

# GOING THE DISTANCE WITH GOD:

LESSONS IN HEBREWS FOR THE TIMES  
WHEN WE'RE TEMPTED TO QUIT

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SEEING THEN THAT  
WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST,  
THAT IS PASSED INTO THE HEAVENS,  
JESUS THE SON OF GOD,  
LET US HOLD FAST OUR PROFESSION.  
HEBREWS 4:14

LET US RUN WITH PATIENCE  
THE RACE THAT IS SET  
BEFORE US,  
LOOKING UNTO JESUS  
THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER  
OF OUR FAITH.  
HEBREWS 12:1-2



CHAPLAIN SERVICES



# INTRODUCTION

Quitting is not an option with God. He doesn't give up—on us. He says: “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Heb 13:5\*). But there are times when each of us is faced with the decision to go on or turn back. But what is there to turn back to? And Who are we turning away from? These are some of the questions that the Book of Hebrews answers powerfully.

We all need encouragement and this book describes itself as “a word of exhortation” (Heb 13:22). Exhortation is defined as “*to urge or advise earnestly*” (*Oxford American Dictionary*). And there is an urgency in this inspiring letter

I've come to a greater appreciation of the great themes and reasoning of Paul the apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews. (I will not digress too far about the subject of authorship except to say that one of the earliest Greek New Testament manuscripts, dated around 200 AD, places Hebrews, between Romans and 1 Corinthians in a collection of Paul's writings). It is a consummate work of logic, eloquence and spiritual depth.

Supremely prominent in Hebrews is Christ as our great High Priest and His ministry in the sanctuary (only in Hebrews is He so described). So, throughout this study, you will see depictions of various articles of the sanctuary and a *Sanctuary Primer* with biblical data to assist you in your study of this theme.

May these lessons inspire you to ‘*go the distance with God*’ ! Dig into His Word that means life to all who embrace its Author—and “so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb 10:25).

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*\*Please note: All verses from Hebrews, unless otherwise indicated, are from the King James Version, and all emphasis has been added.*



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# EXHORTATION

*And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation:  
for I have written a letter unto you in few words.*

*Hebrews 13:22*

Hebrews is about exhortation. We know that because of what has just been quoted. Exhortation, as we learned, is to “urge or advise earnestly”; it is to appeal on the basis of strong reasons. Within this “word of exhortation” there is also deep exposition or reasoning and linked with it are passages of passionate appeal and warning.

In Hebrews deep **exposition or explanation** of important themes is followed by strong **exhortation or encouragement**. Five times it flows in the following structure:

I. Exposition	Heb 1:1—14
<b>Exhortation</b>	<b>Heb 2:1—4</b>
II. Exposition	Heb 2:5—3:6a
<b>Exhortation</b>	<b>Heb 3:6b—4:16</b>
III. Exposition	Heb 5:1—10
<b>Exhortation</b>	<b>Heb 5:11—6:20</b>
IV. Exposition	Heb 7:1—10:18
<b>Exhortation</b>	<b>Heb 10:19—10:39</b>
V. Exposition	Heb 11:1-40
<b>Exhortation</b>	<b>Heb 12:1-13:25</b>

*William G. Johnson, Issues in the Book of Hebrews, p 18, adapted*

The following is an abbreviated but, I trust, faithful portrayal of the compelling reasoning—often referred to as ‘the argument’—of Hebrews.

**I.** In broadest strokes, the first exposition uplifts Jesus in the highest language. He is equal with God and better than angels, therefore we must take more earnest heed lest we let the things He has said *slip* away. We must be careful not to *neglect* so great salvation.

**II.** Then Paul reasons that Jesus is worthy of more glory even than Moses, as much more glory as the builder of a house is more worthy of honor than the house itself. Therefore, we must take care not to become a casualty to the deceitfulness of sin! We must rather be diligent to enter God’s rest. We must not forget the lessons of our past in the history of Israel. “There remaineth therefore a rest [lit. the keeping of a sabbath] to the people of God” (Heb 4:9). We must labor to enter into the kind of rest modeled for us by our Maker. We may have infirmities but we have a great high priest which can help us press on in spite of them!

**III.** The third section contains an elaborate discussion of the priesthood of Jesus and how it is patterned after that of Melchisedec. Jesus, though highly privileged, was a real person who suffered and thus “became the author of eternal salvation unto them that obey him” (Heb 5:9). Paul then strongly warns against spiritual lethargy and dullness. We need to grow into “full age” (5:14) even “perfection”, that is spiritual maturity (6:1). A failure to grow is extremely dangerous and may lead to spiritual death. “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak” (Heb 6:9).

With God's promise and oath, with God's Son we have a "strong consolation", we have a "refuge", we have a hope like an anchor, both sure and steadfast" that is connected to Jesus our High Priest, and His priesthood is "forever"! **Never give up!** Go the distance with God!

**IV.** The next four chapters make clear that we have a priest who is forever "able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (7:24-25). His is "a more excellent ministry" and He is the "mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" even the promises of God! (8:6). God pledges to write his laws upon our minds and hearts. He promises to accomplish, through Jesus, all that the old covenant services of ancient Israel foreshadowed: "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:13:14). Through Christ we are to boldly "enter into the holiest [lit. 'holies'; i.e. the sanctuary] by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way...and having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb 10:19-22). We are to "draw near" (v22) and *never* "draw back (10:38).

