

The LETTER of PAUL to the HEBREWS

LAST GENERATION VERSION

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Chapter 1

God sent Us His Son, the Heir of the Creation

God, formerly speaking at many times and in many ways to the fathers by the prophets, 2 in these latest times has spoken to us by the Son whom He appointed Heir of everything,¹ through whom He also fashioned the ages.² 3 [He] who being the radiance of the glory and the likeness of the [One] undergirding Him, even carrying everything³ by the word of His power, by Himself having made a purging of our sins, took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty in the highest,⁴ 4 having become⁵ so much better than the messengers,⁶ since inheriting a much more excellent name⁷ compared to them. 5 For to which of the messengers has He ever said, “*You are My Son, today I have fathered You*”?⁸ And again, “*I will be to Him a Father, and He*

¹ Paul appealed to the second Psalm, which describes the preeminence of the Son of God as the future King in Jerusalem (Mt. Zion), the Heir of all the nations and the whole earth which God promised Him. Psalm 2:6-9 LXX*. “*But I was established as King by Him on His holy hill of Zion, declaring the Lord’s decree: The Lord said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You; Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall shepherd them with a rod of iron; You shall shatter them like a potter’s vessel.’*” This text forms the basis for the entire book of Hebrews, which constantly points to the hope of the co-inheritance for all who remain joined to the Son.

² Compare Eph. 1:9-10. The Son was the agent of creation, and is the One guiding history, appearing within the creation, both in ancient times and through the incarnation by which He atoned for our sins, (see notes on Heb. 4:1-11; Heb. 11:1-3).

³ Christ is the One who carried Israel throughout all of her history. Deut. 1:30-31 “... *in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.*”

⁴ Psalm 110:1-2 “*The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’ The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!*” Christ’s being seated at the Father’s right hand is the prelude to His taking His place as King of kings, in fulfillment of Psalm 2.

⁵ As related in chapter 2, Christ’s coming in the form of a human baby initially made Him “*lower than the angels.*” But, by finishing the work on earth assigned to Him by His Father, He has become complete as the “*Son,*” making Him the heir of the inheritance, far superior to the angels. This is demonstrated by His taking His seat at the Father’s right hand, a sign that the inheritance of the nations is assured to Him.

⁶ Or “*angels*”

⁷ The “*name*” referred to here is “*Son,*” which entitles Him to the inheritance described in Psalm 2.

⁸ After having indirectly referred to Psalm 2 twice already (vss. 2 & 4), Paul quoted from verse 7 directly.

*will be to Me a Son”?*⁹ 6 Yet again, whenever He should be leading¹⁰ the Firstborn¹¹ into the Land,¹² He says, *“And give worship to Him all the messengers of God.”*¹³

7 And indeed unto the messengers He says: *“... the One making His messengers spirits, and His servants a blazing fire.”*¹⁴

8 Yet unto the Son: *“Your throne, O God, is for the age of the age, and the scepter of Your Kingdom is the scepter of integrity. 9 You loved justice and hated lawlessness. Therefore God, Your God, anointed You with the jubilation oil in the presence of your fellow¹⁵ [heirs].”*¹⁶

10 Also: *“You Lord, in the beginning, established the land, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. 11 They shall wear out,¹⁷ yet You remain constant. And all [these] shall decay as a garment. 12 And like a cape [thrown about the body] you will spin¹⁸ them, and they will be changed.¹⁹ Yet, You are the same, and Your years will not fail.”*²⁰

13 When has He ever said to any of the messengers, *“Sit on my right side until I should place Your enemies under your feet”?*²¹ 14 Are they not all attendant spirits commissioned for those on the threshold²² of inheriting the deliverance?²³

⁹ 1 Chron. 17:10-14 Christ is the heir of the Davidic Covenant, the promised Son of David who will sit upon the Throne of David and reign over David’s kingdom forever, (see also: Isa. 9:6-7; Luke 1:31-33).

¹⁰ The Father will accompany the Son at His coming, and publically bestow the Kingdom upon Him, (Daniel 7:13-14).

¹¹ “Firstborn” is a synonym for the rightful heir. See also Rom. 8:29.

¹² Lit. “territory,” the Land promised to Abraham and his Seed (Gen. 13:14-17; Gen. 17:8), who is Christ (Gal. 3:16), and all who have been baptized into Him (Gal. 3:26-29).

¹³ Deut 32:44 LXX* (the quoted clause does not appear in the Hebrew text). *“Be glad O heavens together with Him! And give worship to Him all the messengers of God! Be glad, O gentiles with His people, and grow in strength in Him all you sons of God! For the blood of His sons He shall avenge, and He shall avenge and recompense punishment to the enemies, and to those despising Him He will repay. And the Lord shall clear out the Land for His people.”* The personal pronouns, Him, He, and His, all have as their antecedent the “Rock” mentioned in verses 4, 15, 18, 30, & 31. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 10:4 that this “Rock” which carried Israel in the wilderness was Christ. Here Paul interpreted the closing verse of the Song of Moses as referring to the Father’s leading the Son into the Promised Land, when He will *“clear out the Land for His people.”*

¹⁴ Psalm 104:4 The angels are mere “servants,” clearly inferior to the Son.

¹⁵ Jesus will be anointed King by the Father in the presence of all of His co-heirs, (Daniel 7:9-28; Rom. 8:15-23).

¹⁶ Psalm 45:6-7

¹⁷ The Greek word can mean to “destroy” or “ruin.” Yet, the verb is in the middle voice, which means the heavenly bodies will self-ruin rather than being disturbed by God directly.

¹⁸ to whirl, as a sling over the head. This no doubt refers to the rotations and orbits of the planets.

¹⁹ The “change” refers to the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21), which is why the restored creation is called *“new heavens and new land”* in Isaiah 65:17 & 66:22. The earth remains forever (Psalm 104:5).

²⁰ Psalm 102:25-27, see also: Isaiah 51:3-6 which uses the same language regarding the earth wearing out, yet clearly states that Jerusalem will be restored at that time.

²¹ Psalm 110:1

Chapter 2

Do not Neglect the Son's Teaching Reported by the Apostles

Because of this, it is especially crucial for us to heed what we have heard, so at that time²⁴ we might not fall away. 2 For if the word spoken through messengers²⁵ proved steadfast, and every violation received a just punishment,²⁶ 3 how will we escape, neglecting a deliverance of such magnitude? Originally [it] was taken hold of to be proclaimed through the Master,²⁷ and was confirmed to us by those hearing Him,²⁸ 4 God verifying [their testimony] with signs,²⁹ and with miracles, and with various mighty acts, and distributions of the Holy Spirit according to His will.

The Creation is to be Ruled by Man in the Kingdom

5 For He does not subjugate to [His] messengers the impending territory which we are discussing.³⁰ 6 Yet somewhere one witnesses saying: *“What is man, that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You are visiting him? 7 You made him a little bit below the messengers, You crown him with glory and honor, and You appoint him over the works of Your hands.”*³¹ 8 *You place everything under his feet.”*³² For in subjecting everything to him, He

²² Michael and his angels have been commissioned to assist believers through the Great Tribulation into the eschatological Kingdom of Christ, (Psalm 91:11; Dan. 10:21; Dan. 12:1; Rev. 12:6-7,14). The story of Lot's escape from Sodom, assisted by two angels (Gen. 19:1-26), sets the backdrop for Jesus' instructions to His disciples about the *“days of the Son of Man,”* and their escape to places of safety during the Great Tribulation (cf. Matt. 24:15-29 & Luke 17:22-37). His ominous warning, *“Remember Lot's wife”* (Luke 17:32) makes this connection inescapable. (See also Isaiah 26:20 - 27:1)

²³ “Deliverance” in Hebrews is always eschatological, referring to the deliverance from this evil age by the return of Christ, and the inheritance in His Kingdom, (cf. Heb. 2:10 & Heb. 9:28).

²⁴ μηποτε – “at that time,” at the end of the age when we are *“on the threshold of inheriting the deliverance,”* (Heb. 1:14). For a discussion of this Greek word see Appendix D.

²⁵ The Law was given to Moses in the company of angels (Deut. 33:2 LXX; Acts 7:53)

²⁶ God's judgments upon Israel as in the rebellion at Kadesh Barnea

²⁷ The eschatological “deliverance” was already known from the prophets, but “taken hold of” (expounded) by Jesus. He spoke more in His parables about the coming Kingdom than anything else, (Matt. 13 & Acts 1:3,6).

²⁸ Paul spoke of the other Apostles in the third person because he was not present to witness Jesus' teaching during His public ministry, (1 Cor. 15:8-9).

²⁹ Mark 16:15-20

³⁰ This statement makes it clear that the “deliverance” is the coming Kingdom of Messiah.

³¹ Genesis 1:28

³² Psalm 8:4-6

leaves nothing outside [man's] dominion. Yet now we do not yet see everything having been subjected to him.³³

Christ came as a Man to Lead Many Sons to His Inheritance

9 But we see Jesus, crowned with glory and honor, having been made a little bit lower³⁴ than the messengers for the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God He might partake of death for every man. 10 For it was proper for Him, the supreme leader of their deliverance, (for whom everything is³⁵ and by whom everything is³⁶), to become complete³⁷ through hardship, in leading many sons to glory.³⁸

The Necessity of the Son's Humanity

11 For both the consecrating One and those being consecrated are from one [human race].³⁹ For this reason He is not ashamed to call them 'brothers,' 12 saying: *"I will proclaim Your name to My brothers, in the middle of the congregation⁴⁰ I will sing hymns to You."*⁴¹ And again: *"I will have confidence in Him."*⁴² And again: *"Look! I and the children God gave to Me."*⁴³ 14 Then since the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He likewise partook of the same, so that through death He may vanquish the one having the domain of death, who is the Devil, 15 and to release those who were prone to

³³ God's command to Adam to take dominion over everything on the earth was thwarted when man sinned. It was therefore necessary to take care of the sin problem before man could assume his rightful place as ruler of the whole inhabited earth in the age to come.

³⁴ *"crowned with glory and honor"* and *"a little bit lower than the messengers,"* as all with humans, vs. 7

³⁵ Jesus is the heir of all the nations, and the ends of the earth (Psalm 2:6-9; Psalm 110; Heb. 1:2,4)

³⁶ Jesus is the architect and guide of human history, (Heb. 1:1-2; Heb. 11:1-3).

³⁷ Jesus Christ was both divine and human, perfect in His divinity, but in His humanity having to endure severe trials in His human experience in order to reach completion, through being an overcomer. This is why He was tempted of the Devil and endured the trial in the garden of Gethsemane, (Heb. 1:4; Heb. 5:7-9).

³⁸ Christ is leading "many sons" to the glory of the inheritance which belongs to Him.

³⁹ Having applied the qualities of humanity to Christ (*"a little bit lower than the angels"* and *"crowned with glory and honor"*), Paul spoke of the common humanity shared by Christ and His brothers.

⁴⁰ See Heb. 12:23

⁴¹ Psalm 22:22. After the psalmist described the sufferings of Christ in verses 1-21, He announced the glory to follow when all the redeemed are to be gathered to Christ in the "great assembly" in the Kingdom, (Heb. 12:23).

⁴² This is the closing line in Isaiah 8:16-17: *"Bind up the testimony, Seal the law among my disciples [the brothers]. And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him."*

⁴³ Isaiah 8:18 also refers to Christ and His followers.

always live in slavery to the fear of death, 16 (for doubtless it does not take hold⁴⁴ of the messengers, but it does take hold of the seed of Abraham). 17 For this cause He was obliged to become like His brothers in every way, so that He could become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things toward God, to atone for the sins of the people. 18 For in what He suffered, having been tested, He is able to help the ones being tested.

Chapter 3

The Son Compared to Moses

Therefore holy brothers, sharers of the invitation of heavenly dominion, consider Jesus Christ, the Emissary and High Priest of our confession, 2 being faithful to the One who appointed Him, as also Moses [was] in all his household.

3 For this One has been deemed more worthy than Moses by the same proportion a builder has value over the house [he builds]. 4 For every house is built by someone, yet God has built everything.

We Must Remain Faithful to the Pristine Faith

5 And Moses was indeed faithful in all his household as a servant, as a witness of what would be spoken later. 6 But Christ is as a Son over His own household, of whose household we are if we clutch⁴⁵ the confidence and rejoicing of the confirmed hope⁴⁶ unto the consummation,⁴⁷ 7 according to which⁴⁸ the Holy Spirit says: *“This day, if you hear His voice, 8 you should not harden your hearts as in the provocation, as in the day of testing in the wilderness 9 where your fathers tried me, they tested Me and saw My works. 10 Forty years I was disgusted with that generation. And I said, ‘They are always straying in their*

⁴⁴ The confusion among translations concerns the verb, “επιλαμβανεται,” which literally means “seize” or “take hold.” The NKJV; NIV; NASB et al rendering “give aid to” is highly unlikely because: (1) the verb is in the middle voice (implying seize to self); (2) the two nouns “angels” and “seed” are not dative, but genitive. The KJV rendering, “took to himself the nature of” is also unlikely because the verb is a present indicative, not aorist indicative (past tense) as the KJV renders it. The verb requires a present and continuous seizing or taking hold of something. It is better to take “fear” to be the subject of the verb, and correctly render the verb in the present tense. Being seized by fear is the most likely meaning, (see Luke 8:37 for a similar expression).

⁴⁵ To grip tightly

⁴⁶ The permanent land inheritance of the Abrahamic Covenant, taken hold of and proclaimed by Jesus Christ, and confirmed by the Apostles’ testimony (Heb. 2:3). It was further confirmed by supernatural signs of the Holy Spirit accompanying the Apostles (Heb. 2:4). And also confirmed by God’s oath to Abraham (Heb. 6:13-20).

