

Hebrews

References from outside the Bible

- Clement of Rome (~ 96 AD) referred to this letter, but gave no hint of its authorship.
- By about 180 AD this letter was included in a collection of the letters of Paul (P⁴⁶).
- The Muratorian Canon (~ 115 AD) does not list Hebrews as being among the seven letters of Paul “to churches,” but this letter does not seem to be “to a church.” So, this list tells us that the Hebrews was accepted, but gives no help about who wrote it.
- Numerous reputable scholars from the second through the fourth centuries suggested many authors besides Paul, but they had no more information than we do. The less information that exists, the more people tend to offer theories:
 - Barnabas, Paul’s fellow missionary (Acts 4:36, 9:27, 11:22 – 15:39, 1 Corinthians 9:6, Galatians 2:1 – 13, Colossians 4:10). But, we have no knowledge of anything Barnabas wrote, so there is nothing with which to compare.
 - Apollos, “an Alexandrian, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures,” (Acts 18:24 – 19:1, 1 Corinthians 1:12. 3:4 – 6, 3:22 – 4:6, 16:12, Titus 3:13). He would have had the skills necessary to write Hebrews.
 - Priscilla or Aquila, fellow workers with Paul (Acts 18:1 – 26, Romans 16:3, 1 Corinthians 16:19, 2 Timothy 4:19). We have no information about anything they may have written.
 - Peter. But Peter is characterized as less of a scholar, and his other writing does not seem to match the sophistication of Hebrews.
- The Alexandrian church listed the author as Paul in the late 100’s. The Roman church did not do so until the late 300’s. This would be strange if the author were Apollos.
- Almost all early writers accepted the letter as apostolic. But none of them gave any facts to decide who wrote it. So, we speculate.

Original audience

- Many have assumed the audience to be Jewish Christians, probably those living outside Israel.
 - The author’s knowledge of the Levitical ritual is based on the text of the Law, not the practice of the time.
 - The examples of apostasy from Israelite history would be more familiar to Jewish Christians.
 - Circumcision is not mentioned, as in Galatians, so the audience probably is already circumcised.
 - Many arguments are made from the Old Testament. If faith is wearing thin, Jewish Christians would be more likely to be influenced by arguments from the Law.
 - They were probably Hellenistic Jews, since all the quotes are from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.
- They had not seen Jesus personally (2:3).
- They had experienced some persecution, but not to death (10:32 – 34, 12:4).
- “Those of Italy” (13:24) could imply that the recipients were Italian, or that the location of the author was Italy.

Date

- The Temple rituals seem to be on-going (9:6 – 9, 10:1 – 2).
- Jeremiah’s prophecy is seen as in process, not completed (8:13).

General Outline

- The Finality of Christianity (1:1 – 2:18)
- The True Home of the People of God (3:1 – 4:13)
- The High Priesthood of the Christ (4:14 – 6:20)
- The Order of Melchizedek (7:1 – 28)
- Covenant and Sacrifice (8:1 – 10:18)
- Faith (10:19 – 12:29)
- Conclusion (13:1 – 25)

Fading Faith is a dominant theme throughout the letter, as though the author were trying to revive the excitement from when they first believed. Perhaps each of these topics in the letter should be taken as a motivator for returning to an exciting faith.

2:1 – 3	4:11	6:12	12:1 – 3
3:12 – 15	5:11 – 14	10:23 – 29	12:15
4:1	6:1 – 9	10:32 – 39	

Be excited about angels (Chapter 1)

- Other New Testament references to angels
 - Hebrews 12:22 Angels are part of the church.
 - Hebrews 13:2 Some have entertained angels unawares.
 - 2 Peter 2:11 Angels, who are greater in power, do not dare to bring a reviling judgment
 - 1 Peter 3:22 Angels are subject to Jesus
 - 1 Peter 1:12 Angels longed to look into the things promised by God
 - Galatians 3:19 The Law was brought by angels
 - 1 Corinthians 11:10 A woman has a symbol of authority on her head “for the angels.”
 - 1 Corinthians 6:3 We will judge angels
 - 1 Corinthians 4:9 Some like Paul were made a spectacle to men and angels
- (1 – 4) The Son is higher than the angels. Rather than thinking about this chapter as defeating a false doctrine about angels (the existence of the doctrine is inferred by those looking for reasons for writing), start from the general acceptance of angels as really important and exciting. If angels were exciting, Jesus is even more exciting.
 - Now has spoken to us through His Son. Messages delivered by angels were major points in history (more than 50 stories involving angels in the Old Testament). This is bigger.
 - Through whom He made the ages.
 - Ages: Long periods of time (Ephesians 2:2, 2:7, 3:11, Colossians 1:26), usually translated eternal or for ever and ever. “Through whom He made forever.”
 - Everyone knew that angels played a major role in creation. Jesus’ role was even more exciting.

- The express image of His person – a step above the image of angels, who put on glorious displays. (Colossians 1:15 The image of the invisible God)
- Upholding all things by the word of His power – not a servant but a participant (Colossians 1:15 – 16)
- When He had purged sin, sat down. As spectacular as angels are, Jesus did a bigger job, finished the job, and claimed the first seat.
- Inherited a more excellent name (name: essential quality).
- (5) Faithful people (using David as an example) are higher than the angels. The most exciting part is that faithful people are higher than angels, too. 2 Samuel 7:14 describes David, not the Messiah.
- (5 – 13) Jesus is not “just” another manifestation of God like the angels have been.
 - Psalm 2:5 “You are My Son, today I have begotten Thee.” This psalm also declares that the Messiah will be king over all the earth. The angels were never in charge on earth.
 - Psalm 97:7 “Worship Him, all you gods.” The ancient rabbis understood “gods” in v7 and v9 to mean “spiritual beings.” The writer of Hebrews applied this description to Jesus, another place at which Jesus is called God.
 - Psalm 104:4 Angels were described in glowing terms
 - Psalm 45:6 – 7 The psalm is about the Messiah (v2, eternal; v11, worship Him)
 - Psalm 102:25 – 27 The psalm makes no reference to the Messiah, but, having already made the point that the universe was created through Jesus (v2), then this psalm describes Jesus.
 - Psalm 110:1 Cited by Jesus (Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42) to cause people to think about how David could call one of his descendants Lord. Peter used the same citation (Acts 2:34) to show that the author, David, was not the object of the promises in this psalm, but Jesus.
- (14) The purpose of angels is to serve the faithful.
 - God’s promise is that angels will serve those who will inherit salvation. (Unbelievers have no such promise, although God may send angels to serve them if He needs that to accomplish His ends.) Even the negative events of the Old Testament caused by angels were for the benefit of the faithful.
 - Serving is not a “lower” position. Jesus called Himself a servant (Luke 22:27).
 - Knowing this promise is encouraging, that God has not left us to fend for ourselves, but rather has planned for workers to get things done.

Be excited that Jesus lived like us on earth (Chapter 2)

- Overview of why excitement about Jesus’ life on earth might fade
 - The Law and the Prophets resulted in 39 books. Jesus wrote nothing, much of the New Testament was yet to be written, and what was written was not collected or even widely distributed yet.
 - The Eternal Kingdom had no earthly territory and its citizens were poor and politically powerless.
 - Jesus lived poorly and died badly.
 - Faithful people still died.
 - Satan was wreaking havoc.
 - Doubts and temptation still plagued the people of God.

