

HEBREWS

Conversational Version

Speaking Through the Son

1:¹Long ago God spoke to our ancestors by prophets in many parts and different ways.
2In these last days he has spoken to us in a Son. He made the universe through him and made him heir of everything. **3**He's the radiance of God's glory, the exact image of his nature, and upholds everything by his powerful word. When he'd made purification for sins, he sat down on the right side of the Majesty on high, **4**and became as much better than angels as he inherited a better name than they have.

Heb 1:1-4

The Son's Superiority over Angels

5To what angel did God ever say,

"You're my Son; I've begotten you today" [Ps 2:7]

or,

"I'll be his Father; he'll be my son" [2 Sam 7:14; 1 Ch 17:13]?

6When he brings the Firstborn into the world, he says,

"All God's angels are to worship him" [Deut 32:43 LXX].

7He says in regard to angels,

"Who makes his angels spirits

and his ministers flames of fire" [Ps 104:4].

Heb 1:5-7

8But he says to the Son,

"Your throne, God, is forevermore;

the scepter of your kingdom is a righteous scepter.

9You've loved goodness and hated lawlessness,

so God has anointed you

with greater gladness than your companions" [Ps 45:6-7];

10and,

"In the beginning, LORD, you founded the earth

and made the skies.

11They'll perish, but you'll remain;

they'll get old like a robe;

12you'll fold them up like a cloak

and change them like a robe.

But you're the same;

your years won't end" [Ps 102:25-27].

13What angel did he ever tell,

"Sit on my right hand

till I make your enemies your footstool” [Ps 110:1]?

¹⁴Aren’t they ministering spirits that he sends to help the heirs of salvation?

Heb 1:8-14

Heeding the New Revelation

2¹So we need to pay close attention to what we’ve heard so we never drift away from it.

2What God said through angels stood firm, and every sin received the punishment it deserved.

3So how will we get off if we neglect such a great salvation? After the Lord spoke it, the ones that heard it confirmed it to us. **4**God testified alongside them with signs, wonders, and various miracles and gifts that the Holy Spirit dispensed as he saw fit.

Heb 2:1-4

Mankind as Caretaker of Creation

5It wasn’t to angels that God subjected the future world we’re talking about. **6**In a certain place one has testified,

“What are people that you remember them or visit them?”

“You made them lower than angels for a little while,

crowned them with glory and honor,

“and put everything under their authority” [Ps 8:5-7 LXX].

“Putting everything under their authority” means God didn’t leave anything that wasn’t under them, but we don’t see that yet. **9**We do see Jesus, however, “made lower than angels for a little while,” so by God’s grace he could taste death for everyone. Now we see him “crowned with glory and honor” because he suffered death.

Heb 2:5-9

The Son’s Incarnation

10Everything is through him and for him. It was appropriate, then, in bringing many children to glory, that he make perfect the Author of their salvation with suffering. **11**Both the sanctifier and the sanctified have the same *nature*. That means he’s not ashamed to call them “siblings.”

12*“I’ll present you to my siblings*

and sing your praises in the congregation” [Ps 22:22].

13Again,

“I’ll trust him” [Is 8:17 LXX],

“... I and the children God gave me” [Is 8:18].

Heb 2:10-13

14Since “the children” exist in flesh and blood, he took on flesh and blood so that by dying he could take the power of death away from the one that has it—the devil. **15***That way* he could free people that the fear of death had enslaved as long as they were alive. **16**It’s clear he’s not *here* to help angels, but *to help* Abraham’s descendants. **17**So he needed to be like people in every respect so he could become a merciful, faithful high priest in things that have to do with God and

could atone for people's sins. ¹⁸Since he faced temptation in what he suffered, he can help those who face temptation.

Heb 2:14-18

The Son's Superiority over Moses

3:1 So, holy "children" that take part in the heavenly calling, pay close attention to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of what we profess. ²He was faithful to the One that appointed him just like Moses *was* in his house. ³*But Jesus* has been considered worthy of more honor than Moses—as much more as a house builder has *more honor* than the house. ⁴Somebody builds every house; God has built everything. ⁵Moses was faithful as a servant in his house to testify about things that would be spoken later; ⁶Christ^{Messiah} *was faithful* as a Son over his house. We are that house if we stay confident and take pride in our hope.

