

Thoughts On The Book Of Hebrews



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 4
Theme of the Book of Hebrews	Page 4
The Recipients of the Epistle	Page 4
Authorship of the Book of Hebrews	Page 9
The Date the Epistle was Written	Page 9
The Occasion for the Epistle	Page 10
The Superiority of Christ	Page 12
The 'Better' Things	Page 15
The Better 'New Covenant' Position	Page 35
The Author's Personal Encouragements, Instructions & Condolences	Page 39
Summary and Practical Value of the Epistle	Page 40

Introduction

This book has been the cause of much confusion, not only because people have not interpreted in the light of the whole Word of God but also because they have been shallow to the point of overlooking those teachings which go beyond the mere matter of salvation from hell.

A. *Salvation is threefold*

1. *Salvation from* hell, also called regeneration in our ordinary parlance (Ephesians 2:8, 9).
2. *Salvation from* temptation, that is, deliverance from present sins (II Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:1, 2).
3. *Salvation from* death (either in rapture or resurrection), which is necessarily yet future (Romans 13:11; Matthew 24:13) and which is called "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (II Timothy 2:10). Hebrews deals with it primarily in the second of these senses, but (that) with a view to the third. Actually, we might eliminate the second sense because of the emphasis claimed by the glory-salvation.

B. *The Theme of the Book of Hebrews*

1. Thus we may say that the *theme* of Hebrews is stated in Hebrews 2:1-3.
2. The danger of losing out, or missing something, is taught in vs. 1, but also in many other Scriptures (cf. Matthew 10:32-39; Matthew 16:24-27; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26; John 12:25).
3. The prospect of judgment upon such carelessness is taught, v. 2, also v.3 and many passages through this book. (cf. Matthew 5:13; Matthew 18:34,35; Luke 12:46-48; Luke 19:22-26)
4. The emphasis on God's grace and the place of Christ is suggested in the phrase "so great salvation" (v. 3).

C. *The Recipients of the Epistle*

1. The persons addressed in this book is a matter which must be settled before it can possibly be understood.
2. The title, 'Hebrews' may be misleading. Remember that it is a man-made title, since it is not placed there by the Lord.
3. It is misleading because the canonical title, "Epistle of Paul

to the Hebrews”, would seem to suggest that only Jews are addressed; even though these are conceded to be professing Christians. This erroneous view is supported in traditional explanation by the many references to the covenants, the priesthood, the offerings, the law, the promises, and the inheritance.

4. True, much *is* said about covenants, priesthood, sacrifices, law, etc., leading some to believe that the epistle was written to Jews exclusively; however, Christians need to understand that these terms (originally belonging to Israel in the national sense), have a certain bearing on “the Israel of God” (the church) in a sense that they pertain to no other people (Galatians 6:16).
5. This is seen in Ephesians 2:11-13 where the reconciliation is seen to be “in one body” (the church) where the middle wall of partition is broken down (between an elect or saved Jew, and an elect or church saint). If this distinction is lost then God’s covenant with Abraham is broken and His Word is not true, His promises are meaningless, and we may be sure of nothing).
6. I suggest that the title (certainly not inspired) misses the mark because it fails to take into account the following:
 - a) The need of all Christians to be familiar with the covenants, promises, etc.
 - b) The fact that they depended much on the Old Testament for principles, prophecies, etc., a thing that many present-day Christians err in failing to do.
 - c) The fact that certain Gentile believers may claim the promises along with natural Israel, the covenant-people. This need not surprise us in view of the controversy of Paul at Jerusalem (Acts 21:18-26) and the attitude of the Jerusalem brethren (including the Apostle), in spite of the decision of Acts 15:19-32. The “Seed of Abraham” comprises the special people of God today, though including a Gentile engrafting, as much as ever Israel did in her national capacity. Natural branches were broken off while wild branches were grafted in (Romans 11:17). These too may be broken off. It is with this possibility that the book of Hebrews concerns itself.
 - d) And finally, the fact that the church is today the “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16), made possible by the breaking down of the middle wall of partition (Ephesians 2:14-18), Careful observation concerning who shall inherit the promises (cf. Romans 4:12, 13; specially Romans 9:4; Galatians 3:26-29 et al.) will reveal that not all saved shall inherit (Ephesians

5:1-5; Galatians 5:17-21), for there are necessary conditions to be met. It seems that not all saved are the Israel of God or seed of Abraham or elect or adoption or heirs, any more than all saved are in the church because:

- 1) Some may be "taken away" and "cast forth (John 15:2, 6) as a branch" because they "abide not in the Vine."
- 2) Some branches (because of unbelief - not continuing in His goodness, but rather high-mindedness) may be cut off from the olive tree (Romans 11:17-22). It will not do to say these are lost for they are ones grafted in and also standing by faith.
- 3) One may (by reverting to legalism - the very error of many of the "Hebrews") be "severed from Christ" (Greek of Galatians 5:4) and no longer be "Christ's" (Bride), Galatians 5:24, because "wedded" to the world in spiritual fornication. Only "Christ's" are Abraham's seed (Galatians 3:29), and they only have the "Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9,10) dwelling in them - a gift belonging to the church (Scripturally baptized believers) alone (Acts 2:38; 19:1-5; I Corinthians 12:12,13).
- 4) Some (though in a church) may refuse to heed reproof and cease to be qualified to inherit, but be accounted as "heathen" (Matthew 18:17).
- 5) Only those who suffer can be "joint heirs" (Romans 8:17).
- 6) The "adoption" belongs to Israel (Romans 9:4) but this adoption (which guarantees the inheritance) belongs only to those "appointed" (elected, chosen) by the Father (Galatians 4:1-7; Ephesians 1:4,5).
- 7) Note: The inheritance is "reserved in heaven for [those] who are kept by the power of God" (I Peter 1:4,5), but these are kept "through faith." On God's side it is "certain" (Hebrews 6:19) but on our side is required "diligence to make (our) calling and election sure" (II Peter 1:10), for there is the possibility of a fall. But the diligence provides an "abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom" (the consummation of our hope) which is the place where we receive the inheritance (II Peter 1:11).
- 7) These are definitely "church saints:" not just all saved people, or even some saved people; and neither are they Jewish Christians (or professors) only (Hebrews 3:1-6,14; Hebrews 6:1,4,9-12; Hebrews 10:19-25, 32-34; Hebrews 12:1-11; Hebrews 13:1-25).
- 8) Unless one is mindful of the particular distinction marking

church saints (for no others are called saints in the Bible), as against those merely saved, he may miss the import of this observation. It should be observed that "the gift of the Holy Spirit," or the "indwelling Spirit," belongs not to all saved, but only to those in the Lord's church (Acts 2:38; Acts 19:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12,13). This will mean that special knowledge (alone possessed by those with Spiritual enlightenment) can be had only by those who are in the church. (cf. Hebrews 6:4; Hebrews 10:26 et al).

- 9) Then the church (as God sees it) must comprise the class addressed in Hebrews (though, doubtless, the author had some specific church saints in mind):
 - a) They were in the house of Christ (or God), though with no assurance of remaining there (Hebrews 3:6). The "house of God" is the church, Mark 13:34; I Timothy 3:15.
 - b) They are addressed as being familiar with what it takes to be "heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:14). The only salvation that is inherited is the "glory salvation" (cf. II Timothy 2:10) which is future, belongs to the elect only (cf. Romans 9:4), and goes along with the inheriting of the promises. Salvation from hell is not inherited.
 - c) A conditional "partaking" (sharing) of Christ is mentioned. This partaking must refer to Bridehood and the sharing in His glory, which only the faithful, patient, suffering, and obedient can expect to do (Hebrews 3:14).
 - d) A differentiating of saints from believers in general is seen in Hebrews 4:11,12.
 - e) They were "partakers of the Holy Ghost", a blessing belonging only to believers in "church" standing (Hebrews 6:4). Study will show that the Holy Spirit of Promise belongs only to the members of the Lord's church, being a part of the "covenant blessing" now enjoyed even by Gentiles belonging to the Israel of God (cf. Galatians 3:14; Hebrews 10:15; Ephesians 1:13,14; Luke 11:13; I Thessalonians 4:8). (Note: Search and see if anyone is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (has the gift of the Spirit) apart from a proper church relationship.)
 - f) They had such a High Priest as ministered for the "true tabernacle" (Hebrews 8:2). This must be the church, in this age (Hebrews 9:8,9,11).
 - g) They were admonished concerning their assembling (Hebrews 10:25).
 - h) They were blessed by an illumination which accompanies

"partaking of the Spirit" and belongs alone to the church (Hebrews 10:32 with 26 & Hebrews 6:4).

