

# YOUTH SPIRITUAL COMPETITION 2013

## COLLEGE LEVEL

# A Study of The Epistle to the Hebrews

---

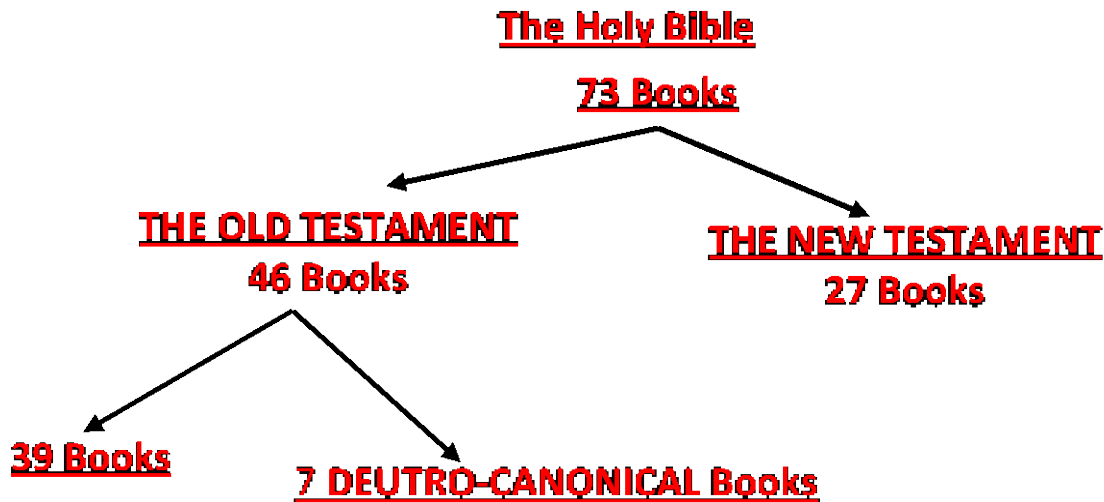


## Part I

## Part 1: Introduction

### I. The Structure of the Holy Bible

The Holy Bible consists of 73 books. There are 46 books in the Old Testament, 39 of which are recognized by all Christians and you can find in the Holy Bible that you usually purchase, and then there are the 7 Deutro-canonical books recognized by the Coptic Orthodox Church. The New Testament consists of 27 books.