Heb 3:1-6

Being Sensitive to Righteousness

⁷So, like the Holy Spirit says,

"Today, if you hear him speaking to you,

8don't harden your hearts

like they did when they rebelled

and tested me in the desert,

9where your ancestors tested me at Meribah,

and saw what I did ¹⁰for 40 years.

That generation wasn't pleasing to me,

and I said,

'They always stray in their hearts;

they don't know my ways.'

11As I swore in my anger,

'They're not going to go into my rest!'" [Ps 95:7-11]

Heb 3:7-11

¹²Be careful so there won't be an evil, disbelieving "heart" in any of you, and you fall away from the living God. ¹³Encourage one another every day as long as it's "Today" so sin's deception doesn't "harden" you. ¹⁴You've become partakers of Christ if you hold firm to the end the assurance you had at the first—¹⁵while he says,

"Today, if you hear him speaking to you,

don't harden your hearts

like they did when they rebelled against me" [Ps 95:7-8].

¹⁶Who "rebelled" against him when they "heard"? Wasn't it everybody that Moses brought out of Egypt? ¹⁷Who was he "angry" with for "40 years"? Wasn't it the ones who sinned and their

corpses fell in the “*desert*”? ¹⁸Who’d he “swear” wouldn’t “go into his rest” but the ones that disbelieved? ¹⁹We can see that they couldn’t go in because they disbelieved. Heb 3:12-19

The Promise of Rest

⁴:¹Let’s be alert so none of us even looks like we’re coming short of a promise he left behind about “*going into his rest.*” ²We’ve had good news presented to us just like they did. But what they heard didn’t do them any good because they didn’t combine hearing with believing. ³We who believe do go into rest like he said,

“*As I swore in my anger,*

‘*They are not going into my rest!*’” [Ps 95:11]

He finished his work when he founded the world. ⁴In one text it says of the seventh day,

“*On the seventh day God rested from his work*” [Gen 2:2];

⁵and in this place,

“*They’re not going to go into my rest!*” [Ps 95:11] Heb 4:1-5

⁶Since there’s still a rest for some to enter, and *since* the ones that received good news before didn’t enter *it* because they disbelieved, ⁷he established another day, “*Today.*” He said at David’s time much later like he’d said before,

“*Today, if you hear him speaking* to you,

don’t harden your hearts” [Ps 95:7-8].

⁸If Joshua had given them rest, *God* wouldn’t be talking after that about another day. ⁹So there’s still a rest for God’s people. ¹⁰Whoever rests from his work has rested like God did. ¹¹Let’s be diligent then about going into that rest so none of us fall after the same kind of disobedience.

God’s Living Word

¹²God’s word is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword. It cuts through to the separation of soul and spirit, and bones and marrow; it judges a person’s inner thoughts and intentions. ¹³Nothing created is hidden from him; everything is naked and laid bare to the eyes of one we’re dealing with. Heb 4:6-13

Our Great High Priest

¹⁴We have a great high priest that’s passed through the sky, Jesus the Son of God. So let’s hold onto what we’re committed to. ¹⁵He’s a high priest that can sympathize with our weaknesses because he has faced every temptation we have, but without sinning. ¹⁶So let’s boldly draw near to the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace when we need it.

Heb 4:14-16

5:1 Every high priest is appointed for people from among people to deal with things that relate to God, and to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. **2** He's somebody that can deal gently with the ignorant and erring because he has weaknesses too. **3** On that account he's obligated to offer *sacrifices* for his own sins as well as the people's. **4** And, nobody takes the honor to himself; he's called by God like Aaron was.

Heb 5:1-4

5 In the same way, Christ didn't exalt himself to become a high priest, but the One that said,

"You're my Son;

I've begotten you today" [Ps 2:7],

6 says in another place,

"You're a priest forever

after the order of Melchizedek" [Ps 110:4].

