

Book of Hebrews

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1 Introduction

Theological context: The theological context of this book and its role in the new testament can be best understood by the old testament verse 'the just shall live by faith' (Hab 2:4). This verse is quoted three times in the new testament (Rom, Gal, and Hebrews). This verse encapsulates the entire message of the Bible, particularly that of the New Testament, in three key words, namely 'just', 'live', and 'faith'. While the book of Romans can be understood as a commentary on what is 'just', the book of Ephesians as a commentary of 'live', then the book of Hebrews can be considered as commentary on 'faith'.

Prayer: Father, I thank You for justifying the sinners through faith in the work of Christ on the cross. Lord, I pray for Your grace to live a life of faith by granting greater insight on what it means to be 'the just shall live by faith'. Amen.

Author: Unlike other New Testament books we are not sure of who is the author of this book which can cast doubt about the canonicity of the book (i.e. whether the book is inspired by the Holy Spirit). However, church fathers had no hesitation in recognizing it as the inspired writing due the depth of its spiritual content. Paul or his

close associate with a strong Jewish background might have been the author of this book.

Audience: We also do not know exactly to whom it was written. The book is not written to any particular local church or to any church leaders. Hebrews 3:1 clearly indicates that the book is written to believers and 2:3 indicates that these believers came to faith by testimony of eyewitnesses of Jesus. They were not very new to faith (5:12) but had endured hardship for a long time (10:32-34). The most likely identity of these believers is that they are Jewish Christians based in Rome. **Prayer:** Father, I thank You for inspiring the author of this book which gives deeper insights on You and Your work on the cross and subsequent response of us toward it. Lord, I pray that these insights may strengthen my faith and transform my character, especially to endure hardship for Your name sake. Amen.

Purpose: Though the purpose of writing this book is not explicitly mentioned, one can get a fair idea of the motivation of the author. The phrases such as 'lest we drift away' (2:1), 'departing from the living God' (3:12), 'dull of hearing' (5:11), 'if they fall away' (6:6), 'who has trampled the Son of God underfoot' (10:29), 'chastening of the Lord' (12:5), and many other similar statements indicate these believers has some kind of backsliding in their faith life. Apart from this, the effort of the author to show the deity of Jesus contrasting the old testament saints, and the permanence and the perfection of the ministry of Jesus in the backdrop of the imperfect and transient nature of the old testament system, including the high priest, sacrifices, and the temple, shows that the audience is very familiar with these. All these indicate that the purpose of this book is to exhort the believers from Jewish background to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus and His church, and to warn them with the consequences of going back in

their faith. **Prayer:** Father, I thank You for this book which shows great insights into the life and ministry of Jesus. Lord, I pray for the grace to remain faithful to You even when all situations of life are not conducive to testify my faith. Amen.

Style of the book: Most probable time when this book was written is AD 64-68 AD. Note that Timothy is alive (13:22). Several mentions of the old testament themes is a strong reason to believe that this book was written before AD 70 when the Jerusalem temple was destroyed. Style of writing of this book alternates between the teachings of encouragement and strong warnings. Some genuine believers may backslide due to fear of persecution and such needs constant encouragement. While others are professing believers without having saving faith. Such people need a strong warning to come to active faith in Jesus, or they will face judgment. **Prayer:** Father, I thank You for this book that encourages me when I face trials and warns me when I backslide in faith. Lord, I pray that I may never waver in faith. Amen.

2 Hebrews 1:1-14

1:1. God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, [[Go to contents](#)]

God took the initiative to speak to humanity in spite of the sinfulness of humanity and the resulting enmity with God. God reserves the right to decide the time and means of this communication. A part of it is recorded as Scripture which is the only authoritative and accurate record available to all. One should not insist on God when and how

to communicate, rather one should be thankful that what he expects from us is available. **Prayer:** Father, I praise you for communicating with us through the Scripture. Lord, I pray for grace to understand its meaning by reading, studying, meditating, etc. I also pray that I may be able to obey all that I understand and open doors to teach others these precious truths.

1:2. (has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;) [Go to contents]

The term **last days** signifies that everything necessary to establish God's kingdom has been completed, with only the second coming of Christ remaining. If this author considered his time to be the **last days**, then we are surely much closer to His return. God's act of sending His Son, Jesus, to speak to us and reveal His will demonstrates profound love for humanity and highlights the immeasurable value of Jesus's teachings. While it may seem mysterious that Jesus, who is God, is described as being **appointed** and made an **heir**, this language likely serves as the most effective way to help us understand the functions of the Triune God without diminishing Jesus's deity. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for revealing to us about triune God and His will for us. Thank you for creating us and this universe for us to live. We pray that we may cherish Your word and heed to your will.

1:3. who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, [Go to contents]

Jesus, as the Son of God, perfectly reflects the glory and nature of God the Father, making the divine nature understandable to finite beings like us. The same powerful words of Jesus that created the universe also sustain it. It is a source of great comfort to know that the Creator Himself is in complete control. This contrasts sharply with the story of Frankenstein, where a creator is horrified by his own creation. By [purging our sins](#), Jesus completely removed the ultimate consequence of sin: the spiritual death. This is the work of Christ. Our role is to receive this gift through faith. His act of [sat down](#) signifies the completion of his mission, and His place at the [right hand](#) of God the Father indicates a position of equal authority and honor. [Prayer](#) Lord we adore You being the glory and image of the Father and who reigning with the Father in heaven. Lord, we praise for sustaining this universe and purging our sin which we cannot do by our effort. Lord we pray that we may rejoice in the truth that the purged our sins and hence, not to entertain sin in our life.

1:4. [having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.](#)
[\[Go to contents\]](#)

While Jews hold angels in high regard for their dedicated service and great power, Jesus is supreme because He is their Creator. This verse emphasizes Jesus's unique status as He [inherited](#) a promise which was never extended to any angel. This distinction is significant to understand the uniqueness of Christ. A [name](#) denotes a person's character and nature. [Prayer](#): Father, I adore You and Your Son, the supreme over all beings as no angels, no saints, no great preacher can never

ever come anyway closer to You in character and nature. Lord, I pray that I may take You and Your words most valuable in my life and be transformed to Your likeness.

1:5. For to which of the angels did He ever say: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”? And again: “I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son”? [\[Go to contents\]](#)

This is a promise made to Son by the Father. The word first born does not mean that Jesus was created. It is a word used to reveal to us, probably to angels also, the role of Jesus in the trinitarian economy. Father reveals the Son and their relationship can best illustrated to us using a father-son analogy. Humanly speaking, my sons have the best potential to represent me - both in manner and position. **Prayer:** Lord we adore the triune God, which is not an idea conceived by human minds, but solemnly revealed to us by the Holy Spirit through the Scripture. We pray that we give due honor and glory to the Son which equals worshipping the Father.

1:6. But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” [\[Go to contents\]](#)

When God the Father revealed His Son, in the human form, commanded angels to worship the Son who is incarnated. Obviously, angels find it difficult, humanly speaking, to worship the Son incarnate. It was the case with Jews during the days of Jesus' public life. Even today, many believe in God, but find it difficult to accept Jesus as the true God. We see in the book of Revelation 5 the awesome scenes of the angelic beings worshipping the Son. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for

revealing Your Son and commanding us to worship Him. We worship the Lord Jesus, the very essence of God. Lord, we pray that we will never sway away from this truth even in momentary thoughts and do not allow evil to deceive us in any way.

1:7. And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.” [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The word spirit should have been better understood as wind. God uses angels even as winds and fire to accomplish his plans. Although angels are also sons of God, they are created being and are servants of God unlike Jesus the heir of all things. **Prayer:** Lord, thank you for angels who worship you perfectly and also ministers to you fulfilling your will perfectly. Lord, we pray that, we worship and minister to you like these angelic beings.

1:8. But to the Son He says: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.” [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Nothing can be more clear than these assertions to the deity of Jesus where Father addresses Jesus as God. Mystery of the triune Godhead is revealed to us. The Dominion of Jesus is forever and how blessed it is to be under His rule forever! Righteousness is the foundational principle of His rule. He rules not out of whims and fancies or random activities, although it may appear like this to the feeble human hearts, but out of a solid foundation of righteousness and justice. **Prayer:** O my Father, thank you for revealing Lord Jesus and His authority to us. We bless your holy name for you rule this universe with righteousness.

Lord, we pray that we may understand what it means to be righteous and exhibit the same in our daily life, especially dealing with your creation.

1:9. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” [\[Go to contents\]](#)

This verse is best understood in the context of His incarnation where Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life which included hating lawlessness. God the Father rewarded this life with gladness - a state of bliss. It is promised to all His companions, that is believers following the same path of loving righteousness and hating sin, of course to a lesser degree. **Prayer:** O Lord, I adore you for Your perfect life on the earth characterised by loving righteousness, hating lawlessness, and experiencing the joy of pleasing the Father. Likewise, we pray for Your grace to live a life marked by righteousness and assurance doing the will of the Father.

1:10. And: “You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Lord Jesus is the creator of heavens and the earth. There is a complex design for this universe and the Lord Jesus is the intelligent designer behind this universe. When we look at the complexity and vastness of this universe we get a glimpse of His wisdom and power. It is beyond our comprehension to understand its design. For instance, how do we understand that God created time and He exists beyond

time. Humans can't understand what is meant by timelessness. What goes along with this is that He created you and me with the same wisdom and power. There must be a definite plan and purpose not only for this universe, but also for our individual life. **Prayer:** Oh, what a mighty God we have and we worship You for your magnificent creation. Lord, help us to comprehend its design and purpose. Amen.

1:11-12. They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; 12 Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail.” [\[Go to contents\]](#)

God is an eternal and unchanging Spirit whereas His creation is gradually degrading until God puts an end to it. Jesus made this statement, heaven and earth will pass away. Lord also promised the coming of new heaven and new earth. The earth as we see today is not going to last for long. Whereas what the Lord is doing will stand for ever. **Prayer:** Lord, we worship you for you are unchanging God We pray that we may realize the transience of this world and invest in what the Lord is doing.

1:13. But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Jesus can never be compared to any angelic or any other divine being. Father's command to sit at His right hand indicated the power and position equivalent to that of the Father Himself. Further, God the Father also promised to destroy all the enemies of Jesus which again

shows that Jesus enjoys a unique position. These words clearly show the deity of Jesus. **Prayer:** Lord we praise You for revealing the nature and relationship in the triune godhead although we are able to comprehend this mystery only in part in our finite minds. Nevertheless we pray that we may be able to comprehend more and more of the triune God and develop an intimate and deeper relation.

1:14. Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? [[Go to contents](#)]

Not only that angels are inferior to Jesus as they are ministers of the Lord entrusted with the responsibility of serving us, this verse also shows we have greater value than even angels before God. Jews who regarded angels highly may be surprised to hear the position of a child of God is greater than angels. Further, we should be encouraged with this revelation that we are not helpless in this world, but our Lord has deputed mighty angels to serve us especially in times of troubles and tribulations. **Prayer:** Lord we thank you for the mighty angels who are serving us and pray that we are encouraged by these great resources provided to our faith life.

3 Hebrews 2:1–18

2:1. Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. [[Go to contents](#)]

This is a warning and is addressed to believers who have already heard these things. The exhortation is to give more attention or devotion

to the words of the scripture. A casual approach is not sufficient. Instead we read, study, memorize and meditate so as to understand our God and His expectation from us. This would result in a conscious effort to transform life. **Prayer:** Lord, we thank you and praise you for the words revealed to us. Pray that we may value Your words and ensure that it impacts my life, of course, with Your grace.

2:2-4. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? [[Go to contents](#)]

Although details are not known, scripture gives clear indications that angels were involved in the institution of the old covenant through Moses (Act 8:53, Gal 3:19.) God severely punished those who violated this covenant. This being the case, how much more serious God would take the covenant established by shedding of the blood of His own Son. Even Though the salvation that God has given to us is free, that does not mean it is cheap. God has taken special care to communicate and authenticate this covenant which include the eye witness account (gospels), signs and wonders performed by Jesus and his disciples. Therefore, we should not neglect salvation. How can we neglect salvation? When we turn away, even in thoughts, from God while going through suffering we are actually neglecting salvation. Conversely, if we consider salvation to be more valuable than

suffering, then we are not neglecting salvation. **Prayer:** Lord Jesus, I confess that I often neglect salvation by questioning God even in small difficulties of life. I admit that many a time I looked at the physical well being of unbelievers and thought that they are more blessed than me. Lord, forgive me for neglecting salvation. Lord, I realize that the salvation that you have given me is the greatest blessing in my life which surpasses the most severe suffering that is possible on the earth. Though difficult, Lord, help me not to forget this truth.

2:5-8. For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: “What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

After showing that Jesus is superior to angels, the author now argues that the incarnate Jesus is superior to angels. For this he first shows that humans have a greater position before God than angels. The notion that spirit beings are superior to humans is very prevalent even in those days. We read in Genesis that God created Adam and Eve and gave authority to rule this world. The entire creation was subjected to the rule of Adam (Ge. 1:28). This shows the superiority of humans over angels even though we have many physical limitations unlike angels. However, we lost that authority due to the sin of Adam.

Nevertheless, we will see the full realization of this authority after the institution of the literal kingdom of God on the earth. **Prayer:** Lord, we thank you for creating me in your likeness and image and bestowing with great value. Lord, we pray that you give the grace to live a life with an expectation of fulfilling the purpose of our creation. Amen.

2:9. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

After contrasting the state of humanity with that of angels, incarnate Jesus is compared with angels. The incarnate form Jesus took was little lower than angels in the sense that it had the physical limitation of humanity. Nevertheless, this humiliation of Jesus was for a noble purpose of sacrificial death. There is intrinsic glory and honour in the sufferings of the Lord. This glory is apart from the glory and honor bestowed on Him after the resurrection and ascension. His sacrifice is now sufficient for all those who believe in Him showing also the superior work of the incarnate Jesus. **Prayer:** Lord I thank you and worship for your incarnation which shows Your noble character of humility and at the same time show how valuable is our human body in spite of its physical limitations. Therefore Lord, we pray that we may be humble like you in associating with the physically weak and poor around us.

2:10. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make

the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. [[Go to contents](#)]

Jesus who owns everything for all things was created by Him. Humans are his sons for they are created in the image of God but lost their glory due to sin. Lord in His mercy brings many back to a greater glory by dealing with sin through the suffering on the cross. His humanity was made perfect in suffering. Beyond its theological implications, Lord Jesus glorified suffering itself. We think when suffering happens, say due to sickness or due to natural calamities, God is angry with us. This need not always be the case. Jesus did not suffer due to His personal sin. By volunteering for suffering, Jesus glorified suffering and set an example for all those who follow Him. Thus he is the captain of our salvation and demonstrated the principle that the path to glory is through suffering. **Prayer:** Lord Jesus, we marvel at your attitude to suffering and how you embraced the cross. We admit that we do not like suffering, but we also know from your life that the path to glory is suffering. Hence, we pray to the Lord that we may never hesitate to stand for you fearing suffering.

2:11-12. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.” [[Go to contents](#)]

Jesus is the one who sanctifies believers through his death on the cross. When we believe in Him, we are sanctified and become part of God's children. Jesus is similar to our eldest brother in God's family.

The old testament prophecy that the Messiah will declare the name of the Father is now fulfilled in Jesus. This means that Jesus reveals God the Father and in turn the triune Godhead to us. Further, Jesus established the assembly of God, which is the church, where God the Father is worshipped and in turn the triune God. If we want to imitate Jesus then we all should worship God in the church along with other believers. **Prayer:** Lord Jesus we praise You for the marvelous work of uniting us with You and we thank you for giving us the position of Your brethren. We thank you for You are continuously sanctifying us or making us more and more holy. Yes, Lord, it is Your marvellous work for us. How can we respond to this unimaginable blessing? Is not by praising You in along with Your brethren in Your church. Help us therefore to take your church seriously and praise you as the chief part of our life.

2:13. And again: “I will put My trust in Him.” And again: “Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.” [[Go to contents](#)]

Two messianic prophecies fulfilled in Jesus are mentioned here. First, state that Jesus fully and absolutely trusted God the Father. This is seen all throughout in the incarnation especially while dying on the cross. Our Lord was willing to be separated from the Father on the cross. The agony of this separation is seen in the prayer at Gethsemane. We could see the absolute trust of Jesus when Jesus prayed “let your will be done.” Second, Jesus confidently presents Himself and all the children God has given to trust and serve God the Father. Note that the children are anyone who believes in the death of Christ as a substitute for his or her sin. If Jesus is the captain of our salva-

tion, and if we are His brethren, what is expected of us to trust God the Father absolutely just like Jesus trusted God the Father. [Prayer:](#) Lord we worship and adore you for the absolute trust in the Father. As the song goes, it is so sweet to trust in Jesus, and we pray that we may be able to trust the Father like Jesus trusted the Father.

