

The Book of

HEBREWS



BIBLE STUDY COURSE BY
RICHARD "RUSTY" DAVID RUTHERFORD

Do Not Abandon Jesus

The Message of the Book of Hebrews

Because of the blood of Jesus, we can now confidently go into the Holy Place. Jesus has opened a new and living way for us to go through the curtain. We must continue to come to him with a sincere heart and strong faith. We must continue to hold firmly to our declaration of faith. The one who made the promise is faithful. **Hebrews 10:19-20, 22-23**

Written and taught by
Richard “Rusty” David Rutherford
Columbus, Texas
2021

Copyright Notices and Policies

Scripture text is from ***GOD’S WORD*** © 1995 by God’s Word to the Nations. All rights reserved. Used with permission. Greek transliterated words are from Strong’s Concordance made available by www.blueletterbible.org

All other text is © 2021 The Sudan Family Foundation. All rights reserved. Other than as specifically authorized below, no part of this course book may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying or other electronic or mechanical method, without prior written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, please email accessthe bible@gmail.com.

You may use this course book for your own personal study or for teaching or participating in a Bible study group or class with others. You may download a copy of this course book to your computer, print or otherwise make paper photocopies for use in your own personal study or use in a Bible study group or class. If you charge for any copies, you may only charge for the cost of copying.

You may NOT make changes to the content of this course book and then attribute the course material to Mr. Rutherford.

Table of Contents

Introduction	The Warnings of the Book of Hebrews	6
Session One	Jesus Is Better Than the Angels Chapter 1	9
Session Two	Jesus Was Given a Human Nature Like Us Chapter 2	13
Session Three	Jesus Is Better Than Moses Chapter 3	17
Session Four	Jesus Is Better Than Joshua Chapter 4	20
Session Five	Jesus Is Better Than Aaron Chapter 5	24
Session Six	The Serious Danger of Rejecting Jesus Chapter 6	29
Session Seven	Jesus Is Better Than Melchizadek Chapter 7	33
Session Eight	Jesus is Better Than Other High Priests Chapter 8	41
Session Nine	Jesus' Sacrifice Is the Best There Is Chapter 9	45
Session Ten	Jesus' Gift of Reconciliation of Sinners with God Chapter 10	50
Session Eleven	Faithful Witnesses of God Throughout the Ages Chapter 11	56
Session Twelve	God Asks Us to Have Patient Endurance in Faith Chapter 12-13	63
A Final Word		70
Alister Begg's Sermon Series on <u>Hebrews</u>		72

Author's Preface



The Book of Hebrews is my fourth favorite book after the Gospel According to John, the Vision of Isaiah, and the Book of Deuteronomy. It is followed by the Revelation of Jesus Christ. While it is short book, more like a long sermon, it presents powerful ideas about the deity and humanity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Jesus was fully Lord and fully man.

The sermon is anonymous, and its audience is not described. So there are many conjectures. After teaching this book many times, I conclude the author is Barnabas as Tertullian has suggested. Barnabas is a Levite from Crete and came to play a significant role in the early church both in Jerusalem and in Antioch. He was also a wealthy man who had the time to study the Scriptures. **Acts 4:36-37**

I believe Barnabas is addressing some priests from the Temple in Jerusalem who left and became Christians in the new church administered by James.

A large number of priests accepted the faith. Acts 6:7

These priests had become discouraged because of the persecution by the Sanhedrin and the ridicule from their fellow priests who remained as priests in the Jerusalem Temple.

These former priests were being lured by the Essenes, a monastic sect living on the shores of the Dead Sea who were looking forward to the coming of Michael the archangel who they thought was also Melchizadek, the priest-King of ancient Salem that became Jerusalem when King David captured it from the ancient Jebusites. Melchizadek would lead the children of light in a battle against the children of darkness whom the Essenes saw as the Romans.

The Essenes lived in a community without women and adopted young men to keep their existence alive. They had a rigorous routine with strict rules and conducted much washing in ritual baths or mikvahs.

They spent a great deal of time copying the Hebrew Scriptures and also writing commentaries on the Scriptures where they developed their theology based on the leadership of Melchizadek. Melchizadek became very important for them although he only appears in Genesis and in **Psalm 110** composed by King David around 1010 BC. They believed he was an early incarnation of the archangel Michael, the protector of Israel. **Daniel 10:13**

These priests in Jerusalem to whom Barnabas was writing had some difficulties with Christians who saw Jesus as a great High Priest of God, superior to any earthly High Priest. However Jesus was from the tribe of Judah rather than from Levi. All Jewish priests had to come from the tribe of Levi and at first descendants of the family of Aaron, the first High Priest.

Moreover, early Christianity really didn't have ordained priests. Rather they were instead Christian leaders chosen by Jesus' Twelve as his apostles. But these leaders had not studied the Torah for years as Levitical priests did. These leaders elders *presbyteros* were ordained *cheirotoneo* but really considered as prophets or teachers led by the Holy Spirit. **Acts 14:23**

Moreover, the church at Jerusalem was administered by James, the half-brother of Jesus who was from Galilee. While James was a very holy man so that even the Sanhedrin called him James the Just, he still was a Galilean and not from Jerusalem where most of the priests lived and certainly not educated as well as the High Priest in the Jerusalem Temple.

The time the book was written after Jesus had died and was raised back to life in 30 AD, but before the Romans destroyed the Temple in 70 AD. James was killed in 62 AD, so it was probably a few years before this when Barnabas wrote his sermon encouraging these disillusioned priests from leaving the Jerusalem church to become Essenes.

These priests were devoted to the authority of the Scriptures in the Hebrew Bible, so Barnabas quotes many verses in his letter. They were also well acquainted the Biblical history of Israel. Barnabas used the Greek language version of the Hebrew Bible called the Septuagint for his quotes because these Greek codexes were more accessible than the Hebrew scrolls which were few and very expensive.

Barnabas had to demonstrate to these former priests that Jesus, although he had human form, was the Son of God and therefore better than angels, Abraham, Moses, Aaron, even Joshua, or even Melchizadek.

Shalom in Jesus,

Rusty

Notes on this Bible Translation and My Editorial Insertions

The translation used in this study is the *GOD'S WORD* translation. © 1995 by God's Word to the Nations Mission Society (GWT). The GWT translation is an attempt to make the English text of the Bible developed in the 1500's more readable to modern Americans. It is not a paraphrase, but it has retranslated the oldest manuscripts into modern American English at about newspaper level using "closest natural equivalence". The Bible is meant by God to be understood. Therefore, using modern language is essential.

I have used this translation in my teaching since 1996 and have found it very accurate. I love the King James Version and so when there are variances in the GWT, I may insert within the Bible text the original transliterated Hebrew or Greek word in *10-point bold-face italicized type* followed by an English word to help better understand the meaning of the passage. English words added to aid in understanding are also in 10-point type but are not in bold. Lastly, if the original Hebrew or Greek word appears in the Bible 10 times or less, I may also indicate how often it appears (e.g., 10x or 2x, etc.). Here's an example from John 11:33 and the raising of Lazarus involving three Greek words:

³³When Jesus saw her crying and the Jews who were crying with her were deeply moved *embrimaomai*—groaned 5x *pneuma*—spirit and troubled *tarasso*—agitated.

This has shown me that the GWT translation is remarkable for finding the right meanings to phrases that are often difficult to translate.

Notes on Font Usage

All text is in the Big Caslon font. Scripture text is in regular 14-point. If I have inserted parallel Scripture quotations, they are also in regular 14-point, but are slightly further indented (.08) than the main Scripture text and are enclosed by brackets []. All Scripture citations are in **12-point bold face**. All my comments and questions to think about are all in regular 12-point.

Introduction

The Warnings of the Book of Hebrews

1. Don't drift away from the truth. **Hebrews 2:1**
2. Don't develop a wicked unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. **Hebrews 3:12**
3. Don't become dull of hearing. **Hebrews 5:11**
4. If we go on sinning after we have learned the truth, if we sin willfully, no sacrifice can take away sins. **Hebrews 6:6; 10:26**
5. Get rid of everything that slows you down. **Hebrews 12:1**
6. Do not refuse to listen when God speaks. **Hebrews 12:25**
7. Don't get carried away by unfamiliar teachings. **Hebrews 13:9**

These warnings are sprinkled throughout the Book of Hebrews. Barnabas has written to former Jewish priests in the Temple at Jerusalem who have joined the Christians in the Jerusalem church where James, the half-brother of Jesus is the elder or bishop.

But they have become discouraged for several reasons including persecution by their former colleagues in the Temple and the Temple establishment in the Sanhedrin who are cooperating too closely with the Roman conquerors and adopting many pagan Gentile Hellenistic practices.

The Essenes

Many pious Jews more than 100 years before Jesus came to earth had formed a group called the Essenes and were living quietly on the shores of the Dead Sea in a monastic community awaiting the archangel Michael to lead them in the war of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness.

Here they studied the Scriptures, copied them, and write commentaries on them. Their hero was the Teacher of Righteousness who led them waiting for two messiahs, the Messiah of Aaron and the Messiah of David. God would send Melchizedek, an incarnation of the archangel Michael to lead them in their battle.

Barnabas demonstrates by Scripture to show that Jesus is better than the angels, better than Moses, better than Aaron and even better than Melchizedek who appeared to Abraham. Then

he severely warns them of rejecting Jesus, once they have been enlightened by receiving the Holy Spirit.

Some people once *hapax* had God's light *photizo*. They experienced *geuomai*—tasted the Heavenly *epouranios* gift *dorea* and shared *ginamai*—made *metochos*—partakers 6x in the Holy *hagios* Spirit *pneuma*. They experienced *geuomai* the goodness *kalos* of God's *theos* word *rhema* and the powers *dynamis* of the world *aion* to come *mello*. Yet, they have deserted Christ *parapipto*—fall away IX. They are crucifying *anastauroo* IX the Son of God again *anastauroo* and publicly disgracing him *paradeigmatizo*—open shame IX. Therefore, they cannot *adynatos*—impossible IOX be led *eis*—unto *metanoia*—repentance a second time *anakainizo*—renew IX *palin*—again to God. Hebrews 6:4-6

This is in line with the penalty for premeditated or high-handed sin in the Towrah:

But any native-born Israelite or foreigner who deliberately presumptuously does something wrong *ruwm*—high *yad*—hand insults *gadaph*—reproaches the Lord and must be excluded *karath*—cut off from the people. That person has despised *bazah* the Lord's word and broken *parar* the Lord's command. He must be excluded completely *karath karath*. He remains guilty *avon*. Numbers 15:30-31

Deliberately rejecting belief in Jesus is a great premeditated sin so Barnabas goes on:

If we go on sinning *hamartano hekousios*—willfully 2x after *meta* we have learned *lambano* the *epignosis*—knowledge truth *aletheia*, no *ouketi* sacrifice *thysia* can take away our *peri*—for sins *hamartia*. All that is left *tis*—certain is a terrifying *phoberos* 3x wait *ekdoche* IX for judgment *krisis* and a raging *zelos*—indignation fire *pyr* that will *mello* consume *esthio* God's enemies *hypothenos* 2x. Hebrews 10:26-27

This is the greatest warning Barnabas will give in this book.

Many do not agree with Barnabas as this appears to limit God's *cheched* or mercy and conflicts. Isaiah says:

Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call on him while he is near. Let wicked people abandon their ways. Let evil people abandon their thoughts. Let them return *shuwb* to the Lord and he will show compassion to them. Let them return *shuwb* to our God for he will freely *rabah*—abundantly forgive *calach*—pardon them. Isaiah 55:6-7.

And Jesus said:

It's impossible *adynatos* for people to save themselves, but it's not impossible for God to save them. Everything *pas*—all is possible *dynatos* for God. Mark 10:27

God described himself to Moses giving his characteristics:

[The Lord came down in a cloud and stood there with him and called out his name: The Lord. Then he passed in front of Moses calling out: The Lord, the Lord, a compassionate *rachuwmm* and faithful *channuwn*—gracious God, patient *'arek*—slow *'aph*—anger, always faithful *rab*—abundant *cheeced*—loving kindness, and ready to forgive *'emeth*—truth. He continues to show his love *cheeced* to thousands of generations forgiving wrongdoing, disobedience and sin. He never lets the guilty go unpunished, punishing children and grandchildren for their parent's sin to the third and fourth generations. **Exodus 34:5-7**]

God's greatest attitude, the only attribute he mentions twice to Moses is his *cheeced*, his loving kindness. This lovely word, used almost exclusively of God appears 248x in the Hebrew Bible.

Session One

Jesus is Better Than the Angels

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 1

God Has Spoken to Us Through His Son

¹ In the past God spoke to our ancestors at many different times and in many different ways through the prophets. ² In these Last Days he has spoken to us through his Son.

