christ is both Founder and Finisher of the Christian faith. There have been many founder of religions throughout the world but death has finished them all.
- ix. *For the joy that was set before him endured the cross* – The nature of this joy is explained in Jude 1:24 – “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy”

2. Submit to Discipline (4-11)

a. Reasons for discipline:

- i. To make us think about God and His Word. “ And yoe have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto

children (V5) This is often OUR problem, we FORGET. David said, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.”(Ps 103:2) This exhortation in Hebrews is taken from Prov. 3:11,12)

- ii. To prove that God loves us (V5) “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” The word “chasten “ here refers to that instruction in right behavior. The word “scourge” speaks of that correction in wrong behavior.
- iii. To prove we really belong to God (7-8) “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then ye are bastards , and not sons.”
- iv. To make us more like Jesus. (10) “That we might be partakers of His holiness.”

b. Reactions to Discipline: (12:5,11)

- i. The believer can despise it, that is, treat it too lightly. (As Esau did his birthright)
- ii. The believer can faint under it, that is, treat it too seriously.
- iii. The believer can be exercised by it. The real question is not simply how many mistakes a Christian makes, but how much he learns through these mistakes.

Ps. 94:12 “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;

Ps 119:67 “Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

Ps. 119:71 “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

Ps. 119:75 “I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

c. Results of Discipline: (12:11)

“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of

righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

The Fifth warning: About disagreeing with God's Word. (V25)

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:”

3. Prepare for the kingdom of God (V12-29)

- a. Lift up your drooping hands. Begin working for Christ (12)
- b. Strengthen your weak knees. Begin praying.
- c. Make straight the paths for your feet.

Homer Kent Writes: “ If one's feet are lame, special care must be taken that the path on which they walk has no dangerous obstacles. Spiritually speaking, the one whose faith is weak must not venture into areas where his spiritual strength will be insufficient. Otherwise the ... lame believer may aggravate his lameness into a dislocation of the limbs.”

C. The performance of faith (Chp 13)

1. It's duties:

- a. Continue to love the brethren (v1)
- b. Continue to show hospitality to strangers (v2)
The entertaining of angels here may refer to Gen 18
- c. Remember the prisoners and the ill-treated (V3) These may be in bonds for the word of the Lord.
- d. Let marriage be held in honor among all. The seventh commandment has been, is, and will continue to be required by God for man (saved and unsaved alike) to obey – “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”
- e. Let your way of life be free from the love of money.
- f. Remember those who lead you and teach you God's Word. (V 7)
- g. Don't be carried away by varied and strange teachings (V9)
- h. Continue offering up a sacrifice of praise to God (V15) In addition to this, the believer is commanded to offer up the sacrifice of his own body (Rom 12:1) and that of Good works (V16)
- i. Obey your teachers and submit to them (V17). The reason is that someday God will hold those leaders accountable.
- j. Pray for Christian leaders, especially the author of the book of Hebrews.

2. Its delights: Our most holy faith brings with it many precious blessings. Note:

- a. "...for he [God] hath said, I will never leave thee, not forsake thee" (V5)
- b. "So that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what men shall do unto me." (V6)
- c. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (V8)
- d. "We have an altar, whereof they [the temple priests] have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." (V10)
- e. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." (V14)
- f. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (V20-21)