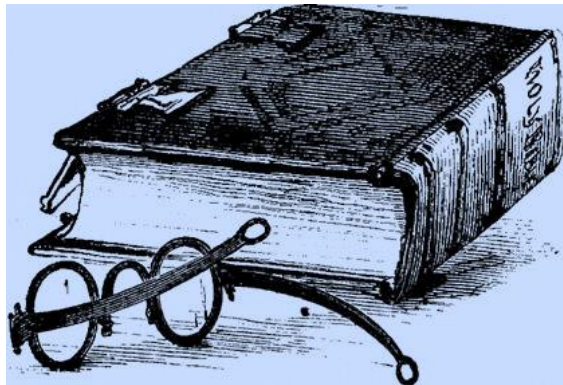


Handbook 7

Studies on the Books of
1st. Corinthians
Ephesians
and
Hebrews
by Albert Fairweather



“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”
2 Timothy 2:15

Bach cover

Handbook Studies by Albert Fairweather

Albert and Elaine Fairweather have been in full time service for the Lord for many years. They live in Queensland, Australia.

Albert has been active in church planting in Australia and Kenya. For many years he edited Christian magazines.

His teaching is now being published in Book form.



Published by
Printing Aid Abroad

Handbook 1.

‘The Shepherd’s Handbook’ and ‘The Holy Spirit’

A Guide for Elders, Bible Teachers & Students of God’s Word.

Handbook 2.

‘God’s Great Plans for the Ages’

Selected Studies on many topics for Christians.

Handbook 3.

‘Things to Come’

The Prophetical Books of Daniel, Revelation and others.

Handbook 4.

‘Triumphing over Trials’

Lessons from the Book of Ruth, Job and others.

Handbook 5

The Patriarchs, Abram to Joshua

Handbook 6

Miscellaneous Studies on various Subjects.

Handbook 7

Studies on 1st Corinthians, Ephesians & Hebrews.

Books printed as funds allow, and available in PDF format on request.

Email: John Denman jldenman@hotmail.com.au

We encourage translation, please contact the Editor

In this Handbook,

All Scripture taken from the New King James Version.

Copyright © by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Table of Contents

Study 1. The Book of 1st. Corinthians

Study 2, The book of Ephesians

Book 3. The Book of Hebrews

.....

Study 1

The Book of 1st. Corinthians

Please read these Studies with an open Bible.

The date of writing this Epistle (or Letter) was between A.D. 55-59, and it is probably one of the earliest writings of the New Testament, along with the Letter of James, and it gives an insight into the functioning of the early churches.

Paul the author also gives insights into his relationship with the Corinthians along with Silas and Timothy who had laboured with him in planting this church (Acts 18:1-8; 17). These believers had written to Paul with questions about marriage in a pagan polygamous society (7:1) and about eating meats offered to idols (8:1).

1st. Corinthians Chapter 1

v. 1. Paul is the author and he first gave his apostolic authority, for an 'apostle' was 'one sent' by Jesus Christ with a divine calling. Apostles were also given signs to authenticate their ministry so people might believe. Sosthenes may have been the ruler of the Corinthian synagogue who was beaten by the Greeks (Acts 18:17).

v.2. Paul addressed the church of God at Corinth and all believers everywhere, and this comes down to us. Believers are 'sanctified in Christ', meaning 'set apart for God's purposes' by His cleansing blood and the indwelling Holy Spirit. They are called 'saints', also meaning 'set apart and holy ones', or 'God's men and women'.

v.3. Grace is God's 'bestowal' on His people, and peace is 'heart tranquillity'. This means that 'grace' when received leads to 'peace' with God and in the heart.

v. 4-8. Paul commended these believers where he could and for the grace given to them and for their gifts and calling in Christ Jesus. They were waiting for the Lord's return and because of Christ's sanctifying work they would be blameless in that day.

v. 9. 'God is faithful' for He can be trusted. He has called us into 'the fellowship of His Son', this means the 'things shared in common' as believers in Him and as 'Son' defines His deity in relationship to the Father. 'Jesus' means 'Saviour' and 'Christ' is the 'Anointed One' and 'our Lord' is 'Sovereign Lord' - Lord of all.

A Call for Unity

v. 10-11. He urges unity in mind, word and action. Paul had received a disturbing report from the household of Chloe. These reports were: a. There were contentions among them (1:11); b. They were 'carnal', acting like babes (3:1); c. Immorality was condoned amongst them (5:1); d. They were going to Law to settle disputes (6:1); e. Christ's headship was not being displayed and there were abuses at the Lord's Supper (11:1-34); f. They were misusing the gifts given by the Lord (Chs. 12 and 14); g. There was false teaching about Christ's resurrection (Ch. 15). So Paul wrote to them to correct these sad issues.

v. 12-17. Paul and Apollos were united as servants of Christ and did not seek a following from those they baptised. This showed immaturity among these believers, for Christ alone must be followed by His people. All Paul wanted to do was preach the Gospel and not be drawn into disputes among them.

The folly of following human leaders

v. 18-29. The Gospel message of the cross is folly to human wisdom. Preaching is God's appointed way to make known His message of Christ crucified, and this alone reveals the power and wisdom of God, for the Jews wanted a **sign** and the Greeks sought **wisdom**. To believers, Christ is the power and the wisdom of God. The world's view is to have power and glory, but Christ is all we need, for in our weakness His power is displayed as we lean on Him and give Him all the glory.

v. 30-31. The Gospel is God's power to change lives: "But of Him (by a divine act) you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD" (1 Corinthians 1:30-31). All we need is found in Christ alone!

1st. Corinthians Chapter 2

v. 1-5. All Paul knew and preached among them was Christ crucified, for human wisdom had no power to change lives and fit them for God's kingdom. He came among them in weakness of speech so that their faith might be centred, not in Greek excellence of speech and human wisdom, but in the wisdom and power of God.

What do we look for in preaching? Entertainment or Edification?

v. 6-9. Paul preached the Gospel, for this is the wisdom of God in a 'mystery', for this is God's previously hidden secret now being revealed (Ephesians 3:1-7). The 'mystery' revealed is: a. Christ Incarnate, revealed in human flesh then crucified (1 Timothy 3:16). b. Ordained before the ages began for our glory; c. Revealed to the apostles and d. Unknown to the rulers of this age who crucified the Lord of glory.

The Seven ‘Mysteries’ are: **1.** Of the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 13:11); **2.** Of Israel’s blindness (Romans 11:25); **3.** Of the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18); **4.** Of Christ’s body, the Church (Ephesians 3:1-7); **5.** Of Christ in you the hope of glory (Colossians 1:26-27); **6.** Of man restored to Godliness (1 Timothy 3:16); **7.** Of iniquity (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

v. 10-11. How is this ‘*mystery*’ revealed? It is only through the Holy Spirit, for He searches and reveals the deep things of God, these ‘*mysteries*’. Only the spirit of man knows the inner man, and only the Spirit of God knows the things of God.

v. 12-13. We have received the Holy Spirit so as to know the things of God. The Holy Spirit caused the apostles to combine spiritual **truth** with Spirit given **words**, and this is Divine inspiration and revelation! This is how our Bibles came to us.

v. 14-16. The natural man cannot receive or understand, for spiritual truth is foolishness to him. The spiritual man discerns and judges, but is not judged by man. Only such a man can instruct in the things of God because he has the mind of Christ.

A Summary: Spiritual truth came by divine revelation through the apostles, then on to us today through the Holy Spirit and through the Holy Scriptures, coming to our hearts and understanding. The Scriptures are infallible and divinely inspired.

1 Corinthians Chapter 3

v. 1-4. In this section, the Spiritual and the Carnal are contrasted, for believers are guided or led by the Holy Spirit or by the old nature, the flesh of human reasoning.

There are three types of people in the world: **1.** Those who are natural and not Christians (1 Cor. 2:14). **2.** Christians who are ‘carnal’ or living for self-interests, not Christ’s interests (1 Cor. 3:1). **3.** Christians who walk in the Spirit, feeding on the ‘solid food’ of the deeper things of the word of the God, walking in obedience.

The command to “*be filled with the Spirit*” (Ephesians 5: 18) was not being lived in them while one said ‘*I am of Paul*’ and another, ‘*I am of Apollos*’. This showed that their **position** in Christ (1 Cor. 1:2) did not match their **condition** before Christ (1 Cor. 3:1-4), for our **union** in Christ should be linked with **communion** with Christ.

Rewards for Labour

v. 5-8. The workmen are Paul and Apollos, and while one planted and another watered, they were ‘*one*’ in their aim, and it was God who gave the increase. They were ‘*workers together with God*’ and would be rewarded for their labours. Their unity in labouring for the Lord contrasted with the disunity in Corinth.

v. 9. The **workplace** where Paul and Apollos laboured was the church at Corinth, for “*You are God’s (cultivated) field, you are God’s building*”. It was through them

that the Corinthians believed (v.5), and their ministry was weeding out the problems of sin and disunity and building them up in Christ into mature believers.

v. 10-11. From this we learn that: **a.** God is the great **Designer**; **b.** The Word of God gives the **Plan**; **c.** The Apostles & Prophets were the **Master Builders** and **d.** The Lord Jesus Christ is the only **foundation** to build our lives and churches upon.

v. 12-15. Believers are building with their lives in one of two ways: **a.** With Gold, Silver, Precious Stones, which picture a Christ-centred life with works of faith, for this is Christ’s glory displayed in believers (3 John 5); **b.** With Wood, Hay, Straw or a self-centered life, with the work of the flesh (Example: 3 John 9; Gal. 5:16-26).

The Work of Faith

This is spiritual edification by Scriptural teaching and living and is the answer to carnality. **1. Gold** is Christ lived and preached (1 Cor. 2:1-5). The pure Gold of the Tabernacle pictured Christ. **2. Silver** is redemption through His blood, man’s need met in Christ (1 Peter 1:18); **3. Precious Stones** is the display in believers lives of Christlikeness (Jude 20-21), typified in the ephod and breastplate (Exodus 28:5-21). Living like this gives eternal rewards at the Judgement Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10).

The Work of the Flesh

These are seen as **Wood, Hay, Straw**, and all consumed by fire! All of this resulting from a self-centred life, without any rewards at the Judgement Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10; Romans 14:10). We will be glad to have done with such works.

v.16-17. The local church is the **temple** of God, His ‘inner sanctuary’ where He dwells (Matthew 18:20). The Spirit of God dwells in the church and in believer’s bodies, so those who defile these God will destroy or corrupt (1 Cor. 11:27-34).

v. 18-20. Self-deception is possible, and God will confound the wisdom of this world. There should be no place for this among Christians or in the local church.

v. 21-23. The wisdom of this world crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Cor. 2:8) and holds nothing for the believer, for “*all things are yours*” in Christ. He is all we need in this life and in the one to come. He provides, protects and we have His presence.

1st. Corinthians Chapter 4

This Chapter has three divisions: **v. 1-5.** Faithful stewards and their judgement; **v. 6-13.** Reigning as Kings in Pride and Prosperity! **v. 14-21.** Paul’s fatherly care of his converts.

1. Faithful Stewards and their judgment

v. 1-2. Paul said to look on him and the other apostles as lowly and humble servants of Christ, and as stewards (house managers) of the mysteries of Christ. These are the

previously hidden secrets now being revealed to the apostles and prophets. A major requirement in stewards is faithfulness. Joseph was a good example of this (Luke 12:42). The Lord Jesus was faithful to Him who appointed Him (Hebrews 3:2)

v.3-5. It is difficult to evaluate faithfulness in others, so Paul discounted their judgement of his stewardship or of any human court. He did not judge himself, for God must be the final judge. Paul was not sinless, but was not aware of any unfaithfulness in his stewardship. Christ was his justification and the judge of his motives and service.

We must be very careful about judging Christian service, for we naturally tend to exalt the spectacular and sensational and to ignore the humble quiet servant. We must leave all judgement in this area to the Lord, who at His coming will reveal the hidden motives and counsels of the heart. Then praise will be given by our Lord where deserved for faithful service. We greatly err when we judge the motives of the heart of the Lord's servants.

2. Reigning as Kings in Pride and Prosperity

v.6-8. To spare their feelings, Paul figuratively transferred his concerns to himself and Apollos. They would show them humility in service, not pride. We should show humility and sensitivity to fellow believers, not set one above another, for God also gave to them their gifts and abilities.

They reigned as kings in prosperity while Christ and His apostles were dethroned in this world. Can we be crowned before the time! Someone has said: *"Lifetime is training time for reigning time"* and *"Christ was given a cross not a crown!"*

v.9-13. These verses contrast the lifestyle of the apostles with that of the Corinthians. This reminds us of the state of the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:14 to 20. Some of the Corinthians may not have been saved (2 Cor. 13:5). As we look at what the apostles suffered, it is a challenge to our faith and lifestyle.

3. Pauls fatherly care of his converts

v. 14-16. Paul, as a spiritual father, wrote to help not hurt. Many would instruct, but few are true fathers to the flock. Paul set the example. Be wary of new comers to the church, for it is wise to give time to prove before trusting such to leadership.

v. 17. Fatherly care sent Timothy to remind them of Paul's ways in Christ and his apostolic teaching, the same teaching he taught in all the churches. He did not teach one thing in Corinth and something else in Ephesus.

v. 18-20. Their pride had to be abased. Paul would demonstrate spiritual power to bring correction. Are we submissive and open to correction from the word of God given by our spiritual guides? Some think they know it all and cannot be taught.

1st. Corinthians Chapter 5

v. 1-2. Paul had to deal with very sinful conduct in the house of God at Corinth and apply biblical discipline (1 Timothy 3:14-15). A disturbing report came to Paul from Chloe's household (Chapter 1:11). This sin was being widely publicised, that a man had taken his father's wife, and this even incensed the unconverted. The Corinthians were 'tolerant' of this sin, 'gifted', 'intellectual' and perhaps 'numbers' counted more than holiness. This called for mourning with tears of repentance and for the church to discipline by putting this man away from their fellowship.

v. 3. In dealing with sin there was the Lord's teaching (Matthew 18:15-17). Paul judged this sin as though present, now the Corinthians had to judge the matter:

v. 4. God has given the local church the authority to judge. This was to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with the grieved and incensed spirit of Paul an apostle as though present, and with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. The action to be taken was to put such a one away from among their fellowship.

v. 5. The sinning man was to be delivered to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, for God's discipline on his fleshly attitudes that could even lead to his death (1 Cor. 11:27-34) and that his spirit might be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was a saved man, and the action taken was designed for his repentance and restoration (2 Cor. 2:1-11).

v. 6. Leaven is a picture of sin, and their glorying in outward appearances was not good, for a little leaven (yeast) has the effect of leavening the whole lump by spreading to others and defiling their testimony and relationship with the Lord.

v. 7. At the Passover, all leaven was removed from Israeli homes for the feast of unleavened bread (Ex. 13). At conversion, all believers 'sin' is forgiven and they are 'unleavened'! After conversion they are to *'purge out'*, meaning to 'thoroughly cleanse away', to confessed and forsake all 'sins' they commit (1 John 1:9).

v. 8. Christ, the Lamb of God, fulfilled the Passover type on the Cross (Exodus Chapter 12). So, let us keep the feast with joy (a 'joyful festival'). We do this by cleansing out malice and wickedness and by living joyfully in sincerity and truth.

v. 9-13. Christians must live among immoral people and have a testimony before them, but we must separate from immoral sinning Christians. Our judgement is limited to Christians who sin, and we must leave God to judge non-Christians.

1st. Corinthians Chapter 6

v. 1-8. Christians must avoid going before the unsaved and using Civil Law against one another. These disputes must be brought before the saints, for they will judge angels in a coming day, and should be able to settle disputes among believers.

Should the church appoint unsaved judges rather than a wise believer? And brother goes to law with brother before unsaved judges, leading to a ruined testimony.

That this was happening at Corinth was to their shame and there was an utter fault, when brother wronged and defrauded brother. They should be able to settle disputes among themselves! Better to be wronged than to go before a Civil Court.

A solemn warning, such people will not inherit the Kingdom

v. 9-10. It is a denial of Christ's teaching to think that the unrighteous will enter the kingdom of God, for those doing such things do not show the fruit of the Spirit:

Fornicators have sex outside of marriage; **Adulterers** have sex with a married person; **Idolaters** worship things other than God. **Homosexuals** and **Sodomites** use one another's body in illicit sexual ways; **Thieves** steal what belongs to others; **Covetous** is inordinate desire for things others possess; **Drunkards** are addicted to alcohol; **Revilers** use abusive speech against others; **Extortionist** take advantage of others at exorbitant rates. **Such people will not inherit the Kingdom of God.**

v. 11. The Corinthians were once like these, but now they were '*washed*' from all defilement by the word of God and blood of Christ with all sin cleansed. They were '*sanctified*' or 'set apart' from bad habits and '*justified*' from all guilt in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the indwelling Spirit of our God.

Things lawful but not helpful

v. 12. Some things we do might be permissible to us but are a stumbling to others, such as offering pork to a Jew. It might be lawful but enslaving as are tobacco or alcohol. Paul would not be brought under the power of any such things.

v. 13. Our body and foods have been designed for each other. The body is not for vile or impure purposes but for the Lord, for our bodies were designed in all functions to be used for God's glory.

v. 14-18. God has a future purpose for our bodies, for as Christ was raised, so will our bodies. Our bodies are members of Christ and His body. At creation God said, "*Two shall become one flesh*", so a believer cannot be joined to a harlot and be joined in spirit to the Lord. The seriousness of this is stressed, "*Certainly not*", for such sins are against the believer's body, so "*flee*" sexual immorality.

v. 19-20. The believer's body is the '*temple of the Holy Spirit*', the **inner sanctuary** where God dwelt in the Tabernacle and Temple. And this is God's doing, we are not our own, for we were bought with the price of His own shed blood. The Corinthians were challenged to glorify God in their body and spirit.

Paul here ends correcting the very serious issues raised in the report given him by the house of Chloe.