7 When he was in the flesh, he offered up prayers and pleas, with tears and audible crying to the One that could save him from death, and God heard him because of his godly fear. **8** As a Son, he learned obedience by what he suffered. **9** Once *he became* perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for everyone that obeys him. **10** God designated him "*a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.*"

Heb 5:5-10

Priest After the Order of Melchizedek

11 We have a lot to say about Melchizedek that's difficult to explain because you're hard of hearing. **12** By now, you should be teachers, but you still need somebody to teach you the basics of God's message. You need milk instead of solid food. **13** People that keep drinking milk don't get accustomed to the message about goodness; they're infants. **14** Solid food is for grownups that have trained their faculties to discriminate between good and bad.

Heb 5:11-14

Getting Beyond the Basics

6:1 So let's get past the basics about Christ and press on to maturity. Let's not lay again a foundation about repentance from dead works, and *about* faith toward God, **2** teaching about baptizings, laying on hands, resurrection, eternal judgment. **3** We'll get past the basics, God willing. **4** You can't renew people to repentance that have once seen the light, tasted the heavenly gift, partaken of the Holy Spirit, **5** tasted God's good word and the powers of the age to come—**6** and then fall away. They crucify to themselves God's Son all over again and hold him up to public disgrace. **7** God blesses the ground that soaks up frequent rains and produces crops farmers can use. **8** If it grows thorns and briars, it's worthless and close to being accursed. It ends up getting burned off.

9 But we're convinced that in matters of salvation you're better than that, despite what we're saying. **10** God is just and remembers your work and love in his name when you ministered

to the saints—and still do. ¹¹We want each of you to keep showing that same diligence, which will endure in the end to a firm hope. ¹²That way you won't get sluggish. By faith and endurance, you'll be imitating people that obtain promises.

Heb 6:1-12

God's Oath to Abraham

¹³When God made his promise to Abraham, he didn't have anything greater to swear by; so "*he swore by himself* [Gen 22:16], ¹⁴*I'll certainly bless you and multiply you*" [Gen 22:17]. ¹⁵After Abraham had waited a long time, he did receive the promise. ¹⁶People swear by something greater and settle every dispute with an oath to confirm it. ¹⁷That's what God did when he wanted to show more certainly to the heirs of the promise how unchangeable his plan was: he guaranteed *it* with an oath. ¹⁸By two unchangeable things, then (God can't lie), we can have great confidence who have fled for refuge to take hold of the hope we headed for. ¹⁹That hope anchors our soul; it's a hope that's certain and reliable. It leads inside the curtain, ²⁰where Jesus went as a forerunner for us when he became "*a high priest after the order of Melchizedek*."

Heb 6:13-20

Christ's Melchizedekian Priesthood

⁷¹That *Melchizedek—king of Salem, priest of God Most High—met Abraham when he came back from killing the kings and blessed him.* ²*Abraham* separated off to him *a tenth of everything* [Gen 14:17-20]. First, by translation, "*Melchizedek*" was "*king of righteousness*," and then "*king of Salem*," meaning "*king of peace*." ³Without *record* of father, mother, genealogy, birth, or death—like God's Son—he remains a priest for all time.

Heb 7:1-3

⁴Look how great the man was that Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the spoils of war. ⁵In the Law the Levites that receive the priesthood have a commandment to receive a tenth from the people, that is, from their kin though they've descended from Abraham. ⁶But the one whose genealogy *wasn't* from them received a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one that had the promises. ⁷Without argument, the greater blesses the lesser. ⁸Here men that die receive a tenth, but there *one received it who is* pictured as alive. ⁹So to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who receives a tenth, paid a tenth. ¹⁰He was in his ancestor's loins when Melchizedek met him. ¹¹If perfection could come through the Levitical priesthood (by which the people received the Law), why *would there be* another priest "*after the order of Melchizedek*"? ¹²Changing the priesthood requires changing the Law, ¹³because the One these things speak about belonged to different tribe; nobody from that tribe ever served at the altar. ¹⁴It's clear that our Lord descended from Judah; Moses never said anything about priests from that tribe. ¹⁵It's even clearer if another priest arises like Melchizedek, ¹⁶who has become *a priest*, not by law based on physical requirement, but by power based on indestructible life. ¹⁷Scripture testifies,