**V.** Finally, comes a thrilling exposition of what faith is and what it does. Faith enables us to draw near. Faith in God pleases God (Heb 11:6). Faith sees the invisible and therefore endures (11:27). Faith will enable us to run with patience, as our spiritual ancestors did, the race set before us (12:1-2). Faith will lead us to "endure chastening" from a loving and tender heavenly Father, knowing that it comes because the Lord loves us (12:6-7). Faith will lead us to "lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees" (12:12). Faith, spiritual eyesight, will cause us to look diligently "lest any man fail of the grace of God"; lest any root of bitterness neglected cause trouble and "thereby many be defiled" (12:15). Faith looks higher than the things of this world and beholds "the heavenly Jerusalem" and "an innumerable company of angels" and "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" (Heb 12:22-24). This is where we must look. Faith never forgets the practical realities of representing God before the world. Faith leads us to "entertain strangers" and to cherish the sacred ties with our leaders (13:7, 17). Faith never forgets that Jesus is "the same yesterday, to day and for ever" (13:8). To save us, He "suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach" (13:13). Faith never forgets that "here we have no continuing city, but we seek on to come" (Heb 13:14). Finally, faith believes this promise of God:

*"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead  
our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep,  
through the blood of the everlasting covenant,  
Make you perfect in every good work to do his will,  
working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight,  
through Jesus Christ;  
to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Hebrews 13:20-21

# S O N

*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past  
unto the fathers by the prophets,  
hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...*

Hebrews 1:1-2

God is the Ultimate Communicator. He spoke through Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah and many others. He spoke through graphic visions and dreams. He spoke in ways that arrested people's attention. On one occasion Jeremiah wore a yoke around his neck as he preached to the people of coming Babylonian bondage (Jer 27-28). In ancient times God spoke through the prophets but "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (1:2).

With these words begins the contrast that Hebrews forcefully makes between Christ and *anything* or *any* other created thing. He is higher, wiser, and better. And God has "spoken unto us by His Son". He is the creator of "the worlds" some translations read "the universe". He is the "brightness" of God's glory (1:3). This means that Jesus is indistinguishable from the very presence of God and as John adds, He is "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). In Jesus "dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

The strong emphasis on the stature and importance of the Son clearly reveals the importance of the message He brings to us from God. And it also reveals the value God places on those blessed to receive such a message! God says we are worth a direct message from the Most High. In this initial fact that God has spoken to us by His Son, he says that He loves us. He desires our love and affection and He wants us to live the more abundant life.

And then comes this awesome statement referring to the Son, that He is: "upholding all things by the word of his power" (1:3). The Son has made all things *and* He continues to sustain the entirety of His vast creation. By conservative estimates there are hundreds of billions of galaxies in the observable universe. These are the 'families' of stars each of which contains hundreds of billions of stars. The Milky Way Galaxy—our 'neighborhood'—contains between 100 and 400 billion stars. This, of course, does not include the planets in various solar systems that might be found circling those stars as does ours.

Son is a rich concept in Hebrews. It presents us with the mystery of the Godhead because the Son is "express image" of God Himself. Words are piled up in an attempt to express just how great He is. Put quite simply God sent His Best to redeem us and to convey the inner thoughts of God to each one of us. Angels are great but none of them alone or all of them put together come close to the majesty of the Son. Angels worship Him! They are not "my Son" (1:5). God addresses the Son "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (1:8). Jesus is no ordinary person—He is the Son of God, in the fullest, and most exalted sense that we can comprehend.

The full divinity of the Son is the cornerstone of our endurance in this race of life. His power and strength are to be made perfect or complete in our weakness (see 2 Cor 12:9). His divinity speaks to the desperate situation in which the human family had fallen. Without a *divine* hand to lift us up we would perish.

His is a position of superiority. He is “a son over his own house” and is therefore “is worthy of more glory than Moses (Heb 3:6, 3).

Think of Jesus as a bridge over a vast, deep and dark gulf of sin. God is on one side. Mankind is on the other side. And sin is separates the two (see Isa 59:1-2). Christ is anchored in the divine and human and thus able to provide a way over the depths of evil that have come between us and God. This is why we need and why “we have a great high priest...Jesus the Son of God” so, “let us hold fast our profession” (Heb 4:14).

The high position of Jesus as Son of God did not insulate Him from the difficulties of life: “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb 5:8). If anything, the Son of God was tested or tempted to a higher degree than we ever will be. Not one of us will ever be so exposed to the power of sin as Jesus was and yet he never gave in to sin (see Heb 4:15).

It also says of the Son that He Himself “purged our sins” (1:3). This accomplishment includes His earthly mission and anticipates the full effect of His heavenly ministry. He said to His Father: “I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do do” (John 17:4). He went the distance! And because He did, we can too!

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### **Matthew 17:5**

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

### **Romans 8:32**

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

# ANGELS

*“And let all the angels of God worship him.”*

Hebrews 1:6

While angels are not the primary focus of the book of Hebrews, nevertheless they occupy a prominent position in it. They serve by way of contrast to demonstrate that, as exalted as angels are—the Son of God is “made so much better than the angels” (1:4). Having said that, it is also true that angels are seen frequently through the sacred record. They stand guard at the gates of Eden (Gen 3:24); they sang at the creation of the world (Job 38:4, 7); they are depicted graphically in the sanctuary in woven threads of gold in the curtains forming the ceiling of the tabernacle (Ex 26:1 cf 39:3) and in the veil between the holy and most holy places (Ex 26:31) and in the two golden cherubim with their wings outstretched at either end of the mercy seat (Ex 25:18-20).

Angels were involved in the giving of the law (Acts 7:53). It was an angel that prepared nourishment for discouraged Elijah as he fled from Jezebel (1 K 19:5-7). It was an angel that struck down one hundred and eighty five thousand Assyrian soldiers that were poised to attack Jerusalem (Isa 37:36). The presence of angels is witnessed everywhere in the New Testament. They are prominently active at the birth of Jesus (Lk 2:13-14), at the close of His temptation in the wilderness (Mk 1:13), at His resurrection where the angel is depicted as “a young man ...clothed in a long white garment” (Mk 16:5), and also at His ascension (Ac 1:10-11).

In the history of the early church, they deliver the apostles from prison (Acts 5:19-20; Acts 12:7-10). An angel directed Peter to the home of Cornelius (Act 10:3-6). An angel visits judgment on the blasphemous murderer of the apostle James (Act 12:23). An angel brings assurance to Paul in the midst of a storm at sea (Acts 27:23-24).