- i) They "looked for a city" together with Abraham and the patriarchs (Hebrews 11:10,14,16; Hebrews 13:13,14). This is the Bride-city and, in this age, the church alone fits the Bride description.
- j) The "better thing" which they might expect to enjoy together with Old Testament heroes of faith must refer to the blessedness of glory which the Bride shall enjoy and which, in this dispensation, is in prospect only for the church and limited further to those who suffer with Him (Hebrews 11:40; Romans 8:17; II Timothy 2:10-12).
- k) These "Hebrews" had "approached" or "come toward" Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, (which is the Bride, Revelation 22:1,2,10), and they had also approached "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Hebrews 12:22,23). This difficult portion can only be appreciated when view in the light of the prospect which awaits the Bride of Christ when she is to be glorified with Christ the Bridegroom in the New Jerusalem. Whether the "general assembly" is meant to describe "church of the firstborn" or not is hard to determine (probably not, since it likely includes angels mentioned before as well as all the others in the series connected by "and" repeatedly). "Firstborn" seems certainly used in the light of the Old Testament use of the term, that is, to describe those who are peculiarly (in a special sense) the Lord's. This harmonizes with those who are "Christ's" mentioned earlier.
- l) This whole passage (Hebrews 12:18-29) shows the parallel position between this people (the "Hebrews") and the Old Testament "covenant people." Instead of this showing that they were all necessarily and only Jews in the flesh, it shows that the "Israel of God" (including the engrafted seed) hold the place as "the people of God" today which Israel alone held in the Old Testament. There were saved people out of the nation of Israel before Christ came; there are saved people outside the church today.
- m) Only "church" saints could fit into the position of those in Hebrews 13:7,17,24.
- n) They had an altar which they ate (Hebrews 13:10). The Lord's Supper belongs only strictly to the church and there is no other eating altar in the New Testament.
- o) The sacrifices they were admonished to offer are exactly the same as characterizes the Bride (cf. Jeremiah 33:11

with Hebrews 13:15,16). Lest these church saints lose their position and miss the blessedness of the people of God ("fail of the grace of God," Hebrews 12:15; cf. Galatians 5:4), this letter is written to them.

D. Authorship of the Book of Hebrews

1. Let Neo-orthodoxy quibble about the authorship of Hebrews; let Fundamentalists cast up their speculations. We believe that Paul's knowledge of the mystery of Christ and of God qualified him to write the book and the internal evidence settles the Pauline authorship. But inspiration is certain in Hebrews. No other Bible book more fully authenticates itself.
 - a) The author was a friend of Timothy (Hebrews 13:23).
 - b) The author lived and wrote during the time Paul did - - just before the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem (Hebrews 7:25; 13:11-13).
 - c) The author was a teacher of (at least) one of the Apostolic churches (Hebrews 13:19).
2. The general plan of the letter is similar to Paul's epistles: doctrinal in the early statements; practical in the latter part.
3. The doctrinal statements are identical with Paul's manner of speaking; e.g., the statement concerning the abolition of the law (Hebrews 7:12, 18).
4. Phraseology, diction, and argumentation are very similar to Paul's letters.
5. Peter (2 Peter 3:15) strongly suggests a Pauline authorship (cf. Galatians 2:11).
6. The most prevalent idea in the early church was that it was written either by Paul or by Barnabas, though some thought it to be Apollos and some few more thought it was Paul's material written by Luke or Clement.
7. The questions were raised early as to authorship, especially because no name was given by the writer as in the other New Testament epistles. But it is an epistle, as is seen by so many epistolary references (e.g., Hebrews 11:40; Hebrews 13:6,7,9,17-25).

E. The Date the Epistle was Written

The date is fairly easily ascertained within a few years (see D-1, b above). This would put it between A.D. 60 and the

time of the destruction of the temple and of Jerusalem by Titus, the Roman general under Vespasian, A.D. 70. The most probable time would seem to be about A.D. 67.

F. The Occasion for the Epistle

1. The occasion of the letter to the Hebrews would seem to be fairly easily determined.
2. The problem which seems to have faced these "Hebrews" and which is repeatedly "answered" or refuted was LEGALISM. It took the form of JUDAISM for that was the form of legalism which plagued the early churches. Even the church at Jerusalem had difficulty here, and succumbed to error in many respects.
3. Legalism in New Testament days threatened the one led astray with being "severed from Christ" (Galatians 5:4). It holds the same threat for us. Legalism today embodies not only Judaism with its Old Testament religious forms and the traditions of Jewish elders, but also the religious TRADITIONS of some 19 more centuries together with much of heathenism which has crept in from time to time in various parts of the world.
4. Thus the most "holy" days (Christmas, Easter) are not considered with most zest and sentiment by present-day Christians. Besides, a denominational or PROGRAMIZED Christianity has arisen to curse the church, make her lean on the weak arm of the flesh and trust in human leaders (Gk., kath-eg-e-tai, cf. Matthew 23:10) instead of holding the Head (Colossians 2:19), accepting the "ministration of the Spirit" (II Corinthians 3:8), as sufficient administration.
5. It is just as LEGALISTIC to resort to the traditions of the past generation or of 200 years ago, justifying practice by "Baptist Fathers," as it was legalistic to "become entangled again with the yoke" of the law and the "traditions of the elders." It entails the same consequence - "falling from grace" - because of becoming "severed from Christ" (Galatians 5:4).
6. Some will want to charge that this is saying that one can be saved and then lost. Instead, it is saying that one may be IN the church (the Israel of God) and then be cut off, be severed from the Bride, and "fail of the grace of God."
7. In addition to legalism, it is evident that the epistle was written in order to avoid a spiritual LOSS. These saints were showing signs of weakness, waywardness, carelessness, backsliding, fear, hardness of heart, feeble knees, hands

hanging down, etc., thus were threatened with a loss (I Corinthians 3:15; Hebrews 3:14, et al.) -- hence, the theme of the book (Hebrews 2:1,18; Hebrews 3:6,8,12-14; Hebrews 4:1,11,16; Hebrews 5:11,12; Hebrews 6:6,11,12; Hebrews 10:22-25; Hebrews 12:1-5, 12,13,15,16,25,28; and the entire closing chapter).

8. All these passages show the constant admonition to these weak, discouraged brethren, pointing them to the prospect of blessing and glory, warning them of judgment.
9. Persecution had arisen and this tended to cause Christians to lapse into Judaism (the prominent form of legalism in that day), because it provided the forms and the cloak of respectability while not demanding a renouncing of the World, (Hebrews 2:18; Hebrews 3:8; Hebrews 4:15,16; Hebrews 5:1-9; Hebrews 12:1-4; Hebrews 13:5,6).
 - a) Such hardships or persecutions were causing many to cast away their confidence (Hebrews 3:6,14; Hebrews 4:14; Hebrews 6:11; Hebrews 10:35).
 - b) The warning was that they might miss the inheritance (Hebrews 6:12; Hebrews 10:36) promised and not share in Christ's glory (Hebrews 3:14), but face severe judgment (Hebrews 2:2; Hebrews 6:8; Hebrews 10:29).
10. The writer, being concerned with the welfare of saints as regards their inheriting the promises (Hebrews 6:12; Hebrews 10:35-36; all of chapter 11, specially vs. 39,40; Hebrews 12:28) and entering into rest (Hebrews 4:1,11), exhorts, challenges, warns careless believers of their danger (cf. Hebrews 10:26-31 with Hebrews 6:7,8). (This was definitely the burden of the heart of Paul (Colossians 1:23 - 2:2; Ephesians 3:3-12; I Timothy 2:7 et al.).
11. These persons were evidently believers of some length of time who were known to the writer (Hebrews 5:12-14; Hebrews 6:1-3,10; Hebrews 10:32-34; Hebrews 12:4; Hebrews 13:3,19,22,23).
12. He had written them a short letter (considering the import of the subject) - (Hebrews 13:22). Still, they were lapsing into legalism and carelessness.
13. Their knowledge and enlightenment is several times referred to, pointing up the fact of their church connection and the magnitude of their error (Hebrews 3:1; Hebrews 6:4,8,9; Hebrews 10:26) in "drawing back."
14. The drawing back of this group of saints is referred to many times and met by many challenges. Their

weaknesses and lapses:

- a) Hebrews 2:1,18
 - b) Hebrews 3:6,8,12,13,15,19
 - c) Hebrews 4:1, 2, 11, 14, 15, 16
 - d) Hebrews 5:11, 12
 - e) Hebrews 6:1, 6, 11, 12
 - f) Hebrews 7:11
 - g) Hebrews 9:14
 - h) Hebrews 10:23, 25, 26, 35, 36, 38, 39
 - i) Hebrews 12:4, 5, 12, 15
 - j) Hebrews 13:1, 2, 5, 9
15. The challenges and admonitions are coupled with each of these (that they might overcome their weaknesses and gain the promises). Consider two words and their significance as illustrating the need for this book:
- a) "Inheritance" (heirship): the thought is that they might miss this inheritance (Hebrews 1:14; Hebrews 6:12,17; Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 11:7,9; Hebrews 12:28 with James 2:5).
 - b) "Promises" (to be received on the basis of faith) which may be missed (Hebrews 4:1; Hebrews 6:12,13,15,17; Hebrews 7:6; Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 10:36; Hebrews 11:9,13,17,33,39; cf. Hebrews 10:23; Hebrews 11:11; Hebrews 12:26)
16. These rather lengthy introductory remarks should make the understanding of this book much simpler. Hence, the following observations will point out the author's design in accomplishing his purpose to warn, admonish, encourage, and strengthen these "Hebrew" believers. The practicality of preserving this book for us can also be appreciated, since the same problems face us as faced them.

I. THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST

The superiority of Christ and of the Blessings afforded through Him in this present economy is affirmed throughout the book. This is the primary challenge to FEEBLE,

CARELESS, INDIFFERENT, and/or LEGALIST Christians, both for the day when the epistle was written and for us today.