1st. Corinthians Chapter 7

Paul answers questions in the letter from the Corinthians

v. 1-2. The sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman is to be preserved in a pagan society where ritual prostitution and other evils were practised. To 'touch' means to have a physical relationship, and so as to avoid immorality, most Christians should marry (Genesis 2:23-24; Mark 10:2-9).

v. 3-6. There are responsibilities for intimacy within marriage (Hebrews 13:4). The husband and wife are to render due affection to each other and not to deprive one another by withholding sexual relations unless for special reasons, and the one concession is to abstain for '*prayer and fasting*'.

v. 7-9. Instructions were given to the unmarried as not all have the gift of celibacy. Some are called to remain unmarried, others to marry especially if there is the danger of falling into moral sin. It is better to marry rather than burn with unfulfilled passions. In 1 Timothy 5:9-15 younger widows are advised to re-marry.

v. 10-11. Instructions for married believers: A wife is not to depart from her husband or husband from his wife. If she departs, both are forbidden to divorce and remarry. Separation does not break the marriage tie. Divorce among Christians is prohibited, except for **habitual sexual immorality** where reconciliation is impossible. This was taught by the Lord (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:9).

v. 12-14. Instructions to believers with an unsaved wife or husband: **a.** If the unsaved is willing to live with a Christian, let them not divorce. The believer has a 'sanctifying' effect in the home. Salvation is not in view, but the blessing of the Gospel and the influence of godliness. An unbeliever does not have this effect.

Under the law of Moses, Jews were not to intermarry with pagans (Deut. 7:3), and pagan wives were to be put away with their children (Ezra 10:2-3). Marriage with proselytes was allowed, for Salmon married Rahab (Matthew 1:5). Under grace children are 'holy' or 'set apart' by the blessed influence of a godly parent.

v. 15-16. Bondage, divorce or re-marriage? Two views: **1.** If an unbeliever departs, do not use emotional or legal means to retain them (bondage), there is no guarantee of saving the unsaved! **2.** If an unbeliever departs, divorce and remarriage are permissible. This is what some believe from Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9.

In all these situations believers are called to resolve all issues peacefully.

v. 17-24. Christianity and our calling: Becoming a Christian does not break marriage obligations. The Jew does not have to obliterate circumcision, or the Gentile his uncircumcision. The slave continues as such unless opportunity comes to be free. Slavery does not diminish our value to the Lord for the slave is the

Lord's freedman and the free man is Christ's slave! So remain 'with God' in the same calling, unless it is a sinful occupation.

v. 25-28. About virgins: The Lord gave no instructions, but Paul writes by inspiration and from experience. The Church will experience periods of distress or persecution and in such times it may be better to remain unmarried. Paul would spare them from having to flee with a wife and children.

v. 29-35. The time is short! Legitimate relationships are to be subordinate to serving Christ so keep before us the eternal realities. Use but not misuse this passing world. The unmarried woman has more time for the things of the Lord and the married must care for the home and husband. Paul does not say this to bring into bondage, but to give guidance. Each must decide before the Lord their calling.

v. 36-38. Two views are held: **1.** In many cultures, a father has control over his daughter marrying. Many hold to this view. **2.** His 'virgin' refers to his own unmarried state or 'virginity'. Kelly and Darby hold to this view.

v. 39-40. Instructions for wives: The law (God's word to Moses) binds her in marriage to her husband but if her husband dies, she is free to remarry, but only *'in the Lord'*, to a believer. Paul and the Spirit say its best she remain unmarried.

These are general rules and guidelines for marriage.

1st. Corinthians Chapter 8

The problem of meats offered to idols: Corinth was a pagan society with many idols and temples. Meat sold in the market may have been first offered to idols. Believers may have been invited to a pagan home or to a temple for a feast.

v. 1-3. The rule of knowledge and love: Knowledge without love causes pride, but knowledge with love builds up or edifies others. God favours and approves those who love Him. Without love there can be no true knowledge.

v. 4-5. An idol is nothing, for it has no power or understanding! In mythology some human like gods inhabited heaven and some earth. Demon powers are behind idols and are controlling and influencing their devotees (1 Cor. 10:19-20).

v. 6. What knowledge teaches about God: There is one God, the Father, the Source and Creator of all things and we created for Him and for His purposes and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things consist and He is our life giver.

v. 7-13. Knowledge and love for my brother: Not all Christians have this knowledge, for some were 'weak' and had a consciousness of the idol. Those who were 'strong' should not stumble or injure those with a 'weak' conscience: Examples: A converted Jew might still not be free to eat pork! No Christian by

their example should offend or lead the 'weak' back into idolatry. One might be free to drink wine, but this may lead a 'weak' brother to become an alcoholic. For me personally, it is better to abstain for my brother's sake.

To perish is not loss of being, but loss of well-being! So do not stumble another for whom Christ died. When we hurt another, we hurt Christ, and to do this is *"to sin against Christ"*. The principle is to avoid giving needless offence to any believer.

1st. Corinthians Chapter 9

v. 1-2. Paul defended his apostleship: He had seen the Lord (Acts Ch. 9). He was called by the Lord with signs authenticating his ministry. The Corinthian believers were his work, the seal of his apostleship. This was the defence of his calling.

v. 3-6. His defence to those who questioned his authority: Because he laboured with his hands (he was a tent maker by trade), some may have said he had no right to take gifts for his support. Barnabas and Paul did not seek support. They trusted God to supply either by gifts or by working. He had the right to support, but would not accept it from carnal Christians.

v. 7-10. Principles of support for the Lord's servants: He gave the examples of soldiers, farmers and shepherds. All enjoy food for their labours! Christian service is like warfare, farming and shepherding. The law of Moses says the same. The working ox feeds on the grain it is treading out (Deut. 25:4). Gaius knew this and sent on the Lord's servants with the support of food or money (3 John 5-8).

v. 11-12. Spiritual versus material values: Paul's sowing brought eternal results in their lives. In return they should minister to him materially. They supported other teachers who may have been his critics, so why not support him? In all this conflict he would rather suffer hardship than hinder the Gospel.

v. 13-14. The example of Priests and Levites in the Temple: A portion of the offerings and sacrifices were given to them. It is a command of the Lord to support Gospel preachers. So we must ask, why did Paul not seek their support? The answer is in 2 Cor. 11:5-15; Phil. 4:10-19. He would not be like the false apostles and teachers who were covetous so as to gain support and were slaves to money.

v. 15-18. He was obliged to preach, but saw support as optional. He did not insist on this right for support nor was he requesting it. He would rather die than cease from his decision. He was called to preach by divine compulsion. A stewardship of the Gospel was entrusted and his reward was to make the Gospel freely known.

v. 19-23. The motives for his service (Matthew 20:26-28): He was not a servant under man's control, but he served all so as to win more. He studied his approach to winning Jews in view of their culture and religious beliefs, for he knew this

well. He studied his cultural approach so as to win both Jews and Gentiles to Christ and to edify the believers.

They would share together in the present benefit and future glory.

v. 24-30. Rewards and the Christian race (2 Cor. 5:9-10): It demands patient endurance, so run to win (2 Timothy 4:7). It demands discipline and self-control (Heb. 12:1-2) and one must run by the rules and compete lawfully (2 Timothy 2:5).

To be disqualified or castaway means the loss of present testimony and of future reward at the judgement seat of Christ. The Christians race is a marathon, so we should all run so as to win and to finish the race with joy (Acts 20:24). Christ is the goal, the end, He must fill our vision. Nearing the end of his life Paul wrote:

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

1st. Corinthians Chapter 10

v. 1-4. Israel were greatly privileged but failed in their race: All Israel were under the guiding cloud, with the **presence, protection and provision** of the Lord. All passed through the Red Sea and were saved from Pharaoh (pictures Satan behind rulers) and Egypt (pictures this world systems; Exodus Ch. 14).

All were baptised into Moses, meaning they were identified with Moses and accepted his God given authority and leadership. All ate the manna that points to Christ the true bread from heaven (John 6:31-33). All drank of the water from the smitten Rock who is Christ who gives the living water (John 4:7-14).

v. 5-10. These things are warnings and examples to us. We are warned against lust, idolatry, immorality, murmuring and not trusting Christ. ‘Most’ were physically delivered, but their hearts were still in Egypt! Because of their unbelief, their bodies were left scattered in the wilderness. Their sin was unbelief and bodily gratification.

v. 11-13. Admonition is warning based on instruction, to train and to put in mind. We need humility and trust lest we also fall. He does not deliver us from trials and temptations, but limits them to what we can bear them. God’s faithfulness will see us through, and He will make a way of escape or a way out in His own good time.

v. 14-15. Eating things offered to idols resumed: Our blessings in Christ preclude idolatry, so flee it! He appeals that they may be wise enough to understand this.

v. 16-17. Fellowship with Christ is set forth in the wine and bread of the Lord’s Supper. The bread reminds us that we are all members of one body.

There are a number of things spread on this Table for us to enjoy! First mentioned is *‘the cup of blessing’*, speaking of His shed blood, **His sacrifice**. Next mentioned is *‘the bread which we break’*, His lovely sinless humanity, **His person**. Our blessings in Christ are in heavenly places and are more than we can number (Ephesians 2:4-7).

We all enjoy great blessings flowing from Christ who shed His blood on the cross and so secured peace with God and His peace for us to enjoy.

v. 18. Israel also enjoyed fellowship with God at the brazen altar and all ate the peace offering together (Lev. Ch. 3). For Israel the *‘Table of the Lord’* described the brazen altar and all placed upon it. It was food for their God, a sweet savour to Him (Malachi 1:7).

v. 19-20. The idol and its offerings are nothing, but behind idols are demons who control their devotees. Christians cannot have fellowship with demons.

v. 21. The cup and table of demons describes all that is involved in idolatry. The *‘cup of the Lord’* is figurative, describing our blessings because of Christ’s death and His blood shed to redeem us. The *‘Lord’s Table’* is figurative of our fellowship with Him, and all the Lord has prepared for us in Christ (Psalm 23:5).

v. 22. The Lord is jealous over us (2 Cor. 11:2; James 4:5). So do not provoke His discipline, for we are not stronger than He and we must walk humbly!

v. 23-24. Seeking the wellbeing of others: A thing may be lawful, but we should discern what is helpful and edifying and spiritually builds up the faith of others.

v. 25-28. It is lawful to eat whatever is sold in the meat market and to eat in the unbeliever’s home, for *“The earth is the Lord’s and all it fullness”* (Psalm 24:1).

Meat sold in the meat market may have been dedicated to idols when slaughtered. So consider what other believers or unbelievers think and say about food offered to idols, and so minister to their conscience and to your own.

v. 29-30. So we must consider the conscience of others, and not impose our freedom on them causing their conscience to condemn them.

v. 31-32. These are the three great divisions of humanity: In whatever we do, do it for the glory of God. We should be careful not to give unnecessary offence to **Jews, Gentiles** or to the **Church of God**.

v. 33. Paul aimed to please all men in all things, apart from things sinful, seeking their salvation. So let us also do all things with a view to their profit.

1st. Corinthians Chapter 11

This chapter deals with Christ's headship and believers conduct at the Lord's Supper. The Corinthian believers had forgotten Paul's previous teaching. Timothy was sent to remind them of this teaching (Acts 16:4; 1 Cor. 4:17). We should also note that what he wrote were *"the commandments of the Lord"* (1 Cor. 14:37).

What is written here is not optional or simply explained away as a 'local custom' as in some Bible footnotes and as some now teach. All that is set forth here is to make believers aware of how to display the headship of Christ in a local church.

Men were praying and prophesying, obviously a church activity, and doing so with their heads covered as is still the Jewish custom for men in Synagogue. Women were in church meetings with uncovered heads. Paul adds further instructions for women in church meetings by showing Adam's priority in creation and Eve's priority in the fall (1 Cor. 14:34-35).

v. 1-2. In seeking the profit of others, Paul followed Christ's example (Philippians 2:5). He commends them, then requests them to keep the *'traditions'* or *'things delivered'*, these are the inspired instructions he had received from the Lord.

v. 3-6. The Divine order of headship is given. To demonstrate this in the meetings of the church, men are to uncover and women to cover. Even in the Godhead, the Father takes the place of rule while Christ takes the place of willing subjection. Differing **roles** do not denote inferiority! The man by uncovering shows Christ's headship, the woman by covering shows man's headship. In this Paul appeals to the Creation order

v. 7-10. Man is the image and glory of God, the woman the glory of man. The woman was made for man. She covers *"because of the angels"*. Angels are spectators to church order (1 Peter 1:12) and are witnesses to the woman's covered head, a symbol of man's authority and our submission to God's plan.

v. 11-12. But both man and woman are inter-dependent on each other in the Lord and in pro-creation. Understanding God's plan should make the men humble and the women content.

v. 13-15. Paul appeals to Nature: They were to judge the matter themselves; even nature itself teaches a distinction between men and women's hair. Two coverings are seen; here it is her natural hair, nature's covering. In v. 6 it is a mantilla or veil-like covering. Two different Greek words are used.

v. 16. Some will be contentious, but the 'custom' or 'practice' as Paul and Timothy taught among all the churches was here again outlined to the Corinthians. They were the only church out of line with the apostolic teaching at this time.

***"If any one is disposed to be contentious, we (the apostles) recognize no other practice, nor do the churches of God"* (Revised Version).**

v. 17. Paul then addressed abuses at the Lord's Supper. He could not praise their conduct when 'coming together', and it is sad when the saints depart from meetings and in doing so hurt and hinder some believers in their walk. God's word says: *"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching"* (Hebrews 10:24-25).

v. 18-19. There were *'divisions'* (schisms) within the church; Paul believed it because their conduct must lead to this, and to *'factions'* (sects), describing a more open division. The only good thing was that those *'approved'* by God could be *'recognised'*, for they stood out from the rest by their godly conduct.

v. 20-22. This is the only mention of ***'the Lord's Supper'***, and is not to be confused with ***'the Lord's Table'*** (10:21). The first had the bread and wine upon it, the second is figurative of all that God has prepared and sets before those who love Him. Their conduct denied what the Supper meant, for one was hungry and another drunk! The early church practised a common meal ending with the Lord's Supper. Paul now separates the two. They had houses to eat and drink in. Their conduct by getting drunk shamed the poor and despised the church of God.

v. 23-26. The solemnity of the Supper is contrasted with their conduct. It was a revelation from the Lord to Paul, that Jesus instituted it while He was being betrayed (Luke 22:17-20). He gave thanks for the bread, which symbolised His body broken for us. The cup symbolised His blood shed for us on the cross. It is the blood of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:10-12). The Old Covenant of Law was brought in with the sprinkling of blood (Exodus 24:8).

v. 26. The example of the first Christians shows that it was kept on the first day of the week, our Sunday (Acts 20:7). It was a proclamation, pointing back to the Cross and on to our Lord's coming again for His people.

Our Lord's loving entreaty was, *"do this in remembrance of Me"*. *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word"* (John 14:23)

v. 27-29. Their careless and irreverent behaviour made them guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. We are all in a sense all unworthy, but if we search our hearts and confess any known sin, we are worthy to partake. We should be right with God and with one another before partaking. To do otherwise means we are careless and do not discern that the Lord suffered in His precious body for our sins.

v. 30-32. The Corinthians were not examining themselves in self-judgment so many were weak, sickly and some had died, for God was judging them. The Lord loves us too much to allow us to continue in sin like people of the world (Hebrews 12:3-11). Sadly, some true believers are not fit for earth so He takes them to heaven!

V.33-34. Closing instructions on the Lord's Supper: They were to consider one another and eat meals in their own homes. The Lord's Supper was not instituted for hunger to be satisfied. To do so would bring the Lord's judgment upon them.

Paul would deal with other issues when he visited them.

1st. Corinthians Chapter 12

There were abuses in the Corinthian church over the proper use of spiritual gifts and especially the gift of tongues. In Chapters 12 to 14 Paul writes to correct this. Some had a supernatural gift to speak in foreign languages they had not learned (Acts 2:7-8). They gloried in the gift, not the Lord who gave it, and they thought they were spiritually superior. Some churches today suffer from this problem.

v. 1-3. Not all manifestations are from the Lord. In the past they had been misled by demons and there was still a present danger of this (10:21). Demons curse Jesus, but to call *'Jesus Lord'* is a work of the Holy Spirit. He must be Lord by our acceptance of His death for our sins and by His total authority over our lives.

Those speaking in tongues may be led by deceiving spirits. Possessing the Holy Spirit is more important than the gifts He gives!

v. 4-11. The Spirit is the giver of all gifts and these 'charisma' or 'giftings' are given in diversity for the *'profit'* or *'common good'* of all believers. The Holy Spirit is sovereign in their distribution. Later we shall see that some of these gifts have ceased. The human body is a figure of Christ and His Church for He is the head while believers are the members of His body, the Church.

v. 12-13. There is *'one body'*, stressing unity. *'So also is the Christ'* (Eph. 1:22-23). There is one *'baptism'* (Eph. 4:5), *"For also in the power of one Spirit we have all been baptised into one body..."* (Darby's translation).and this is in the past tense, so it is complete and it was corporate at Pentecost (1 Cor. 12:12-14).

At conversion **all** believers were baptised into the body of Christ, placed there by the Holy Spirit. They were also born of the Spirit thus becoming children of God (John 1:12-13); They were at that moment sealed by the Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14) and placed as sons of God into His family (Romans 8:14-15).

This baptism is not a 'second blessing' as some teach, for they are confusing this initial *'baptism'* with the many *'fillings'* of the Holy Spirit. The Corinthian's were

baptised into the body of Christ and sadly they were also **'carnal'** and yet still able to speak in tongues! Tongues were a known language, and were not a sign of greater spirituality as some believe. Their proper use was to reach the unsaved.

We all have a responsibility to God to avoid this confusion: We are to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18) and to walk in and be led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-18).

v. 14-24. The human body has many members operating in harmony, all obedient to the head. The foot, hand, eye and ear are all inter-dependent and need the body, for God has designed the members to form one body. There are various functions but all need each other. The heart, lungs and kidneys are hidden and seem weaker than the arms, but we cannot live without them. We can live without a tongue, eyes and legs. Some parts of our bodies we cover in modesty as they are *'less honourable'*, while other parts are more *'presentable'* and we display these.

v. 25-27. Mutual care prevents a schism (rent, division). How painful it is to tear the body! When another Christian feels pain, we all feel pain; if they are honoured, we should rejoice. There should be no jealousy because of differing gifts and God's blessing on their use. The Corinthian church was *"body of Christ"*, a miniature of the whole and each one was a member of the whole Church.

How important it is to have mutual care among all members of the body.

v. 28. This is a priority listing but not an exhaustive list of all gifts.: **First**, apostles, **last** tongues. *'Apostles'* were 'sent ones', chosen by the Lord to be His representatives, with their ministry authenticated with signs and wonders.

'Prophets' were inspired teachers receiving revelations from the Lord before the New Testament was written. *'Teachers'* are those who study and explain the Word in simple terms.