In Revelation, angels are seen in unnumbered throngs encircling the throne of God in worship (Rev 7:11). “And let all the angels of God worship him” that is the Son of God (Heb 1:6); they are also described being “spirits and his ministers a flame of fire” (Heb 1:7). They are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation” (Heb 1:14). They are sent by Jesus Himself to care for His earthly family. Truly, they are “his angels” (Matt 13:41).

In ancient times Jacob had sinned against his family and was forced to flee out of country. To all appearances his future looked dark. But as he journeyed one night he laid down to sleep. And He dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it” (Gen 28:12). The ladder symbolizes the connecting link between heaven and earth that is Jesus Christ. The angels do His will. He loves and cares for each one of us. They do as well.

A remark concerning Peter is made by his friends the night of his rescue from prison. Before they realized he had been set free he came knocking at their door in the middle of the night. They doubted that it was he and said “It is his angel” (Acts 12:15). Each of us has that

angel. Each of us can go the distance with God because of the ministering care of these heaven sent messengers.

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**Psalm 91:9-12**

Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

**Psalm 34:4-7**

I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

**Revelation 12:7-9**

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

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“Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee’ (Rev 3:10), is the Saviour’s promise. He would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than leave one soul that trusts in Him to be overcome by Satan.”

*Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy 560:2*



# BROTHER

*For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one:  
for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,  
Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren,  
in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.*

Hebrews 2:11-12

God has not only spoken to us in His Son but has, through Him, become one of us. He is Immanuel—God with us (see Matt 1:23).

Hebrews is clear as to the purpose, extent and consequence of Jesus' humanity. He became a human being to suffer. To bring about our salvation Jesus had to endure what we experience. "It became him"—God—"in bringing many sons [and daughters] unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb 2:10). Jesus suffered the pains of misunderstanding, abuse, hatred, rejection, disappointment and much more. His humanity enabled Him to experience and appreciate first-hand all that we go through. His humanity speaks to His love for us and says that He is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters (see Heb 2:11 cf Matt 12:50).

There is much that Jesus' humanity accomplishes. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb 2: 14-15). Ultimately Christ's death will result in the destruction of the devil—the author of sin and death. And Jesus' death sets us free from the intimidating fear of death which has afflicted the human race for ages. Jesus has interposed Himself between us and our adversary. He has taken our place and accepted in Himself the fearsome results of all our mistakes and rebellion and sin. He did this because of His great love for us. This shows that nothing that can separate us from His love. (See Rom 8:35-39.)

Jesus' complete identity with our humanity continues to have direct consequences in our daily life and in our future. "Wherefore in all things it behoved [*to behoove means a duty, a responsibility; it is something suitable or appropriate*] him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb 2: 17-18).

In the days of Elijah, the prophet gave in to the pressures of discouragement. But an angel met him as he fled in fear and did not rebuke him but *fed* him! And he said: "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee" (1 Kings 19:7). That nourishment well represents Him Who said of Himself: "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die" (John 6:50). Without Jesus, the journey is too great for us.

We, as His fellow human-beings have the tremendous benefit of our connection with Him. He is bound to us with ties that will never be broken. He is “appointed heir” (Heb 1:2) and through Him we have “the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb 9:15). He is our God. And He is our Brother. And we are His family for He says: “Behold I and the children which God hath given me” (Heb 2:13). And He is our “merciful and faithful high priest”. That mercy is directed toward our doubts and fears and His faithfulness means that He will never leave us nor forsake us without His all-powerful help (see Hebrews 13:5).

Jesus our Brother means the ultimate end of evil, and deliverance from fear in the present and His abiding and powerful Presence as we journey with Him toward the days of eternity.

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### **Isaiah 9:6**

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:  
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God,  
The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

### **Matthew 12:49-50**

And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

### **John 6:51**

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.



# R E S T

*So there must still be a promised Sabbath of Rest for God's people.*

Hebrews 4:9 Goodspeed

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

Matthew 11:28

You cannot go the distance with God unless you experience rest. Life is not a sprint it is more like a marathon. But even marathoners know the value of rest after a long race. How much more do those who are still running “the race that is set before us” (Heb 12:1-2) need rest! Hebrews has important things to say about rest. It is often referred to as God’s rest or “my rest” (Heb 3:11; 4:3, 5).

Rest is a particular sensation involving relief, tranquility, serenity, inner peace and refreshment. Rest is needed by every facet of our being—physical, emotional, and spiritual. And God stands ready and willing to provide more than we can ask or think (see Ephesians 3:20).

When God brought the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt it was His purpose to lead them into the promised land. After demonstrating His awesome power to deliver His people from the armies of Pharaoh (Ex 14:30-31), He provided bread from heaven and water from the rock (Neh 9:15). After this “basic training” God led them to the borders of Canaan in preparation to enter into their destination. But at this very point the people rebelled and refused to believe that God could overthrow the giants in the land (see Num 13:26 – 14:4).

This incident of provocation or tempting God is part of the backdrop to Hebrews 3:7-4:11. Because of their stubborn spirit, God swore “in His wrath, They shall not enter into my rest” (Heb 3:11). In this setting it was their destination that was described as God’s rest. This is pointed out in at least two other scriptures that the Land of Canaan—their promised, permanent home—was to be their rest (see Deut 25:19 and Josh 1:13). Their failure to enter this rest is linked to unbelief: “And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief” (Heb 3:18-19).

Unbelief surely leads to paralysis of the soul. It is termed “hardening” and affects the spiritual capacity or “the heart”. It brings spiritual progress to a halt and actually leads to going backwards. This was ancient Israel’s undoing in the wilderness and stands as a warning to God’s people in all ages—especially as we stand on the borders of the eternal Rest Christ’s return.

But rest in this passage involves not only the promised land of Canaan. It also is a spiritual reality which only yields its blessing to the believer. So the apostle says, “For we which have believed do enter into rest...” (Heb 4:3). This rest of faith we are to experience. Rest means to surrender and receive God’s blessings in His appointed time and way. (This is why Isaiah says that “the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest” (Isaiah 57:20).