- (1 – 3) “Therefore”
 - Because both Jesus and we are more important than angels, who played such an important part in God’s interactions in the past, pay even closer attention.
 - Jewish Christians held the message of angels (the Law and the Prophets) is very high regard. The new covenant (addressed more fully in 8:8 – 13, quoting Jeremiah 31:31 – 34) was certainly greater.
 - The old covenant was payment for services; the new covenant is rescue. The objectives are higher.
- (4) We have evidence
 - Observation: miracles never converted anyone, they just let the faithful know whom to believe.
 - The many miracles of the Old Testament were spectacular. Those of the new covenant were not of the same nature, not political but more personal.
- (5 – 8) Be patient; the promises are not yet complete
 - Reminder: angels’ role is to serve the faithful (1:14).
 - Angels do not run heaven nor will they in eternity. This makes them no less important; we are fellow citizens of the eternal kingdom (12:22 – 24). Rather, our earthly role, and Jesus’ earthly role, make us more important to the process: providing the essential ingredient to success in eternity, faith.
 - Psalm 8
 - Original intent of the psalm
 - The creation announces the character of God
 - God silences His enemies
 - God placed man and the Son of Man in charge of that creation, showing His regard for them.
 - Application in Hebrews 2: Remember the promise of domination.
- (9 – 10) Mortality does not make us less but greater
 - Jesus’ death
 - Overcoming death (not in resurrection but in submitting to it) illustrated Jesus’ character and brought great honor.
 - “By the grace of God” – God would have been true to justice to require that we suffer for our own errors. His gracious character (kindness, patience, love, mercy) found another way to keep the demands of justice by “tasting death for everyone.”
 - This must be physical death, not spiritual death, since Jesus was never separated from God (Psalm 22:24). Note that Psalm 22:22 is cited in 2:12.
 - If “tasting death” was to be real, Jesus could not have physical knowledge of the outcome (which would be walking by sight) but only by faith: tempted in all points (2:18, 4:15).
 - “For whom are all things and by whom are all things” See also John 1:1 – 3, Colossians 1:15 – 17.
 - “For everyone”, like 1 Timothy 4:10, “especially for those who believe.”
 - Our death
 - “Bringing many sons to glory” – The faithful follow Jesus (the captain) to the same goal: character and honor. This is called salvation because, without the captain to lead us, we would fail

- Physical death is ranked as the most powerful temptation (2:14 – 15). If we defeat that one, we can defeat them all.
 - Faithful people are the brothers of the Messiah (2:11 – 18)
 - Psalm 22
 - Cited by Jesus from the cross (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34). John 19:24 also applies this psalm to Jesus. However, nothing in the psalm makes it specific to Jesus. Rather, the psalm is cited here to illustrate the kinship of Jesus and the other faithful.
 - We are not servants (like angels) but children of the king, which is why angels serve the faithful.
 - 2 Samuel 22
 - Song of David when he was delivered from the hand of Saul
 - Contains many of the same thoughts as Psalm 22.
 - The Son of Man and the faithful have parallel purposes.
 - Isaiah 8:12 – 18
 - More specific to faithful Jews, explaining the low yield in Israel
 - “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”: cited in 1 Peter 2:8 and applied to Jesus.
 - Faithful Israelites are for a sign (*cf.* John 17:20 – 23)
 - (14 – 15) Because the children (the faithful) face mortality, the Son must also.
 - When people die, one can always assert that, on some level, they deserved it.
 - Jesus’ death separated the fact of mortality from Judgment.
 - Jesus demonstrated that physical death was the entrance to character and honor, not judgment, for the faithful.
 - Death and the judgment that follows (for the unforgiven, for the unbeliever) is a powerful temptation, used by Satan to control people. Remember that Satan was also labeled the Deceiver; his power was through deceit, not truth. Jesus burst the deception.
 - Overcoming this deception requires faith because those in that day could not see, physically, what happened to Jesus after He left earth. Today, we cannot see, physically, even that much. As John 20:29, “Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”
 - (16) Conclusion drawn from Chapter 1, Jesus does not assist angels. That assistance is reserved for the faithful (the seed of Abraham).
 - (17 – 18) Earthly experience made Jesus a better leader
 - The image in 2:10 was captain, in 2:11, brother. Here, it shifts to High Priest.
 - Rather than suggesting that God needed the experience of life on earth to really appreciate it, we should assume that the intention was to dispel the notion that God is remote.
 - We are better able to relate to a High Priest who has shared our experiences. We are more likely to accept mercy and assistance and be confident in His trustworthiness (faithfulness).

Be excited that Jesus is the Son, not the Servant (Chapter 3)

- (1) Therefore...

- Because of the prophecies and miraculous evidence
- Because all things have been placed under Jesus' feet, including death
- Because we can relate to Him through shared experience
- Because we have been called brethren
- (2 – 6) Be excited that Jesus is worthy of more glory (a bigger parade of character traits)
 - Because He built the house
 - This house is the faithful (v6): 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, Ephesians 2:19 – 22, Hebrews 3:6, 1 Peter 2:5 – 10
 - (3) Moses is characterized as “the house” – one of the faithful, like us.
 - (5) Moses is characterized as being “in His house” – The Law contains references to both the house of Israel and house of the Lord (the tabernacle).
 - In either application to Moses, Jesus is worthy of a bigger parade because He built the house – not just the nation or the Temple, but all things (2:10).
 - Moses was an example of a faithful servant, whereas Jesus is the example of a faithful Son.
 - Chapter 2 placed all the faithful in the “son” category, not the servant category.
 - The example of Moses in the midst of an unfaithful nation is an example from which the faithful learn.
 - “If we maintain the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope.”
 - First mention of hope in this letter, so the original audience was expected to understand its meaning.
 - 39 references in the New Testament
 - Confidence and rejoicing are required.
- (7 – 19) Be excited that the faithful are not like Israel in the wilderness
 - Psalm 95:7 – 11
 - A psalm of David (*cf.* 4:7) – originally addressed to Israel 1000 years before Jesus.
 - The first half of the psalm is an encouragement to worship joyfully
 - The contrast is between joy and hardness of heart upon observing the works of God.
 - (12 – 13) Hardness of heart is a real threat even when surrounded by greatness. Therefore, exhort (encourage) one another. Be excited, even more than the historical pride of Israelites.
 - (14 – 15) Be confident because we are “partakers” of Christ.
 - (3:1) Partakers of the heavenly calling
 - (6:4) Partakers of the Holy Spirit
 - (12:8) Partakers of chastening
 - (16 – 18) Lack of obedience is unbelief
 - If you find the “good works” of God impossible, remember Israel.
 - The obedience in view was refusing to invade the Promised Land (Numbers 14:22 – 24). They lacked confidence in God's promise (Numbers 14:8 – 9).
 - Which promises of God do we discount in the face of earthly adversity?