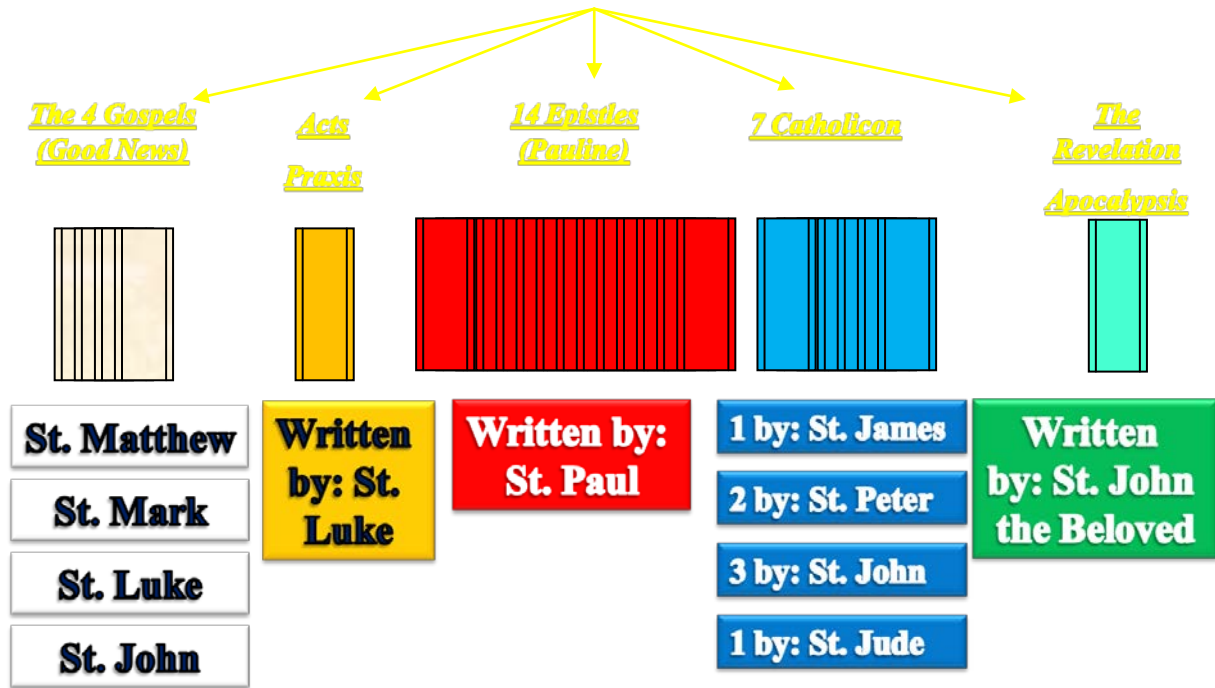


### II. The Structure of the New Testament

- The New Testament is divided into
  - 4 Gospels (also known as the Good News)
    - The four Gospels were written by the saint bearing its name:
    - the Gospel according to St. Matthew,
    - the Gospel according to St. Mark,
    - the Gospel according to St. Luke,
    - and the Gospel according to St. John.
  - Acts of the Apostles (Praxis), written by St. Luke.
  - 14 Pauline Epistles, written by St. Paul.
  - 7 Catholic Epistles (Catholicon)
    - St. James (1 Epistle)
    - St. Peter (2 Epistles)
    - St. John (3 Epistles)
    - St. Jude (1 Epistle)
  - Revelation (Apocalypse), written by St. John the Theologian.

# THE NEW TESTAMENT

## THE 27 BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT



III. The Structure of the Pauline Epistles

The Pauline Epistles Can Be Organized into Several Ways

A. The 14 letters of St. Paul are divided into 3 categories: Ecclesiastical, Pastoral, and Personal.

Ecclesiastical	Pastoral	Personal
Romans 1 <sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2 <sup>nd</sup> Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians, 1 <sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians Hebrews	1 <sup>st</sup> Timothy 2 <sup>nd</sup> Timothy Titus	Philemon

B. Categorized

according to where the epistle was written:

1. St. Paul wrote letters to the churches in Rome, Thessalonica, Philippi, Colosse, Galatia, Corinth, and Ephesus.



2. Several Letters were written while St. Paul was in prison: Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon.

### Elements of the Pauline Epistles

Most of St. Paul's letters share certain characteristics and are organized in a certain way. The following list demonstrates how the standard format St. Paul used to organized each of the 14 epistles. Some epistles, especially Hebrews, are exceptions to this format in that they do not contain every characteristic.

1. The name of the Sender  
St. Paul would mention that he was the sender in the beginning of his letters.
2. The Recipients
3. The Blessing  
The blessing included in the letters was usually "Grace and Peace." However, St. Paul used "Grace, Mercy, and Peace" in his pastoral letters.
4. The Thanksgiving – St. Paul mentions and lists what he is thankful for.
5. The Body of the letter.
6. The Conclusion to the letter.

### The Themes of Each of the Epistles

Romans	God's righteousness
1 <sup>st</sup> Corinthians	Koinonia (fellowship)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Corinthians	Reconciliation – Apostleship
Galatians	True Gospel – the Cross – Freedom
Ephesus	The Church is the Body of Christ
Philippians	Our life in Christ
Colossians	Christ in the head of the Church
1 <sup>st</sup> Thessalonians	Holy life leads to eternal life
2 <sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians	Second coming
1 <sup>st</sup> Timothy	Pastoral care
2 <sup>nd</sup> Timothy	Overcoming the hardships in ministry – Farewell Epistle
Titus	Overseeing the Church
Philemon	Brotherhood in Christ
Hebrews	Christ is the great God

## Part 2: Introduction to Hebrews

### I. Authorship

St. Paul's epistle to the Hebrews is the only Pauline epistle that does not contain all of the 6 characteristics previously discussed. In fact, Hebrews is the only epistle that consists of only a body and a conclusion; St. Paul does not write who is the sender, recipient, a blessing or thanksgiving.

Despite St. Paul not mentioning the author of the epistle, we still affirm it is himself. According to St. Pantaeus, St. Athanasius, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Augustine (Council of Carthage), St. Paul is the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Additionally, the Liturgical readings in the Church include the Book of Hebrews as part of the Pauline Epistles.