God's rest is also linked to the seventh day, "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works" (Heb 4:4). This is an important part of God's rest in which we are to participate: "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (Heb 4:10). That is participating in God's rest involves resting in a similar way to how He rested at the close of the sixth day of Creation Week.

Life is hectic and we can be harassed with a multitude of cares. God desires us to see His power to restore and refresh us as we "cease from our works". This is why he says here: "So then, there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God" (Heb 4:9 RSV). We need this rest to go the distance!

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#### **Exodus 16:23**

And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

#### **Exodus 31:16-17**

Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath, to observe the sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.

#### **Deuteronomy 12:9**

For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.

#### **Exodus 23:12**

Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.

#### **Psalms 37:7**

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

#### **Isaiah 66:22 -23**

For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

# HIGH PRIEST

*Now of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum:  
We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne  
of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary  
and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.*

Hebrews 8:1-2

Here is the central point of Hebrews: Jesus is our high priest! This fact is also *central to going the distance with God*, for it is written: “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession” (Heb 4:14). In other words, with Jesus—we can do it!

Jesus is our great High Priest. What does that mean? He is the personification of compassion. He is one “from among men” and offers “both gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Heb 5:1). He has “compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way” (v 2). He “is called of God” to serves the people in place of God and approach God in place of the people (v 4).

According to Hebrews, the high priest is our forerunner. He goes before us and represents us in the presence of God (Heb 6:18b-20). His presence is described there as “an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil” (Heb 6:19). This means stability and steadiness in answer to the danger of drifting or letting things “slip” (Heb 2:1).

Christ’s priesthood is after the order of Melchisedec. This point is mentioned no less than seven times. (Heb 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:11, 15, 17, 21). Because of this precedent He continues “for ever” (Heb 6:20; 7:17, 21)—He is our priest in perpetuity: “But this man [Jesus], because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (7:25). Our great high priest is our Savior. His intercession is powerful to “save to the uttermost” or “evermore” the margin reads. He is supremely effective in His work of redeeming and keeping those who put their trust in Him. He serves as the eternal bond between God’s heart and the heart of humanity—He represents our highest interests before the Father as well as the God’s interests before mankind and the Universe.

Like all priests he offers sacrifice. Like all priests he approaches God with blood. Unlike others, His sacrifice is Himself and the blood is His own: “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come,...by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us...How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:11-14). This means access.

Finally, His priestly ministry is inspiration to us: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for

us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; 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” (Heb 10:19-22).

**John 1:14 NASB margin**

*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt [tabernacled, mg.] among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

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**The Desire of Ages 25:1**

In stooping to take upon Himself humanity, Christ revealed a character the opposite of the character of Satan. But He stepped still lower in the path of humiliation. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:8. As the high priest laid aside his gorgeous pontifical robes, and officiated in the white linen dress of the common priest, so Christ took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself the priest, Himself the victim.



# SANCTUARY

*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands,  
which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself,  
now to appear in the presence of God for us.*

Hebrews 9:24

Of Jesus it is said that He is: “A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Hebrews 8:1-2). We have a high priest *and* we have holy places (Greek: *ton hagion*, literally ‘the holies’). What is the significance of this? Paul writes concerning the old covenant that it “had also ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary” (Heb 9:1). His use of the word ‘also’ implies that the new covenant has a sanctuary as well. And it does. This is the sanctuary that is now to be the focal point of our faith.

The sanctuary in ancient times was the center of the life of the people of God. If for some reason they were living at a distance they were to pray toward Jerusalem and God’s house and God would hear their cries for help and forgiveness (1 Kings 8:29-30; 35, 38, 42, 44). The Temple or Sanctuary—God’s House—was to be the focus of their spiritual life. So it is to be for us now. We are to follow Christ by faith where He is ministering for us in the heavenly sanctuary.

In this house God shows how special we are and how particular He is about our worship. Here in Heb 8:5 it recounts Moses was commanded: “See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.” In this same text it refers to the temporary and limited nature of the earthly sanctuary and its services: “Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things” (Heb 8:5a). The ancient services were designed to point to the reality—not obscure it. The worship of God is something out of this world!

Others have affirmed the truth about God and earthly temples: “Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet” (Ac 7:48) and “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24). Ultimately Stephen’s quotation stands: “What house will ye build me? Saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?” (Acts 7:49).

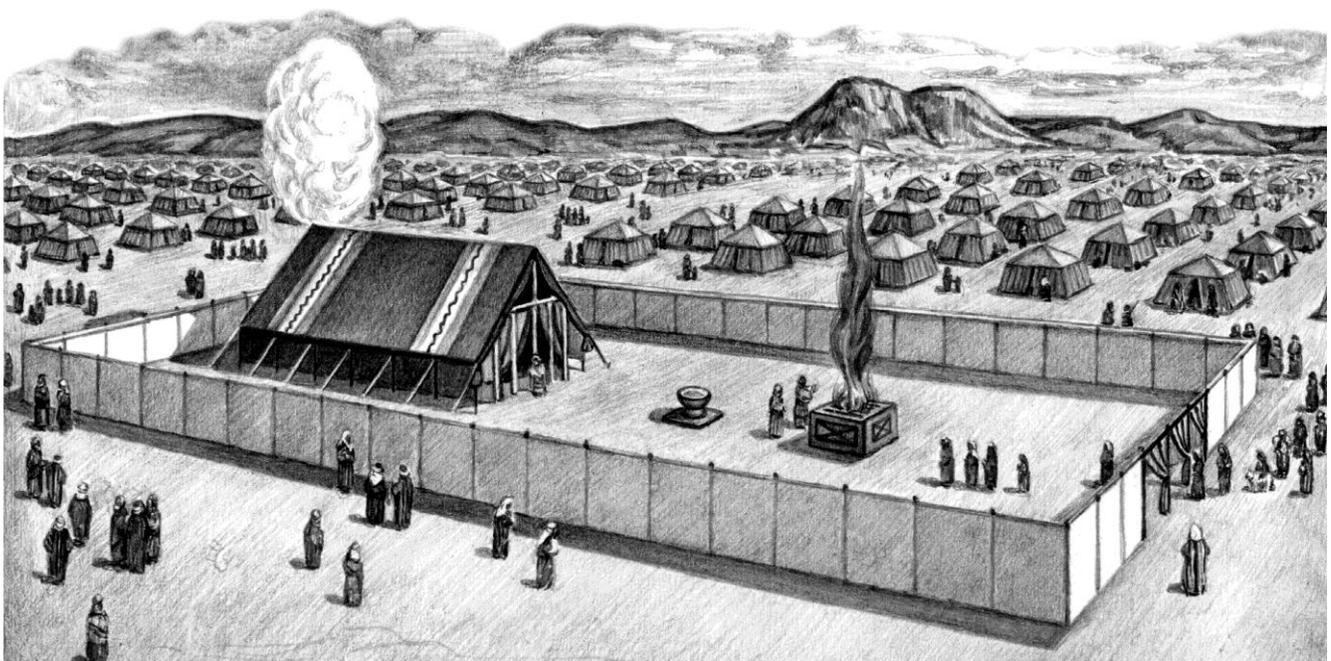
The focus of the present time is to be on the unseen temple above where Christ our High Priest ministers for us. By faith we see Him and follow Him and seek Him and receive the gifts of His ministry. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above...” (James 1:17)—it comes from Jesus in the Sanctuary. Jesus says: “I am from above” (John 8:23) and so true wisdom is from above (James 3:17). The Bible consistently draws our attention away from man to God and the temple that He has erected (Heb 8:2).