⁴⁷ The end of the age (Matt. 10:22; Matt. 24:6,13,14; 1 Cor. 1:8; Rev. 2:26)

⁴⁸ Psalm 95 is a prophecy about the “consummation.”

heart and they do not know my ways,' 11 as I swore in My anger whether they shall enter into My Rest.⁴⁹/⁵⁰

12 Beware brothers, if at that time⁵¹ a wicked heart of unbelief shall⁵² be found in any of you, in apostatizing from the living God. 13 But encourage one another each day until⁵³ that [day] which is called *'This day,'* so that none from among you may be hardened by the seduction of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of the Christ⁵⁴ if we should clutch the original confirmed foundation⁵⁵ unto the consummation,⁵⁶ 15 when it is to be proclaimed:⁵⁷ *"This day, if you hear His voice, you should not harden your hearts as in the provocation."*

16 For some having heard, provoked [God], but not all who came out of Egypt by Moses. 17 Yet with whom was He disgusted forty years? Was it not the ones sinning, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear would not enter His rest, except those who were unconvinced? 19 And we see that they were unable to enter because of disbelief.

⁴⁹ The word "Sabbath" in Hebrew means "rest." The original "Sabbath day" on which God rested (Gen. 2:2-3) and the weekly Sabbath day the Jewish – Christian readers observed (Ex. 20:11) was symbolic of the ultimate eschatological "Rest" of Christ the Creator. God's Rest is clearly defined in Isaiah 62 as the coming Kingdom, when Jerusalem will be restored. *"For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. ... I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. ... Indeed the LORD has proclaimed To the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him.'" And they shall call them The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD; And you shall be called Sought Out, a City Not Forsaken."* This passage was referenced by Jesus in Rev. 22:12. See also Isaiah 40:10.

⁵⁰ at the "consummation," when Psalm 95:7-11 will be proclaimed

⁵¹ μηποτε – referring to the "consummation" to which *"this day ..."* refers. See Appendix D.

⁵² future tense, referring again to the consummation.

⁵³ Most translations incorrectly render this, "while it is called Today."

⁵⁴ sharers in the inheritance of the "Son" in Psalm 2.

⁵⁵ υποστασις – lit. "what stands beneath" (the thing that supports). The whole clause, "the original confirmed foundation" refers back to Heb. 2:3-4, the original testimony of the Apostles to Jesus' teaching, confirmed by the supernatural signs of the Holy Spirit.

⁵⁶ We must maintain the pristine Faith handed down by the Apostles until the coming of Christ. (vs. 6)

⁵⁷ The exhortation in Psalm 95, *"This day..."* is to be proclaimed at the consummation of the age.

Chapter 4

Our Future 'Kadesh Barnea'⁵⁸ at the end of the Sixth Millennium

We should fear then, if at that time⁵⁹ any of you might appear to have fallen short⁶⁰ of the remaining promise⁶¹ to enter into His⁶² Rest. 2 For we also have been told the good message as they were (but the message heard [by them] had no benefit, not having been mixed with faith in the hearers).⁶³ 3. For we – the ones who believed – are entering⁶⁴ the Rest, (just as He said: “*As I swore in My anger, whether they shall come into My Rest,*”)⁶⁵ although the labors have been performed⁶⁶ since the founding of the world.⁶⁷

4 For He has declared somewhere concerning the seventh [day]⁶⁸ thus: “*And God ceased in the seventh day from all His works.*”⁶⁹ 5 And thus again: “*whether they shall come into My Rest.*”⁷⁰

⁵⁸ The reader is transported the future ‘Kadesh Barnea’ at the end of the age when many Christians will fail the same test of faith that the Israelites failed in the wilderness. This is the apostasy in the time of Antichrist (Matt. 24:9-13; 2 Thess. 2:2-3).

⁵⁹ μηποτε – “if at such time” refers to the future ‘Kadesh Barnea’ when the believer’s faith in God’s promise of the inheritance (Rest) will be put to the test in the time of great tribulation. See Appendix D.

⁶⁰ “*have fallen short*” – the verb is in the perfect tense (a past completed action with continuous results). The sense is that when the future trial of our faith comes, some might discover that they have already fallen short, unable to recover. Jesus’ parable of the wise and foolish virgins illustrates the same point graphically (Matt. 25:1-13).

⁶¹ The “remaining promise” is the future fulfillment of the promise of entering His rest implied in the quotation of Psalm 95. (Psalm 37 shows that David had the same understanding).

⁶² The personal pronoun “His” refers to the Creator, whom Paul has already identified as Christ (Heb. 1:2; Heb. 2:10).

⁶³ The “good news” was preached to the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea by Joshua and Caleb, but they rejected it, (Num. 13:30; 14:6-9). “*And all the congregation said to stone them with stones.*” (Num. 14:10)

⁶⁴ Paul was still speaking from the perspective of the future Kadesh Barnea (the time of testing just before Christ’s Kingdom arrives) which he introduced in verse 1 with the words, “at such time.” This is why he used the present tense “we ... are entering,” and the aorist tense “the ones who believed,” just as in verse 1 he used the perfect tense “appear to have fallen short.” His verb tenses in verses 1-3 are from the perspective of the consummation of the age.

⁶⁵ Psalm 95:11 LXX

⁶⁶ The Greek word means to occur, to come to be, to be performed.

⁶⁷ Contrasting the future “Rest” of Psalm 95 with the labor of mankind under the curse since the “foundation of the world.” It is the same contrasting relationship that the 6 days of creation had to the Creator’s Sabbath rest, and the 6 day work week has to the Sabbath day.

⁶⁸ The future “Rest” (Messiah’s Kingdom inheritance) for believers is here called the “seventh day.” Paul said that God has spoken of the “seventh day” in both Genesis 2:2 and in the promised “Rest” of Psalm 95, which he has placed as our future hope. That the creation week is a prophecy of the end of the age is strongly implied by Isaiah also. “*I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end at the beginning.*” (Isa. 46:9-10*). Paul stated unmistakably that the Kingdom of the Messiah is the “Seventh Day.” Just as the

6 Since then it remains for some to enter into it, and those to whom it was previously announced did not enter because of stubbornness, He specifies another set day – ‘*This day.*’ 7 After such a long time⁷¹ He says in [the Psalm of] David, according as was previously proclaimed,⁷² “*This day if you hear His voice, you should not harden your hearts.*”⁷³

8 For if Joshua [had provided] them the Rest, He⁷⁴ would not have been speaking of another day after those. 9 Consequently, a Sabbatical⁷⁵ awaits the people of God.

10 For the one entering into His Rest, he has also ceased from his own labors⁷⁶ just as God did from His. 11 Therefore, we should be diligent to enter into that Rest, so that none fall into the same pattern of stubbornness.

The Son as High Priest at the Father's Right Hand

12 For the Word of God⁷⁷ is alive and effective, and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating unto dividing of both soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is the judge of inner sentiments and thoughts of the heart. 13 And nothing created is imperceptible in His presence, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes⁷⁸ of Him to whom we report. 14 Having then a great High Priest who has passed through

weekly Sabbath is the seventh day of the week, a “Seventh Day” Kingdom necessitates six previous “days” also. There is no escaping the clear implication of six ages followed by the seventh Kingdom age. The only component of Ante Nicene Chiliasm that is not explicitly stated here is the length of each of the seven ages. Yet, this is implied in Psalm 90:4 & 2 Pet. 3:8, and plainly stated in Rev. 20 as a millennium. The obvious conclusion is that man will toil under the curse for 6 millennia, and the believing ones will inherit the 7th millennium. See Appendix A for the opinion of early Christian writers on the millennial week & Sabbath Rest.

⁶⁹ Gen. 2:2

⁷⁰ Psalm 95:11 LXX

⁷¹ Such a long time after the rebellion in the wilderness David wrote this Psalm which placed the opportunity to realize God’s Rest in the future.

⁷² Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14:6-9) and Moses (Deut. 1:29) previously pleaded with the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea to trust God and go into the Land.

⁷³ Psalm 95:8 LXX

⁷⁴ God through David in Psalm 95

⁷⁵ A Sabbath to be kept (a Sabbath awaits). Paul has clearly called the Kingdom age the “Sabbath.”

⁷⁶ When the faithful believer enters God’s rest (the 7th Millennium, the “Sabbatical”), he has reached the end of his own labors, just like God did at the very end of His creation labor.

⁷⁷ This does not refer to the Bible. The “Word of God” is portrayed as having eyes and conscious perception, being “*the One to whom we report.*” This is the name of the Judge of all the earth, Christ Himself. “*He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called ‘The Word of God’.*” (Rev. 19:13)

⁷⁸ The “Lamb” has seven eyes, which represents the seven-fold Spirit of God, (cf. Rev. 5:6, Zech 3:9 & 4:10). The Spirit given to us searches our hearts when we pray (Rom. 8:26-27; 1 John 3:19-20).

the heavens – Jesus the Son of God⁷⁹ – we should cling to the Profession.⁸⁰ 15 For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but One like us who has been similarly tested in every way apart from sin. 16 Therefore, we may come with boldness to the throne of grace,⁸¹ so that we may receive mercy and grace for prompt assistance.

Chapter 5

Qualifications of a High Priest

For every high priest being taken from among men is appointed over men the things of God, so that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins, 2 being able to be compassionate to the ignorant and straying ones, since he also is enclosed with frailty. 3 This is why he is obliged to offer [sacrifices] for sins accordingly for the people, and for himself. 4 And no one takes this honor for himself, but [only] the one being called by God, just as Aaron [was].

Christ is Qualified to be High Priest

5 Thus Christ also did not glorify Himself to become High Priest. Instead, the One saying to Him: “*You are My Son, this day I have fathered You,*”⁸² 6 also accordingly in another [Psalm] says: “*You are priest for the age*⁸³ according to the order of Melchisedek.”⁸⁴ 7 Who in the days of His flesh,⁸⁵ offering both requests and pleadings to the One able to save Him from death with strong outcries and tears, being heard out of fear, 8 even being a Son He understood obedience from the things He suffered.⁸⁶ 9 And being

⁷⁹ Paul links together the “High Priest” and “Kingly” roles of the ‘Son’ in Psalm 2 & Psalm 110.

⁸⁰ “The Profession” refers to the “rock” on which Christianity is founded, that Jesus is the Christ (the anointed King to sit upon David’s throne), the Son of God. (cf. Psalm 2 LXX & Matt. 16:13-18)

⁸¹ Where Christ is seated at the Father’s right hand awaiting His inheritance (Psalm 110:1 & Rev. 3:21)

⁸² Psalm 2:7

⁸³ “εις τον αιωνα” This can be rendered, “for the age,” “during the age,” or “unto the age.” It means throughout this present age (until the next). Paul quoted Psalm 110:4 from the LXX here and in Heb. 7:17 & 21, which uses the singular “for the age” (not forever as in most English translations). Each time Paul referred to the duration of the priesthood of Christ in Hebrews he repeated the same clause, “for the age,” (Heb. 6:20; 7:24; 7:28). However, when speaking of Christ’s role as King, Paul quoted the LXX in Heb. 1:8, “for the age of the age,” referring to the Millennial Sabbath Rest.

⁸⁴ Psalm 110:4

⁸⁵ This refers to Christ’s unglorified flesh subject to decay and death. He still had “flesh and bone” after the resurrection (Luke 24:39), and continues to have a human body according to 1 John 4:2-3, since the perfect tense (has come) requires that He still possessed a flesh body when John wrote. (See Rev. 1:18)

⁸⁶ The suffering referred to here was Jesus’ anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44).

completed, He became the source of perpetual deliverance for all the ones who are obeying Him, 10 having been called by God, ‘Chief Priest’ *“according to the order of Melchisedek.”*⁸⁷

A Rebuke of Their Slothfulness

11 The message about him is abundant and difficult for us to expound,⁸⁸ since you have become lazy in hearing. 12 For by this time you ought to be teachers, yet you are in need of being taught again yourselves what are the foundational principles of the pronouncements of God. And you have become dependent on milk and not solid food.⁸⁹ 13 For everyone [still] partaking of milk is inexperienced in the word of justice, for he is a baby. 14 Yet, solid food is for the mature, those who have conditioned their senses through practice, having discernment toward what is just and what is worthless.

Chapter 6

Through this [solid food], leaving the message of the basics of Christ, we should be carried on⁹⁰ to completion. [We should] not be laying the foundation again of repentance from dead works, of belief on God, 2 of the teaching about immersions,⁹¹ or the placing of hands,⁹² or the resurrection of the dead, and age-enduring condemnation. 3 And we will do this if God should permit.⁹³

⁸⁷ Psalm 110:4

⁸⁸ Notice that Paul continually expounds Christ from the Greek Old Testament (LXX), particularly the Psalms.

⁸⁹ 1 Cor. 3:1-4

⁹⁰ The passive voice implies the effort of others (spiritual leaders) as the cause of believers reaching completion (Heb. 13:7,17), with God’s permission (v. 3).

⁹¹ Teaching about “baptisms” (plural) refers to the distinction between John’s baptism and Christian baptism. Both accompanied repentance and were for the remission of sins (cf. Luke 3:4; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16). However, John’s baptism did not convey the Holy Spirit, but Christ’s post-Pentecost baptism does. (cf. Mark 1:4-8; Acts 2:38; Acts 19:1-6)

⁹² The bestowing of spiritual gifts by the 12 Apostles (Acts 8:14-20; Acts 19:6; Rom. 1:10-11; 2 Tim. 1:6)

⁹³ Hebrews is “solid food” for the mature believer, preparing him to be a capable “teacher” of the things of Christ. Paul’s rebuke applies to many pastors and teachers in Christian churches, who neither know nor understand these things, and who have no idea how to discern what is good doctrine from what is worthless rubbish concocted from the machinations of the human philosophical mind.