Furthermore, there is evidence from the Holy Bible itself that St. Paul is the author. According to Hebrews 12:23, the author of the book was a friend of St. Timothy. It is also obvious from a study of the epistle that the author is well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures. Moreover, the author, in Hebrews 10:38, used the same Old Testament quotation found in Habakkuk 2:4, "The just shall live by faith," that St. Paul also used in two other letters of his (Rom. 1:17 and Gal. 3:11). The author also concludes Hebrews in the same fashion as St Paul in his writings. For example, 2 Thessalonians 3:17-18 reads: "The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Compare this to the closing found in Hebrews 13:25, "Grace be with you all. Amen."

There is further biblical evidence of St. Paul's authorship in that the author was evidently known by St. Peter. According to Galatians 2:7, St. Peter was the disciple to the circumcision (the Jews). And in fact, St. Peter's two epistles were written to the Jews who were scattered all over, the Jews of the dispersion (1Pt. 1:1; 1Pt. 3:1). St. Peter says, "Even as our brother Paul also...wrote unto you" (2Pt. 3:15). This goes to show that St. Peter was familiar with some writing of the St. Paul's that was addressed to the same dispersed Jews to which he was writing. The author of Hebrew wrote about "many things...hard to understand" (Heb. 5:11). St. Peter says the very same thing about Paul's epistle to the Jews, "Paul...has written unto you...some things hard to be understood" (2Pt. 3:15-16).

So the evidence all points toward St. Paul as the author of Hebrews.

So then the question remains, why didn't St. Paul mention his name in the epistle? Because it was mentioned about him that, "but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses..." (Acts 21:21) Thus, he did not mention his name lest they would not read the letter he sent them.

### II. Date When the Epistle Was Written

It is estimated that the epistle was written between A.D. 64-67 for several reasons. First, there is no mention in the epistle of the destruction of Jerusalem or its temple, which occurred in A.D. 70. In fact, the references to the priesthood and temple indicate both still standing when this letter was written (Heb. 10:11). Second, St. Timothy had been imprisoned but was now free when St. Paul wrote the letter (Hebrews 13:23). Third, St. Clement of Rome knew of the epistle when he wrote his letter to the

Corinthians (A.D. 95) and so the epistle must have been written sometime before it had circulated to him.

### III. Language

Scholars tell us that St. Paul quoted from the Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, when citing the verses or prophecies of the Old Testament. (The word Septuagint is a Greek word meaning “seventy,” and its abbreviation is the Roman numeral for seventy, LXX. Tradition claims that seventy men translated the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek.)

### IV. Themes of the Epistle

#### A. Overview

The Book of Hebrews was written to Christians that came from a Jewish background, they were referred to as Hebrew Christians. Since they converted to Christianity, the rest of the Jewish population deprived them of the right to enter the temple and partake in the rituals. However, the Christians obtained the true heavenly temple instead of the symbolic or physical temple, and they received the heavenly high priesthood instead of the Levitical priesthood. Furthermore, they were related to the Church of the Firstborn instead of the Jewish citizenship, and the heavenly Jerusalem instead of the earthly Jerusalem. Our Lord Jesus transformed us from the shadow to the truth and instead of only a glimpse of heaven we have received heaven itself; from outward physical worship to Christ’s supreme service.

This epistle exhorts that Jesus and His way is the better way. The word “better” is used 13 times in this epistle. St. Paul uses the word “better” to teach us that our Lord Jesus Christ is superior to the angels, the prophets, Moses, Joshua and Aaron. Our Lord offers a better priesthood, sanctuary, and sacrifice for in worshiping Him we enter heaven. Expanding on this point, St. Paul concentrates on the priesthood of Christ, who intercedes with His Blood in front of His Father. Therefore, we must faithfully hold fast to Him, preserving our faith in the incarnate Son.

The 13 uses of the word “better” in the epistle:

Our Lord Jesus Christ...

- Is “so much better” (Heb. 1:4)
- Gives us “better things” (Heb, 6: 9)
- Is the “better person” (Heb. 7:7)
- Brings the “better hope” (Heb. 7:19)
- Assures the “better covenant” (Heb. 7: 22)
- Is the mediator of a “better covenant...and better promises” (Heb. 8:6)
- Purifies with “better sacrifices” (Heb. 9:23)
- Gives us heaven, a “better possession” (Heb. 10:34)
- Gives us a “better country (heaven)” (Heb. 11:16)
- Gives us a “better resurrection” (Heb. 11:35)
- Provides “better things” (Hebrews 11: 35; 11:40; 12:24)

Finally, in Hebrews, St. Paul often quoted from the Old Testament, revealing the unity of the two Testaments. Hebrews quotes from the Old Testament about 100 times, using the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew text. This epistle does more to explain the Old Testament typology than any other book in the Bible. In this way, St. Paul transformed the dogma to an experienced life.