***“You’re a priest forever
after the order of Melchizedek” [Ps 110:4].***

18*That statement annuls the preceding commandment because it was weak and unprofitable—*

19*the Law didn’t make anything perfect—and brings in a better hope by which we can draw near to God.*

Heb 7:4-19

God’s Oath About Christ’s Priesthood

20-21*Furthermore, Christ’s priesthood *came in* with an oath. The Levites became priests without an oath, but he became a priest with an oath from the One that said to him,*

***“The LORD swore
and won’t change his mind,
‘You’re a priest forever’” [Ps 110:4].***

22*By that much Jesus also guaranteed a better covenant. **23**There were lots of former *priests* because death prevented them from continuing. **24**He holds his priesthood without successors because he remains forever. **25**So he can save “forever” the ones that draw near to God through him. He’s always alive to intercede for them.*

Heb 7:20-25

26*That’s the kind of high priest we need—holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners, higher than the sky. **27**Unlike those high priests, he didn’t need to make an offering every day first for his own sins and then for the people’s. He made an offering once and for all when he offered himself. **28**The Law appoints men high priests that have weakness, but the oath that came after the Law appointed forever a perfected Son.*

Heb 7:26-28

Christ’s Priesthood in Heaven

8:1*Here’s the point: we have the kind of high priest that sat down on the right hand of the majestic throne in heaven. **2**He ministers in the sanctuary, the real tabernacle the LORD pitched, not man. **3**Every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; so he needed to offer something too. **4**On earth, he wouldn’t be a priest at all since there are those who offer gifts according to the Law and serve a copy and shadow of heavenly things. **5**God warned Moses when he was getting ready to put up the tabernacle, **“Be sure you make everything like the design I showed you on the mountain”** [Ex 25:40]. **6**Christ received a ministry that’s as much better as the covenant he’s mediating is better, because God enacted it on better promises.*

Heb 8:1-6

The Promise of a New Covenant

7*If the first covenant hadn’t had faults, God wouldn’t have planned to put a second covenant in place. He’s finding fault with *the first* **8**when he says,*

***“The time’s coming
when I’ll make a new covenant
with Israel and Judah.***

⁹*It won't be like the covenant I made with their ancestors
when I brought them out of Egypt.*

*They didn't continue on in my covenant,
and I wasn't pleased with them.*

¹⁰*This is the kind of covenant I'll make with Israel later:*

*I'll put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.*

*I'll be their God,
and they'll be my people.*

¹¹*Nobody will be teaching his fellow citizen and friend,
'Know the LORD.'*

They'll all know me from smallest to greatest,

¹²*because I'll have mercy on their sins;*

I won't remember them anymore" [Jer 31:31-34].

¹³When he said "new," he made the first old. What's getting old is about to pass away. **Heb 8:7-13**

Service in the First Sanctuary

^{9:1}Now the first covenant had an earthly sanctuary and regulations for service. ²The first tabernacle, "*the Holy Place*," had a lampstand and a table with sacred bread on it. ³Behind the second curtain stood another tabernacle, "*the Holy of Holies*." ⁴It had a gold altar of incense and the Ark of the Covenant that was gold-plated all over. Inside the ark there was a gold pot with manna in it along with Aaron's rod that budded and the tablets that contained the covenant. ⁵Above the ark the glorious cherubs hovered over the mercy seat. We can't speak in detail about these now. **Heb 9:1-5**