Understanding Jesus’ location and His work for us enables us to intelligently cooperate with Him and truly follow Him—to *go the distance with God!* “Having therefore, brethren,

boldness to enter into the holiest [again, literally, *the holies or holy places*—i.e. the sanctuary] by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way...through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith..." (Heb 10:19-22).

God is a lover of process. He delights to implement steps that serve as a "ladder" to draw out our cooperation and with Him, accomplish the impossible. All He asks of us is that we take the next step. There are a number of steps in the sanctuary experience. We must come to the door and Jesus is the door (John 10:7, 9). We must come to Jesus. We then enter through Jesus. We then place our hand—that is we identify ourselves with Jesus the One who takes our place—our sacrifice. Jesus is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29). We then confess our sins and give them up—place them upon Jesus and "kill the sacrifice". This means we acknowledge that it was our sins which brought about the death of God's Son (Isaiah 53:6). Then the priest who is also Jesus (Heb 4:14-16) will take His blood and with it cover our sins (1 John 1:9).

Through it all we are to believe that He takes our names upon His lips and prays for us until His work as our High Priest is complete. We are to maintain strong confidence in His power to complete the work He has begun in us (Phil 1:6). We are to hold fast to Him until the end. We are to run with patience the race that is set before us and never take our eyes off of the One whose love for us has won our hearts and restores our souls.



# SANCTUARY PRIMER

“Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary” (Ps 77:13). The Sanctuary describes God’s way of coming close to His people and the only way in which they can come close to Him. This required a special *place* (the court, the holy place and the most holy place), using special *people* (the priests) and special *procedures* (sacrifices). Detailed instructions about all this were given by God. Sin necessitates a mediator—one who acts in between God and the people. One who can get right up next to the people and as close as possible to God. Procedures made plain that sin is so toxic, deadly and contaminating, that only through God’s way could its power be overcome. Since the sanctuary is so prominent in Hebrews this overview is included here for your further study.

## I. The Priests

Garments (Ex 28:1-43) for Aaron, i.e. the high priest “...for glory and for beauty” (v2)

- 1) the breastplate (vss 15-30)
- 2) the ephod (vss 5-14)
- 3) the robe (vss 31-35)
- 4) the turban (vss 36-38)
- 5) the tunic (v 39a)
- 6) the sash (v 39b)

The garments for Aaron’s sons, i.e. the ‘common’ priests were “for glory and beauty” (Ex 28:40).

- 1) tunics
- 2) sashes
- 3) hats

Dedication of the priests (29:1-35) – These services were intricate, multi-faceted, and meaningful.

## II. The Court of the Tabernacle (Ex 27:9-19)

Overall dimensions of the court: 100 cu (150 ft) x 50 cubits (75 ft) x 5 cu high (7½ ft). Note: 1 cubit = approx. 18 inches. For the gate of the court there will be a screen 20 cu (30 ft) long set on 4 pillars and sockets. All pillars will have bands of silver, hooks of silver, sockets of bronze.

## III. The Altar of Burnt Offering (Ex 27:1-8)

5 x 5 x 3 cu. (7 ½’ x 7 ½’ x 4 ½’). Acacia wood overlaid with bronze.

## IV. The Laver and Its Foot (Ex 30:17-21)

This was made of bronze and was for the priests to wash at. It was placed “between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar” (v 18).

## V. The Tabernacle (Ex 26:1-37)

*The Curtains:*

- Set 1: 10 curtains of fine linen 28 x 4 cu (42’ x 6 ft) 9.5 cu/14¼’ overlay.
- Set 2: 11 curtains of goats’ hair 30 x 4 cu (45’ x 6 ft) 10.5 cu/15¾’ overlay.
- Set 3: rams skins dyed red (v14a – no dimensions)
- Set 4: badger skins (v 14b – no dimensions)

*The Building: “acacia boards standing upright”* Ex 26:15

- 30 cu long x 9 cu wide x 10 cu high (45’ x 13½’ x 15’)
- Length: South, North = 20 boards @ 1½ cu. = 30 cu (45 ft)
- Ex 26:18, 20.

- Width: West = 6 boards @ 1½ cu. = 9 cu. (13½ ft) Ex 26:22 Each board = 10 cu long x 1½ cu wide v 15 (15’ x 2¼ ft).

*The Veil* woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen...with an artistic design of cherubim (v 31). This veil separates **the most holy place** which contains the ark from **the holy place** which has the altar of incense, table and lampstand.