This is the ultimate revelation from God, Jesus' Words. His words take precedence over anything the prophets said or implied.

God made his Son responsible for everything. His Son is the one through whom God made the universe.

[Everything came into existence through him. Not one thing that exists was made without him. **John 1:1**]

³ His Son is the reflection of God's glory and the exact likeness of God's being. He holds everything together through his powerful words.

[He existed before everything and holds everything together. **Colossians 1:17.**]

After he had cleansed people from their sins, he now holds the honored position — the one next to the majestic God the Father on the Heavenly throne.

[Now Christ has gone to Heaven where he holds the honored position — the one next to God the Father on the throne. Angels, rulers and powers have been placed under his authority. **1 Peter 3:22**]

God's Son Is Superior to the Angels

⁴The Son has become greater than the angels since he has been given a name that is superior to theirs. ⁵God never said to any of his angels:

You are my Son. Today I have become your Father. **Psalm 2:7**

And God never said to any of his angels:

I will be his Father, and he will be my Son. **2 Samuel 7:14**

⁶When God was about to send his firstborn Son into the world, he said:

All of God's angels must worship him. **Deuteronomy 32:43**

⁷God said about the angels,

He makes his messengers winds. He makes his servants flames of fire. **Psalm 104:4**

⁸But God said about his Son:

Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter in your kingdom is a scepter for justice. ⁹You have loved what is right and hated what is wrong. That is why God, your God, anointed you, rather than your companions, with the oil of joy. **Psalm 45:6-7**

¹⁰God also said:

Lord, in the beginning you laid the foundation of the earth. With your own hands you made the Heavens. ¹¹They will come to an end but you will live forever. They will all wear out like clothes. ¹²They will be taken off like a coat. You will change them like clothes. But you remain the same and your life will never end. **Psalm 102:25-27**

¹³But God never said to any of the angels:

Take the honored position — the one next to me on the Heavenly throne until I put your enemies under your control. **Psalm 110:1**

¹⁴What are all the angels? They are spirits sent to serve those who are going to receive salvation.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Barnabas begins by describing Jesus, the Son of God. He speaks first of his divinity as the second member of the Triune God. God created Creation with Jesus. God spoke the world into creation and Jesus is the Word of God. Jesus is the exact likeness of God, co-equal and co-eternal. He sustains the universe. God sent him to earth in human form with a human nature. He cleansed people from their sins by dying on the cross. But God raised him from death and seated him next to himself at his right hand on the Heavenly throne.

Jesus is better than the angels because he is the only **Son of God**. Barnabas quotes seven Scriptures – remember, seven is the number of completion – to demonstrate the high acclamation God gives in revelation about his Son.

While the angels are God's servants, they cannot compare to God's Son Jesus. Even Michael the archangel.

This is the first time Barnabas quotes King David's **Psalm 110**. It is the key to understanding this book. Jesus is designated a High Priest by God himself with an oath.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Barnabas never quotes the words of Jesus as contained in the Gospels. Instead, he quotes Jesus' words as paralleled in the Psalms and Isaiah. **Hebrews 2:12-13**. Why do he do this?
2. Barnabas points to Jesus' superiority by saying he sat down at his Father's right hand five times in Hebrews. No angel was ever given this privilege. List the verses where he says this.
3. Barnabas says that Jesus is greater than the angels because his name, the **Son of God**, is greater than his. But Job said of the angels:

[One day when the sons of God came to stand in front of the Lord, Satan the Accuser came along with them. **Job 1:6**. Also **Job 2:1**]

[On what were its footings sunk? Who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy? **Job 38:7**]

What is so different about Jesus' name?

4. Why does Barnabas call this the Last Days? **Hebrews 1:1**
5. What is the relationship of the words of Jesus to the words of the prophets?
6. What verse does Barnabas use to prove that Jesus is God?
7. Why did God create angels? What purpose do they serve? Why did God create humans? What purpose do they serve?

Session Two

God Gave Jesus a Human Nature

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 2

WARNING: Do Not Drift Away from the Truth

¹ For this reason we must pay closer attention to what we have heard. Then we won't drift away from the truth.

² After all the message that the angels brought was reliable and every violation and act of disobedience was properly punished.

Moses believed that God delivered his Towrah using angels. In his blessings to the twelve tribes:

[He said: The Lord came from Sinai. For his people he rose from Seir like the sun. He appeared like sunshine from Mount Paran. He came with ten thousand of his holy ones. On his right was a raging fire *'esh dath* *'esh dath*-fiery law for them. **Deuteronomy 33:2**]

³ So how will we escape punishment if we reject the important message *telikoutos*-great ^{4x} *soteria*-salvation , the message that God saved us?

Jesus Revealed the Truth of God

First the Lord told this saving message. Then those who heard him confirmed that message. ⁴ God verified what they said through miraculous signs, amazing things, other powerful acts, and with other gifts from the Holy Spirit as he wanted.

Barnabas confirmed that God gave his Apostles like Peter and Paul the ability to do miracles to confirm what they said was true.

⁵He didn't put the world that will come about which we are talking under the angels' control. ⁶Instead, someone has declared this somewhere in Scripture:

What is a mortal that you should remember him, or the son of man that you take care of him? ⁷You made him a little lower than the angels. You crowned him with glory and honor. ⁸You put everything under his control. **Psalm 8:4-6**

When God put everything under his Son's control, nothing was left out. However, at the present time we still don't see everything under his Son's control. ⁹Jesus was made a little lower than the angels, but we see him crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death. Through God's kindness *charis*-grace he died on behalf of everyone.

Barnabas says that humans are a little lower than the angels. God sent Jesus to earth with a human nature.

¹⁰God is the one for whom and through whom everything exists. Therefore, while God was bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was the right time to bring Jesus, the source of their salvation, to the end of his work through suffering.

Jesus Became One of Us to Help Us

¹¹Jesus who makes people holy *hagiazō*-sanctifies and all those who are made holy *hagiazō*-sanctified have the same Father. That is why Jesus isn't ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. ¹²He says:

I will tell my people about your name. I will praise you within the congregation. **Psalm 22:22**

¹³In addition, Jesus says:

I will trust him. **2 Samuel 22:3; Isaiah 8:17**

And Jesus says:

I am here with the sons and daughters God has given me. **Isaiah 8:18**

¹⁴ Since all of these sons and daughters have flesh and blood, Jesus took on flesh and blood to be like them. He did this so that by dying he would destroy the one who had power over death, that is, the Devil. ¹⁵ In this way he would free those who were slaves all their lives because they were afraid of dying.

¹⁶ So Jesus helps Abraham's descendants rather than helping angels. ¹⁷ Therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters so that he could be merciful. He became like them so that he could serve as a faithful High Priest in God's presence and make peace *hilaskomai*—reconciliation, propitiation 2x with God for their sins.

¹⁸ Because Jesus experienced temptation when he suffered, he is able to help others when they are tempted.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Barnabas now gives his first warning. We must beware of drifting away from the truth. This happens so slowly that we are not even aware that we are drifting. How dangerous this is. But it can happen even the best of us.

When a person deliberately violated the Towrah in a premeditated sin, they were to be excluded from the people. **Numbers 15:30-31**. A person could be forgiven for only an inadvertent sin. They could bring an animal sacrifice to the wilderness tabernacle and give it to the priest to be sacrificed.

The Torah was God's revelation to humans. Jesus likewise spoke God's Word to his Twelve disciples who also spoke it to others. God authenticated Jesus' Words by giving the Twelve Apostles the authority to do miracles to prove that this was really his Word. Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and in this, the Spirit worked in these disciples as it did in Jesus.

God does his work in his Creation through humans. King David was amazed at how God give humans the authority to govern Creation in his **Psalm 8**.

God gave Jesus honor and glory because he completed his mission for God by suffering death on the cross. Jesus completed the work of the Covenant of Redemption cut by the three members of the Trinity before Creation was created. Jesus would come to earth in a human form to reveal God as never before and then voluntarily die to atone for the sins of wicked humans thus reconciling them to a holy God.

God gave his Son Jesus a human nature besides his God nature. In this way, Jesus became just like us with all our human weaknesses or frailties. But he never stopped being the Son of God. Jesus learned through his suffering. **Hebrews 5:8**. He was tempted to sin and he suffered. In this way, he can appreciate and help humans when they suffer. He can be a merciful and faithful High Priest in God's presence for us.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why is the concept of drifting away from the truth so dangerous?
2. Read **Leviticus 26: 14-39**. Then read **Deuteronomy 28:15-68**. Why does God promise to give curses to those who break his laws? Why does God hold his people to a stricter account than he does for Gentiles?
3. What are some of the miracles God allowed Peter and Paul to perform to authenticate their ministry?
4. **Hebrews 2:4** is the first mention of the Holy Spirit. It will be mentioned 7x in Hebrews. How was Jesus able to perform miracles as a human? How does the Holy Spirit work in us?
5. The word *charis* or *grace* means *God's kindness* and appears 7x in Hebrews. Identify the seven verses where this word appears and develop a working definition of God's grace. I use www.blueletterbible.org to answer this.
6. How was Jesus tempted in his earthly ministry?
7. What did Jesus learn about humans in his earthly ministry?

EXTRA CREDIT

Since all of these sons and daughters have flesh and blood, Jesus took on flesh and blood to be like them. He did this so by dying he would destroy the one who had power over death, that is, the Devil. **Hebrews 2:14**

The Devil is still alive and kicking, tempting us to sin. Did Jesus destroy the Devil or simply annul the power Satan had frightening humans by the thought of death by his resurrection that is also offered to believers? See **Hebrews 9:15, 26**. What power does the Devil possess today to affect us?

Session Three

Jesus is Better Than Moses

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 3

¹ Brothers and sisters, you are holy partners *metochos*-partakers 6x in a Heavenly calling. So look carefully at Jesus, the apostle *apostolos* and High Priest about whom we make our declaration *homologia*-profession of faith. ² Jesus is faithful *pistos* to God who appointed him in the same way that Moses was faithful when he served in God's House.

³ Jesus deserves more praise than Moses in the same way that the builder of a house is praised more than the house. ⁴ After all every house has a builder, but the builder of everything is God.

⁵ Moses was a faithful *pistos* servant *therapon*^{IX} in God's household. He told the people what God would say in the future. ⁶ But Christ is a faithful son in charge of God's household. We are his household if we continue to have *katecho*-hold fast courage *parresia*-boldness and to be proud of the confidence *elpis*-hope we have *bebaios*-firm *mechri*-unto *telos*-end.

⁷ As the Holy Spirit says:

If you hear God speak today, don't be stubborn *skleryno*-harden 6x *hymon*-your *kardia*-hearts. ⁸ Don't be stubborn like those who rebelled and tested *peirasmos*-tempted me in the desert. ⁹ That is where your ancestors tested *peirazo*-proved me, ¹⁰ although they had seen what I had done *ergon*-works for 40 years.

That is why I was angry *prosochthizo*-grieved 2x with those people. So I said: Their hearts continue to stray *planao*-err and they have not learned *ginosko* my ways *hodos*. ¹¹ So I angrily *orge*-wrath took a solemn oath *omnyo* that they would never enter *eiserchomai* my *mou* place of rest *katapausis*^{8x}. Psalm 95:7-II

WARNING: Do Not Develop a Wicked, Unbelieving Heart

¹² Be careful *blepo* brothers and sisters that none of you ever develop a wicked *poneros*-evil, unbelieving *apistia* heart *kardia* that turns away *aphistemi*-departs from the living *zao* God *theos*. ¹³ Encourage each other every day while you have the opportunity. If you do this, none of you will be deceived *apate* by sin and become stubborn *skleryno*-hardened.

¹⁴ After all, we will remain Christ's partners *metochos*-partakers only if we continue to hold on to *katecho* our original *arche*-beginning confidence *hypostasis bebaios*-steadfastly until *mechri* the end *telos*.

¹⁵ Scripture says:

If you hear God speak today *semeron*, don't be stubborn. Don't be stubborn like those who rebelled *parapikrasmos*-provocation 2x. **Psalm 95:7,8**

¹⁶ Who heard God and rebelled? All those whom Moses led out of Egypt rebelled. ¹⁷ With whom was God angry for 40 years? He was angry with those who sinned and died in the desert.

¹⁸ Who did God swear would never enter his place of rest? He was talking about those who didn't obey him. ¹⁹ So we see that they couldn't enter his place of rest because they didn't believe *apistia*.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This chapter introduces Moses as *a faithful servant of God*. This is a title Moses is proud of as it is mentioned 21x in the Bible. Yet Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land because both he and Aaron disobeyed God. **Numbers 20:1-13**. So even Moses fell. But God says that Moses was the most faithful servant in my House. **Numbers 12:7**

Jesus is also a faithful servant of God, but he is also a Son. That makes him better than Moses. Barnabas says we are in Jesus' household and partakers or partners with him if we continue to be faithful.