⁶With things arranged that way, the priests regularly go into the first tabernacle to perform rites of divine service. ⁷But the high priest goes into the second tabernacle by himself once a year and takes blood to offer for himself and the sins people committed in ignorance. ⁸The Holy Spirit signified by that design that the way into the Holy of Holies wasn't obvious while the original tabernacle was standing. ⁹The tabernacle figuratively pictured its own time when gifts and sacrifices couldn't clear a worshiper's conscience. ¹⁰Those gifts and sacrifices only dealt with foods, drinks, various washings—physical regulations in place till the new order would come in. **Heb 9:6-10**

Christ as Priest of What's Real

¹¹Christ appeared as a high priest of good things that are here now. He went in by the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹²He didn't go into the Holy of Holies on the basis of the blood of goats and calves, but on the basis of his own blood once and for all to obtain eternal salvation. ¹³If the blood of bulls and goats and the

ashes of a heifer sprinkling the defiled, sanctifies to cleanse the flesh, ¹⁴how much more will the blood of Christ—who offered himself without blemish to God through the eternal Spirit—cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Heb 9:11-14

Christ's Mediating the New Covenant

¹⁵So he's the mediator of a new covenant. His death redeemed sins that people committed under the first covenant so the heirs of the eternal covenant could receive the promise. ¹⁶A testamentary covenant involves the death of the one that made it. ¹⁷It's never in force while he's alive. ¹⁸The first covenant was instituted with blood. ¹⁹When Moses had spoken every commandment to the people, he took the blood of goats and young bulls—with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop—and sprinkled the scroll itself and the people, ²⁰saying, "*This is the blood of the covenant God commanded you*" [Ex. 24:8]. ²¹He also sprinkled blood on the tabernacle and the vessels used in it. ²²*I can almost say*, according to the Law, blood cleanses everything; there's no forgiveness without shedding blood.

Heb 9:15-22

²³These things cleansed the copies of heavenly things, but something better needed to cleanse the heavenly things themselves. ²⁴Christ didn't go into a handmade copy of the real sanctuary; he went into heaven itself to appear for us now in God's presence. ²⁵And, he didn't need to offer himself many times like the high priest does in the Holy Place every year with blood that's not his own. ²⁶Otherwise, Christ would've had to suffer many times since the world began. But now, once and for all at the end of the ages, he has appeared to get rid of sin by sacrificing himself. ²⁷It's appointed to men to die once and after that *to face judgment*. ²⁸In the same way, Christ offered himself once to bear the sins of many. He'll appear a second time—apart from sin—to the ones who wait expectantly for him to save us.

Heb 9:23-28

Replacing Shadows with Realities

^{10:1}The Law has a shadow of good things to come, not the very things themselves; so, by the same sacrifices every year, it can never make the ones perfect that are drawing near. ²Otherwise, wouldn't those sacrifices have ceased to be offered? The worshipers wouldn't feel like sinners anymore because they would've been cleansed once and for all. ³But every year the sacrifices remind people that they're still sinners. ⁴The blood of bulls and goats can't take away sins.

Heb 10:1-4

⁵So when he comes into the world, he says,

*"You didn't want sacrifice and offering;
you prepared a body for me."*

⁶*You didn't delight in whole burnt offerings
and sacrifices for sins.*

⁷*Then I said,*

'God, I've come to do your will;

it's been written about me in the scroll” [Ps 40:6-8, cp. LXX].

⁸When he says above, “**You didn't want or delight in sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings** and **sacrifices for sins**,” which are offered according to the Law, ⁹then he says, “**I've come to do your will.**” He takes away the first to establish the second. ¹⁰By that will, the one-time offering of Christ's “body” has made us holy. Heb 10:5-10

¹¹Every day, priests stand ministering and offering the same sacrifices over and over that can never take away sins. ¹²But he offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down on the right hand of God, ¹³and is waiting till his enemies become his “footstool.” ¹⁴By one offering, he permanently perfected the ones he sanctified.