'Miracles and Healings': these had the gift of raising the dead and healing the sick. *'Helps'* are those who serve in the church and minister to others. The thought is one who 'helps' by takes hold of a heavy load another is attempting to lift.

'Administrations' are probably elders overseeing the church and deacons assisting them with its activities. *'Tongues'* was the ability to speak in a language unknown by them but known by listeners. This allowed the Gospel to be preached without learning the language.

v. 29-30. A question and an entreaty: This question has already been answered by a **'No'**. What the Corinthian's put first, God put last! What they put last, the apostle and God put first! If the body was all 'tongue' it would be a monstrosity!

v. 30. Gifts are important, but there is something more important and a more excellent way than childish disputes over gifts. It is **'love'**, now introduced.

1st. Corinthians Chapter 13

v. 1-3. This chapter sets forth love and the use of gifts, for *"God is love"* (1 John 4:8). It is by love that the divine nature is manifested and God's love for the world was revealed (John 3:16). Unless the various gifts are ministered in love, they are of no value. To have revelations from God, to understand mysteries, even to sacrifice one's self without love means that *"I am nothing"*, and the only motive for service is love for our Lord *"For the love of Christ compels us"* (2 Cor. 5:14).

v. 4. The Character of love and how to recognise it by actions: Love suffers long for it patiently endures under all trials. It is kind having goodness of heart, being gracious. It does not envy and is not moved with jealousy. It does not parade itself, is not puffed up and has humility, therefore love is not self-assertive.

v. 5. Love does not behave rudely, for it is courteous and considerate of others. It does not seek its own and is not self-centred. Is not easily provoked for it suffers insults and injuries without reacting in anger. It thinks no evil unless evil is clearly demonstrated and does not attribute bad motives where there is an alternative.

v. 6-7. We should not rejoice in the failures of others, but rejoice when truth triumphs. Love supports and covers sins and puts the best construction on all situations, and it bears up under difficulties. We should strive to measure up to these beautiful attributes of love and practise them in our lives.

Love and gifts contrasted

v.8. Love will never fail, but will endure forever. The **prophetic** gift of revelation would fail to function and that happened by the end of the apostolic age. **Tongues** had ceased by the end of the age of the apostles (AD 96) and of those who outlived them. John Chrysostom (AD 345 – AD 407) wrote in his *'Homilies'* of *"the cessation of happenings which were common in those days (of the apostles) but unknown in our own"*. He said, *"they have long since ceased"* (Homily 4).

Knowledge, the ability to recall and teach the prophetic word without having a Bible would vanish away. Today we need constant revision of the Scriptures with meditation upon what we read. The Holy Spirit then gives understanding of the Scriptures and helps us to teach these precious truths.

v. 9. Paul understood by revelation that knowledge and prophecies were only partial. God knows more, and would give a *'complete'* replacement to these gifts.

v. 10. What is the *'Perfect'* thing? *'Perfect'* is in the neuter gender; it is some 'thing', not a 'person'! *'Perfect'* means 'complete' or 'mature', and in the context God's word replaced the partial gifts of 'prophecy', 'tongues' and 'knowledge'.

The two aspects of what is 'Perfect'

1. There is only one *'perfect'* thing on earth, and it is the **Scriptures, the word of God**. It was 'completed' about A.D. 96 with the Book of Revelation.

2. The expert Greek scholar and Bible commentator, W. E. Vine wrote: *"Perfect' refers to the complete revelation of God's will and ways...in the completed Scriptures and also in the hereafter."* This will be in the Kingdom and eternal age.

v. 11-12. Prophecies, tongues and knowledge belonged to the 'infancy' of the Church age. Before the Bible was completed, their *'knowledge'* from prophecy was like looking into a dim mirror.

The completed Scriptures would give a *'perfect'* reflection of what we are and of what Christ is. Then they would know perfectly what God wants known in this age and in the hereafter (2 Cor. 3:18).

v. 13. Faith, hope and love will abide while the earth remains. But the greatest will always be love. Faith, hope and love are contrasted with what will be done away, and these are prophecies, tongues and knowledge.

A summary of Chapters 11 to 13

1. Apostles and Prophets laid biblical foundations. They were *'first'* (12:28) in the order of Church gifts and calling (Ephesians 2:20; 4 :11).

2. Demons are behind idolatry (12:1-3); the Corinthians were warned about this.

3. Headship is to be displayed in the local church. Church 'order' protects against deception by deceiving spirits and is watched over by angels (14:20).

4. Tongues were known languages, last in order of the gifts (12:28). They were given for witness to the unconverted Jews. Not all had this gift.

5. Tongues would cease suddenly, along with prophecy and knowledge of the prophetic word (13:8). Now we have the inspired and completed Scriptures, *"the faith once for all delivered to the saints"*, so there is no new revelation (Jude 3).

6. Faith, hope and love are with us while this earth remains, but in the new age,

Faith will give way to sight, Hope to realisation and Love will be all in all for all eternity. The light of His love will remove and exclude all darkness.

1st. Corinthians Chapter 14

v. 1-2. Prophesying excels tongues, however, to benefit the church, all must be ministered in love. No one can understand a tongue other than God. Speaking in the Spirit the tongue speaker speaks in a 'mystery', a language hidden to listeners.

v. 3. Prophesying excels, for it promotes '**edification**' that builds up, '**exhortation**' that stirs up and '**comfort**' that binds up; all in a known language!

v. 4-19. These show the superiority of prophesy over tongues. Note verse 6, 12, 19. "*Revelation and knowledge have to do with inward reception, while prophesying and teaching have to do with the giving out of the same*" (W.E.Vine Commentary).

Prophesying is revelation that gives knowledge, while teaching is imparting that knowledge, now found in the inspired Holy Scriptures.

v. 20-21. Children like to be amused and they do not hold malice. We should be without malice and mature. Israel would not obey God's Law, so they went into captivity where they heard many other languages, so 'tongues' were a sign to unbelieving Israel of their captivity, but they were slow to learn from this.

v. 22. God spoke through 'tongues' or known languages to Jews at Pentecost, while prophesying was for the believers. Tongues were never a sign of spirituality among believers as many teach today.

v. 23-25. In church meetings untaught believers or unbelievers attending would think the Christians mad if they spoke in languages they could not understand. But prophesy would bring the conviction of God's word and lead to life-changing conversions.

The brothers taking part are addressed.

v. 26. Tongues were being abused. The early church practised open meetings where a number of brothers took part. But all must be for edification.

v. 27- 31. No more than two or three were to prophesy or use tongues, each in turn and in an orderly manner, leaving room for others to participate. Tongues must have an interpreter present who knew the language. The others were to judge if the ministry was appropriate, the object being that all could learn and be encouraged.

v. 32-33. In pagan rituals demons took control (12:2), but Christian prophets and teachers were self-controlled, speaking with the spirit and the understanding (14:15). Here teaching is given to correct these Corinthian problems, "*For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.*"

The sisters are addressed

v. 34. They are instructed as to their place in church meetings. Teaching on this is also found in 1 Timothy 2:8-15. The 'law' is most likely taken from Genesis 3:16; a transliteration is: "*What you desire shall be subject to the veto of your husband, and he shall rule over you*". Also, only men served in the Tabernacle and Temple.

v. 35. They are not to speak, teach, or do so by asking questions during a meeting of the church, but were to ask their 'husbands' or 'menfolk' at home. Women have a special ministry in the Gospel (Philippians 4:3) and among women (Titus 2:4).

v. 36-38. Who is really spiritual? Who brought the word of God to Corinth? The prophet or spiritual would acknowledge that what Paul taught was the commandments of the Lord. There is no room for manoeuvring around these truths. Some will never accept this as God's word. These will remain ignorant and unconvinced. "*A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still!*"

v. 39-40. These gifts were then still present in the church when Paul wrote; prophecy is the most important, but tongues were not to be forbidden, subject to the restrictions placed on them. Many of those who claim to have these gifts today do not follow this injunction: "*Let all things be done decently and in order*".

1st. Corinthians Chapter 15

v. 1-4. This is the Gospel, the Good News they had received and the ground they stood upon, by which they were saved, provided they continued in these truths. Paul received from the Lord this most important revelation:

1. That Christ died for our sins (Isaiah 53:5-6). **2. That He was buried** (Isa. 53:9), and **3. That He rose again the third day** (Psalm 16:8-11). All according to and foretold in the Old Testament '**Scriptures**'. This is the only foundation, the immoveable rock that Christianity stands upon, the unchanging word of the Lord.

v. 5-8. He was seen by Cephas (Peter), by the twelve and by over 500 at one time and some were still alive when Paul wrote. He was seen by James, and lastly He was seen by Paul on the Damascus Road. Paul came on the scene later like an untimely birth, for he was not among those disciples who lived with the Lord.

There were many witnesses to His resurrection and there is no better attested fact in history, recorded also by secular authors at the time He arose.

v. 9-11. Paul felt his unworthiness in view of his past life, but God's grace triumphed in his life and through Paul the Gospel had reached them.

v. 12-19. Even though they had been taught about the resurrection of Christ, some were denying it. If this was true, Paul's preaching had no substance, he was a false witness of God (a most serious charge) and it followed that their faith was without any basis and they were still in their sins. This false teaching meant that those who

died in Christ had no hope beyond this life, and this was a most pitiable situation for any to be in.

The triumph of Christ' resurrection

v. 20. Paul now turned to proclaim the triumph and the truth of Christ's resurrection. His promise that He would rise from among the dead (Mat.16:21) was fulfilled (Philippians 3:11); He is the firstfruits of a great resurrection harvest.

v. 21. Two men and two results are contrasted: Adam from the old creation brought death into the world. Christ by His new creation brought resurrection life.

v. 22. Adam heads up the old creation where **all** who are *'in Adam'* in their sins die. Christ heads up the new creation, and **all** those *'in Christ'* shall be made alive.

v. 23-25. The order of the resurrection: Christ is the firstfruits and then those who are His at His coming, and this has the 'rapture' in view (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). He also comes to 'reign' with the saints and armies of heaven (Revelation 19:11).

All believers of all ages will be raised in their order. Then comes the end, when the unbelieving dead are raised, judged, and He gives the kingdom to God the Father (Revelation 20:11-15). His 1000-year reign will end with His enemies judged (Revelation 20:7-10).

v. 26-28. For He must reign until the last enemy, death, is destroyed or abolished (Revelation 20:14). Christ's role in future glory: A quote from Wm. MacDonald's Commentary:

"God has made Christ ruler, administrator of all His plans and counsels. All authority and power is put in His hands. There is a time when He will render His account of the administration committed to Him. After He has brought everything into subjection, He will hand the kingdom back to the Father. Creation will be brought back to God in a perfect condition. He will retain the subordinate place that He took in Incarnation."

v. 29. Baptism often led to martyrdom, and those being baptised 'for the dead' were filling up the ranks 'in place of' the dead and martyred believers. Baptism does not save (1 Peter 3:21), nor can a dead person be saved by baptising in their place a living person, as some teach (Hebrews 9:27).

v. 30-32. What point was there in all the suffering Paul and these baptised believers went through if there was no resurrection? One might as well enjoy this life to the full, to eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die!

v. 33-34. False teachers spreading this error were bad company and to be avoided. If there was no resurrection, there was no need for righteous living. Some of these people were not saved.

Do not be deceived by such people, live rightly in view of eternity.

Illustrations of the resurrection body

v. 35-38. Two questions answered from nature: a. *"How are the dead raised up?"*

b. *"What will their body be like?"* The answer is that a grain is sown to die. It then grows with a body God gives. The grain is not the same as the plant, but there is a connection. The believer dies, but will be raised with a new body.

v. 39-43. There are variations of flesh, human, animal, fish and birds. There are variations of heavenly and earthly bodies. All having different glories. These are all illustrations of the resurrection.

We live in bodies that are weak, often sickly and age and they die and are sown in death like a grain of wheat. These bodies will be raised in power and in a glorious form (Philippians 3:20-21).

The natural and spiritual body

v. 44. The believers natural body is often **soul led**, suited to earth and subject to death. The spiritual body is **spirit led**, suited to heaven and immortal. In resurrection the spiritual and material combine in a new body like Christ's, for the resurrected Jesus ate food and He had a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:36-43).

v. 45. Adam was **given** a natural body shared by the human race. His origin and character was **earthly**. In contrast, Christ came from **heaven** and **gives** the gift of eternal life and all believers will bear **His heavenly image** (1 John 3:2).

v. 46-49. The natural comes before the spiritual, for the **first man** Adam was made from dust, and came before the **second Man** who is Christ the Lord from heaven.

The resurrection 'mystery' and the victors cry

v. 52. Our present bodies are not suited for heaven. The mystery is explained, for not all believers will die, but all will be changed. This will happen quickly at the Rapture, heralded by the trumpet of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

v. 53-54. The corrupted bodies of believers (the dead) will rise first and those mortal (alive) will follow. All believers will then be incorruptible and immortal. Then death will be swallowed up in victory.

v. 55-57. Death will have no sting and Hades no victory. Believers are forgiven and Christ has met the demands of law.

Thanksgiving rises to God who gives us the victory over death, sin and Hades through our Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 58. In view of the resurrection we should not be moved by difficulties or adversity. Our labour in the Lord will be rewarded, so abound in God's work.

1st. Corinthians Chapter 16

v. 1-4. Here principles for giving are outlined, for each one is to give: **Secretly** (Matthew 6: 1-4); **Regularly** (1 Cor. 16:2); **Proportionally** (1 Cor. 16:2); **4.** Bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6) and **Cheerfully** (2 Cor. 9:7). But we should first give ourselves (2 Cor. 8:5); we should abound in this grace (2 Cor. 8:7), and then there must be accountability in giving (2 Cor. 9:21).

Paul's Personal Plans

v. 5-9. He planned to visit 'God willing', but Ephesus offered an open door with many adversaries, always true where blessing is flowing. He wrote from Ephesus.

v. 10-11. In the meanwhile Timothy was to be received, protected and cared for (1 Cor. 4:17). He was a faithful and devoted servant of the Lord (Phil. 2:19-22).

v. 12. Even an apostle would not force his will on Apollos. The Lord's servant must be directed by the Lord.

Closing exhortations

v. 13-14. Christians should be on duty! '**Watch**' by keeping awake, watchful and vigilant. '**Stand fast in the faith**' by adherence to it. '**Be brave**' and be. '**Be strong**', be strengthened, and let all that you do be done with love.

Commending and submitting

v. 15-18. The household of Stephanas were among the earliest converts, and '**addicted**' to serving the saints. This is a description of the ministry of those who are to be acknowledged and submitted to. This challenges us to recognise and respect those placed over us in the Lord (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

Greeting and challenging the saints

v. 19. Paul passed on to them greetings from the churches in Asia minor. where Ephesus was the capital. Aquila and Pricilla were living there (with a house church), and had lived in Corinth, so were known to the believers at Corinth.

v. 20-21. Greetings from all the brothers and Paul. Some cultures still use a holy kiss, we use a handshake.

v. 22. Those who do not love the Lord Jesus are '*anathema*' or 'cursed', that is condemned to judgement. "*O Lord come*" is '*maranatha*' in Aramaic. "*Even so, come Lord Jesus*" (Revelation 22:20).

Benediction and closing words

v. 23-24. Benediction: "*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you*". Grace is "*That which bestows or occasions pleasure, delight, or causes favourable regard*" (W.E. Vine). Christ was full of grace and truth. This 'graciousness' should be reflected in our lives.

Paul so ends his letter: "*My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen*"

.....

Study 2

The Book of Ephesians

There are two words in the Greek New Testament used for 'love'. The first is '**agape**', meaning '*A love that is sacrificial in serving others*' (John 3:16).

The second Greek New Testament word for 'love' is '**philia**', meaning '*friendship, a brotherly love as expressed to family and fellow believers*'. The Greek word '**eros**' for erotic love is not found in the Bible.

Introduction:

Ephesians was written by **Paul** about A.D. 60-64 (his name means '**small**'), while imprisoned in Rome. It was carried by Tychicus along with the letter to Philemon (6:2-22). It is probably the first in order of his prison letters.

Its theme is "*the mystery*" of the Church, something **previously hidden in the divine counsels**, but now being revealed "*by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets*" (Ephesians 3:5). There are twelve such 'mysteries' listed.

This 'mystery' is mentioned six times and reveals **the believer's exalted position as seated with Christ in the heavenlies**, who with both Jew and Gentile make one body in Christ, the Church, of which Christ is head.

To Christians, a '**mystery**' is not '**mysterious**', but it is outside what the natural man can comprehend. It can only be revealed by the Holy Spirit to those born of the Spirit. In Greek religions, a '**mystery**' was what became known to the '**initiated**', those who became '**perfected**' in idolatrous rites.

Outline of this Letter

1. Introduction (1:1-3). The Believer's '**position in Christ**' in grace with our '**standing in Christ**' (Ephesians 3:21)!

2. The Believer's '**practice in the world**' - his walk and warfare (Ephesians 4:1 – 6:20). This is '**our state**' in the eyes of the world and of our God.

3. Conclusion (Ephesians 6:21-24). **The Letter contrasts a. our 'position' in Christ with b. our 'condition' before Christ; c. our 'union and communion'; d. and our 'doctrine and duty'!**

Ephesians Chapter 1

v. 1. Introduction. Paul is the author and '**apostle**' means '*a sent one*', called and commissioned by the Lord Jesus who granted signs to authenticate their ministry.

The '**saints**' (the Greek word '*hagios*') means '*Holy Ones, set apart for God's use*' by the indwelling Holy Spirit and the cleansing blood of Christ. This is **positional sanctification**. There is also **progressive sanctification**, and that is growing in grace in our daily walk. In it various forms '*hagios*' is translated as '*saint, sanctify, sanctification, hallow, holy, holiness*'. These saints are '**faithful**', and this means '**believing ones**', true of all believers in Christ.

v. 2. 'Grace' is the Greek '*charis*' and means '*favour freely bestowed*'. **God freely gives grace for daily living**. It is through grace He makes every provision for all who will believe. '**Peace**' means '*to join together*', or '*heart tranquillity*', an end to strife, resting in God in all situations. Christ joins believers to God.

There is '**peace with God**' that Christ made through His shed blood (Col. 1:20; Romans 5:1) and '**the peace of God**' that is given to hearts trusting in Him for all issues of life's journey (Philippians 4:6-7). '**God**' is now our Father by the new birth and by the Spirit of adoption (Romans 8:15-17). '**Lord**' is '*Sovereign Master*' as head of the Church and over all heavenly and earthly domains.