Be excited about the promised rest (Chapter 4)

- (1 – 9) A rest for the people of God
 - Historical argument

- (3) Moses (by God's direction) led the Israelites to the southern border of the Promised Land, from which the twelve spies went out (Numbers 12:16 – 13:27). The people were discouraged by the report of the spies (Numbers 13:28 – 33) and did not trust that they could overcome the inhabitants (Numbers 14:1 – 5). As a result of their unbelief, they were condemned to wander until that generation died (Numbers 14:20 – 34). Moses argued God out of His original intention of wiping them out and starting over with Moses (Numbers 14:11 – 19).
 - (8) Joshua finally led the next-generation Israelites into the Promised Land about 1400 BC.
 - (7) David, who wrote Psalm 95 (Hebrews 4:7), lived about 1000 BC and urged people in his time to trust God's promise of "rest."
 - (8) Because David wrote about 400 years after Joshua, the "rest" of which David wrote was not the land of Canaan.
 - (9) Therefore, the promised rest remains for those who have faith.
 - (1) "Let us fear..."
 - (2) "The gospel was preached to us as well as to them"
 - The Promised Land was not a physical example of a spiritual promise. The possession of their own country in Palestine was a separate promise accomplished under the leadership of Joshua.
 - Romans 1:1 – 2, "...gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets..."
 - Some Old Testament characters understood salvation by faith; most did not.
 - We should fear that we might become like them, refusing to act on the promises of God. Ignorance of the promises is not in this illustration, but outright refusal to act on what clearly is not humanly possible; "hearing not mixed with faith."
 - (3 – 4) "The works were finished"
 - The "rest" was created before the seventh day of creation because Genesis 2:2 says, "God rested on the seventh day from all His works."
 - How does this fact encourage us (allay our fears)?
 - The "rest" for the faithful was prepared before there were people to enter it. God is not reacting to events but has a plan that is well prepared.
 - God has not given up on people; the promised rest remains for the faithful.
 - (10 – 11) "He who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His."
 - In what way does God "rest"? God still works (Philippians 1:6). When God came to earth, He is said to have worked (10 places).
 - Some say that the "he" is Jesus, so the meaning is that Jesus has finished His work, also. (John 4:34, 17:4, Jesus finished the work given to Him.)
 - In this context, God rested from His work of creation, not from participation in the events of the universe.
 - If the "he" represents the faithful, then the works which cease are the good works for which we were created (Ephesians 2:10 and 34 other places).

- When do the faithful enter this rest? The faithful are seated in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6) yet will be granted entrance to the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21). Verse 9 sounds future; verse 10 sounds past.
- If it could be read two ways, think of it both ways. Our faith is encouraged because:
 - We have entered that rest; we are not struggling to reach it.
 - We will enter a better rest.
 - Jesus finished His task; all is complete in the plan (except the end)
 - We have finished our task; we will not receive new jobs.
 - God still participates in the world; Jesus still lives in the faithful; the Spirit still accomplishes promises; the faithful still do what faith motivates us to do.
- (12 – 16) Tools to do better than unbelieving Israel
 - (12) The Word
 - The Israelites had the word of God spoken to them by numerous prophets, so we need to pay closer attention than they did.
 - The Word is not just the printed part, but includes the “body of thought concerning God” – the logos. John 1:1, 14, “and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”
 - “Thoughts and intents” are the objective, not rules and regulations.
 - (13) God sees everything
 - The Israelites were reminded of this fact by numerous prophets, so we need to pay closer attention than they did.
 - Poor choices often arise from a mistaken impression that “no one will know.”
 - We will need to give an account of our intents (not our performance).
 - (14 – 15) Our High Priest has been where we are
 - (2:17 – 18) The fact that Jesus shared our experiences gives us confidence that He understands. Earthly life and death was not sensitivity training for God.
 - “Passed through the heavens” – Acts 1:9, Luke 24:51 – Jesus was given a grand exit to illustrate His victory.
 - Romans 14:23 “All that is not of faith is sin.” Jesus never stopped acting by faith. We can do the same if we will use the power of the Spirit that dwells in us.
 - We were not created defective, unable to act faithfully on a consistent basis. If someone managed to do it, that would be OK, too.
 - However, we have dropped our faith on occasion in the past, so a debt was incurred which Jesus paid in advance for all of all eras.
 - By the Spirit, we have the ability to overcome. Yet, we are not consistent in our performance because we have not grown sufficiently.
 - Jesus paid for all sins so that we could be released from debt and be eligible to be in the faith system, in which remain as long as trust remains.
 - (16) Our reaction to this warning: the result of this fear
 - Boldness, not weakness. That is where the Israelites failed.
 - Coming to a gracious God, not a wrathful one.
 - God is intensely motivated to fix what ails us (merciful).
 - Confident of receiving help when we need it.
- The Word is unique and powerful. (4:12)

- Our leader is sympathetic and personally interested Jesus experienced every temptation, making Him sympathetic, not arrogant. (4:15)

Be excited about how Jesus became the eternal High Priest (5:1 – 9)

- The presentation of Jesus as eternal High Priest began in 4:14.
 - (4:14 – 16, 2:17 – 18) The fact that Jesus shared our experiences gives us confidence that He understands
 - (4:14) “Passed through the heavens” – a grand exit to illustrate His victory.
 - (4:15) Our leader is sympathetic and personally interested
 - (4:15) Jesus experienced every temptation, making Him sympathetic, not arrogant.
 - (4:16) Our reaction to this warning: the result of this fear
 - Boldness, not weakness. That is where the Israelites failed.
 - Coming to a gracious God, not a wrathful one.
 - God is intensely motivated to fix what ails us (merciful).
 - Confident of receiving help when we need it.
- (5:1 – 3) Brief review of why human High Priests are a good thing
 - The function of a High Priest is to offer both free will offerings and sin offerings. He is not the intermediary only in the bad times, but also the good times.
 - A human High Priest not only is compassionate with the sinner, but also the ignorant.
 - In what way was Jesus subject to weakness?
 - (4:15) Tempted in all points just as we are
 - (5:7) Reference to the Garden prayer
 - (Luke 2:52) Jesus increased in wisdom and stature. He did not start that way, and, putting it negatively, at times He was ignorant.
 - (5:8) Jesus learned obedience.
 - The Levitical High Priest was required to offer sacrifices for himself first, then for the people (Leviticus 9:7, 16:3 – 19).
 - The author makes no attempt to excuse Jesus from offering a sacrifice for Himself.
 - Since Jesus did not spring forth of full maturity, He was subject to ignorance.
 - We can be certain that sin was never assigned to Jesus (4:15), but His choices may not have always been the “best.” Certainly, every choice was by faith.
 - Jesus was baptized by John (Matthew 3:13 – 17, Mark 1:4 – 11, Luke 3:21 – 22). Similarly, Jesus made sacrifices for Himself before making an offering for the people.
- (5:4 – 9) Jesus did not take the position as High Priest; rather the position was thrust upon Him.
 - Aaron was more comfortable in the limelight than Moses, but did not seek the position (Exodus 4:10 – 17).
 - Unspoken is the history of the office which, on several occasions, had become a coveted political position. In Jesus’ day, the High Priesthood guaranteed a huge income and great power.
 - (5) Jesus did not organize His own victory parade. Rather, as in Psalm 2, the Son was granted the nations of the earth as His possession (Psalm 2:9, Revelation 2:26 – 27, 12:5, 19:15). All Christians should have the same attitude of service after which God will grant them their own victory parade.