2:14-15. Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. [[Go to contents](#)]

In the natural realm children inherit the nature of parents. Similarly, Jesus took human form so that he could identify with us. Jesus destroyed Satan on the cross in the sense that his power over us is destroyed. Satan's power over us is fear of death that is our desire to preserve ourselves. In fact Satan enslaves humanity with this fear and forces them to do all kinds of sins. When a person is saved by believing in Jesus then there is no reason to fear even the death which is the greatest enemy of man. We have eternal life and eternal bliss in Jesus. Satan has no hold on us if we truly understand this truth and apply in our practical life. [Prayer:](#) Lord Jesus, we worship you for the great love toward us in sharing our humanity and saving us through the work on the cross. We pray that we may be truly relieved from the fear of death, fear of suffering, fear of people, fear of failure and so on. We pray that we may live a bold life in Jesus knowing fully that our soul is safe and secure in Christ Jesus. Amen.

2:16. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Angels are servants of the Lord. They execute the will of God with perfect obedience. Angelic disobedience was dealt without mercy as we see in the case of Lucifer and the fallen angels. On the other hand, Jesus who is 'the' seed of Abraham was helped by angels several times including during his birth, after the temptation (Mat. 4:11), and after the prayer at Gethsemane (Luke 22:43), and during resurrection. This verse shows the superiority of Jesus over angels. As mentioned elsewhere, angels are also spirits ministering to believers. What a great privilege. Imagine the great boldness we have when a group of commandos surround us to protect us. How much more is the assistance of angels for us. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for the supreme position of angels and prayer that we may be encouraged by assurance of angelic help.

2:17. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

High Priest is an OT concept where a person is chosen who will represent the people of Israel and mediate with God. The high priests were sons of Aaron and therefore they could represent the people. In the new covenant, Jesus is our high priest who became a legitimate representative of humanity by His incarnation. Hence it is mentioned in this verse that Jesus had to be made like His brethren so that just like OT high priests qualify to represent the people, Jesus is quali-

fied to be our high priest who will do the needful to take care of the problem of sin. Two qualities are required from a high priest. He should be merciful to the people whom he represents. We see that Jesus demonstrated His mercy to the people and the most obvious ones are His healings. The second quality is faithfulness toward God the Father. By His sinless life and perfect obedience to the Father, Jesus demonstrated His faithfulness. **Prayer:** Lord we thank you for You are our high priest showing both mercy toward us and faithfulness toward the Father. We know from elsewhere that we are also your royal priests and therefore we also need to be merciful to the people around us and faithful towards you. Give us the grace to fulfill this dual responsibility. Amen.

2:18. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The life of Jesu on the earth was characterized by all challenges associated with humanity including suffering and temptation. This enabled Jesus to fully identify with our plight, not only in His omniscience, but also experientially. We have therefore greater boldness to approach Jesus even though He is the Holy God. **Prayer:** Lord Jesus, thank you for the love shown to us through your life on the earth which enables us to approach you in our struggles for you are sympathetic to us.

4 Hebrews 3:1–19

3:1. Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession,

Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The author appeals to us that we should be faithful to the Lord Jesus who has made us holy and given heavenly inheritance. The motivation for us to be faithful is Jesus who is faithful to God the Father who appointed Him as the Messiah. We are holy means that we are a special group of people exclusively belonging to our Lord. Heavenly calling means that the benefit of salvation is spiritual and fulness will be in heaven. Apostle means the messenger of God and Jesus brought the message of salvation through Jesus. High Priest means the mediator between us and God the Father. A second motivation that appeals especially to the believers from Jewish background is the faithfulness of Moses. **Prayer:** Lord, we pray that we may be faithful to the heavenly calling no matter how much difficulty we may face. We cannot do this with our own strength and we need Your mercy and power. We cannot trust our natural strength for this and we rely fully on You. Amen.

3:3. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Moses has been held with a very high position among Jews who take God seriously because through Moses God gave the law. Moses was like the founder of their nation. These verses say that God is the owner and builder of all: both physical and spiritual world. Whereas Moses is only a servant of the Lord who executed the command of the

Lord. It is possible that we may not see the glory of Jesus when we look at the life of Jesus on the earth with a natural eye. **Prayer:** Lord, help us to understand the greatness of Your glory. There is none like You, and Your glory is greater than Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Peter, John, Paul, and the like or even more than the glory of all of them put together. Lord, we pray that nothing in us should marr the glory of Jesus.

3:5. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Moses was a servant of the Lord and he faithfully served the Lord as we often read that he built the tabernacle with every minute details according to the instruction he received from the Lord. This became a pattern for all the Jews to imitate. On the other hand, Jesus is the Son of God and owns everything unlike Moses who was the servant of the Lord. The tabernacle that Jesus is building is His church and we are the living elements of that tabernacle. What is expected of us holds fast the confidence which means that like Moses be faithful to the calling. We are also exhorted to rejoice in the hope of salvation. The fullness of the salvation that the Lord promised will be realized only in eternity and therefore we should firmly hold that hope. One important evidence of this is how joyful we are about the promised salvation. Note that the believers are going through various trials and even in the midst of intense trials if we are able to rejoice in the salvation itself is proof to the genuinity of our faith and we can

be confident that the Lord will be able to complete what He wants in us. **Prayer:** Oh Lord, like Moses, help me to be faithful to You and to rejoice in the salvation You have promised even in the midst of various trials. Yes Lord, your salvation is more valuable than anything else and help to cherish it dear to my heart. Amen.

3:7. Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. [Go to contents]

Unlike the pagan gods, our God is a God who communicates clearly to us. The Holy Spirit is the author of the Scripture in the sense that He inspires the human authors. Therefore the Scripture is authoritative. God decides when He wants to communicate to us. I cannot dictate but I can plead. But when He talks, I should yield to what He communicates. Human nature is to rebel against what God says. We rebel because we God wants to address our sin problem and our flesh resist any attempt to deal with our sin. A good example of this is what happened in the wilderness where the Israelites refused to yield wholeheartedly to God. **Prayer:** Lord, speak to me in Your mercy so that my life may be transformed. Give me a soft heart and give me the grace to yield to what You say to me no matter how hard it may be. Lord, give me understanding how to respond to Your Word in a way that pleases You. Amen.

3:10. Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, And they have not

known My ways.’ 11 So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ ”. [[Go to contents](#)]

People generally assume that they have an ‘okay’ relation with God for He is a loving person. However, God is also righteous and He can be very angry with us. Hence, it is very critical to have an assessment of our relation with God. What makes God angry? First, when our heart goes away from an active relation with God. Second, when we don’t understand what pleases God and what displeases Him. How can we ensure God is not angry with us? Take time and effort to understand from the scripture the ways of God and embrace it wholeheartedly. What happens if God is angry? It says God will deny the promised rest. The rest in their context was that they could not enjoy the land of Canaan. Today, it means that we will not enjoy heaven. Hence, it is a serious warning. **Prayer:** Lord, You are righteous Almighty God who deserves all honor and adoration. Forgive me for not taking my relation with You casually. I pray for your grace to take effort to understand your ways and follow it with full devotion. Oh, Lord, I desire and long for the heavenly rest that you promised to those who believe in You for salvation and live by faith. Amen.

3:12. Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. [[Go to contents](#)]

Beware: a strong warning that requires utmost attention. Evil heart of unbelief: We normally associate an evil heart with that of a ter-

rorist or rapist etc. The Bible calls unbelief as evil which itself is difficult to believe! Is it not true that a person who goes away from his creator is evil? Often we think sin against fellow human beings is the greatest evil and ignores his relationship with his creator. What else can we call a person who disregard the creator but be nice with fellow beings? The Bible exhorts us to have good relation with others, but relation with the creator is supreme. Exhort daily: The days are difficult because all the forces of nature will push us away from the living God. Hence, there should be a daily effort from our side. One another: note that our growing in relation with God is not a personal matter. Instead it is a corporate matter that is expected to happen in the context of church. God designed the church with the precise objective of taking us closer to God by mutual exhortation. No one is immune to unbelief, we all can fail. Hence, with humility, encourage one another. Equally important is also to receive encouragement in humility. Deceitfulness of sin: Sin deceives us by taking us away from God. **Prayer:** Lord, help me to have the right faith in You and never depart from an active relationship with You. I pray for discernment in life that I may never be deceived by sin which takes me away from God.

3:14. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Partaker of Christ: Christ suffered and enduring suffering is identifying with Christ. God glorified Christ and likewise we too will be glorified if we suffer like him. Today: God can communicate with us

whenever he wants, and our response should be a willingness to listen and obey. **Prayer:** Lord, my nature is to reject suffering, but if you give it, help me to endure it without rejecting You, help me to endure suffering till the end of my life and hold on to the faith. Help me not to reject your words, but embrace it by understanding and obedience. Amen

3:16-19. For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Author reminds me of a very unfortunate incident of the old testament. Israelite's were led by Moses in a very dramatic way from the bondage in Egypt. However, they rebelled against Moses and God was angry with them to the point that God cursed the people who rebelled against Him that they would not reach the land of Canaan but would die in the wilderness. The root cause of their rebellion is unbelief. Unlike the popular notion, unbelief is not a trivial issue. Rather it can be fatal! Relationship with God is a serious matter and the foundation of that relationship is faith. An important aspect of faith is the conviction that God is absolutely good and that the commandments of God are for our own good. **Prayer:** O Lord, the wilderness example is a constant reminder of the anger of God against unbelief. I pray that You may help me to remove any trace of unbelief in me. I express my desire to believe in the absolute goodness of

You. What all You will do in my life, however painful it may be, is ultimately for my good.

5 Hebrews 4:1–16

4:1. Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. [[Go to contents](#)]

Rest: To Israelite it is the promised land of Canan where they have the freedom from Egyptian bondage and prosperity. To us it is the promise of heaven where we have the full freedom from the bondage of sin and enjoyment of the goodness of God in full. Mixed with faith: The promise of rest is to be obtained by faith in the one who has promised it. Proof of that faith is the endurance to it till we attain it. So the practical life, including facing difficulties of life, should be based on the outworking of that faith. If not, the gospel message has no effect on us. In other words, genuinity of the faith is known only when it is tested and proved. **Prayer:** Oh Lord, help me to hold on to that faith to which You have called and give me the grace to endure it till I reach heaven. Amen.

4:3. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: “So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’ ” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh

day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; 5. and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.” [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The rest refers to heaven where there is rest from sin and suffering. The basis to enter that rest is by faith alone in the work of God. God rested after creating this world in six days and gave this world to Adam and Eve to enjoy. In a similar but spiritual sense, Jesus by His life on this earth and death on the cross completed the work that is necessary for salvation. He has been inviting humanity to enjoy the benefit of His work by believing in His work. Those who reject this work in unbelief will not enter the rest which means they will not enter heaven. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for the work of Christ on the cross for my sin. Though I understand very little of that, I pray that I may fully enjoy the benefit of it by believing it and living a life reflecting what I believe. Give me the grace to continue in vibrant faith enduring all hurdles till I reach heaven. Amen.

4:6. Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7. again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.” [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The first generation to whom Moses spoke of deliverance did not reach Canaan because of their disobedience is a solemn warning to those who heard the gospel but rejected it. The disobedience need not be an immediate outright rejection like the Pharaoh, but like the

first generation who initially responded enthusiastically but did not remain faithful to Moses due to difficulties in the journey. Nevertheless, God spoke to their second generation who eventually reached Canaan. This is a reminder of two kinds of people, one who did not complete the journey and the other who continued and reached the destination by faithful obedience. **Prayer:** Lord, help me to continue in faith no matter whatever is the difficulties of life before I reach the heavenly home. I realize it is not my determination and self will but your sustaining grace. Amen.

4:8. For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

An interesting biblical pattern is seen here. It is conveying a spiritual principle from physical means. The rest promised to Israelites had a physical dimension and the physical occupation of the land of Canaan is only a partial fulfillment of the promise. Complete fulfillment requires spiritual fulfillment and that still remains. The spiritual fulfillment is heaven itself which is available for people of God from both old and new covenant. Similarly the salvation that Jesus offers now has physical blessing which is only a shadow of the glorious spiritual fulfillment in heaven. **Prayer:** Lord I pray that I should not be content with mere physical temporal blessing. Instead, Lord help me to patiently and faithfully wait for the fullness of your salvation, the rest in heaven. Amen.

4:10. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. 11. Let us therefore be

diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The word ceased indicates a completion of the work. God completed the creation in a good note and then entered the rest. We too, likewise should complete what God expects us from this life before entering heaven. Hence the writer calls for diligence. It is true that believers have the assurance of eternal life. Nevertheless the degree of dominion in His kingdom is proportional to the diligence shown in obeying His will while we live on this earth. **Prayer:** Lord I thank You for the assurance of eternal life. But, Lord, I pray also for enjoying heaven by a diligent life now, that I may never be slack in my calling, taking effort to do things that pleases You alone. Amen.

4:12. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

This verse shows very clearly the power of the Word of God. The Bible looks like any other book, but its power is tremendous, but very subtle. Man made sword can cut only material things but it can do nothing in the non-physical realm. Whereas God's Word operating through the Bible can deal with our making designated by words such as soul, spirit, mind, heart, thoughts, motives, etc. which we ourselves are not very clear what exactly they are. We also need to know the

omniscience of God who knows even our thoughts and motivations lying deep within us. Further, God being our creator, we must be accountable to Him for all our actions, words, and even our thoughts. What is the practical implication of these truths? First, develop a living relationship with God's Word with an expectation of transforming us by knowing God intimately. Second, live with a constant awareness of the presence of triune God. **Prayer:** Lord, I pray for a vibrant living relationship with Your Word. Let Your word transform my life, my thoughts, my words, and my actions. Lord, I pray specially to purify my motives, often deceptively hidden in me. Lord, let me not forget that I will be judged one day for how I lived on this earth.

4:14. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. [[Go to contents](#)]

Although the previous verses gave a scary picture, we are comforted by the sympathy of the great God towards us. Here Jesus is portrayed as the High Priest who, like the old testament counterpart, will intercede for us. The term 'passed through the heavens' indicates the incarnation, burial, resurrection, and ascension. Tempted yet without sin is a great mystery of incarnation. The Lord was tempted implies a great comfort to us for He identifies with our struggle with sin. Yet without sin makes Him an authentic High Priest who can plead our case before God the Father. This is the most encouraging and com-

forting truth that we should drive ourselves closer when we are in any kind of trouble. **Prayer:** Lord I thank you for You are my great High Priest who understands and identifies with me. Your primary attitude toward me is sympathy, mercy and grace. O Lord, I come to You in my struggles knowing fully that I will find help. Amen.

6 Hebrews 5:1–14

5:1. For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.² He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. ³ Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. [[Go to contents](#)]

The function of a high priest is to represent people before God. He will mediate between men and God. Aaron and his sons were the high priest and they mediated before God for all the Israelites. selected. Their mediation was necessary because of sin they were enemies of God. Sons of Aaron themselves were sinners and hence they know the weakness of the people. They can therefore sympathise with people. Before meditating for the people, the high priest needs to offer sacrifices for his own sin and then only he should offer sacrifices for others. In these verses the author sets the stage for comparing and contrasting the ministry of Jesus. **Prayer:** Lord, I thank you once again that you are my high priest who can sympathise with my weakness due to sinful nature and intercede before the Father. Lord, strengthen me to

overcome the power of sin in me through your sacrifice.

5:4. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. 5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.” 6 As He also says in another place: “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek”; [\[Go to contents\]](#)

One of the most important spiritual principles revealed in the Bible is that we can be accepted before only in God’s terms and conditions. This is evident even in the choice of the high priest who was not elected or appointed by people, but they were chosen by God. The choice that Aaron and his sons alone become the high priest is not a human decision. Even the choice that Jesus will be our High Priest is not His own, rather, He was appointed by the Father. To support these two quotes from the old testament is mentioned here. First, Jesus is presented as begotten from the Father. Of course, Jesus was not created but this verse reveals their relation in the trinity. Second, Jesus became High Priest not because He was a descendant of Aaron. Instead His priesthood is according to the order of Melchizedek meaning it was directly appointed by God. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for appointing Your Son as our High Priest. Hence, I pray that I may never entertain any doubt about the effectiveness of the mediation of Christ. Hence, I pray that I may never seek any other mediation, be it saints, people, or even my self-will. Instead, help me to come to Jesus in all circumstances and for every need, however, big or small it may be. Amen.