'**Jesus**' means '*Saviour*'. It is related to His perfect **sinless humanity**; He is able and willing to save. He saves His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). '**Christ**' means '*the Anointed One*', the Hebrew '*Messiah*'. It is '*God with us*', *Immanuel*, walking among us, revealing the Father to us (Matthew 1:23; John 14:9-11).

'Blessed' is the Believer's position in grace

v. 3. God is '**blessed**' (*eulogeo*), meaning '*to be praised and worshipped*'. So we '*bless*' His name! Man is '**blessed**' (*makarios*) meaning '*pronounced happy*' by God because of our spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 2:4-10).

Our blessings are **spiritual**, and in '**heavenly places**', sent from **heaven** as a gift through the Holy Spirit, and all centred in Christ (1:20; 2:6). They are not **earthly** as demanded under the law, where to obey is to live, to disobey is to die.

The '**heavenly places**' is the sphere where the Church demonstrates God's wisdom to heavenly beings; "*things which angels desire to look into*" (1 Peter 1:12). They are beholding the good order of churches. In the book of Job, Satan had entrance to heaven, the place of spiritual conflict is a mystery (Eph. 6:10-12). In resurrection our Lord cleansed with His blood '*the heavenlies*' (Heb. 9:12).

v. 4. 'He chose us in Him', in Christ in eternity past before the '**world**' began. He chose us so that we might also bless others (Abram, Genesis.12:2).

The '**world**' (the Greek '*kosmos*') is '*the orderly and harmonious arrangement of His creation*'. This creation still bears the marks of this despite the fall of man. It is the opposite of the Greek word '**chaos**' which comes exactly into English, and means where everything is totally dysfunctional and disorderly.

In all His dealings with man, God is **sovereign**, for "*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me*". But man is **responsible** to come to God, for Jesus said, "*and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out*" (John 6:37; 2 Peter 3:9).

His purpose in choosing: "*That we should be holy and without blame before Him in love*". The Father has a **penetrating view** over our lives, and we need to respond in our character by **loving** others and be a people **separated** from sin.

v. 5. His purpose in "*having predestined to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself*": He '**predestined**' or '**foreordained**' us. It means that He '*marked out beforehand our destiny*', to '*pre-determine from eternity past*'. He marked us out '*with a view to adoption as sons*', '*to place as adult sons*', a term involving the **dignity** of this relationship.

Here God's **love** is revealed for He made us His **children** (Greek *teknon* – John 1:12) and also marked us out '*for Himself*' as **adult sons** (Greek *huios* – Romans 8:15) to be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). Sonship carries with it the responsibility to live up to our exalted position in Christ!

This was all according to '**the good pleasure of His will**' (because it pleased Him), to bring many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10).

v. 6. In this we see the display of His glory and grace. All that He has done is to the praise of His '**glory**' that is, '*His moral excellence revealed*' by displaying what He **is** in Himself.

'**Grace**' is the '**bestowal**' of undeserved favour flowing from His divine character of love.

It is because of His divine grace that we are **'accepted in the Beloved'**. This speaks of the love that God is, His love for the lost as in John 3:16. Let us praise Him for this wondrous grace! All are acts of His own will, not due in any way to any goodness in us! **To Him be all the glory!**

v. 7. 'In Him we have redemption', redemption meaning *'to release on payment of a ransom, to buy in the slave market'*. We are freed from the bondage and guilt of sin and are now freed to serve Christ. **The price has been paid:** Christ gave His life and shed His blood to **redeem** us. All this is according to the riches of His grace. His grace is infinite, and so is His forgiveness. We have a new Master and are *'freed slaves'* of sin to be His *'bond servants'* (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

v. 8-9. He made His grace to 'abound (to exceed, to super abound) toward us'. This is revealed in His **'wisdom'** and **'prudence'** (*understanding in the right use of wisdom*), in making **'known'** (*by revelation*) to us the **'mystery'** pertaining to **'His will'**, all coming from His heart of love and for the wellbeing and blessing of saints. All is centred in Christ crucified, the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:18-31). The believer is brought into the secret of God's will and into eternal union with Christ in the Church (Matthew 11:25-30). This was according to His good pleasure which He **'purposed'** (determined) **in Himself!**

v. 10. Future aspects of the mystery: There will be a future **'dispensation'** meaning a *'stewardship, the administration of Christ, 'in the fullness of times'* (seasons) when Christ reigns over the earth with the Church in glory and He gathers together in one restored Israel and the believing ones from all nations on earth (Isaiah Chapter 11). This is known as the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, the 1000-year reign when He will be the head of all things (Revelation Ch. 20). After this He hands all things to His Father for this will be the eternal state (Revelation Chs. 21-22; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

v. 11-12. 'In whom we also have obtained an inheritance': This refers firstly to the apostles and early Jewish believers *'we who first trusted'*. He **'predestined'** or *'marked out beforehand'* these to this end, and this will be revealed to all. All this is *'according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the council of His will, to the praise of His glory'*. These Jews were trophies of grace, called out of a nation that had rejected and crucified their Messiah.

His grace, wisdom, understanding, purpose and will proceeds from Himself.

v. 13. 'In Him you also trusted'. This refers to the Gentile believers for when they heard the Gospel, the word of truth, they believed and they, like the Jewish believers were also **'sealed'** with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22). This was promised by the Father and the Son (John 14:15-18).

'Having believed you were sealed': This 'seal' speaks of permanency, of ownership by our Lord, and of security held in His hand, giving eternal life to all who believe (John 10:27-30).

v. 14. The Holy Spirit within is the **'guarantee'** *'the deposit or token payment'* of our inheritance, making it sure to us. Now both Jew and Gentile are united by the **'our'**. The Holy Spirit within us is the *'pledge'* or *'deposit'* until the full amount is paid; that will be in the time of **'the redemption of the purchased'**. This refers to the rapture, our body being changed (1 John 3:1-3) when we are taken into the Lord's presence at His coming (1 Thess. 4:13-18; Phil. 3:21).

'Redemption' is of spirit, soul and body, and is to the praise of His glory, fulfilling all His purposes, and was purchased for us at Calvary.

v. 15-23. This is Paul's great prayer for the saints, and should also be ours for one another. It is largely self-explanatory and I suggest you read it prayerfully as it is written by divine inspiration for our encouragement, hope and the realisation of what God has for us now, and holds in store for our glorious future!

We all have **'knowledge'** *'gnosos'* that can make us proud (1 Corinthians 8:1-3), but the **'knowledge'** here is *'epignosis'*, *'full knowledge'* of Him and of His plans, purposes and will for us. It was the exceeding greatness of His power that raised our Lord Jesus from the dead that is now at work in those who believe! That power seated Him at the right hand of the Father in heavenly places, far above all other rule, authority or power.

He, the Father, put all things under His feet, making Him head over all things to the Church, His body, which is the fullness or compliment of Him who fills all things.

Ephesians Chapter 2

v. 1-3. Just as the Father raised the Son from the dead, so He has through the indwelling Holy Spirit **'made alive'** all who believe in the Son. From the heights of Chapter 1 we descend to what we were before our conversion:

1. We were spiritually dead. To **'trespass'** means *'to deviate beyond the boundaries'* set by God; to **'sin'** means *'to miss the mark'* of God's standards.

2. We were depraved and followed the **devil** whose realm is the world system; we were **'sons of disobedience'**.

3. Both Jew and Gentile ('others') lived **fleshly** lives, and were children of wrath, with sins of action and of thought and walked accordingly. But now He has lifted us up from the pit of sin and made us alive in Christ (Psalm 40:1-3)

v. 4. **'But God'** acted, setting forth His character, revealing the **divine grace** that has saved us! He is *'rich (or wealthy) in mercy'* and has intervened because of His **'great love'** for us.

v. 5-6. He loved us when we were spiritually dead in our trespasses. It was then that He made us alive together with Christ, so that we are identified with Him in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 3:1-4).

He **'raised us up together'**, both Jew and Gentile, and we are enthroned **with Him** in heavenly places. Our new life is hidden *'in Christ Jesus'*. It is by grace alone that we are completely and permanently saved for all eternity!

This salvation is **positional**, for the Holy Spirit takes us out of Adam and places us in Christ. It is also **progressive**, for the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives dealing with sin, thus conforming us gradually into the likeness of Christ (2 Peter 3:18; Proverbs 4:18)

v. 7. He raised us up to show the exceeding riches of His grace in Christ into the future as the ages roll one upon another into eternity.

We saints will be on display as angels gaze upon us and marvel at His work of grace in us.

v. 8-9. By grace we are saved through faith alone. It is not of works; it is not produced by man or earned by him. It is God's free gift, His *'bestowal'*. It is given when our faith rests in what Christ has done for us and so all boasting is excluded!

v. 10. He has done a work **in us**, making us **new creatures** in Christ Jesus. His purpose being that we should go forth to serve Him with good works. We are not saved by our works, but saved *'to do good works'* which God has prepared beforehand that we should *'walk'* in them. This tells us that He has a plan for the life of every Christian. So how can we know God's will for our lives? The secret: Wait on Him in prayer and surrender all to Him. Read Romans 12:1-2.

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

v. 11. Gentiles are called to **'remember'**: to remember the past life from which they had been delivered and to think on the present and future blessings that are theirs in Christ.

v. 12-13. Then they were *'without Christ'* and *'uncircumcised'* in the *'flesh'* (held in contempt by Jews) *'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel'*, *'strangers'* (foreigners) from *'the covenants'* God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. *'Having no hope and were without God in the world'* for *'salvation is of the Jews'*

(John 4:22). They were not only without God, but without the Messianic hope until Christ the Messiah came and brought both Jew and Gentile into the New Covenant. Now *'in Christ'*, Gentiles are no longer *'far off'*, but *'made near'*, brought into this relationship by the blood of Christ shed for them on the cross.

Circumcision was a sign in the flesh given by God to Abraham and his descendants as a sign that they were God's people (Genesis 17:10-12). But Israel failed to live up to true circumcision. *"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God"* (Read Romans 2:25-29; Jer. 4:4).

v. 14. He **'Himself is our peace'**, for *'Shiloh'*, meaning *'The Peaceable One'*, the Messiah, has come (Genesis 49:10). He joins together Jew and Gentile, breaking down the middle wall of *'division'*, for the Laws given to Moses were for the Jews only. Gentiles could not approach the Temple Court under threat of death.

v. 15-16. He also **'made peace'**, for He *'abolished'* (done away) all the Laws that separated Jew from Gentile, creating in Himself one *'new man'*, the Church. He reconciled them in His own body on the cross, putting to death the enmity.

v. 17. He **'preached'** or **'proclaimed peace'**, to Gentiles who were far off and to Jew who were near, bringing both together and near. God wants all the world to know the good news, *"The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ; He is Lord of all"* (Acts 10:36).

v. 18-19. It is through Him, **Christ**, that we have *'access'* or *'entry'* to the Father by virtue of His blood shed on the cross. And it is the one Spirit that *'conducts'* the saint into the Father's presence. For in prayer we are to ask in His name (John 14:13-14), and the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26-27). Now both Jew and Gentile have this access. Gentiles are no longer strangers, foreigners or aliens but saints, joint members with Jews of God's household (1 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6).

v. 20. The Church is His **building**. The **foundation** was laid by the apostles and prophets - by their example and teaching (1 Corinthians 3:10). Christ as the **cornerstone** gives alignment and direction to the structure (1 Peter 2:6-8). As the **capstone** He will return and complete and ornament the building (Zechariah 4:7).

v. 21. The Church is His **holy temple**. For He dwells in the body of each believer and is in the midst wherever two or three gather in His name (Matthew 18:20). All joined in unity, for it is a living and growing organism where we worship in spirit and in truth (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19;).

v. 22. The Church is where believers “*are being built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit*”, where He dwells with and in His people in the Spirit.

It is impossible for the human mind to grasp all the things God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Ephesians Chapter 3

In this Chapter, from verses 1 to 14, Paul’s purpose is to acquaint the Gentiles with their calling and his knowledge by divine revelation of this ‘*mystery*’, this being how both Jew and Gentile are brought together in one body.

v. 1. Paul was a prisoner of Jesus Christ in Rome because of his calling to preach to the Gentiles. The Jews continually persecuted him but he lived above his circumstances and his letters show his joy and rejoicing in Christ.

v. 2. A ‘*dispensation*’ is a ‘*stewardship*’ and this speaks in general of ‘*the oversight, or the house management, an administration over something*’. Paul was entrusted with this ‘*stewardship*’ over the house of God (Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-2). His message to believers was one of grace, God’s ‘*bestowal*’ or His free gift, and through his ministry, Gentiles were being blessed along with believing Jews.

Israel had a ‘*stewardship*’ entrusted to them as a nation from the law of Moses to the Cross of Christ, and this was set aside as the Church age was ushered in. The Church has a ‘*stewardship*’ entrusted to them from Pentecost to the Rapture.

v. 3-4. Paul was an apostle by God’s calling (Galatians 1:1) and God made known to him by ‘*revelation*’ (apokalupsis), meaning ‘*an uncovering, laying bare*’ of the mystery of the Church (2 Cor. 12:7). Of this he had written before in a few words, that is in Ephesians Chapters 1 and 2. So when they read his letter they might know how he came by this knowledge in the ‘*mystery of Christ*’.

v. 5-6. This ‘*mystery*’ relating to Christ was not made known in the ‘*previous ages*’ of the Old Testament, but was now being revealed by the Spirit to the holy apostles and prophets. Now in this new age Gentiles are ‘*fellow heirs, members*’ of the body as well as the Jews, all enjoying and partaking of the same promises and blessings of Christ through the gospel.

v. 7-8. Paul became a ‘*minister*’, a ‘*servant*’ (diakonos), from which we get the word ‘*deacon*’, emphasising his calling, his God given grace and power to carry out this ministry. Paul, once the persecutor, now had a true estimate of his own worth as less than the least of all the saints. We also are nothing without Christ.

To him this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the ‘*unsearchable*’, or the ‘*unfathomable*’ and ‘*inexhaustible riches*’ or ‘*wealth*’ of Christ. This is the whole wealth of salvation and future glory that Christ bestows freely on all who believe.

v. 9. To make all ‘*see*’ (to bring to light) what is the ‘*fellowship*’ (stewardship) of the mystery’ that was from the **beginning of the ages** (from before creation), hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ.

v. 10-11. That the ‘*manifold*’ (variegated, great variety of colours) *wisdom of God*’ might be taught or revealed to angels and powers, the wonderful grace of God by the conduct of the Church. Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the saints (Hebrews 1:14). They behold the good order of churches (1 Cor. 11:10).

Angels desire to look into these ‘*manifold*’ things (1 Peter 1:12). All this is according to His eternal ‘*purpose*’ (to carry into effect) which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The ‘Believers Bible Commentary’ says: “God is the teacher, the universe the classroom, the Church the object lesson, angels the students!”

v. 12-13. **The blessings we inherit in Christ!** We have ‘*boldness*’, that is absence of fear and ‘*access*’ with confidence into His presence. These great truths should also cause us not to lose heart because of any trials, for trials only add to our reward, and heaven’s glory is ours eternally. So sin did not take God by surprise, for He had the plan in place before creation (1 Peter 1:18-21). **Through Christ we have gained access to the Father, and gained more than we lost in Adam.**

v. 14-15. Paul bows his knees in worship to the Father in view of what we were by nature and are what we are now by grace. These blessing come from the Father to the ‘*whole*’ (every family) that are named in heaven and earth. This ‘*every family*’ is made up of both human and angelic beings, from both heaven and earth.

v. 16. **This is Paul’s second prayer:** (See 1:15-22). That He, God, would grant you according to the ‘*wealth of His glory*’, to be strengthened with power through the Holy Spirit in the ‘*inner man*’ (the inner self of the conscious man).

3:17. That Christ by faith might be ‘at home’ in a believer. It means that Christ might finally ‘*settle down*’ and feel completely **at home**. Saints should live in conscience dependence, relying in all situations on the Lord, making room for Him in a heart not troubled by anxious cares.

The words ‘*rooted*’ (securely settled) and ‘*grounded*’ (deeply founded) results from Christ being at home in the heart, from which love flows out to all the saints, the fellow believers in Christ.

v. 18-19. God wants all saints to ‘*understand*’, to apprehend, to lay hold of and grasp with the mind the vastness of the love of God that passes knowledge, and leads to being filled with the fullness of God. This is being ‘*Spirit filled*’.

A Hymn says: ‘The love of God is broader than the measure of man’s mind,

The heart of the Eternal is wonderfully kind’.

v. 20-21. This is called a ‘doxology’, an expression of praise: It rises to Him who is able to do immeasurably above all that we can ask or even think, according to the power that works in our lives, the power of the Holy Spirit that raised our Lord out from among the dead (Romans 1:4).

To Him be *glory* (the glory due to Him) in the Church (the domain where praises are to be rendered) and our praises are by and in Jesus Christ to all generations.

So eternal praises to Him who is the Head of the Church, and that forever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians Chapter 4

Now there is a major change: Chapters 1 to 3 dealt with the believers ‘*calling*’. Chapters 4 to 6 is the call to ‘*walk worthy of our calling*’, that is, by godly conduct, the practical outworking on ‘*earth*’ of our **position** in the ‘*heavenlies*’.

v. 1-2. **Paul’s faithfulness** to his calling led to his imprisonment, but he gloried in this as he saw himself as the Lord’s prisoner! To ‘*walk worthy*’ should be the Christians entire lifestyle, pleasing to the Lord in all areas of life. This walk must be in ‘*lowliness of mind*’, that is in humility for we are nothing apart from Christ.

With ‘*gentleness*’ means we do not react to unkindness, for God is in control. Jesus was gentle and lowly in heart (Matthew 11:29). He was also ‘*long-suffering*’ under prolonged provocation from ungodly men. When reviled, He reviled not again. ‘*Bearing with one another in love*’ means we make allowance for the faults and failings of others just as the Lord does with us. We are to love others under all circumstances, both the lovely and unlovely, just as God loves!

V. 3. ‘*Endeavouring*’ means ‘*to make every effort*’ to keep the unity of the Spirit. God has made the unity of one body of both Jew and Gentile, and so both Jew and Gentile should meet together and avoid any separation of churches. We should work together in ‘*peace*’ for the common good of saints and for God’s glory.