A. THIS SUPERIORITY IS SEEN IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST:

1. As a testimony of God He is greater than all, whether prophets, creation, or other (Hebrews 1:1-3).
2. As THE SON OF GOD He is far superior to "the sons of God" (angels), inasmuch as by inheritance He has a more excellent NAME (Hebrews 1:4-9, 14).
3. As THE CREATOR He is far superior to that which is created (Hebrews 1:10-12; Hebrews 2:5-8) and shall ultimately RULE all things.
4. As A MAN He is far superior to all flesh and has demonstrated what can be done toward resisting temptation and enduring sufferings when God indwells that flesh (Hebrews 2:9-18).
 - a) In connection with His INCARNATION is His Saviorhood taught (Hebrews 2:9).
 - b) In the same connection is His PRIESTHOOD taught (Hebrews 2:17, 18).
 - c) A sort of "EXTENDED INCARNATION" (Christ dwelling in believing, yielded men) makes possible the "fellowship with the Father and with His Son" (Hebrews 2:11, 12; I John 1:3). As these learn the "fellowship of His sufferings" (Philippians 3:10) they qualify for "glory" (Hebrews 2:10; Romans 8:17; II Timothy 2:12; II Corinthians 1:4-10; II Thessalonians 1:5; I Peter 4:12-19).
 - d) *Young's Literal Translation* of Hebrews 2:14-18 helps clarify a difficult passage: "Seeing, then, the children have partaken of flesh and blood, he himself also in like manner did take part of the same, that through death he might destroy him having the power of death - that, is the devil - and might deliver those, whoever, with fear of death, throughout all their life, were subjects of bondage, for, doubtless, of messengers it doth not lay hold, but of seed of Abraham it layeth hold, wherefore it did behoove him in all things to be made like to the brethren, that he might become a kind and steadfast chief-priest in the things with God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people, for in that he suffered, himself being tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted."
5. As A SON OVER HIS OWN HOUSE (God's house - the church

today) He is far superior to Moses, THE SERVANT IN THE HOUSE (God's house - the elect, Numbers 12:7) by as much as the Builder of the house is superior to the house (Hebrews 3:1-6).

6. As A HIGH PRIEST made by oath (Hebrews 7:21,28; Psalm 110:4) He is far superior to the Aaronic priesthood (Hebrews 4:14 ~ 5:10; Hebrews 6:13 ~ 8:6), because the Levitical (Aaronic) priesthood was "after the law of a carnal commandment", but the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec was "after the power of an endless life" (Hebrews 7:16).
 - a) The Levitical priesthood "made nothing perfect" (Hebrews 7:19), being weak and unprofitable because of the "weakness of the flesh" to which it appealed (Romans 8:3), and is therefore set aside or disannulled (Hebrews 7:18).
 - b) His is A BETTER PRIESTLY MINISTRY in direct proportion to the superiority of the better covenant (over the old [law] covenant), because the NEW COVENANT was established upon BETTER promises (Hebrews 7:19; Hebrews 8:6).

B. THIS SUPERIORITY IS SEEN IN THE WORK OF CHRIST:

1. Christ is the Mediator of a BETTER COVENANT (Hebrews 8:7-13; Hebrews 9:15-22).
2. The sanctuary, ordinances, services (offerings), and priesthood of the Old (law) Covenant were only typical - unable to perfect the conscience (Hebrews 9:1-10).
3. The sanctuary, ordinances, service, offering, and Priesthood of the New Covenant are real, effectual, and practical for us to day (Hebrews 9:11-14, 23; Hebrews 10:20).
 - a) The sanctuary (the one body - church (cf. Hebrews 8:2; Hebrews 9:24) was purged by Him and is, therefore, superior as a sanctuary to the tabernacle in the wilderness (Hebrews 9:11-14, 23, 24).
 - 1) The sanctuary cannot be heaven for it did not need purifying (cf. Hebrews 9:23).
 - 2) The church is bought with the blood of Christ and is the habitation of God through the Spirit and the holy place or heavenlies for the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16) today, Ephesians 5:25; Ephesians 2:21, 22; Ephesians 1:3 (cf. John 3:12); Ephesians 2:6 (cf.

Ephesians 1:20 where HEAVEN is included); Ephesians 3:10; (cf. Hebrews 3:1; Hebrews 6:4; Hebrews 8:5; Hebrews 9:23).

- b) Christ's ONE OFFERING is superior to the many sacrifices of the Old Testament (Hebrews 9:25 ~ 10:18).
- c) The saint (a term EVIDENTLY applicable to body-believers - in the church - only) today has a place of worship far superior to the believer under the law (Hebrews 10:19,20; Hebrews 12:18-24), and that will also apply to a believer today who puts himself under law and thus jeopardizes his "body" position (cf. Galatians 5:4 et al.).
 - 1) The believer under the law could approach only in fear, his position exemplified and symbolized by the thunders, voices, smoke, blackness, darkness, and tempest from Sinai.
 - 2) We may approach God boldly, going on through the veil (i.e., by means of His flesh offered for us), and hear God speak from heaven (NOW) and look to the time when He shall send forth His law from Zion and His Word from Jerusalem and he personally shall teach us His ways (Isaiah 2:3).
4. The FAITH-WALK is far superior to the legalism of the law (Hebrews 11:1-40).
5. We partake of an ALTAR made available because He suffered "WITHOUT THE CAMP" (Hebrews 13:10-12).

II. THE 'BETTER' THINGS

A. The practical Application of These Teachings Concerning the BETTER THINGS -Warnings, Admonitions, Exhortations, Instructions (Hebrews 2:1-4 ; Hebrews 3:7 ~ Hebrews 4:16 ; Hebrews 5:11 ~ Hebrews 6:12 ; Hebrews 10:21-39 ; Hebrews 12:1-17 ; Hebrews 12:25-29 ; Hebrews 13:1-9 ; Hebrews 13:13-25).

B. THE GREAT THEME OF THE BOOK IS HORTATORY

1. There is danger of letting slip that which we have heard (Hebrews 2:1), that is, that we should slip away from the Truth we know.
2. God is NOT SLACK but keeps His Word (Hebrews 2:2; John 10:35).
3. How shall WE escape if we neglect so great salvation?

(Hebrews 2:3).

- a) Rhetorical question addressed to saved, enlightened, "church" believers.
- b) Salvation is GREAT because of One through Whom spoken and because of those by whom confirmed (experimentally and demonstratively), cf. v 4.
- c) Escape from what? Since it is not "from hell", the ones involved already being assured of that, then it must be "from judgment and its consequent penalties", cf. Hebrews 6 and 10 below.
- d) How can a saved person "NEGLECT" God's salvation?
- e) By failing to "work it out" (Philippians 2:12, 13)
- f) By failure to renounce (deny) self and take up His cross (symbolizing one's death to sin and life unto God) (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; confer: Matthew 10:33; 2 Timothy 2:12, 13; Revelation 3:8).
- g) By saving their lives (for themselves) instead of losing them for the Lord (Matthew 10:39), thus failing to "possess" their souls (confer: Luke 21:19)
- h) By becoming savorless salt (Matthew 5:13; Mark 9:49, 50; Luke 14:25-35)
- i) By not abiding in the vine (John 15:6)
- j) By "high mindedness" (Romans 11:22)
- k) By loving family and kin more than Christ (Matthew 10:35-38)
- l) By not "keeping their garments" (Revelation 3:4; Revelation 16:15)
- m) By failure to "endure" to the end (Matthew 24:13 ; Hebrews 13:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:4,5 ; Hebrews 3:6, 14; Hebrews 6:15; Hebrews 11:27; James 1:12)
- n) By legalism (Galatians 3:1, 2 ; Galatians 4:4, 5 ; Galatians 5:1)
- o) By failure to "grow in grace" (2 Peter 1:4-9; 2 Peter 3:18)
- p) By not showing diligence to make one's calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10, 11 ; Titus 1:1; John 15:16)
- q) Note: Many other things might be added to this list. You may note that "soul-winning," or "witnessing," is not

specifically mentioned; that is because it is included in the many things named. "Soul-winning methods" or "steps" or "practices" have been taught so as to become a form of LEGALISM. This should be avoided. Soul-winning is bearing fruit, but no one can bear fruit except they "abide" in Christ (confer: John 15:5,16).

B. THERE IS A REST THAT AWAITS THE PEOPLE OF GOD

a)(Hebrews 3:7 ~ 4:16)

1. The entrance of the Hebrew nation into the land of Canaan is called a "rest" (Hebrews 3:7-11,16-19; Hebrews 4:2,5,6,8 ("Jesus" in this verse is "Joshua"), and this "rest" is a type of a greater rest in the future (Hebrews 4:9; confer Joshua 1:13; Deuteronomy 25:19).
2. The Seventh-day Sabbath was also a type of this future rest (Hebrews 4:4).
3. The millennium, being the "rest" of the future, is typified by both of these (cf. 2 Peter 3:8-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:6,7 ; Hebrews 4:7-9; confer Deuteronomy 3:20; Deuteronomy 12:9,10; Deuteronomy 28:64,65 ; Psalm 55:6; Psalm 95:11; Psalm 116:7,8 ; Psalm 132:1-18 – specific vss. 8, 11, 12, 13,14 ; Isaiah 11:10; Isaiah 14:3,7; Isaiah 28:12; Jeremiah 30:10; Jeremiah 46:27; Jeremiah 50:34).
4. UNBELIEF is the cause for missing this "rest," (Hebrews 3:6,12,14,18,19; Hebrews 4:1,2,3,6,11).
5. The "deceitfulness of sin," bringing on a "departing from the living God," because of a "hardness of heart," is the danger to be avoided (Hebrews 3:12-14; Hebrews 4:7).
6. This language also makes it plain that the "unbelief" is not that of a lost sinner, but of the "church" believer who rebels. It was unbelief concerning ENTRANCE INTO THE LAND (fear of the giants) which brought death and the wilderness wandering. These same had believed as to leaving Egypt, crossing the Red Sea, receiving the law, etc. So, then, it is UNBELIEF as regards the promises – the blessed hope – which cuts the promises, the hope and the "rest" off for such unbelievers.
7. The strong plea is for "steadfast confidence," laboring, heeding the Word, ceasing from one's own works (legalism), brotherly admonition, and holding fast, while coming boldly to the throne of grace where help can be found (Hebrews 3:6, 12, 14; Hebrews 4:1, 2, 10, 11, 14, 16).