*Four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold...hooks of gold...on sockets of silver (v 32). No height given.  
The Screen for the door of the tabernacle of blue, purple and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen (v 36).*

## **VI. The Gold Lampstand (Ex 25:31-40)**

Made of “one hammered piece of pure gold”—one talent (an Egyptian talent was 27 kg or 60 lbs; at today’s price [US\$1,217 as of 2015 = \$1.16 million]). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talent\\_\(measurement\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talent_(measurement)).

No dimensions of height are given. “How high do you want to lift the light?” —Leslie Hardinge, *Shadows of His Sacrifice*, p. 39

## **VII. The Table of Shewbread (Ex 25:23-30)**

2 x 1 x 1 ½ cu (3 x 2 ¼ x 1 ½ ft). Acacia wood overlaid with pure gold with a molding of gold all around.

## **VIII. The Altar of Incense (Ex 30:1-10)**

1 x 1 x 2 (18” x 18” x 36”) Acacia wood overlaid with gold.

## **IX. The Ark (Ex 25:10-22)**

2 ½ x 1 ½ x 1 ½ cubit (3¾ x 2¼ x 2¼ ft.). Acacia wood overlaid with gold inside out—with gold molding all around.

## **X. The Sacrifices**

The Burnt Offering Lev 1:1-17  
The Grain Offering Lev 2:1-16  
The Peace Offering Lev 3:1-17  
The Sin Offering Lev 4:1-35  
The Trespass Offering Lev 5:1-13  
The Red Heifer Num 19:1-10

## **XI. The Feasts of the Lord**

*Spring of the year*

Passover “on the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight” Lev 23:5

Unleavened Bread “on the fifteenth day of the same month” Lev 23:6

Firstfruits or Wave Sheaf “on the day after the Sabbath” presumably after the first seventh-day Sabbath after the harvest Lev 23:9-14

Weeks Lev 23:15-22

*Fall of the year*

Trumpets Lev 23:23-25

Day of Atonement Lev 23:26-32 cf Lev 16:1-34

Tabernacles Lev 23:33-44

## **XII. Building the Sanctuary**

The people were invited to participate in the construction of the sanctuary through freewill offerings. “Of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering” (Ex 25:2).

It was to be made strictly according to “the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof” (Ex 25:9).

God put His Spirit upon certain individuals to enable them to build (Ex 31:1-11).

Finally, the purpose of the sanctuary was made clear in Ex 25:8—

*“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”*

# COVENANT

*And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest...  
By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.*

Hebrews 7:20, 21

God's covenant involves God's commitment to redeem humanity. While your strength to stay true to God may be weak, His resolve and pledge to enable you is unshakeable! The new covenant has its foundation in the "better promises" (Heb 8:6) of God and has been developed in this world to meet the terrible emergency of sin and its consequences. At times it is referred to as "the everlasting covenant" (Gen 9:16; 17:7, 13, 19) to emphasize the unchangeable nature of God's purpose toward sinful humanity.

The word for testament and covenant (*diatheke*) is the same in the original Greek New Testament. Jesus is the surety or guarantee of a better testament. Jesus alone, because He is both God and man can serve in this capacity. He lives to make sure the provisions of the everlasting covenant of grace.

Covenant is one of the principal concepts in Scripture. At the present time we also make use of covenants in some of the most important aspects of our life. Marriage involves a covenant or promise. A mutual commitment is made between two parties to be faithful to stipulated conditions agreed to by both sides. Buying a house also involves a covenant. A pledge is made to make payments and in return we get the keys to the house. Understanding God's covenant gives us assurance that we can *go the distance with Him*.

Christ is said to be a mediator of a "better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Heb 8:6). This is "the second covenant" (Heb 8:7) which is brought about for the following reason: "For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers...because they continued not in my covenant...For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel...I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: (Heb 8:8-10). God's covenant has "better promises"—His promises. And because God's promises are trustworthy and because they are based on His infinite love and power, Jesus followed through with the pledge of the Godhead: He came and offered Himself to confirm the promises of God made so long before. This faithfulness to God's covenant renders the old covenant obsolete and it is "ready to vanish away" (Heb 8:13).

In the new covenant experience we are to learn to depend on God. We are to rest in God. We are to look to God. We are to rely on Him, His strength, His support. Jesus is the "hope set before us" and therefore an "an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb 6:19).

God's promises to redeem us, forgive us, cleanse us, teach us, empower us, restore us, and even to restore the world are the heart of the new covenant. "Now the God of peace, that

brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Heb 13:20-21).

Under the ministry of Jesus that which had been impossible—the taking away of sins and cleansing the conscience—now becomes a reality! What had been a shadow now meets reality in Jesus Christ.

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### **Jeremiah 31:3**

The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.

### **Isaiah 46:3-4**

Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

### **Hebrews 9:14**

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

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### **The Desire of Ages 834:2**

Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled.



# B L O O D

*Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest  
by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way...*

Hebrews 10:19-20

God's covenant—His promise to redeem us and restore us in love and loyalty—is a blood oath. It required blood—a symbol of life (see Lev 17:11)— to fulfill this pledge. This is why for ages blood was required as a sign of faith in the coming Savior. For thousands of years the way to successfully cross the gulf between man and God was to come with a blood sacrifice. This is why “Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain” (Heb 11:4). It was a blood sacrifice. It foreshadowed the sacrifice of God's beloved Son in behalf of guilty mankind.

Blood speaks of the death of Jesus. This shedding of blood, accomplishes very important things and serves to encourage us and preserve us in “the race that is set before us” (Heb 12:1).

By becoming one with humanity, Jesus is able through His death to “ destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb 2:14-15). We are set free by His shed blood! Our Savior literally, in our behalf, “resisted unto blood, striving against sin” (Heb 12:4). We can run with confidence in the fulfilled pledge of our Lord Jesus!

After His sacrifice on the cross and His resurrection, He ascended to enter into the sanctuary above “by his own blood...having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb 9:12). His blood is powerful to effect forgiveness and cleansing for all confessed sin. The apostle reasons that if the blood of bulls and goats purified the flesh in the ancient sanctuary service, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:14).