*The Fearful Permanence of Apostasy*⁹⁴

4 For those having been illuminated⁹⁵ once, and having partaken of the gift⁹⁶ of the heavenly dominion,⁹⁷ having become fellow-sharers of the Holy Spirit,⁹⁸ 6 and having partaken of the good proclamation of God⁹⁹ and the powerful abilities¹⁰⁰ of the impending age,¹⁰¹ and yet fall away,¹⁰² are unable to be restored again¹⁰³ to repentance, crucifying again for themselves the Son of God,¹⁰⁴ making a mockery. 7 For land which absorbs the frequent showers upon it, providing crops adequate for those by whom it is being farmed, receives blessing from God. 8 Yet, [if] producing thorns and briars, it is castaway, and soon devoted to destruction, whose destiny is burning.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁴ Clearly, this passage was intended to strike fear into the hearts of the brethren who might be tempted to abandon Christ, (as also in Heb. 2:3; Heb. 4:1; Heb. 10:27; Heb. 12:15-17). Yet, Hebrews also seeks to provide confidence and boldness for those pressing on in their faith (Heb. 4:14; Heb. 10:19-23).

⁹⁵ Paul also used the term 'illuminated' as a metaphor for being reconciled to God in Heb. 10:32. The earliest Christians referred to baptism as 'illumination'. *"Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. ... And this washing is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings,"* (Justin, First Apology, LXI). The ancient Aramaic New Testament (Pishitta) reads: *"But this is impossible for those who have once been baptized and have tasted of the gift from heaven and have received the Holy Spirit,"* (Lamsa Translation).

⁹⁶ The remission of sins (Acts 2:38-39)

⁹⁷ See Appendix C

⁹⁸ See: 1 Cor. 12:12-13

⁹⁹ The Gospel

¹⁰⁰ Spiritual gifts

¹⁰¹ Supernatural spiritual gifts are viewed as precursors and prototypes to the miracles of the coming Kingdom age. Jesus said essentially the same thing when He sent out His disciples to heal the sick and raise the dead, proclaiming, *"The Kingdom of God has come near to you,"* (Luke 10:9).

¹⁰² Matt. 24:9-13; 2 Thess. 2:3-12

¹⁰³ "Restored again" to repentance requires a previous repentance.

¹⁰⁴ Heb. 10:29 also describes the apostate in similar terms.

¹⁰⁵ John 15:1-6; Heb. 10:26-27. The warning of the permanence of apostasy here seems to be within the context of the Great Tribulation. The end time "Kadesh Barnea," introduced in chapters 3-4, is the focal point of the whole book, and is the future event for which Paul sought to prepare his readers. Therefore, the "fire" is the destruction of the wicked on Day of the Lord (Isa. 66:15-18,24; Mal. 4:1-3). It is therefore conceivable that the permanence of this apostasy, with no room for repentance, is due to the finality of one's spiritual state during the Great Tribulation when "repentance" is impossible (Rev. 22:11), after having taken the mark of the Beast (Rev. 14:6-11). Notice the similarity between this passage and the Wheat and Tares parable in Matthew 13, which also concerns the end of the age.

Personal Encouragement to Persevere

9 Yet, we have assumed¹⁰⁶ the better concerning you, beloved, as still possessing these things¹⁰⁷ of the deliverance,¹⁰⁸ even though we speak like this. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown towards His name, having served the saints and continuing to serve. 11 Yet we are longing for every one of you to demonstrate diligence towards the assurance of the hope until the consummation,¹⁰⁹ 12 so that you may not become lazy, but imitators of those who through faith and endurance inherit the promises.¹¹⁰

The Anchor of the Soul is the Abrahamic Promise

13 For God, in promising Abraham,¹¹¹ since He had no one greater to swear by, swore by Himself,¹¹² 14 saying, *“Surely, in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply you.”*¹¹³ 15 And thus, through endurance,¹¹⁴ he obtained the promise. 16 For indeed, men swear by something greater, and an oath for confirmation settles all disputes for them. 17 In this way God, being intent on showing to the inheritors of the promise¹¹⁵ the irrevocability of His purpose, confirmed with an oath,¹¹⁶ 18 so that by two

¹⁰⁶ A persuasion or supposition, not a fact (see also: Phil. 1:6)

¹⁰⁷ The things listed in verses 4-6

¹⁰⁸ As always in Hebrews, the “deliverance” is eschatological, dealing with “the impending age” (vs. 6).

¹⁰⁹ See Heb. 3:6,14

¹¹⁰ The Abrahamic Covenant promises are for Christians (Rom. 4:13-16; Gal. 3:16, 26-29; Eph. 2:11-13)

¹¹¹ Gen. 22:15-18 is an oath confirming the earlier promises in Gen. 13:14-17 & Gen. 17:4-8. These promises include the permanent inheritance of the land, from the Nile to the Euphrates rivers, as an everlasting possession for Abraham and his “Seed.” In Gal. 3:16, Paul explained that the term “Seed” in all these promises is singular, and refers to Christ. (Unfortunately, many English translations have “descendants” {plural} in these passages in Genesis. But, they are always singular in both the Hebrew and the LXX). Then in Gal. 3:26-29, Paul wrote that all who are baptized into Christ are the children of Abraham and heirs of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. Here in Hebrews 6:13-20, Paul held up the hope of the permanent Land possession as our “anchor of the soul,” the thing that will assure our perseverance if we always keep this hope before us (see also: Heb. 11:10,13,39-40). Consequently, all theological systems which deny the future Land promise to Christians remove the “anchor of the soul” as the incentive to press on to the inheritance. Instead, they substitute the Gnostic hope – ascending to the heavens.

¹¹² Gen. 22:16

¹¹³ Gen. 22:17-18

¹¹⁴ The faith of Abraham was more than just mental assent. As explained in chapter 11, Abraham’s “faith” was completed by his action (leaving his homeland & offering His son), and perseverance in hard times (living in the Promised Land in a tent as an alien, awaiting the fulfillment of the land promise).

¹¹⁵ Christians are the inheritors of the promise to Abraham (see note on verse 13).

¹¹⁶ The oath also included the permanent land inheritance (cf. Gen. 22:16-17; Gen. 26:3-5; Gen. 50:24; Psalm 105:8-11; Luke 1:68-75)

irrevocable actions,¹¹⁷ which God is unable to falsify, we – the fleeing ones¹¹⁸ – might have powerful incentive to cling to the hope laying before us,¹¹⁹ 19 which we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and confirmed,¹²⁰ entering into the chamber behind the veil,¹²¹ 20 where Jesus, the forerunner over us has entered, having become High Priest for the age, according to the order of Melchisedek.

Chapter 7

A Closer Look at Melchisedek

For this ‘Melchisedek,’ king of Salem,¹²² priest of God the Highest, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth of everything,¹²³ is indeed primarily translated: “King of Justice.”¹²⁴ After that [he is called] “King of Salem,” which means ‘King of Peace.’ 3 [He is] without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, yet having become an exemplar to the Son of God, he remains a priest unto the materialization.¹²⁵

¹¹⁷ The two irrevocable actions were the original promise confirmed by God’s igniting Abraham’s sacrifice (Gen. 15:7-21) and the oath God swore to Him when He offered his son, Isaac (Gen. 22:1-19).

¹¹⁸ This is a direct reference to Jesus’ instructions for His followers to flee from both the destruction of Jerusalem (AD70) and the Great Tribulation events, (Matt. 24:15-28; Luke 17:22-37; Luke 21:7-36; Rev. 12:3,13-17).

¹¹⁹ The oath God swore to Abraham, confirming His promise to give him a multitude of descendants and the permanent inheritance of the Land, was given for the benefit of “the fleeing ones.” The hope of the Land inheritance is our destiny as co-heirs with the Son. This is also the “remaining promise” implied in Psalm 95, (quoted in Heb. 4:1), which is the “Rest” of the “seventh day” (Heb. 4:4) and the “Sabbatical” (Heb. 4:8). David also spoke extensively of this hope in Psalm 37, and Jesus quoted it in Matt. 5:5. See Appendix B for the opinion of the early Christians.

¹²⁰ This hope was confirmed by the Holy Spirit’s power in the Apostolic ministry (Heb. 2:2-4).

¹²¹ The Holy of Holies in heaven, explained further in Heb. 9

¹²² Salem means “peace.” “City of peace” is “Jeru-salem.” Melchisedek was called King of Jerusalem before the city even existed. Both titles are prophetic and Messianic.

¹²³ Genesis 14:18-20

¹²⁴ A title of the Messiah (Isaiah 11:1-5)

¹²⁵ “εις το διηνεκες” literally means “unto the carry through.” The word “διηνεκες” (carry-through) only appears 4 times in the New Testament, all occurring in Hebrews (Heb. 7:3, 10:1, 10:10; 10:14), always in the clause, “εις το διηνεκες” (unto the carry through), and always in the context of explaining Psalm 110 (which includes the promise of the present Melchisedek priesthood as Christ’s temporary role until His coming Kingdom, when His enemies are placed under His feet. This clause (unto the materialization) always refers to the fulfillment of the Father’s promises to His Son in that Psalm, His enemies being placed beneath His feet, and His receiving the nations and the ends of the land as His inheritance (Psalm 110:2-3,5-7 & Psalm 2:6-9). This meaning is clearly defined in Heb. 10:12-13. Paul wrote that Christ is seated at the Father’s right hand, having received the Melchisedek Priesthood “unto the materialization

4 Now you see the magnificence of this one, to whom the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the booty. 5 And indeed, those of the sons of Levi who obtain the sacred office have instructions to receive tenths from the people according to the Law, from their own brothers who also come from the groin of Abraham. 6 Yet, [it was] someone apart from their genealogy to whom Abraham [gave] the tenth, who [then] blessed the one having the promises. 7 It is indisputable that the one who blesses is superior to the one who is blessed. 8 And here¹²⁶ dying men receive tenths. But there¹²⁷ [it] is confirmed that he is alive!¹²⁸ 9 And, Levi, who receives the tenths, has given the tenth through Abraham, 10 because he was still in the patriarch's groin when Melchisedek met him! 11 If indeed, then, completion was through the Levitical priesthood, (for the people had been bound under law by it), why still the need for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchisedek, and not said to be according to the order of Aaron?

The Mosaic Law is Superseded if the Priesthood is Superseded

12 For the priesthood being superseded also requires that the Law be superseded. 13 For the One about whom these things are said was a member of a different tribe from which no one has attended the altar. 14 For it is obvious that our Lord came forth from Judah, about which tribe Moses said nothing about the priesthood. 15 It is also abundantly obvious that if a different Priest stands up "*according to the order of Melchisedek,*" 16 who has not come according to the Law of a fleshly precept,¹²⁹ but

(εις το διηνεκες), *the remainder being received when His enemies should be placed under His feet.*" It is clear therefore, that this term refers specifically to the beginning of the Sabbath Rest, when the promises to the Son of His inheritance are to be fulfilled. The "priesthood" of Melchisedek is said to extend to this point (7:3), and so is the priesthood of Christ said to continue "*εις το διηνεκες*" (10:12).

This essentially means that Christ and Melchisedek are the same person, and His priestly function ends when His reigning over His enemies begins. This is why Jewish believers are now being prepared for the role of priests for the nations in the coming age (Heb. 9:14; 1 Peter 2:5), in fulfillment of Exodus 19:4-6.

¹²⁶ The Law that instructed the Levites to receive the tenth from their brothers (Deut. 14:22-29)

¹²⁷ In Genesis 14:18-20

¹²⁸ In this statement, Paul has shown that Melchisedek was not human, but actually a preincarnate appearance of Christ Himself, still being alive to this day. We are assured then, that Abraham met Christ face to face and paid Him the tenth. Christ, the King of Salem (Jerusalem), Priest of God the Highest, actually had the "communion" meal with Abraham (Gen. 14:18). Tithing directly to Christ therefore has precedent in Scripture, and establishes a pattern for all who are "*Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.*"

¹²⁹ A precept of the Law for men of flesh who die and must continually be replaced by successors.

according to power of a durable life,¹³⁰ 17 (for he attests, “*You are a priest unto the age according to the order of Melchisedek*”), 18 there is therefore indeed a cancellation of the previous ordinance because of its weakness and unprofitability. 19 (For the Law brings no one to completion. But the introduction of a better hope does, through which we are approaching God).

The Superiority of the Melchisedek Priesthood

20 And indeed it was not apart from swearing an oath. 21 For indeed the priests have become [so] apart from the swearing of an oath. Yet this One [has become Priest] through the swearing of the oath to Him, “*The Lord swore an oath, and will not reverse it, ‘You are Priest unto the age, according to the order of Melchisedek’.*” 22 Accordingly, Jesus has become the guarantor of a much better covenant.

23 And there are many who have become priests, because death prevents them from continuing. 24 Yet this one, because He is to continue “*unto the age,*” has an untransferable priesthood. 25 From which [priestly office] He is able to complete the deliverance of those approaching God through Him, continually living to intercede over them. 26 For this kind of High Priest has been appropriate for us, blameless, innocent, pure, having been separate from sinners, having become superior to the heavenly beings.¹³¹

27 He has no daily necessity, (like the chief priests who first offer sacrifices for their own sin, and only afterward for the people). But He did this in totality, offering up Himself.

28 For the Law appoints as high priests men with imperfections. Yet, after the Law, the word of the sworn oath [appoints] the Son “*unto the age,*” having been completed.¹³²

Chapter 8

The Son’s High Priestly Function in Heaven

Now this is the primary thing being said: We have this kind of High Priest Who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 an Officer of the holy things and of the true Tabernacle which the Lord set up, not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Thus it

¹³⁰ From Psalm 110:4, Paul inferred that the Melchisedek Priest needed no successors based on the clause, “unto the age” (for the whole age until the age to come).

¹³¹ Becoming superior to the angels (Heb. 1:3-4)

¹³² Heb. 2:10; Heb. 5:9

was necessity for this One also to have something to offer. 4 For if indeed He was on earth, He would not be a priest, of the priests who offer sacrifices according to the Law.

The Better 'New' Covenant

5 Those [priests] perform service of the heavenly dominion¹³³ using symbol and similitude, according to what Moses was told when [he was] about to make the Tabernacle: *"For see,"* He says, *"you should do everything according to the model, the one shown to you in the mountain."* 6 Yet now He has taken up a more excellent service, being administrator of a better covenant, founded on better promises.