8. The INCENTIVES for our encouragement and challenging:
 - a) We have a sympathetic high priest (Hebrews 4:14,15 ; Hebrews 2:18)
 - b) The "line is drawn" beyond which we may not go and the "eyes of Him" are on us, so that we may duly "fear" (Hebrews 4:1,12,13).
 - c) The prospect of SHARING WITH HIM IN GLORY (Hebrews 3:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:7) and of enjoying the "rest" of the kingdom (Hebrews 4:8,9).
 - d) We may enjoy this REST even NOW in our hearts by faith (Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 8:23; Hebrews 4:10 with Philipians 3:9).

C. THE DANGER OF INDIFFERENCE, SLOTHFULNESS AND FAILURE TO "GO ON TO PERFECTION"

D.(Hebrews 5:11 ~ 6:12)

1. Spiritual dullness, failure to advance from "milk" Truth, posed a risk (Hebrews 5:11-13) for they were not only "unskillful" but faced the prospect of being shut out from God's blessings (both here and when the Lord comes – Hebrews 6:7) and are "nigh unto cursing" (Hebrews 6:8; cf. Luke 12:45-48; Luke 19:20-26; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15).
2. "First Principles," "ABC's," "foundation" Truths, are all very well, very important, but we must not continue to "re-lay" them (Hebrews 6:1, 2).
 - a) **"Repentance from dead works"** (Hebrews 6:1)
 - 1) The blood of Christ is enough to purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Hebrews 9:14), so we reflect on that blood either...
 - 2) ...when we keep committing sins again which call for a "reviving" over and over, or...
 - 3) ...when we resort to a "legalism" as the means of "perfection" (MATURITY) instead of "the hearing of faith" (Galatians 3:1-5). Perhaps this error also includes the "backslidden thinking" of so many believers who pray for their pastor to "say something which will touch the heart of some poor, lost sinner," but who never think of their own waywardness. They want an evangelistic, superficial ministry in their church, but no rebuking, no warning, no expense. (cf. Revelation 3:17,

18).

b) **"Faith toward God"** (Hebrews 6:1)

- 1) Certainly this is a **FUNDAMENTAL**, but one should not stay on this "first principle."
- 2) One has said, "Perhaps the one with the strongest faith is the one least aware of faith itself, as the one with the strongest heart is least aware of his heart, and the one with the best nerves is least aware that he has nerves."

c) **"...of the doctrine of baptisms..."** (Hebrews 6:2)

- 1) "Baptisms," in the plural, often referred to the ceremonial washings, abolitions or immersions frequently found among the Jews (cf. Hebrews 9:10 and Mark 7:4).
- 2) The arguments between the Jews and John the Baptist over purification might well have grown out of this (then) "first principle" (cf. John 3:25).
- 3) Undoubtedly, the value of **EXTERNALS** occupied much discussion and aroused much controversy among the early Christians, due partly to Jewish influence, largely to fleshly legalism.
- 4) "Washings" would seem to be a better rendering, particularly in view of the discussion of the manner of "purification" which engaged the Jews and disciples of John the Baptist (John 3:25), but the question of the comparative merits, the prerequisites, and the eligible
- 5) recipients of the two "baptisms," that in water and that in the Holy Spirit, could possibly be the theme in this passage. Surely, these two are essentials and ought to be "ABC" principles, but we should not stay on those but "go on unto perfection" (Hebrews 6:1), that is, "if God permit" (Hebrews 6:3).

d) **"...of laying on of hands..."** (Hebrews 6:2)

- 1) This may NOT seem like a first principle to us, but in the emphasis on the "externals" it occupied a prominent place in their thinking, associated as it was with blessing (Matthew 19:13), fellowship (Galatians 2:9), healing (Mark 7:32; Mark 16:18), choice or approval (Acts 6:6), bestowal of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17f; Acts 19:6), recommendation or separation (Acts 13:3), and in

ordination (1 Timothy 4:14; 1 Timothy 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6), which is about the same as "recommendation or separation."

- 2) One thinks of the "hand shakings" of today which become so important in the thinking of some brethren and wonders if such is not a product of staying with "first principles." A few even seem to think that a brother, though baptized, is not a member of the church until after he has been extended the "right hand of church fellowship."

e) **"...of resurrection of the dead..."** (Hebrews 6:2)

E.This is a marvelous "principle," but one must not keep laying down this principle; he must build upon it. It is a wonderful FOUNDATION principle, but let us go on from there!

f) **"...and of eternal judgment"** (Hebrews 6:2)

- 1) This is another FUNDAMENTAL, but the warnings of it need to be heeded, and then LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION.
- 2) Modern day Christians still revert to this "first principle," except that theirs is a "day" judgment instead of an eternal one. "Judgment day," to most believers, means a 24 hour day, or very short time judgment, unaware as they are of the continuing judgment (rule) of God.
- 3) Note: These observations on these "first principles" are elementary, for undoubtedly far more is involved. But observe that "orthodoxy" is NOT the question. Being sound and staying with the PRINCIPLES (foundation) had almost become an indictment instead of cause for "high-mindedness" as it often is in our day - NOT because there is anything wrong in contending for "first principles," but because there is ERROR in NOT going "on unto perfection" (maturity). Most Baptists will "glory" in a sermon on Hell (eternal judgment), or Security (faith toward God), or Repentance, or Resurrection, or some such similar ABC truth, but few of them can "take" a message on Sanctification, Adoption, Glory, the Indwelling of the Spirit, or even the Bride or Election if it adheres closely to the Scriptures on these themes.
- 4) How many today, who "for the time ought to be teachers," "have need that one teach...again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong

meat" (Hebrews 5:12).

- g) **"...and this will we do, if God permit..."** (Hebrews 6:3)
- 1) The declared warning is that in some cases GOD MAY NOT PERMIT. We can only "go on" as God works in us to will and do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). But why may God NOT permit? The "for" of verse 4 says that it is because "it is impossible" for those (of a certain class) who "fall away."
 - 2) It is this sin – what a dreadful sin it must be, to limit one's growing up and reaching maturity (even ruling out God's permission!) that is discussed in the rest of the verses of this section (cf. Hebrews 6:4-9).
 - 3) What kind of sinner is he whom God will not permit to go on to perfection? (Hebrews 6:4-6)
 - a) He must be a believer and a church member, because...
 - b) He is a sinner against knowledge ("once for all enlightened"). This could not be said of an unbeliever, particularly in view of the other qualities.
 - 4) The "once-for-all" reference bespeaks the idea of permanency, indicating that the person who so sins against such knowledge is not committing an ordinary sin. This enlightenment that embraces "the knowledge of the Truth" (1 Timothy 2:4) after being saved, that is, knowledge, which pertains to the glory-salvation that is future – in the kingdom (cf. 2 Timothy 2:10).
 - 5) The Holy Spirit has only begun to make us know spiritual Truth when we are saved (1 Corinthians 2). From there we are to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18) – "grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15) – "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man ("go on unto perfection"), unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:13, 14).
 - 6) This growth produces a "fruitfulness" in the "knowledge of the Lord" by supplying every Christian grace in our faith (2 Peter 1:5-9). This enlightenment, then, is not elementary, but pertains to an understanding of the "rest" (Hebrews 3)

and of the kingdom (Hebrews 12). Therefore, it can be seen from this first step that the "light" this one has been given will help determine the degree of his guilt. Church members cannot continue in the condition of those in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:11-14; 2 Peter 1:9; Revelation 2:4, 5; Revelation 3:14-18, without reaping dire consequences.

- 7) He knows experimentally what the "heavenly gift" is like. What is this heavenly gift? And what is it to taste?
- a) Take "taste" first: Jesus "tasted death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). Surely this is more than a mere touch to the tongue. Note the other uses of "taste" (Matthew 16:28 ; Matthew 27:34 ; Mark 9:1 ; Luke 9:27 ; Luke 14:24 ; John 2:9 ; John 8:52 ; Acts 10:10 ; Acts 20:11 ; Acts 23:14 ; Colossians 2:21 ; 1 Peter 2:3). First usages often determine the strength of a word. Undoubtedly, this (first use, Matthew 16:28) parallels Hebrews 2:9. Have you tasted that the Lord is gracious? (1 Peter 2:3).
- b) The "heavenly gift" : This is difficult, since the word "gift" has such a wide usage:
- (1) Salvation from hell (John 4:10)
 - (2) The Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38 ; Acts 8:20 ; Acts 10:45 ; Acts 11:17)
 - (3) Future eternal life-righteousness according to which one may reign in the kingdom (Romans 5:17 ; Romans 6:23)
 - (4) Christ Himself – His Person for fellowship in some particular and dear capacity (John 14:23 ; John 17:21 ; 2 Corinthians 9:15). This belongs to Christ (Galatians 5:24 cf. Romans 8:9) and His belonging to us is described in the figure of a Bride and Bridegroom (cf. Song of Solomon 2:16 ; Song of Solomon 6:3 ; Song of Solomon 7:10).
 - (5) Christ is ours – our strength (Philippians 4:13), since He is the Vine and we are the branches (John 15:1, 4, 5). Since this relationship can be broken, salvation is NOT the subject, but some other relationship, that is, Christ and His church. Only those who have received a "heavenly calling" (Hebrews 3:1), "tasted that the Lord is gracious," called to service according to the "gift of grace" (Ephesians 3:7), enabled to perform by being "given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ," KNOW, experimentally, what is the "heavenly gift."