Now Barnabas compares the first generation of Israelites who tested and provoked God for 40 years. After God brought them out of Egypt, they built a Golden Calf idol and then refused to

enter the Promised Land not believing God would enable them to conquer the giants in the land.

Barnabas repeats **Psalm 95** that recounts that story. He warns his readers not to have an evil heart of unbelief that turns away from the living God. For all the warriors over 20 years old in the first generation, God decrees they will die in the wilderness in the next 40 years. But God will allow two of these men, Joshua and Caleb who did believe God could conquer the giants in the land into the Promised Land. God will allow the second generation of warriors to enter Canaan and receive rest from all their enemies.

Don't be like those ungrateful 600,000 warriors God delivered from Egypt only to die in the wilderness.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Although Moses was great, the greatest hero of Israel besides King David, he was flawed. What flaws did Moses have?
2. What character trait did Jesus have that Moses didn't have?
3. Why were the first generation of Israelite warriors so rebellious of God?
4. What should Christians do to prevent their brothers and sisters from having a evil heart?
5. What should Christian do to prevent themselves from having an unbelieving heart?
6. What causes a person to harden their heart?
7. What is God's place of rest for a Christian?

EXTRA CREDIT

What does it mean to be a partaker with Jesus?

Session Four

Jesus Will Give Us Rest

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 4

We Christians Will Enter God's Place of Rest

¹ God's promise *epangelia* that we may enter *eiserchomai* his place of rest *katapausis* still stands. We are afraid *phobeo* that some of you think you won't enter *hystereo*—come short his place of rest. ²We have heard the same Good News *euangelizo*—Gospel that your ancestors heard. But the message *logos*—word didn't help *opheleo*—profit those who heard it in the past because they didn't believe *sygkerannymi*—it was not mixed ~~2x~~ *pistis*—with faith.

³We who believe are entering that place of rest *katapausis*. As God said:

So I angrily took a solemn oath that they would never enter my place of rest. **Psalm 95:11**

God said this even though he had finished his work when he created the world. ⁴Somewhere in Scripture God has said this about the seventh day:

On the seventh day God rested from all his work. **Genesis 2:2**

⁵God also said in the same passage:

They will never enter my place of rest. **Psalm 95:11**

⁶However some people enter that place of rest. Those who heard the Good News in the past did not enter God's place of rest because they did not obey God. ⁷So God set another day. That day is Today.

Many years after your ancestors failed to enter that place of rest God spoke about it through David in the passage already quoted:

If you hear God speak today, don't be stubborn. **Psalm 95:7-8**

⁸ If Joshua had given the people rest *katapauo* 4x, God would not have spoken about another day. ⁹ Therefore, a time of eternal rest *sabbatismos* IX exists for God's people. ¹⁰ Those who entered his place of rest *katapausis* also rest *katapauo* from their work as God did from his.

¹¹ So we must make every effort to enter that place of rest *katapausis*. Then no one will be lost by following the example of those who refused to obey.

The Essence of God's Word

¹² God's Word *logos* is living *zao*—quick and active *energus*—powerful. It is sharper than any two-edged sword and cuts as deep as the place where soul and spirit meet, the place where joints and marrow meet. God's Word judges a person's thoughts and intentions. ¹³ No creature can hide from God. Everything is uncovered and exposed for him to see. We must answer to him.

Jesus Is Better Than Other High Priests

¹⁴ We need to hold on *krateo*—hold fast to our declaration *homologia* of faith: We have a superior High Priest who has gone through *dierchomai* the Heavens *ouranos*. That person is Jesus the **Son of God**.

¹⁵ We have a High Priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses. He was tempted *peirao* in every way that we are, but he didn't *choris*—without sin *hamartia*.

¹⁶ So we can go *proserchomai* confidently *meta parresia* to the throne of God's kindness *charis*—grace to receive mercy *eleos* and find kindness *charis* which will help *boetheia* 2x us at the right time *eukairos*—time of need. 2x

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Barnabas now continues with the story of **Psalm 95**, of the 600,000 warriors who perished during their 40-year journey with Moses in the desert because they refused to believe God. **YHWH**, God's personal name, wanted to give his people rest by giving them a peaceful life in

a land flowing with milk and honey. But they rebelled against him, so God demanded they wander 40 years in the desert until the first generation of warriors died.

Barnabas is concerned that some of these former priests will worry that God won't give them rest either because they are wavering in their belief in Jesus. Those warriors of former years heard the same Good News from God, but it didn't help them for it was not coupled with faith and trust in God. However, we who believe are entering God's rest.

God did not give his Day of Rest to those who didn't believe. But he set another day for us who believe. It is not a *katapausis* but a *sabbatismos* – a Sabbath Rest. **Hebrews 4:9**. This is a unique word that appears only here in the Bible. Barnabas is apparently paralleling God's rest after his work of Creation. **Exodus 20:11**. God will give believers full and perfect sanctification and glorification, a Sabbath Rest in the New Jerusalem in the Last Days.

Barnabas therefore encourages his readers to make every effort to maintain their faith and so enter that place of God's Sabbath Rest. We must finish the journey of sanctification. As Paul says: *We must finish the race. Acts 20:24*

Then he points to God's Word that not only instructs but reveals to us where we fail or attempt to fool God. However, God uses his Word to judge our motives so that everything is uncovered and exposed for him to see. No one can hide their motives from God. We must be honest with him and answer for our wrong thoughts, motives, and actions.

We must look to Christ as our model. Although Jesus was tempted in every way as we are during his 3½ year earthly ministry, he never sinned. So we can go with confidence to the throne of mercy in Heaven to receive mercy and grace from him in every time of our need.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. The words translated *rest* appear 8x times in this chapter and only 10x in the entire book. Define God's rest. It is more than simply entering the Promised Land. It is more than rest from all our enemies.
2. Who is qualified to receive God's rest. How can we make every effort to enter into God's rest?
3. What is a Sabbath rest? Read **Exodus 20:8-11** and **Deuteronomy 5:12-15**.
4. Why didn't Jesus stress keeping the Sabbath in the New Testament?
5. How was it possible for Jesus not to sin if he had a fully human nature?
6. Why is a definition of the characteristics of God's Word included here?

7. Why is it so wonderful that we receive God's grace and mercy every time we call out to him?

EXTRA CREDIT

Joshua claims God has given the people rest:

[Now the Lord your God has given your relatives peace *nuwach*-rest as he promised them. So return home to the land that is your own possession. It is the land that the Lord's servant Moses gave you east of the Jordan. **Joshua 22:4**]

But is this the rest God promised? What is missing? And why didn't Joshua appoint a successor to lead the nation?

Session Five

Jesus is Better than High Priest Aaron

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 5

¹ Every High Priest is chosen from humans to represent them in front of God that is to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin. ² The High Priest can be gentle with people who are ignorant and easily deceived, because he also has weaknesses. ³ Because he has weaknesses, he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins in the same way that he does for the sins of his people.

⁴ No one takes this honor for himself. Instead, God calls him as he called Aaron. ⁵ So Christ did not take the glory of being a high priest for himself. Instead, the glory was given to him by God, who said:

You are my Son. Today I have become your Father. **Psalm 2:7**

God Anointed Jesus to Be a High Priest in the Order of Melchizedek

⁶ In another place in Scripture, God said:

You are a priest forever, in the way Melchizedek was a priest. **Psalm 110:4**

⁷ During his life on earth Jesus prayed to God who could save *sozo* him from death *thanatos*. He prayed *deesis* and pleaded *hiketeria* ^{1x} with loud crying *krauge* ^{6x} and tears *dakry*, and he was heard *eisakouo* ^{5x} because of his devotion *eulabeia*—feared ^{2x} to God. ⁸ Although Jesus was the **Son of God**, he learned *manthano* to be obedient *hypakoe* through his sufferings *pascho*.

⁹ After he had finished his work *teleioo*—made perfect, he became the source *aitos*—author ^{2x} of eternal *aionios* salvation *soteria* for everyone *pas*—all who obeys *hypakouo* him.

¹⁰ God appointed him High Priest in the way Melchizedek was a priest.

WARNING: Do Not Become Lazy

¹¹We have a lot to explain about this. But since you have become too lazy to pay attention *nothrus*-dull ^{2x} *akoe*-hearing, explaining *lego* it to you is hard *dysermeneutos* IX. ¹²By now *chronos*-time you should be teachers *didaskalos*. Instead, you still need someone to teach *didasko* you *palin*-again the elementary *arche*-first truths *stoicheion*-principles ^{7x} of God's Word *logos*. You need milk not solid food.

¹³All those who live on milk lack the experience to talk about *apeiros*-unskilled IX what *logos*-word is right *dikaiosyne*-righteousness. They are still babies *nepios*.

¹⁴However solid food is for mature people *teleios* whose minds *aistheterion*-senses IX are trained by practice *gymnazo* ^{4x} to know *diakrisis*-discern ^{3x} the difference between good *kalos* and evil *kakos*.

It is surprising how harsh Barnabas is in talking to these former priests. Only the sons of Jewish priests could be priests. They normally spent all their time up to the age of 30 studying and learning so they could finally be ordained as priests in the Temple. Being a priest was a great honor in Jewish society.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This is an important chapter because it states that Jesus' one sacrifice made the sacrifices offered for sin by other Levitical priests redundant and unnecessary. It also reveals Jesus' struggles in his human form.

Jesus' greatest described struggle as revealed in the Gospels was in the Garden of Gethsemane just before his arrest by the Sanhedrin.

He took Peter, James, and John with him and began to feel distressed *ekthambeo*-very amazed ^{4x} and anguished *ademoneo*-troubled great anguish or depressed ^{3x}. He said to them: My anguish *perilypos*-overcome with sorrow ^{5x} is so great that I feel like I am dying *thanatos*. Wait here, and stay awake. **Mark 14:33**

He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons with him. He was beginning to feel deep anguish *lypeo*-sorrow and *ademoneo*-very heavy ^{3x}. Then he said to them: My anguish is so great *perilypos* that I feel as if I'm dying *thanatos*. Wait here and stay awake with me. **Matthew 26:37**

Then an angel from Heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. So he prayed *proseuchomai* very hard *ektenesteron* IX in anguish *agonia* IX. His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground. **Luke 22:43-44**

Mark uses the same word *ekthambeo* he uses for the female disciples of Jesus fright when they saw the angel in the tomb on Easter. **Mark 16:5**. Notice the number of rare words used here by the evangelists. Yet Barnabas raises the level of Jesus' anxiety as Jesus prayed to his Father *with loud crying and tears*. And Jesus didn't merely pray, he *pleaded* with God. Then he adds:

Although Jesus was the Son of God, he learned *manthano* to be obedient *hypakoe* through his sufferings *pascho*. **Hebrews 5:8**

This says a great deal about how Jesus restricted *kenoo* or emptied himself **Philippians 2:7** in his human nature. He had to learn. What is amazing to me is how Isaiah, writing 700 years before could have prophesied this:

[He will see and be satisfied because of his suffering. My Righteous Servant will acquit many people because of what he has learned *da'ath* knowledge through suffering. He will carry their sins as a burden. **Isaiah 53:11**]

Barnabas then adds that Jesus was unique for he was a priest not in the order of Levi but of Melchizadek. Moreover, he was called by God with an oath to be his High Priest.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Describe why God chose only the sons of Aaron to serve as priests.

[Appoint Aaron and his sons to serve as priests. Anyone else who tries to do the priests' duties must be put to death. **Numbers 3:10**]

This one choice of ancestry for all priests meant that God did not have to call individuals as he did Jesus. This makes Jesus superior to them. God called Jesus to be a High Priest with an oath.

2. Does this overcome the objections of the Levitical priests that Jesus could not be a priest because he was from the tribe of Judah rather than Levi?
3. Why did the Levitical priests when they offered sacrifices, first offer a sacrifice for their own sin and only after that could they then offer sacrifices for the sins of others?

4. How can we be certain that **Psalm 2:7** is speaking of Jesus? In **2 Samuel 7:14**, the words are the same: *I will be his Father and he will be my Son*. Here God is apparently speaking of Solomon.
5. At any time other than in the Garden of Gethsemane do the four Gospels present Jesus praying and pleading to God with great emotion?
6. How does Jesus learn to be obedient through his sufferings?
7. The name Melchizadek appears 9x in Hebrews and nowhere else in the New Testament. It only appears 2x in the Hebrew Bible once in Genesis and in Psalm 110. Why was Melchizadek selected by Barnabas for use in this letter?

EXTRA CREDIT

King David seemed to perform the duties of a priest with impunity. Why?

[When David had finished sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings in the Lord's presence, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of Armies. **2 Samuel 7:17-18**]

But when King Uzziah burned incense, the Lord struck him with leprosy.