¹⁵The Holy Spirit also testifies. After he said,

**“This is the covenant I'll make with them
after those days:
I'll put my laws in their hearts
and write them on their minds”** [Jer 31:33];

¹⁷then he says,

**“I won't remember their sins
and lawless deeds anymore”** [Jer 31:34].

¹⁸Where there's forgiveness for sins, there's no more sacrificing for them. Heb 10:11-18

Obtaining a Clear Conscience

¹⁹So we have confidence about entering the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus. ²⁰We go in by the new and living way that he has opened for us through the curtain, that is, his flesh. ²¹We have a great priest over God's house; ²²so let's draw near with a true heart in full assurance that comes from trust. *Let's draw near* with hearts sprinkled from a guilty conscience and bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let's hold onto *our* hope confidently without wavering; we can trust the One that promised. ²⁴Let's think carefully how we can encourage one another to love and good works. ²⁵Let's not quit going to church like some do; let's encourage one another, especially as we see “the time” coming close. ²⁶If we keep on sinning deliberately after we know the truth, there's no more sacrifice *to be offered*. ²⁷There's a fearful dread of judgment and the furious fire that will consume *God's opponents*. ²⁸Anybody that disregards the Law of Moses, dies without mercy at the testimony from two or three witnesses. ²⁹How much more severe punishment do you suppose people deserve who trample the Son of God under their feet, regard as unclean the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and insult the Spirit of grace? ³⁰We know who said,

**“Revenge is my business;
I'll take care of it”** [Deut. 32:35];

and,

“The LORD will judge his people” [Deut 32:36; Ps 135:14].

31It’s a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Heb 10:19-31

Confidence in Hardships

32Remember the earlier days when you first saw the light and suffered such hardships.

33You were publicly shamed with insults and difficulties and shared with other people that were abused that way. **34**You sympathized with people in prison and accepted it joyfully when authorities confiscated your possessions, because you knew you had a better possession that lasts. **35**So don’t lose confidence; an important payment is coming. **36**You need to hang in there so, once you’ve done God’s will, you’ll obtain the promise,

37*“In a little while*

the One that’s coming will come,

38*and my righteous one will have life by faith.*

If he gives up,

I won’t be pleased with him” [Hab 2:3-4].

39We aren’t among those who “give up” and get destroyed; we have “faith” to the preserving of our “life.”

Heb 10:32-39

Roll Call of the Faithful

11:1Faith is confidence about what *we* hope for, certainty about what *we* can’t see. **2**By faith people of old received testimony.

3By faith we understand that God spoke the universe into existence, so what we see didn’t come from something previous.

4By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. Through it he received testimony that he was good. (God testified in response to his gifts.) Through it he’s still speaking though he’s dead.

Heb 11:1-4

5By faith Enoch didn’t die. **“God took him up, and he simply wasn’t there”** [Gen 5:24]. Before God took him up, *the ancient writings* say **“he pleased God”** [Gen 5:22-24; Sir 44:16; Enoch 70:1-4; Wis 4:10]. **6**Without faith a person can’t please God. Whoever comes to him has to believe he exists and rewards people who look for him.

7By faith Noah built an ark that saved his family. God had warned him about things he couldn’t see yet, and he paid attention to the warning. By faith he condemned *his* world and inherited the results of the goodness that comes from faith.

Heb 11:5-7

8By faith Abraham obeyed when God called him, and went out to a place he’d inherit later. He went without knowing where he was going. **9**By faith he lived as a foreigner in a land God had promised him. He lived there as a nomad in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs of the same promise. **10**He did it because he was looking for a city that had foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

¹¹By faith Sarah, too, though she couldn't have children, God enabled to conceive even after child-bearing years. She did so because she had faith in the One that promised. ¹²So, from one *man* that was as good as dead, there descended as many as the stars in the sky and the grains of sand on the seashore.

Heb 11:8-12

¹³These all died in faith without receiving the promises. They saw them a long way off and greeted them from afar. They regarded themselves as foreigners and temporary residents on earth. ¹⁴People that say things like that show they're looking for a homeland. ¹⁵If they were looking to where they'd come from, they could've gone back. ¹⁶But they longed for a better, heavenly homeland. So God's not ashamed of being their God, as he showed by preparing a city for them.