- (6) The author applies Psalm 110 to Jesus:
 - In this place, the application is that the honor was granted to Jesus; Jesus did not seek or take the position for Himself. In keeping with Jesus' attitude, His followers will be volunteers, not well-paid associates or honored servants (Psalm 110:3).
 - The same Psalm is cited in other places for different reasons:
 - "The Lord said to my Lord" Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42, Acts 2:34
 - "Sit at My right hand" Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 1:13,
 - "Make Your enemies a footstool" Hebrews 1:13, 1 Corinthians 15:25, Ephesians 1:22
- (7) A reference to the Garden (Matthew 26:36 – 44, Mark 14:32 – 36, Luke 22:39 – 46, John 17) and to Psalm 22, specifically verse 24.
- (8) Jesus learned obedience through suffering.
 - Like the way God built the universe (broken) so that we would learn to trust (*cf.*, 1Peter 1:7)
 - The same concept will be addressed to believers in chapter 12.
- (9) "Having been made consistent"
 - Matthew 5:48 "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." This same consistency is expected of us. So, the illustration arising from Jesus' death is slanted more toward His example of how to handle the trials of life.
 - More passages concerning "perfection" by believers on earth:
 - John 17:20 – 23 The faithful were to prove that Jesus is God by being "perfected in unity."
 - Hebrews 12:23 The church is populated by "the spirits of righteous men made perfect."
 - Hebrews 10:14 "For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified."
 - Hebrews 6:1 "Let us press on to perfection."
 - Colossians 4:12 Epaphras prayed that his friends in Colossae "stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God."
 - 1 Corinthians 2:6 "Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are perfect." Verses 10 – 16 describes these perfect people as those who have "the mind of Christ," referring to believers living on earth.
 - Ephesians 4:13 Miraculously appointed leaders were provided "until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."
 - Philippians 3:12 – 15 Paul uses a play on words, describing himself as having "not already become perfect," but in the conclusion of the paragraph, includes himself in the group of those who are "perfect."
 - Colossians 1:28 "That we may present every man perfect in Christ."
 - Hebrews 11:40 "Apart from us they should not be made perfect."
 - James 1:4 "And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be made perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
 - James 2:22 "As a result of the works, faith was perfected."

- “The author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” Because of His consistency across all experience, He is capable of guiding all His followers into eternal rescue.

Be excited about growth (5:11 – 6:20)

- (5:11 – 6:3) Growth is healthy and logical
 - (5:14) “Those who are perfect” The faithful grow up into wisdom and understanding: perfection. The image of remaining a perpetual baby is unappealing and unnatural. A few reminders about perfection:
 - Matthew 5:48 Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect
 - John 17:20 – 23 Perfected in unity
 - 1 Corinthians 2:6 Yet we speak wisdom among those who are perfect.
 - Colossians 4:12 Stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.
 - Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.
 - Hebrews 12:23 The church consists of the spirits of righteous men made perfect
 - Warning signs of arrested growth. Like the lists of bad behaviors, this is a list of bad characteristics. The purpose of the list is not to make us feel worthless, but to burst our self-deception bubble concerning what acceptance means.
 - (5:11) When the Scriptures seem complicated or difficult
 - (5:12) Lack of teaching others (implies instruction, not “by example”)
 - (5:12) Are we stuck at “first principles”? (Defined in 6:1 – 2)
 - (5:13) Those stuck in “first principles” (the unskilled) should not teach.
 - (5:14) Difficulty discerning right and wrong?
 - (6:1 – 2) If the following list is other than a no-brainer, you are a babe. First principles that we should already know:
 - Repentance – Do we know why we turn from dead works?
 - Faith – Do we know its characteristics?
 - Baptism – If I have to explain it, they don’t understand it. Do we know the several commitments we are making in that action?
 - Resurrection – Is our conception childish (physical) or mature (spiritual)?
 - Eternal judgment – Do we know the basis of judgment?
- (6:4 – 10) The purpose of the warning is not to make us feel worthless or fearful, but to burst our self-deception bubble concerning what acceptance means.
 - (9 – 10) We are confident of better things concerning you
 - “Though we speak in this manner” – A wake-up call for the immature.
 - What accompanies salvation? Wisdom, understanding, teaching. Being saved is not the complete picture. The self-centered gospel stops with salvation.
 - God will not overlook your good start
 - Work and love “toward His name.” What work have we done to move toward His essential quality? Do we make choices based on what is best for His essential quality?
 - Serving the saints. Do we serve the saints or ourselves?
 - (4 – 8) The extreme case:
 - This is encouragement stated ironically. If you have the following, you have not fallen.

- Do you understand now what was confusing before?
- Has the Spirit made changes in you?
- Do you find the Word encouraging?
- Do you look forward to the power of the Spirit in this life, the power of God in our resurrection, and the power of God in eternity?
- (6) “To renew themselves.”
 - The word after “renew,” in most translations, is “them.” “Them” is not in the text. Rather, the ending of the verb, renew, contains a pointer to a plural pronoun as the object. The context has only one plural pronoun, “themselves,” so this is the object of “renew.”
 - The point is that such people cannot renew themselves because they have rejected the evidence through which they were called originally. Those who orchestrated Jesus’ execution put Him to open shame, so God had nothing left to call them to faith. (Called by Jesus’ character and virtue.)
- (7 – 8) Those who bear fruit are blessed by God. Those who do not are burned.
 - John 15:1 – 8, Luke 13:6 – 9 Same image from Jesus.
 - Luke 3:7 – 9 Same image from John the Baptist.
 - Fruits:
 - (Galatians 5:22 – 23) Fruit of the Spirit is character.
 - (Romans 1:13, Philippians 1:22) One of Paul’s fruits were those whom he taught
 - (Romans 6:22) Fruit unto holiness and everlasting life.
 - (Ephesians 5:9) The fruit...is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.
 - (Philippians 4:17) Sharing is a fruit
 - (Colossians 1:10) Be fruitful in every good work
 - (Hebrews 12:11) Discipline yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.
 - (Hebrews 13:15) The sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips
- (6:11 – 20) The object of the contrast: full assurance of hope
 - (11 – 12) Full assurance makes one diligent, not sluggish. How many church leaders desire to keep people uncertain so that they will be motivated to work harder? Our author says the opposite. The full assurance is based on:
 - (6:10) Work, love, service
 - (1:4) Evidence
 - (2:16) Assistance
 - (3:14) Partakers of Christ
 - (13 – 16) Example of Abraham
 - Genesis 22:16 – 18 After the sacrifice of Isaac, God knew (22:12) that Abraham’s faith was sufficient. Therefore, He swore, not just said.
 - The point of the example is that Abraham did not receive the promise for a long time.
 - (17 – 20) We (the heirs of the promise) have the same level of promises made to us.
 - Note: Knowing the promises is essential to having faith.
 - As a result, we, those who have fled for refuge to lay hold of hope, have:
 - Strong consolation

- An anchor of the soul
- Entry through the veil (4:14 – 16, and, more specifically, 10:20)

Be excited about our High Priest (Chapter 7 and 8).