[But when he became powerful, his pride destroyed him. He was unfaithful to the Lord his God. He went into the Lord's Temple to burn incense on the incense altar. The priest Azariah went in after him with 80 of the Lord's priests. They opposed King Uzziah. Uzziah, you have not right to burn incenses as an offering to the Lord. That right belongs to the priests, Aaron's descendants, who have been given the holy task of burning incense. Get out of this place because you have been unfaithful. The Lord God will not honor you for this.

Uzziah, who held an incense burner in his hand, became angry. While he was angry with the priests, a skin disease broke out on his forehead. This happened in front of the priests in the Lord's Temple as Uzziah was at the incense altar. When the High Priest Azariah and all the people turned toward him, a skin disease was on his forehead. They rushed him away. Uzziah was in a hurry to get out of because the Lord had inflicted him with the disease.

King Uzziah had a skin disease until the day he died. Since he had a skin disease, he lived in a separate house and was barred from the Lord's Temple. His son Jotham was in charge of the royal palace and governed the country. **2 Chronicles 26:16-21**]

Session Six

The Genuine Danger of Rejecting Jesus

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 6

¹With this in mind, we should stop going over the elementary truths about Christ and move on to topics for more mature people. We shouldn't repeat the basics about (1) turning away *metanoia*—repentance from the useless things we did *nekros*—dead *ergon*—works and (2) the basics about faith in God. ²We shouldn't repeat the basic teachings about such things as (3) baptisms, (4) setting people apart for holy tasks *epithesis*—laying on *cheir*—hands, (5) dead people coming back to life *anastasis*—resurrection, and (6) eternal judgment. ³If God permits, we will do this.

WARNING: Don't Crucify Jesus Again

⁴Some people once had God's light *photizo*—enlightened .

[That was the true light *phos* which lights *photizo* every man that comes into the world. **John 1:9** KJV]

They experienced *geuomai*—tasted the Heavenly gift *dorea* and shared in *metochos*—partakers 6x the Holy Spirit.

[Jesus replied to her: If you only knew what God's gift *dorea* is, and who is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him for a drink. He would have given you living water. **John 4:10**]

⁵They experienced the goodness *kalos* of God's Word and the powers *dynamis* of the world to come.

⁶ Yet they have deserted *parapipto*-fall away ^{ix} Christ. They are crucifying the Son of God again and publicly disgracing him. Therefore, they cannot be led *anakainizo*-renewed a second time *palin*-again to God *metanoia*-repentance.

⁷ God blesses the earth. So rain often falls on it and it produces useful crops for farmers. ⁸ However, if the earth produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

God Will Not Forget What You Have Done for Him

⁹ Dear friends even though we say these things we are still convinced that better things are in store for you and that they will save you.

¹⁰ God is fair. He won't forget what you've done or the love you've shown for him. You helped his holy people, and you continue to help them.

¹¹ We want each of you to prove that you're working hard *spoude*-diligence so that you will remain confident *plerophoria*-full assurance ^{4x} *elpis*-hope until the end *telos*.

¹² Then instead of being lazy you will imitate those who are receiving *kleronomeo*-inherit the promises *epangelia* through faith *pistos* and patience *makrothymia*.

¹³ God made a promise to Abraham. Since he had no one greater on whom to base his oath he based it on himself. ¹⁴ He said:

I will certainly bless you and give you many descendants. **Genesis 22:17**

¹⁵ So Abraham received *epitygchano* ^{5x} what God promised *epangelia* because he waited patiently *makrothymeo* ^{10x} for it.

¹⁶ When people take oaths *horkos*, they base their oaths on someone greater than themselves. Their oaths guarantee what they say and end all arguments. ¹⁷ God wouldn't change his plan. He wanted to make this perfectly clear to those who would receive his promise, so he took an oath.

¹⁸ God did this so that we would be encouraged.

God cannot lie when he takes an oath or makes a promise. These two things can never be changed. Those of us who have taken refuge *katapheugo* ^{2x} in him

hold on to *krateo* the confidence *elopsis* we have been given. ¹⁹We have this confidence *echo* as a sure and strong anchor *agkyra* for our lives.

This confidence goes into the Holy Place the Holy of Holies behind the curtain ²⁰where Jesus went before us *prodromos*—forerunner IX ON our behalf.

The Holy of Holies is the inner room where the Ark of the Covenant is kept. It is a symbol of the presence of God. **Exodus 25:21-22**

He has become the High Priest forever in the way Melchizedek was a priest.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

This chapter contains the starkest warning of all. A person who has once been justified, believes in Jesus and has been given the gift of the Holy Spirit by God, then who turns away and rejects belief in Jesus, will be separated from God forever. He can never return and remains in what Jesus' called *outer darkness* forever. **Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30**

Barnabas begins with a very harsh statement that these former priests have not learned the basics of the Christian faith. They have been taught them, but they have not learned and retained them. Apparently, they say things that contradict these fundamentals of Jesus' words. So they are in danger of making an idol of their own rather than believing and teaching what Jesus taught.

As they were former priests, they are respected by the community and are assumed to know the truth. So by their false teaching, they can led many Christians astray and place themselves in danger of being separated from God.

However, Barnabas believes better of them. He believes they will return to the way of true knowledge and will receive the inheritance God promises of perfection or fullness of full sanctification and glory.

God swore with an oath to Abraham that he would have many descendants. Although Sarah was barren, Abraham waited 25 years until his son Isaac was born. God swore by himself since there is no one greater. He kept his promise and Isaac was born. God later swore when Abraham and Isaac were on Mount Moriah. **Genesis 22**

We who have taken refuge in God know that God will keep his promises so we can go confidently to him in prayer into the Holy of Holies where Jesus has gone before us as our mediator. Jesus is our High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Barnabas talks very harshly to these former priests. However, he is attempting to warn them of a great danger. Do you think this is the right approach?
2. Barnabas lists six fundamentals of the Christian faith. Has he left anything out?
3. What are *the useless things or dead works we did*? **Hebrews 6:1**
4. What does it mean to be enlightened? Is it simply going through the ceremony of baptism? Can a person be enlightened without baptism?
5. Do you agree that if a person rejects Jesus, then can never return to faith in him?
6. Why does Barnabas discuss that God keeps his promises? Isn't this obvious?
7. At the end of Chapter 5, Barnabas says that Jesus was appointed High Priest by God in the order of Melchizedek. At the end of Chapter 6, he says the same thing. What point is he making?

Session Seven

Jesus is Better Than Melchizedek, Priest of God Most High

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 7

Melchizedek Was a Priest-King in Ancient Canaan

¹ Melchizedek was King of Salem and priest of the Most High God. He met Abraham and blessed him when Abraham was returning from defeating the Kings. ² Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything he had captured.

In the first place, Melchizedek's name means King of Righteousness. He is also called King of Salem which means King of Peace. ³ No one knows anything about Melchizedek's father, mother, or ancestors. No one knows when he was born or when he died. Like the Son of God, Melchizedek continues to be a priest forever.

Barnabas says that since the Hebrew Bible passage about Melchizedek doesn't state when he was born or when he died so he is presumed to be an eternal being like Jesus, the Son of God.

⁴ You can see how important Melchizedek was. Abraham gave him a tenth of what he had captured even though Abraham was the father of the chosen people.

⁵ Moses' Teachings say that members of the tribe of Levi who become priests must receive a tenth of everything from the people. The priests collect it from their own people, Abraham's descendants. ⁶ Although Melchizedek was not from the tribe of Levi, he received a tenth of everything from Abraham.

Barnabas says that since Abraham gave a tithe of the war booty to Melchizedek he acknowledged that Melchizedek was a priest.

King Melchizedek Was More Important Than Abraham

Then Melchizedek blessed Abraham who had God's promises. ⁷No one can deny that the more important person blesses the less important person.

⁸Priests receive a tenth of everything, but they die. Melchizedek received a tenth of everything, but we are told that he lives. ⁹We could even say that when Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything, Levi was giving a tenth of everything.

Levi gave, although later his descendants would receive a tenth of everything. ¹⁰Even though Levi had not yet been born, he was in the body of Abraham when Melchizedek met him.

¹¹The people established the Levitical priesthood based on instructions they received. If the work of the Levitical priests had been perfect, we wouldn't need to speak about another kind of priest.

Melchizedek Was a Different Kind of Priest Who Existed Before God Established the Levitical Priesthood

However, we speak about another kind of priest, a priest like Melchizedek, not a Levitical priest like Aaron.

¹²When a different kind of priesthood is established, the regulations for those priests are different. ¹³The priest whom we are talking about was a member of a different tribe. No one from that tribe ever served as a priest at the altar.

¹⁴Everyone knows that our Lord came from the tribe of Judah. Moses never said anything about priests coming from that tribe. ¹⁵The regulations were different. This became clear when a different priest who is like Melchizedek appeared.

¹⁶That person is a priest not because he met human requirements but because he has power that comes from a life that cannot be destroyed.

David's Psalm 110 Says Jesus Was a Priest Forever as Was Melchizedek

¹⁷The Scriptures say the following about him:

You are a priest forever in the way Melchizedek was a priest. **Psalm 110:4**

¹⁸The former requirements are rejected because they are weak and useless.

¹⁹Moses' Teachings couldn't accomplish everything that God required. But we have something else that gives us greater confidence and allows us to approach God.

God Made Jesus a Priest with an Oath

²⁰None of this happened without an oath. The men from the tribe of Levi may have become priests without an oath, ²¹but Jesus became a priest when God took an oath. God said about him:

The Lord has taken an oath and will not change his mind. You are a priest forever. **Psalm 110:4**

²²In this way Jesus has become the guarantee of a better Covenant.

²³There was a long succession of priests because when a priest died he could no longer serve. ²⁴But Jesus lives forever so he serves as a priest forever.

²⁵That is why he is always able to save those who come to God through him. He can do this because he always lives and intercedes *entygchano*^{5x} for them.

[My Righteous Servant will acquit many people because of what he has learned through suffering. He will carry their sins as a burden. So I will give him a share among the mighty and he will divide the prize with the strong because he poured out his life in death and he was counted with sinners. He carried the sins of many. He intercedes *paga'* for those who are rebellious. **Isaiah 53:11-12**]

²⁶We need a High Priest who is holy, innocent, pure, set apart from sinners, and who holds the honored position — the one next to God the Father on the Heavenly throne.

²⁷We need a priest who doesn't have to bring daily sacrifices as those High Priests did. First they brought sacrifices for their own sins and then they brought sacrifices for the sins of the people. Jesus brought the sacrifice for the sins of the people *once and for all* when he sacrificed himself.

²⁸Moses' Teachings *nomos*-law designated mortals as High Priests even though they had weaknesses. But God's promise *logos*-word *horkoosia*-oath ^{4x} which came *meta* after Moses' Teachings *nomos* designated *teleioo*-consecrated the Son who forever accomplished everything that God required.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR ?

Finally in the Seventh Chapter, we have come to a discussion of Melchizedek. Because he only appears three times in the Bible, I give you the full account of his meeting with Abraham:

[After Abram came back from defeating Chedorlaomer and his allies, the King of Sodom came out to meet him in the Shaveh Valley, that is, the King's Valley. Then King Melchizedek of Salam brought out bread and wine. He was a priest of God Most High *El Elyon*. He blessed Abram and said: Blessed is Abram by God Most High, Maker of Heaven and Earth. Blessed is God Most High who has handed your enemies over to you. Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

The King of Sodom said to Abram: Give me the people and keep everything else for yourself. But Abram said to the King of Sodom: I now raise my hand and solemnly swear to the Lord *YHWH* God *el* Most High *elyon*, Maker of Heaven and earth, that I won't take a thread or a sandal strap. I won't take anything that is yours so that you will never be able to say: I made Abram rich. I won't take one single thing except what my men have eaten. But let my allies Amer, Echol, and Mamre take their share.
Genesis 14:17-24]

Barnabas will go into great detail about Melchizedek. His name is significant. *Malak* in Hebrew means *King*; *Tsedeq* means *righteousness*. *Shalam* means *peace*. We don't know anything about Melchizedek except he was King of Salem that later became Jerusalem. King David captured the city from the Canaanite Jebusites and made it his capital about 1010 BC.

Out of nowhere, King Melchizadek suddenly appears and blesses Abraham in the name of God Most High *El Elyon*. This was the name the patriarchs used for God. Moses said:

[God spoke to Moses: I am the Lord *YHWH*. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty *El Elyon*, but I didn't make myself known to them by my name the Lord *YHWH*. Exodus 6:2]

Notice however, Melchizadek used the name *El Elyon* but Abram used the name *YHWH El Elyon*.

Then Abram gave the priest Melchizadek one-tenth of the war booty. Why did he do this? Apparently, it was traditional to do this at that time around the year 2,000 BC.