7 For if the former [covenant] has been unassailable, He never would have been seeking room for a second. 8 For blaming them, He says, *"Look! Days are coming,' says the Lord, 'and I will complete a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 9 not corresponding to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, since they did not remain in My covenant, and I ignored them,'¹³⁴ says the Lord."* 10 *Because this is the covenant I will be covenanting with the house of Israel after these days,' the Lord says, 'ingraining My laws¹³⁵ into their thinking, and I will engrave them on their hearts.¹³⁶ And I shall be God for them, and they shall be for Me a people. 11 And by no means should each [have to] instruct his neighbor or each his brother, saying "Get acquainted with the Lord!" For all of them will have come to know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12 For I will be merciful to their wrongdoings, and their sins and their unlawful deeds I should by no means continue recalling."¹³⁷*

13 In saying "new," He has set aside the former.¹³⁸ And what is being set aside and becoming obsolete¹³⁹ is close to disappearing.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ God's dominion over Israel, including His rites performed by the priests, See Appendix C

¹³⁴ The LXX has *"I ignored them,"* while the Hebrew has *"I was a husband to them."*

¹³⁵ The LXX has "laws" (plural), while the Hebrew has "law" (singular).

¹³⁶ See: Psalm 40:8; Ezek. 11:19; 2 Cor. 3:2-3

¹³⁷ Jer. 31:31-34 quoted by Paul from the LXX

¹³⁸ Jeremiah's prophecy itself guarantees the obsolescence and disappearance of the Mosaic covenant given at Mt. Sinai.

¹³⁹ The Mosaic Covenant was already in its death throes when Hebrews was written, about AD66, since the New Covenant had already been inaugurated by Jesus Christ (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6).

¹⁴⁰ The destruction of the Temple in AD70 was the final blow to the Mosaic Covenant and priesthood.

Chapter 9

The Old Sanctuary and Priestly Service was an Allegory

Indeed then, the former [covenant] had ordinances of divine service, and also the earthly sanctuary. 2 For the front tabernacle was constructed, called 'the holy place,' containing the lamp-stand¹⁴¹ and the table for displaying the loaves. 3 Yet after the second veil was a [rear] tabernacle called 'the holy of holies,' 4 having the golden censer, and the completely gold plated ark of the covenant, in which was the golden pot containing manna, the rod of Aaron that budded, and the [stone] tablets of the covenant. 5 Above it were glorious cherubim overshadowing the place of atonement, (about which no particular comment is to be made now). 6 And these things having been constructed like this, indeed the priests constantly¹⁴² [enter] into the front tabernacle performing the divine service. 7 But only the high priest went into the second tabernacle, once a year,¹⁴³ never without blood, which he offered for himself and the peoples' ignorant failures.¹⁴⁴

8 About this the Holy Spirit shows that the path of the holy things was not yet to have been made visible¹⁴⁵ with the front tabernacle still having standing.¹⁴⁶ 9 This was an allegory until the time which has come. According to this both offerings and sacrifices are offered, yet being unable to complete according to conscience the one offering divine service, 10 [concerned] only with foods and drinks and various washing [rituals], and ordinances of the flesh being laid upon [us] until the time of thorough straightening.

The Superior Melchisedek Priesthood

11 But Christ, High Priest of the intended good things, having arrived through the greater and more complete tabernacle not hand-built, (that is not of this creation), 12 not even by the blood of goats and bulls,¹⁴⁷ but by His own blood He went once into the holy of holies, securing age-enduring redemption.

¹⁴¹ The seven branch menorah

¹⁴² The priests entered this room daily throughout the year.

¹⁴³ On Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

¹⁴⁴ The Greek word means to fail due to ignorance, misunderstanding, or inattentiveness.

¹⁴⁵ The entrance of the high priest into the holy of holies (rear tabernacle) on Yom Kippur was obstructed from the people's view because of the front tabernacle.

¹⁴⁶ The front tabernacle, called 'the holy place,' was temporary.

¹⁴⁷ The goats and bulls were offered once a year on Yom Kippur (Lev. 16).

13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and ashes of a heifer, sprinkling those having been polluted, consecrates for purification of the flesh, 14 how much greater the blood of Christ, Who through the age-enduring Spirit offered Himself flawless to God, will¹⁴⁸ cleanse your conscience from dead acts¹⁴⁹ unto what is to be¹⁵⁰ divine service to the living God!

15 And through this [blood] He is Mediator of the New Covenant, [His] death having produced redemption from transgressions for those covered by the former covenant,¹⁵¹ [so that] those who have been called may receive the promise of the age-enduring inheritance.¹⁵² 16 For whenever a covenant [was made], it was necessary to carry out the death of the covenant victim. 17 For a covenant is ratified upon dead victims,¹⁵³ since it has no force at the time the covenant victim is still alive, 18 which is why the former covenant was not inaugurated without blood.

19 For every instruction under Moses having been spoken to all the people according to the Law, [and] having taken the blood of bulls and goats with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, he sprinkled both the scroll itself and all the people 20 saying: *"This is the blood*

¹⁴⁸ Paul placed the completion of their cleansing in the future, making them fit for a priestly function in Christ's Kingdom. This is the "completion" to which Paul instructed his Jewish readers to press on, (Heb. 6:1). The Law was inadequate to accomplish it (Heb. 7:19; Heb. 10:1). The "completion" of believers' deliverance is at the appearing of Christ's Kingdom (Heb. 12:23). Jesus Himself experienced the completion as *"the Supreme leader of their deliverance"* (Heb. 2:10). His achieving "completion" made Jesus Himself fit to function in the Melchisedek High Priestly role, (Heb. 5:5-10; Heb. 7:28). And it is the same process (which includes perseverance through suffering) that will make the adopted sons of God fit to carry out the function of the Melchisedek priesthood under Christ the King in the coming Kingdom. The "Order of Melchisedek" is not only one priest, but will become many. *"Blessed and holy is the one having a part in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."* (Rev. 20:6)

¹⁴⁹ The dead acts of service according to the Law of Moses, which has become obsolete (Heb. 8:13)

¹⁵⁰ Paul here describes a future 'priesthood' in the coming Kingdom for believers whose deliverance has been completed. The future Millennial Priesthood is also referenced by Peter. *"And you also, as living stones, are a spiritual house being constructed, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."* (1 Peter 2:5*). At the end of the age, the 24 elders proclaim: *"You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals, because You were slain, and have redeemed some to God with Your blood from every tribe, and language, and people, and nation, and have made them to be kings and priests to our God. And they shall reign on the land,"* (Rev. 5:9-10*). The prophets also agree, (Isaiah 56:1-8; Isaiah 60:1-7; Jer. 33:14-22 Ezekiel 44:15-16; Zech. 14:21).

¹⁵¹ Christ's atonement retroactively cleansed all of the Old Testament saints by means of the New Covenant.

¹⁵² The 'age enduring inheritance' is the Land promise of the Abrahamic Covenant. God promised the Land to Abraham and his 'Seed' (who is Christ – Gal. 3:16) *"unto an age-enduring inheritance"* (Gen. 17:8 LXX*). Cf. Psalm 37; Matt. 5:5; Rom. 4:13-16.

¹⁵³ The slaying of an animal victim was always used to confirm the covenants. (See Gen. 15).

of the covenant God enjoins towards you."¹⁵⁴ 21 And the tabernacle also, and all the instruments of the administration, he likewise sprinkled with blood. 22 And virtually everything is cleansed with blood according to the Law. And without bloodshed, there is no deliverance.

23 It was indeed necessary then for the examples of things in the heavens to be cleansed by these, yet the heavenly dominions¹⁵⁵ with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ did not enter the holy of holies made by [human] hands, [which] represents the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, 25 not so that He may offer Himself repeatedly, like the high priest enters the holy of holies once a year with the blood of others, 26 (since that would have required Him to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world). Yet now, once, at the completion of the ages,¹⁵⁶ He has been manifest for the cancelling of sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

27 And since it is appointed for men to die once, and judgment afterward, 28 likewise Christ also having been offered once, to carry the sins of the many, shall be seen a second [time] by those awaiting Him separated from sin,¹⁵⁷ for the deliverance.¹⁵⁸

Chapter 10

The Law is Unable to Bring Israel to the Inheritance

For the Law, having a similitude of the impending good things, but not the exact representation of the procedure, those same sacrifices which they are offering accordingly each year¹⁵⁹ are not able to complete the worshippers unto the

¹⁵⁴ Exodus 24:8

¹⁵⁵ The "heavenly dominions" that are sprinkled and cleansed by the blood of Christ include believers on earth, as Heb. 10:22 shows. It is not merely the heavenly Temple that is cleansed, but all that is under the domain of heaven, including everything on earth that is in submission to Christ. See Appendix 3.

¹⁵⁶ In chapter 4, Paul spoke of the Kingdom of Christ (Millennium) as the "seventh day" and "Sabbath," implying six previous "days" or millennial ages. In Heb. 1:2 & 11:3 he spoke of Christ's having organized the "ages" (plural). Paul was not indicating that Jesus Christ was crucified at the extreme end of all ages, because that would conflict with his other statements about Christ's second coming being future. Rather, he placed Jesus' crucifixion at a point in time when one millennial age ended and another began. In fact, Jesus' death was precisely in the 4,000th year from creation, making Paul's statement, "*upon the completion of the ages,*" extremely precise, if we understand him to mean precisely at the end of the first four ages.

¹⁵⁷ 2 Cor. 11:2; Col. 1:21-23; Heb. 12:14; Rev. 7:13-17; Rev. 19:7-9

¹⁵⁸ Deliverance here is eschatological, as in Heb. 1:14 & Heb. 2:3-5

¹⁵⁹ The repeated sacrifices of the Mosaic Law referenced in Hebrews refers to Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), where the blood of a bull and a goat are sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant by the high priest, (Lev. 16). This procedure will not be done anymore in Christ's Kingdom, according to Jeremiah

materialization.¹⁶⁰ 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased offering,¹⁶¹ because no one offering divine service, having been once cleansed, would still have conscience of sins? 3 But in them is a reminder of sins, according to each year.¹⁶²

Christ's Body as the Single Effective Offering for Sin

4 For the blood of bulls and goats is unable to remove sins. 5 This is why, coming into the world He says: "*Sacrifices and offerings You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me.* 6 *In burnt offerings and [offerings] for sin, You have no pleasure.* 7 *Then I said, 'Look! I am coming! In the volume of the scroll it has been written about Me, the One to do Your will, O God!'"*¹⁶³

8 At first saying, "*Sacrifices and offerings*" and "*In burnt offerings and [offerings] for sin,*" "*You did not desire*" and "*You have no pleasure,*" (which are offered according to the Law), 9 He then said, "*Look! I am coming, ... the One to do Your will, O God!*"

He [thus] abolishes the first¹⁶⁴ so that He may establish the second,¹⁶⁵ 10 by which "*will*" we are [in a state of] having been set apart through the offering of the "*body*" of Jesus Christ once.

11 And indeed every high priest has repeatedly stood, according to the Day,¹⁶⁶ officiating and offering the same sacrifices many times, which are unable to remove¹⁶⁷ sins. 12 Yet He, offering one sacrifice over sins, seated Himself at the right side of God

3:16-17. However, Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles will be observed yearly, (Ezek. 45:18-25; Zech. 14:16-21)

¹⁶⁰ The clause, "εις το διηνεκες," (unto the materialization) is referencing Psalm 110:1-4 LXX*, "*The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit on my right side until I should place Your enemies under your feet.' The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! ... The Lord swore an oath, and will not reverse it, 'You are Priest unto the age, according to the order of Melchisedek.'*" This Psalm is about the delay in Christ's reign upon the earth with a rod of iron, during which time He waits at the Father's right hand and fulfills the role of Priest according to the order of Melchisedek. The "materialization" is when His priestly role ends and the promises of His Kingly role materialize (Psalm 2:6-9; Psalm 110).

¹⁶¹ Cease offering the bulls and goats on Yom Kippur. The Kingdom prophecies in Ezekiel 40-48 refer to Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles being celebrated in the Kingdom, but Yom Kippur is absent. Jeremiah wrote that this yearly ritual, of sprinkling the blood of a bull and a goat on the Ark of the Covenant, will not be celebrated in the Kingdom (Jer. 3:16-17).

¹⁶² Each year on the Day of Atonement

¹⁶³ Psalm 40:6-8 LXX. The Hebrew text of this Psalm has been corrupted, substituting "*You have opened my ears*" in place of "*but a body You have prepared for Me,*" as in the Septuagint.

¹⁶⁴ The entire Levitical priesthood and worship of God offered according to the Law

¹⁶⁵ The New Covenant (Heb. 8:5-13)

¹⁶⁶ According to the instructions regarding the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)

¹⁶⁷ The Greek word means to remove from all around – from one's presence.

unto the materialization,¹⁶⁸ 13 the remainder being received when His enemies should be placed under His feet.¹⁶⁹ 14 For by one offering He has completed unto the materialization the ones being set apart.

15 For after what was to have been proclaimed, 16 *“This is the covenant I will be covenanting with the house of Israel after these days,”* the Lord says, *“ingraining My laws into their thinking, and I will engrave them on their hearts. ... 17 and their sins and their unlawful deeds I should by no means continue recalling,”*¹⁷⁰ 18 the Holy Spirit is also testifying to us – wherever there is remission from these, there is no longer offering over sin.

