

HEBREWS

“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So, he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy saying "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." But angels are ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.” (Hebrews 1:1-14)

Son of Man

“We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding (Covenant given by God through Moses), and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord (Christ), was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.” (Hebrews 2:1-4)

“You made him (Son of Man, Jesus) a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet." But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.” (Hebrews 2:7-11)

Comment: Those who Jesus called brothers are those God raised from their burial by immersion (baptism) into Christ's death following their death to sin and put onto Christ's Body, His church.

“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants (those of faith). For this reason, he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.” (Hebrews 2:14-18)

“Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future.

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. We are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast." (Hebrews 3:1-6)

Hear Him

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So, I declared on oath in my anger, 'They (Israelites) shall never enter my rest (Land of Canaan).’” See to it, brothers, that none of you (Christians) has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence, we had at first. Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest (eternal life) still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel (the life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of the Son of God) preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. ... It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them (those who obeyed and then turned back) did not go in, because of disobedience. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience (the Israelites). For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” (Hebrews 3:7-4:10-13)

Comments: On the way to Canaan the Israelites did not hold firm to God so, they did not enter their earthly promised land. Likewise, Christians on their way to Heaven who do not hold firm to God will not enter their spiritual promised land.

Comment: The Word (Gospel) will divide the spirit of God that He put in man, which at death returns to him, from the eternal soul of the wicked and rebellious man which at death goes to everlasting death with the Devil and his angels.

Jesus Christ - Our High Priest

“We have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

“Every high priest is selected from among men and is appointed to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. So, Christ also did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father.” (Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:1-5)

“During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek. ... Therefore, let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. God permitting, we will do so. It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.” (Hebrews 5:7-10; 6:1-6)

For discussion on elementary teachings go to: thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/FirstPrinciples.html.

“Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.”

Comments: Cultivating your spiritual land is accomplished by constant study of God's word and discussions with spiritual brethren as this is working out your salvation with fear and trembling.

New Covenant

“The Lord said I will make a new covenant in which I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear. Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! For this reason, Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.” (Hebrews 8:8,10,13; 9:1, 11, 12, 15)

“When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." But Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming — not the realities themselves.”

Comments: God's shadows and mysteries under the Old Covenant are the reality of the New Covenant.

thebiblewayonline.com/HTML/ShadowsTypesProphecies.html

“First, he said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them’ (although the law required them to be made). Then he said, ‘Here I am, I have come to do your will.’ He sets aside the first covenant to establish the second and better covenant. By that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Then he adds: ‘Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.’ Where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin. Therefore, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrews 9:19-20, 24, 26-28; 10:1, 8 -10, 17-18, 22-25)

“If we (Christians) deliberately (with no desire to cease) keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth (Gospel of Christ by burial, immersion, into His blood), no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ and again, ‘The Lord will judge his people.’ It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

“Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, “He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. If he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.” But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.” (Hebrews 10:26-39)

Faith at Work

Faith is being sure (certainty, not maybe or I think) of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. We understand that the universe was formed at God's command, - not made out of the visible. By faith

Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. He was commended as a righteous man,

Enoch was taken from this life - he did not experience death because God had taken him away.

Noah in holy fear built an ark to save his family and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

Abraham obeyed and went as God instructed not know where he was going.

Abraham made his home in the promised land like a stranger living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob,

Abraham was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.

Abraham offered Isaac, the son of promises, as a sacrifice reasoning God could raise him from the dead

Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped.

Joseph spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions about his bones.

Moses' parents hid him for three months because they saw he was no ordinary child,

Moses refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter choosing the people of God

Moses kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, keeping the death angel from the firstborn of Israel.

The people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land

The walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days.

The prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw and welcomed them from a distance. They admitted they were aliens and strangers on earth looking for their heavenly home.” (Hebrews 11:1-13)

Comment: Every one of these examples had one common thread – actions based on belief and faith (faith and belief are similar words. Nelson's Bible Dictionary).

“What more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received during their life what had been promised.” (Hebrews 11:32- 39)

God's Discipline

“In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. You have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.” (Hebrews 12:4-11, 14-16)

“We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers (but not those who teach a different gospel and deny Christ was God in a human body), for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those in prison (your Christian brothers) as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer (covenant breakers) and all the sexually immoral (sex with someone not your spouse – fornication). Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.” (Hebrews 12:28-29; 13:2-5, 9)

“Continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise — the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. Obey your leaders and submit (to yield to authority and admonition, (Thayer's)) to their authority. They keep watch over you (not dictate but warn of dangers so you can take actions) as men (spiritual leaders) who must give an account (to the chief shepherd.). Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Hebrews 13:15-17)

Key Points from Hebrews

- The deceitfulness of sin can harden one’s heart. Pay close attention to what you have heard so that you do not drift away.
- See to it, brothers, that none of you Christians have a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.
- It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, and shared in the Holy Spirit, and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance.
- The Old Covenant was the earthly shadows and types of what the New Covenant would include. Therefore, it was inferior to the New Covenant.
- If Christians deliberately keep on sinning after we have received and obeyed the knowledge of the truth, the gospel, no sacrifice for sins is left as they have removed themselves from Christ.
- One’s depth of their faith and belief is shown by their actions in doing good and living righteously.
- The lord disciplines those he loves as it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace if one is trained by it.

Question – What is faith and how did those of old show their faith?