Barnabas uses this story from the Hebrew Bible to show that a priesthood existed in the time of Abram. He was re-named by God later as Abraham before the Levitical priesthood was inaugurated by God when he consecrated Aaron as High Priest of Israel around 1,300 BC, 700 years after the time of Abraham. Exodus 29:1-46

But Melchizadek was chosen by God as a priest in advance of Aaron's anointing. This means there was another priesthood designed by God. Jesus is the High Priest of this priesthood.

Moreover, King David, the writer of 73 psalms in the Book of Psalms one thousand years later says in his Psalm 110:

The Lord *YHWH* said to my David's Lord *Adonay*. Take the honored position – the one next to me – God the Father – on the Heavenly throne until I put your enemies under your control. Psalm 110:1

The Lord has taken an oath and will not change his mind: You are a priest forever in the way that Melchizadek was a priest. Psalm 110:4

David was considered to have been inspired by the Holy Spirit to have written all these psalms so he is prophesying in advance of the Messiah who would come who would be the Son of God. This Messiah is David's lord.

One thousand years later, Jesus referred to this in Jerusalem before he was crucified:

[While Jesus was teaching in the Temple courtyard, he asked: How can the experts in Moses' Teachings the scribes say that the Messiah is David's son. David, guided by the Holy Spirit said: The Lord *YHWH* said to my Lord *Adonay*. Take the honored position – the one next to me – God the

Father on the Heavenly throne – until I put your enemies under your control. David calls him Lord *kyrios*. So how can he be his son? **Mark 12:35-37**]

Jesus is saying that the Messiah is the Son of God.

With all this said, Barnabas says that since Jesus lives forever, he is a High Priest forever. He intercedes for us who come to God through him, that is, in his name. **John 16:23**

We need a High Priest like this who has never committed a sin, who is the Son of God, who has made only one sacrifice for all time – *once and for all* – when he sacrificed himself on the cross. The Torah designated a human as a High Priest to teach people how to sacrifice. But a greater sacrifice has now been made by Jesus *once and for all*.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Melchizadek was living in Salem, later Jerusalem. How did he know about Abraham's victory over King Chedorlaomer of Elam?
2. Why did Abram include the name **YHWH** when he made his oath while King Melchizadek did not?
3. What makes Melchizadek superior to Abraham?
4. Why did Abram tithe 10% of the war booty to King Melchizadek?
5. Why does Barnabas say that *Moses' Teachings couldn't accomplish everything that God required? But we have something else that gives us greater confidence and allows us to approach God.* **Hebrews 7:19**
6. Why is it important that God swears an oath to make Jesus a High Priest forever in the order of Melchizadek?
7. How did David say what he did in **Psalms 110**?

EXTRA CREDIT

Why is Melchizadek never mentioned again in the Hebrew Bible but the Essenes select him almost a thousand years later as an incarnation of the archangel Michael who appears in **Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 1:9; and Revelation 12:7** ?

11Q13, also 11QMelch or the **Melchizedek document**, is a fragmentary manuscript among the Dead Sea Scrolls from Cave 11 that mentions Melchizedek as leader of God's angels in a war in

Heaven against the angels of darkness instead of the more familiar Archangel Michael. The text is an apocalyptic commentary on the Jubilee year of **Leviticus 25**. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain texts in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, the language of 11Q13 is Hebrew, date of composition is circa 100 BCE. **Wikipedia**

The Text of 11QMelech II

11QMelech II... And concerning that which He said: In [this] year of Jubilee [each of you shall return to his property (Lev. xxv, 13); and likewise, And this is the manner of release:] every creditor shall release that which he has lent [to his neighbor. He shall not exact it of his neighbor and his brother], for God's release [has been proclaimed] (Deut. xv, 2).

[And it will be proclaimed at] the end of days concerning the captives as [He said, To proclaim liberty to the captives (Isa. lxi, 1). Its interpretation is that He] will assign them to the Sons of Heaven and to the inheritance of Melchizedek; f[or He will cast] their [lot] amid the po[r]tions of Melchize]dek, who will return them there and will proclaim to them liberty, forgiving them [the wrong-doings] of all their iniquities.

And this thing will [occur] in the first week of the Jubilee that follows the nine Jubilees. And the Day of Atonement is the e[nd of the] tenth [Ju]bilee, when all the Sons of [Light] and the men of the lot of Mel[chi]zedek will be atoned for. [And] a statute concerns them [to prov]ide them with their rewards. For this is the moment of the Year of Grace for Melchizedek. [And h]e will, by his strength, judge the holy ones of God, executing judgement as it is written concerning him in the Songs of David, who said, **ELOHIM** has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgement (Psalms lxxxii, 1).

And it was concerning him that he said, (Let the assembly of the peoples) return to the height above them; **EL** (god) will judge the peoples (Psalms vii, 7-8).

As for that which he s[aid: How long will you] judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? Selah (Psalms lxxxii, 2). its interpretation concerns Belial and the spirits of his lot [who] rebelled by turning away from the precepts of God to ...

And Melchizedek will avenge the vengeance of the judgements of God... and he will drag [them from the hand of] Belial and from the hand of all the sp[irits of] his [lot]. And all the 'gods [of Justice'] will come to his aid [to] attend to the de[struction] of Belial. And the height is ... all the sons of God... this ...

This is the day of [Peace/Salvation] concerning which [God] spoke [through Isa]jah the prophet, who said: [How] beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who proclaims peace, who brings good news, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion: Your **ELOHIM** [reigns] (Isa. lii, 7).

Its interpretation; the mountains are the prophets... and the messenger is the Anointed one of the spirit, concerning whom Dan[iel] said: [Until an anointed one, a prince (Dan. ix, 25)] ... [And he who brings] good [news] , who proclaims [salvation]: it is concerning him that it is written... [To comfort all who mourn, to grant to those who mourn in Zion] (Isa. lxi, 2-3). To comfort [those who mourn: its interpretation], to make them understand all the ages of t[ime] ... In truth ... will turn away from Belial... by the judgement[s] of God, as it is written concerning him, [who says to Zion] ; your **ELOHIM** reigns.

Zion is ..., those who uphold the Covenant, who turn from walking [in] the way of the people. And your **ELOHIM** is [Melchizedek, who will save them from] the hand of Belial. As for that which He said, Then you shall send abroad the trump[et in] all the land (Lev. xxv, 9) ...

Session Eight

Jesus Is Better Than Levitical Priests

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 8

Jesus' Serves as High Priest of the True Heavenly Tent

¹The main point we want to make is this: We do have this kind of High Priest. This High Priest holds the honored position — the one next to the majestic God the Father on the Heavenly throne. ²He serves as priest of the Holy Place and of the True Tent of Meeting set up by the Lord and not by any human.

Levitical Priests Service at a Copy of the True Tent

³Every High Priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices. Therefore, this High Priest had to offer something. ⁴If he were on earth, he would not even be a priest. On earth other priests offer gifts by following the instructions that Moses gave. ⁵They serve at a place that is a pattern, a shadow, of what is in Heaven. When Moses was about to make the Tent of Meeting, God warned him:

Be sure to make everything based on the plan I showed you on the mountain. Exodus 25:40

Jesus Brings a Better Covenant from God Than the Mosaic Covenant

⁶Jesus has been given a priestly work that is superior to the Levitical priests' work. He also brings *mesites*-mediator a better *kreitton* Covenant *diatheke* from God that is based on better *kreitton*-guarantees *epangelia*-promises. ⁷If nothing had been wrong with the first Covenant, no one would look for another one. ⁸But God found something wrong with his people and said to them:

The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant *beriyth* to Israel and Judah. ⁹It will not be like the Covenant that I made to their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of Egypt. They rejected that Covenant, so I ignored them, says the Lord.

¹⁰But this is the Covenant that I will make to Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my teachings *torah* inside them and I will write those teachings on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

¹¹No longer will each person teach his neighbors or his relatives by saying: Know *yada'* the Lord. All of them from the least important to the most important will all know me ¹²because I will forgive their wickedness and I will no longer hold their sins against them. **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

¹³God made this new Covenant and showed that the first Covenant was outdated. What is outdated *palaio*—decays and aging *gerasko*—waxes old will soon *engys*—ready disappear *aphanismos*—vanish.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

The New Covenant was prophesied by Jeremiah in the years between 642-586 BC – in the final days before the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. Although Jeremiah prophesied that the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed and the people killed or deported to Babylon unless they surrendered to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, he also prophesied of God's restoration of his Chosen People after the 70-year exile.

In this restoration, God would circumcise the people's hearts and give them the ability to obey his laws for living in his Creation. He would write his teachings on their inward parts – their hearts – and also enable them to have a personal relationship with him so that they would know him.

But right now, God's people only had the priests chosen under the Mosaic Covenant who offered sacrifices for sins at an earthly Temple, that was only a pattern of the true Temple in Heaven. Jesus, who God sent to earth in 5 BC, inaugurated this New Covenant by his blood shed on the cross.

On the night before he died on the cross, Jesus performed a symbolic act:

[Then Jesus took bread and spoke a prayer of thanksgiving. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: This is my body which is given up for you. Do this to remember me. When supper was over, he did the same with the cup. He said: This cup that is poured out for you is the New *kainos* Covenant *diatheke* in my blood. **Luke 22:19-20**]

In the New Covenant, God repeats the language of his eternal Covenant:

[I will be their God and they will be my people. **Jeremiah 32:38**]

God first said this to Moses while Moses was in Egypt speaking to Pharaoh:

[Tell the Israelites: I am the Lord. I will bring you out from under the oppression of the Egyptians and I will free you from slavery. I will rescue you with my powerful arm and with mighty acts of judgment. Then *I will make you my people and I will be your God.*

You will know that I am the Lord your God who brought you out from under the forced labor of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the Land I solemnly swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as your own possession. I am the Lord. **Exodus 6:6-8**]

God will say this sentence many more times in the Bible.

God made Covenants with Adam, Noah, Moses, and David. But the greatest Covenant of all was the New Covenant inaugurated by Jesus. He is able to bring this great Covenant into effect because he is the Son of God who redeemed wicked humans by his sacrifice once and for all.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. In the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the Temple in Heaven is mentioned in **Revelation 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5, 6, 8; 16:1, 17**. But in the New Jerusalem, there is no Temple. Why not?
2. What was the purpose of the Wilderness Tabernacle the Israelites constructed at Mount Sinai? HINT: Read **Exodus 25:8**. What does God mean by saying this?
3. Why did God wait so long to bring the New Covenant?
4. Why does Barnabas say?

God made this new Covenant and showed that the first Covenant was outdated. What is outdated and aging will soon disappear. **Hebrews 8:13**

How should this prevent the former priests from returning to their former occupation as priests?

5. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount:

[Don't ever think that I came to set aside Moses' Teachings or the Prophets. I didn't come to set them aside but to make them come true. I can guarantee this truth: Until the earth and the Heavens disappear, neither a period nor a comma will disappear from the Scriptures before everything has come true.

So whoever sets aside any commandment that seems unimportant and teaches others to do the same will be unimportant in the Kingdom of Heaven. But whoever does and teaches what the commandments say will be called Great in the Kingdom of Heaven. I can guarantee that unless you live a life that has God's approval and do it more faithfully than the experts in Moses' Teachings and Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. **Matthew 5:17-20**]

How then can the Mosaic Covenant be outdated and disappear?

6. In the New Covenant, God says he will write his laws on the hearts of all people. Aren't these laws already written on our hearts in our conscience? How are God's laws different from what our conscience tells us?

7. Does the New Covenant apply to all people or just the Chosen People?

Session Nine

Jesus' Sacrifice Is the Best There Is

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 9

The Earthly Sanctuary—Exodus 25:10-40

¹The first Covenant had rules for the priests' service. It also had a Holy Place on earth. ²A Tent of Meeting was set up. The first part of this Tent was called the Holy Place. The Lamp Stand, the Table of Incense, and the Table of the Bread of the Presence were in this part of the Tent.

³Behind the second curtain was the part of the Tent called the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies. ⁴It contained the gold incense burner and the Ark of the Lord's Covenant. **Exodus 25:10-22**

The Ark was completely covered with gold. In the Ark were the gold jar filled with manna **Exodus 16:33**, Aaron's staff that had blossomed **Numbers 17:10**, and the tablets on which the Covenants was written. **Deuteronomy 10:2**

⁵Above the Ark were the angels of glory with their wings overshadowing the throne of mercy. **Exodus 18:18-20**. Discussing these things in detail isn't possible now.

Then Tent Has Two Rooms: The Holy Place and the Holy of Holies

⁶That is how these two parts of the Tent were set up. The priests always went into the first part of the Tent the Holy Place to perform their duties. ⁷But only the High Priest went into the second part of the Tent the Holy of Holies.