Blood sealed the covenant (Heb 9:18) and served to dedicate the earthly tabernacle and its vessels (Heb 9:20-21). “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” (Heb 9:22). It is still true. Because , “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb 10:4). Beyond forgiveness, as in ancient times a priest could not function with blood so Christ “that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” (Heb 13:12). It is the “blood of the covenant”, Christ's blood that sanctifies us or makes us holy—like Himself (Heb 10:29). It is a dangerous thing to disregard this experience and turn back to the world. The future of such a choice is “a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which will devour the adversaries” (Heb 10:27).

On the contrary, we have “boldness to enter into the holiest [the sanctuary] by the blood of Jesus”; it is a “way that is consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh” (Heb 10:19-20). Because Jesus' heart was broken, our hearts can be healed. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled [by Jesus' blood—that is the effect of His shed blood on the cross for our sins] from an evil conscience [a guilty

conscience], and our bodies washed with pure water [baptism by immersion]. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)” (Heb 10:22-23).

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**1 Peter 1:18-21**

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

**Revelation 5:9**

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

**Revelation 7:13-14**

And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

**Revelation 12:10-11**

And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

*His oath, His covenant, and blood,  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.*

*Edward Mote*

# FAITH

*But without faith it is impossible to please him:  
for he that cometh to God must believe that he is,  
and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Hebrews 11:6

The classic definition of faith is found here in Hebrews 11:1— “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Faith is the “sixth sense” of the saved. It is spiritual eyesight. This is what John Newton meant when he penned these immortal words in *Amazing Grace*: “I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.”

Faith enables us to see things that haven’t happened yet such as in prophecy. It helps us to see things in the past and their meaning; even when those who witnessed them at the time did not grasp their true significance. For example: the resurrection of Christ. People don’t typically rise from the dead but this was the message of the angels and Jesus Himself. Thomas doubted and demanded to see—that is see with his natural eyesight. Jesus gently rebuked this spirit and said: “Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

Faith is so important to God that without it, we are told: “it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Heb 11:6). Faith is the key to entry into the land of promise (see Heb 3:19); it is the condition to experiencing the rest of the saints (Heb 4:3).

Faith is not simply a mental assent. It is an inner decision of the heart and mind—a yielding of the will to the revealed will of God—don’t miss this point—in obedience to God. This is why you will read throughout the eleventh chapter of Hebrews that faith led to certain and very specific actions. For example: “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb 11:7). Notice that Noah had never seen what he proclaimed was coming but he acted on the word of God.

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went” (Hebrews 11:8). There was much uncertainty about where God was leading but of one thing Abraham was sure: God was leading and he was determined to be faithful and obedient.

Faith is revealed by actions of conviction. Under the blessing of God these decisions accomplish the impossible. “Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised” (Heb 11:11). Faith is not a hunch about your abilities. It’s believing in the One you have found to be trustworthy.

Faith in God can enable an elderly couple to bear children. God can do the impossible. “Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky

in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable” (Heb 11:11-12). And when he was tested regarding the sacrifice of his son Isaac, it is written: “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son...Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure” (Heb 11:17, 19). He knew the power of God. He knew that Isaac was a miracle child to begin with and he trusted in God to fulfill his word even though, with the natural mind, he could not understand how.

These descendants of Abraham heard of the promises of God and came to the same conclusion that Abraham had experienced—that God is faithful! “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb 11:13).

Faith enables us to go the distance with God. It takes us through obstacles that might stop those who cherish unbelief. Faith takes hold of the unseen hand of God.

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**Job 13:15**

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.

**Job 23:8**

Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him: But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

**1 John 5:4**

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

**Hebrews 11:20-22**

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

# PATIENCE

*Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,  
and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,  
Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.*

Hebrews 12:1-2

It takes time to enter the Promised Land—and it takes patience or endurance. Forty years elapsed between crossing the Red Sea and passing through the Jordan River. We are not to be slothful but “followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (Heb 6:12).

While justification or forgiveness comes the moment we ask for it, like the thief on the cross who received immediate assurance from Jesus when he asked for it or like the leper who begged for cleansing, we too may hear these words of acceptance when we call for help. Patience speaks to the journey of life and says “Hold on. It’s not as far as you think.” It has been said that ‘good things take time.’ This is true.

The life of faith *requires* patience to continue. “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:12-14). Sanctification is being made like Jesus—“going the distance”. And that takes time.

Paul writes of this: “To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, [they inherit] eternal life” (Rom 2:7). In other words we must keep going. We cannot afford to slow down, veer off the path, be distracted from our goal, or by any means ever go back.

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Heb 10:35-39).

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, [which is to say—you are not alone in the challenges you experience; there are heroes and heroines of faith who have run before you and finished their course!] let us lay aside every weight, [the heaviest weight that any of us carry is the burden of sin. Cast that burden—and everything that is pressing upon you on to the Lord.] and the sin which doth so easily beset us

*[everything in the context here says that this is the sin of unbelief], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. [This describes the circumstances of our life which we all must endure. The thing about this race is that we are not competing with others but with ourself! This race is won by all who run with patience—that is persistence and steadfast determination to go on to the finish line.] Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; [Here is the great key to success in this race—keeping the focus of your life on Christ. “Look unto me and be ye saved...” (Isaiah 45:22)] who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. [His motivation was in seeing you and me at His side—“seeing the travail of His soul” and being satisfied (Isaiah 53:11) All of us are called into the “kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9); we need the patience of Jesus as we run. We need the encouragement of His example and the help of His prayers. We need the confidence that what He has begun, He will complete; that through Him we are crossing the finish line of victory!] For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds (Heb 12:1-3). [Our trials are minimal in comparison with His. He ran through every phase of temptation and terror and ran on. He knew that everyone that would flee “for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb 6:18).]*

While challenging to accept and understand, at times, trials and troubles are a validation of our relationship to God as “sons” or children. “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons... Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb 12:5b-7a; 11 emphasis mine). God is at work in the very things that appear to be trying to slow us down. As Joseph said to his brothers—and he had suffered betrayal and rejection at the hands of these very men—“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive” (Gen 50:20). Joseph had “gone the distance with God” and never gave up!