We All Have Access to the Holy of Holies through Jesus Christ

19 Therefore brothers, retaining boldness in the blood of Jesus unto the entrance of the holy of holies 20 which He inaugurated for us, a recently slain and living way through the veil, (that is, of His flesh),¹⁷¹ 21 and [having] a High Priest over the house of God, 22 we may approach with a true heart, in complete confidence¹⁷² of faith, our hearts having been sprinkled¹⁷³ from a wicked conscience, and the body having been bathed¹⁷⁴ in pure water.¹⁷⁵

The Real Danger of the Coming Apostasy

23 We should clutch the profession of the hope¹⁷⁶ unrelaxed,¹⁷⁷ for the One who promised¹⁷⁸ is faithful. 24 And we should watch out for one another to stimulate love¹⁷⁹

¹⁶⁸ “εις το διηνεκες” unto the materialization of the remaining promises in Psalm 110 dealing with His reign as King.

¹⁶⁹ The remainder of the promises in Psalm 110:2-7, and in Psalm 2:6-9

¹⁷⁰ Again quoting Jer. 31:31-34 LXX, as in Heb. 8:8-12

¹⁷¹ Paul was apparently drawing a parallel between Christ’s broken body and the veil of the Temple that was torn from top to bottom at His crucifixion, signifying that access to God was through His death.

¹⁷² See vs. 35

¹⁷³ Exodus 24:8; Heb. 9:19

¹⁷⁴ Similar expressions referring to baptism are found in the following passages: 1 Cor. 6:11 LGV *“And such were some of you, but you bathed, but you were set apart, but you were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God.”* Ephesians 5:26 LGV *“that He should set her apart, cleansing her with the bath of water in the proclamation.”* Titus 3:5 LGV *“Not from acts of righteousness we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the bath of rebirth and renovation of the Holy Spirit.”*

¹⁷⁵ Exodus 29:4; Leviticus 8:6

¹⁷⁶ The “profession” is the acknowledgment that Jesus is the “Christ” (the anointed King to sit upon the Throne of David, Ps. 2 & 110). The “hope” is that we will share in His inheritance (Ps. 2:12; Ps. 110:3).

¹⁷⁷ The Greek word for “recline” or “lean” (against something) with the negative particle prefixed.

¹⁷⁸ Psalm 2:6-9; Psalm 110:1

¹⁷⁹ “Love” needs to be encouraged, or it will “grow cold” in the last days (Matt. 24:9-13).

and virtuous deeds, 25 not according to the habit of some – abandoning the assembling together of themselves – but calling [them] back¹⁸⁰ [to the assembly], and more urgently as you observe ‘the Day’¹⁸¹ nearing.

26 For our¹⁸² purposeful continuance in sin, after acquiring the full knowledge¹⁸³ of the truth, leaves no more sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful expectation of judgment and the raging of “fire” that is about to “devour the hostile ones.”¹⁸⁴ 28 Anyone casting off the Law of Moses dies without pity over two or three witnesses. 29 How much worse do you suppose will someone be deemed deserving of punishment who has trampled the Son of God, and has regarded the blood of the covenant in which he was set apart¹⁸⁵ like an unclean thing, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? 30 For we have observed¹⁸⁶ the One who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord,” and again, “the Lord shall judge His people.”¹⁸⁷ 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁰ It is critical for believers in the last days to be part of a local assembly, to encourage and strengthen one another for endurance.

¹⁸¹ This term refers to ‘this Day’ repeatedly quoted from Psalm 95:7-11 in Heb. 3:6-4:10. It is the ‘Day’ when Christians will face a similar test to what Israel faced at Kadesh Barnea, whether they will enter the inheritance (the Seventh Day, Sabbath rest), or fall away.

¹⁸² ἡμῶν (of us) The first person plural pronoun includes the writer as well as the readers, as having acquired “the full knowledge of the truth.” It is therefore clear that Paul was referring to believers who fall away from the truth of the Gospel.

¹⁸³ ἐπιγνώσις “full discernment, acknowledgement” (Strong’s #1922)

¹⁸⁴ Quoting from Isaiah 26:11 LXX, the judgment of fire on the Day of the Lord (See also Mal. 4:1-3, and notes on Heb. 6:4-8)

¹⁸⁵ There can be no question that the person described here was once a Christian, since he was previously set apart (sanctified) by the blood of the New Covenant. See also Heb. 6:4-8.

¹⁸⁶ Paul points them to the consistent pattern in the Old Testament of how God has dealt with His covenant people who turn away from Him.

¹⁸⁷ Deut. 32:35-36, from the Song of Moses, which describes Israel’s forsaking the Lord (their Rock), and His rejecting them.

¹⁸⁸ This entire section is placed within the setting of the Great Tribulation. This can be seen in the quotation of Isaiah 26 in verse 27, and the eschatological framework of the closing verse in the Song of Moses quoted in verse 30, when God will “purge the Land for His people” (Deut. 32:43 LXX). Also, the verses following (36-39) mention the Great Tribulation and the coming of the Antichrist. Therefore, as in chapter 6, it seems likely that the apostasy mentioned here is the same apostasy Jesus warned about in the last days (Matt. 24:9-13), and Paul wrote would accompany the arrival of the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2:3-12). This final apostasy will not permit repentance (Rev. 22:11). Taking the mark of the Beast seals one’s fate, (Rev. 14:9-12). This final apostasy is also mentioned in verse 38, quoting Habakkuk’s prophecy of the final apostasy.

Encouragement to Persevere in the Coming Great Tribulation

32 Now recollect the former days in which, having been illuminated,¹⁸⁹ you endured a great struggle of hardship, 33 indeed being defamed, and a spectacle in persecution, and having become sharers with those who endured this. 34 For you sympathized with my [being in] shackles,¹⁹⁰ and you accepted with joy the confiscation of your possessions, knowing within yourselves to have a better and permanent possession in the heavens.¹⁹¹ 35 Therefore you should not throw away your confidence,¹⁹³ which has an enormous compensation. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that upon doing the will of God, you should obtain the promise.¹⁹⁴ 37 For there remains “*a little season.*”¹⁹⁵ The “*coming one will arrive, and will not stay long.*”¹⁹⁶ 38 Yet, “*the just shall live*¹⁹⁷ *by faith,*”

¹⁸⁹ See Heb. 6:4

¹⁹⁰ This refers to Paul’s imprisonment at Caesarea, (cf. Acts 21:8-15 & Acts 24:23-27)

¹⁹¹ Christ is in heaven, seated at the Father’s side. The inheritance belongs to Him. And He will bring His reward with Him when He returns, administering the inheritance to the faithful. (Isaiah 40:10-11; Isaiah 62:11-12; Rev. 22:12).

¹⁹² The Apostle Paul brings to mind the faithfulness of believers in the early years of Christianity as a model for how believers must persevere in the time of tribulation. Holding earthly things loosely, not being concerned with the loss of material possessions, but rather placing our hope in the impending inheritance that will arrive at Christ’s appearance, is critical to our survival. Jesus warned, “*Remember Lot’s wife,*” (Luke 17:32).

¹⁹³ The “confidence” flows from Christ’s sacrifice, and having our hearts sprinkled with His blood and our bodies washed in baptism, (vss. 19-21).

¹⁹⁴ The “promise” is the permanent land inheritance promised to Abraham and his “Seed” (who is Christ – Gal. 3:16, 18, quoting Gen. 17:8 LXX). Cf. Heb. 6:13-20; Heb. 9:15; Heb. 11:8,13,39-40

¹⁹⁵ The Greek clause, “*μικρον οσον οσον*” (a little season) is a direct quote from Isaiah 26:20 LXX, the only other place it occurs in Scripture. “*Go, my people, enter into thy closets, shut thy door, hide thyself for a little season, until the anger of the Lord have passed away. For, behold, the Lord is bringing wrath from his holy place upon the dwellers on the earth: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall not cover her slain. In that day God shall bring his holy and great and strong sword upon the dragon, even the serpent that flees, upon the dragon, the crooked serpent: he shall destroy the dragon.*” (Isaiah 26:20–27:1 LXX). This prophecy concerns faithful Christians going into places of hiding and divine preservation during the great tribulation. (See also Rev. 12)

¹⁹⁶ This does not refer to the second coming of Christ, but the coming of the Antichrist. It is a quotation of Habakkuk from the Septuagint, which reads as follows: “*And the Lord answered me and said, ‘Write the vision clearly on a tablet, so that the one reading these things may flee. For the vision is for a set time, and it will arise at the consummation, and not in vain. If he should be tardy, wait for him, because the coming one will arrive, and will not stay long.*” (Hab. 2:2-3 LXX*). The “coming one” in this context refers back to Hab. 1:5-11 LXX, which is a prophecy of the Antichrist and the abomination of desolation. Hab. 1:11 NKJV reads as follows: “*Then his mind changes, and he transgresses; He commits offense, Ascribing this power to his god.*” The Hebrew word rendered “transgresses” here can also mean “to take away” (Strong’s #5674), and refers to the daily sacrifice, while the “offense” is the abomination of desolation, (see Daniel 12:11). Habakkuk was instructed to write down the vision for the benefit of believers in the last days, so that they may “flee” at the proper time (see previous note). The “coming one” is also described in Daniel 9:26-27, along with the

and, “If he should ever withdraw, my breath¹⁹⁸ is not approved in him.”¹⁹⁹ 39 Now we are not of the “withdrawal” unto damnation,²⁰⁰ but of “faith” unto acquisition of the breath.²⁰¹

Chapter 11

Documented Examples of People Justified by Faith, Who Will Live

Now faith is the supporting structure²⁰² of anticipation, the persuasion of unseen ventures, 2 for in this the elders were documented. 3 “By faith”²⁰³ we recognize that the ages²⁰⁴ have been organized by the declaration of God, resulting in what is being observed not having transpired from what is apparent.²⁰⁵ 4 “By faith” Abel offered to God more [of a] sacrifice than Cain, through which he was documented to be just, when God testified over his offerings. Through this [sacrifice], having died, he still speaks.

abomination of desolation in the midst of the 70th week. Jesus also placed the “fleeing” of His followers to places of safety at that time, (Matt. 24:15-28; Luke 17:22-37).

¹⁹⁷ “Shall live” is future tense, and most likely refers to the resurrection, (See Isa. 26:19; Ezek. 37:5-6,14; Jn. 11:25; Rom. 6:8; 2 Cor. 13:4; Rev. 20:4).

¹⁹⁸ The Greek word, “*φυξη*,” literally means “breath.” God breathed into the man He created from the dust, and he lived (Gen. 2:7). Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, “*receive the Holy Spirit*,” (Jn. 20:22), the One who will raise our dead bodies (Rom. 8:11). At the resurrection, the “wind” (Spirit) will blow into the corpses of the dead in Christ, and give them “breath,” (Ezek. 37:1-14)

¹⁹⁹ These two quotes follow immediately after the mention of the coming of Antichrist in Hab. 2:3-4 LXX. (See previous note). “*The just shall live by faith*” refers specifically to how believers will survive the great tribulation. And “*If he should ever withdraw, my soul is not pleased with him*,” refers to those who fall away in the apostasy, (Matt. 24:9-14; 2 Thess. 2:3).

²⁰⁰ The great apostasy which accompanies the revelation of Antichrist, (Matthew 24:9-14; 2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:3-4)

²⁰¹ This clause explains what “*the just shall live by faith*” means. The word “just” refers to those who have been “justified.” In Gal. 3:11, Paul again quotes Hab. 2:4 LXX “*the just shall live by faith*” to prove that the Law cannot save. “*But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith’.*” That is, the resurrection (shall live) is not obtained through the Law, but by faith. The “acquisition of the breath” refers to the resurrection of the body described in Ezekiel 37:1-14.

²⁰² “*ὑποστᾶσις*” – what stands beneath.

²⁰³ All of these “*by faith*” statements in this chapter are quoting Habakkuk, as in Heb. 10:38, “*the just shall live by faith.*”

²⁰⁴ See Heb. 1:2. The creation account in Genesis is bound together with God’s ultimate purpose carried out through six ages. The solar system is a clock, counting down to the seventh day Rest, (Heb. 4:1-10).

²⁰⁵ This verse deals with far more than just the creation of the material cosmos, but with God’s invisible hand directing the course of human history throughout the Millennial Week (See Heb. 4:1-11). This interpretation agrees with the “unseen ventures” in verse 1, and sets the tone for what follows, a sequential recounting of God’s interaction in human affairs to fulfill the land promise to Abraham and his Seed.

5 “By faith” Enoch was transported, so as not to see death, and was not found, because God transported him. For before his transporting, he was documented to have fully pleased God.²⁰⁶

6 (And without faith it is impossible to fully please [God], for the one approaching God must believe that He exists, and [that He] is becoming the benefactor of those who search for Him²⁰⁷).

7 “By faith” Noah, being apprised about what was as yet unknown, being apprehensive, constructed an ark for the saving of his household. Through this he condemned the world, and the heir²⁰⁸ became just according to faith.²⁰⁹

8 “By faith” Abraham, having been called, obeyed,²¹⁰ migrating to the place which he was expecting to receive as the inheritance.²¹¹ And he left not knowing where he was going.²¹² 9 “By faith” he lodged in the Land of promise as a foreigner, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the co-heirs of the same promise.²¹³ 10 For he was waiting for the city having foundations,²¹⁴ whose designer and fashioner is God.²¹⁵

²⁰⁶ Genesis 5:22

²⁰⁷ Deut. 4:2-30; 1 Chron. 28:9; Jer. 29:13-14

²⁰⁸ Heir of the post-flood earth

²⁰⁹ Gen. 6:8-9; Romans 4

²¹⁰ Acts 7:2-5

²¹¹ Genesis 13:14-18; 17:8

²¹² Genesis 12:1

²¹³ Genesis 26:1-5; Genesis 28:13-14; Genesis 35:9-12 (See Appendix B)

²¹⁴ Isaiah 54:11-12; Rev. 21:14,19. Restored Jerusalem is the “New Jerusalem” in Revelation. See vs. 17

²¹⁵ Abraham had knowledge of ‘Jerusalem’ from the King of that city, Melchisedek – Christ (Heb. 7:1-3). The “blessing” Melchisedek pronounced over Abraham no doubt spoke of Jerusalem, reconstructed by God. This is the present city of Jerusalem after its restoration indicated in Isaiah 54. Paul directly quoted Isa. 54 in Gal. 4:27, calling this restored Jerusalem, “higher Jerusalem” and “the mother of us all.” In Heb. 12:23-24, Paul called Jerusalem, “Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,” then immediately quoted from Isaiah 66:6-10 LXX*, “Rejoice, O Jerusalem, and all you that love her hold in her a **general assembly**: rejoice greatly with her, all that now mourn over her: that you may suck, and be satisfied with the breast of her consolation; that you may milk out, and delight yourselves with the influx of her glory. For thus says the Lord, Behold, I turn toward them as a river of peace, and as a torrent bringing upon them in a flood the glory of the Gentiles: their children shall be borne upon the shoulders, and comforted on the knees. As if his mother should comfort one, so will I also comfort you; and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” It is clear, therefore, that the city which Abraham waited for was not some celestial city in heaven or on some other planet, but the city of Jerusalem restored, as Isaiah 54 proves by referring to her history of violence and shame (Isaiah 54:4,11). The word “heavenly” is an adjective describing quality, not a location.