5:7. who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. [Go to contents]

We know that Jesus prayed every day but we do not know the manner, the content, and the posture of his prayer. However, we have some glimpses of his prayer in Gethsemane. Most probably, this verse may be most pointing to that. Here, death is referring to the prospect of separation from God the Father when Jesus took our sin on the cross. Of course, no one can pray like how Jesus prayed for He alone knows the gravity of death. Nevertheless, one thing is clear, prayer is not an entertainment. On the contrary, it is an expression of the agony of the soul at the realization of the horrible consequences of sin that separate us from God. If my prayer is not reflecting, of course in a milder sense, then I may not be realizing the horror of the spiritual consequence of sin. Jesus obeyed the Father in executing the plan of salvation. Good news is that Father heard the payer of Jesus which means that God accepted the work of Christ on the cross. What is obedience? It is not wishful thinking, but real action that may involve sacrifice. This will not come easy, but has to be learned. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for your Son who has obeyed you fully to accomplish Your plan of salvation. Lord, I pray to open my eyes to see the gravity of the consequence of sin and respond to it in agonizing prayer. Amen.

5:9. And having been perfected, He became the author of

eternal salvation to all who obey Him, 10 called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,” 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Perfected: Jesus was perfect even in the eternity past. However, the incarnation, the life on the earth, and His death on the cross manifested His noble character, especially obedience to the Father, to us and even to the rest of the creation. Author: Jesus is the basis of salvation. What distinguishes Christian faith is that salvation depends on a person unlike other faith systems in the world where it is depended on doing certain works or possessing special knowledge. Obey: Since Christ perfected obedience, it is logical and natural that those who desire salvation need to obey Him. The first step of obedience is to believe in Him. Melchizedek: detailed discussion will follow, but as stated earlier that Jesus became our High Priest out of divine calling and not based on His genealogy. Dull of hearing: Put in simple words, this is a state where a person is not excited about spiritual matters for he is concerned with earthly matters alone. [Prayer:](#) Lord, thank you for the beautiful plan of salvation into which I am called. I pray that you take my heart away from the concern of earthly things. Instead, help to be excited about spiritual matters, create in me a longing for the knowledge of You and matters that are dear to You. Amen.

5:12. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled

in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

It is imperative that God's desire is that all his children should be able to have sufficient knowledge to teach. It is true that some have the gift of teaching which is distinct from the general expectation that all believers must be able to teach. For instance, every father and mother has the responsibility to teach their children. Hence, we all must have sufficient knowledge to teach the basic principles of faith. Analogy is taken from an everyday life situation. Babies taking milk is normal and necessary. An adult insisting on milk instead of solid food is considered abnormal. Grown up people require solid cooked food for their sustenance. Similarly, a new believer needs to be taught by mature believers and these new believers should grow eventually to teach other new believers. Why does everyone have to be teachers? We all will be faced with situations in life to choose between good and evil which are sometimes easy to distinguish like black and white. Often, we are faced with a situation that appears grey and a good grasp of God's word is necessary to distinguish what pleases and what displeases God. **Prayer:** Lord, help me to grow in Your Word that I may be able to discern what is good and what is evil. Lord, help me also to teach new believers the basic principles from Your Word. Amen.

7 Hebrews 6:1-20

6:1. Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Lack of growth of a believer is highly undesirable just like retarded growth of some children. Children need to be given good nourishment for proper growth. Similarly, new believers should learn the basics so that they will grow. The more they grow, the more solid food needs to be taken. This means that they should take personal effort to learn God's Word and apply in their life. The term 'repentance from dead works and of faith toward God' refers to salvation. The 'doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands' refers to admission into church and growing there and is the most basic means for our sanctification. The 'resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment' point to future events associated with our glorification. Hence, the elementary things mentioned can be summarised into salvation, sanctification, and glorification. **Prayer:** Lord, help me not to be complacent with the status, but give me that intense desire to grow into perfection. Give me the grace to grow in Your Word to understand Your mind and apply it to my life. Do not allow my flesh, the world, or the devil to deceive me. Amen.

6:4. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to

renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

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This is probably one of the most difficult passages in the whole bible. The interpretation that this passage refers to a backslidden believer seems to be consistent with the text, context, and the rest of the scripture. What is impossible is to bring him back to repentance. The terms in verse 4 and 5 clearly refer to a believer. The 'falling away' is not losing salvation, but going back to the active profession of faith. Continuing in such a life will eventually lead to a state where he will be insensitive to sin and thereby will not be able to repent. Every time a believer sins is like 'crucifying again' Jesus. This term clearly points to the pain and shame the Lord is enduring for that person. Two important applications to us: First, every time sin, I am inflicting pain and shame to the Lord. Imagine the pain and shame when our close family member is arrested for some heinous crime. Second, if a believer continues to repent of his sin, then he may reach a state where he will be hardened in his heart and will not be able to repent. Imagine the horror of leprosy which hampers our ability to sense pain. **Prayer:** Oh Lord, help me to realize the pain and shame on You when I sin and give me the grace to confess my sin and take all sincere effort to turn away from sin. Amen.

6:7. For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; 8 but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

A simple illustration is given to explain the above point. Earth is compared to a believer and rain to the spiritual blessing of salvation. What is expected from the earth which receives rain is herbs that are useful to the farmer. Likewise, what is expected from a believer receiving salvation is good works. On the other hand, if the land is producing only useless thorn, then the farmer rejects the crop by burning it. Similarly, if a believer is producing bad works then that work is rejected by God. Note two things. First, the phrase 'near being cursed' clearly indicates not losing salvation but the state of a believer in heaven who is having no reward from the Lord after the judgement (burning). Second, good works (herbs) need to be understood as actions, words, and even thoughts which are both confirming to the standards of the scripture as well as with a motive of glorifying God, and not in any popular understanding of the term. **Prayer:** Oh, Lord, this is a strong warning to take the salvation seriously by living a life meeting Your expectation. Give me the grace to evaluate my life to see the herbs I am producing and to discern the thorns I am producing. Oh Lord, trusting in the power of Your Spirit, I express my resolve to live with a motive to produce abundant herbs to You my Saviour. Amen.

6:9. But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

First part of this verse confirms that the above passage refers to some backsliding believers. In one sense salvation is just the beginning of what God is doing in our life. After the warning in the previous passage, this passage is an encouragement to the faithful in the church. God keeps a record of very small and big work we do for the Lord's ministry and for His servants. **Prayer:** Lord, help us to understand manifold dimensions of the salvation and give us grace to appropriate them in our life. Believing in the promise that You will reward all our service for Your ministry, help me to serve you specially by taking care of the needs of Your servants. Amen.

6:11. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

While these believers were appreciated for their good works before the Lord, an exhortation is made here to continue in faith till the end of life on the earth. It is possible, unless we take special care, to become sluggish which means a causal approach in life which gradually takes us back in faith. Genuine believers will respond to this exhortation. We are further encouraged to imitate the life of other heroes of faith. Their life is an example to us and likewise, I should aim that my life should be an example to others. **Prayer:** Lord, I realize often I am sluggish in spiritual matters, but I pray that you may help me to be diligent in faith and manifest the same in patient waiting. I pray that I may carefully observe the life of great men and women of faith in church history. Amen

6:13. For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The importance of patient waiting on the Lord is illustrated by the life of Abraham. Even the small promise of having a child took more than two decades. Other promises made to Abraham took even greater time, surpassing his life on the earth. Real multiplication of his offsprings happened several generations later. Today, we receive God's promises through the Bible which is His Word and there is no authority above it. We are likewise exhorted to wait patiently on the Lord and not to give up faith when problems arise. **Prayer:** Lord, I thank You for the manifold promises available today revealed to us through the Bible. I pray that You give me the grace to patiently wait on you and not to waver in faith when trials come. Amen.

6:16. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The terms swear and oath is similar to deeds or agreements made by two parties on stamp paper. Once an agreement is signed, then either party cannot change its terms. Similarly, the promises made by

God are immutable and these verses assure that God will honor His Word. The immutable things may refer to God's unchanging character and the immutable nature of the oath made by God. Practical implication of this truth is that we can be confident that the salvation we have received from the Lord will eventually take us to heaven and hence we should not waver in faith. Lord Jesus left this world to heaven demonstrates the certainty of these things. **Prayer:** Lord, thank you for the promise of heaven is so sure and certain to all who believed in Your deity of work on the cross. I pray that I may never waver in faith, but with patience hope for the full realization of the salvation in heaven. Give me the grace to hold on till the end. Amen

6:19. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

What drives our life in the midst of all suffering is the hope of heaven where there is no sin and no sorrow. The basis of this hope is that Jesus died, resurrected and ascended to heaven. He is seated on the right hand of God the Father as indicated by the word 'Presence'. The veil in the tabernacle symbolises the separation of the Holy God from the sinful humanity. Jesus entering behind the veil shows that this separation no longer exists. Thus Jesus is the 'forerunner' in the sense that we who believe in Jesus will also have similar access to God the Father. This exactly is the function of a high priest and Jesus is therefore our only authentic High Priest. The 'order of Melchizedek' is a term which indicates it is a divine initiative. **Prayer:** Lord, please

help us anchor our soul when it is tossed by sufferings of this life to the hope of eternal bliss awaiting us in heaven. Thank you Jesus for this hope. Amen.

8 Hebrews 7:1-28

7:1. For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Melchizedek was the priest of God Most High according to Genesis 14 and Abraham met him after a conquest. There we see Abraham gave tithe to Melchizedek and Melchizedek blessed Abraham. Obviously Melchizedek enjoyed a greater spiritual position than Abraham. However, we have no other details of Melchizedek including his genealogy and how he became the priest. What we can therefore conclude is that Melchizedek's priesthood is purely of divine origin. Not only that Melchizedek was a priest, but he was also designated as a king, not of any nation, but in the spiritual domain of peace and righteousness. Hence, the conclusion of the matter is that Melchizedek is a type of Christ. Jesus is our high priest not because he was a descendant of Aaron, but because he was divinely called (see Psalm 110:4). [Prayer:](#) Father, I thank you for Your Son our Lord Jesus who is our High

Priest standing before You always. Let this truth sink deeply in me that Jesus will always plead for mercy before His Father. Oh Lord, give me the grace to please you in my life. Amen.

7:4. Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. 5 And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; 6 but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Melchizedek has a greater standing than Abraham who gave tithe to the former though we know nothing of his genealogy so as to trace the source of his priesthood. Levites have greater standing than the rest of the tribes who were required by the Law to give tithes to Levites. Jews do not deny the spiritual superiority of Levites from whom all priests including the high priest come. Applying the same principle, Melchizedek is obviously superior to Abraham. Abraham not only gave tithes, but also received blessings from Melchizedek. This is another reason why Melchizedek is superior to Abraham who has great promises from God (Genesis 12). The old testament Jews overlooked the greatness of Melchizedek. Similarly, new testament believers from Jewish backgrounds also ignored the uniqueness and superiority of Jesus. **Prayer:** Lord Jesus, although You lived on the earth like a human, You are infinitely superior than great men of faith ever lived on the earth. I pray that I may be able to adore you more and more seeing greater glory of You. amen.

7:7. Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. 8 Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. 9 Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. [Go to contents]

The lesser refers to Abraham who received the blessing and the better refers to Melchizedek who gave the blessing. The 'mortal men' refers to Levites who receive tithes from the rest of the tribes. Verse 8 combines two ideas from Genesis and Psalm about Melchizedek. The priesthood of Melchizedek is forever according to Psalm 110:8. Verse 9 and 10 is based on an important theological insight that Levi and all their descendants were present in Abraham, in some sense personally. This is similar to we all were present in Adam when he sinned and thus we are also personally responsible for the sin of Adam. Using this concept Melchizedek is superior to Levites and his priesthood is superior to the levitical priest system. All this points to the fact that the priesthood of Jesus is far greater to old testament priesthood.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are my High Priest and no one can represent me better than You. I pray that I may rest in your priesthood. Amen.

7:11. Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13 For He of whom

these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Having established the superiority of the priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek and the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood, the author now shows its practical implication. The Mosaic law which came along with the Aaronic priesthood is not perfect. When the priesthood is changed the corresponding law also needs to be changed since priests operated purely based on the law. V13 and 14 show all these arguments lead to the Lord Jesus who came from the tribe of Judah, but his priesthood is not because of His ancestry, but divinely bestowed like Melchizedek. What does this mean to us? First, salvation brings a new change in how we relate with God. Second, the basis of this relation absolutely depends on how we related to the person of Jesus. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for Your Son through Him I have access to You. Lord, I pray that you help me to have a vibrant relation with You through Your Son Jesus. Amen.

7:15. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. 17 For He testifies: “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.” [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Levites become priests because their father is a Levite whereas Jesus is the high priest not because of the earthly parents, but by divine

call by the eternal God the Father. Hence, the priesthood of Jesus is eternal, divine, and perfect. So the salvation we get through His mediation is infinitely superior due to its perfection and permanence.

Prayer: Father, thank you for appointing Your Son, Jesus, my high priest through Him I have an eternal salvation. Lord, help me enjoy the fullness of it even in this life on the earth. Amen

7:18. For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, 19 for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The law given to Moses is made null by the new command through Jesus. The law is weak to transform me, and following it is not profitable for it will not bring righteousness before God. Law made nothing perfect. Why did God give the law? Because, law exposes the sin that is in me, it exposes how weak I am, and so on. On the other hand, new priesthood through Jesus brings a better hope because of several reasons that will be elaborated below, but the key point is that it is intended to draw us near to God. God's desire is to have an intimate relation with us. The intensity of this desire is seen in the pain endured on the cross. **Prayer:** Lord, I confess that I neglected You in my practical life, not taking serious steps to develop intimacy with You. I confess that my desire is to gratify my flesh and to please others. Forgive me, and create in me a true longing for You that will translate into quality time with You.

7:20. And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an

oath 21 (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: "The LORD has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek' "), 22 by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Priesthood of Jesus is superior for it was by a solemn promise of the Father. V21 is quoted from Psalm 110:8. The new covenant is better for Jesus himself is the surety. Essentially, Jesus conveys to God the Father that He will vouch for us who believe in Him. What a great surety! No covenant can be better than this. **Prayer:** Father, thankyou for the covenant that enables us to have a relationship with You. Lord, Jesus, great is Your love for me and help me to respond to that love. Amen.

7:23. Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Yet another reason for the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus over the Levites is mentioned here. The Ministry of the Levitical priest ends with his death and someone else replaces him. We should not forget that the priest has to atone for sin, and evidence of sin is death. Now the priest himself is subjected to death also shows the insufficiency of the Levitical priest. Jesus our highpriest has victory over death and hence his atonement on the cross is sure cure for sin.

Hence, His priestly intercession can save anyone from sin, no matter how hard it may appear from human perspective. His intercession is not a one-time affair, rather, it is always available to us. What a great privilege, what a great Priest we have. **Prayer:** Father, I worship You for the priesthood of Your Son that saved a wretch like me. Lord, thank you for the constant intercession for me before the Father. Give me grace to come to You for cleansing, no matter how 'big' or 'small' a sin looks in my eyes. Amen.

7:26. For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever. [Go to contents]

The contrast between the old and new high priests is stark and clear. Jesus our High Priest according to the new order is holy, harmless, undefiled, and is closer to God the Father than anyone else. He is sinless and hence does not require any atonement for Himself. His sacrifice on the cross is sufficient for the perfect and permanent atonement of any number of people. On the other hand, the high priest of the old order is a sinful human being who needs to atone for his own sin regularly. The conclusion is that it is foolish to go after the older, rejecting the new because of persecution. **Prayer:** Lord, I pray that I may never waver from the perfect atonement for my sin brought by

the work on the cross. Amen.

9 Hebrews 8:1-13

8:1. Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The author is trying to convey the superiority of Jesus Christ over all the great saints of the old testament including Abraham and Moses. In fact, His superiority is beyond comparison, for He is God as denoted by the word 'seated at the right hand of God'. Further, His ministry in heaven where no man ever [Prayer](#): Father, let the greatness of Your Son and our Lord Jesus may sink deeply into me.