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### **Matthew 20:22**

Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?



# PEOPLE

*And these all, having obtained a good report through faith,  
received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us,  
that they without us should not be made perfect.*

Hebrews 11:39-40

People matter to God. That is because “God is love” (1 John 4:8). And “God so loved,” the people of this world, “that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). He delivered Him up for us all (Rom 8:32).

The plan of salvation—or God’s purpose to pay our spiritual debt of sin and bring us back to love and loyalty, is squarely based on God’s love for people! The Book of Hebrews is about people that are acquainted with the message of the gospel but are in danger of neglecting it (Heb 2:1) or doubting it (Heb 3:12) and forgetting their past experience and departing from the safety of Christ (Heb 10:32-39).

There are strong warnings in Hebrews because of the serious dangers involved in refusing to listen to the Son of God who is speaking to us in the gospel (Heb 1:1-2; 12:24-25). But there’s more than just our own safety; going the distance with God means becoming like Him in character and purpose. His interests become our concerns. His love for others is to be mirrored in us!

And so there are a host of admonitions which reflect this concern in Hebrews. Going the distance means staying with the Lord and growing in our love for others at the same time. For example: “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers...” (Heb 5:12). He makes plain their spiritual lack and how a mature follower of Jesus is a teacher of others. This word “teacher” is the same word that was used to address Jesus. He was Master to His disciples. He taught them and served them in many ways. He was close to God and lived to serve people as well.

We are to show our concern for one another: “exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb 3:13). We are to daily take a proactive interest in the spiritual well-being of others. It is to become part of our life to encourage others. So it’s repeated later on: “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Heb 10:24-25). We must not isolate ourselves for very long. It may be necessary at times but in general we are to live an encouraging, outgoing life. This is part of our ministry and will have great effect on our spiritual health.

To go the distance with God you must go with others! You will not go alone. “Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame [those weak brothers or sisters who are watching you] be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed” (Heb 12:12-13). Be encouraged in the Lord!

Do not unwittingly mislead those who are watching you! Do not turn the lame—that is those who are spiritually crippled—out of the way. Your determination can make a difference in their spiritual restoration. “Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). A word of caution is introduced here. In your purpose to bless others—“following peace”—always remember your highest responsibility is to God—“holiness”—this is total or complete dedication to Him. This protects all else.

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled” (Heb 12:15). These roots of bitterness act like weeds in the soil of your soul. They can weaken faith unless they are rooted out. Untended they will do damage to us and others. We are to be alert to the enemy’s purpose to divide us from one another. We are to watch out for one another.

“Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb 13:1-2). Christianity is a forward looking faith and it is an outward looking faith. Our love for each other is to spill over into the world around us. Even strangers are to benefit from our interest and concern for them. We are admonished to identify with prisoners and those who “suffer adversity” (Heb 13:3).

One of the greatest ways to cherish the value of others is to be content with, not only what you have but who you are. We can do that as we take this counsel to heart: “ Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb 13:5). To go the distance with God is to be secure in His care and loving provision.

This spirit will enable us to rightly estimate the things of this life and give us confidence in relating to others who may have more wealth and power than we have. Journeying with Jesus means being able to say “boldly...The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb 13:6).

Don’t forget your spiritual leaders: “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb 13:7-8). Note that we are to follow a leader’s faith, keeping in mind the end or goal of their conversation—which is a broad term taking in the lifestyle of the person—it’s Jesus!

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### **John 13:34**

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

### **1 Peter 1:22**

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.

# R E W A R D

*By faith Moses, when he was come to years,  
refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter...  
Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt:  
for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*

*Hebrews 11:24-26*

In 1922, the tomb of a relatively obscure Pharaoh, Tutankhamun, was discovered in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. In that tomb some of “treasures in Egypt” came to light. Egypt was the superpower of its day and the most advanced civilization of its time. But Moses looked higher and farther ahead. He esteemed the affliction—that is the trials of the follower of Jesus, a greater wealth than all the riches of temporary earthly glory that Egypt could offer.

The faith of Jesus is forward looking. Even Jesus looked ahead to the end result of His battle with sin unto blood. “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” (Heb 12:2). This was motivation to go the distance! This had been the subject of Isaiah’s prophecy of the Messiah: “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied” (Isa 53:11). It’s not wrong to appreciate what God has promised. This can be a wonderful stimulus to go on. We must keep in mind all that the Lord has promised us.

On one occasion Abraham was used by God to bring about a great deliverance and he refused to take any of the plunder for himself (see Gen 14:14-24).

*“After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision,  
saying, Fear not, Abram:*

*I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*

God Himself is presented here as the true reward of the faithful. The greatest reward we will receive is to be with Jesus, to “dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Ps 23:6).

Like his forefathers, Moses kept his eyes looking ahead, to reward with permanence and stability: “a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Heb 11:10). The believer must wait for this blessing but it is sure to come. Our reward will come. “For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Heb 10:37).

The practical results of our genuine reward that is future is protection from cheap imitations that we encounter here. In this world we are called to be “pilgrims and strangers” (Heb 11:13): “For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.” (Heb 11:14-16).

Even now we can enter, by faith, the heavenly Jerusalem: “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in

heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb 12:22-24).

We are not to make this world our home. We are strangers and pilgrims in this world (Heb 11:13 cf 1 Peter 2:11). We are not to turn back. What is just ahead is worth waiting for. Even now we may, by faith, see the 'gates ajar', just up ahead. As those swing wide we will "enter in" (Heb 3:19) and know that through the grace of our Captain we have gone the distance with Him!

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### **John 14:1-3**

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

### **1 Corinthians 2:9**

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

### **Revelation 21:7**

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

### **Revelation 21:1-5**

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said,

Behold, I make all things new.  
And he said unto me, Write:  
for these words are true and faithful.

# NOTES