The ‘*Believers Bible Commentary*’ says: ‘*In essentials, unity. In doubtful questions, liberty. In all things, charity* (love)’. We must not give way to our own personal whims and fleshly attitudes; there is enough of the flesh in any one of us to divide any church or destroy any work of God.

v. 4. God has made a **unity of all peoples** who accept Jesus the Christ as Lord and Saviour. These are all members of the ‘*one body*’, the true Church, placed there by the **one Holy Spirit**, with ‘*one hope of your calling*’, this calling being that we all are waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus to take us to heaven.

v. 5. We know there is only ‘*one Lord*’. There is also only ‘*one faith*’, the teachings of the apostles. Jude 3 tells us to earnestly contend for this faith once and for all delivered to the saints, as evil men corrupt the teachings of the New Testament.

There are two aspects of the ‘*one baptism*’, for all who believe are baptised into the **one body** at the moment of conversion (1 Cor. 12:13). Then there is **water baptism**. Our Lord was baptised by John, and commanded that all who believe be baptised (Matthew 28:18-20).

v. 6. We also know there is only ‘*one God and Father of all*’, even though there are many gods that people worship. He is the true God, and above all, through all, and in you all – He dwells in the hearts of all believers.

v. 7-8. Our Lord has given ‘*grace*’ (*giftings*) to every member of the body, which means He has given all a gift as He sees fit. Paul quotes from Psalm 68:18 to show that our ascended Lord is the giver of these gifts. This is now explained in the verses that follow.

v. 9. After dismissing His spirit on the cross, our Lord descended to Paradise where the beggar Lazarus went (John 16:19-25). To the repentant thief Jesus said, “*Assuredly, I say to you, Today you will be with Me in Paradise*” (Luke 23:43).

v. 10. The One who descended into Paradise (Hades) is the mighty Conqueror who defeated Satan, sin and death, and then ascended far above all the visible heavens to the right hand of the majesty on high, taking Paradise (holding the O.T. saints) with Him to heaven (2 Cor:12:4) Now He fills all things, for all blessings flow from Him who is head over all things to His Church (Eph 1:21).

v. 11. During the Church age Christ dispenses gift. Here these gifts are gifted men. First, **the apostles** and **prophets** were given special gifts to lay the foundations of the Church by their teaching, revelations and other gifts not with us today (2 Corinthians 12:1-7).

The ascended Lord continues to give gifts, and these are **evangelists** who are soul winners, and **pastors** who are the **shepherds**, the **elders** and teachers in the churches. Now each believer has a Christ given gift that is unique to that person, and each need to find out what that gift is and to use as He enables.

v. 12. These gifts are to be used for the benefit of the members of the body of Christ, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, leading to the edifying or building up spiritually of His body.

v. 13. As these gifts operate in churches, the believers grow spiritually and come to a unity of the faith, learning more about our Lord with a transformation in their lives, coming to be a *'perfect'* or *'mature'* man or woman,

Then we will in some measure be in the likeness of Christ in our walk, that is in our conduct while here on earth. So the gifts are to equip or prepare the saints to serve and to live righteously. The result is that the body of Christ is built up spiritually. Now we await the final transformation, for when we see Him, then we shall be like Him, given a body like His body of glory.

v. 14. Children are immature and easily misled. The use of the gifts with the faithful teaching of God's word saves Christians from childish behaviour and false teaching by the trickery of men who lay in wait to deceive.

v. 15. Faithful shepherds and teachers *'speak the truth'* of God's word **in a loving way**. This leads to spiritual growth into Christlikeness. Always remember, there can be no compromise of the truths of the Bible.

v. 16. Spiritual growth proceeds from God as He honours the faithful teaching of His word in a spirit of love. Each gifted believer is joined to all others, and they supply spiritual food to the members causing the body of Christ to grow. The unity of the human body is used to illustrate this truth.

The *'walk'* of God's people, each to live a life pleasing to the Lord

v. 17. Our *'walk'* is how we conduct or behave ourselves, for we are not to be like the unsaved Gentiles around us whose sinful actions are purposeless in view of eternity, and proceed from their deceived minds.

v. 18. Unsaved people are in a sad place: They are without understanding, darkened or blind in their minds to spiritual truth; distanced from the life of God within because of their ignorance; blinded to the salvation that is in Christ.

v. 19. Many Gentiles are past feeling, for their conscience no longer tells them of what is right or wrong doing, and they are given over to vile passions, being greedy and covetous, without care for the less fortunate.

v. 20-22. But if we have been taught by Christ, with His truth in our hearts, we have learned from Him a better way. This means we *'put off'* (as with an old worn-out filthy garment) the **old man** within, our corrupt way of life that was led by our fallen sinful nature.

v. 23-24. We are to be renewed in the spirit of our minds, in our thinking, with the new life within enabling us to live for God with the help of the Holy Spirit. We are to *'put on'* (as a pure white garment) the **new man**, that has been created by

God within us at conversion, putting on in *'true righteousness'* (right living) and *'holiness'*. (Read Colossians 3:1-17, Isaiah 61:3,10; 64:6).

v. 25. We are to *'put away lying'* as it is part of the old filthy garment. We are to speak *'truth'* to our neighbours for we are members of one another (Zech. 8:16),

v. 26-27. Do not sin by giving way to *'anger'*, or let the sun go down without resolving the issues. Giving *'place to the devil'* means allowing *'a region or locality'* in our lives for him to occupy, for this will defeat us and lead to sin.

v. 28-29. *'Stealing'* is to be replaced by working so as to be able to give to meet the needs of others. We are to be careful with our words not to use bad language or unprofitable *'speech'*, only that which builds up others in their faith, imparting by our words what imparts grace to those who hear.

v. 30. All of these things can *'grieve'* or hurt the indwelling Holy Spirit, who seals us ready for that moment when we enter the Lord's presence.

v. 31-32. This section closes with a command to *'put away'* from yourself all things that defile, and to replace it with kindness, a tender heart with forgiveness, *'just as God in Christ forgave you'*.

Ephesians Chapter 5

v. 1-2. We should *'imitate'* God as His dear children because He has forgiven us. As God has loved us, so we should *'imitate'* Him and walk in love to all, living in a sacrificial way, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself as a sacrificial *'burnt'* offering. This offering was *'sweet smelling'*, for it was all for God's delight.

v. 3. *'Fornication'* is illicit intercourse, living together outside of marriage, and here it also includes *'adultery'* among the married, and all forms of sexual sins. All moral uncleanness is to be avoided, such as pornographic magazines and porn on the internet. Many have made shipwreck of their lives by looking at filthy things. *'Covetousness'* here is lusting after others with sexual desire.

v. 4-5. We are to be careful in what we say, not to use foolish, filthy, suggestive or bad language or jesting that is bad jokes, but only the giving of thanks. All who commit any of these sinful things, along with those who love money more than God, or who serve idols, will not enter His kingdom.

v. 6-8. Christians are warned not to be deceived by those who promote such evils, for God's wrath will come upon them, so avoid partaking with them in any of their evil practices. God does love the sinner but not their sins and calls for them to repent. God must judge the unrepentant. Believers are reminded that they once walked in this kind of sinful darkness but God's light has shone into their hearts, so they are to walk as children of light.

v. 9-10. All who believe are born of the Holy Spirit, and the fruit or the evidence of this is in showing goodness, in right living and always acting with truthfulness in all situations. Making sure we learn and live by what is acceptable to our Lord.

v. 11-12. We are to have nothing to do with such sinful practices, but avoid them and expose them so that the saints are aware of such evil. These are works of darkness so avoid even speaking about such things that are done in secret.

v. 13-14. All things are exposed by the light of God's word, so we must make sure it is faithfully taught so that the believers are aware of what is 'truth'. In the past God called His people to be 'awake' to what is evil, and not sleep like those who are dead in their sins (Isaiah 26:19; 60:1). If we heed His word, Christ will give us light and understanding to walk right and be pleasing to Him.

The walk of a Spirit filled Christian

v. 15-16, Paul reminded the believers that they should be careful in how they **walked**, "*See then that you walk 'circumspectly' not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil*".

1. To walk '*circumspectly*' means to walk watchfully, carefully and accurately, for the days are evil and active in opposing all that is good.

2. '*Redeeming the time*' means to '**buy up**' and make a wise and sacred use of each opportunity. We will have opportunities to serve today that we will never have again. Psalm 90:12 says: "*So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom*".

v. 17. We are not to be unwise, but wise to what is good, in understanding God's will for our lives.

v. 18. One who is '*drunk with wine*' is under the influence of alcohol and acts foolishly, but we are to be filled with, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit and this is through knowing and obeying God's word. The Bible warns about the excess of drinking wine (Proverbs 20:1; 21:17; 23:30-31). Timothy was to take a little wine as a medicine probably because he had a weak stomach (1 Tim. 5:23).

V. 19-21. If we are Spirit filled we will be joyful, talking to one another about the Lord and His word, singing hymns and being thankful and submitting to one another.

The married life of Spirit filled believers

v. 22-24. Spirit filled wives are to submit to their husbands as if to the Lord, recognising that the Lord has placed the husband as head of the wife, just as the Church is subject to Christ. Marriage of one woman to one man is a beautiful

picture of the true Church which is the bride of Christ. We should live this out in our marriages (read 2 Corinthians 11:2; and Revelation 19:7-9).

V. 25-29. Spirit filled husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, for that is the standard husbands are to reach out for. The unity of Christ and His Church is set forth in a Christian marriage, for we are members of His body.

The creation order is appealed to: "*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh*" (Genesis 2:24).

Men are to love their wives in a special way, and wives to respect and reverence their husbands.

Ephesians Chapter 6

v. 1-3. Spirit filled children are to submit to their parents '*in the Lord*', or '*as to the Lord*', to Christian parents or otherwise. The only exception would be if they are asked to commit something sinful, against God's commandments. If they honour their parents, it will tend to long life as God has promised (Exodus 20:12).

v. 4. Spirit filled fathers are to use godly discipline, always given in love and in a calm spirit, never in anger, explaining to the child what the child has done wrong. '*Training*' them with discipline and correction, '*admonition*' means with warning and rebuke. The Bible gives fathers advice in the book of Proverbs. "*A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother*" (Proverbs 10:1). Wise fathers can prepare their children to follow the Lord, and live godly and fruitful lives. Multitudes today have '*no fear of God*', untaught by their parents.

6:5. Spirit filled servants are 'bondservants' and were slaves, but the principles outlined apply to all who work for a master. With '*fear and trembling*' means with respect, and a 'fear' of offending the Lord, master or employer by doing wrong.

v. 6-8. All our work should be done from the heart as to Christ, for in the work place we serve Him as much as in a church service! We must do this when the master is looking and when he is not looking. And the Lord sees all we do. Whatever our lot in life, all our work for any master should be done as if we were doing it for the Lord, and not simply as '*men-pleasers*'!

v. 9. Spirit filled masters should also be guided by the same principles as the servants. They should not use '*threatening*' language or use any form of abuse, but act in a god-fearing way towards their workers, knowing that their conduct is accountable to their Heavenly Master.

The Christian warfare

v. 10. Christians are involved in a very real spiritual warfare. In this battle we need to put on all of the soldier's armour provided for us by our Lord.

v. 11-13. The Roman soldier's armour and dress is used to illustrate how we are to overcome in this spiritual warfare, for we have a strong and active adversary in the devil and his many agents. These '*principalities and powers*' are in the '*heavenly*' realm, as seen in the book of Job and Daniel 10:10-21.

"Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Eph. 6:12-13). Here are listed some of the protective garments, armour and weapons to prepare and arm the Christian.

v. 14. **The waist girded with truth:** *"Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth"* The first piece was not really armour, but a wide leather belt that girded the waist of the soldier. On this '**hung**' all his accoutrements, his sword, food and money bags, rope and darts, all he needed in long marches and in battle. It also held his protective garments in place, a breastplate of thick leather or steel, and the thick leather skirt protecting his upper legs and thighs.

This sets before us the importance of '**truth**', for all '**hangs**' on living our lives **truthfully** in this world. For we represent Him who was *"full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). That is why Jesus in His prayer said; *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth"* (John 17:17). 'Sanctify' means to be 'set apart for God'.

God's word leads us to know **Him who is truth**, and equips us to **know and apply truth** in our lives. Satan will defeat us if he can make us **untruthful in any situation**. Then he strips away from us the usefulness of the rest of our armour, and we will be ineffective in our lives and in our witness.

The breastplate of righteousness: Next we are told, *"having put on the breastplate of righteousness"*. This breastplate of thick leather or steel protected the soldier's vital organs, especially his heart. '**Righteousness**' has been described as living '**right and wise**'. It means overcoming evil within us as representatives of Christ. As sons of the living God, we are called to walk in that dignity.

a. **In Christ** we have '**positional righteousness**', for He is all that we are not; *"But of Him (by a divine act) you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God; and righteousness and sanctification and redemption"* (1 Corinthians 1:30). For *"your life is hidden with Christ in God"* (Colossians 3:3).

b. As His children, we are to exhibit '**personal righteousness**' and this means **living righteously**. *"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother"* (1 John 3:10).

v. 15. **The Soldier's Footwear:** Roman soldiers in battle wore a special leather boot with nail studs for grip. To lose one's footing could be fatal! We need '**peace**' in our hearts, for fear, anxiety and failure leave us weak for spiritual conflict, and Satan will take advantage of this.

The Lord has made special provision for us in His word, so that we can have a good **relationship with Him**, and not slip up in this battle! His word teaches that He, Jesus, '**is our peace**' (Ephesians 2:14), and that He '**preached** (or proclaimed) **peace**' to those near (Jews) and we who are afar off (Gentiles) (Ephesians 2:17). Then, through His death on the cross, He *"made peace through the blood of His cross"* (Col. 1:20). Christians with hearts prepared and feet shod are to go into all the world and spread among all nations the Gospel of peace (Matthew 28:18-20).

His peace can **garrison** our hearts (Philippians 4:6-7) and Jesus also left us His legacy of peace, for He said: *"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"* (John 14:27).

v. 16. **The Shield of Faith:** The Roman shield was large enough to protect the whole body, and the Legions went into battle with front shields locked together and on each side and some held them overhead to protect from flying arrows and darts burning with pitch.

All through life Christians will face these attacks from the devil. **Faith** is simply taking God at His word, and acting on it. When He speaks we need to step out in faith! We need an unshakable faith in God's word and faithfulness (1 John 5:4).

It was through **faith** that the heroes of Hebrews Chapter 11 overcame and gained the reward. Our tendency is to work things out for ourselves, but God's word says, *"For we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Corinthians 5:7).

One of the promises for guidance is found in Proverbs 3:5-6; *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."* We can ask Him to increase our faith when under attack, and His peace will then garrison our hearts.

v. 17. **The Helmet of Salvation:** The helmet of the Roman soldier protected his head. Up to here, all is defensive armour! **We need to protect our minds** from doubts about our salvation, for this will cripple us in our ability to serve the Lord.

The assurance that we are saved is found in the word of God, for Jesus said that His sheep are eternally secure in His and the Father's hand (John 10:27-30). Again, nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:39 and John 5:24).

Our minds are also open to deception from the devil and his agents, so we need to gain **wisdom** to **protect our minds** by reading the word of God.

We also gain **knowledge** and **wisdom** (the ability to **apply knowledge**), so notice what this leads to in our lives: *“I, **wisdom**, dwell with **prudence**, And find out **knowledge and discretion**”* (Prov. 8:12).

What precious jewels are wisdom, prudence, knowledge and discretion! With these active in our lives we can really be used by the Lord.

The Sword of the Spirit which is the word of God: The short Roman sword was for attacking the vital parts of an enemy. The usual Greek for **‘word’** in our Bible is **‘logos’**. But here the word is **‘rhema’**, referring to the individual **‘sayings’** found in our Bible. When Jesus was tempted by the devil, He took a single **‘saying’** or **‘rhema’** from the whole **‘logos’** or **‘word’** of God, to resist Satan.

In the armoury of our Bibles are many **‘swords’** or **‘rhema’**, and we can with wisdom use *‘the sword (‘rhema’) of the Spirit’*, and select a **verse** from our Bible to meet any situation in life. We need to daily read our Bibles from cover to cover.

v. 18-20. All Prayer: Paul then stresses the importance of prayer as a weapon and protection especially for himself in prison. Throughout the Bible there are people praying with prayers answered and great things done for God. James wrote: *“**The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much**”* (James 5:16).

We should begin the day by filling our minds with Bible reading and prayer, for this will help us to face all that the day holds. We should take all things, great and small to the Lord (Philippians 4:6).

There is an old saying, *‘More things are wrought through prayer than this world dreams of’*. His word says, *“Rejoice always, **pray without ceasing**, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”* (1 Thessalonians 5:16 -18). Jesus said in John 14:13:

“And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son”

v. 21-22. Tychicus was sent by Paul to tell the Ephesian saints of his situation in prison in Rome. He was a beloved brother and faithful to the Lord.

v. 23-24. Paul closes with beautiful words of greetings; with peace, love and faith from God the father and the Lord Jesus Christ,

‘Grace to be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.’

.....

Study 3

The Book of Hebrews

The author of this book is not known, and the divinely inspired writer here sets forth our Lord Jesus Christ as **‘so much better’** than the angels or Moses their law giver. It was written to Hebrew believers who were well acquainted with the priesthood, sacrifices and ceremonies of the Old Testament. The temple still stood in Jerusalem so this Book was written before destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.

It has warnings for **Jews** who acknowledged at least in part the truth of the Gospel but had no heart knowledge of Christ. They were warned not to relapse back into Judaism. They needed to count the cost of discipleship and totally commit to Christ and be born of the Holy Spirit. The true Hebrew believers faced intense persecution (Hebrews 10:32-35). They only had to return to the law to escape this.

This book also has great blessing for **Gentiles** as they learn that Christ was foretold in the Old Testament and revealed in the New.

Hebrews Chapter 1

The supremacy of Christ

v. 1. God has spoken to the fathers in times past at various times and ways. He spoke through the prophets Moses and Samuel; He spoke by the Angel of the Lord who is Christ, and He also spoke in dreams and visions (Job 14:13-33, Daniel 7:1). Today God can still speak in some of these ways, but mainly He speaks to us by **His Spirit** and **His word** as we meditate on this in the Bible.

v. 2. In these last days He has spoken to us by **His Son**, for Christ stands eternally in **relationship** as Son to the Father and not as One who **‘became’** His Son as some translations teach (NIV Psalm 2:7). *“No one has seen God at any time. The **only begotten Son**, who is (eternally) in the **bosom** of the Father, He has declared Him”* (John 1:18). His being **‘the only begotten Son’** means *“pertaining to being the only one of its kind within a specific relationship”* (John 1:14). It speaks of His **uniqueness** and **endearment**, and His **‘bosom’** speaks of intimacy, affection and love. There are not two Gods! The unity of the Godhead is protected. God said, *‘Let us make man in Our image’* (Genesis 1:26).