Only the High Priest Entered the Holy of Holies and Only Once a Year

Once a year on Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement he entered and brought blood that he offered for himself and for the things that the people did wrong unintentionally. **Leviticus 16: 6-9** ⁸The Holy Spirit used this to show that the way into the Most Holy Place was not open while the Tent was still in use.

The First and Second Parts of the Tent Are Symbolic

⁹The first part of the Tent is an example for the present time. The gifts and sacrifices that were brought there could not give the worshiper a clear conscience. ¹⁰These gifts and sacrifices were meant to be food, drink, and items used in various purification ceremonies. These ceremonies were required for the body until God would establish a new way of doing things.

The Heavenly Sanctuary

¹¹But Christ came as a High Priest of the good things that are now here. Christ went through a better, more perfect Tent that was not made by human hands and that is not part of this created world. ¹²He used his own blood, not the blood of goats and bulls, for the sacrifice. He went into the Most Holy Place and offered this sacrifice *once and for all* to free us forever.

¹³The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of cows sprinkled on unclean people made their bodies holy and clean. ¹⁴The blood of Christ who had no defect does even more. Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself to God and cleansed our consciences from the useless things we had done. Now we can serve the living God.

By His Sacrifice of Himself, Jesus Reconciled Us to God

¹⁵Because Christ offered himself to God, he is able to bring a New Covenant from God. Through his death he paid the price to set people free from the sins they committed under the first Covenant. He did this so that those who are called can be guaranteed an inheritance that will last forever.

Under the Mosaic Covenant, every time a person unintentionally sinned, they brought an animal sacrifice to the priest. Once a year on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, all the sins

for that year were forgiven by the High Priest's sacrifice of the goat and the scapegoat. But only sins for that year. However, Christ's sacrifice on the cross at Jerusalem in 30 AD allowed God to forgive all the sins of those who believed in Jesus for all time. *Once and for all* time.

¹⁶ In order for a will to take effect, it must be shown that the one who made it has died. ¹⁷ A will is used only after a person is dead because it goes into effect only when a person dies.

¹⁸ That is why even the first Covenant was made with blood. ¹⁹ As Scripture tells us, Moses told all the people every commandment. Then he took the blood of calves and goats together with some water, red yarn, and hyssop and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. ²⁰ He said:

Here is the blood that seals the promise God has made to you. **Exodus 24:8**

²¹ In the same way Moses sprinkled blood on the Tent and on everything used in worship. ²² As Moses' Teachings tell us, blood was used to cleanse almost everything because if no blood is shed, no sins can be forgiven.

The Sacrifice of Jesus Was Greater Than Any Earthly Priest Could Make

²³ The copies of the things in Heaven had to be cleansed by these sacrifices. But the Heavenly things themselves had to be cleansed by better sacrifices. ²⁴ Christ didn't go into a Holy Place made by human hands. He didn't go into a model of the real thing. Instead, he went into Heaven to appear in God's presence on our behalf.

²⁵ Every year the High Priest went into the Holy Place to make a sacrifice with blood that isn't his own. However Christ didn't go into Heaven to sacrifice himself again and again. ²⁶ Otherwise, he would have had to suffer many times since the world was created. But now at the end of the ages he has appeared *once* to remove sin by his sacrifice. ²⁷ People die once, and after that they are judged. **Revelation 20:11-15**

²⁸ Likewise, Christ was sacrificed *once* to take away the sins of humanity and after that he will appear a second time. This time he will not deal with sin but he will save those who eagerly wait for him.

[Then people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. He will send out his angels, and from every direction under the sky, they will gather those whom God has chosen. **Mark 13:26-27**]

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In this session we look at the difference between the sacrifices offered by the Levitical priests since 1,300 BC and the one sacrifice offered by Jesus 1,330 years later in 30 AD.

At Mount Sinai, God gave Moses to build instructions for a Wilderness Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting. This was a temporary structure that would be set up and taken down whenever God guided the Israelites to move by his pillar of smoke and cloud.

When the Israelites entered Canaan and after they conquered the land, the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh near Shechem. The Philistines destroyed the worship site, but the Israelites rescued the Tent. It was probably at Nob, and then later it was set up at Gihon near Jerusalem.

King Solomon built a Temple in Jerusalem although the Tent of Meeting was kept at Gihon in the time of King David. This was the site where Solomon was anointed King. **1 Kings 1:38**. We lose track of the Tent of Meeting after that.

Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem was designed after the Tent of Meeting.

There were two rooms - an outer room where the priests served that contained a Golden Altar of Incense, a Table of Showbread, and a Menorah or lampstand. There was also an inner room in the shape of a cube that was totally dark where there was only one object - the Ark of the Covenant. There was a curtain between the two rooms.

Only the High Priest could enter this inner room called the Holy of Holies or the Most Holy Place. And he could enter it only once a year on Yom Kippur - the Day of Atonement.

But Jesus by his sacrifice on the cross symbolically entered the Holy of Holies of the Temple in Heaven. There he offered his own blood rather than the blood of animals as the sacrifice. So his sacrifice was better than the earthly animal sacrifices offered by the priests at the Bronze Altar in the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting.

Christ went into Heaven to appear to God on behalf of all wicked humans. Symbolically, he was cleansing the Heavenly things in the Heavenly Tabernacle or True Tent with his own blood. **Hebrews 9:23**

He did this only once making *one* sacrifice for *all* time. He is in Heaven now sitting at the right hand of God interceding for humans. But one day he will return to earth not to deal with sin but to take all that believe in him to be with him in Paradise.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why does blood cleanse?

Isaiah points to this paradox when he says:

[Come on now, let's discuss this, says the Lord. Though your sins are bright red, they will become white as snow. Though they are dark red, they will become as white as wool. **Isaiah 1:18**]

John the prophet does likewise :

[These are people coming out of the terrible suffering. They was washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. **Revelation 7:14**]

2. What did the Ark of the Covenant represent? HINT: Read **Exodus 25:21-22**
3. Why was the Holy of Holies completely dark? HINT: Read **Psalms 18:9-11**
4. Why was only the High Priest allowed to enter the Holy of Holies and only once a year?
5. Why was the curtain between the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place torn in two from top to bottom when Jesus died? **Mark 15:37; Matthew 27:51; Luke 24:44**
6. Why is important that Jesus was only sacrificed *once* to take away the sins of humanity?
7. What will Christ do when he comes to earth a second time?

Session Ten

Jesus's Sacrifice Reconciled Us Sinners to a Holy God

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 10

We Can Enter the Holy of Holies because of Jesus' Sacrifice of Himself

¹ Moses' Teachings with their yearly cycle of sacrifices are only a shadow of the good things in the future. They aren't an exact likeness of those things. They can never make those who worship perfect.

² If these sacrifices could have made the worshipers perfect, the sacrifices would have stopped long ago. Those who worship would have been cleansed once and for all. Their consciences would have been free from sin.

³ Instead, this yearly cycle of sacrifices reminded people of their sins. ⁴ The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins.

⁵ For this reason when Christ came into the world, he said:

You did not want sacrifices and offerings, but you prepared a body for me.

⁶ You did not approve of burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin. ⁷ Then I said: I have come. It is written about me in the scroll of the book. I have come to do what you want, my God. **Psalm 40:6-8**

⁸ In this passage Christ first said:

You did not want sacrifices, offerings, burnt offerings, and sacrifices for sin. You did not approve of them. **Psalm 40:6**

These are the sacrifices that Moses' Teachings require people to offer.

⁹ Then Christ says:

I have come to do what you want. **Psalm 40:8**

He did away with sacrifices in order to establish the obedience that God wants. ¹⁰We have been set apart as holy because Jesus Christ did what God wanted him to do by sacrificing his body *once and for all*.

¹¹Every day each priest performed his religious duty. He offered the same type of sacrifice again and again. Yet, these sacrifices could never take away sins.

¹²However, this High Priest Jesus made *one* sacrifice for sins and this sacrifice lasts forever. Now he holds the honored position — the one next to God the Father on the Heavenly throne. ¹³Since that time, he has been waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool.

[The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. **Psalm 110:1 NKJV**]

¹⁴With *one* sacrifice he accomplished the work of setting them apart for God forever.

¹⁵The Holy Spirit tells us the same thing:

¹⁶This is the Covenant that I will make to them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my teachings in their hearts and write them in their minds. **Jeremiah 31:33**

¹⁷Then he adds:

I will no longer hold their sins and their disobedience against them. **Jeremiah 31:34**

¹⁸When sins are forgiven, there is no longer any need to sacrifice for sins.

¹⁹Brothers and sisters, because of the blood of Jesus we can now confidently go into the Holy Place. ²⁰Jesus has opened a new and living way for us to go through the curtain. The curtain is his own body. ²¹We have a superior priest in charge of God's House.

²²We have been sprinkled with his blood to free us from a guilty conscience and our bodies have been washed with clean water. So we must continue to come to him with a sincere heart and strong faith. ²³We must continue to hold firmly *katecho* to our declaration *homologia* of faith *elpsis aklines*—without wavering ix. The one who made the promise *epangellomai* is faithful *pistis*.

Encourage Each Other

²⁴We must also consider how to encourage each other to show love and to do good things. ²⁵We should not stop gathering together with other believers as some of you are doing. Instead we must continue to encourage each other even more as we see the Day of the Lord coming.

WARNING: Deliberate Sin Results in Separation from God

²⁶If we go on sinning after we have learned the truth, no sacrifice can take away our sins. ²⁷All that is left is a terrifying *phoberos* wait *ekdoche* for judgment *krisis* and a raging fire *pyr*—fiery *zelos*—indignation that will consume *esthio*—devour God’s enemies.

[Be careful you don’t forget the Covenant that the Lord your God made to you. Don’t make your own carved idols or statues that represent anything the Lord your God has forbidden. The Lord your God is a raging fire, a God who does not tolerate rivals. Deuteronomy 4:23-24]

²⁸If two or three witnesses accused someone of rejecting Moses’ Teachings, that person was shown no mercy as he was executed. Numbers 15:32-36

[One witness is never enough to convict a person of a crime, offense, or sin he may have committed. Cases must be settled on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Deuteronomy 19:15]

WARNING: Do Not Disrespect the Son of God

²⁹What do you think a person who shows no respect for the Son of God deserves? That person looks at the blood of the Covenant – the blood that made him holy – as no different from other people’s blood and he insults the

Spirit that God gave us out of his kindness. He deserves a much worse punishment.

³⁰We know the God who said:

I alone have the right to take revenge. I will pay back. **Deuteronomy 32:35**

God also said:

The Lord will judge his people. **Deuteronomy 32:36**

³¹Falling into the hands of the living God is a terrifying thing *phoberos*.

The Early Christians Were Persecuted

³²Remember the past, when you first learned the truth. You endured a lot of hardship and pain. ³³At times you were publicly insulted and mistreated. At times you associated with people who were treated this way. ³⁴You suffered with prisoners. You were cheerful even though your possessions were stolen since you know that you have a better and more permanent possession.

WARNING: Don't Lose Your Confidence

³⁵So don't lose your confidence. It will bring you a great reward. ³⁶You need endurance *hypomone* so that after you have done what God wants you to do, you can receive what he has promised *epangelia*.

³⁷Yet, the One who is coming will come soon. He will not delay.

³⁸The person who has God's approval will live by faith. But if he turns back, I will not be pleased with him. **Habakkuk 2:3,4**

³⁹We don't belong with those who turn back *hypostole* ^{IX} and are destroyed *apoleia*. Instead we belong with those who have faith and are saved.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

In this session we learn that because of what Jesus has done by his death on the cross, we can enter God's presence and thus be reconciled to him even though we are sinners and rebels. For Jesus' sacrifice has paid our debt and God has forgiven us all our sins.

Jesus did what God wanted. God wanted obedience rather than sacrifice. When King Saul disobeyed God and offered him a sacrifice, prophet Samuel came to him and said:

[Is the Lord as delighted with burnt offerings and sacrifices as he would be with your obedience? To follow instructions is better than sacrifice. To obey is better than sacrificing the fat of rams. The sin of black magic is rebellion. Wickedness and idolatry are arrogance. Because you rejected the Lord's Word, the Lord rejects you as King. 1 Samuel 15:22-23]

God created animal sacrifices in the Torah to show his Chosen People how horrible it was to sin. An innocent animal must die for a human's error.

Jesus came to earth to complete the Covenant of Redemption the three persons of the Holy Trinity made before Creation was created. Jesus was the obedient servant of God. He never sinned during the 3 ½ years of his earthly ministry. Despite the difficulty of completing his mission with only a human nature, Jesus completed his work for God.

Because Jesus shed his blood, we now can enter confidently into the presence of God. We have been sprinkled with his blood to free us from a guilty conscience and our bodies washed with clean water. This is what Jesus has done for us.