11 *“By faith”* Sarah herself received ability to conceive seed. And being beyond the season of childbearing, gave birth, since she deemed faithful the One promising,²¹⁶ 12 though whom also from one (whose [womb] was all but dead) were produced accordingly as the constellations of heaven in multitude, and as if sand beside the seashore, innumerable.²¹⁷

13 These all died according to *“faith,”* not having received the promises, but observing them far ahead,²¹⁸ and being persuaded and embracing [them], also acknowledged that they were aliens and foreigners in the Land.²¹⁹ 14 For those saying such things demonstrate that they are yearning for the [promised] homeland.²²⁰ 15 And indeed, if they had been meditating on [the land] they left behind, they might have had occasion to go back.²²¹ 16 Yet even now they are craving the better [homeland], that is, under heavenly dominion.²²² Because of this, God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God,²²³ for He has prepared a city for them.²²⁴

17 *“By faith”* Abraham, being tested, has offered Isaac. And the one who welcomed the promises was sacrificing the only child, 18 about whom it was said, *“In Isaac your seed*

²¹⁶ Sarah’s inclusion in this list ought to encourage those whose faith may at times falter, since at first she laughed at God’s promise (Gen. 18:1-15). It also shows that gender does not matter, but perseverance in faith.

²¹⁷ Sarah is the mother of all Christians (Rom. 9:6-10; Gal. 3:16,26-29; Gal. 4:31; 1 Pet. 3:6)

²¹⁸ This statement proves that the future inheritance for believers is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Land promise.

²¹⁹ The “promise” and “inheritance” so often repeated in Hebrews is here clearly defined as the Land God promised to Abraham as an age-enduring inheritance, which he did not receive during his lifetime (Acts 7:2-5), but he will inherit it at the resurrection of the just along with all of his “seed,” both Jew and Gentile. (cf. Heb. 6:13-19; Heb. 11:39-40)

²²⁰ This was in contrast to their present state, living all their lives in the very Land God promised to them as an age-enduring inheritance, as though they had no ownership rights. The “fatherland” they yearned for was the very land in which they lived as aliens.

²²¹ The Patriarchs are our example, not to meditate on the material things of this world we are leaving behind, but to be “yearning” for the fatherland God promised to Abraham and His seed. Otherwise, we might turn back as well, and lose our inheritance.

²²² The land God promised the patriarchs, where they lived as foreigners and aliens, was under the dominion of the Canaanites and other nations (Acts 7:2-5). They longed for the fulfillment of the promise, when it would be their permanent inheritance, under the dominion of heaven. See Appendix C

²²³ This is also linked to the Land promise, (Genesis 17:7-8).

²²⁴ Jerusalem (Zion) restored by God, as described in Isaiah 54: *“Afflicted and outcast thou has not been comforted: behold, I will prepare carbuncle for thy stones, and sapphire for thy foundations; and I will make thy buttresses jasper, and thy gates crystal, and thy border precious stones. And I will cause all thy sons to be taught of God, and thy children to be in great peace. And thou shalt be built in righteousness: abstain from injustice, and thou shalt not fear; and trembling shall not come nigh thee. Behold, strangers shall come to thee by me, and shall sojourn with thee, and shall run to thee for refuge.”* (Isa. 54:11-15 LXX). See also Isaiah 66:10-24 & Heb. 11:10

shall be called,"²²⁵ 19 considering that God was also able to raise the dead, from where, in allegory, he did recover him.

20 "*By faith*" Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning the impending [promises].²²⁶

21 "*By faith*" Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and bowed over the end of his cane.²²⁷

22 "*By faith*" Joseph, when dying, remembered [the prophecy] about the exodus of the sons of Israel,²²⁸ and gave instructions concerning his bones.

23 "*By faith*" Moses, being born, was hidden by his fathers for three months, because they saw that the boy was impressive, and they were not afraid of the decree of the king.

24 "*By faith*" Moses, becoming great, disavowed the title, "*son of Pharaoh's daughter,*" 25 preferring to be mistreated with the people of God, rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin. 26 He considered the disparagement of the Christ²²⁹ to be greater riches than the wealth in Egypt, because he was forward looking unto the reward.

27 "*By faith*" he left Egypt, not fearing the anger of the king. For he clutched the unseen [promise] as though seeing it.

28 "*By faith*" he has appointed the Passover and the application of blood [to the doorposts], so that the executing of the firstborn [sons] would not affect them.

29 "*By faith*" they walked through the Red Sea, as though dry land. The Egyptians, attempting the same, were swallowed up.

30 "*By faith*" the walls of Jericho fell, being circumnavigated for seven days.

31 "*By faith*" Rahab the prostitute did not perish with the unconvinced, receiving the spies with peace.

32 And what more should I say? For time will fail me retelling about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephtha, David, and Samuel and the prophets, 33 who "*by faith*" overthrew kingdoms, delivered justice, received promises, sealed the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped gashes of the sword, were made strong from weakness, became invincible in battle, laying waste to the enemies' camps.

35 Women received their dead through resurrection.

²²⁵ Genesis 21:12; Romans 9:7

²²⁶ Genesis 27:29 – Isaac passed the Abrahamic Covenant on to Jacob, including the Land promise.

²²⁷ Genesis 49:1,10,18 – a "last days" prophecy

²²⁸ Genesis 15:13-16 LXX

²²⁹ Moses had knowledge of the Christ, the promised Seed, from oral tradition passed down from Abraham.

Yet others refused relief when beaten so that they might achieve the better resurrection. 36 Still others received a trial of ridicule and whipping, and then shackles and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, dismembered, scrutinized, [and] murdered with the sword. They roamed in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, enduring tribulation, being mistreated. 38 The world has not been worthy of these – living in remote and desolate places, in the mountains, in the caves, and in the crevices of the Land.²³⁰

39 Yet all these, documented [to have been] “*by faith,*” did not attain the promise, 40 God having provided in advance that better thing²³¹ for us, so that they would not be made complete without us.²³²

Chapter 12

Endure the Great Tribulation “By Faith”

Certainly we also, since having so many documented examples surrounding us, tossing aside every excess load and plaguing sin, should run with endurance the grueling course²³³ lying ahead of us,²³⁴ 2 looking unto the originator and finisher of the Faith – Jesus. Who, instead of [choosing] the calm delight lying ahead of Him, [He] endured the cross, ignoring the disgrace, and is now seated on the right of the throne of God. 3 For consider the One having endured such heckling by sinners, so that you may not be exhausted, despairing in your souls.

Suffering is a Necessary Discipline

4 You have not yet withstood unto blood, contending against sin. 5 And you have been oblivious to the summons which addresses you as sons, “*My son, do not loathe of the*

²³⁰ The faithful remnant of Israel has lived just like Abraham, as a foreigner in the Promised Land.

²³¹ Verse 16. The same permanent homeland and city for which Abraham craved, is to be our inheritance also.

²³² See Psalm 37

²³³ The Greek word rendered “grueling course” (αγωνα – ag-O-na) is the source of our English word, “agony.” Paul used it as a metaphor for intense tribulation and persecution in Phil. 1:29-30 & 1 Thess. 2:2. Here it refers to the Great Tribulation, mentioned in Heb. 10:37-39, which will be for “*a little season,*” when “*the coming one [Antichrist] will arrive and not stay long.*”

²³⁴ In Heb. 10:37-39, Paul reminded his readers of the impending “little season” of tribulation prophesied by Isaiah, and the impending arrival of “the coming one” (Antichrist), concluding that “*the just shall live by faith*” during this time of trial. After providing a long list of examples of how the just live by faith, he now turns his attention back to the great tribulation, “*the grueling course lying ahead of us,*” and the endurance necessary to safely navigate it.

discipline of the Lord, nor despair when being rebuked by Him. 6 For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He whips every son whom He receives close."²³⁵ 7 If you endure discipline, God is bringing it to you as 'sons.' For what son does a father not discipline? 8 Yet, if you are apart from discipline, of which all [sons] have become sharers, then you are illegitimate, and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had authoritarian fathers of our flesh, and we respected [them]. Shall we not much rather submit to the Father of [our] spirits and live? 10 For indeed they were disciplining [us] for a few days according to their judgment. But, He [disciplines] for our excellence, to partake of His holiness. 11 Now all discipline, for the present, does not seem to be pleasant, but agonizing. Yet it produces the tranquil fruit of justice in those who have been trained by it.

Desired Reaction to Discipline – Reform

12 Therefore, "*Straighten the hands which have become limp, and the knees which have become weak.*"²³⁶ 13 Make level paths for your feet, so that the faltering may not turn aside, but rather be recovered. 14 Pursue peace with everyone, and purity, without which no one will see the Lord.

Undesired Reaction to Discipline – Anger and Apostasy

15 Watch over [each other]: that no one exhausts the grace of God; that no growing "*root of bitterness*"²³⁷ may encroach, (and many may be contaminated by this); 16 that no one is a fornicator, or a vile person like Esau who gave away his birthright for one meal. 17 For you have seen that afterward, desiring to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no room for repentance, even seeking it with tears!²³⁸

²³⁵ Proverbs 3:11-12

²³⁶ Paul quoted Isaiah as an exhortation to endurance in light of Christ's Kingdom which is about to appear. "*Strengthen the weak hands, And make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are fearful-hearted, 'Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you.' ... And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, And sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*" (Isaiah 35:3-4,10 NKJV)

²³⁷ Here Paul quoted a severe warning about the dire consequences of apostasy. "*So that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, ... and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood; and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart' ... The LORD would not spare him; for then the anger of the LORD and His jealousy would burn against that man, ... and the LORD would blot out his name from under heaven,*" (Deut. 29:18-20 NKJV) This is a severe warning for those who think they can abuse God's grace and still have an inheritance in Christ's Kingdom.

²³⁸ Genesis 27:34-38

Our Hope, the Universal Assembly in Restored Jerusalem

18 For you have not approached toward the mountain²³⁹ that could be touched, which has been burnt²⁴⁰ with fire, toward the blackness and gloominess and storm, 19 and the blaring of a trumpet, and the commanding voice, (which when hearing, they recoiled, [asking] that no more be spoken to them, 20 because they were unable to endure the admonishing). Even if an animal would touch the mountain, it must be stoned or shot with an arrow. 21 And the spectacle was so frightening, that Moses said, “I am terrified and shaking.”²⁴¹

22 But you have approached toward Mount Zion, the city of the living God,²⁴² Jerusalem of heavenly dominion,²⁴³ and tens of thousands of messengers,²⁴⁴ 23 toward the universal assembly²⁴⁵ and congregation²⁴⁶ of the firstborn ones²⁴⁷ having been preregistered in the heavens,²⁴⁸ and toward God the Judge of all, and toward the spirits of the just ones having been completed, 24 and toward Jesus, the administrator of the New Covenant and the blood of sprinkling that says better things than Abel.²⁴⁹

²³⁹ Mount Sinai, Exodus 19

²⁴⁰ The perfect tense implies that the results of this burning of Mt Sinai could still be seen in Paul’s day.

²⁴¹ Paul used the frightening scene on Mount Sinai to represent the whole Mosaic system, which demanded service to God out of fear, the system that had been done away with by the coming of the New Covenant (Heb. 8).

²⁴² Mt Zion, the city of God, is always Jerusalem (Psalm 48)

²⁴³ Isaiah 65:17-25; 66:10-18, restored Jerusalem under heavenly dominion, see Appendix C

²⁴⁴ These messengers are the 144,000 Jews of Rev. 7 whom God will deliver from harm in the Great Tribulation by means of the seal of God in their foreheads. They are described in the same passage from which all these other terms were drawn – Isaiah 65-66. “*And I will leave upon them a seal, and I will send the ones who have been delivered ... unto those who have not heard my name, nor seen my glory; and they will proclaim my glory among the nations.*” (Isaiah 66:19-20 LXX)

²⁴⁵ πανηγυρει – this word only appears twice in the Bible, here and in Isaiah 66:10 LXX. By quoting this unique term, Paul intended to import the whole context into the minds of the reader. “*Rejoice, O Jerusalem! And all who love her, hold in her the universal assembly. Rejoice greatly with her, all who mourn over her: that you may nurse and be satisfied with the breast of her consoling; that you may be weaned, and delight yourselves with the influx of her glory. For the Lord says this: ‘Behold, I turn toward them as a river of peace, and as a torrent bringing upon them in a flood the glory of the Gentiles. Their children shall be carried on their shoulders, and comforted on their knees. Like a mother comforts, so I will also comfort you. And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.’*” (Isaiah 66:10-12 LXX*).

²⁴⁶ See Heb. 2:12

²⁴⁷ The “firstborn ones” (plural) refers to all believers who have been joined to the “Firstborn” one – Jesus, (Heb. 1:6). Paul explained: “*For those He knew formerly, He also predetermined to conform to the likeness His Son, so that He might be the firstborn among many brothers,*” (Rom. 8:29*). These are now the “firstborn ones” who are the “co-heirs” with Christ of the restored creation, (Rom. 8:17-25).