- The discussion of our High Priest, begun in 4:14, interrupted in 5:11 – 6:20 with a discussion about growth, continues in chapters 7 and 8. A review of 4:14 – 5:10:
 - (4:14 – 16, 2:17 – 18) The fact that Jesus shared our experiences gives us confidence that He understands
 - (5:1 – 3) Brief review of why human High Priests (including Jesus) are a good thing
 - (5:4 – 9) Jesus did not take the position as High Priest; rather the position was thrust upon Him.
 - (5:10) “The author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” Because of His consistency across all experience, He is capable of guiding all His followers into eternal rescue.
- (7:1 – 10) The Messiah was predicted to be a High Priest like Melchizedek (5:6, 5:9, 7:17, 7:21, Psalm 110:4)
 - Historical review (Genesis 14:18 – 20)
 - (2) Names were important in those times. Being called “king of righteousness” and “king of peace” were descriptions of the character of the individual.
 - (3) The author is not saying that, literally, Melchizedek had no parents and was neither born nor died, rather that Melchizedek’s ancestry is not how he became a priest, and he did not pass it on to another. He was High Priest because of his character. He continues to lead by his historical example. In this way, Jesus was like Melchizedek; Jesus did not inherit his position and He did not pass it on; He is our High Priest because of His character and He continues to lead.
 - (4) Abraham shared 10% of the spoils of war with Melchizedek, acknowledging that he considered Melchizedek to be a rightful High Priest and that he had contributed in a meaningful way to the success of the war.
 - (7) Abraham further acknowledged that Melchizedek was his legitimate priest by allowing Melchizedek to pronounce a blessing on him.
 - (9) The fact that Abraham shared with Melchizedek and was blessed by him implies that Melchizedek is greater than the Levitical priesthood because Melchizedek remains as an example to the descendants of Abraham.
 - What Melchizedek teaches us about Jesus
 - When one becomes a High Priest by character, not by inheritance, that priesthood endures for all time, not passed to another. We should be excited that our High Priest was appointed by His character and that He remains able to be our intermediary.
 - We share the proceeds of our victories with and receive blessings from our eternal High Priest, not earthly ones.
- (7:11 – 28) Be excited that we have something better.
 - The Law was not a failure. Rather, a thousand years before Jesus, God announced that the Messiah would be a different kind of priest (Psalm 110:4, quoted four times).
 - (7:11, 18 – 19) The Law was not designed to produce consistency.
 - (7:28) The Law used people with weaknesses as High Priest. God planned it this way.

- (7:21) God did not swear concerning Levitical priests, but did swear concerning the High Priesthood of the Messiah.
 - (8:1 – 5) The Law worked with a copy; Jesus works with the original.
 - The purpose of the Law was to illustrate the reality in heaven. Being focused on physical things with weak leadership, the copies cannot achieve the reality. But, that is not failure, but the nature of illustration.
 - The Law was predicted to pass away:
 - By implication of a new High Priest (7:12, 7:18, 7:19, 7:22, 8:7, 8:13).
 - If the Messiah was to be both priest (Levi) and king (Judah), the nature of one or the other or both must change (7:12 – 14). The Levitical priesthood was an illustration, not the reality.
 - By Jeremiah (8:8 – 12, Jeremiah 31:31 – 34)
 - This predicted change of priesthood implies:
 - (12) A change of the Law.
 - (16) The end of physical inheritance of leadership and the beginning of permanent leadership.
 - (18) The end of the Law
 - (19) A better hope, implying that now we can achieve consistency (perfection).
 - (24) The High Priesthood had seen its ups and downs; Jesus is permanent.
 - (25 – 27) The new High Priest does not spend half His time fixing Himself. He is always available.
- Be excited that we serve the reality, not the copy (8:1 – 13)
 - (5) The things of the Law are a copy and shadow.
 - The gospel is “better” than the Law.
 - (7:19) A better hope: consistency (5:14)
 - (7:19) Able to draw near to God (4:16)
 - (7:22) Better contract: resulting in eternal life rather than just big families, big crops, and victory in battle.
 - (8:6) Better promises (partakers of the divine nature)
 - (8:10) Transformation, not just the best you can do.
 - (8:11) A kingdom of faithful people, no longer the minority.
 - (8:12) “I will have an urgent desire to fix that which leads to their unrighteousness, and I will not remember that unrighteousness.”
 - Jesus offered His own blood in the real Temple; His sacrifice was real, not an illustration.
 - (7:27) Illustrations are teaching tools, oft repeated. The reality of Jesus’ sacrifice was only once. The power of sin was broken for all of all times, not just present and not just future, but a satisfaction of justice to close out the right-and-wrong system
 - (8:3) Justice must be satisfied; God cannot just ignore it.
 - (9:11 – 10:18) Jesus also sanctified the real Temple.

Be excited about the symbolism of the Temple (9:1 – 10:22)

- (9:8 – 10) The way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. Faithful people before Jesus could only trust that a path to God was available. With Jesus, the path was made clear.

- (9:9) The Law was symbolic so we could understand this new one
- (9:1 – 15) The ceremonies of the Law deemed symbolic in this narrative:
 - (9:2 – 5) The contents of the tabernacle
 - The furnishings of the tabernacle are listed. The Temple had more replicates and a few extra items (1 Kings 6 – 7, 2 Chronicles 3 – 4)
 - Extra cherubs in the Most Holy Place (2 Kings 6:23 – 28)
 - Dimensions larger and different materials
 - Additional hardware for assisting in sacrifices
 - Ten lampstands and ten tables for showbread
 - The author described the tabernacle as in the Law, not the Temple that was in Jerusalem at the time of writing.
 - The symbolisms of these furnishings are not given here (see 9:5). For reference:
 - Incense: prayer (Psalm 140:2, Revelation 5:8)
 - Lampstand: leader (Zechariah 4) or congregation (Revelation 1:12 – 20)
 - Light: The Word of God (John 1:1 – 10, *et al*) enlightening the world
 - Table of Showbread: The 12 tribes, their desired purity, and need for sacrifice (Leviticus 24:5 – 9)
 - The Veil: The body of Jesus (Hebrews 10:20, Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38, Luke 23:45)
 - Priests: Christians (Revelation 1:6, 5:10, 20:6, 1 Peter 2:5, 2:9)
 - Pillars: The faithful (Revelation 3:12)
 - (9:6 – 15) The ceremonies of the tabernacle were deemed symbolic:
 - The High Priest represented the Messiah (9:11)
 - Previously in this letter:
 - (2:17, 4:14 – 15, 5:2) Jesus was human to qualify as a merciful and faithful High Priest, able to help those being tempted.
 - (5:3) Offers gifts and sacrifices for Himself and for the people.
 - (5:4) Does not take this honor on Himself, but was given it.
 - (5:6, 7:15, 7:21, 7:24) A priest like Melchizedek, not by inheritance but eternal, by an oath
 - (7:25 – 27) One sacrifice, not repetitious.
 - (8:1 – 4) In the real tabernacle, not an earthly copy
 - (11 – 15) Additional details of the High Priestly function of the Messiah
 - Cleanse our consciences from dead works
 - The reality of forgiveness illustrated by the sacrifices under the Law
 - Other symbols
 - (8) The way into the Most Holy Place is now clear and available to all the faithful (*cf*, 4:16)
 - (9) The new sacrifice is effective, not symbolic. Previously, the faithful understood only that the sacrifices were symbolic of that which had not yet been revealed. They had to trust that God had a plan.
 - (11) The location is the real tabernacle, not the copy. The earthly location had a history of problems that likely would continue. The real tabernacle

had had its problems (Revelation 12:7 – 12), but now were fixed permanently (9:24)