So if we deliberately go on sinning after we have learned this truth, there is no sacrifice to take away our sin. We can only await the fearful judgment of being separated from God forever. We will go into *outer darkness* as Jesus says. **Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30**. Falling into the hands of the living God – the God who acts – is a fearful thing.

Barnabas warns his hearers that persecution should never cause one to turn away from the faith. Don't lose your confidence in Jesus. Instead, have patient endurance *hypomone*. Then you will receive the inheritance of the Eternal Life God has promised you. Remember that patient endurance is not a passive act. You must work to endure and keep your faith.

Abraham is our example of keeping the faith with patient endurance.

[Abram believed the Lord and that faith was regarded as the basis of Abram's approval by the Lord. **Genesis 15:6**]

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. How is what we have learned about Jesus' sacrifice an example of progressive revelation? What other examples of progressive revelation can you give?

2. Barnabas says *we have been set apart as holy because Jesus Christ did what God wanted him to do by sacrificing his body once and for all*. **Hebrews 10:10**. With one sacrifice he accomplished the work of setting them apart for God forever. **Hebrews 10:14**. What does he mean?
3. Barnabas says that *Jesus has opened a new and living way for us to enter God's presence through the curtain. The curtain is his own body*. **Hebrews 10:29**. What does he mean?
HINT: Read **Mark 15:38**.
4. Barnabas repeats his warning from **Hebrews 6:4-5** in **Hebrews 10:26**. Will God really permanently reject a person who turns away from him and then returns?
5. List Scriptures that support your answer to question four.
6. What does it mean that *God alone has the right to take revenge*? **Hebrews 10:30**
7. When is falling into the living God's hands a terrifying thing? **Hebrews 10:31**

EXTRA CREDIT

All three Greek words for *endurance* appear in Hebrews: *hypomone* 2x **Hebrews 10:26; 12:1**; *makrothymeo* 1x **Hebrews 6:15**; *makrothymia* 1x **Hebrews 6:2**. Why is this such an important concept in Hebrews?

The word *hypomone* appears in 32 verses in the New Testament but only twice in the Gospels: in **Luke 8:15** and **Luke 21:19**. Why is *patient endurance* important in the Epistles and not in the Gospels?

The word *hypomone* appears 7x times in Revelation. **Revelation 1:9; 2:2, 3, 19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12**. What is the relationship of the Book of Hebrews to the Revelation of Jesus Christ?

Abraham certainly exhibited patience having faith in God. He waited 25 years for his son Isaac to be born even though Sarah was past the time of childbearing. But the highest amount of faith Abraham showed was in **Genesis 22**. Describe Abraham's faith in this situation.

Session Eleven

Faithful Witnesses of God

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter II

Faith Directs People's Lives

¹ Faith *pistis* assures us of things we expect and convinces us of the existence of things we cannot see. ² God accepted our ancestors because of their faith.

³ Faith convinces us that God created the world through his Word. This means what can be seen was made by something that could not be seen.

The Hebrew word *pistis* appears 32x in Hebrews, the most of any book in the Bible. The word *pistis* appears 24x in this chapter alone. Words translated *faith* appear 2x in the Hebrew Bible: *'emuwn* in Deuteronomy 32:20 and *'emuwnah* in Habakkuk 2:4. The word *'emuwnah* is usually translated *faithfulness* and appears 49x in the Hebrew Bible, 22x in the Psalms.

Faith at the Dawn of History

Abel

⁴ Faith led Abel to offer God a better sacrifice than Cain's sacrifice. Through his faith Abel received God's approval since God accepted his sacrifices. Through his faith Abel still speaks even though he is dead. Genesis 4:1-10

Enoch

⁵ Faith enabled Enoch to be taken instead of dying. No one could find him because God had taken him. Scripture states that before Enoch was taken, God was pleased with him. Genesis 5:21-24

⁶ No one can please God without faith. Whoever goes to God must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Noah

⁷Faith led Noah to listen when God warned him about the things in the future that he could not see. He obeyed God and built a ship to save his family. Through faith Noah condemned the world and received God's approval that comes through faith. **Genesis 6:5-8:22**

The Faith of the Patriarchs

Abraham

⁸Faith led Abraham to obey when God called him to go to a place that he would receive as an inheritance. Abraham left his own country without knowing where he was going. **Genesis 12:1-3**

⁹Faith led Abraham to live as a foreigner in the country that God had promised *epangelia* him. He lived in tents as did his son Isaac and his grandson Jacob who received the same promise *epangelia* from God.

[Through you every family on earth will be blessed. **Genesis 12:3**]

¹⁰Abraham was waiting for the city that God had designed and built, the city with permanent foundations.

¹¹Faith enabled Abraham to become a father even though he was old and Sarah had never been able to have children. Abraham ~~Sarra~~Sarah trusted that God would keep his promise.. ¹²Abraham was as good as dead. Yet from this man came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the grains of sand on the seashore.

¹³All these people died having faith. They didn't receive the things that God had promised them but they saw these things coming in the distant future and rejoiced. They acknowledged that they were living as strangers with no permanent home on earth.

[Land must never be sold permanently because the land is mine. To me you are strangers without permanent homes. **Leviticus 25:23**]

¹⁴ Those who say such things make it clear that they are looking for their own country. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking about the country that they had left, they could have found a way to go back. ¹⁶ Instead these men were longing for a better country — a Heavenly country. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God. He has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷ When God tested Abraham, faith led him to offer his son Isaac. Abraham, the one who received the promises from God, was willing to offer his only son as a sacrifice. **Genesis 22:1-14.** ¹⁸ God had said to him:

Through Isaac your descendants will carry on your name. **Genesis 21:12**

¹⁹ Abraham believed that God could bring Isaac back from the dead. Abraham did receive Isaac back from the dead in a figurative sense.

Isaac

²⁰ Faith led Isaac to bless Jacob and Esau. **Genesis 27:23,39**

Jacob

²¹ While Jacob was dying, faith led him to bless each of Joseph's sons. **Genesis 48:12-14.** He leaned on the top of his staff and worshiped God.

Joseph

²² While Joseph was dying, faith led him to speak about the Israelites leaving Egypt and give them instructions about burying his bones. **Genesis 50:25**

Moses

²³ Faith led Moses' parents to hide him for three months after he was born. They did this because they saw that Moses was a beautiful baby and they were not afraid to disobey the King's Pharaoh's order. **Exodus 2:2**

²⁴ When Moses grew up, faith led him to refuse to be known as a son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵ He chose to suffer with God's people rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a little while. ²⁶ He thought that being insulted

for Christ would be better than having the treasures of Egypt. He was looking ahead to his reward.

²⁷ Faith led Moses to leave Egypt without being afraid of the King's anger. **Exodus 2:15**. Moses didn't give up but continued as if he could actually see the invisible God.

²⁸ Faith led Moses to establish the Passover and spread the blood on the doorposts so that the destroying angel would not kill the firstborn sons. **Exodus 12:21-23**

²⁹ Faith caused the people to go through the Red Sea as if it were dry land. **Exodus 14:22**. The Egyptians also tried this, but they drowned. **Exodus 14:27-28**

³⁰ Faith caused the walls of Jericho to fall after the Israelites marched around them for seven days. **Joshua 6:20**

³¹ Faith led the prostitute Rahab to welcome the spies as friends. She was not killed with those who refused to obey God. **Joshua 2:8-13**

Many Others Were Faithful

³² What more should I say? I don't have enough time to tell you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah **Judges 11:1**, David, Samuel, and the prophets.

³³ Through faith they conquered kingdoms, did what God approved, and received what God had promised. They shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ put out raging fires, and escaped death. They found strength when they were weak. They were powerful in battle and defeated other armies. ³⁵ Women received their loved ones back from the dead.

Other believers were brutally tortured but refused to be released so that they might gain Eternal Life. ³⁶ Some were made fun of and whipped and some were chained and put in prison. ³⁷ Some were stoned to death, sawed in half, and killed with swords. Some wore the skins of sheep and goats. Some were poor, abused, and mistreated.

³⁸The world didn't deserve these good people. Some wandered around in deserts and mountains and lived in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹All these people were known for their faith, but none of them received what God had promised.

⁴⁰God planned to give us something very special so that we would gain Eternal Life with them.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

Now that Barnabas has proved that Jesus is greater than anyone because he is the Son of God, and that we should have faith and trust in him to deliver us from our sin, he goes on to recount the great heroes of the Hebrew Bible.

He begins with Abel, the son of Adam and Eve, our first parents. Both of their sons offered sacrifices to God, but God accepted Abel's sacrifice and did not accept Cain's. Cain was angry and killed him. Then Barnabas moves through the generations to Enoch who did not die but was taken by God. He had walked with God in faith.

We move on to the patriarch Noah who built an ark at God's direction. He and his family were saved from the great flood God brought on the earth because humans had become so wicked. Noah's son Shem lived 500 years. He was only 98 years old when the flood ended. **Genesis 11:10-11**. Some think that Melchizedek was actually Shem as he was alive in the time of Abraham.

Abraham Is the Great Model of Faith

God called Abram to leave his father and *go to a land I will show you*. **Genesis 12:1-3**. Abram took his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot and their servants and went south from Haran to Canaan, to Shechem in the middle of the land. There he built an altar to God and worshiped him. God spoke to Abram many times and made a Covenant with him that his descendants would inherit Canaan and his descendants would bless all the families of the earth.

Abraham waited 25 years from the time that God said he would have a son to the time that Isaac was born. He was 100 years old at the time of Isaac's birth. Then, when Isaac was about 12 years old, God told him to take his son and offer him as a burnt offering to God. Abraham had faith that even though Isaac would die, Abraham's descendants would still bless all the families of the earth. How was this to happen if Isaac, the son of the promise, died?

Although Abraham tied his son Isaac on the altar and prepared to plunge a knife into him, God's angel stopped him at the last minute and substituted a ram caught in a nearby bush for the sacrifice. What great faith Abraham had.

Seven hundred years later, Abraham's descendants were no longer in Canaan but in Egypt where the Pharaoh had enslaved them in hard work. They had grown from 70 original men from Canaan to over 600,000 men twenty years or older – of warrior age. The Hebrews called out to God, and he heard them.

God raised up Moses, a Hebrew who was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter. For 40 years Moses lived in the palace. Then one day he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, so he killed him. Then he fled to the region of Mount Sinai where he married the daughter of Jethro, a priest of Midian, a descendant of Abraham's second wife Keturah. **Genesis 25:2**

Forty years later Moses met the Lord speaking to him out of a bush that burned but was not consumed. God told Moses to go to Egypt and lead the Israelites to Mount Sinai where God would instruct them. With mighty acts, God enabled the Israelites to leave Egypt and go to Mount Sinai.

After a year at Mount Sinai where God gave them his Ten Words and they built the Wilderness Tabernacle, God led them back to Canaan. But the Israelites refused to enter the land because of the giants they saw, so God led them back into the wilderness for 40 years. After much rebellion to God along the way, they finally reached Canaan again. Moses died and Joshua led them into Canaan where they first captured the city of Jericho after Rahab helped the Israelites spy out the city.

There were more heroes of faith in the Bible. And they also kept their faith even though they were persecuted. Their faith was in a God who would protect them and guide them in his Creation. Barnabas says that they had a promise of life eternally with God. *They were longing for a Heavenly country.* **Hebrews 11:16**

Elliot says that they were wandering and sojourning until God's own time should come when he could grant them his promise – a home in a country of their own. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/hebrews/11-16.htm>

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Define faith.
2. Why did God accept Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's sacrifice? Does **Genesis 4:10** give us the answer?

3. List the promises God made to Abraham. Did Abraham see the fulfillment of them? How did Abraham know that these promises would be fulfilled?
4. What was the greatest act of faith in this chapter? Why was it the greatest act of faith?
5. Why is King David, the great hero of Israel, only mentioned and his faith not described?
6. What is the promise of God that Barnabas says these people looked for and never received?
7. Is Barnabas saying all these people actually looked for life after death with God?

EXTRA CREDIT

Explain what the last sentence of this chapter means:

All these people were known for their faith but none of them received what God had promised. God planned to give us something very special so that we could gain Eternal Life with them. **Hebrews 11:39-40**

Session Twelve

God Asks Us to Have Patient Endurance in Keeping the Faith

THE SCRIPTURE TEXT

Chapter 12

Faith Directs Our Lives

¹ Since we are surrounded by so many examples of faith we must get rid of everything that slows us down especially sin that distracts us. We must run the race that lies ahead of us and never give up. **1 Corinthians 9:24**

² We must focus on Jesus, the source and goal of our faith. He saw the joy ahead of him so he endured death on the cross and ignored the disgrace it brought him. **Philippians 2:8**. Now he holds the honored position —the one next to God the Father on the Heavenly throne.