- (6) This can only be true of saints in the Lord's church. To such "church saints" (1 Peter 2:5) has God granted this special gift (2 Peter 1:3, 4 where the verb 'given' is used).
- (7) The condition in this last verse ("...that ye might be partakers of the divine nature") has always been a "stumper." I wonder if this is not another way of referring to this "heavenly gift." It is by certain "great and precious promises" that we (the "ye" to whom Peter was writing, and they were already saved) might become sharers of the Divine nature. They were already saved and had the "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). But these promises seem yet (for them) to be realized.

- (8) It rather seems to me that the indwelling Christ (Colossians 1:27) represents this Divine Nature IN us. My opinion is that he and His bride become so identified (Galatians 2:20 ; Ephesians 5:31, 32) – "they two shall be one flesh" – that she shares His Divine attributes. This is the "heavenly gift."
- (9) Of course, since this blessing is realized by those "having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust, " possibly cannot be fully realized until the resurrection.

h) **"...and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost..."** (Hebrews 6:4)

- 1) The word "partaker" means "sharer," one who "holds together (or in common) with" another. It is true that the Spirit convicts the lost sinner, but this term cannot properly apply to His mere convicting work. It describes a common sharing of an experience. (see uses of the Greek word: Luke 5:7 ; Hebrews 1:9 ; Hebrews 3:14 ; Hebrews 12:8). When the Spirit convicts a sinner He is no more a sharer of that person's experience than a court shares in the crime when it convicts a criminal.
- 2) To be a "partaker of the Holy Ghost" is to enjoy a fellowship (commonness) with Him. I am convinced that this experience is limited to church members – hence, a BODY relationship – since the "gift of the Spirit" demands both (repentance) salvation AND baptism (obedience) as prerequisites (Acts 2:38).
- 3) The "Spirit of promise" is not a part of salvation for

many saved (mentioned in the Bible) did not have this blessing 'till after Jesus provided it for the church (John 14:16, 17), and many saved after that time (Pentecost) had not received the Spirit until after a proper relationship with a true church was established, usually after the laying on of the hands of an apostle.

- 4) Only those in the church have been baptized (in Holy Spirit) with reference to one body and have been made to drink with reference to one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:12, 13). Those are not lost sinners in Hebrews 6:4-6, for they have gone too far in learning and experiencing what God has provided for believers.
- i) **"...And have tasted the good word of God..."** (Hebrews 6:5)
- 1) This is what the Hebrews had done but were still dull "when for the time they ought to (have been) teachers (Hebrews 5:11-14). This is the experience of those in 1 Peter 2:1-3. Those who "gladly received the Word and were baptized" (Acts 2) were tasting the Word as Peter preached it.
 - 2) Some "received the word with Joy" (Luke 8:13 ; Matthew 13:20, 21) but wound up forgetting the Word (2 Peter 1:9) because they had not given "diligence to make their calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10), nor had added the list of graces to their FAITH which by adding would have constituted their growing in grace (2 Peter 1:4-8 ; 2 Peter 3:18).
- j) **"...and [tasted] the powers of the world to come..."** (Hebrews 6:5)
- 1) Since "taste" means "to receive by experience," and "world to come" refers to "the coming age" (millennium, kingdom), these saints had experienced the dynamic (miraculous) powers which shall characterize the coming kingdom. The kingdom shall be a time of miracles. The miraculous accompaniments of the out-pouring of the Spirit upon the church demonstrated (in token form) what the kingdom age shall be like.
 - 2) But the miraculous (outward) demonstrations are not a part of this present economy. However, the "powers of the world to come" are still in evidence in the surrendered lives of the obedient believers. Luke chapter twelve illustrates the demand which the coming age makes upon men now; so does the sermon on the Mount. We are to live now as though it were then and God's "gift of grace" makes it possible NOW.

- 3) The phrase, "I can..." (Philippians 4:13) embodies an idea corresponding to "powers" (Greek, dunameis) as seen in Hebrews 6:5.
- 4) Paul said, that he was sufficient (Greek, ischuo) in the One empowering him (Greek, en-duna-moun-ti). This "dynamic" power is ours IN HIM! When one objects, saying, "It is not possible (Greek, ou dunatai) to live a Christian life in this age of increasing temptation," he is repudiating (in effect) the "powers" (available to us now) of the coming age. Such an attitude goes along with the "falling away."
- 5) He is a willful sinner (Hebrews 10:26), for no other kind could go against so much knowledge and experience (Hebrews 6:4-6).
- 6) What is the sin of one whom God will not permit to "go on unto perfection"?
 - a) It is a "falling away" ("having fallen away" - Hebrews 6:6)
 - 1) The participle construction may (and does so here) refer to a condition, but this is NO HYPOTHETICAL CASE. The condition is: the kind of sinner (having the qualities) we have discussed MAY FALL. It is a definite possibility. The probability of it should overwhelm us. The warning concerning this sin constitutes the burden of this book (confer Hebrews 2:1, 3).
 - 2) This falling away may mean a definite departure from Truth, knowledge, service, love, fellowship, etc. It is the "fallen from grace" of Galatians 5:4. This it is a sin of finality. Galatians 5:4 says "Christ" is become of no effect unto you," literally, "ye are severed from Christ" (the body relationship broken).
 - 3) The particular form of the sin in the Galatian churches was a resorting to legalism. This shows a lapse into human strength, flesh energy, man's programs and means, for accomplishing God's purposes.
 - 4) They had "let slip" the only source of strength (John 15:4, 5 ; Philippians 4:13) and were, therefore, like the Israelites who forsook God, "the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that could hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13), hence were guilty of two evils.

- 5) Not all the Galatians had made this step, but they stood in jeopardy of it. It is much like the sin to characterize the Lord's churches in the last days when there shall come "a falling away" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). This falling away (Greek, apo-stasia) is a little different from that in Galatians 5:4 (Greek, exe-pe-sate – from ek-pip-to, to fall out of).
 - 6) That in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 means "to stand off from" the Truth – deliberately – knowing what the Truth is. It is the objects of these verbs which demand the different constructions. One "stands off from" the Truth and the consequence is to "fall out of" the grace.
 - 7) A "slipping away from" the Truth (Hebrews 2:10 is "a deviating from" (Greek, para-pes-ontas, the form in Hebrews 6:6, from para-pip-to) that Truth and ultimately results in one's "standing off" from it, hence the "falling away from" (or "out of") grace, and the "severing from" (the body of) Christ (Galatians 5:4).
 - 8) The sin of 2 Thessalonians is a deliberate standing off from known Truth, that of Hebrews 6:6 a sin of carelessness, indifference, indolence, and hardness in the face of the known consequences.
- b) It is a failure to retain or hold onto something, such as...
- 1) ...the things we have heard (Hebrews 2:1)
 - 2) ...a steadfast faith or confidence (Hebrews 3:6, 14 ; Hebrews 10:35 ; Hebrews 12:12)
 - 3) ...their profession (Hebrews 4:14 ; Hebrews 3:1 ; Hebrews 10:23)
 - 4) ...their hope (Hebrews 6:11)
 - 5) ...their patience (Hebrews 6:12 ; Hebrews 10:36 ; Hebrews 13:3, 13)
 - 6) ...their love of brethren unto exhortation and assembly for fellowship (Hebrews 10:24, 25 ; Hebrews 3:12, 13 ; Hebrews 13:1)
 - 7) ...their respect for their teachers (Hebrews 13:7, 17)
 - 8) ...their love of worship (Hebrews 10:25 ; Hebrews 13:15, 16)
 - 9) ...their stability (Hebrews 13:9)

- c) It is a sin of self-will (Hebrews 10:26)
- d) It is a sin of in-gratitude, lack of diligence, and slothfulness (Hebrews 6:7, 8, 11, 12).
 - e) The earth is used to illustrate it: It drinks in the rain and is cultivated, and fertilized, but brings forth "thorns and briars" (Hebrews 6:7, 8).
- e) It was a sin of laziness marked by absence from regular services, failing to engage in public worship (Hebrews 6:11, 12 ; Hebrews 10:24, 25 ; Hebrews 13:15, 16).
- f) It is a sin of crucifying to one's self the Christ, and of openly shaming Him (Hebrews 6:6).
 - 1) What is it to openly shame Christ? The word (openly shame, Greek, para-deig-ma-ti-zon-tas) is used (Matthew 1:19) in a slightly less emphatic form (Greek, deig-mati-sai, that is, without the prefix, para-) of Joseph's unwillingness to make Mary a "public example." Such sin could not be committed by a lost sinner, else Paul could never have been saved, for he did publicly reproach Christ.
 - 2) Since one so sinning cannot be brought to repentance (Hebrews 6:6), the sin cannot refer to a lost man because the lost man who blasphemes the Father or the Son can still be saved (Matthew 12:32 ; Mark 3:28).
 - 3) Only one who is closely associated with Christ could so shame Him. The sins of another man other than myself cannot shame my wife (when she is not involved), but my public sins would shame her publicly (though she were not involved) because there is a mutual identification of the two of us.
 - 4) Thus, the one who has "put on Christ" (dressed up in Christ in scriptural baptism), publicly identifying himself with Him, just as an engaged bride wears the engagement ring; such one, turning away, denying Him, or merely ignoring Him, puts Him to shame.
 - 5) It is a definite reflection on his love...His mercies...His goodness (Romans 11:22), and the honor of His name (or in other words, a *denial* of His name – Revelation 3:8). Such is a reproach to Christ.
 - 6) Such sin, I repeat, could only be committed by one who has been so closely associated with Christ as to have borne reproach with Him (Hebrews 10:33), but who then ...