8:3. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. 4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown to you on the mountain." [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Sacrifices are atonement for sin and gifts are given voluntarily for

the favours from God. Mosaic law has various instructions concerning these and the Levitical priests administer them. If the priesthood of Jesus is superior, then Jesus also should have something to offer. Jesus did not offer any gifts while on the earth for He was from the tribe of Judah. Jewish priests served in the Jerusalem temple by virtue of their lineage from Aaron. Note that the Jerusalem temple was so glorious that even gentiles from far away places came to see the temple from outside. Nevertheless, this earthly temple is only a shadow of the heavenly things since Moses was instructed to build the tabernacle strictly according to the pattern shown by God on the Sinai mountain. Now, one can imagine the greatness of the priesthood of Jesus who is the minister of the heavenly things. **Prayer:** Father, let me not be satisfied by my external religious activities however good it may. I pray that I may get a better grip of the genuine spiritual realities that connect me intimately with the Lord Jesus and the triune God. Amen.

8:6. But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.7. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

It is evident from these two verses that the new covenant is better than the old and that the old has faults. Why is it so? The new covenant is better for a variety of reasons, especially because it is authenticated by the promise that the mediating priesthood (of Jesus) is forever. This means that Jesus has not only resurrected from the dead and ascended to heaven, but also has a very effective interces-

sion for us sitting at the right hand of the Father. On the other hand, the ministers of the old covenant themselves are subjected to death which is a clear indication of limitation of their mediation. The glory of Christ and His ministry is simply awesome. **Prayer:** Father, once again thank You for the promise of a new covenant and the ministry of Your Son. I pray that my entire being will be captivated by Your Son. Amen.

8:8. Because finding fault with them, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. [Go to contents]

It is interesting to note that the limitation of the old covenant as well as the prospect of the new was already revealed in the old testament. The new covenant is not the invention of the new testament authors. In other words, the seed of the Christian faith was sown in the Jewish scripture and hence jews should not think that faith in Christ is opposed to their Scripture. One should not have any trace of doubt that the old covenant was also given by God. In this context, a solemn warning is given to the new believers in Christ to continue in the new faith unlike the jewish nation who did not continue in the old covenant. **Prayer:** Lord, help me to understand how serious you take the covenant you made with me and give me the grace to continue to be faithful all throughout my life. Amen.

8:10. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Very clearly the old testament points to the new covenant. While the old covenant was external with the laws written on stones, the new covenant is internal with the laws written on heart by God. There is no external compulsion to pursue the law, but there is internal transformation. It is the work of God and depends more on Him to understand this. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for writing that new law in my heart and I pray that I may grow in my intimacy with You. Amen.

8:12. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” 13 In that He says, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The peak of God's love is seen in His mercy toward the people of the new covenant. Remember no more: Can God forget things? Impossible. Nevertheless God no longer remembers our sin in the sense our sin will never hinder our relationship with Him. This verse gives a hint that this book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem

temple. By the destruction of Jerusalem temple in AD 70, all the activities of the Levitical priest system, on which Jews placed great glory, had come to an end. If this is true, then destruction of Jerusalem temple is an attestation of the old covenant being replaced by the new.

Prayer: Father, Your mercy is so great, and let me not use it as a license to sin, rather, motivated by Your love, shun from it. Amen.

10 Hebrews 9:1-28

9:1. Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. 2 For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; 3 and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, 4 which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; 5 and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The rituals of the old covenant were neither arbitrary or from human ingenuity. They were instituted by divine ordinance. The tabernacle and the temple had various elements constructed according to divine instruction and each has significance. But now the details of these are less significant in the advent of the new covenant. **Prayer:** Father, you determine how we need to approach you as evident from the detailed instructions given in the old covenant and how much more

significant in the new covenant though visible rituals are virtually nil. Father, help us to come to You through the meritorious work of Jesus. I pray for grace to comprehend these.

9:6. Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. 7 But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; 8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The priests can enter only in the holy place of the tabernacle or of the temple. Only high priests, that too only once in a year, can enter into the holy of holies. Not only that, he can enter only after performing a sacrifice for his sins and then for the sins of the people. By this stipulation, the Spirit of God wants to convey that access to God is highly limited in the old covenant, which also points to the need for a new covenant that provides uninterrupted access to God. We can praise God for the new covenant He made with us through Jesus which enables us to approach the throne of Grace in heaven anytime and anywhere. What a blessed privilege. By the way, these sacrifices are for unintentional sins and there is no sacrifice for intentional sin.

Prayer: Father, give me the grace to utilize the free access granted through your son. Father, You see my heart and the rebellion still there deep rooted. I pray for your mercy and ask You to transform me. Amen.

9:9. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience—10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. [Go to contents]

Symbolic: This is an apt word that clarifies the doubt that the old covenant which was also given by God is now obsolete. Old covenant is symbolic of the new in the sense that it was given with an intention of identifying and confirming the new when it arrives. All the elements of the old covenant have some resemblance to the new, albeit physically. Further, the old was a temporary, physical and external arrangement till the new come. The new, on the other hand, is the eternal, spiritual, and transformative plan of God to all who are willing to accept in faith. **Prayer:** Father, I look to You for the enabling grace to understand more and more deeply the mysteries of Your plan for me that will transform me from inside. Amen

9:11. But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. [Go to contents]

Contrasting the old covenant the new one has several reasons for its superiority. Only one High Priest, the Lord Jesus, the Son of God. There can be no other better mediator before God the Father. His

ministry is not in the Jerusalem temple or any other places on the earth. Note that the Jerusalem temple itself was destroyed showing the limitation of the old covenant. The Lord's sanctuary is heaven, the temple where God resides. Is there a better place we can think of? Again, the sacrificial object was not any animals, but the Lord Jesus Himself. Note that the old covenant has sacrificial animals which are lower in order of creation than humans. But, in the new covenant, Jesus who is the incarnate God was the sacrificial object which is obviously infinitely high in the order of creation, that is, the creator Himself. Can there be any other object better than this? Lastly, the validity of the atonement is eternal in contrast to the annual sacrifice of the old covenant. Do we require any other covenant that has better validity? The best covenant before the sacrifice of Jesus available to humanity was the Mosaic covenant. However, with the arrival of the new covenant in Jesus, human can never even imagine a covenant that is better in any aspect. Such glorious, supreme, and awesome is the covenant on the cross. Amen. **Prayer:** What shall I say to such a great covenant made available and revealed to me. I pray that I may grasp the glimpse of the glory awaiting me in heaven. O Lord, help me to cling to You more and more. Amen.

9:13. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? [\[Go to contents\]](#)

This simple question that can be answered by pure logic has the

power to demolish the entire old covenant. The entire Jewish spirituality is founded on their elaborate sacrificial system. However best they may be, ultimately they are all based on the blood of animals which are much inferior to humans. The new covenant is based on an infinitely superior sacrificial object. The words like 'Christ', 'eternal', 'Spirit', 'without spot', 'conscious', 'dead works', and 'living' show the superior basis of the new covenant. Why should one rely on an inferior old system when the superior new one is available? Nevertheless, its superiority can be appreciated only if we are frustrated with our 'dead' works and longing to 'serve' the living God. Conversely, the new covenant paves the way to deal with our corrupted conscience and with that to serve the living God. So the challenge to those who believe is to cleanse our conscience and serve the living God. Amen.

Prayer: Father, relying on the perfect work of Your Son, help me to cleanse my conscience and thereby serve You. Amen.

9:15. And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. [Go to contents]

This reason: death of Jesus by shedding of His blood is the basis of the new covenant which brings redemption to us. Not only that, even the redemption of the transgressions of those called according to the old covenant was also on the basis of the new covenant. Ignorant of this fact many Jews boasted in the ritualistic sacrifices of the old covenant. In fact, sacrifices of the old covenant were a visible form of the promise that God will send Jesus as the perfect sacrifice. The

basis of the salvation of both old and new covenant is the work of Christ on the cross. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for the work of Christ, the sole basis for salvation of anyone on this earth. Help me live with that assurance of eternal inheritance no matter what I have or have not in this world. Amen.

9:16. For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

A simple understanding of this shows the seriousness of the matter. The testament or covenant God made with humanity, be it old or new, involves death by shedding of blood. It is definitely the most serious matter to God: it may be beyond our comprehension what motivates God to take His creation, humans, so seriously, except to reveal His character. Further, blood indicates the seat of life and by giving blood, God commits His very life into the covenant He made with us. If so, how much more we puny creation should respond to His by devoting our entire life! Amen **Prayer:** Father, help me to understand the seriousness of the covenant You made and enable me to respond with the same commitment from my side: that is to devote my life into it. Amen.

9:18. Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying,

“This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.” 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

In spite of the various limitations of the old covenant, its basis is still the blood implying life, even if that were of the sacrificial animals, given to its enactment. All the ritualistic actions mentioned here are symbolic of various elements of the new covenant. Hence, God has commended them, not as a suggestion, to observe these. Sprinkling the book implies God is committed to the covenant and sprinkling the people shows the commitment of the people to it. Same is true in the new covenant, Jesus sheds His blood showing commitment on God's part and when we believe shows our commitment. How do we know we truly believe? I think the best evidence we can think of is the continuation of faith which will be manifested in my life. **Prayer:** Father, help me to be rejuvenated by the life of Christ in me. Amen.

9:22. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission. 23 Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Sin is costly, serious, and it takes a life. Remission of blood signifies how strong is sin and escape from it requires the blood, meaning the life of the sinner. God in mercy provided atonement through the blood of His Son Jesus and spared us. Killing of animals and sprinkling of blood conveys these truths to the people. **Prayer:** Lord, help me

to realize the gravity of sin in me that demanded the blood of Jesus. Lord, give me the grace to hate sine with perfect hatred. Amen.

9:24. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Many portions of the scripture including the records of the resurrection and ascension shows that the Lord Jesus is now in heaven, the temple of God. He beholds the face of the Father and this High Priestly position is forever. Unlike the high priests of the old covenant, the sacrificial shedding of His blood has a permanent effect. With this the foundation of God's redemptive plan is complete. End of age: completion of God's redemptive work. **Prayer:** Lord, thank You for being my High Priest and I am so blessed to have You as my High Priest. I pray for cleansing of my sins against You and true blessings from the throne of grace evidencing Your favour. Amen

9:27. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Appointed: God's design for humanity is not to live eternally on this earth. Instead, he has to live for a while, and then face his creator to give an account of how he lived on the earth. We should never

forget two things: one day we have to leave this world and then face judgement. This should drive how we conduct our daily life focusing on a relationship with the Lord to know how He judges. We cannot afford to have wrong assumptions and to avoid this plunge into God's Word to understand His mind. After this, fashion our dealing with all the people around us in a way that brings greater reward and not punishment. **Prayer:** Lord, one day I have to leave this world and face you on the judgement seat. I pray that you give me the grace to live today and the rest of every day that you give me in such a way that I should be longing to be judged by You.

9:28. so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The characteristic of a person who is prepared for the judgement is the one who has faith in the sacrificial work of Christ and as an evidence of that eagerly waits for the coming of the Lord. What does it mean to wait for Christ? First and foremost to develop an intimacy with the Lord through the Word and prayer. Second, keep oneself away from all kinds of defilements from sin. Third, take all efforts to prepare others, both believers and unbeliever, to meet the Lord. And so on. Note that the return of the Lord is an exciting event for a believer whose sins are forgiven and especially for those eagerly waiting for Him. Amen. **Prayer:** Lord, let my heart long for Your return and set my mind on the preparations for Your coming. Amen.

11 Hebrews 10:1-39

10:1. For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Shadow and image: Shadow of an image points to the existence of the image and can give some idea about the image, though not exact. Shadow has no existence without the image. If one can see the images, why should he look at the shadow? The word 'never' emphatically shows the yearly offering of the sacrifices is imperfect and temporary. If the covenant sacrifice was perfect and permanent, then it should not have been done year after year. Consciousness of sins: what is expected from a perfect sacrifice is complete cleansing from sin which was not possible with the old. This raises an interesting question? What about the new? Whether it is able to remove the consciousness of sins? No will be the experience of those believed in it. A careful reading of the New Testament shows that state is possible, but only after we leave this world. Nevertheless, a serious follower of the Word of God can attest, a deliverance from the power of sin to a great degree even on this side of eternity. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for the grace you have given me to believe in the perfect sacrifice of Your Son and I pray that I may be able to experience purification of my mind from consciousness of sins. Amen.

10:3. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. [Go to contents]

Year after year the sacrifices in the old covenant remind us that the atonement for the sin is not done permanently. It anticipates the longing for a permanent solution which is now accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is noteworthy to observe two aspects in the new covenant. First, believer of the new covenant may not experience full realization of the deliverance from sin which is not due to the limitation of the sacrifice of Christ, rather, it is due to presence of sin, satan, and our flesh, and these will be removed after our physical death or the second coming of the Lord Jesus, whichever is earlier. Second, week after week participation in the Lord's Table is neither the reminder of our sins nor the limitation of the sacrifice of Christ, but it is a reminder of the perfect sacrifice of Christ that needs to be appropriated regularly in our life. Further, the latter verse also emphatically asserts the impossibility of the sacrifice of lower order creation to atone for higher order human beings. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you once again for the perfect sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ and I pray that I may be able to live in victory of that in my life.

10:5. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. [Go to contents]

Lord knew the limitation of the old covenant and He takes no pleasure in mere killing of animals that has no transforming power on the

sinner. Hence, God did the preparations needed for the perfect sacrifice. One of the key aspects of this preparation is the incarnation of Jesus. The body of Christ shares our humanity and life in that body was sinless making these perfect sacrificial objects. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for the incarnation of Your Son and I pray that His sacrifice may constantly transform me, and specially today. Amen

10:7. Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God.’ ” [\[Go to contents\]](#)

What uniquely characterizes the incarnation is the humiliation of the Lord Jesus by the Father, which includes total submission and unconditional obedience. Doing the will of His Father was the mission of Jesus thereby leaving us an unparalleled example to imitate. It is true that we have a will, but surrendering our will and submitting to the will of the Father is true courage, genuine character, great faith, and agape love. Unconditional obedience requires courage to face all the uncertain consequences. Submission and obedience is possible only to an unselfish and humble soul reflecting the character of a person. Faith in the goodness of God is indispensable for such an obedience. What motivates such an obedience is the love for the Lord knowing that our obedience glorifies God. **Prayer:** Father, I am amazed by the obedience of Lord Jesus, and with ‘reluctant’ heart pray for the grace to obey You unconditionally, knowing my fear, my pride, my unbelief, and my selfishness preventing that. Have mercy on me. Amen.

10:8. Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure

in them” (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

God does not delight in the sacrifices of the old covenant which at best is a shadow of the sacrifice of Christ. It was the will of the Father to establish a new covenant that brings intimate relations with Him through Jesus. Jesus fulfilled the will of the Father and its effect on us is permanent which means we are constantly sanctified by the sacrifice of Lord Jesus. **Prayer:** Father, sanctify me today, tomorrow, and so on till I leave this world to me You. Aman.

10:11. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Daily . . . repeatedly: these words indicate the limitation of the rituals of the old covenant which is emphatically stated as ‘never take away sins’ for the reason stated earlier. Man: points to the humanity of Jesus and thereby qualified as a representative of us unlike animals in the old covenant. One: contrasting the daily repeated sacrifices of the old covenant, the work of Christ on the cross is a singular event which is effective to deal with sin forever. right hand of God: this phrase asserts the divinity of Jesus, that is it means one who is equal to God. It also alludes to the Father accepting the sacrifice of Christ.

Even though the work of Christ on the cross is perfect, his enemy is still at work instigating humanity, including believers, to sin against God. Nevertheless, just like there was a long waiting for the first coming of the Lord, there is a long waiting for His second coming. When He comes again, there will be perfect victory over sin and satan and we can fully experience the power of His sacrifice. Amen. **Prayer:** Father, I pray that I may be able to eagerly wait for the coming of Your Son. Amen

10:14. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. [Go to contents]

Perfected: although we may not experience now, the saving work of the Lord on us those who believe in Him is perfect and will remain perfect even in eternity. We are not experiencing that perfection in this fallen due to the presence of sin nature that is still in us in addition to the influence of the fallen world and temptations from the evil one. Nevertheless, the Lord is constantly sanctifying us which means purifying us to His service. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for the perfect work of Christ on the cross and thereby in my life. I pray that I may be sanctified by Your power and give me the grace to submit to you and experience more and more perfection in my life. Amen.