²⁴⁸ In the Book of Life (Luke 10:20)

²⁴⁹ Heb. 11:4

A Final Warning of the Coming Great Tribulation

25 Beware! You should not reject the One speaking. For if they did not escape, refusing the One speaking on land, much more we [will not escape] – those who turn away from the One [who speaks] from the heavens. 26 Whose voice then shook the ground. But now He has promised, saying: “Yet once more I am shaking, not only the ground, but also the heaven.”²⁵⁰ 27 Now the [prophecy], “Yet once more...,” reveals the transforming²⁵¹ of what is being shaken, like the things which have been constructed,²⁵² so that what is unshakable may continue.²⁵³

The Glorious Kingdom Inheritance

28 Through this²⁵⁴ unshakable Kingdom which we are receiving,²⁵⁵ we may possess grace through which we may offer divine service pleasing to God with reverence and fear. 30 For our God is a consuming fire.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁰ It is unfortunate that virtually all commentators completely ignore the contexts of the Old Testament prophecies quoted in Hebrews. A survey of the popular commentaries demonstrates a heavy amillennial and/or dispensational bias imposed on Hebrews, and this passage is no exception. Most refer to this “shaking” as the complete destruction of this material creation, followed by an abode in heaven. Yet, the prophecy quoted here speaks of the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem, which was under construction when this prophecy was given. “For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘And in this place I will give peace,’ says the LORD of hosts.” (Hag 2:6-9 NKJV).

²⁵¹ The transfer of a state or possession (cf. Heb. 7:12 & 11:5)

²⁵² “Things which have been constructed,” is masculine gender, not neuter (things created), and must have reference to a masculine term within the context of Haggai’s prophecy being quoted. It refers to the construction of the second Temple and all its furnishings in Jerusalem by Zerubbabel. This exact terminology was borrowed from Hag. 1:14 LXX. Haggai’s prophecy of the “shaking” and then the restoration of the Temple, implies the fall of the Jewish possession of the holy site, and the Temple’s restoration and possession by Christ and those who belong to Him, after the “shaking.” That this “shaking” is the Great Tribulation and the subsequent return of Christ, and not the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70, is shown from Haggai’s closing words: “I shake the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will overthrow the thrones of kings, and I will destroy the power of the kings of the nations...” (Hag. 2:22-23 LXX).

²⁵³ Much will survive the Great Tribulation. Jerusalem will not be destroyed, but restored. The Temple in Jerusalem will be grander than Solomon’s Temple (Hag. 2:6-9). Jesus alluded to this Temple also, quoting Isaiah 56:7 in Mark 11:17. This is also “My Father’s House” in John 14:1-3, containing the many chambers for the priests in Christ’s Kingdom (cf. 1 Kings 6:5,10; 1 Chron. 9:24-34; 1 Chron. 28:11-13; Ezekiel 40:44-46; Ezekiel 41:5-11; Ezekiel 44:15-19; Ezekiel 45:1-5).

²⁵⁴ The word “this” must refer back to Haggai’s prophecy.

Chapter 13

Final Exhortations for Last Days Pilgrims

Retain brotherly love. 2 Do not forget hospitality, for by this some have lodged messengers²⁵⁷ without realizing it. 3 Remember those who are bound, as being bound with them; of those abused, as also being [abused] in body.

4 Marriage is honorable in every way, and the bed is pure. But God will judge fornicators and adulterers.²⁵⁸

5 Your manner [should] not be fondness for silver,²⁵⁹ [but] being content with what you have. For He has said, *"I will certainly not ignore you or abandon you."*²⁶⁰ 6 Therefore, we have the courage to say, *"The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear! What can anyone do to me?"*²⁶¹

7 Be mindful of your leaders, those who speak the word of God to you, carefully watching the end result of their behavior. Imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and unto the ages. 9 [So] do not be carried aside by various and foreign teachings. For it is best to stabilize the heart with grace, not with kosher foods, by which those observing were not benefitted.

Priestly Service While We Await the Permanent City

10 We have an altar from which those serving the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 For blood of animals is carried by the high priest into the holy of holies for sins, and their bodies are burned outside the camp. 12 Through this [allegory], Jesus also suffered

²⁵⁵ The Greek language frequently uses the present tense for the future when stressing the certainty of an anticipated event, such as the second coming of Christ in Rev. 3:11; Rev. 22:7,12,20. (See Wallace, GGBB, p. 536)

²⁵⁶ Deut. 4:24

²⁵⁷ Heb. 1:14 indicated that angels were commissioned to assist believers on the threshold of the inheritance (Great Tribulation). Lodging angels without realizing will become more common in the last days.

²⁵⁸ Rev. 2:18-29

²⁵⁹ Exodus 16:16-20; James 5:1-6

²⁶⁰ Quoted from Joshua 1:5 LXX. *"I will certainly not ignore you or abandon you."* It is significant that this quotation immediately follows the forbidding of greed, because it was the greed of Achan which caused God's presence to leave Israel. God explained to told Joshua, *"Israel has sinned, ... Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you."* (Josh 7:11-12) It is apparent that the original promise was conditional, (See Deut. 28). We should not expect Paul or his readers to understand it as unconditional here. God will never initiate a separation. However, if we depart from Him, He will depart from us, (1 Chron. 28:9; 2 Chron. 15:2; Ezra 8:22; 2 Tim. 2:12-13).

²⁶¹ Psalm 118:6 LXX

outside the gate, so that He may cleanse the people with His own blood. 13 Now then, we should go out toward Him outside the camp [of Israel], carrying His ridicule. 14 For we do not possess a permanent city now, but we yearn for the impending one.²⁶² 15 Even so, through Him we may continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, which is the fruit of our lips, acknowledging His name. 16 And do not forget benevolence and contributions, for with these sacrifices God is well pleased. 17 Heed your leaders, and submit to them. For they stay alert, watching over your souls, as someone who must give an accounting, so that they may do this with joy, and not with sighing, for that has no advantage for you.

Personal Remarks

18 Pray for us! For we have been confident of a good conscience, being willingly well behaved in everything. 19 Yet, I am asking you to do this more earnestly, so that I may be restored to you quickly.

20 Now may the God of peace, the One who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of the age enduring covenant, 21 may He equip you to do His will in every good work, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory unto the ages of the ages, Amen!

22 I urge you, brothers, tolerate this briefly written message of admonition. 23 You know that brother Timothy has been released, with whom (if he comes soon) I will see you.

24 Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those of Italy greet you. 25 Grace be with all of you,²⁶³ Amen!²⁶⁴

²⁶² Heb. 11:14,16,40 (cf. Isaiah 54 & Gal. 4:21-28; Isaiah 62 & Rev. 21:2,9-10)

²⁶³ This is Paul's signature statement, found in all of his letters, written in his own handwriting (2 Thess. 3:17-18).

²⁶⁴ The Textus Receptus adds: "Written to the Hebrews from Italy through Timothy."

Appendix A:

Early Christian Remarks on the Millennial Week & Millennial Sabbath

Papias, disciple of John (Late 1st Century)

“Taking occasion from Papias of Hierapolis, the illustrious, a disciple of the apostle who leaned on the bosom of Christ, and Clemens, and Pantaenus ... of the Alexandrians, and the wise Ammonius, the ancient and first expositors [of Scripture], who agreed with each other, who understood the work of the six days as referring to Christ and the whole Church.”²⁶⁵

Barnabas (Late 1st Century)

“The Sabbath is mentioned at the beginning of the creation [thus]: ‘And God made in six days the works of His hands, and made an end on the seventh day, and rested on it, and sanctified it.’ Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, ‘He finished in six days.’ This implies that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testified, saying, ‘Behold, to-day will be as a thousand years.’ Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. ‘And He rested on the seventh day.’ This means: when His Son, coming [again], shall destroy the time of the wicked man, and judge the ungodly, and change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day.”²⁶⁶

Justin (Early 2nd Century) [Comments by Anastasius]

“And the fact that it was not said of the seventh day equally with the other days, ‘And there was evening, and there was morning,’ is a distinct indication of the consummation which is to take place in it before it is finished, as the fathers declare, especially St. Clement, and Irenaeus, and Justin the martyr and philosopher.”²⁶⁷

Irenaeus, disciple of Polycarp, disciple of John: (2nd Century)

“But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the

²⁶⁵ Fragments of Papias, IX

²⁶⁶ Epistle of Barnabas, XV

²⁶⁷ Justin, Frag. xv

promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that 'many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob'."²⁶⁸

"[He gives this] as a summing up of the whole of that apostasy which has taken place during six thousand years. "For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the Scripture says: 'Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon the seventh day from all His works.' This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years; and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand year. ... the whole apostasy of six thousand years, and unrighteousness, and wickedness, and false prophecy, and deception; for which things' sake a cataclysm of fire shall also come [upon the earth]."²⁶⁹

"These are [to take place] in the times of the kingdom, that is, upon the seventh day, which has been sanctified, in which God rested from all the works which He created, which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation; but shall have a table at hand prepared for them by God, supplying them with all sorts of dishes."²⁷⁰

Commodianus: (Mid 3rd Century)

"Adam was the first who fell, and that he might shun the precepts of God, Belial was his tempter by the lust of the palm tree. And he conferred on us also what he did, whether of good or of evil, as being the chief of all that was born from him; and thence we die by his means, as he himself, receding from the divine, became an outcast from the Word. We shall be immortal when six thousand years are accomplished."²⁷¹

"This has pleased Christ, that the dead should rise again, yea, with their bodies; and those, too, whom in this world the fire has burned [martyrs], when six thousand years are completed,..."²⁷²

²⁶⁸ Irenaeus, Bk. V, ch. xxx

²⁶⁹ Against Heresies V, ch. xxviii

²⁷⁰ Against Heresies, Bk. V, ch. xxxiii

²⁷¹ Christian Discipline, xxxv

²⁷² Christian Discipline, LXXX

Cyprian: (Mid 3rd Century) [On Antichrist and the last days]

“It is an ancient adversary and an old enemy with whom we wage our battle: six thousand years are now nearly completed since the devil first attacked man. All kinds of temptation, and arts, and snares for his overthrow, he has learned by the very practice of long years. If he finds Christ’s soldier unprepared, if unskilled, if not careful and watching with his whole heart; he circumvents him if ignorant, he deceives him incautious, he cheats him inexperienced. But if a man, keeping the Lord’s precepts, and bravely adhering to Christ, stands against him, he must needs be conquered, because Christ, whom that man confesses, is unconquered.”²⁷³

Methodius: (Late 3rd Century)

“For since in six days God made the heaven and the earth, and finished the whole world, and rested on the seventh day from all His works which He had made, and blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, ... which signifies that, when this world shall be concluded in the seventh thousand years, when God shall have completed the world, He shall rejoice in us.”²⁷⁴

“For I also, taking my journey, and going forth from the Egypt of this life, ... celebrate with Christ the millennium of rest, which is called the seventh day, even the true Sabbath.”²⁷⁵

“‘For a thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday: seeing that is past as a watch in the night.’ For when a thousand years are reckoned as one day in the sight of God, and from the creation of the world to His rest is six days, so also to our time, six days are defined, as those say who are clever arithmeticians. Therefore, they say that an age of six thousand years extends from Adam to our time. For they say that the judgment will come on the seventh day, that is in the seventh thousand years.”²⁷⁶

Lactantius: (AD. Late 3rd Century)

“Therefore let the philosophers, who enumerate thousands of ages from the beginning of the world, know that the six thousandth year is not yet completed, and that when this number is completed the consummation must take place, and the condition of human affairs be remodeled for the better ... Therefore, since all the works of God were

²⁷³ Treatise xi

²⁷⁴ Discourse IX, ch. 1

²⁷⁵ Discourse IX, ch. 5

²⁷⁶ Extracts From The Work on Things Created. IX

completed in six days, the world must continue in its present state through six ages, that is, six thousand years. ... And again, since God, having finished His works, rested the seventh day and blessed it, at the end of the six thousandth year all wickedness must be abolished from the earth, and righteousness reign for a thousand years; and there must be tranquility and rest from the labors which the world now has long endured. ... For six thousand years have not yet been completed, and when this number shall be made up, then at length all evil will be taken away, that justice alone may reign."²⁷⁷

Appendix B: The Early Church & the Abrahamic Covenant

The following quotation from Irenaeus clearly demonstrates that our interpretation of Hebrews is precisely what the earliest Christians, with direct links to the Apostles, believed.

“Thus, then, the promise of God, which He gave to Abraham, remains steadfast. For thus He said: ‘Lift up thine eyes, and look from this place where now thou art, towards the north and south, and east and west. For all the earth which thou seest, I will give to thee and to thy seed, even forever.’ And again He says, ‘Arise, and go through the length and breadth of the land, since I will give it unto thee;’ and [yet] he did not receive an inheritance in it, not even a footstep, but was always a stranger and a pilgrim therein. And upon the death of Sarah his wife, when the Hittites were willing to bestow upon him a place where he might bury her, he declined it as a gift, but bought the burying-place (giving for it four hundred talents of silver) from Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite. Thus did he await patiently the promise of God, and was unwilling to appear to receive from men, what God had promised to give him, when He said again to him as follows: ‘I will give this land to thy seed, from the river of Egypt even unto the great river Euphrates.’ If, then, God promised him the inheritance of the land, yet he did not receive it during all the time of his sojourn there, it must be, that together with his seed, that is, those who fear God and believe in Him, he shall receive it at the

²⁷⁷ The Epitome of the Divine Institutes, Chapter 70

resurrection of the just. For his seed is the Church, which receives the adoption to God through the Lord, as John the Baptist said: 'For God is able from the stones to raise up children to Abraham.' Thus also the apostle says in the Epistle to the Galatians: 'But ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise.' And again, in the same Epistle, he plainly declares that they who have believed in Christ do receive Christ, the promise to Abraham thus saying, 'The promises were spoken to Abraham, and to his seed. Now He does not say, And of seeds, as if [He spake] of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.' And again, confirming his former words, he says, 'Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham. But the Scripture, fore-seeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, declared to Abraham beforehand, That in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham.' Thus, then, they who are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham, and these are the children of Abraham. Now God made promise of the land to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed, that is, those who are justified by faith, do now receive any inheritance in it; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For God is true and faithful; and on this account He said, 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land'."²⁷⁸

Appendix C: The meaning of "Heavenly" in Ephesians and Hebrews

One of Satan's schemes against the pristine Faith has been the corruption of a few Greek adjectives used by Paul. These misunderstood terms have been used to covertly smuggle Gnosticism into Christian theology, and to make it extremely difficult to discover and remove the Gnostic corruptions of pristine Apostolic Christianity that occurred in the 2nd – 4th centuries). By imposing a Gnostic meaning upon these adjectives, and then imposing such definitions upon the texts in which they appear, Gnostic ideas have been placed in the mouth of Paul. The adjectives, "πνευματικός" (rendered "spiritual") and "επουρανιος" (rendered "heavenly places"), are the main culprits. We will deal only with "επουρανιος" here.