The Lord Jesus Christ perfectly sets forth, declares and reveals the Father, for He is unique in that relationship. *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’”* (John 14:9). Now God speaks to us through His Son. This is confirmed to us by **‘those who heard Him’** (Hebrews 2:3). He speaks through His life, His words and deeds; all these are recorded in the Bible.

As the eternal Son in relationship to the Father, He is the appointed **heir** of all things. As **Son of Abraham** He is **heir** of the land of Canaan. As **Son of David** He is **heir** to the throne of the coming Kingdom. As **Son of Man** He is **heir** to the eternal ages and as the **Son of God** He is **heir** to all things! Through Him, Christ, the **worlds** were made, for He fitted the ages together, the whole of creation with its appointed times and seasons and incredible life structures of DNA and atoms.

v.3. He, **being** in **timeless existence**, is the **brightness** or the out-raying of the true Shechinah '**glory**' which reveals His moral excellence. He is the very **express image** of His **person**, His very substance. He is the **exact expression** of God.

'Christ is the visible representation and manifestation of God to created beings; the likeness expressed in this manifestation is unique and perfect' (W. E. Vine)

He upholds **all things**, for He governs and preserves the universes by the **word of His power**, and by Himself He **purged** or cleansed and made purification of sins.

He then '**sat down**', or set Himself down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, His mission accomplished. He is higher than all created beings. No priest ever sat down in God's presence. Therefore He is greater than all the prophets and priests of Judaism and all other religions are revealed as false in the light of His being.

He is unique in many ways, being greater than angels!

v. 4. He has a more excellent name! He is '**so much better**' that the **angels** by **inheritance**, by **name** and by **relationship** as God's unique and eternal Son.

v. 5. By His unique birth (Psalm 2:7), for the power of the Most High overshadowed the virgin Mary and Emmanuel was born in Bethlehem (Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7). **And by His unique life** (2 Samuel 7:14), seen in His walk of faith and great works, for He was always about the Fathers business.

v. 6. By His future coming in glory (Psalm 97:7), as He, the Father, '**again**' (future tense) brings the '**firstborn**' (His priority of position, rank, dignity and honour overall) into the **world** (the inhabited earth) and all the angels will '**worship**' Him (to 'kiss towards', with affection and reverence). Then He will judge the world in righteousness and rule as King of kings and Lord of lords.

v. 7. Angels are created spirits (Psalm 104:4). They move as a flame of fire, like lightening, in perfect and instant obedience as '**ministers**' (public servants) doing His will.

v. 8-9. His full deity revealed (Psalm 45:6-7). This whole Psalm 45 is a marriage hymn. The marriage supper of the Lamb is at hand. To the Son who walked this earth as the perfect Man the Father says, "*Your throne, **O God**, is forever and ever*". '**O God**' is '**Ho Theos**' in Greek and in this His full deity is revealed.

He loved righteousness, and because of His moral excellence, the Ruler is **appointed** and **anointed** with the oil of gladness, for He is the '**Anointed One**', Christ the Messiah of Psalm 2:2. Righteousness will **reign** in His kingdom and will **dwell** in the eternal state (Revelation 5:10; 2 Peter 3:13). And we who believe are among His '**companions**' or **partakers** (Hebrews 3:1,14) and will enter into the joy of our Lord when He reigns, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

v. 10-12. Jehovah (Lord) addresses the Son as 'Lord' and as the Creator of Genesis 1:1 (Psalm 102:25-27). But this creation will pass away and be folded up like a worn-out garment, but He remains '**the same**' (this is '*I, I Am He*'), His years will not fail, for the Man of Calvary rose the third day and lives in the power of an endless life.

v. 13-14. Angelic beings stand and never '**sit**' in the divine presence (Psalm 110:1). One day every knee will bow at His footstool and every tongue confess Him as Lord! He sends forth His angels as '**ministering spirits**' (public servants) to '**minister**', meaning to serve those who **will inherit** salvation.

He is greater than the angels whom He sends to serve His people.

Hebrews Chapter 2

Great is His glory, great His salvation and His great warnings.

v. 1. Warnings are given: 'Therefore' (for this reason) we must give earnest heed. Christ is supreme and our Creator and we are dealing with our souls and with God who knows all. We cannot afford to be careless and '**drift away**' from what we have heard, as from the safe harbour like a ship losing its pilot and anchor. **The end of such is shipwreck of the soul.**

v. 2-3. If the word spoken '**through angels**' (at the giving of the law of Moses) proved steadfast, and the word of angels is far inferior to the word spoken by our Lord; if every '**transgression**' (deliberate sins of commission) and '**disobedience**' (sins of omission) brought a '**just reward**' (a measured retribution), how then shall we escape if we **neglect** or **reject** so great a salvation'? **For such, NO escape!**

We should not treat carelessly or disregard a salvation greater than what the law of Moses could give. Many today have a head knowledge but no heart knowledge of Christ, for He said, "*You must be born again*" (John 3:1-7).

v. 3-4. This '**great salvation**' first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed '**by those who heard Him**', by the Apostles and others. The Gospel is indeed good news, for God authenticated the Apostles witness with signs attesting to their God given authority; with wonders, causing the beholder to marvel and with miracles, works of power with a supernatural origin.

v. 5-8. Now the Psalmist (Psalm 8:4-6) wonders that God is *'mindful'* of and even cares for *'the son of man'*. God visited man in Eden and Adam was crowned with glory and honour, placed over the creation, over all *"The works of Your hands"*. All things were placed under his feet. Adam was King! Only God was excepted (1 Corinthians 15:22).

God made man, though *'lower'* in the divine order than angels, to have dominion over the **world** (the inhabited earth), but Adam lost his sovereignty when he sinned. He surrendered it to Satan who now is *"the ruler of this world"* (John 14:30), for *"the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one"* (1 John 5:19).

We *'now do not yet see'* God's original purpose for all things to be put under man's feet! His purpose will be fulfilled in Christ, the second Man, the true *'Son of man'*, the term used by our Lord some 80 times. This will be in the Kingdom Age when He reigns in perfect righteousness for 1000 years (Rev. 20:4-5).

Angels are now in active conflict with Satan who claims all this for himself. But redeemed man will one day be reinstated and reign with Christ who will reclaim what Adam lost. Angels, such as Gabriel and Michael, are in this present age active as administrators, but the world to come will not be subject to them.

v. 9-12. But *'we see Jesus'*, the true *'Son of Man'*, **made** (for a little while) lower than the angels for the suffering of death. We also see Him *'crowned with glory and honour'*, for He was full of grace and truth while on earth, and is now glorified in heaven.

All creation honoured Him, for at the beginning of His ministry, He was with the wild animals in the desert, He also calmed the sea and fish obeyed Him. He took the dead by the hand and they lived. By His touch a leper was cleansed and at the end of His ministry He rode an unbroken donkey. When He turned water into wine He manifested His glory (John 2:11).

V. 10. Christ was *'perfected'* (to completeness, both legally & officially) through the sufferings He experienced at the hands of men. But a suffering Messiah was and is still foreign to Jewish thinking, and for this Peter rebuked Him! (Matthew 16:22). But Christ, the last Adam, in perfect humanity, is the *'life-giving spirit'*, who tasted death for everyone. The prophets taught this, and only by this means were and are many sons brought to glory (Psalm 22; Isaiah 53).

It was *'fitting for Him'* (the Father), in accord with His purposes (His nature and character), *'in bringing many sons to glory'*, to make the *'author'* (the Prince, Captain, Leader) of their salvation *'perfect'* (to completeness, legally & officially) through **sufferings**. This suffering He had to experience in His perfect Manhood.

v. 11-13. He the **sanctifier**, and we the **sanctified** (set apart for Himself and His purposes) are all of *'one'*. He is not ashamed to call them brethren (Psalm 22:22).

v. 14-16. Because He experienced life here and *'tasted death'* for us all, it was through death and resurrection that He would *'destroy'* (rendered powerless and annulled) him who had the power of death, the devil.

The reason He became the Son of Man was that He might die and through death release those who lived in the fear of death and were subject to that bondage all their lives. He did not *'give aid to angels'* (an angel *'gave aid'* and took hold of Lot's hand), but He does **give aid to man**, to all the seed of Abraham, to both Jews and Gentiles who are of the faith of Abraham (Romans 4:16).

The High Priestly ministry of the ascended and glorified Christ

v. 7-18. The whole purpose of His becoming man (made like we, His brethren) was to meet our every need as His children, and to give aid to us who are the **tempted ones**. To meet our every need He is both *'merciful and faithful'* as our **High Priest**. He *'made propitiation'* (a satisfaction as did the blood sprinkled mercy seat, satisfying God's every claim) for the sins of the people. Because He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

Hebrews Chapter 3

Christ is greater than Moses

v. 1. How privileged are Christians! They are a *'holy'* people, meaning set apart for God. They are *'brethren'*, a family united to Christ. They are *'partakers'* meaning *'companions'* in this *'heavenly calling'* and because of this they are told to set their affections on things above.

They are to *'consider'* very closely, clearly and carefully Christ as their *'Apostle'*, meaning the One sent forth, for as *'Apostle'* **He represents God to us**. As *'High Priest'* He went back to heaven and **represents us to God!**

Moses and Aaron were God's Apostle and High Priest to Israel and they had an earthly calling. Christ is greater with a heavenly calling.

Those faithful in the House of God

v.2-6. Christ and Moses are now contrasted! Christ Jesus as *'the Son'* was faithful to Him who appointed Him. Moses was faithful as *'a servant'* in God's house among Israel, a sinning and disobedient people (Numbers 12:7). But Christ as a *'Son'* and *'High Priest'* is *'over'* His *'own'* house, whose house we Christians are as members of the body of Christ, the true Church. Note 1 Timothy 3:14-16.

Every Jew knew that a son is superior to a servant!

The Hebrews addressed here were directed away from looking to Moses, for he served the shadows of better things to come (Hebrews 10:1). They were to look to the greater One, to Christ and to God who built all things. They were also warned to make sure that their salvation was real, *'if'* held fast and expressed in confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.

The warning here given is not to be merely **'professors'**, but to be **'confessors'** and **'possessors'** of Christ as Lord and Saviour.

The warning given is to be also faithful

v. 7-11. Lessons from Israel in the wilderness. In Hebrews Chapter 1 God has spoken; in Chapter 2 the Son speaks and in Chapter 3 the Spirit speaks. For the **Holy Spirit** speaks from Psalm 95:7-11 to these Hebrews, descendants of Israel.

Now *'today'* we must listen to the voice of God in the Holy Scriptures, or we also will fail to enter *'My rest'* (to cease, repose). The Sabbath day of rest given to Israel was a pointer to a present rest found only in Christ, and to the future eternal rest in heaven above. This rest is not the rest of inactivity, but of all our faculties, our will, heart, imaginations and conscience finding fulfilment in Christ as our Lord and Saviour. He only can give rest to the human heart (Matthew 11:28-30).

The next warning – enter *'My rest'*

v. 12-19. Israel had an *'evil heart of unbelief'* in departing from *'the living God'*. We must also deal with God. It is a fearful thing to fall into His hands. It is still *'Today'*! So we must listen to His voice, for **'He does not promise us a tomorrow'**. Sin is deceitful and hardens the heart. It is more deadly in eternal consequences than hardening of the arteries (Jeremiah 17:9-10; Proverbs 4:23).

Israel were led out of Egypt by Moses on a journey to the promised land, but they rebelled and sinned and left their corpses in the wilderness, with 40 years of unbelief! We must see why they failed, for it was through their *'unbelief'*. Now God says that without faith we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6).

Hebrews Chapter 4

There is a **present rest** of conscience when sins are forgiven, and when we are in submission to His will. But here a **future rest** is in view, when heaven is reached.

v. 1-6. In view of this promise, we are to *'fear'* lest we *'seem'* to come short of it. The Gospel (Good News) was preached to us and to them (Israel), but not mixed with faith as they faced testing on their journey to the Promised Land. We are also on a journey, so where will we be when life ends? And we only enter that rest

if we believe. The Eden *'rest'* Adam and Eve enjoyed was marred by sin, but our Creator has a rest, *'My rest'*, and this is in view here and He wants all to enter.

v. 7-11. The promise of *'another day'*:

a. Joshua could not lead unbelieving Israel into the rest that true faith offers, so King David spoke of *'another day'* that would offer rest, but this Psalm also warned of hardening the heart in refusal (Psalm. 95).

b. As it was in Eden, so God wanted it to be in Canaan, but that generation refused to enter. So now He offers another *'day'* of opportunity to enter His rest! We enter that rest when we cease from our works, from our endeavours to find rest in religious rites, sensual pleasures or drugs etc apart from faith in Christ,.

c. Be *'diligent'*, don't miss out, for to this day there *'remains'* (continues) a **'Sabbath Rest'**, and waiting for this rest all of creation groans (Romans 8:22-24). But unbelief will rob us of it as it did Israel.

d. There is coming a glorious day when the whole earth will be at rest when Christ's kingdom is established on earth (Isaiah 14:7; Revelation 20:4).

v. 12-13. But meanwhile, *'This is not your rest'* so we must labour for Him and fulfill the works He has appointed for us (Ephesians 2:8-10; Micah 2:10). **Our true condition cannot be hidden from God.** We must deal with the word of God, for it enables us to judge our hearts and our true state before God.

The word of God is:

1. *'Living'*. Possessed of life, for His word is Spirit and life. **2. *'Powerful'*,** operative, exposing our sins and motives. **3. *'Sharper'*** than a double-edged sword; it commends, condemns; rebukes, restores; approves, disapproves; penetrating and is dividing. **4. *'Discerning'*,** exposing even our thoughts and the intents of our hearts. **5. *'Nothing is hidden from His sight'*;** all is exposed to Him to whom we *'must'* give account.

The true believers should welcome this and run **to Christ** for forgiveness and cleansing. The unbeliever runs **from Christ** and tries to hide from his sin in the darkness of unbelief away from God (John 3:19-21).

V. 14-16. His rest can be maintained in the Christian's heart for God provides help. Rest is **assured** because we do have a *'great High Priest'* who passed through the heavens for us, Jesus the Son of God. He **understands** our struggles, for He sympathises with us because He was tempted as we are, apart from sin. He will support us through our wilderness journey. There is a *'throne of grace'* where we can obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of our need.

Hebrews Chapter 5

Christ was introduced as High Priest in Ch. 2:17 & 3:1, seen in Ch. 4:14-16 as our great High Priest. This topic becomes the main theme of the chapters that follow.

v. 1-4. Christ's High Priesthood is after the **'pattern'** of Aaron as to His **'service'** (v.4) but is the **'order'** of Melchizedek who has an **'everlasting'** Priesthood (v.6).

a. Aaron, was **'taken from among men'** and clothed with garments of glory and beauty. To this position of honour he was called and appointed by God. He had to be a man to represent men before God. He was the first High Priest.

b. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Lev. Ch 16) Israel's High Priest made 'atonement' (a covering) first for his own sins, then for the people. Aaron had failed Moses and should have known his own **'weakness'** or frailty. Aware of this, he could have **'compassion'** (treat with pity, gently, with mildness and moderation) those who are **'ignorant'** and going **'astray'** (wayward).

v. 5-6. Aaron, an **imperfect man**, was called by God from the tribe of **Levi**. He differs from Christ the **perfect Man** from the tribe of **Judah**, who is God manifest in flesh. Likewise Christ did not *'glorify Himself'* to become High Priest, but was **'begotten'** (in 'incarnation', meaning *"pertaining to being the only one of its kind within a specific relationship"*) and **'called'** by the Father (Psalm 2:7). Christ came not from Levi, but from Judah the tribe of Kings and after the order of Melchizedek, and remains a priest **'forever'** (See Psalm 110 and Heb. 7:1-3).

v. 7-8. The cries and tears of **the suffering Son** bring out the many human experiences He passed through while on earth, and refer to Gethsemane and His depths of agony as He faced Calvary with **'vehement cries and tears'**. His prayer was to Him who could save Him, not **'from death'**, but **'out of death'** into resurrection (Psalm 22:21-22). See Romans 1:1-4.

He was **'heard'** because of His godly **'fear'**, This **'fear'** was 'reverential awe and trust', and He was heard as He committed Himself to His Father with perfect trust. As the Son, He learned or became **acquainted** with **'obedience'** through His sufferings. He **'experienced'** what was foreign to Him before His incarnation.

v. 9-10. There were no imperfections in our Lord. He had to be **acquainted with suffering**, our human condition, and **'perfected'** means 'to bring to a desired end, to accomplish, to complete'. His sufferings led to Him being **perfectly qualified** as our Saviour. In heaven the Son of God had not experienced this. Resurrected, and **proven perfect**, seated in heaven, He became the **'author'** (the active cause) of **'eternal salvation'** to all who **'obey Him'**.

Obedience is not an option but an imperative and is faith in action.

He became obedient unto death (Philippians 2:5-8). Without this there could be no salvation. See Romans 16:26; 1 Peter 4:17! This guarantees eternal life to all who will receive our Lord Jesus Christ by obeying the Gospel of His salvation.

He was **'called by God'** as High Priest *"according to the order of Melchizedek"* and proven perfect even unto death. He has an eternal Priesthood that is far superior to anything Judaism's earthly priests could offer.

The obedience of Christ demands our obedience to Christ.

v. 11-12. The writer wanted to lead these Hebrews into a deeper understanding of the implications of the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ, but they **'had become dull of hearing'**. They had regressed, back-slidden, and could not digest deep truth. Instead of being teachers they needed again to be taught the **'first principles'**, the first, original, commencement of the **'oracles'**, the 'word' of God. They still clung to Old Testament rituals and had failed to make progress in the early, original doctrines of God's word. This is the foundation of the Gospel and of the Christian faith that apostolic Biblical teaching builds upon.

They needed to go back to the beginning of their faith journey in Christ.

v. 13-14. **'Milk'** is for infants, for they had not grown in their faith, or added to the Gospel foundation. This left them unskilled in the **'word of righteousness'**, of right living according to God's word, in *'faith, hope and love'*.

'Solid food' is the deeper things of the word of God and is for those **'of full age'**, those growing in their spiritual life, their senses aware and exercised to discern both good and evil. This delivers from being 'vulnerable' and side tracked by Satan into unprofitable beliefs and practices. Peter taught, *"as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby"* (1 Peter 2:1-2).