Heb 11:13-16

¹⁷By faith Abraham, when God put him to the test, *went ahead and offered up Isaac*. *The man* that was so happy to receive the promises offered up the only *son* he had. ¹⁸He was the one God told, "**Your lineage will descend through Isaac**" [Gen 21:12]. ¹⁹He figured that God could even raise Isaac from the dead; in a way, that's what happened.

²⁰By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau even about future things.

²¹By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons and "**worshiped, leaning on his staff**" [Gen 48:15-16; 47:31 LXX].

Heb 11:17-21

²²By faith Joseph, when he was about to die, remembered the *future* exodus of Israel's descendants and gave instructions about his bones.

²³By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months. They saw he was a handsome little boy and weren't afraid of Pharaoh's decree.

²⁴By faith Moses, when he grew up, refused to be considered the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵He chose to suffer mistreatment with God's people rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a while. ²⁶He considered the disgrace of Christ more valuable than the wealth of Egypt because he was looking on ahead to the later reward. ²⁷By faith he left Egypt, not afraid of Pharaoh's anger, and endured as if he saw the One that's invisible. ²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and the smearing of blood *on the doorposts* so the one that destroyed the firstborn wouldn't touch them. ²⁹By faith he crossed the Red Sea as on dry ground. When the Egyptians tried it, they drowned.

Heb 11:22-29

³⁰By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after the Israelites circled them for seven days.

³¹By faith Rahab the harlot didn't perish with the disobedient because she welcomed the spies in peace.

Heb 11:30-31

Extreme Faithfulness

³²What more can I say? There's not enough time to talk about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel, and the prophets. ³³By faith they conquered kingdoms, did good things, received promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴extinguished the power of fire, escaped the

sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, drove out armies of foreigners.³⁵ Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some^{mas} were beaten to death, rather than accept deliverance so they could gain a better resurrection.³⁶ Others received public torture and scourging, *were put in* chains and imprisoned.³⁷ They were stoned, sawn in two, murdered with swords. They went around in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, oppressed, abused;³⁸ wandering in deserts and mountains, *hiding in* caves and holes in the ground. The world didn't deserve them.³⁹ They all received testimony through their faith, but they didn't receive the promise.⁴⁰ God provided something better for us so that *what they anticipated* wasn't completed till we received it.

Heb 11:32-40

Renewed Zeal from Faithful Examples

12:1 So, surrounded by such a crowd of witnesses to us, let's lay aside everything that weighs us down and the sin that so easily holds us back. Let's press on in the race that's in front of us,² as we look ahead to Jesus the forerunner and finisher of our faith. For the joy in front of him, he endured the cross, overlooked the disgrace, and sat down on the right side of God's throne.³ Keep in mind the One that endured such verbal hostility from sinners so you don't get discouraged.

Heb 12:1-3

4 You haven't shed your blood yet in straining against sin. **5** You've forgotten the encouragement that reasons with you like children,

*"My child, don't take lightly the LORD's discipline
or give up when he scolds you.*

6The LORD disciplines the ones he loves

and punishes every child he receives" [Pro 3:11-12].

7 Endure to gain discipline because God's treating you like children. What child doesn't a father discipline?⁸ If you're not receiving discipline, you're not children; you're illegitimate offspring.⁹ Besides, we respected our physical fathers who disciplined us; won't we respect our spiritual Father more and live?¹⁰ They did what they thought was appropriate; he does it for our benefit so we'll be holy like him.¹¹ Discipline always seems harsh at the time; but later it pays back the peaceful results of right living.¹² So strengthen the limp hands and weak knees,¹³ and make straight paths for your feet so what's lame won't veer off but get corrected.

Heb 12:4-13

Getting Serious About Holy Living

14 With everybody, strive for peace and the holiness you need to have to see the Lord.

15 Make sure none *of you* come short of God's grace. Don't let some root of bitterness sprout up and cause trouble and end up defiling other people.¹⁶ Don't be immoral or irreligious like Esau, who sold his birthright for one meal.¹⁷ As you know, afterward, when he wanted to inherit the

blessing, he was refused. He didn't find any change of heart *in his father* though with tears he tried diligently to get it.