10:15. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, 16 “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” 17 then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” 18 Now where there is remission of these, there is no

longer an offering for sin. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The Holy Spirit's witness through the scripture affirms the coming of the new covenant in which God will directly implant His laws into our hearts and minds. Heart signifies a desire to follow God's laws. Obeying the law is not a burden to a new covenant believer. On the contrary he delights in it. Mind symbolises our understanding of God's word and thereby His will. God will give a new capacity to a new covenant believer to know what is in the mind of God to a great extent. In addition, since the basis of this covenant is the work of Christ, God will never consider our sinful deeds a hindrance to our relation with Him. These characteristics of the new covenant were clearly revealed in the old testament and Jews can never ignore the new covenant. Lastly, since the remission of sin is complete, perfect, and permanent, there is no need of any more sacrifice including that of the old covenant. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for putting Your laws in my heart and writing them in my mind. I pray to You that give me the grace to experience the joy of obeying Your laws with understanding. What unbelievable mercy You have shown in forgiving and forgetting my sin. Help me to live a life experiencing this mercy. Amen.

10:19. Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The knowledge that our sins are forgiven gives us a kind of boldness to approach God. Sin separates us from God and prevents any active relationship with Him. Entering the holiest is symbolic of direct access to God. This concept comes from the temple where only the high priest can enter the holiest place where he is supposed to meet God directly. Our access to God is through the blood of Jesus and never through our good works. Access to God in the old covenant was very restricted, limited, and indirect, i.e only high priests can enter the holiest, that too once in a year and every time with the fresh blood of animal sacrifice. The new way now available to us is through Jesus. The comparison of the veil to the body of Jesus is symbolic of how we see Father through the body of Jesus and how Father sees us which is again through the body of Jesus. Is this not an awesome fact that when we look at Jesus we are actually seeing God the Father (of course not forgetting that Jesus is God Himself)? Further, Is this not a beautiful thing that when God the Father looks at us, He is actually seeing Jesus (of course not forgetting that we are still sin-stricken human body)? (to be continued). **Prayer:** Father, thank You for giving access to You anytime from anywhere but through Jesus. Give me the grace to use this privilege constantly and to the full potential by coming to You in prayer, yes a ceaseless prayer for all things. Amen.

10:19. Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies

Continuing the above thought, we not only have a new way to approach God, but, this way is also a living way, meaning, it is available all the time unlike set times and places to meet God in the old covenant. Thus we have Jesus as the High Priest who will enable us to approach God's throne boldly and also ensures that God will deal favourably with us. If this is the case, what logically follows is the best use of this privilege. There are three exhortations followed by the words 'let us'. The first is let us draw closer to God with full assurance of this privilege. But remember always the reality of residual sin in us and hence needs to approach God with a clear conscience by confessing our sins. It is the desire of a holy God that believers should approach Him. If so, how much more should be the longing of the believer to approach God. However, in reality, the opposite is the usual response of the believer. That is sin. It takes us away from God, it ruins our boldness to approach God. Confession has two aspects: first is the confession of the evil conscience in me that triggers all kinds of sin, and the second is the resultant external actions done by our body. Confess not only the action, but also admit before God the evil conscious in us that is wicked and corrupt. This is hard because we believe we are good and that is the picture that we give to others also. Nevertheless, before God, we must be absolutely honest in admitting our sinful nature and approach God with the conviction that only through Jesus we access God. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for I can always come to You through Jesus. I pray that I may not neglect this privilege, but consistently and consciously use this very often. Father, I confess the sinful, evil, and fleshly nature in me and its manifestation by me.

10:23. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The second exhortation to the glorious privilege of having uninterrupted access to the throne of heaven and having a high priest is to let us hold on to this faith without giving weaverling. Hold on to faith implies that we continue in this faith and apply Biblical principles in our life. Weaverling implies severe trials and suffering may come in life that will question the claims of this faith and such a situation should not shake our faith. The only reason to hold on without wavering in troubled situations of life is the character God, especially His faithfulness to His people. **Prayer:** Father, You are faithful, even when I am unfaithful, which shows the greatness of Your character and hence I worship You declaring that You are faithful. Trusting in Your faithfulness, I pray that you help me to be faithful to You reflecting Your faithfulness in my life. I pray that no matter what troubles arise in my life, help me to hold on to You in faith and live a fitting life. Amen.

10:24. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The third exhortation is let us consider one another which implies not to neglect others. Note that the Lord Jesus is not 'my' high priest, but He is 'our' high priest. Each one of us who are adopted into the family of God should in the family there are other members. It is therefore imperative that I need to love them and do all that is within my scope for their spiritual growth. I also have the responsibility of stirring up good works in them. The best way to do this is

by being an example. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for adopting me to Your family with diverse kinds of people. I pray that You give me the grace to love all the members of Your family and let my life be an example to all so that they will be stirred up in good works. Amen

10:25. not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. [Go to contents]

A definite, unique, and mandatory way of accomplishing considering one another is worship gathering of the church. God has designed his people in a locality to meet regularly in His name and then stirrup one another in love and good works. There will be so many things that demand our time and attention, but if we understand the great privilege we have in Jesus, then all the other priorities will vanish. Gathering as a church is not with a focus on for personal benefit but for edifying others. When we become a blessing to others, God will bless us. Amen.

10:26. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. [Go to contents]

There is no sacrifice for willful sin be it in the old or new covenant. Provisions to reconcile with God through sacrifices is not for deliberate disobedience. In other words, sacrifices are not a license to do sin. Willful sins are rebellion against God and His laws and God takes

this very seriously. Every rebellion against a country is taken very seriously by that country often resulting in capital punishments. How much more God will take threats against His holiness. One should not take goodness and mercy of God granted. They are to the humble, or the 'broken and contrite' or to the 'poor in spirit.' **Prayer:** Father, I thank You for the forgiveness of sin through Jesus and I pray that I may never take this provision as a license to sin. Give me a heart that is truly submissive to Your laws and genuinely repentant of pitiable state. Amen.

10:28. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Wilful disobedience or deliberate sins had been dealt severely in the old covenant. The role of two or three witnesses ensured that the rejection was wilful. No mercy was shown once the rejection was established. If so, how much more will be the punishment under the new covenant? The reason for this, as detailed earlier, is the superiority of the new covenant. If the covenant is glorier and superior, the punishment also will be greater. This verse also shows the greatness of this covenant by the words like 'Son of God', 'blood of the covenant', 'Spirit of grace'. In addition, the severity of the rejection by the words 'trampled', 'counted ... common', and 'insulted'. The sin of apostasy (rejecting faith) is a serious matter and God can deal with His people severely. Mention of the words 'he was sanctified'

indicates the person is a believer and the punishment need not be hell as evident from the following verses. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for the mercy shown to us through You Son Jesus and help me to continue in the faith and never depart from it. Amen.

10:30. For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The LORD will judge His people.” 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. [Go to contents]

Here God takes the matter by Himself and He does not need any help from any other being. God’s vengeance is right for He knows even the deep thoughts of His creation. Note that it is written very clearly that ‘Lord will judge His people’ shows that these people are believers and God has several means of judging His people while on earth or even after death, as we see from elsewhere in the Scripture. Hence, this vengeance is not sending them to hell. Nevertheless, one can imagine how severe would be the punishment from a living God. David experienced judgement from God when he decided to count his army. **Prayer:** Father, I can only imagine the gravity of the fear that these words should evoke in me. Father, I pray that I may learn to truly fear You, I may never do anything to displease You, and I may hold on to the faith You deposited in me. Amen

10:32. But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: [Go to contents]

These believers had a very good beginning after they came to faith

and they endured a great struggle with suffering showing the genuinity of their faith. However, some of them later seem to gradually move away from faith. They are now exhorted to remember their endurance in the early days of faith. It is profitable to reflect on how God led in the past amid sufferings. Note the word 'illuminated' which is the work of the Holy Spirit who gives light to see the darkness of the human heart and how the blood of Christ can cleanse it. It is good prayer for those around us that the Holy Spirit may illuminate them to see clearly the spiritual realities by removing the blindness caused by sinful flesh, corrupted world system, and schemes of the devil. Such prayer is relevant for believers who also grow into fruitfulness. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for the illumination of the Holy Spirit which enabled me to realize my sin and recognize Jesus as my saviour from that sin. I pray that the same illumination may be given daily to see my true spiritual state and respond in a way that transforms me. Amen.

10:33. partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Two sources of suffering due to faith: first, directly receiving from the enemies of the gospel which can be ridicule, oppression, or outright persecution; and the second, indirectly by identifying with those believers directly receiving the persecution. **Prayer:** Father, I praise and worship you, though I do not like suffering, but beyond my comprehension, you allow these in your power, love and wisdom in my life. I pray that when I go through various sufferings due to faith in You, help me Lord to hold on to You and give me the grace to go through. I also pray that I may be able to identify with those going

through such sufferings. Adamaen.

10:34. for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

As mentioned in the previous verse, one way of enduring suffering is identifying with other believers who are undergoing suffering. Here, these believers identified with the author of Hebrews (could this be Paul?) and commented on it as a virtue. Further, what a great faith these believers had. Their faith was genuine: they demonstrated it by being joyful when their goods were plundered. This attitude reminds me of when someone steals our money or by deception takes our money, how furious we become. Most likely, our heart is deeply rooted to this world and hence we get upset when we have monetary losses. Contrasting our attitude, these believers joyfully accepted plundering of their wealth for they were fully convinced that the true possession is in heaven and no one can plunder them. What a genuine faith. The state of our heart shows how genuine our faith is. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you and praise you for the enduring possession You have promised and prepared in heaven. I pray that my response to material possession of this world matches with the faith You have given me. Father, I pray that You take my heart away from the possessions of this world and fix it on the eternal and spiritual possession which are much more valuable than what I get here. Amen.

10:35. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has a great reward. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Confidence in Christ has a reward. One need not be educated or elite, healthy, or wealthy to have this confidence. Anyone can have this, it is an expression of genuine faith, it is a desire and determination coming out of that faith, and the best part is that there is a reward for faith. What is this confidence? It is a conviction that God will give an everlasting possession in heaven which is much more valuable than all that we can get from this world. Demonstration of this faith is an attitude of 'let go' or 'hold loosely' on the material possessions for the sake of faith. How do I know I have this confidence? Sometimes the Lord may test this. For example, one may joyfully reject a lucrative job offer if it compromises faith in some way.

Prayer: Father, thank you for a great reward for confidence in You which I can get, not because of my social standing, education, health, or wealth, but because of the faith You have given me. I pray that my confidence may never be shaken when You test. Amen.

10:36. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: [[Go to contents](#)]

Endurance or long suffering is a spiritual virtue. It is the ability to continue indefinitely in faith irrespective of adverse circumstances which can be external or internal. Externals include direct persecution, ridicule, neglect, exploitation etc. due to faith. Internal may include doubts, wavering, uncertainty, various negative feelings such as insecurity, insignificance, failure, etc. We are exhorted to find what is the will of God for our life, i.e. how God expects us to respond in adverse circumstances, and do it, trusting God who is faithful will

fulfill what was promised to us, namely rewards in heaven. **Prayer:** Father, I thank You for reminding me of the endurance needed in my life, revealing Your will through Your word, and reinforcing the promises made. Give me the grace to endure hardships in my spiritual life, understand more and more clearly Your will for my life, and submit to You in obedience. Amen.

10:37. “For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. [Go to contents]

The motivation to endure suffering in the present life is the promise of the second coming of the Lord Jesus. This is a great promise since with His coming everything will be restored, including His Kingdom. According to various teachings of the scripture, especially through the parables, the Lord made it clear that we will have a great role in His kingdom. Anticipation of His coming therefore should motivate us to endure hardship for a little more time. The church has been waiting for almost two thousand years for His coming which seems quite long. Nevertheless, compared to eternity, this period is still very little. This also is true for an individual who is waiting till the end of his life on this earth and then be with the Lord till the rest of eternity. Contrary to popular notion, departure from this world will be a glorious event in the life of a believer. Coming of the Lord is a certainty, just like how God promised about His first coming in the old testament was fulfilled by the life of Jesus, so sure also will be His second coming. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for the glorious prospect of the coming of Your Son, establishment of His kingdom, and significant role for Your faithful in that kingdom. Lord I pray that let this sink deeply in me and let my life be characterised by an enduring waiting for the

fulfillment of this promise. Amen.

10:38. Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.” [[Go to contents](#)]

The quote ‘the just shall live by faith’ from Habakkuk 2:4 is so important that it is mentioned in the scripture at four places: the other two are in Romans and Galatians. This is the fundamental spiritual law of God that governs our spiritual life on this planet. Just: it is God who justifies us by imputing the righteousness of Jesus when we believe that He is God and His death on the cross is the sole basis of forgiveness of sin. Faith: it is the conviction that all what God communicates to us through the scripture is absolutely true and is the sole authority in all matters. Life: How a person needs to relate to self, to rest of the creation, and to the creator. God takes no pleasure in one who goes back in faith. Conversely, when we hold on to faith irrespective of adverse circumstances, please God. alternatively, difficulties in faith-life can be seen as God testing us and also as an opportunity to please God. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for justifying me through Jesus and deposited faith in me. Help me O Lord to hold on to You no matter what circumstance that I may face and let my life be the one that gives You pleasure. Amen.

10:39. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. [[Go to contents](#)]

A solemn warning follows after great words of exhortation that distinguishes two kinds of people approaching God, first, those who obtain

heavenly inheritance by continuing in faith, and the second draws back to perdition due to suffering. Genuinity of faith can be known only by continuing in it especially when there is opposition. Hence, it is not as important how we began our faith as to how we finish our life faith on this earth. One need not be concerned about utter unbelief, deadly sins, and great failures of the past. Rather, we all should be concerned about enduring a life of faith and finishing well. It is so important in saving our soul from the sin infected world to a state of eternal bliss. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for the provision of preserving our soul through faith in the life and work of Lord Jesus. Lord, I pray for grace to never go back in this life of faith when it is challenged by various threats from my flesh, the world, and the devil. Amen.

12 Hebrews 11:1-39

11:1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. [[Go to contents](#)]

A very simple and elegant definition of faith. Substance: the word means confidence, firm, that which has foundation, has actual existence, steadfastness of mind, resolution, assurance, etc. Biblical faith has basis, has content, and is a reasonable one, but not a blind faith. Things hoped for are the one that are promised by God and revealed to us through the scripture. They are things not seen, which implies that the faculty which assimilate evidence is not physical sensory organs of our body, but data pertaining to the spiritual realm gathered from the scripture by our inner man with the help of the illuminating work

of the Holy Spirit. Oh, that we may understand what faith means. It is neither wishful thinking nor a superstition. **Prayer:** Father, You have created us with a capacity to exhibit faith, and have given us a variety of exciting things to hope for in the midst of various trials of life. Father, I pray that let my faith grow steadfastly so that it has substance, it has hope, and it has right evidence. Amen.

11:2. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Testimony: it means to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. Here, it refers to a life of faith where the person believes in the promise of God and lives a life affirming his convictions. He knows that this is true because it was taught by divine revelation or inspiration. Elders here refers to the faithful believers of great influence in the old testament whose list follows. First principle of faith is that the material world which we see and experience was created by God. Genesis clearly teaches that out of nothing but by the word of God the heaven and the earth were created. There is a creator behind this universe and hence it will function according to His laws. Further, we are created by Him and we also should function according to His law, and the most cardinal one is to have faith in Him and exhibit it in how we live in this world. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for the life of the elders which motivates me and serves as an example to follow. Lord, I pray for Your grace to live a life of faith to obtain a good testimony like saints of the past. I am amazed at the wisdom and power demonstrated in creating this universe. In

reverential adoration I submit my life to You. Amen.