- 7) casts away his confidence (Hebrews 10:35)
- a) ...draws back so that the Lord has no pleasure in him (Hebrews 10:38)
 - b) ...has to be cast away (1 Corinthians 9:27)
 - c) ...is cut off (John 15:6 ; Romans 11:22)
 - d) ...is cast out (Matthew 5:13 ; Matthew 25:30)
 - e) ...is rejected (Hebrews 6:8)
 - f) ...but then is saved yet so as by fire (1 Corinthians 3:15)
 - g) ...suffers loss of reward (1 Corinthians 3:15 ; 2 John 8)
- g) The word "perdition" (Greek, apo-le-ia – Hebrews 10:39) may or may not have reference to the destruction of hell; it can mean any severe treatment or loss. It is possible that both this reference (Hebrews 10:39) and others (Romans 9:22, et. al.) apply to that loss in judgment to be endured by the unfaithful saved when the Judge brings all to stand before His Judgment Seat.
- 1) The verb from which it is derived (Greek, apol-lumi) is definitely used of unfaithful saved (confer Matthew 10:39 ; Matthew 16:25), and are both rendered "lose" (2 John 8, et. al.). But this verb form seems to be used of the life of possessions and not of the person of saved men.
 - 2) My opinion is that "perdition" in Hebrews 10:39 and "destruction" in Romans 9:22 do refer to the destruction in eternal hell, but this would be difficult to prove.
- h) What is it to crucify Christ to one's self? This openly shaming Christ crucifying Him to one's self is doubtless the same. But let us see the Scriptural logic and examples on the subject:
- 1) Paul used the example of legalism among the Galatians (Galatians 6:12-15) to illustrate. He said that he gloried in the cross of Christ because...
 - ...by it he world was crucified unto Him (that is, it was a dead thing having no value or attraction to Paul and...
 - ...by it he was crucified to the world (that is, Paul was

dead to the world so that it could not attract him or command his life by its appeals to his flesh). What power there is in the cross is effective TO THOSE WHO ARE GLORYING IN THE CROSS; to those who are reckoning themselves dead indeed unto sin (Galatians 6:14 ; Romans 6:11-13).

- 2) But some, legalistically (and it was Judaistic legalism in those days), though it might be any number of other forms of legalism today, were demanding circumcision from these believers of Galatia (Galatians 6:12, 13) thought inconsistently. Why?
 - Because they themselves did not keep the law...
 - Because they only wanted to glory in the flesh of these Galatians...
- 3) Just what does this teach? Is there not an almost overwhelming tendency among men, even Christians (and preachers) to make a showing in the flesh? Why else do men seek to enlist numbers, magnify finances, buildings, programs, days policies, organizations, drives, goals, slogans, etc.?
- 4) Men who know that none of these things are essential to salvation and NONE of them are a part of the scriptural procedure or New Testament practice of a church, INSIST on these, magnify them, advertise them, defend them, and even anathematize and ostracize those who do not "push" these same human mechanics. That is what the Judaizers among the Galatian Christians were doing.
- 5) A WARNING: Some who will be able to see the logic of this interpretation will be inclined to deny the application to ourselves today. "I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation" (Hebrews 13:22).
- 6) Why do men practice this flesh-legalism though it means crucifying Christ to themselves? Two reasons are given:
 - That they might glory in the flesh (make a showing in the flesh; glory in men)
 - "Lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (Galatians 6:12).
 - There is an offense in the cross. It is a great

stumbling block, both to legalists and to the irreligious (Galatians 5:11 ; 1 Corinthians 1:23 ; 2 Timothy 3:11,12).

- i) Paul was accused of preaching circumcision (because he had Timothy circumcised – confer Galatians 5:11). But he insists that their own actions toward him refute their accusation, for they were persecuting him, which they would NOT have done had he been preaching circumcision. “Then is the offense of the cross ceased,” he said (Galatians 5:11).
- j) The thought is, “If I preach circumcision as you accuse, and am persecuted, then the cross has lost its distastefulness to you.”
- k) The charge of the Jews against Stephen was not that he preached Christ and Him crucified, but that he “spoke blasphemous things against this holy place and the law.”
- l) Thus it is seen that the cross is the crux of the life of the saint. When he avoids the “offense of the cross,” dodges the vital issue to escape persecution, then he has “crucified Christ to (himself) and put him to an open shame.” Those who desire to make a fair show in the flesh, and glory in the flesh, do it to escape the anathema of those leaders (A. V. “masters,” Greek, kath-egē-tai) who expect “results.”
- m) The Jerusalem church (as evidenced by their attitude toward the demands on Paul at the time of his last visit, (Acts 21:17-26), lapsed into Judaism (legalism) and her testimony was gradually destroyed. When one contemns the cross, he crucifies the Christ of the cross to himself. Such condition cannot prevail long until God withdraws His Spirit from such and he no longer belongs to the “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16).
- n) The church which does what it should by such a person will account him “an heathen” (Matthew 18:17) and he shall not inherit as one of the “seed” (Hebrews 6:12 ; Hebrews 10:36). He is “salt that hath lost his savour, and is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of man” (Matthew 5:13). He is the branch that has been severed from the vine (John 15:6). He is the “castaway” who was rejected because he did not “keep himself under” (1 Corinthians 9:27). All these things are irreparable...final.
- o) What are the consequences of such a sin? (Hebrews 6:6, 8 ; Hebrews 10:26, 27, 29).
 - (1) There is no repenting (Hebrews 6:6). Many “slip” and

stumble (Hebrews 2:1 ; 1 Corinthians 10:12); some can repent. But that sin, either of word or deed (and the deed speaks louder than words sometimes), which is so ugly that God withdraws His Spirit leaving the heart unable to repent. Is such person saved? Yes, but only so "as by fire, for the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Corinthians 3:15 ; Hebrews 10:27).

- (2) Such a sinner is "nigh unto cursing." This is from the illustration of land which is unproductive (suggesting the nature of sin) even though tilled, watered, and fertilized (Hebrews 6:8). This suggests severe judgment (Hebrews 10:30, 31), but leaves room for salvation from hell (perdition? – Hebrews 10:39).
- (3) "Whose end is to be burned" is also said of the land (Hebrews 6:8), and this is pointed out.
- (4) "A certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries" (Hebrews 10:27), or in other words, "a fearful prospect of judgment and the fury of fire." This is hard to appreciate as applicable to believers, particularly since our traditional teaching has imbued us with the idea that we shall escape all "the tribulation the great" if we are saved.
- (5) But this is certainly not indicated by the Bible. There is eerie evidence that this "fire" is applicable to unfaithful saved people, just as the passage in (Hebrews 6:3-12).
- (6) For similar language of judgment toward SAVED people see: (1 Corinthians 5:5 ; John 15:6 ; Luke 12:45-48 ; Matthew 18:34, 35 ; Matthew 22:11-14 ; Matthew 24:48-51 ; Matthew 25:24-30 ; Luke 23:13-30 ; Luke 12:49).
- (7) A number of these passages have been so long applied (traditionally) to lost men until it may at first be difficult to see their application to saved men, but careful study (in context) will show that the wayward, careless, stubborn, high minded, or willful sinner (though saved from hell) shall meet a severe judgment.

k) **He is rejected** (Hebrews 6:8)

- 1) This word, "rejected" is the same word "castaway" found in 1 Corinthians 9:27. It conveys the same idea as...