- (12 – 14) The sacrifice brings eternal redemption, not symbolic, and cleanses the conscience for service. The “works salvation” attitude has been defeated.
- (9:16 – 10:19) The roles of death, blood, and uniqueness
 - (9:16 – 17) Why did Jesus have to die?
 - The nature of the relationship: inheritors, not servants (*cf.* 3:1 – 6).
 - The contract was not designed to take effect until after Jesus died (*cf.* John 16:7)
 - (9:18 – 23) The symbolism of blood
 - (19 – 21) Sprinkled: sanctified, reserved for godly purposes (1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 5:26)
 - (22) Remission: forgiveness by substitution (Acts 22:16, Hebrews 10:22)
 - (9:23 – 10:19) Symbols are repeated for instructional purposes. Reality happens once.
 - (23, 10:1 – 4, 10:11 – 14) It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins
 - See 9:11. The earthly symbolism will continue to be flawed. The heavenly reality has been repaired permanently.
 - (10:2) That earthly sacrifices were repeated illustrated ineffectiveness.
 - (10:3) Educational repetition implied lessons not learned.
 - (10:5 – 9) Psalm 40:6 – 8: a description of faithfulness. When faith came, the symbolism was no longer needed, which is true in all eras.
 - (9:25 – 26, 10:10 – 14) Why must Jesus die only once?
 - According to Catholic doctrine, Jesus is sacrificed anew in every mass in every place it is performed.
 - That Jesus’ sacrifice atoned for those before that day implies that people can be forgiven after they die. Verse 27 implies not.
 - If Jesus’ sacrifice stretches across time to each individual, the concept of “once” loses its meaning.
 - Rather, Jesus one-time sacrifice satisfied the demands of justice in a right-and-wrong system. That criterion for judgment no longer can be used on the last day. (Revelation 12:10, the accuser has been cast down.)
- The specific objectives cited in this narrative:
 - (9:9, 10:1, 10:14) Made perfect (not future but present)
 - (9:14, 10:22) Cleanse our consciences from dead works
 - (9:15) Receive the promise of the eternal inheritance
 - (10:2) No more consciousness of sin
 - (10:16) I will put My laws in their hearts
 - (10:19) We have boldness to enter the Holiest
 - (10:22) Full assurance, conscience cleansed

Be excited about the application of the illustrations of the Law (10:13 – 39)

- (23) That which follows is based on the promises from the Law previously illustrated:
 - (1:14 – 2:1) Are they (angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Therefore we must give the more earnest heed...

- (2:17 – 8) ...that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest...able to aid those who are tempted.
- (3:5 – 6) Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant...but Christ is a Son over His own house, whose house we are...
- (4:11) Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.
- (4:15 – 16) For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize...Let us therefore come boldly...
- (7:16) ...not according to the law of fleshly commandment but according to the power of an endless life.
- (7:19) The Law made nothing perfect
- (8:2) Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, not man.
- (9:8) ...the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was standing.
- (9:13 – 14) If the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer...sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ...
- (9:15) ...Mediator of a new covenant...that those who are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance.
- (9:23) Therefore it was necessary that the copies...should be purified...but the heavenly...with better sacrifices.
- (9:25 – 10:1) ...not that He should offer Himself often...For the law...can never with these same sacrifices...make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered?
- (8:8 – 12, 10:16 – 18) Where there is remission...there is no longer an offering for sin.
- (10:19) Therefore, have boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus
- (24) Let us consider one another...
 - The rest of the chapter changes from an inward viewpoint to an outward viewpoint.
 - The symbols of the Law illustrated the grand scheme of heaven (High Priest, tabernacle, sacrifices and offerings) and our individual part in it (bold access, effective cleansing, help, eternity).
 - The remainder of the chapter should be viewed as our relationship to others, both fellow believers and outsiders. Taken out of context, the section would attack the very hope to which we are to hold fast.
 - The faithful under the Law were the few among many (*viz*, 3:19). They could not count on support from fellow Israelites. Under the new covenant, mutual support among believers is an integral part of the plan.
- (24 – 25) Stir up love and good works
 - A major thrust of the assembly is refreshing the faithful
 - “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”
 - Under the Law, the faithful acted out the illustrations of the future before God as they celebrated forgiveness. They received little spiritual support from one another.
 - Mutual support, encouragement, and exhortation were designed into the new covenant as essential ingredients because, as in 8:11, “all shall know Me.”

- (26 – 31) Remember what can happen if the faithful fail in this task.
 - (26) “If we sin willfully” We are talented at self-deception, which is the reason for the inclusion of the “bad lists” in the New Testament. Because I am not likely to see my own self-deception, one of the functions of the church (of each faithful person) is to lead others out of such traps by positive methods: stir up love and good deeds, exhort.
 - (27) “Fearful expectation of judgment” for the self-deceived. Fear for myself is not compatible with love (Perfect love casts out fear, 1 John 4:18). I fear for those who may fall victim to their self-deception if I am not there to encourage them.
 - (28) “Consider one another” is not trivial but essential to the operation of the Kingdom.
 - (29) “Trampled the Son of God underfoot...” How could a faithful person fall into this description? Read Galatians. Legalism insults the spirit of grace (Galatians 3:2, 5:4), counts the blood of the covenant a common thing (Galatians 3:13), and tramples the Son of God underfoot (Galatians 2:21)
 - (31) “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” Again, my fear is not for me, but for others (Let us consider one another...). The same concept should lead us to evangelism.
 - (35) “Do not cast away your confidence” Remember the physical distresses you have overcome, and the hard choices you have made. “Consider one another” and help others through the same difficulties to a “great reward.” Remind others of the need for endurance to overcome physical trials. Habakkuk 2:3 – 4 encouraged faithful Israelites in the same way, although they were faced with a spiritually bankrupt leadership and the impending destruction by the Babylonians. If they had confidence, so can we.
 - (39) “But we are not those...” Like 6:9, “we are confident of better things concerning you.” The warning is real, but the author does not expect the readers to fail, rather to succeed spectacularly.
- The positive nature of this exhortation to “hold fast the confession of our hope”:
 - (24) Consider one another
 - (24) Stir up love and good works
 - (25) Exhort (strong encouragement, not scolding or reprimanding)
 - (25) As you see the day approaching (in their case, the destruction of Jerusalem).
 - (27, 30) Fiery indignation which will consume the adversaries (not us).
 - (29) Son of God, blood of the covenant, the spirit of grace: valuable encouragements
 - (32 – 34) You have overcome trials before
 - (35) Great reward
 - (36 – 38) If the faithful Israelites were rescued, so will we be.
 - (39) Paul is confident in us

Be excited about being partners with the faithful of history (chapter 11)

- (40) The readers (the faithful of modern times) in some ways are in a better position and in some ways are partners with the heroes of the Old Testament. The first part of chapter 12 contains specific applications. The faithful of modern times are to be partners with these faithful people, of the same nature. The references in Chapter 11 are specific examples of

ways we should be like them and be partners with them, and a stepping stone to something better.