11:4. By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

This chapter is popularly called the hall of faith - all those who in the past demonstrated faith in their life which should challenge us, motivate us, and serve as models to imitate. The fact that they are all mere humans with their own sinful failures comforts us with hope that we too can have a life of faith with this sinful body, in this corrupted world, and even when the evil devil opposes. We read in Genesis that Abel's sacrifice was accepted while that of Cain was rejected. Although the reason is not explicitly mentioned there, connecting various verses, one can deduce that Abel's sacrifice involved blood demonstrating his faith in the principle that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. God gave that conviction to Abel that his righteousness is from God and Abel demonstrated it in his sacrifice. Note that Abel's sacrifice involves animals pointing to shedding of blood which is a foreshadow of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. On the other hand, Cain offered fruits and vegetables obtained directly by human labour and that too from the cursed earth. The phrase 'being dead still speaks' implies that this event is recorded and serves as an example and warning to us: what kind of sacrifices pleases God and what does not. Yes, not all kinds of sacrifices are acceptable before God. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for the perfect sacrifice of Your Son Jesus in which You are fully satisfied. I thank You for the grace given to me to believe in this and thereby obtained

perfect righteousness imputed by You. Lord, I pray that, like Abel, I may obtain witness that I am righteous.

11:5. By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

We read about Enoch that he walked with God which implies that he lived a life of faith and by an extraordinary act God transported him to heaven without tasting death. It serves as a great message to us that we too should likewise live a life of faith and God will likewise reward us taking us to heaven for life with Him (note that this does not mean that we will not taste death, but after our physical death, we will be resurrected to a glorified body). It is challenging to read that Enoch pleased God. The question to us is whom we are pleasing? Is it the people around us whoever they may be? Or, am I pleasing myself? Enoch was determined to please God. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for the life of Enoch. I pray that I may likewise please You and You alone. Amen.

11:6. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Probably the most concise definition of faith and precise statement of purpose of a believer is revealed here. First, without faith it is impossible to please God. Can the scripture convey the importance of faith better than this? God is displeased when we exhibit unbe-

lief. Conversely, anyone can please God with faith. One need not be a genius, rich, smart, or strong to please God. Even an ordinary person can please God with faith. No one can give an excuse for lack of faith. Second, to please God, one must approach Him with a conviction that God exists. It goes along with this as an accurate understanding of who God is. Since the world is filled with varied ideas of God, we must rely on the Biblical revelation to comprehend the true nature and character of God so as to ensure that the content of faith is accurate. Third, faith involves a confidence in the goodness of God who will reward us. God of the Bible is neither a sadist nor insensitive toward human predicaments. Lastly, one must diligently, not casually, seek Him. This means one must have longing for Him and take whatever effort to find out who He is and what He requires of me. **Prayer:** Father, You are a God who can be pleased by feeble human beings like me. I worship You for the goodness shown in Your reward when I seek You diligently. Lord, help me to please You by having the kind of faith You desire in me. Amen.

11:7. By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. [[Go to contents](#)]

Atmospheric conditions existed during the time of Noah were entirely different. The notable among them is the absence of flood and even rain. God told Noah about the impending destruction of the world, by then around two thousand years elapsed after Adam, through a worldwide flood. No one ever heard, seen or even could imagine rain

and flood. In spite of that Noah believed the words of God and his faith was so strong that he devoted the rest of his life to preparing an ark. He and his family laboured for about 120 years building an ark to protect them from rain and flood which they knew only from the word of God. Not only that he built the ark in faith but this very act was an open proclamation of the wrath of God against the wickedness of the people of the world. Our faith in Jesus and a life demonstrating our beliefs is an open declaration of the impending destruction of this world at the second coming of Jesus. Our generation, like those during the life of Noah, will mock us when we proclaim the details of what is going to happen to this world. Nevertheless, like Noah, we must live a life of faith. **Prayer:** Father, I praise You for the dramatic events during the life of Noah that have a lasting message to me. I thank you for the faith of Noah that is challenging me even today after about four thousand years! I pray that You give me such faith in believing all the events unfolding at the second coming of Jesus and fashion my life investing for eternity. Amen.

11:8. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10. for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Abraham is known as the father of faith. His faith is evident in his obedience to God's calling. It might have been tough for Abraham to leave his birth place and go to an unknown place. Though Abra-

ham was very rich and mightier than princes of his time, he lived as a pilgrim staying in tents ready to move any time to any place God directs. He was willing to settle only in the city of God which is popularly referred to as heaven. Abraham believed this promise, hoped for it, and lived a life exhibiting his convictions. God is building a place for us to settle and this world is not our permanent home. **Prayer:** Father, I praise You and thank You for a glorious city You are building for us. Lord, give me the grace to believe this, and demonstrate it in my life. Direct my steps and give grace to live in this world as a pilgrim.

11:11. By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. [Go to contents]

Scripture clearly asserts the faith of Sarah, first woman in this list. Her act of faith however small it may look to us is very significant in the whole plan of God in bringing a godly nation for Him. We too likewise consider God to be faithful even if our external circumstances are contrary. **Prayer:** Father, help me to count You faithful even in adverse external circumstances. Amen.

11:12. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. [Go to contents]

What faith can accomplish is unimaginable! If we were witnessing the life of Abraham and Sarah, I wonder, would we have ever imagined

the birth of that single child at the very old age could have resulted in the formation of a nation that has actually determined the course of human history, both in physical and spiritual realm. Similarly, our acts of faith, however feeble it may appear to human perception, can have the potential to change the destiny of many. What a blessed privilege to lead a life of faith. Amen. **Prayer:** Father, I adore You for what You accomplish through puny human beings when they exercise faith in You is mind boggling. I pray that You give me that kind of faith which will lead many to eternal glory. Amen.

11:13. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Scripture made it very clear that they have not achieved the promises of God before they depart from this earth. Nevertheless, they had the assurance and conviction that God will fulfill the promises made in eternity. They embraced these promises by holding them dear to them. They were not ashamed of their faith and hence they confessed their faith to this world by their words and deeds that they do not belong to this world. Yes, this world is not the place where we are going to receive the fullness of manifold promises of God that accompany salvation. At best we can experience its shadows. The values system and governing principles of the people of this world are entirely different and hence we are strangers to this world. It is true that we live in this world and do not shortcut this life for the life on this earth is a journey to heaven and thus we are all pilgrims. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for various promises that accompany the salvation.

Lord, I pray that You give me the grace to hold on to them dearly and to proclaim them to this world. Oh that I may understand what it means to live on this world as a stranger and pilgrim. Amen.

11:14. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had the opportunity to return.16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The patriarchs declare by their life that they seek a permanent settlement not of this world. They could have returned to the country from where God called them. Archaeological evidence indicated that they left a thriving city to an unpromising distant land. They remained as pilgrims in spite of the opportunity to return. We too should never return to the lifestyle of this world which we left for the sake of faith. We too have a similar promise that the Lord will come again to take us to His glorious kingdom and hence our life should reflect our faith like the patriarchs mentioned above. That is why we see in the scripture that He is a God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God seems proud of this identification. Now the question is, is God proud or ashamed of calling Himself as Tom's God. **Prayer:** Father, God of Abraham, I praise you for acknowledging the faith of the patriarchs. Now, I pray for grace to live a life that enables You to call Yourself as the God of Tom without any shame. Oh, how far I am from that, but Lord, help me to bridge that gap. Amen. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for the promise of glory in Your kingdom and I pray for grace to reflect in my

life that I truly believe this. Amen.

11:17. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Greatness of Abraham's faith is known to us in his willingness to sacrifice Isaac. Although God knew his faith even before this incident. Nevertheless, God tested him so that it vindicated God's calling and proved to humanity of his faith. Analysing how Abraham faced this test of faith is instructive to us. God promised him earlier that through Isaac the nations will be blessed. Then God asking to sacrifice Isaac was contrary to the earlier promise. Nevertheless, Abraham obeyed God even though, from a human perspective, the promise will be nullified. Abraham knew one thing very clearly that God will somehow fulfill the promise. Abraham thought that God would raise Isaac from the dead and fulfill the promise. Note that no one ever raised from the dead till that point in human history. It was easier for Abraham to believe an impossibility than to doubt the promise of God. That was the faith of Abraham. In a figurative way, Isaac was dead in Abraham's mind and God raised Isaac from the dead, again in a figurative sense. In short, from the life of Abraham, who is considered as the father of believers, we can define faith as believing that God would fulfill His promise even if obedience to His command may seem to contradict God's promises. In other words, we have to live a life of obedience believing that God would somehow, beyond our comprehension, fulfill

His promises towards us. **Prayer:** Father, help me to have faith like Abraham, yes to believe that You will fulfill your promises concerning me. Help me, therefore, to obey You, all my life, at all time, at any place, in every situation and circumstances. Help to have a deep connection with You that enables this. Amen.

11:20. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. [Go to contents]

Not only Abraham demonstrated faith, though not very dramatic to us, Isaac and Jacob also had similar faith evident from their blessing at the old age. It is interesting to note that they have not blessed them with their possessions, but with promises concerning the future. We too should be motivated by faith. Three applications we can draw from their life: first, we must hold on to the promise of the future till the end of our life on this earth, second, what we must give to our next generation is the faith that we have and not merely the earthly possessions. **Prayer:** Father, I praise You for the faith-life of Isaac and Jacob. I pray that likewise, I may hold on to the faith that You have deposited in me till the end. I also pray for the grace to pass on this faith to my next generation both by my life and my words. Amen.

11:22. By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. [Go to contents]

Joseph lived a royal life in Egypt and lacked nothing for a prosperous

life for his posterity. Nevertheless, he anticipated a time when God would take them to Canaan and instructed his children to carry his bones to Canaan. Even in his burial, he carried his faith. Today, we know there is nothing special about the physical remains of our body. However, we have a similar promise that we will be resurrected and will receive a new body when the Lord comes. Hence, we live anticipating that day and life on this earth should reflect that faith. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for creating us with immortality and putting faith in You will take to be with You eternally. I pray that you give the grace to live today with this conviction. Amen.

11:23. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.

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Faith of the parents of Moses was exemplary. They saw in him beauty (or divinity) that prompted them to take a life threatening risk by disobeying the king who commanded all the male children be killed. What an example of the faith of parents shown towards their children. No wonder that God honored their faith not only in preserving the life of their child, but also raised him to be the builder of God's nation. Parents must have faith in God on behalf of their children and God will honor such faith by blessing their children. Needless to say that faith often requires disobeying earthly authorities when their commands are contrary to God. Faith is putting our life in the hand of God rather than protecting it by cowardly compromises. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for the life of the exemplary faith of the parents of Moses and how You have honored their faith in You. I pray for such

faith on behalf of my children and experiencing Your favour in them.
Amen.

11:24. By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. [[Go to contents](#)]

Very practical application of faith that requires tremendous courage and boldness. When Moses realized his true identity is Jewish, he refused to be called as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. We can reasonably assume that Moses received some instruction about Jewish history and God has called them to be a great nation who will be a blessing to humanity. He could have easily continued in the palace and enjoyed the luxurious life of power and pleasure. Instead, he chose to associate with Jews who were slaves at that time. Note that there was absolutely no benefit of living as a Jew. On the contrary, he had to lose all the privileges of a royal life even to the point of becoming their enemy and suffer affliction. It was foolish from a human perspective to think that the Egyptian empire, with all its might and glory, is nothing before the 'nation' of Israel. Can we call Israel a nation at that point of time? Not at all; they were a bunch of slaves for the past several centuries! Nevertheless, Moses could see beyond natural human perception that the power and pleasure of the palace is merely the passing pleasure of sin. Not only that, Moses could also comprehend beyond all human logic that Egypt will perish for it is built on the might and wisdom of the flesh but Israel will become a

great nation for it is based on the promise of the eternal sovereign God. That was the faith of Moses who could easily give up the fortune and embraced the promise of God. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for the great faith of Moses, and I pray that I may understand the passing pleasure of sin before me so as to reject them and embrace the 'shame' and 'pain' associated with a life of faith in Christ. Amen.

11:27. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. [Go to contents]

It might not have been easier for Moses to forsook Egypt and invite the wrath of the king. Although now we may appreciate his decision, imagine what stand we would have taken if we were in his place. Continuing in the palace would have been the most logical way forward for it gives peace, prosperity, security, and even the prospect of becoming the next Pharaoh. We may even think that if I become the next Pharaoh, I could easily help the Jews. Why should I sacrifice the prospect of a great career and risk my life for no benefit? If I ask for advice from believers, many of them would advise to be practical, not to be emotional, don't be fanatic, and so on. Unlike us, Moses had very strong spiritual conviction that suffering with God is far better than the reigning as Pharaoh. He was able to perceive all the prospect of pleasure and pomp of Egypt is deceptively temporal while the fulfilment and glory from the invisible God is everlasting. That is faith: realistic assessment of what this world can offer versus a life solely based on the promises of God. **Prayer:** Father, I worship You, though You are invisible but absolutely real and I thank You for the promises that bring great fulfillment when believed and acted on

it. Lord, I pray that like Moses, I may forsake the pleasures that this world is offering, and endure hardships, though momentary, for the sake of faith in You. Amen.

**11:28.. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.
29. By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, whereas the Egyptians, attempting to do so, were drowned.**

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Events surrounding the institution of Passover are dramatic. God commanded Moses to instruct Israelites to observe Passover and to apply blood on their door so that angels of death will spare their first born. Not only did Moses believe, but he had the faith that the people will believe in his words. We may require great faith to act based on the words of God, but greater faith is required when we tell others what God commanded and expects them to act based on our words. It may be relatively easier for us to face the consequence of acting based on the word of God. However, it is much more difficult to face the consequences in others' lives when they act based on our words, even though it is from God. Having faith in God is a great thing, but others will have faith in God by our words is a greater thing. Moses had such greater faith. Lives of the entire Israel depended upon the words of Moses, both at the Passover and crossing the Red Sea. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for using Moses to kindle faith in the people of Israel. Lord, I pray that grace may be given to me to instill faith in others by life and words. Amen.

11:30. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they

were encircled for seven days. 31. By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace. [[Go to contents](#)]

Two more incidents of exemplary faith, the first shown by the people of Israel and the other by an individual, surprisingly from an unexpected source. Jericho was formidable due to its strong walls. The people of Israel just entered the gateway of Canaan. God asked them to encircle the city with praises and many more such things, all of which does not make any sense in the context of a war. Nevertheless, people believed and the unbelievable happened. In the next incident we see Rahab shows her faith in the true God. Her faith stands out for several reasons: she is a woman, she was a harlot, and she was from gentile. No one might have told him that God of Israel is the true God. Moreover, by siding with the spies she risked the life of her family too. We can learn from the first incident that the faith involves acting contrary to human wisdom only when explicitly commanded by God. Second incident teaches that even if all the circumstances are contrary to exercise faith, true faith circumvents all hindrances. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for demonstrating Your power when people acted in faith and also honoring Rahab when she acted in faith in spite of her adverse circumstances. Lord, I pray for such faith that brings Your power and approval in my life. Amen.

11:32. And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the violence of fire,

escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Many in the OT had demonstrated exemplary faith in their life, each going through different trials, varying in details and degree, but had one thing in common that they held onto the hope and trust in God who is able to deliver them out. It is amazing to see what faith can accomplish in our life. Faith unleashes God's power in our life. Some may be dramatic, while many may appear normal at glance. God is pleased when we exercise faith, and enables us for unimaginable outcomes. **Prayer:** Father, I worship You for the life of great men on the faith and pray for such faith in my life.

11:35. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Not only men, but many women also share the list of people of exemplary faith. They are equally valuable before God as men. Reference might be about the widow who got her son back to life during the days of Elijah. We may not know who all belong to the 'other' who were tortured. Though we don't know the details, two things are certain: first, God values the faith of women and promises reward for their faith; second, many women demonstrated exemplary faith, and in many cases excelled the contemporary men, thereby demolishing the notion that women are weak in facing persecution. Nevertheless, be it men or women, genuine faith takes an uncompromising stand even if that endangers one life and possession. **Prayer:** Father, thank

you for the many women of faith and pray for my spouse, daughters, and sisters of my church that they may excel in faith and a life reflecting that. Amen.

11:36. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Continuing the previous theme of sufferings associated with a life of faith, author adds to list mocking, scourgings, and imprisonment etc. Diverse are the tickets of this world controlled by Satan to extinguish the faith in us. One must not despair in the midst of these thoughts where the power of God. Rather, one must seize them as opportunities to demonstrate before the creation, seen and unseen the greatness of the faith that the Lord has deposited in us. It is humbling to note that society treats evil and wicked men also likewise. Just as light appears brighter in a dark background, faith is stronger when opposition is great. Amazing is how God designed the manifestation of faith: to the world it is total foolishness, but to the faithful it is God's wisdom hidden from the unbeliever. **Prayer:** Father, marvellous is how You work when our faith is being tested. Lord, I pray for Your grace that I may never give up the great faith You have deposited in me. Amen.