- 2) "appoint him his portion with the unbelievers" (Luke 12:46)
- 3) "appoint him his portion with the hypocrites" (Matthew 25:41)
- 4) "cast out and trodden under foot" (Matthew 5:13)
- 5) "cast forth as a branch" (John 15:6)
- 6) "cut off" (Romans 11:22)
- 7) "Christ is become of no effect unto you (literally, "ye are severed from Christ" - in the sense of losing the body-bridal relationship)
- 8) "ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

l) **There is no more sacrifice for such sin** (Hebrews 10:26)

- 1) This suggests the heinousness of the sin and the finality of it. The offering of Christ is sufficient to save "to the uttermost," but those guilty of this sin cannot expect recourse except in judgment. God knows the heart and He is aware of whether or not the individual will ever be fit for service, usable in the Spirit's hands, and He only "rejects" those who will not be so used.
- 2) Note: Some may think of this judgment as a sort of "purgatory" and object to it on that basis. There is quite a bit of difference between this idea and the Catholic purgatory. Catholic purgatory is NOT disciplinary but penal only. This is penal but also disciplinary. In that sense it is like chastening. Paul referred to a measure of suffering which we in the body are bound to "make up," but this does not reflect on the merits of Christ (confer: Colossians 1:24).
- 3) If man's bearing his own sin's penalty IN THE FLESH reflects on the work of Christ, then we must find some explanation for that "reaping what is sown" expression which definitely applies (in some instances at least) to saved men.
- 4) The "fearful prospect of judgment" definitely applies to those who have "come to the knowledge of the truth." I am convinced that this applies to saved men (confer: Hebrews 10:30).

m) **The Judgment is Worse than Physical Death**

(Hebrews 10:29)

- 1) Physical death was the penalty under Moses' law, but he who "hath trodden under foot the Son of God," is worthy of "sorer punishment."
- 2) Can a 'saved man' do this? Is it not evidently done repeatedly by those who show no consideration for His goodness? (confer Romans 11:22).
- 3) Also worth of "sorer punishment" is the one who "hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing."
- 4) "Unholy" means "not hallowed," or "not sacred."
- 5) The profane person comes to feel contempt for all but the present appetite of the flesh - the present (material) good.
- 6) This explains why the charge of contempt is often justly brought against church members, many of whom are saved but who love their sin better than the church or the Lord; forsaking the Lord and the church in preference to forsaking the church.
- 7) This was exactly the attitude of Esau (Hebrews 12:16, 17). And it was for this attitude that he failed to inherit the blessing.
- 8) The material good (the benefit reaped immediately) was desirable, but he did not want the spiritual responsibility that went along with it.
- 9) The fact that the profane person has been "sanctified" suggests the advance he has made in grace. But this is a difficult idea. "Sanctified" evidently refers to the "willful" sinner under discussion.

n) **"And hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace"** (Hebrews 10:29)

- 1) This certainly is strong language to be applied to saved men, but the context (the whole book of Hebrews) will allow no other application.
- 2) "Hath done despite" means "has treated contumely, contemptuously," that is, has insulted the Holy Spirit.
- 3) This explains the heinousness of this sin. That man who repeatedly shows his disdain for the Spirit's wooing and disrespects the Spirit's restraint (constraint), deplores the

Spirit's leadership, repudiates the Spirit's Word, and denies the Spirit's will.

- 4) Such a man cannot expect other than that the Spirit should leave him alone (although he be a saved man) for he is no longer usable in His hands.
 - 5) It is the will of God that every believer be sanctified (1 Thessalonians 4:3), that is, "that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification (holiness) and honor" (1 Thessalonians 4:4).
 - 6) Then he continues with the warning that God is the avenger of those who overstep their prerogatives in pressing his brother on issues or in other matters, concluding that God has called us "unto holiness," and warning that those who take matters into their own hands do not merely despise man but actually despise God "who hath also given unto us His holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 4:6-8).
 - 7) This shows how it is possible to despise the Holy Spirit (through despising God's man, or men); and in that regard many saved people are not guiltless!
 - 8) Such a person (as does not keep his vessel in holiness) is not fit for the Master's use, but must "purge himself from these" and then "he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." (2 Timothy 2:21).
 - 9) Many believers oppose themselves by their foolish actions and lives. These we need to teach, that "peradventure" God "will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Timothy 2:25, 26).
 - 10) The condition "peradventure" suggests that some may NOT be granted repentance (God knows their hearts – confer Hebrews 6:6); they being such as He will not permit to "go on unto perfection" (Hebrews 6:1, 3).
- o) **"He shall not see God"** (Hebrews 12:14)
- 1) The word "see" is used here in the sense of truly comprehending God in His holiness and glory – in the same sense as Matthew 5:8).
 - 2) Seeing the Lord in His glory and in "the beauty of [His] holiness" is reserved for a select group (Revelation 22:3, 4).

- 3) The idea of purity (holiness), as associated with seeing God, is seen in 1 John 3:2, 3 ; Ephesians 5:5, etc. When it is said that all men shall see the Lord ("every eye shall see Him" – Matthew 24:30 ; Revelation 1:7), the sense is that all shall see Him as Judge, the God of wrath; but only a select group (Christ's bride) shall see Him as the Bridegroom.

p) **He has "failed of the grace of God"** (Hebrews 12:15)

6.This does not mean that he is lost, but he has come short in his privileges of availing himself of that grace (Hebrews 4:16) until he has "fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:24). How far short of our privileges do most of us live! (John 14:12).

III. THE BETTER 'NEW COVENANT' POSITION

The New Covenant position, which believers may now enjoy, is the greatest challenge of all reverent caution and godly fear (Hebrews 12:18-29). It is in this New Covenant that a strong contrast is drawn between LEGALISM and GRACE (Hebrews 12:18-24). This contrast is demonstrated under the figure of two literal mountains:

- Mt. Sinai in the Arabian Desert stands for LEGALISM (Hebrews 12:18-21; Galatians 4:24, 25; cf. Deuteronomy 4:11; Psalms 78:68-70; Psalms 132; Psalms 13, Psalms 14, et al).
- Mt. Zion (the New Jerusalem) stands for grace (see below). Note the two mountains; observe what each provided;

A. Mt. Sinai

Mt. Sinai is...

- 1) ...a mount that might be touched (though touching meant death) (Hebrews 12:18). This materialistic, holy-place religion Jesus condemned (John 4:21) and thus gave import to the walk by faith as against a walk by sight.
- 2) ...a mount that burned with fire (Hebrews 12:18; cf. Deuteronomy 4:11; Deuteronomy 5:4, 5). Oh, the fear of it (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:15; Hebrews 10:31 et al).
- 3) ...a mount that portended "blackness and darkness" (the darkness making a 4th thing which those at Sinai had come to) (Hebrews 12:18). This is in direct contrast with the light of Truth, love, compassion of the New Testament

(John 3:19; Ephesians 5:13, et al).

- 4) ...a mount that bespoke a "tempest" (Hebrews 12:18). Strong wind is indicative of God's presence in legalism (cf. 1 Kings 19:11, 12), but not in grace.
- 5) ...a mount that included the "sound of a trumpet," (Hebrews 12:19) which definitely speaks of judgment and authority. Cf. the seven trumpets of Revelation.
- 6) ...a mount that offered "the voice of words" (Hebrews 12:19, 20). This reminds of the "letter" which is so often set over against the "spirit" (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:6-18). How strange that men will today insist on "audible voices," "outward signs," "visions," etc., when terror struck the hearts of those who experienced those very things at Sinai (cf. Galatians 4:21ff.).
- 7) (NOTE: The actual physical scene, instead of striking awe and godly fear, as some might suppose, rather did the very opposite. Then, as Paul clearly shows (Galatians 4:21ff.) that Sinai genders to bondage).

B. Mount Zion

- 1) Mount Zion, on the other hand, gives quite a different picture (Hebrews 12:22-24). Regarding Mount Zion, it is said of the covenant community, "You have come to..."
- 2) Mt. Zion (Hebrews 12:22). The literal mount Zion (the city of David) is where David's throne was located and where Jesus shall rule. There is a sense in which believers in the church today now enjoy the blessing of this mount (cf. Galatians 4:26), for we have such a "mother" in her as accounts us "free born," like Isaac (Galatians 4:28). This is accomplished for us Gentile believers through the ADOPTION (Galatians 4:1-6), according to which we (BY GRACE) are set as sons (heirs) to inherit with Christ. (See below on the meaning of "ye are come to").
- 3) The city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). This language is concordant with that in Ephesians which speaks of our now sitting together with Christ in "heavenly places" (cf. Ephesians 2:5ff.) We have a heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1) and we "are not of this world" but we are in the world and hold the blessed hope of a heavenly (cf. Hebrews 11:14-16; Hebrews 13:14).
- 4) To an innumerable company (host) of angels, a general assembly (Hebrews 12:22, 23). There is no question but what the second expression is in apposition with the first.

The prospect of our judging angels, having them as our servants – if we qualify – is a promise of the future kingdom (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:3; Hebrews 1:14). Jesus mentioned this feature of the believer's prospect (John 1:51) when he told Nathaniel the true significance of Jacob's ladder and dream (Genesis 28:12-16). The dream-vision was an appropriate herald of the future covenant-blessings to Jacob and his seed in the kingdom, when Jesus shall be Christ the King and the angels minister to Him and those who are heirs with Him.

- 5) The Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven (Hebrews 12:23). This language has made many imagine that some "universal, invisible, body" is meant, supposing that "general assembly" is descriptive of this "church." The church is composed of the "firstborn," a title reserved for those identified with the "FIRSTBORN," Christ (Colossians 1:17-19).
- 6) James mentions this as our hope (James 1:18). The type (in Israel) is seen in Numbers 3:12, 45, 50; 1 Peter 1:18). Only one child can be "first born" in a family. Christ is the "only begotten." Any other child of God, though born of
 - 7) the Spirit, must be "set as a son" or adopted into the position of the firstborn. Only so may he inherit with the firstborn. Israel (God's election) was called the "first-born" (Exodus 4:22; cf. Exodus 13:2) and the church is God's Israel today (Galatians 6:16), though mostly a gentile engrafting, hence is now the "first-born." Hence, the church is the "first-born" but is not all the saved. Of course, she is "enrolled in heaven" and there is every reason to believe that the "book of life" (possibly different from the Lamb's Book of Life) is this "roll" (cf. Exodus 32:32, 33; Revelation 3:5; Revelation 20:12), though this does create some difficulties while solving others.
- 6) God the Judge of All (Hebrews 12:23). God is not yet judging, but will rule when Christ returns (cf. 2 Timothy 4:1). He has judged sin in Christ so that we need not stand in judgment for determining our destiny (John 5:24), but He shall judge (rule) all the earth in the kingdom.
- 7) The spirits of just men made perfect (Hebrews 12:23). This reference must be to those who have "received the promises" (Hebrews 11:39) who have now (at that time, when the kingdom is possessed by the saints) been "made perfect" (Hebrews 11:40). It is not just "perfect spirits," but a perfection of just men at that time.
- 8) Jesus the mediator of the new covenant (Hebrews 12:24).