- (6) Faith is essential. The two components of faith highlighted here are accepting that God (1) is real, not a fable, (2) does positive things for the faithful, and (3) must be sought diligently.
- (1) This is a figure of speech about faith. Taking out the figure of speech and putting it literally, “Faith gives substance to hope; evidence gives substance to faith.”
 - Many have missed the figure of speech and confidently declared that faith is evidence, that faith is a blind leap; that hope is based only on what we have chosen to believe.
 - The characteristics of biblical faith, are:
 - Acceptance of the resurrection as evidence
 - Acceptance of the need for a sacrifice
 - Acceptance of the Word of God as true
 - A realistic hope of heaven
 - Acting on the promises of God
 - Taking on the divine nature
 - Evangelism
- (2) The heroes whose histories are recorded in the Old Testament were acceptable to God because of their faith. The unspoken counter point is that they were not declared acceptable because of what they accomplished; all of them had flaws.
- (3) Accepting that God created is a hallmark of faith.
 - Romans 1:20 His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made (The obviousness of creation points to God.)
 - Ephesians 3:9 – 12 ...the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church...according to the eternal purpose (Creation gives us purpose.)
 - Colossians 1:15 – 17, In Him all things were created...in Him all things consist (Jesus is the cause of Creation.)
 - Hebrews 4:3 – 4 ...the works were finished from the foundation of the world (God is not reacting but leading.)
 - 2 Peter 3:3 – 7 ...scoffers...saying...”all things continue as from the beginning” (Denying creation overlooks historical events.)
- (4) The reason that God counted Abel’s sacrifice “more excellent” is not given. Due to lack of searching the Scriptures, many have taught that the reason was because Cain offered vegetables whereas Abel offered the blood of animals. But, the reality is that each offered what they produced; one was not better than the other. 1 John 3:12 reveals that Cain murdered Abel “because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous.” The author’s point is that Abel’s sacrifice was better because it was the product of faith.
- (5) All that is known of Enoch is in Genesis 5:21 – 24 and Jude 14 – 15. The supposed “Book of Enoch” is a fake. The author’s point is that God goes to extremes for the faithful.
- (7) Although the history of Noah fills several pages (Genesis 5:29 – 9:29), the characteristics of the faith of Noah are the point here:
 - Moved with godly fear: godly fear is fear for the fate of others.
 - Noah “condemned the world” not by the physical act of building the ark, but by
 - Preparing for the unseen (a flood beyond human comprehension)

- Preaching (2 Peter 23:5), implied here by the fact that the people of that time were held accountable.
 - He became an heir of the promises which are a part of faith.
- (8 – 10, 17 – 19) Abraham (Genesis 11:27 – 25:11) is mentioned over 200 times in the Bible. In this place, the author focuses on certain acts of Abraham that were prompted by his faith:
 - Abraham left the most civilized city of the time. He did not know where he was going when he set out, trusting God.
 - Abraham lived in a tent and did not possess the land to which he moved.
 - Abraham waited for the promised possession. This is not to reference Jerusalem, since Jerusalem's foundations already existed in Abraham's time, and that city was built by people, probably not at God's direction. So, the reference is to heaven, as revealed in verse 16.
 - Abraham's faith caused him to understand the command to sacrifice Isaac, that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead to accomplish His promise that Isaac would be the descendant through whom the world would be blessed.
- (11 – 12) Sarah was able to conceive because of her faith.
- (13 – 16) Summary of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah:
 - They all died before what they had been promised became reality.
 - Specific promises to Abel and Enoch are not given.
 - The promises to Noah were observed by Noah except that God would not destroy the earth by flood again.
 - The specific promise to Abraham and Sarah (verse 12) that they did not see was that their descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky or grains of sand on the beach.
 - God has prepared a heavenly city for the faithful.
- (20) Isaac (Genesis 21:1 – 35:29) blessed Jacob and Esau (Genesis 27:26 – 40) in the reverse order as would be customary. The story in Genesis suggests that Isaac was duped. This verse adds that Isaac allowed Rebekah and Jacob to play out their game because he was acting by faith, not custom. Isaac's blessing contained promises from God through Isaac, not wishful thinking on Isaac's part. This event defined his faith.
- (21) Jacob (Genesis 25:21 – 50:14) blessed his sons (Genesis 49), telling them that he was speaking of the future, implying that this was a promise from God. The author of Hebrews referenced not the blessing of the twelve, but the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:8 – 22), in which Jacob also reversed the normal sequence, placing Ephraim (the younger) ahead of his brother. This even defined his faith.
- (22) Joseph (Genesis 30:22 – 50:26) gave orders that he be carried out of Egypt to the Promised Land (Genesis 50:24 – 26, Exodus 13:19), illustrating that he believed the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- (23) The faith of Moses' parents (Genesis 22:1 – 10) was illustrated by hiding their infant child despite the royal decree. They did the right thing, even though their child was not predicted to be anyone great. Rather, they did what was right despite the potential consequences.
- (24 – 29) The faith of Moses (Exodus 2:1 – Deuteronomy 34:5) is summarized in a few events:

- Exodus 2:11 – 15 Moses could have remained in the royal household with its privileges. Rather, he identified himself with his ethnic group. Killing the Egyptian probably was ill-advised. The result was that Moses fled Egypt, not due to fear but prudence.
- Exodus 3:1 – 4:17 At the burning bush, God repeatedly identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. So, this must have meant something to Moses. He was aware to the Promises Land and the blessing upon all the world. Moses, as revealed here, was motivated to leave the household of Pharaoh by these promises. The reproach Moses brought on himself ranged from stepping down from royalty to slave, how he was treated by the Pharaoh, and how he was treated by his own people. Whether he knew how the Messiah would be treated is unknown.
- Exodus 11 – 12 Moses followed God’s instructions about the original Passover.
- Exodus 14 Walking between the walls of water surely took some faith.
- (30 – 31) The faith of the Israelites that resulted in the destruction of Jericho (Joshua 2 and 6) and the faith of Rahab are examples and stepping stones for us. The battle plan was unusual. Rahab’s faith was securely founded on evidence, by which she overcame her culture.
- (32 – 38) Miscellaneous brief mentions, the effectiveness of which is based on knowledge of Israelite history.
 - Gideon (Judges 6 – 8) was the youngest son in a small clan of a small tribe. God chose him to lead the Israelites and defeat the Midianites. He received several signs. He trimmed his army from 32,000 to 300 to better illustrate that God would win the battle.
 - Barak (Judges 4 – 5) was the general under judge Deborah who would go only if Deborah went with him, and knew that he would gain no glory from the task.
 - Samson (Judges 13 – 16) was a scoundrel, but God used him to defeat the Philistines.
 - Jephthah (Judges 11 – 12) was the son of a harlot, so generally excluded from polite society. God chose him to defeat the Ammonites.
 - David (1 Samuel 16 – 1 Kings 1)
 - Samuel (1 Samuel) was the last judge.
 - (35) An example of resurrection is in 1 Kings 17:22
 - (37) By tradition, Isaiah was sawn in two by order of King Manasseh.
- (40) These examples of faith are to be reminders to us that we are partners with them, and that we have something better. In what ways do we have something better?