Heb 12:14-17

¹⁸You haven't come to *a mountain* you can touch or one blazing with fire. You haven't come to darkness, gloom, and whirlwind, ¹⁹to a trumpet blast or the sound of words *the Israelites* begged not to hear. ²⁰They couldn't deal with the severe demand,

"If even an animal touches the mountain, stone it" [Ex 19:12-13].

²¹The spectacle was so terrifying, Moses said, **"I'm so afraid I'm shaking"** [Deut 9:19]. ²²But, you've come to Mount Zion,

to the city of the living God,
to the heavenly Jerusalem and countless thousands of angels,
to the assembly ²³and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven;
to God, the judge of all;
to the spirits of good people made perfect;
²⁴to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant; and
to the sprinkling of blood that speaks better than Abel's.

Heb 12:18-24

²⁵Make sure you don't ignore who's talking to you. If they didn't escape who ignored the One that warned them on earth, you certainly won't escape if you turn away from the One *who has warned you* from heaven. ²⁶His voice shook the earth then, but now he has promised,

**"One more time I won't just shake the earth
but the sky too"** [Hag 2:6].

²⁷"*One more time*" means taking away what can be shaken—this creation—so what can't be shaken will be all that's left. ²⁸Since you're receiving a kingdom that can't be shaken, be grateful. In gratitude serve God in an acceptable way with reverence and awe; ²⁹he's a consuming fire.

Heb 12:25-29

Service to All People

13:1Love the believers. **2**Be hospitable to strangers. (Some have entertained angels without knowing it.) **3**Remember prisoners as if you're in prison with them, and those abused as if you're in *their* bodies. **4**With everybody, keep marriage honorable and the bed undefiled; God will judge fornicators and adulterers. **5**Be free from the love of money and be content with what you have. He said it himself,

"I'll never abandon you" [Deut 31:6].

⁶So we can confidently say,

**"The LORD's my helper;
I won't be afraid.**

What are people going to do to me?" [Ps 118:6].

⁷Remember your leaders, who spoke God's message to you. Look at the way their lives turned out and imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Heb 13:1-8

Resisting Distractions

⁹Don't get drawn off course by strange teachings. It's good to feel secure because of grace rather than food. Observing regulations about food doesn't benefit the ones that observe them. ¹⁰We have an altar that the ones who serve the tabernacle don't have a right to eat from. ¹¹The high priest takes into the Holy Place the blood of animals *as a sacrifice* for sin; the bodies of those animals get burned outside the camp. ¹²Jesus also suffered outside the gate to sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³Let's go out to him—outside the camp—and bear his disgrace. ¹⁴We don't have an eternal city here, but we anticipate the one that's coming. ¹⁵Through him let's offer up to God a sacrifice of continuous praise, that is, what we say in acknowledging him. ¹⁶Don't neglect doing good and sharing; God delights in sacrifices like that.

Heb 13:9-16

Assisting the Leaders

¹⁷Obey your leaders; defer to them. They watch over your souls so they can enjoy giving account. (Doing so with sighing wouldn't benefit you.)

¹⁸Pray for us. We have a clear conscience; we want to conduct ourselves well in everything we do. ¹⁹I urge *you* to do that all the more so I can get back to you sooner.

Doxology

²⁰⁻²¹May the God that brings peace, that resurrected the Great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you by the blood of the eternal covenant to do his will in everything that's good. Through Jesus Christ, may he accomplish in you what delights him. Glory to him forever[more]^{ms!} Amen.

Closing Exhortation and Greeting

²²I encourage you to listen to *this* brief encouragement. ²³Be aware that our brother Timothy is free now. If he comes soon, I'll see you with him.

²⁴Greet your leaders and all the saints. The ones from Italy greet you.

²⁵Grace *be* with you all.

Heb 13:17-25