Hebrews Chapter 6

Many Jewish believers in Jerusalem were still zealous for the Law (Acts 21:20). They were occupied with the Old Testament types and shadows, not with Christ the substance, and this had stunted their spiritual growth. Some had **professed**, but never really **possessed** a true, saving faith. Some had turned back to Judaism, denying Christ as the Messiah. Those who went back were not 'born again'.

V.1-3. The writer of Hebrews wanted them to move on from those **'elementary principles'** that were designed to prepare Israel for the coming of the Messiah.

Their need was to leave behind Old Testament legal beliefs and to embrace New Testament, thus moving on from the beginning of this Gospel:

1. From **'Repentance'** is having a change of mind about sin and God, and **'dead works'** is law keeping, requiring continual sacrifices for forgiveness of sin. The prophets warned against sinful living and works of the flesh devoid of faith.

2. From **'faith'** in or **'towards God'** as taught by Old Testament prophets. The Apostles taught something new, **'repentance toward God and faith in Christ'** (Acts 20:21). Christ their Messiah is now to be the object of their faith.

3. No longer needed were doctrines of **'baptisms'**, or ceremonial **'washings'** for cleansing before sacrificing. These had a place in the previous age of the law under the sacrificial system. Now **baptism** has a new meaning, setting forth the believers **identification with Christ** in His death, burial and resurrection and is to be done in His name (Romans 6:1-10; Matthew 28:18-20).

4. The **'laying on of hands'**, where the offeror identified with the animal being sacrificed by **laying hands** on its head. (Leviticus 1:4; 3:2; 16:21). Faith now **lays hold** of Christ as the one sufficient sacrifice offered for sin (Hebrews 10:14).

5. It is no longer **'resurrection of the dead'** (Job 19:25-27), for the New Testament gives new light, for now it is **'resurrection out from among the dead'**. Jesus said, *"A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also"* (John 14:19).

6. Now there is a fuller understanding of **'eternal judgment'**, also clearly taught in Old Testament. See Daniel 7:9-10. Now there is a new concept of resurrection of the **just** and the **unjust**. **a.** All the **just** Church age believers will stand at the judgement seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:9-11). **b.** There will be the judgment of the **unjust** at the great white throne where the books will be opened (Rev. 20:11-15).

While all scripture is profitable, yet it gave no evidence of progress in the Christian faith to still hold on to these Old Testament beliefs. They needed to move on, adding new light; **'And this we will do if God permits'**. God certainly wanted this, but any limiting factor would be on their side.

v. 4. There is another class of people whom it is **'impossible'** to restore again to **'repentance'**. Hearing the Gospel, these Jews had **great privilege** but they lacked any true faith. The Gospel of the grace of God had only reached their head, but had not penetrated their hearts with brokenness over sin and with true repentance.

They were **'enlightened'**, for they had been under the light of the Gospel and seen the power of the Holy Spirit in changing the lives of others. They had **'tasted'** of the Lord Jesus, the **'heavenly gift'**. But tasting does not mean eating or digesting.

c. As **'partakers'** they were 'partners', going along the path, like Judas, with the **pre-salvation work of the Holy Spirit** who convicts of sin, righteousness and

judgement to come. But they had not received Christ by a definite act of faith. No mention is made of the new birth or redemption by His blood, all of which are essentials for salvation. Their hearts were the **'stony ground'** of Matthew Ch. 13.

v. 5. These Jews had even **greater privileges**. They had **'tasted'** the **'good word of God'**, the many Old Testament promises and Messianic predictions fulfilled in Christ, as in Isaiah Ch. 53. They had also **'tasted the powers of the age to come'**. They had heard the Spirit empowered exposition of heavenly blessings in Christ, and seen the miraculous works of power during the apostolic age.

These blessings were all a precursor to Millennial blessings and of the power of the age to come, when saved Israel and the Gentiles would be blessed in a regenerated earth under the righteous rule of Christ. Not all who tasted the loaves and fishes believed in Jesus (John 6:26; verse 66).

The unpardonable sin

v. 6-8. Privilege brings responsibility to act on **the light given**. Those **'falling away'** are people who hear the Gospel and for a while identify with Christians, then **abandon** their profession of faith and deny and reject Christ. They put Him to an open shame. It is **'impossible'** for such to find true repentance!

For, 'Light received increases light; light rejected brings on night.

Who will give the will to choose if the love of light we lose?'

This is a sin that can only be committed by those who never knew Christ as Saviour and Lord and may be the **'sin leading to death'** (1 John 5:16). Both Esau and Judas enjoyed privileges, but 'fell away' and sold their souls for a morsel of meat and a handful of silver! They **'regretted'** their actions, but never **'repented'**. God's creation is an example of this, for rain falling on the earth that brings forth herbs for food is blessed, but if it bears only thorns it is near to be and burnt. So those who despise God's leading in their lives will suffer eternal fire.

v. 9-12. The true believers, called **'beloved'**, are encouraged and exhorted. There are **'better things'** that accompany salvation, and God is not unjust to forget their work and their labour of love towards His name, and their ministry to the saints.

Those wavering are exhorted to show the same earnestness and so realise **'the full assurance of hope to the end'**. This means to make sure they are saved, and then to go on for Christ in His work, love and ministry till heaven is reached. They should not grow **'sluggish'** (lax, weary), but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises (Hebrews 12:1-2).

v. 13-15. God swore to Abraham *'by Himself'* that He would bless and multiply him (Genesis 22:15-18). God kept His word and Abraham believed and obtained the promise when Isaac was born. He endured through many trials, and is called *'The father of the faithful'*, an example of faith in God's word and promises.

v. 16-18. In human affairs, men swear by someone greater, as they do in a Court of Law on the Bible. God swore by Himself, by two *'immutable'* (unchangeable) things, these being His **'word'** and His **'oath'** (His covenant promises). This gives us also great **'consolation'** (and comfort) as we have fled to Jesus and laid hold of the certainty of the **'hope'** set before us. He will never break His word.

v. 19-20. This **'hope'** provides an **'anchor'** for the **'soul'**. It is **'sure and steadfast'**, which enters the divine Presence behind the **'veil'**. Christ is the **'forerunner'**, meaning 'to cut a path', and the believer, though not yet in heaven and often storm tossed, yet is anchored and divinely held safely to Christ.

Israel's High Priest on the Day of Atonement passed through the veil into the most holy place within the Tabernacle where God's presence dwelt. He took with him the blood of a bull with which to make atonement, first for his own sins and then for sins of the people.

In contrast, our Lord Jesus passed in death through the **'veil'** of His humanity and entered heaven and there with His own blood made reconciliation for the sins of the whole world (Hebrews 10:19-25). In resurrection power He is seated in heaven, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. His presence there is our guarantee of one day also being there.

Hebrews Chapter 7

v.1-3. This mysterious man, **Melchizedek**, was king in **Salem** (means Peace), and this is the first mention of the city later called **Jeru-salem**, meaning **'Possession of Peace'**. He was God's priest who met Abraham and blessed him, and to whom Abraham gave a tenth part of the spoils won in battle (Genesis 14:18-24). His name means 'king of Righteousness', and 'king of Salem' meaning king of Peace.

He has no recorded father or mother that Jewish descent relied on, and was made like the Son of God and is a lovely type of our Lord Jesus Christ who remains a priest forever. He reigned in Jerusalem in the days of Abraham, about 2000 BC.

David wrote of Christ and Melchizedek in Psalm 110, and the only other mentions are in Hebrews Chapters 5 to 7. He combined the offices of both king and priest and so he was the political and spiritual leader of his people around Jerusalem..

v. 4-9. **'Consider'** means to ponder intensely just how great this man was! Abraham gave him **a tenth** of the spoil won in battle. The people gave Levitical

priests, the descendants of Abraham, tithes, but here Levi, the priestly tribe was still in Abraham's loins when he gave Melchizedek tithes of all so he is greater.

Melchizedek blessed Abraham and the lesser was blessed by the better who was not related to Abraham. He was **"Priest of God Most High"** (Genesis 14:18). He had a **perpetual** priesthood, as he had no recorded father or mother, unlike the priests who descended from Levi, who were born and then died.

Melchizedek was **'made'** both symbolically and typically like the Son of God. Christ's priesthood follows his **'order'** for **'it is witnessed that he lives!'**. Therefore Christ has a continuing priesthood.

v. 11-19. Perfection was not possible through Levi and a change of priesthood demanded a change of the law. Christ came after **'the order of Melchizedek'** and from the royal and kingly tribe of Judah, not from the priestly tribe of Levi.

Christ did not come according to **'the law of a fleshly commandment'**, but according to the power of **'an endless life'**, and is made a priest forever. The law made nothing **'perfect'**, for the law and priesthood stand or fall together. But Christ belongs to another tribe who never served as priests. Because of this we who believe in Christ have a better hope through which we draw near to God.

v. 20-22. The method of induction of the priesthood of Melchizedek is found in Psalm 110:4. **a.** The Lord has **'sworn'** - Christ was made High Priest forever with an **'oath'**. Aaron and his priesthood were made without an oath and were not enduring. **b.** Christ was made **'surety'** or **'guarantee'** of a **'better covenant'** - by His death, burial and resurrection and has an eternal priesthood.

When Christ came the Jewish priesthood had become corrupt, and He brought in the **New Covenant** and **priesthood**. We enjoy the blessings of the New Covenant, but it will be fully realised when Israel is redeemed and restored nationally.

v. 23-25. There were many high priests of Levi, some say 84. Death prevented them from continuing. But Christ continues forever, for His is an unchangeable priesthood. **'Therefore'** stresses His ability to save to the **'uttermost'** from the power of sin, all who come to God through Him, because of His continuing priestly intercession at God's right hand on behalf of His people.

v. 26-28. We need such a High Priest to intercede for us who is **'holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners'** and enthroned in heaven at the Father's right hand. He **'once for all'** offered up Himself as the perfect offering for the sins of the people. The law appointed imperfect high priests, but the word of God's oath appointed the Son, perfected forever in His High Priestly ministry..

earthly Hebrews Chapter 8

v. 1-2. This chapter begins with a **summary** of *‘the things we are saying’* from previous Chapters. Christ, our Great High Priest has seated Himself on High, His work on earth finished, now as Priest and King, following the ORDER of Melchizedek. He ministers in His place in the heavenly Sanctuary where there is no separation. This contrast with the earthly Tabernacle erected by men with compartments that separated priest, the people of Israel and the gentiles!

The Tabernacle and Temple were beautiful constructions suited to their times, but today the Lord has no earthly sanctioned Sanctuary. Now He is present in the midst of His people whenever and wherever they meet (Matthew 18:20).

v. 3. His ministry is far greater with better things to offer than the gifts and sacrifices offered by the earthly high priests. He presents our worship, prayers and praises, and He intercedes for us and represents us before the Father.

v. 4. If He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there were priests from Levi offering gifts as the law demanded. This indicates that the Temple was still standing when Hebrews was written. It was destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans.

v. 5. These priests serve the shadow and copy of heavenly things, as divinely given to Moses, for he was to build an exact copy of that shown to him on Mount Sinai. We too must build for God as He has instructed.

v. 6. This again highlights that Christ has obtained a more excellent ministry. He is the Mediator of a better Covenant established on better promises. We have such a Great High Priest who is so much better suited to us than the old Levitical order!

A New Covenant Established on Better Promises

v. 7. Having introduced that Christ mediates a better Covenant than the old and faulty one, these verses drawn from the books of Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Isaiah 54:13, highlight the blessings and promises of the New Covenant.

v. 8-12. This New Covenant with Israel has promises unlike the Old that they repeatedly broke. He would put His laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. He will be their God and they would be His people, and He would be merciful, and remember their sins and lawless deeds no more forever.

v. 13. A New Covenant with Israel indicated that the old one made with Moses was ready to vanish away. The New Covenant came in through Christ, where Christians now stand and where redeemed Israel will stand in a future day.

Hebrews Chapter 9

The First Covenant and the Earthly Sanctuary

v. 1-5. The first Covenant had various ordinances. A Tabernacle (Tent) was erected with various compartments and vessels here described.

v. 6-10. But there were limitations to access. All the priests could serve in the part called the **Holy Place**. Before entering they had to wash hands and feet. Only the High Priest could enter the **Holiest of All**, where God’s presence, the *Shekinah* Cloud of Glory was over the Ark of the Covenant. He could only enter alone once a year and not without blood, first for his own sins, then for the peoples sin.

Christ and the Heavenly Sanctuary

v. 11-14. Christ came as High Priest of *‘good things to come’*, with things to be enjoyed now and in the future. He has entered a greater and more perfect place not made with hands, not of this earthly creation. He entered the heavenly Most Holy Place once for all, with His own blood. Thus He obtained eternal redemption for us. He did not enter heaven with the blood of bulls, goats or ashes of a heifer that under the law of Moses sprinkled the unclean. How much more shall the blood of Christ who offered Himself through the Eternal Spirit without spot to God purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

The Perfect Mediator

v. 15-22. He mediates, or brings together God and man under the New Covenant by the means of His death. He redeems all His people from all their transgressions under the first Covenant as well as the New. A Testament or Will only comes into force when the testator dies, so Christ’s death brought in the New Testament.

The Old Covenant was brought in with the sprinkling of the blood of a bull, the New with the blood of Christ shed on the cross. Blood purged or cleansed most things under the law, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

The Greatness of Christ’s Sacrifice

v. 23-24. These earthly *‘copies’* or *‘representations’* of heavenly things were cleansed with the blood of animals, but the heavenly with better things than these, with the blood of Christ.

This is important to know: The fall of Satan meant that the heavenly places he has access to also needed cleansing. Christ has not entered the earthly copies or Tabernacle, but into heaven itself, now to *appear* (to emphasise Himself) in the presence of God for us. There He presented His blood to cleanse also the heavenlies.

Here we let Scripture speak for itself! It is self-explanatory.

v. 25-28. Not that He should *'offer Himself often'*, as did the high priest entering the Most Holy Place every year offering the blood of a bull;

"He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many"*. (He was offered up for our sins).

"Now to those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for (our) salvation." **Jesus is coming again!**

Hebrews Chapter 10

v. 1-4. The Tabernacle with its special vessels and sacrifices of animals demanded by the law were only shadows or sign posts pointing to Christ's once and for all perfect sacrifice. The animals sacrificed annually on the Day of Atonement and continually day by day *'atoned for'* or temporally *'covered'* the offeror's sins.

Those sacrifices were a continual reminder and awakened a memory of sins, but never could *'once for all'* purge or cleanse away sins, nor did they give the offeror a clear conscience. The blood of bulls and goats could never do that. All was repetitious and a better sacrifice was needed.

v. 5-10. The Old Testament Scriptures foretold that Christ would come into this world (His incarnation) with a prepared body to make a better sacrifice (Psalm 40:6-8). God had spoken previously in this Psalm that He neither desired nor found pleasure in those sacrifices of animals. But Christ would come to take away **the first** (the sacrifices) and so establish **the second** (a new order of obedience to the will of God). So it is that *"By that will (God's) we have been sanctified (set apart) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all"* (Heb. 10:10).

v. 11-13. What priests under the law who always *'stood'* could not do by their repeated daily offerings was to take away sins! *'But this Man'*, Christ, offered one sacrifice for sins forever and then bowed His head and said *'It is finished'*. He then *'sat down'* at the right hand of God, His work perfected and completed.

Nothing is to be added! Since that time He is waiting till His enemies are made His footstool when, at His second coming in glory, every eye will see Him, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord! (Philippians 2:10-11).

v. 8. His work is once and for all time completed, *"For by one offering He has perfected forever (in perpetuity) those who are being sanctified"*, and this is His ongoing work in us and for us after we trust in Christ (Hebrews 10:14). Christ is **seated** forever, and we are **positionally** sanctified in Him forever!

A New Covenant has come into force resulting from His finished work, as set forth in Chapter 8 and here quoted from Jeremiah 31:33-34. Note the witness of the Holy Spirit to *'us'*, for He inspires all scripture.

Now He puts His laws into our hearts and writes them in our minds! Under this New Covenant, *"Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more"*. Now we have total remission of sins and no more animal offerings are needed to cover or atone for sin!

He buries our sins in the sea of His forgetfulness! So

"NO FISHING!"

Holding Fast to Our Confession

v. 19-22. Since Christ is seated in the Holiest in Heaven, we also have boldness (the right) to enter there by virtue of the blood of Jesus! The people of old were kept from God's presence where the Ark was placed in the Tabernacle and Temple. We now enter by a *'new'* (newly slain) and *'living way'* (by His death and resurrection) which He consecrated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh.

At His death the Temple **veil** (a type of His body) was rent from top to bottom. His flesh was rent or torn on the cross to open heaven to us! His life proved Him to be the sinless Son of God, and the acceptable sacrifice, so through His death He saves us! We have a great High Priest over the house of God who ever lives to intercede for us, so we can draw near with boldness to enter Heavens throne room!

How we are to enter

We must enter with a true heart in sincerity, not like many in Israel whose hearts were often far off with only an outward pretence! We come in full assurance of faith, with full confidence in His promises and with our hearts *'sprinkled'*, and cleansed by His precious blood from an evil conscience.

We come with our bodies *'washed'* with pure water by the Spirit and the Word. We have the greatest privilege and are to be spiritually prepared for our audience with the Lord of Hosts. We need to remember this as we enter His presence in our prayer times and as we gather *'in His name'* in our church meetings.

v. 23-25. In view of all these wonderful provisions, we are to hold fast to the *'confession of our hope without wavering'*, for our only hope is in Christ. We must not be tempted to exchange future reward for temporal gain or return to Judaism, for He is faithful to His promises and they will never fail and He will not disappoint us. He will come at the appointed time to take us home to heaven.

We should seek ways to encourage fellow believers to stir up **'love and good works'**. This we must also do: not **'forsaking'** or failing to meet with a local church and with fellow believers, as is the manner of some. In this way we will be encouraged and strengthened by our mutual faith and Scriptural teaching.

Love is an act of the will, something we must do and we have no choice in this matter. We are commanded to love one another and our neighbour.

1. We should be exhorting one another especially as we see the Day approaching when He returns for His people, for then we shall be changed, for when we see Him we shall be like Him. He will then reward His faithful servants! Then there is the Day when He is revealed with His holy angels and with His people, taking vengeance on all His enemies as seen in Revelation 19:11-16.

v. 26-31. History record men who knew the truth and turned from it, for apostasy is 'to fall away' from the truth. **Cain** heard it from God Himself, **Esau** heard it from his father Abram and **Judas** was a disciple of Jesus for three years, but Jesus said, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70).