11:37. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— 38. of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Unimaginable was the suffering endured by many saints to guard their faith. Faith appears as a vague intangible aspect of spiritual life. However, strength of faith is manifested in the unfathomable tenacity to be faithful when it is challenged by this world. In fact, the world, knowingly or unknowingly hates Jesus and takes all efforts to eliminate the faith of those in Him. The world hopes in vain that their tactics will overpower the convictions of the faithful. The more faithful they are, the more venomous will be their means to vanquish divine faith, often resulting in their departure from this world. Sarcas-tically, the author comments that this world is not worthy of having them in spite of their impeccable character and selfless service; leave alone the fact that they are the true representatives of the Lord Jesus, the ultimate king of this world. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for the great faith of You faithful and I pray that you may give such a faith to and give grace to guard it no matter what the cost be. Amen.

11:39. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

All the men and women of faith in the old testament though did not receive the promised perfection, but have had good testimony possible only through faith applied in life. The new testament believers are better privileged and hence God will perfect the old testament believers along with us. Thus, both old and new testament believers have to wait for perfection. By the way, what we have better is not mentioned here, references elsewhere suggests this includes the indwelling holy spirit, fuller revelation of God, and the like. **Prayer:**

Father, thank You for the great privilege bestowed on me and the promise of making me perfect. Lord, I pray that you may help me to live with faith resulting in a life having good testimony. Amen.

13 Hebrews 12:1–29

Introduction to Heb. 12 and 13. Having discussed the person of Jesus in the first four chapters, the work of Christ in the next six chapters, the author defines faith in the tenth chapter along with a long list of examples of those who exhibited faith in their life. This should teach us that it is possible for us to live a life of faith that pleases God and is not an unattainable utopian idea. Nevertheless, it is important to address the question of how we apply faith in our practical life so that it pleases our God, serves as an example to others, and ultimately obtains the promise. The book addresses this in the last two chapters of the book. It is also instructive to observe how the author encourages the reader to stand in faith for the Lord by first addressing the object of our faith which is the person and work of Christ. He then motivates us by the testimonies of people who share our frailty but exemplary in conduct. After setting proper foundation, he now gives practical exhortations. Keep this biblical principle in mind when we disciple others, or even in our own life. One needs a solid understanding on whom he/she believes (i.e. the preeminence of Jesus Christ) and on what he/she believes (i.e. the superior work of Jesus Christ on the cross). **Prayer:** Father, thank you for the person and work of Your Son and my Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, teach me and empower me to apply faith in my daily practical life so that it pleases You, serves as a good testimony to others, and eventually becomes a great blessing to my life. Amen.

12:1. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [[Go to contents](#)]

The chapter starts with the word 'therefore' which implies that the exhortations of this chapter is highly motivated by testimonies of faith in the previous chapter. Faith is contagious. When we exhibit faith, others are encouraged in their faith just as others faith challenges us. The 'cloud of witness' refers to the men and women of faith listed in the previous chapters. Christian life is compared to athletic running and we need to learn some crucial principles from a good athlete. First principle: do not care much about temporal matters. A good athlete gets rid of all 'weights' that reduces his/her competitiveness; be it clothing, ornaments, body weights, and so on. So also, our priority in terms of time, effort, and dedication to the Lord and His business. Our temporal needs and responsibilities should be reduced enough to ensure that the spiritual progress is not hindered. Second, avoid all opportunities of sin which can wreck our spiritual life. A good athlete will be careful to avoid anything that causes fall, even small things like shoelace. How much more should we be careful with our conduct? Thirdly, we should continue in faith without giving up. Often Christian life is compared to a marathon race and not a sprint. Like a marathon runner, we should endure the race till the end, even if it is slower. Fourthly, we have a specific life set for each one. An athlete needs to know which track he should run and should not run in someone else's track. So is also, the path of life set for me is not the same for others. **Prayer:** Father, give me grace to get rid of all

concerns and sinful opportunities, and with consistent faith complete my life You have set for me. Amen.

12:2. looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

In spite of the great testimonies mentioned in the previous chapter, the testimony of Jesus remains as the greatest of all. While the cloud of witnesses surrounds us, Lord Jesus is our direction, our focus, and our goal. Looking unto Jesus implies that we are not looking at others however great they may be, or even ourselves including our success or failure, and any other forces of physical or invisible realm. Not only that Jesus is the author of faith, the one who implanted that faith in us, He is also the finisher of our faith, in the sense that one who is able to safely take us to heaven which is our finishing point. Jesus embraced the cross with its suffering and shame joyfully. Though the pain was intense and real, He was obedient to His Father which is His joy. Yes, true joy is experienced inside of us when we obey God no matter how painful externally. This is contrary to human nature which craves for momentary pleasure and comfort. He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God and showed clearly how the Father honored Jesus with glory and power. Cross given by our Father now will be the Crown in future if we, like Jesus, endure the suffering and shame associated with the cross joyfully. **Prayer:** Father, great is the life of Jesus and helps us to endure suffering with joy knowing fully that it is graciously given to honor me in eternity. Oh Lord, open my eyes, deepen my hearts, and lift my spirit to this marvelous privilege.

Amen.

12:3. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted bloodshed, striving against sin. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

There is a lot to consider and learn from Jesus how He endured hostility from sinners while living a life conforming to the will of the Father. Unless the life of Christ is not our motivator, we can get easily discouraged in our faith-life. Sin is so serious that it took the very life of Jesus. The Lord Lord who created everything by the Word of His mouth had to shed His blood should be a chilling reminder of the gruesome nature of sin which we often take so lightly. However, what motivated the Lord was the joy set before Him, and this should also be our motive: yes, there is tremendous joy set before us for every victory over sin. Oh that we should get a glimpse of it. **Prayer:** Father, help us to understand the suffering of the Lord from the wicked and evil ones of this world, knowing that we may also face similar hostility. Lord needs your grace to go deep into our conviction of the gravity of sin and glory awaiting when there is victory over sin. Amen.

12:5. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.” [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The word ‘son’ indicates the intimacy of the relation between the Lord

and a believer which gives a new meaning to the sufferings. These are not necessarily due to the anger of God, but are acts intended for our good. Hence, we should not be discouraged and waver in faith. Discipling is an expression of the Lord's love. Hard to accept when one goes through it. Hence, when things are going fine, we should internalize this truth and teach others. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for the unchanging deep love You have for us. Lord, I pray that I may never doubt Your intentions when going through difficulties and various sufferings. Instead my prayer is that you give the grace to go through it triumphantly. Amen.

12:7. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. [Go to contents]

Sufferings are hard to explain when a good God reigns. To God's people it is not the absence of God's love for them or lack of His power to prevent sufferings, but they are acts of paternal love. Though hard to digest, this portion makes it so normal and logical that if I am a child of God then I will receive not only His blessings, but also His chastenings. On the contrary, one should doubt his relationship with God when there is no chastening of the Father. This is ironic to the natural man who sees all sufferings as punishments of God. **Prayer:** Father, I thank You for You discipline me since I am You son. Oh Lord, it is a great privilege and blessing. I pray that I may understand it and receive your chastening with faith and thanksgiving. Amen.

12:9. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Biblical understanding of parenting involves painful correction when children go astray, but always with the intention of good. Practically speaking, this intention should be communicated to the children and they should be convinced of it. Eventually, this will create respect in the children towards parents. If this is true in the natural realm, how much more in the spiritual realm. No believer should forget that God gave us life and He has authority over our soul much more than that of earthly parents. God's purpose of correction or disciplining is to produce holiness in us. God is Holy, and He desires that we too share His holiness. **Prayer:** Father, thank You for you want us to share Your holiness, whatever it means, for we understand it very little only. I pray that I may understand this, willingly and voluntarily subject to all disciplining of the Lord, however painful it may be. Amen.

12:11. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

We humans are interested in pleasure and concerned about the present only. What the Lord is doing in our life is to produce inner spiritual qualities that will last forever. Oh that we may understand this God:

His intentions and means to achieve that we may gain the best. Like an athlete needs to be trained constantly to achieve and retain the fitness required to win the prize, the Lord constantly trains us with various difficulties of life so that we will be like Him: humility, dependance, gentleness, joyful, and so on. Such qualities will never come overnight. Hence, instead of complaining to the Lord for the unpleasant situations of life, we must be thankful to the Lord, and constantly examine ourselves in the light of the scripture to make amendments in our life. This will ultimately yield to a peaceful relation with the Lord. Afterall, it is neither desirable nor wise to oppose what the Lord is doing in our life. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for You are the God who is interested in producing righteousness in my life. Lord, I pray that I may gain an understanding of these and be trained by Your chastening. Amen.

12:12. Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Oh what a love of the Lord who bears with our weakness. He is not a cruel God as some think, and the same should be the attitude of each one of us. Intention of God is to heal us from all defects that arise out of our sinful nature. On one side we are responsible for our sin, and on the other side, we are helpless as far as getting out of the curse and consequences of sin. So our Father, like an expert surgeon, operates us and removes all defects, and His tools include painful disciplines. He who formed me knows the best: the precise time and measure of the disciplines. **Prayer:** Father, thank You once

again for Your great concern for sinful beings like me and I pray that I may comprehend Your marvelous schemes which will heal me from sin and make me perfect. Amen.

12:14. Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Two fold exhortations are given in this verse: one in relation to the fellow human beings and the other in relation to our God. First, pursue peace with all people. Pursue is a word that indicates continued persistence. We as believers have peace with God in the sense that our sins are forgiven and that we are no longer enemies of God. However, we also need to have peace with all people: be it believers or gentiles. That is their sin should not be a reason for us to keep animosity with anyone. Do all that is possible so that there is peace with all people. Second, pursue holiness. Holiness means an exclusive and supreme relation with God. Seeing is not a physical activity, rather, it is an understanding of God which comes through revelation. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for how you designed our life with perfect harmony and fulfillment is so beautiful and I pray for the grace to pursue peace with all people including difficult ones around me. I also pray that You teach me what it means to be holy and grace to be holy, the way you expect. Amen.

12:15. looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; [\[Go to contents\]](#)

While the Bible teaches the security of salvation, one should not take

the grace of God lightly. We need to be careful how we respond to the grace the Lord has shown to us; especially in guarding our inner person. Bitterness is a serious problem: it can be towards God or others. When things happen contrary to our expectations, if we don't joyfully accept them as coming from the sovereign loving and wise God who will turn all things to our good, then bitterness gradually grows in us. Often, such bitterness is deep rooted and unless one examines thoroughly with the help of Word of God, Spirit of God, and the church of God, it remains hidden. Such bitterness defiles a person in the sense it robs the warmth of the relation with God and others, especially the people of God. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for the amazing grace shown to us. Lord, help to value grace as the most supreme in my life. Pray especially that I may search my soul with your help to uproot all kinds of bitterness toward You and the brethren. Amen.

12:16. lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The life of Esau is a chilling reminder of the great consequence of rejecting spiritual over material, eternal over temporal, usefulness over pleasure. How often we also fall into that trap of giving importance to the present physical need fully neglecting what the Lord wants us to do. One will be amazed at the great loss suffered for seemingly silly mistakes. Humanly speaking, no one can deny the genuine need of food when Esau was very hungry. From a divine perspective, Esau fully neglected his spiritual privilege, he took it very casually, and sold it to his brother. Jacob on the other hand, though he acted shrewdly, understood the value of the birthright: he did not take any exorbitant

money but only the birthright which has no practical earthly value. In our eyes, Esau may be a foolish person, but this verse calls him a profane person. Oh how serious is the assessment of Esau by God. Yes, one who belittles things pertaining to God is simply a profane person. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for the mercy shown to my life and for giving me the spiritual privileges. Lord, I pray that I may never neglect it for my present day pleasures and comforts. Instead, I pray that You give me the grace to value it, cherish it, and use it for Your glory. Amen.

12:17. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears. [Go to contents]

The implication of the fall of Esau from grace is shocking when we know that there was no scope of return. Grace of God is not something that we get when we want, but it is a favor from God given when He pleases to give. If we don't receive it when He gives, we may reach a point even if we seek it diligently with tears we may not get it from God. Note that Esau sought it diligently with tears. It is not my self will that matters, but it is God's sovereign act that results in blessings upon us. That does not mean that we should give up seeking God: remember Jacob's attitude when he wrestled with God saying that I will never leave you unless You bless. **Prayer:** Father, I tremble at Your awesome presence knowing the consequence of rejecting Your grace is essentially rejecting You. Lord, I pray that I may learn from the life of Esau and never reject Your grace, but receive it as the most valuable in my life. Amen.

12:18. For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

We often take the Word of God very lightly as mere words of a book and having no fear or respect to it. The fact is that the Word of God is awesome and powerful though its glory is hidden ordinarily. In one typical occasion, referring to the Exodus instance, God reveals its power and greatness. It is so glorious, that one cannot even touch the foot of the mountain from where God spoke. The sound of a trumpet denotes the importance of these Words, its authority over us, and binding on us just like a soldier hears the trumpet sound. Today we don't see, hear or experience such awesomeness when we read or hear the Word of God. This doesn't mean that we can take God's word lightly. On the other hand, by faith, one must be convinced of the glory and power of God's word. Obedience is the only evidence

12:20. (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.") [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The holiness of God is so great that even a beast is not allowed to touch the mountain. Note, that the beast is not going to die automatically. God commanded His people to kill the beast. This implies

that the people of God have the responsibility to maintain the holiness of God in their midst. Even such a great man of God like Moses also trembled before God. **Prayer:** Father, great is Your holiness which (should) make me tremble. I pray that I may truly protect the holiness of You in my life, in my family, and in my church. Lord, give me the discernment and boldness in serving You. Amen.

12:22. But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,. M [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Mount Zion and the city on its top, Jerusalem, points to the presence of God and His throne in heaven. In heaven, God is surrounded by a huge number of angels, who worship God and are always ready to execute the will of God. We are exhorted to be conscious of this truth that when we approach God in prayer, we are actually approaching God in His throne, spiritually speaking. Be reminded of the fear of people when they approached Mount Zion and the same or more reverence should be there when we approach God though in spirit. How much an Israelite yielded to king David and all his successors should remind us how much more should we surrender to God in all areas of our life. **Prayer:** Father, Mount Zion reminds me of Your holiness and Jerusalem reminds me of Your sovereign rule. I pray that I may approach You with proper reverence and with honor that is due to You and not careless with You. Lord, likewise, I pray that I may joyfully submit to Your sovereign rule in my life. Amen.

12:23. to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the

spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The general assembly refers to the court of the sovereign God where we have now access through the mediation of Jesus. The church of the first-born points to the fact that the New Testament church belongs to the Lord Jesus and therefore we must approach it with due diligence. Registered in heaven refers to the security of salvation of a believer and our permanent residence in heaven. God is referred here as the supreme Judge of all, both believers as their redeemer and the gentiles as their creator: all must meet God and give an account. It is scary to the one who lived a reckless life while it is a blessing to those who fashioned their life in the fear of God. Just men made perfect points to the sanctification work of Christ in the life of believers, that is, the Lord constantly purifies our inner man through various trials and disciplines. In verse 25 we see that Jesus is the mediator and there is no other mediator between man and God. He established the new covenant based on His work on the cross. The essence of this covenant is that anyone who believes in the death and resurrection of Jesus will receive forgiveness of the sin and will have eternal life. The 'blood of sprinkling' speaks of the old covenant where animals were sacrificed and the blood is sprinkled on people as a sign of forgiveness from sin. Abel's offering of the flock is the first sacrifice made by man and hence the word 'Abel' refers to the animal sacrifices of the old covenant. Essentially, the sacrifice of Jesus is superior to the animal sacrifices started with Abel. Note that though God accepted the sacrifice of Abel, the sacrifice of Jesus is much superior as we had seen earlier chapters. **Prayer:** Father, how much more these words

remind of Your greatness and my smallness. Lord, I pray that I may approach with honor due to You, with joy in the prospect of eternal living in heaven, and with diligence in life knowing one day I have to stand before You. O Lord, have mercy on me on that day, but give grace today to live in preparation for that day.

12:25. See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” [\[Go to contents\]](#)

God of the Bible is a communicating person and He being our creator deserves our earnest attention. History of Israel attests the consequences of those who rejected His voice which we see during their sojourn in the wilderness. It was so terrifying that the judgment was accompanied by some kind of earthquake. This event is only a shadow of the impending judgment of God unfolding at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Book of revelation gives a detailed account of the events surrounding His coming, both on the earth and in heaven. [Prayer:](#) Father, thank you for communicating to me through the Word of God and the Spirit of God. I pray for your grace to truly tremble at Your word, and obey You in submission. Amen.