It is as Mediator that we now see him, not as Messiah to come, or Savior. Those who “are come” to these seven named things are already saved.

C. “Ye are not come” to Mt. Sinai “but ye are come unto Mount Zion” (Hebrews 12:18, 22)

- 1) The meaning of “are come” (Gk., proseleluthate, from proserchomai) should be clear:
 - a) It is a compound, to or toward (Gk., pros), plus to come (Gk., erchomai): hence, to come to or toward, to approach, to draw near.
 - b) The form is present perfect indicative, 2nd person plural: you have drawn near, you have come to, you have approached. Thus, the A.V. rendering is not incorrect. Its first use (first usages are good criteria of New Testament meanings) is Matthew 4:3, there a completed action, participle: “When the tempter came to him.” Other uses in the book of Hebrews: “let...come unto” (Hebrews 4:16); “that come unto” (Hebrews 7:25); “comers... unto” (Hebrews 10:1); “let draw near” (Hebrews 10:22); “that cometh to” (Hebrews 11:6); seven in all in Hebrews.
- 2) Israel did draw near to Mt. Sinai, witnessing the sights, hearing the thunders and voices. This was real. We have not come before the literal Mount Zion, since it is in Jerusalem.
 - a) It is explained to be a figure by stating it is “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Hebrews 12:22). But this literal heavenly city is a future PROSPECT for those who recognize their covenant relationship and continue in that relationship (cf. Hebrews 11:10, 14-16; Hebrews 13:14; Revelation 21:1-3, 9; Revelation 3:12 et al). It is evident that we do not stand before the literal mountain now, though we shall stand there when the throne is established there (Revelation 14:1). It is a present PROSPECT, our glorious hope.
 - b) This “heavenly (new) Jerusalem” is now called “above” and “the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:26). This is definitely a figure – an allegory (Galatians 4:24). Abraham was father both to Ishmael and Isaac, but it was the freeness of Isaac’s mother which determined that the seed should be called in Isaac, that is, that he should be the heir. Our “free” mother is this heavenly city. As long as I am conscious of my free position as a child of promise (like Isaac, Galatians 4:28) I am in the position to be

declared (set) as an heir (adopted, Galatians 4:1-7) along with my "First-born" Lord (cf. Romans 8:17), but when I resort to legalism (become married to the law or to human rules, laws, programs, etc., I then am claiming another mother (Hagar, Mount Sinai, the law, the earthly Jerusalem which now is) and stand in jeopardy of being severed from (the body of) Christ and falling from grace (Galatians 5:4), thus "failing of the grace of God" (Hebrews 12:15). This is what Esau did. This explains why many believers today cannot inherit the kingdom (Ephesians 5:5), being "cut off" from the root and fatness of the olive tree (Romans 11:17, 22), counted "a heathen" (Matthew 18:17), no longer to inherit with the people of God (His election), cf. 1 Peter 3:9; 1 Peter 2:10, 11; Revelation 21:7; Hebrews 9:15 et al.

- c) Just as Israelites could not enter or inherit the land except they walked in the statues from Sinai (Exodus 19:4-6) so must believers now recognize Him who speaks from heaven (Hebrews 12:25).
- d) God's voice from heaven must be heeded or the penalty is greater than to break the law spoken at Sinai (Hebrews 12:25-29).
 - 1. They did not escape then (Hebrews 2:2; Hebrews 10:28; Deuteronomy 17:2-7; Numbers 15:32-36 et al). Neither shall we escape (Hebrews 2:3; Hebrews 10:27-31; Hebrews 12:25; Luke 21:36; Luke 12:47, 48; Luke 19:24-26; Matthew 18:34,35; Matthew 24:28-30 et al).
 - 2. There was a shaking of the earth at Sinai (Hebrews 12:26); ONE MORE shaking is due and it shall include the heavens also (Hebrews 12:27; Haggai 2:2, 6,7, 22; Isaiah 2:19,21; Isaiah 13:13; Joel 3:16). All "temporary" things will be destroyed (2 Corinthians 4:18).
 - 3. Some things cannot be destroyed (Hebrews 12:27, 28), including the kingdom.
 - a) This demands "grace" whereby we may "serve God acceptably with reverent caution and godly fear" (cf. 2 Peter 3:10-18).
 - b) God is a consuming fire, just, executing vengeance (Hebrews 12:29; Hebrews 10:27,31 et al).

IV. THE AUTHOR'S PERSONAL ENCOURAGEMENTS, INSTRUCTIONS, AND CONDOLENCES

- A. The author's personal acquaintance with these "Hebrews" can be seen (Hebrews 6:9; Hebrews 10:34; Hebrews

12:4; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 19, 23, 24; Hebrews 12:12).

- B. There appears to be a possible reference to the writer (Hebrews 13:3).
- C. The writer's strong warning language concerning the possible dangers they faced as slothful, careless, weak-kneed, even rebellious believers is tempered with his references to their former blessedness (Hebrews 6:9,10; Hebrews 10:32-35; Hebrews 13:7). (NOTE: Key words reveal the meaning: slothful, diligence, diligent, boldly, remember, seeing, consider, lest, if, etc.)

V. SUMMARY AND PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE EPISTLE

- A. Believers are described as in two categories as bespeaking their future rewards:
 - 1. Those who are saved from hell but shall not inherit and may be in severe danger of judgment at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:35-37; Hebrews 12:28,29).
 - 2. Those whose faithfulness, in addition to their salvation from hell, shall bring them into an abundant entrance (Hebrews 6:12; Hebrews 3:14; Hebrews 10:35,36; Hebrews 11:7,37,39,40; Hebrews 12:22,28; Hebrews 13:13,14; cf. 2 Peter 1:5-11 et al.)
- B. It seems obvious that the "Hebrews" were believers (hence the book applicable to us today) who had "enlightenment," "illumination," and other blessings which at one time put them in the "faithful" category, but who became discouraged, legalistic, slothful, seeking ease in the world, and in great danger (Hebrews 2:3; Hebrews 10:38).
- C. Christ, in the Superiority of His Person and work, is a challenge to such.
- D. The prospect of judgment is strong incentive to faithfulness (Hebrews 10:26-31; Hebrews 12:25).
- E. A Pauline characteristic: a doctrinal foundation is laid, then application made.
- F. A few practical Truths for us out of many mentioned:
 - 1. Just being saved is not enough.
 - 2. Believers ought to become church members and "go on unto perfection." Failure to heed and grow may mean our being given over to sin and not allowed to repent or go (Hebrews 6:3,6; Hebrews 10:36,37; Hebrews 12:15,16).

3. Not all believers shall inherit the kingdom and its blessings (Hebrews 12:15).
4. Faith is not something merely to be preached to the lost: "The just shall live by faith," Hebrews 11:38.
5. Saved men may so sin as to deserve physical death (Hebrews 12:9; 1 Corinthians 10:30) or even death to the body of Christ (Galatians 5:4; Romans 8:6,13).
6. Legalism stands in contradistinction to true spirituality, sanctification, godliness, purity, holiness, diligence, and every Christian virtue (Hebrews 12:18-24; cf. Philippians 2:12,13).
7. Believers may become hardened (Hebrews 3:8,12,13) and mistake chastening for persecution) Hebrews 12:3-5).
8. The blessings of the new covenant are presently realized by those walking by faith (Hebrews 4:10 with Matthew 11:29 & Philippians 3:9 - Hebrews 10:14-18). "Looking for the city" (Hebrews 13:14) is such blessed hope, gendered by such walking faith as makes us heirs of God (Hebrews 11:7), having the heavenly Jerusalem as our "mother" (Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22ff.) This present prospect genders godliness (Hebrews 11:24,26 with 1 John 3:3).
9. The "better thing" provided to "faith-overcomers" today (Hebrews 11:40) is also available to those O.T. "faith witnesses" who died not having obtained the promises.
10. The "man of faith" is not cited so much for WHAT he did as much as for the fact that he did it BY FAITH (Hebrews 11).
11. God is not nearly so anxious that we do things "for" Him as that we trust Him to do with us as He pleases. "Come boldly." "Let us have grace" (Hebrews 12:28).
12. The Person of the Christ is the ONE OBJECT of the believer's love, faith, and zeal. The Holy Spirit sets the example (John 16:12-15).

Conclusion

I am aware that these thoughts are very incomplete, particularly as regards some portions of this book. But the challenge of the book is the more imperative because of this study. I desire to speak with the author of Hebrews as in Hebrews 13:18.

My admonition should also be his, as in Hebrews 13:22. My hope is to hold the gospel hope of the glory (Romans 9:4), hence I would endeavor to lay ahold of it (Hebrews 6:18) as an 'heir of promise.' □