Be excited about our training program on earth (Chapter 12)

- (1 – 4) Be excited about mimicking the faithful who went before us
 - (1) Be motivated by the faithful lists in chapter 11 to lay aside excuses.
 - Weight: that which slows us down. From chapter 11:
 - (11:7) Motivated by fear for the lost, not fear for me
 - (11:8) Not knowing the outcome, but going by faith
 - (11:9) Not receiving the promise while on earth
 - (11:17) Acting on the impossible
 - (11:20) Telling the next generation
 - (11:22) Preparing for what happens next
 - (11:23) Doing what is right despite potential repercussions

- (11:25) Pursuing faith rather than honor in the world
 - (11:30 – 39) A long history of success by faith
 - Endurance: faith is a distance event
 - (2 – 3) Jesus, the ultimate example of faith
 - If Jesus is not like us (2:17 – 18, 4:15), then this has no meaning.
 - Literally, “The architect of faith, the one who makes our faith consistent.”
 - “Author”: see Hebrews 2:10, Acts 3:15, 5:31
 - “Finisher” or “perfecter”: the one who makes our faith consistent.
 - Joyful objective: creating a big family that will last.
 - The horrible nature of crucifixion was not the pain but the shame (humiliation).
 - Jesus was dishonored by most “honorable” people all of his earthly life.

Overcome weariness and discouragement by remembering that this is normal.
 - (4) The target audience had not experienced severe persecution. Many of those held up as examples in chapter 11 had. Remember that they had it worse.
- (5 – 11) Be excited about the training program.
 - In sports, training occupies much more time than the contest. The training generally is difficult and has no immediate gratification. Yet, athletes train for years just to make the Olympic team.
 - In good families, children are trained (disciplined) so that they may be successful adults. Academics, learning social graces, planning, responsibility, and perseverance all are taught over a long period of time with no immediate goal.
 - Chastisement (discipline) looks to the future; punishment looks to the past.
 - Proverbs 3:11 – 12 is in a section concerning wisdom.
- (12 – 17) Be excited about the team concept
 - The point (“Therefore”) of considering the faithful and being disciplined is not about me, but about those who need help to complete the training program.
 - (12 – 13) The “lame” in the family need strengthening; they are not to be cut from the roster. Make “straight” paths. The strong make the roads. Make your ways simple and direct so that even the weak can walk with you.
 - (14) Pursue peace. Based on the exhortations in this letter, this cannot be peace at the expense of holiness or truth. Rather, the strong are to find a way to keep everyone at peace while growing from different starting points and at different rates. Peace is essential to a successful church (without which no one will see the Lord).
 - (15 – 17) Root of bitterness causes trouble
 - Divisive people are to be cut from the roster (see Jude 19 and Titus 3:10 – 11).
 - Troubles within the church were predicted (*e.g.*, 1 Timothy 4:1 – 5, 2 Timothy 3:1 – 9, Titus 1:10)
 - Root causes (two among many that are mentioned elsewhere):
 - Bitterness:
 - See Deuteronomy 29:18 – 19, “I shall have peace, even though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.”
 - Jealousy
 - Retained anger
 - Worldliness – the value system of the natural man (the best this world has to offer).
 - Esau: did not take his birthright seriously until it was too late.

- The opposite: “Sober” Romans 12:3, 2 Corinthians 5:13, 1 Peter 4:7
 - The example suggests that church people who do not take their faith seriously will find no place for repentance when they want to inherit. Unlike the 11th-hour laborers who had no opportunity to work until the end of the day, those who do not take their faith seriously will not get paid.
- (18 – 29) Be excited that we have a relationship with God founded on positive images, not fearful ones.
 - (8:8 – 12, Jeremiah 31:31 – 34) The new covenant is with the faithful, unlike the old covenant that was with predominantly the unfaithful. Therefore, the approach is different.
 - Fearful old covenant
 - Exodus 19:12 – 24, 20:18 – 2, Deuteronomy 4:9 – 12, 5:23 – 27
 - Moses trembled (Deuteronomy 9:19) not out of fear for himself, but the fear of what God would do to the unfaithful Israelites after the golden calf incident.
 - The attraction of positive images about the church:
 - Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem – Figurative expression based on the hill on which the original city of Jerusalem was built, which David conquered.
 - Angels are part of the church, the general assembly (like when Israel came together for a holiday like Passover, Pentecost, or Tabernacles), registered in heaven (the Book of Life, Revelation 3:5, 20:12)
 - Spirits (characters) made consistent
 - Jesus, previously described as High Priest (2:17 – 3:1, 5:5 – 11, 6:19 – 8:6, 9:11 – 28, 10:11 – 22)
 - Abel (11:4), recalling the faithful of old
 - (25 – 27) Do not develop the root of bitterness (12:15) and be overconfident due to the positive images. Remember Haggai 2:6 – 7 about the Messiah, that heaven and earth will be shaken (in the day of the original audience). The disruptions of that era (both in heaven and on earth) were predicted.
 - (28 – 29) But our kingdom cannot be shaken, therefore
 - Be a gracious person in the midst of difficulty
 - Gracious people are able to continue to serve God during hard times
 - With reverence, like soberly, the opposite of Esau
 - Godly fear, like Moses had for the Israelites after the golden calf incident

Be excited about living honorably (Chapter 13)

- “Live honorably” is from verse 18, Paul’s summary statement of his own motivation. The following actions and attitudes are a checklist for honorable life.
- (1) Let brotherly love continue (Romans 12:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 2 Peter 1:7)
- (2) Be hospitable (Genesis 18 – 19, Abraham and Lot both entertained angels unawares)
- (3) Remember the prisoners, probably with reference to Christians who were imprisoned by order of the Sanhedrin (Acts 9:2, 26:10). Further, prisoners in that time were provided food or clothing, so friends and family had to provide for them or they would die of starvation or exposure.
- (4) Be faithful in marriage. Fidelity in the culture of the time was rare.

- (5 – 6) Greed is a sign of failure to value a relationship with God and failure to trust His promises.
- (7 – 13, 17, 24) Follow faith. The examples are those who taught the Word and Jesus. The description of such leaders is “hegemone”: those whom it makes sense to follow.
 - (7) Faith is evaluated by observing actions
 - (8) Jesus is unwavering. Of course, Jesus was different at different times. The point is His consistency.
 - (9 – 10, 25) Doctrines are evaluated by how well they promote a gracious character, in contrast to dietary rules. We have something better (chapters 7 through 10)
 - (11 – 13) Another illustration from the Law (like chapter 10). Sacrifices for the sin of the nation were burned outside the camp, symbolic of removing the sin from the nation (Exodus 29:14, Leviticus 4:12, 4:21, 9:11, 16:27). Jesus was executed outside the city for the same reason. We are to take ourselves (as living sacrifices) “outside the camp” to take the sin out of the camp. Evangelism purifies.
 - (14) Israel looked to the Temple to feel valuable. We look to an eternal one.
 - (15 – 16) Our sacrifice is to praise God, do good, and share.
 - (19) Prayer works.
 - (20 – 21) Look to the promises of God:
 - God will make you consistent (Hebrews 10:14, 12:23, Ephesians 4:13, Colossians 1:28)
 - For the purpose of good works, which is His will (Ephesians 2:10)
 - (22) An appeal, not a command.
- Note the simplicity of the message.