Jesus Kept Faith in God and Continued His Mission Despite Persecution

³ Think about Jesus who endured opposition from sinners so that you don't become tired and give up. ⁴ You struggle against sin but your struggles haven't killed you. ⁵ You have forgotten the encouraging words that God speaks to you as his children:

My child, pay attention when the Lord disciplines you. Don't give up when he corrects you. ⁶ The Lord disciplines everyone he loves. He severely disciplines everyone he accepts as his child. **Proverbs 3:11-12**

Value Your Discipline from God

⁷ Endure your discipline. God corrects you as a father corrects his children. All children are disciplined by their fathers. ⁸ If you aren't disciplined like the other children, you aren't part of the family.

⁹On earth we have fathers who disciplined us and we respect them. Shouldn't we place ourselves under the authority of God, the father of spirits, so that we will live? ¹⁰For a short time our fathers disciplined us as they thought best. Yet, God disciplines us for our own good so that we can become holy like him.

¹¹We don't enjoy being disciplined. It always seems to cause more pain than joy. But later on those who learn from that discipline have peace that comes from doing what is right.

¹²Strengthen your tired arms and weak knees. ¹³Keep walking along straight paths so that your injured leg won't get worse. Instead, let it heal.

¹⁴Try to live peacefully with everyone and try to live holy lives because if you don't, you will not see the Lord.

¹⁵Make sure that everyone has kindness from God so that bitterness doesn't take root and grow up to cause trouble that corrupts many of you.

Esau

¹⁶Make sure that no one commits sexual sin or is as concerned about earthly things as Esau was. He sold his rights as the firstborn son for a single meal. **Genesis 25:33**

¹⁷You know that afterwards, when he wanted to receive the blessing that the firstborn son was to receive, he was rejected. Even though he begged and cried for the blessing, he couldn't do anything to change what had happened. **Genesis 27:38**

Mount Sinai, the Mountain of God

¹⁸You have not come to something that you can feel, to a blazing fire, to darkness, to gloom, to a storm, ¹⁹to a trumpet's blast, and to a voice. **Exodus 19:18**

When your ancestors heard that voice, they begged not to hear it say another word. ²⁰They couldn't obey the command that was given:

If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death. **Exodus 19:12-13**

²¹The sight was so terrifying that even Moses said he was trembling and afraid. **Deuteronomy 9:19**

The Heavenly Jerusalem

²² Instead you have come to Mount Zion, to the City of the living God, to the Heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to tens of thousands of angels joyfully gathered together ²³and to the assembly of God's firstborn children whose names are written in Heaven. **Revelation 7:9-10**

You have come to a judge, the God of all people and to the spirits of people who have God's approval and have gained Eternal Life. ²⁴You have come to Jesus, who brings the new Covenant from God and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better message than Abel's. **Genesis 4:10**

WARNING: Listen When God Speaks

²⁵ Be careful that you do not refuse to listen when God speaks. Your ancestors didn't escape when they refused to listen to God who warned them on earth. We certainly won't escape if we turn away from God who warns us from Heaven.

²⁶ When God spoke to your ancestors, his voice shook the earth. But now he has promised:

Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the sky. **Haggai 2:6**

²⁷ The words *once more* show clearly that God will change what he has made. These are the things that can be shaken. Then only the things that cannot be shaken will remain. ²⁸ Therefore we must be thankful that we have a Kingdom that cannot be shaken. Because we are thankful, we must serve God with fear and awe in a way that pleases him. ²⁹ After all our God is a destructive fire. **Deuteronomy 4:24**

Chapter 13

¹ Continue to love each other. ² Don't forget to show hospitality to believers you don't know. By doing this some believers have shown hospitality to angels without being aware of it. ³ Remember those in prison as if you were in prison with them. Remember those who are mistreated as if you were being mistreated.

⁴ Marriage is honorable in every way so husbands and wives should be faithful to each other. God will judge those who commit sexual sins especially those who commit adultery.

⁵ Don't love money. Be happy with what you have because God has said:

I will never abandon you or leave you. **Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:5**

⁶ So we can confidently say:

The Lord is my helper. I will not be afraid. What can mortals do to me?
Psalms 118:6

⁷ Remember your leaders who have spoken God's Word to you. Think about how their lives turned out and imitate their faith.

⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

The unchangeable nature of our Savior Jesus Christ is an all-embracing assurance that his Word is faithful, his promises are true, his saving grace is free to all who trust in him for salvation and none of the many precious promises contained in the Word of God can ever fail.

WARNING: Don't Get Carried Away by Strange Teachings

⁹ Don't get carried away by all kinds of unfamiliar teachings. Gaining inner strength from God's kindness is good for us. This strength does not come from following rules about food, rules that don't help those who follow them.

¹⁰ Those who serve at the Tent have no right to eat what is sacrificed at our altar.

Barnabas is making a distinction between the food the Levitical priests eat from the sacrificial animal sacrifices with the Eucharistic sacrifice of our Lord's communion –the bread and the wine.

¹¹The High Priest brings the blood of animals into the Holy Place as an offering for sin. But the bodies of those animals were burned outside the Israelite camp. ¹²That is why Jesus suffered outside the gates of Jerusalem. He suffered to make the people holy with his own blood. ¹³So we must go to him outside the camp and endure the insults he endured.

Jewish believers in Christianity must expect to be ostracized from their families and go outside Jewish society to worship Jesus. They should not expect to be accepted by members of their local synagogue.

We Don't Have a Permanent Home on Earth

¹⁴We don't have a permanent city here on earth but we are looking for the city that we will have in the future.

¹⁵Through Jesus we should always bring God a sacrifice of praise, that is words that acknowledge him. ¹⁶Don't forget to do good things for others and to share what you have with them. These are the kinds of sacrifices that please God.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and accept their authority. They take care of you because they are responsible for you. Obey them so that they may do this work joyfully and not complain about you. Causing them to complain would not be to your advantage.

¹⁸Pray for us. We are sure that our consciences are clear because we want to live honorably in every way. ¹⁹I especially ask for your prayers so that I may come back to you soon.

Benediction

²⁰The God of peace brought the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, our Lord Jesus, back to life through the blood of an Eternal Covenant. ²¹May this God of peace prepare you to do every good thing he wants. May he work in us

through Jesus Christ to do what is pleasing to him. Glory belongs to Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

Farewell

²²I urge you, brothers and sisters, to listen patiently to my encouraging words. I have written you a short letter. ²³You know that Timothy, our brother, has been freed. If he comes here soon, both of us will visit you.

²⁴Greet all your leaders and all God's holy people. Those who are with us from Italy greet you.

²⁵May God's good will be with all of you.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED SO FAR?

We are now given some practical applications of this teaching, some of the basics of Christian living. God wants us to live holy lives. It is one thing to believe. It is another thing to integrate that belief into our lives. *Without holiness, no one will see the Lord.* **Hebrews 12:14**

Jesus must be our role model. Things might become tough, but we must have patient endurance *hypomone* to continue our faithful life. God may be providing discipline to us at times to help develop our character.

We must live peaceful lives seeking to get along with everyone. Bitterness and unforgiveness can corrupt our lives. Sexual sin can ruin us.

We look forward to coming to Mount Zion, the Heavenly Jerusalem, where we will gather with angels and God's children who will worship God continually with the inheritance of Eternal Life. We will come to Jesus who brings the New Covenant from God.

Now a Warning: Do not refuse to listen when God speaks to you through his Holy Spirit. The Kingdom we will soon enter can never be shaken.

We must continue to love other believers showing them hospitality. Keep marriage pure and faithful. Don't love money. Remember our leaders. Remember that Jesus Christ remains constantly faithful to his promises.

Another Warning: Do not be led astray by strange teachings. The words of Jesus must guide us as well as the Scriptures. Don't be surprised if you are ostracized from Jewish society. Jesus was taken outside the camp to be crucified. We must join him there.

Barnabas then gives us a beautiful benediction calling Jesus the Great Shepherd of the Sheep. May God work in us through his Holy Spirit to accomplish the good works he has planned for us to do. May God's grace be with all of you.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

1. Why does God discipline believers?
2. What did Esau do wrong?
3. What is the difference between God's appearance on Mount Sinai and his appearance in the New Jerusalem?
4. Barnabas quotes the prophet Haggai who lived around 500 BC saying God will shake not only the earth but also the sky. **Haggai 2:6-7**. What does the prophet mean?
5. Why is it important to listen to God? What happens if we don't listen?
6. Why is it dangerous to listen or follow teachings not taught in the Bible?
7. What is the value of a believer in Jesus being different in actions from most in society? Who benefits?

EXTRA CREDIT

Describe the Eternal Covenant God makes with all believers.

A Final Word

The Epistle to the Hebrews has been written in a very high Greek literary style. Many of the sentences are complex and use rare words. Therefore, sometimes it is difficult to follow the wording of the **GOD'S WORD** © translation with that of the King James Version. That is the reason you will find many of the original Greek words in **bold face print** in the text.

Words I have added to the text to aid understanding are in ten point type.

Scriptures I have added to the text are indented and enclosed by brackets [].

Many have wondered why King David was the only one to mention Melchizadek prior to the writing of To the Hebrews. I have a theory, but it is pure conjecture.

David conquered Jerusalem from the Jebusites. **2 Samuel 5:6-10; 1 Chronicles 11:4-9**. This was about 1010 BC and about 1,000 years after Abraham. Soon after the Scripture text mentions that Zadok, son of Ahitab and Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar were co-High Priests. **2 Samuel 8:17**

There is a theory that Zadok was actually the priest-King of Jebus or Jerusalem when David conquered it. To avoid a great loss of men in a potential battle, David agreed with Zadok that he could be co-High Priest with Ahimelech from the tribe of Levi. Since Zadok was a descendant of Melchizadek and believed in the Most High God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, this was not a difficult arrangement.

Zadok proved to be the most loyal High Priest to David. By contrast, Solomon exiled the High Priest Ahimelech, who was descended from Aaron. **1 Kings 2:26-27**

Unfortunately, this is contradicted by **1 Chronicles 6:8** that says Ahitub from the tribe of Levi was the father of Zadok. But King David of Jerusalem considered himself a Priest-King like the former Jebusite rulers of Jerusalem. When David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, he wore a linen ephod.

[The men carrying the Ark set it in its place inside the new Tent David had put up for it. David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings in the Lord's presence. When David had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of Armies. **2 Samuel 6:17**]

As we study the life of King David in the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles there are many questions which arise. This is only one of them.

But there seems to be no other explanation offered of why King David would mention Melchizedek in his **Psalm 110** after 1,000 years of silence about Melchizedek. David was speaking prophetically as Jesus, David's descendant, is our prophet, High Priest, and King. He did this in many of his Psalms.

Sermons of Alistair Begg's on Hebrews

Fix Our Eyes Upon Jesus Series

You may listen to these sermons from the website www.truthforlife.org. Some of these have videos and even transcripts.

Heed These Warnings	Jan 12, 1997	1:1-3
The Superiority of Christ	Jan 12	1:4-14
The Danger of Drifting	Jan 19	2:1-18
Holding Firmly to the End: Part One	Jan 26	3:1-19
Holding Firmly to the End: Part Two	Jan 26	3:1-19
Rest for Your Souls	Feb 2	4:1-13
Jesus the Great High Priest	Feb 9	4:14-5:10
Slowing or Growing?	Feb 16	5:11-6:3
Much to Learn	Feb 19	5:11-14
The Peril of Spiritual Apostasy	Mar 2	6:4-8
Confident of Better Things	Mar 2	6:9-12
The Mystery of Melchizadek: Part One	Mar 9	7:1-11
The Mystery of Melchizadek: Part Two	Mar 9	7:12-28
A Superior Covenant	Mar 16	8:1-13
The Cleansing of Conscience	Dec 3, 2009	9:1-14
When Jesus Came	Mar 23, 1997	9:11-28
It Is Finished	Mar 12, 2010	10:1-18
Faith, Hope, and Love	Mar 30, 1997	10:19-25
Keeping Near, Keeping On	Apr 27	10:26-39
What is Faith?	May 11	11:1
Perseverance of the Saints	May 11	Romans 8:8
Portrait Gallery of Faith: Part One	May 18	11:1-7
Portrait Gallery of Faith: Part Two	May 18	11:8-16
Every Picture Tells a Story	Jun 1	11:17-28

Through Many Dangers	Jun 8	11:29-40
Running the Race	Mar 12, 2010	12:1-4
The Father's Discipline	Jun 15, 1997	12:5-11
Essentials of Christian Maturity	Jun 15, 1997	12:12-27
A Christian Lifestyle	Jun 22	13:1-8
The Privilege of Disgrace	Jun 22	13:9-14
A Summary of Christian Duty	Jun 29	13:15-37
Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus	Jun 29	13:18-25