²⁷⁸ Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book V, xxxii, 2

Gnosticism was the enemy of early Christianity, and was attacked by Paul, John, and several of the early Christian apologists, such as Irenaeus and Hippolytus. However, many linguists, having accepted theologies which were heavily influenced by Gnosticism centuries earlier, have defined these terms for us. And the incorrect meanings have become the dominant definition in Greek lexicons and commentaries.

The Kittel – Friedrich, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT), which is the primary source for many other linguists and scholars, is a good example. The TDNT claims that “επουρανιος” (sometimes rendered “heavenly”) refers to heaven itself, or the heaven of heavens. Many other lexicons followed its lead. The editors were German Protestant theologians, who were amillennialists. Their definition has not been opposed by dispensational writers either, who also rely on the same “heavenly destiny” concepts imposed on Ephesians and Hebrews by using the TDNT’s wrong definition of this adjective. The KJV illustrates the same error in Protestant thinking, rendering “επουρανιος” incorrectly as “heavenly places.” This erroneous definition has not only given cover to the latent Gnosticism of both amillennialism and dispensationalism, but has also spawned dabbling in the occult by misguided Charismatic Christians, under the guise of “spiritual warfare.”

The adjective, “επορανιος” (ep-oo-ran’-ee-os), is a compound word, with the preposition “επι” prefixed to the adjective, “ουρανιος” (oo-ran’-ee-os), “heavenly.” The preposition “επι” means to superimpose something over something else – literally, “to cover” (of time, place, or order). It could be used of covering a bed with a blanket, covering a particular city with a radio broadcast, or a state’s governmental authority over that state.

The TDNT denies that “επι” carries its usual force in this case. “*επι here does not denote “upon” but “in heaven.”*”²⁷⁹ It claims that “επι” acts as a superlative, as “highest heaven” or “heaven of heavens.” It then concludes, “*But in Ephesians we find not only the OT idea of the throne of God in heaven, but also the gnostically influenced view to which Christ, exalted high above the heavenly world, reigns as its conqueror and ruler.*”²⁸⁰ In short, the editor of the TDNT was claiming that Paul himself, when writing Ephesians, had been influenced by Gnosticism, and thus had partly molded his Pauline theology from Gnostic ideas. The editor’s opinion elevates Gnosticism, the enemy of pristine Apostolic Christianity, to a fountainhead of truth equal with divine revelation. That is, Paul’s theology was a mixture of divine revelation and Gnosticism. It is from this presupposition that the

²⁷⁹ TDNT Vol. V, p. 538

²⁸⁰ TDNT Vol. V, p. 539

editor defined the term “επουρανιος” for Christians, forever coloring their interpretations of Ephesians and Hebrews.

That the TDNT’s editor (as well as other linguists) allowed his own corrupt theology to color his definition is easy to demonstrate. Lexical definitions are developed by observing usage in all of the places where a term occurs, and finding a single basic meaning that explains them all. A good definition will fit well with every usage of the term in Scripture, both in the New Testament and in the Septuagint.

Compound words, such as the one we are dealing with, result from fusing two ideas together. We would expect, then, that the meaning would flow from this fusion of the two ideas, not contradict either or both.

The occurrence of “επουρανιος” in several passages clashes with Kittle’s interpretation, requiring “Gnostic” kinds of mystical (nonsensical) explanations in order to make sense of them. Both amillennialists and dispensationalists do not shy away from such Gnostic, mystical interpretations in these passages. Just read a few of the Reformed or Dispensational commentaries on Ephesians 2:6 for a sampling of such mystical nonsense. This author is not surprised when amillennialists do this, since allegory is their default hermeneutic. But, dispensationalists claim a literal hermeneutic, yet do not in practice follow it in these passages.

If we assume Kittle’s definition, we are left with the following absurdities:

- Matt. 18:35 (Majority Text & TR) violates Sharp’s 2nd rule, making “The Father” synonymous with “the heaven” itself (“the Father heaven”).
- Eph. 2:6 puts Paul and the entire church of Ephesus in heaven at the time he wrote to them, being seated snugly on the throne of God along with Jesus at the Father’s right hand.
- Eph. 6:12 puts all the minions of hell in the highest heaven, where Paul and the Ephesians were allegedly seated beside Christ.
- Heb. 11:15 claims that while Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were living in tents in the Land that God promised to give them as an age-enduring inheritance, they were instead longing for a city and inheritance in heaven. This contradicts both Genesis and the context of Hebrews 11. It makes the “promise” to Abraham (which both Genesis and Hebrews claim was the Promised Land inheritance) into a promise of a city in heaven, no hint of which can be found in the Genesis account.

More recent and reasonable scholarship has shown that *επουρανιος* refers to heaven's influence superimposed upon something else in the context. That is, the preposition "επι" retains its usual meaning – to superimpose, cover, hence abstractly, to completely influence or completely dominate. Prefixed to the adjective "ουρανιος" (heavenly) the sense is "heavenly dominion," "heavenly domination," or the scope of "heavenly influence" exerted upon earthly things. The new HELPS™ lexicon has this meaning: "*epouranios – properly, heavenly, referring to the impact of heaven's influence on the particular situation or person.*"²⁸¹

The heavenly sphere of influence (dominion) is a much better understanding of the fusing of the preposition *επι* with the adjective for "heavenly." Since almost every occurrence of this compound adjective has the definite article and lacks a noun to modify, a noun must be supplied for our translation to be grammatically correct in English. (The KJV wrongly inserts "places" in Ephesians, based on the same thinking as Kittle's TDNT). It is therefore natural and proper to take the sense of the noun we are supplying from the preposition that was prefixed to the adjective. Hence, "επι" (literally, to superimpose) refers to the heavenly dominion or sphere of influence. Literally, it would be "heavenly covering," but abstractly, "heavenly dominion." This meaning also makes good sense in every place where this word appears in the Bible. Here are some examples:

1. Daniel's declaration to Nebuchadnezzar in the Septuagint about God's judgment on him reads as follows: "...*from which you will know the power of heavenly [dominion],*" (Dan. 4:24 LXX). The primary point concerns heaven's dominion over Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom, not Nebuchadnezzar discovering the location of "heaven."

2. In 1 Corinthians 15:40, Paul was not saying that resurrected bodies are in heaven or created in heaven, while earthly bodies are on earth or created on earth. Rather, he was saying that the natural body is under the earthly dominion (cursed, destined for death), but the resurrected body is under heavenly dominion (from whence its incorruptible nature flows). He clearly said, in vs. 42-43, that the very same corpse that is planted (in the grave) in dishonor is to be raised in honor! Therefore, the body cannot be in two different locations at the same time, nor can Paul be contradicting himself. Rather, our bodies are first under the dominion of the cursed earth (when buried) but under the dominion of heaven when they are raised.

3. Ephesians 1:20 speaks of Christ's authority, rather than His location: "...*raising Him from the dead, and seating Him at His own right hand, in the heavenly [dominions].*" That

²⁸¹ HELPS™ Word Studies, © 1987, 2011 by Helps Ministries, Inc. <http://thediscoverybible.com>

“dominion” rather than location is the thought Paul had in mind is proven by the words which immediately follow: *“far above all principality and power and might and **dominion**, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all,”* (Eph. 1:21-23 NKJV). Clearly, Christ’s location being vertically “high above” the location of others, including the Ephesian church, is not the point! Rather, within the “heavenly dominions” (that is the things that are NOW under submission to heaven, such as the church), Christ has been placed as an authority, exerting His authority within these realms of influence and dominion (as opposed to His unlimited dominion in His coming Kingdom – Psalm 2).

4. Ephesians 2:6 says that Christ has *“raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly [dominions] in Christ Jesus.”* Again, the point is not location, but heavenly authority within the realms that are subject to heaven. Christ’s being “seated” at the Father’s right hand is drawn from Psalm 110:1, which uses the “footstool” metaphor for total domination. Hence, being “seated” is a metaphor for having authority. The scope of this authority is limited by the clause, *“in the heavenly dominions.”* That is, our authority as Christians is active within those limited realms where Christ’s dominion extends, such as within the local church, or the Christian home. Taking this term to mean location here is an absurdity, and exegetically indefensible. And this is what has led to some absurd practices by Charismatics, seeking to take “dominion” over cities or regions which are not yet submitted to Christ’s authority.

5. Ephesians 6:12 makes much more sense with our interpretation, rather than supposing that all the minions of hell run free in God’s presence in heaven. *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly [dominions].”* The last clause, *“in the heavenly dominions”* limits the sphere of our practicing spiritual warfare to those earthly realms that are already under the dominion of Christ, such as the church, or the Christian home. If Charismatics simply understood that our “fight” with spiritual forces does not extend to those realms which have not yet been placed under Christ’s footstool, (such as politics, government, society, or territory), much of the buffoonery and dabbling in Christian witchcraft could be avoided!

6. Finally, Hebrews 11:16 makes much more sense with our interpretation. Abraham was not yearning to go live in some city in the highest heaven, something never alluded to in the entire Old Testament. He was yearning for the fulfillment of God’s promise to him, plainly stated in Genesis, to give him and his Seed the land in which he lived as a pilgrim and alien, for a permanent inheritance. *“And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art*

northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.” (Gen 13:14-18 KJV).

Satan has been busy inserting “a little leaven” into the translations of Scripture by altering the definitions of biblical terms. This has been done by the editors of lexicons coloring the definitions of terms by their own incorrect theological bias.

Appendix D: The Meaning of the Greek Word, μηποτε

The Greek word “μηποτε” is often rendered “lest at any time” in many translations and lexicons. It appears 25 times in the Greek New Testament. It is a compound of the particle of qualified negation “μη” and the word “ποτε” (at some time), literally, “if not at some time.” The particle “μη” presents the possibility of negation under some condition implied by the context. We might get the general idea by rendering it “perhaps not” or “if not.” The old English word “lest” captures the idea. The critical question for our purposes concerns the word “ποτε,” and whether “μηποτε” refers to a completely unqualified time, or a specific time that is limited by the context.

Most translators have far too broad an understanding of this term, as referring to unqualified or unlimited time. Hence, they render it, “lest at *any* time,” as opposed to our much more limited rendering, “if at *that* time.” That the common meaning is too broad can be shown by usage. In all 25 places where this Greek word appears in the New Testament the time element is always limited to a very specific time (event or period of time) defined by the context. Hence, our rendering, “at *that* time” is much more precise. Below are a few examples.

Matt 13:27-30

*27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ 28 He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ 29 But he said, ‘No, **lest while** [μηποτε] you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.*

Clearly, the time referred to here is not completely unqualified, “lest at *any* time.” Rather, the danger (lest ... you also uproot the wheat) is clearly limited to the brief time “while you gather up the tares.” Therefore, μηποτε is limited to a very specific time defined by the context. We could literally render it as follows: “No, ***lest at the time*** you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat.”

Here is another example:

Acts 5:33-39

*33 When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. 34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. 35 And he said to them: “Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. 37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. 38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it — **lest** [μηποτε] you even be found to fight against God.”*

Again, μηποτε does not refer to unqualified or unlimited time, but to a very specific time defined by the context. Gamaliel’s warning was not that the council might “at *any* time” fight against God. It was that they would be found to have fought against God when they carried out their plot to kill the Apostles. We could properly render μηποτε here as “lest at *that* time” (when you carry out your plot to kill the Apostles) you even be found to fight against God.

Another example is as follows:

2 Tim 2:24-25

*24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, **if** God **perhaps** [μηποτε] will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.*

Here μηποτε refers to the time when Timothy would humbly correct the erring brothers, that God may grant them repentance from their error. The possible granting of repentance is clearly being linked in time to the humble correction being offered.

H E B R E W S

A similar situation occurs in all 25 places where this word is used in the New Testament. Therefore, rather than defining this term as being qualified negation of unqualified time (if at *any* time) it should be defined as qualified negation of qualified time (if at *that* time), the specific time being stated or implied in the context.

In Hebrews 2:1, "*Because of this, it is especially crucial for us to heed what we have heard, so **at that time** we might not fall away,*" the clause "*at that time*" refers back to the previous verse, "*on the threshold of inheriting the deliverance.*" Likewise, Hebrews 3:12, "*Beware brothers, **if at that time** a wicked heart of unbelief shall be found in any of you, in apostatizing from the living God,*" refers back to "this day" at the "consummation" in the previous verses: "*unto **the consummation**, according to which the Holy Spirit says: "**This day**, if you hear His voice, you should not harden your hearts.*" Hebrews 4:1 refers back to this same prophesied time of the consummation with the following words, "*we should fear then, **if at that time** any of you might appear to have fallen short of the remaining promise to enter into His Rest.*" In these verses, the apostasy being warned against is the final apostasy of the last days, as described by Jesus in Matt. 24:9-13, and by Paul in 2 Thess. 2:1-3.