12:27. Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

A prophetic statement of the end times when this earth will be removed and heaven, where God dwells, will remain eternally. This physical world is not eternal and hence, one should not put entire labour into it. Instead, one must put best of efforts in matters related to heaven. In other words, one should have eternity in mind while living in this world. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for Your plan for eternity: though this world is going to an end, You will establish heaven for us. Hence, I pray that You may give me the grace not put my hope for this world, instead long for the eternal home. Amen.

12:28. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

What motivates serving the Lord is that we are going to be part of an eternal kingdom. We need His grace to serve God, not on our natural strength. Serving must accompany three aspects. First: acceptably. This means our service should be acceptable to the Lord. When we serve Him according to the pattern and principles of the Word of God, then it will be acceptable. Second: with fear. This implies one must be aware of the greatness of God. Third: with fear. One must not serve God that will bring dishonor to God. God is a consuming fire: while there is great reward in serving the Lord, one must not take this for granted. **Prayer:** Father, I thank you for the great privilege of receiving Your kingdom and the opportunity to serve You today. Lord, I pray for greater insights on what it means to serve you with reverence and fear, and grace to serve You in a way that is

acceptable to You. Amen.

14 Hebrews 13:1-25

13:1. Let brotherly love continue. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

This chapter deals with practical Christian living and consists of several instructions for daily life. First and foremost is love. What is love? And, what is brotherly love? Love is a much mis-understood concept. Most of us think it is a feeling. A good definition of love is: Love is an action for the ultimate good of others often involving self-sacrifice. Love of Jesus for us is a clear illustration of this definition. Now, brotherly love adds emotion to the love: that is not only that the love is an action meant for the good of another person, but also accompanied by sweet emotion. **Prayer:** Father, Your love for us is perfect and that motivates us to love others. Lord, I confess that I lack brotherly love and my love is often selfish. Hence, I pray for Your grace to have brotherly love. Amen.

13:2. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Hospitality is an important aspect of ministry and it should extend even to strangers. Obviously there is an element of risk, nevertheless, the Lord will take care of the consequences of obeying Him. Its importance is highlighted by an old testament allusion where Abraham entertained three men not knowing they were angels. Apparently, this is an opportunity to get reward from the Lord. **Prayer:** Father, I

worship Your care and concern for strangers. Lord, I pray that I may be able to entertain strangers trusting in Your protection and reward. Amen.

13:3. Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.

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These prisoners were faithful believers imprisoned for their faith. The crime they have committed was boldly proclaimed their faith which each one of us is expected to do. In that sense, we also commit the same crime and hence deserve the same punishment. Hence, we are exhorted to identify with them as if we are also similarly imprisoned. Likewise, those who were mistreated were also for their faith. One typical case is plundering of their wealth by the enemies of the gospel. We need to identify with such, as if we are going through the same pain and pray for them. Never look down upon them thinking that we are good and favored by God. In such situations the body principle must be in force: meaning, we are all part of one body, and when one member suffers the whole body suffers. **Prayer:** Father, in Your sovereign plan some believers go through persecution and some are spared: marvelous and incomprehensible are Your ways though we know at the end will result in ultimate good. Lord, I pray for the grace to truly and genuinely identify with those who are suffering for the gospel and earnestly pray for them. Amen.

13:4. Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

How seriously God takes marriage is seen here. Marriage is instituted by God and honoring it is honoring God and defiling it invites God's wrath. The motivation to honor marriage is not with the goodness of the spouse, but in the covenant made before God. Any action, including words and thought, that promotes a sensual relationship outside marriage invites God's judgment. Conversely promoting purity in marriage, meaning an exclusive relationship with the spouse pleases God and will be rewarded. **Prayer:** Father, we praise and worship You for the beautiful institution of marriage which is a reflection of the relationship of Christ and His church. Lord, I pray for the grace for an honorable marriage with my one and only one spouse, and let nothing defile it even in thoughts. Amen.

13:5. Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." [[Go to contents](#)]

Greed for money and material possessions greatly robs our spiritual growth. It is a direct challenge to the sovereignty of God who gives more to some and less to others. It may appear to be unjust who measures blessing only in material terms. Greed also puts our focus more on self and less on God and thus robbing our intimacy with the Lord. Greed is not a problem of gentiles, but also of believers, though often in a subtle way. Believers cover their greed by painting it as prayer points. It is godly to pray for our needs and leave the outcome to the Lord, thus manifesting our submission to the Lord's goodness, wisdom, and sovereignty. It is ungodly to insist on God to provide us with material blessing of our choice. Contentment on the other hand is a great manifestation of our faith in the promise of God who

promises that He will never abandon us: He will provide my needs, in His time, in His ways. **Prayer:** Father, I worship You remembering Your promise of never leaving me and never abandoning me. Lord, I confess the sin of covetousness and not being content with what You have given. Lord, I pray that I may be content with what You have given me. Amen.

13:6. So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” [[Go to contents](#)]

One of the greatest problems of humanity, especially for believers, is people. We fear them, we depend on them, we try to please them, etc., particularly those who oppose the Lord and His gospel. Whereas here the author is reminding us of a quotation by the Psalmist asserting faith in the all sufficiency and supremacy of the Lord. Answer to this rhetoric is that people can do almost nothing to God's people in comparison to the help the Almighty can provide. If we are afraid of the people, then it questions our faith in this promise of God. **Prayer:** Father, Oh that I cannot imagine how great is Your help in protecting us in this world which hates You. Lord, I confess my sin of fearing people which is essential doubting this promise. Oh, Lord, I believe this promise, help my unbelief, and transform me to a person who fears You and You alone. Amen.

13:7. Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. [[Go to contents](#)]

Believers must remember their elders/pastors in the sense of imitat-

ing their godly life. This verse also implies the necessity of rulers for believers: that is, one should know who is his ruler and likewise, the ruler should know whom he is ruling. In other words, believers should be accountable to their ruler and the rulers should be responsible to their subjects. Note that the concept of ruler in a church is diametrically opposite to that of this world. Former lead by example while the latter by force. On a different note, this verse expects rulers with the responsibility of being godly examples to their flock in all walks of life. **Prayer:** Father, we praise You for godly rulers who shared your word to us. Lord, I pray for grace to follow the life and ministry of godly rulers/elders You have placed in my life. I also pray that my life also be an example to the youngsters in faith.

13:8. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

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Theological implications are many: Jesus is God, who is eternal, immutable, and is not a random person who came into existence in the first century. This verse has many practical implications also. The unchanging nature and character of Jesus Christ is seen here. Hence, His promises will stand, He is dependable, and one can put his entire faith in Him. Contrast the Roman emperors who were ruling those days with all might and pomp are mere humans who will die and disappear. One need not be afraid of such mere creatures and compromise their relation with the Lord. Even each of us should be aware of our own transient nature and character and hence in an absolute sense should not and could not depend on self or others, however good and smart they are. Oh my Lord and savior Jesus Christ, You deserve all our praise, worship, and adoration. Lord, help me to put

my confidence not in any human being including myself, rather, help me to put my life on You, convinced of Your eternal goodness towards me. Amen.

13:9. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

False teaching is a real threat to effective christian living and we have been warned of the same. Such teachings can never make us mature followers of the Lord. Our heart is established only by sound doctrines and care is required of both the teachers and listernes of God's Word to accurately understand and communicate God's Word. Food in this verse, as evident from the following verses, refer to the sacrificial meat and associated food. Author asserts that such foods had not profited the Jews who are occupied with the physical aspects but never bothered to enquire about the reality behind those elements. Recall that those sacrifices were actually pointing to the sacrifice on the cross and ignoring the significance of the work of Christ on the cross will benefit none. In short, what takes us to maturity and effectiveness is sound doctrines derived from an accurate understanding of the scripture. **Prayer:** Father, we praise You for the sacrifice of Your Son on the cross through which we have grace for an effective life even in this world. Lord, I pray that You establish me with the sound doctrine and give the grace not to waste my life on trivialities.

13:10. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 For the bodies of those

animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. 12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Even the old testament high priest cannot eat from certain sacrificial offerings indicating the reverence to be given to those sacrifices. Verse 11 is also details of another sacrifice pointing again to the seriousness to be given to them. Now what is interesting is that the author brings a connection between one aspect of an old testament sacrifice and an event in the life of Jesus. Such connections are plenty in the book of Hebrews. Such connections are to be understood as the life of Christ on this earth and the work of Christ on cross as realities and the corresponding aspects of the old testament as the shadows. While the shadows had great significance in the old testament dispensation where the reality was not yet realized, they lost their prominence with the first advent of Jesus. That does not mean one should discard the old testament, rather look carefully into it for enriching the understanding of the person of Jesus and His sacrificial work on the cross. **Prayer:** Father, marvelous is how the redemptive plan was progressively revealed to us. Lord, I pray for greater and deeper understanding of who You are and what You have done so that it will transform me to Your likeness. Amen.

13:13. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The term 'outside the camp' referring to an aspect of the old tes-

tament sacrifice is actually a pointer to the manner of the Lord's death on the cross. Although the trial happened in the city, He was crucified outside the city is an indication of dishonor shown to the Lord even at choosing the location of His death. If we love the Lord, the exhortation is, be willing to receive dishonor from the people of the world who defamed the Lord. **Prayer:** Father, I praise for the marvelous way the scripture shows how the Lord Jesus bore reproach for our salvation. Lord, I confess that often I crave for the honor from the world and reluctant to identify with You before this world fearing their reproach. Have mercy on me and I pray for Your grace to stand with You bearing whatever reproach this world gives me. Amen.

13:15. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

Thanking and praising God continually is evidence of victorious christian living. Praising means we accept what God is doing in my life and in the world is the best thing that can happen, even if it is contrary to my expectation. Praise can be a sacrifice when we thank God in adverse circumstances. In such situations, we may be filled with negative thoughts like anger, sadness, bitterness, etc. Praising God in such situations requires sacrificing our natural responses and consciously acknowledging what God does is ultimately the best for us and also for others, since our God is infinitely more wiser and loving than what we can imagine. Verse 16 expands the exhortation from an attitude to an action. Praising God should not be restricted by thoughts and words. Rather, earnest praising outflows to gener-

ous actions that may bring others closer to God. The exhortation is very emphatic: we should take deliberate steps so that we may not forget this in the business of mundane life. The reward is also equally emphatic: God is pleased with such actions and there is nothing more rewarding than giving pleasure to God through our feeble efforts. **Prayer:** Father, we praise You for all what is happening in and around our life, for they are all according to Your sovereign and moral will resulting as ultimately good for us. Lord, I confess my failure in praising You by occupying my mind with various negative thoughts causing displeasure in You. Instead, I pray for Your grace to please You by my praising and good works. Amen.

13:17. Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

As a faithful follower of the Lord, every Christian must be accountable to the respective church elders. It is a God ordained rule for every believer. It is not easy to obey or to be submissive to the elders, however, this is what God expects from us. When believers obey and submit to their elders voluntarily and willingly then it is a matter of joy and it will be beneficial to the believers. On the other hand, when a believer resists the elders and brings great difficulty in their ministry, that is neither helpful to the church nor to the believers. A believer's life is not a one-dimensional relation with God alone. Rather it has a second dimension towards other members of the church. A believer may deceive himself by saying that I am fully obedient to God and fully submissive to Christ and then resisting their elders actually shows

that he's not truly submissive or obedient to the Lord. Therefore, the test of our obedience to the Lord and submission to the Lord's decision in our relation with the Church leadership. On the other hand, the elders must not forget their responsibility also. It is not merely conducting meetings or preaching, rather the ultimate objective of ministry is to ensure the souls of their congregation steadily grow in the Lord. **Prayer:** Father, we praise You for You care for the progress of our soul and designed the Church as a means of that. Lord, forgive me every time I resisted the Church leadership. Lord, I pray for grace to voluntarily obey and submit to my leadership. Lord, I also pray as a leader of the church, to help me to be careful about the spiritual condition of every member of my church. Amen.

13:18. Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. 19 But I especially urge you to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

It may be surprising to some that the author of this book with his very high spiritual standing is requesting the prayer support of the readers, many of them are struggling in their faith. On one hand it shows the humility of the author which needs to be imitated by mature Christian leaders that they should not consider them beyond the need of prayer by common believers of their congregation. On the other hand, it shows the concept of biblical prayer where God is pleased to answer the prayer when His people ask in faith, unity and love. As a lay person, I should realize the value of my prayer before the Lord and earnestly pray for the leaders and rulers of the Lord's church. **Prayer:** Father, I praise You for even my prayer is valuable before You and

seek Your grace to pray effectively for Your servants and fellow believers. Amen.

13:20. Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

These verses contain a very solemn benediction loaded with adoration and supplication that can be used in congregational meetings. God the Father is referred to as the author of peace between man and God. He accomplished this through raising Jesus from the dead, a perfect act of accepting the sacrifice of Jesus. By this peace is established between God and anyone who believes in the work of Christ on the cross. Jesus is portrayed as the greatest Shepherd, who not only died for us, but also leading and guiding us constantly on the way to heaven. The basis of this relationship is the everlasting covenant He made with us by the shedding of His blood on the cross. It is His covenantal commitment that those who put faith in His work will be made perfect. He enables us to do good work that will please Him. When we think these things our response is an outburst of attributing glory to Him. Amen. **Prayer:** Father, I praise You for establishing peace with You through the everlasting covenant made through Your Son. Lord, You are my great Shepherd and thank You for making me complete in You. Lord, I pray for greater grace to do good works that pleases You and thereby give You the adoration due to You. Amen.

13:22. And I appeal to you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words. 23 Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

The author is very sensitive to the readers of his epistle for he knows that the exhortations are heavy and convincing. Such exhortations may not be soothing to ears and appealing to a natural man. Maybe the author wanted to convey his care and concern for them, but for some unknown reason could write this letter briefly. Nevertheless, he is glad to inform them of the release of Timothy from the prison and the prospect of personally visiting his readers along with Timothy. These words manifest the brotherly love between the author and the readers: such should be warmth of love among the members of the church. **Prayer:** Father, how beautiful is when your servants exhibit the love which in turn is a reflection of Your love. Lord, I confess my lack for such a love among my brethren and pray for Your grace to show the love and receive the love. Amen.

13:24. Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you. 25 Grace be with you all. Amen. [\[Go to contents\]](#)

This book is not written to any specific church or a person and is probably to be written to scattered churches and believers. Hence the final exhortation is to greet the respective rulers of the church, namely the elders and deacons. That means the believers should respect and be subject to their rulers, and should have a vibrant relationship with them. Needless to say that this verse once again emphasizes the bib-

lica design of a believer's growth through their local church which is ruled by elders and deacons. In other words, it implies that every believer should be part of a local church and should be ruled by their elders and deacons. Every believer must answer two questions: who is your ruler, and are you ruled by them? Similarly, every elder should answer this question: Do you know whom you should rule and are you ruling them in the way the Word of God exhorts? Sadly, these days, we seldom get a clear answer to these questions. Finally, The book beautifully ends with a final benediction of the Grace of God to all the readers. Grace that saved us and the same grace that is needed to complete our journey to heaven and to enjoy heaven. **Prayer:** Father, thank you for the way you have designed the growth of a believer through the local church led by elders and deacons. O Lord, forgive me when I fail to submit to those who rule over my soul. Lord, now I pray that you give me the grace to submit my rulers to Your glory and my edification. Amen.

15 Conclusion

The book of Hebrews is a powerful and complex letter arguing for the superiority of Jesus Christ over the Old Covenant system. It presents Jesus as the ultimate high priest and the final, perfect sacrifice, surpassing the Levitical priesthood and temple rituals. The author urges Jewish Christians to persevere in their faith, not to return to Judaism, and to find assurance in Jesus as the founder and perfecter of their faith. **Prayer:** Heavenly Father, We thank you for the book of Hebrews. We are grateful for its profound truths that reveal the supremacy of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you for showing us that Jesus is the ultimate high priest and the perfect, once-for-all sacri-

fice, who has completed the work of our salvation. We pray that the message of this book would strengthen our faith and encourage us to persevere. Help us to fix our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, and to draw near to Your throne of grace with confidence. May we never grow weary but hold fast to the hope we have in Him. In Jesus's name we pray, Amen.

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