Some identify for a time with a church and then depart. "They went out from us, but were not of us" (John 2:19). They were not born of the Holy Spirit and they deliberately and decisively turned from the truth. Jude warned about the Israelites brought out of Egypt who did not believe, and the angels who left (apostatized from) their first estate, and Sodom and Gomorrah and their sexual immorality.

Apostasy is to sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth and understanding God's grace, then rejecting such light from God. For such **'there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins'**. They deliberately rejected the sacrifice of Christ. For such there is only a **'certain fearful expectation of judgment'**.

Those under the Law of Moses who turned from the truth to idols, died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deut. 17:2-6). There will be worse punishment for those who trample underfoot the Son of God, and count as a common thing the sanctifying blood of Christ and do insult to the Spirit of grace.

God will repay such people with vengeance, for "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God". And "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

A call to remember and retain confidence

v. 32-36. The author now reminds these Hebrews to recall the former days when they were illuminated (enlightened), and the great struggle with sufferings they endured, being persecuted by the Gentiles and fellow Jews. They were made a spectacle, suffered reproaches and tribulations, and had empathy with the author in his chains (imprisonment). Their possessions were plundered, but they knew

they had an enduring treasure in heaven. They were not to **'cast away your confidence, which has great reward'**. By enduring and after doing the will of God they would receive the promise.

The promise of eternal life and eternal rewards

v. 37-39. This quote, **'Now the just shall live by faith'** is from the prophet Habakkuk and was a reminder to these Jews that it was really only **'yet a little while and He** (the Messiah, the Christ) **will come and will not tarry'** or delay. So they needed to hold on in view of this fact (Habakkuk 2:3-4).

The quote "Now the just shall live by faith" is a reminder that all those with faith in the Christ will be saved and receive the gift of eternal and a heavenly reward.

It also contained this warning from the Lord to any who were double minded: "But if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him" - "But we are not of those who draw back to perdition (destruction), but of those who believe to the saving of the soul".

The quote 'Now the just shall live by faith' is repeated three times: In Romans 1:17 it emphasises **'the just'** for it is justification through faith not works. In Galatians 3:11 it emphasises **'shall live'** for we receive life through the Spirit and not by keeping the law. In Hebrews 10:38 it emphasises **'by faith'** as it is only through faith in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, that we have eternal life.

Hebrews Chapter 11

This Chapter is God's great **'Hall of Fame'**! All were imperfect people whose failures are not recorded here. Among all these **'Heroes of Faith'** God looked at the overall life, their motives and faith actions, not their mistakes and even their sins! All this is for our encouragement, both to follow their example of faith, and to realise that all our exploits of faith are also recorded in the **'Annals of Heaven'**!

There are many trials in living a life of faith, and a genuine faith will be tested (1 Peter 1:7). That man of great faith, George Muller said, "Difficulties are food for faith to feed on". Faith does not rest on feelings but on the facts of God's word, an Anchor for our soul and an unmovable Rock to cling to in all the storms of life..

What is Faith?

v. 1-2. The Chapter begins with a statement of what faith is, "Faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see". It brings certainty and direction to one's life. Faith gives **'substance'** to the promises of God and lays hold of, and acts on them, knowing they are true. In this way the elders of old gained

God's approval by their faith in action and by having a good testimony before the world. They gained God's approval and this is all that really matters.

Faith gives Understanding

v. 3. Faith gives 'light' from above! It gives us '*understanding*' for it opens the mind to the realities of time and eternity and of heaven and hell. It is by faith that we know that God created all things, and that they were not made from visible material. God spoke the word and time, space and matter, all things, visible and invisible, came into existence. Faith rings the death knell to the theory of evolution, the Devils deception!

v. 4. Abel 'offered' by faith the sacrifice God required. The lamb he offered pointed to Christ, '*the Lamb of God*'. Abel obtained the '*righteousness*' that comes only through faith, for God accepted his gift, and in doing so bore witness to his faith.

God testified to Abel's gifts, and though long dead, he still '*speaks*'. From the beginning of creation God had this message to the whole world: Approach to God is only through sacrifice and not by works or by any human endeavour.

v. 5. Enoch was the first to be '*translated*' without dying. The second was **Elijah**.

1. **Enoch**, translated before Noah's flood pictures the **Church**, taken out before the great tribulation (Genesis 5:21-24). 2. **Noah** pictures **Israel**, a remnant saved and preserved through the coming great tribulation.

Enoch was 65 years old when his son was born and following this he '*walked with God*' for 300 years. He pleased God and so God took him to heaven without dying. He was the seventh of the godly line listed from Adam. He prophesied of the Lord's coming and His judgment on the ungodly (see Jude 14-15).

v.6. But without faith it is '*impossible*' to please God. It is essential to '*come to God*' and to believe that '*He Is*' (that He eternally exists), and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him.

Do you find it hard to believe? Then ask God to help you, for Jesus said: "*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened*" (Matthew 7:7-8).

v. 7. Noah 'prepared' for he acted in faith when he was '*divinely warned*' of the coming flood at a time when the earth was watered by a mist (Genesis Ch's. 6-9). Violence filled the earth and God was about to act in judgement. But Noah found grace for he was an upright righteous man who '*prepared*' to save his household!

Noah alone was right and the world was wrong and perished. He was a '*preacher of righteousness*' (2 Peter 2:5). Noah building the Ark was mocked by the world and

all those living godly lives are mocked today. Jesus said "*But as the days of Noah (and Lot) were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be*" (Luke 17:26-30).

v.8-10. Abraham 'obeyed' for his life was marked by obedience to God's call. His father Terah (meaning 'delay') hindered this call (Genesis 11:31-32). He obeyed by leaving Ur and moving on as God led. He lived as a '*sojourner*' with Isaac and Jacob in tents in Canaan his promised inheritance, and all he ever owned was a burial cave.

He believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. This highlighted faith, as opposed to works (Genesis 15:6; Romans Ch. 4). In faith, "*he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God*" (Hebrews 11:10).

v.11-12. Sarah by faith '*received strength*' to conceive when 90 years of age and so from Abraham aged 100, who was as good as dead as far as fathering children, Isaac was born and from him were born a multitude of people.

A 'parenthesis', the Heavenly Hope

v.13-14. All these saints '*died in faith*', not having received the promises. But they embraced them! Generations of Christians have likewise died, having much more understanding while waiting for the Lord's coming. A life of faith declares that we seek a better country.

v. 15-16. A life of faith means that having put our hand to the plough, we do not look back (Luke 9:57-62). A life of faith means that we seek a better, a '*heavenly country*'. A life of faith gains God's approval, therefore He is '*not ashamed*' to be called their God! A life of faith lived for God means that He has '*prepared*' a city for us, as Jesus said, '*I go to prepare a place for you*' (John 14).

v. 17-19. Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah's old age, was greatly loved. Abraham showed **remarkable faith** when he obeyed God when told to sacrifice his son, for he believed that if God had given him a son when Sarah was past the age of bearing children, then God would raise his son even from the dead.

v. 20-22. Isaac revealed his faith in blessing his sons Jacob and Esau concerning future events. **Jacob** also did likewise for when dying he blessed the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, leaning on his staff. At the River Jabbok Jacob '*wrestled*' all night with God who touched his thigh and from then on he limped, leaning on his staff, no longer leaning on his own strength (Genesis 32:22-28). **Joseph** also revealed his faith when he made mention of Israel's departure from Egypt, then 400 years into the future, and he gave instructions to carry his bones to Canaan.

v. 23-29. Amram and Jochebed, the parents of Moses, revealed their faith in **hiding** their son Moses in the River Nile. **Moses** showed great faith in '*refusing*'

to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and then leaving the wealth and privileges of Egypt to lead the nation of Israel out of Egypt to the promised land.

v. 30-40. Here are listed the faith exploits of **Joshua, Rahab, David, Samuel** and many others who are unnamed, not only what they achieved through faith, but what they also suffered because they believed and trusted in God. The world was not **'worthy'** of such people who obtained a good testimony through great trials of suffering and even martyrdom.

Even though they maintained their faith, they did not receive the promises God has provided for us. We and they together now await the better things that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ brought to us by His death for our sins on the cross, His resurrection and His promise to come again for His people.

Then and then only will the full rewards of faith be revealed and given to those who love Him and who through faith persevered and overcame.

Hebrews Chapter 12

Lessons for the Christian Race

v.1. The Christian race is a marathon, the race of life, and we are to **'lay aside every weight'** that can hold us back. Some things are legitimate but can hinder a runner, so we need personal exercise of heart in this. We must lay aside sinful things that can ensnare us, like a net cast over an antelope. We must not deviate from the course of holiness, or cut corners, but run with **'patience'** and endurance the race set before us, for God has planned the course!

v.2. We must run **'looking unto Jesus'**, for He stands at the finishing line, so fix our eyes on Him! He is the **'Author'** (originator) and **'finisher'** (perceptor) of our faith. We must run with faith and patience if we are to please Him! (Hebrews 11:6).

He, **'for the joy set before Him'**, endured the cross, despising the shame and won His race. His joy was to be seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and with the prospect of multitudes of the redeemed saints around Him for all eternity.

So endure, for faithful believers will one day be crowned and reign with Him!

The Discipline of God

v. 3-4. **'For consider Him'**, how He endured great hostility from sinners, and His endurance will encourage us not to grow weary and discouraged in our souls. They had not yet resisted to shedding their blood as He did.

v. 5-6. They were not to forget the exhortation from Proverbs 3:11, that they were **'sons'** and as such would be **chastened**. The moment we accept Christ we become children of God and are adopted as His sons. We also should not despise or become

discouraged by His chastening, for we have a caring heavenly Father loves us too much not to discipline us when we disobey or sin.

v. 7-9. Here we learn that even earthly fathers discipline their sons. This discipline then is a sign of sonship. Without it we are not His sons, and cannot claim Him as our Father. If our human fathers corrected us and we gave them respect, should we not submit to the Father of spirits and live? We are to submit to Him and obey Him.

v. 10-11. Our human fathers disciplined us as they thought best, but He **'for our profit'**, so that we may **'partake of His holiness'**. This chastening is not joyful, but it produces the **'peaceable fruits of righteousness'** if we are trained by it. We must allow this process to work, and if we do, our spiritual vitality will be renewed.

v. 12-13. In times of spiritual tiredness, we are to strengthen our walk by following **'the straight paths'** of righteous living that the Lord has laid out before us. In these we **'regain strength'** and find spiritual healing for the mind.

v. 14. A true Christian is known by being **peaceable** with all, and by living a holy life. **Holiness** is becoming more like Christ; without this no one will see the Lord.

v. 15-17. We are to **look carefully** for any wrong attitudes, actions and words that indicate our falling short of the grace of God. When any **'root of bitterness'** springs up it causes trouble and many by this are **'defiled'**, showing no sign of God's grace in their lives. Esau had godly parents, but he did not value spiritual things. He **'despised his birthright'**, and the birthright was God's promise that his decedents would bring forth the Christ into this world. His heart was so hardened that he found no **'repentance'**, for his tears of 'regret' did not change his heart attitudes.

v. 18-24. We have not come to the terrifying sights and events seen by Israel at Mt. Sinai, where God gave Moses the law that no one was able to keep. This law could only show our sinfulness, and our need of Christ. But we have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem and an innumerable company of angels.

We have come to the **'festal gathering and church of the firstborn'**, to all those who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant and the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

v. 25-27. We are warned not to **'refuse Him who speaks from heaven'**, as Israel did when both God and Moses spoke to them from earth and they suffered for their disobedience. How will we escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven? At Mt Sinai God's voice shook the earth; He will also shake not only the

earth, but the heavens as well. When all is shaken and the present earth removed, only the new heaven and earth will remain.

v. 28. We who believe are to receive a kingdom that cannot ever again be shaken. So in view of this, *“Let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear”*. *‘For our God is a consuming fire’*.

Hebrews Chapter 13

True Christianity is at odds with present world views. It is diametrically opposed. This Chapter begins with five Christian graces:

v. 1. **Love:** The Bible tells us that the abiding things for this age are **faith, hope and love**, and the greatest is **love**. When Christians demonstrate **love for each other** they demonstrate the true character of God, for *‘God is love’* (1 John 4:8).

v. 2. **Hospitality:** At times believers may be in need or even destitute, or may be fleeing persecution. We should not close our hearts to any needs that we can meet, or shun helping for fear of association in times of persecution.

Love demands action with open hearts and homes open to the needy, for Abraham showed hospitality and entertained angels. Read Genesis 18:1-8.

v. 3. **Imprisoned believers:** We should minister to those who are in prison because of their faith and testimony, and those mistreated for the same reasons. We should feel for them because they are members with us of the Church body.

v. 4. **Marriage:** Christians must uphold the sanctity of marriage as instituted by God between one woman and one man. God performed the first marriage. Those who defile and degrade marriage by immoral acts will be judged by God.

v. 5-6. **Covetousness:** This is the love of material things, things that are passing away and can displace our love for God. He promises to meet our needs, to be our protector and provider giving us security and peace! Jesus said, *“I will never leave you nor forsake you”*, so we need not fear what man may do to us.

v. 7. Believers are to remember their church elders, to be mindful of their example of **faith and actions**, their **continuance** and **faithfulness** to the Lord, *‘whose faith imitate’*. They do not **‘rule’** but **‘lead’** and **‘guide’**, and the **outcome of their faith** is that they will receive *‘a crown of glory’* in heaven (1 Peter 5:4).

v. 8. These elders lived with hope and faith fixed on **Jesus Christ** who remains the same, always **unchangeable**, *“yesterday, today and forever”*. They had not turned back to Judaism, and some had even been martyred for their faith in Him.

v. 9. There was the danger of turning to external ceremonial religious rituals and practices. Today, as then, some prohibit the eating of certain foods. Ritual

cleansing cannot replace inward cleansing! But believers can only be established in the true faith by the **‘grace’** of God working in their hearts by faith.

v. 10. Christian Cathedrals have a ‘Great Altar’ as did the Jewish Temple still standing at the time when Hebrews was written, a Temple defiled by sinful priests who crucified our Lord. But Christians also have a greater **‘altar’**, Christ Himself, with all the blessings He imparts as at His feet we worship and serve Him.

v. 11-12. The bodies of animals sacrificed for sin were burnt **outside** the Temple enclosure. Jesus also suffered **‘outside the gate’** of Jerusalem and organised Judaism and there at Golgotha shed His blood with which He sanctifies (sets apart and cleansed) all who believe in Him.

v. 13-14. These Jews were called to turn their backs on **‘the camp’** of ritual Judaism, and we also are called to separate from all religious systems that teach salvation through works and have instituted rites contrary to God’s word.

Here, in this world, we have no **‘continuing city’**. To this day Jews venerate Jerusalem, but Christians look for a heavenly city, the New Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the Bible calls us strangers and pilgrims while here on earth.

v. 15-16. The Jewish Temple had its priesthood and sacrifices. Christians are a holy and royal priesthood (1 Peter Ch. 2), and are called to offer sacrifices continually that are both spiritual and practical. These are: **a. Praise to God** – spiritual; **b. Giving thanks to His name** – spiritual; **c. Doing good to others** – practical; **d. Sharing our resources with those in need** - practical. With these priestly sacrifices and offerings God is well pleased.

v. 17. Here are given instructions regarding local church leadership. This verse should be looked at with v. 7-8 where believers are told to **obey** those who rule over them, those who lead and guide them. Here are added more injunctions: Believers are to **obey and be submissive** to those who are their spiritual guides.

Elders are here in view (1 Peter 5:1-5), for they are the overseers who **watch out** like wakeful shepherds for their **souls**. Elders must **give an account** of their **shepherd care** and the believers **responses**, and that they may do so **with joy**, and not with **grief** (sorrow). This would be **unprofitable for them**, with loss of reward at the Judgement Seat of Christ. Here believers works, attitudes and actions and not their sins are in view, and these will be fully revealed on that Day.

v. 18-19. Closing personal requests. He asked for prayer as he kept a **good conscience and lived honourably** before all. This was his defence against those who sought to bring Jewish believers back under the law of Moses.

He asked for prayer so as to be restored to them the sooner, as it seems he may have been imprisoned. In Chapter 10:34 he said: *“for you had compassion on me in my chains”*. Both they and he were suffering persecution for their faith in Christ. As Paul taught: *“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”* (2 Timothy 3:12).

The Unknown Authors Beautiful Benediction

v. 20. *“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant”*.

Judaism did not know the ‘*God of peace*’, and it could not give ‘*the peace of God that passes all understanding*’.

Judaism was taught ‘*The Lord is my Shepherd*’ (Psalm. 23), but they did not know the ‘*the Good Shepherd*’ who shed His blood, the blood of the everlasting covenant, and who gave His life for the sheep (John 10:11).

Likewise they did not know that ‘*Great Shepherd*’ who rose again from the dead having accomplished redemption and who cares for the sheep, or the ‘*Chief Shepherd*’ who will return for the sheep with rewards in His hand (1 Peter 5:4).

Application of the Benediction

v. 21. The author wanted to *“...make you complete in every good work to do His will”*. To achieve this God is *“working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen”*.

God is at work. We see this for it is by grace we are saved through faith, and thus we become **His workmanship** to go forth to do good works (Ephesians Ch. 2). He works in us to equip us and then He asks us to work out His will in our lives.

Positionally we are complete in Him, but conditionally we are to work out the in-worked salvation.

v. 22-23. **Closing appeal and greetings:** His appeal is for them to heed his exhortations in this brief letter, and that he has more that he could impart to them, These Hebrews had compassion with him in his bonds (Hebrews 10:34). He was also intimate with Timothy who had been released from prison and whom he wished to accompany him in seeing them.

v. 24. He sent greetings to those ‘*who rule over you*’, their elders who lead and guide them, and to all **the saints** (the sanctified, or set apart ones). He included greetings from all those **in Italy**, where he probably wrote to them from.

v. 25. He closes with *“Grace be with you all”*. A reminder of ‘*God’s unmerited favour towards all who believe*’.

Grace is God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.

This ends our Study on the Book of Hebrews. In my Studies I have been helped by Wm. Macdonald’s ‘Believer’s Bible Commentary’ and by the series of Commentaries called ‘What The Bible Teaches’.

.....

This can be printed inside back cover if it saves paper?