### B. Organization by Chapter

Chapters 1 through 10 can be described as exhorting a unique doctrine teaching how Christ is better and greater than anything else; whereas, chapters 11 through 13 extend more practical lessons to the people.

Chapter 1 - 2	Christ is greater than the angels
Chapter 3	Christ is greater than Moses
Chapter 4	Christ is greater than Joshua
Chapter 5 – 7	Christ is greater than Aaron
Chapter 8	Christ gives us the greatest Covenant
Chapter 9	Christ gives us the greatest sanctuary
Chapter 10	Christ gives us the greatest sacrifice
Chapter 11 - 12	Heroes of faith are listed
Chapter 13	Advice to the people, “the word of exhortation” (Heb. 13:22)

### C. The Epistle of Severe Warnings

St. Paul wrote Hebrews to warn people of the danger of abandoning the gospel and of immaturity, also to offer advice or exhortation.

St. Paul advised the people of the danger of abandoning the gospel and several ways in which this could happen. Some abandon the gospel by drifting from the Word, thus neglecting it (Heb 2: 1 -4). Some doubt the Word with a hard heart (Heb 3:7 – 4:13). Some have a dullness, or become sluggish, towards the Word (Heb 5:11- 6:20). Others despise the Word out of willfulness (Heb 10:26-39). Lastly, some defy the Word and refuse to hear it (Heb 12:14-29).

St. Paul warns how some are at a spiritual standstill and in danger of regression (Heb. 5:12). Still others have even forsaken the regular worship services (Heb. 10:25) and were not making spiritual progress (Heb. 6:1). In the Christian life, if you do not go forward, you go backward; there is no such thing as standing still.

St. Paul also warns about the several ways in which immaturity can hinder the spiritual life. A person becomes immature because of dull hearing (Heb. 5:11) or because he refuses to grow (Heb. 5:12). A person becomes immature because of being unskilled in the Word (Heb. 5:13) or because he does not exercise his mental and spiritual senses (Heb. 5:14). A person needs to get the past the ABC's of doctrine (Heb. 6:1-2) and must be determined to grow in Christ (Heb. 6:3).



Along with his several warnings, St. Paul earnestly advises the people on five points (Heb 13:22): (1) to “hold fast” (Heb 3:6), (2) “to go on to perfection or maturity” (Heb 6:1), (3) “to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession” (Heb 3:1), (4) “to consider Him that endured” (Heb 12:3), and (5) St. Paul offers 13 exhortations, known as the “let us” exhortations, to encourage spiritual diligence and growth.

The 13 “Let us” exhortations:

- “Let us fear lest any of you come short of [His rest].” (Heb. 4:1)
- “Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest.” (Heb. 4:11)
- “Let us hold fast our confession.” (Heb. 4:14)
- “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace” (Heb. 4:16)
- “Let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God” (Heb. 6:1)
- “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith” (Heb.10:22)
- “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering” (Heb. 10:23)
- “Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works” (Heb. 10:24)
- “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us” (Heb. 12:1)
- “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (Heb. 12:1)
- “Let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” (Heb. 12:28)
- “Let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.” (Heb. 13:13)
- “Let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” (Heb. 13:15)

For a more succinct version of above: “Let us”...

- |                                 |                 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Fear                          | (Hebrews 4:1)   |
| • Labor                         | (Hebrews 4:11)  |
| • Come boldly                   | (Hebrews 4:16)  |
| • Go on                         | (Hebrews 6:1)   |
| • Draw near                     | (Hebrews 10:22) |
| • Hold fast                     | (Hebrews 10:23) |
| • Consider one another          | (Hebrews 10:24) |
| • Lay aside every thought       | (Hebrews 12:1)  |
| • Have grace                    | (Hebrews 12:28) |
| • Go forth                      | (Hebrews 13:13) |
| • Offer the sacrifice of praise | (Hebrews 13:15) |

## Part 3: Commentary on the Book of Hebrews

### I. Chapter 1: Introduction to the Epistle

In Hebrews, St. Paul states that our Lord Jesus, the Son of God

- is the heir of all things.
- is the creator of the world.
- is the brightness of God's glory.
- is the image of the Father.
- upholds all things by His power.
- purged our sins.
- sat down on Majesty on High.

### Hebrews 1: 1 – 3: God Spoke through the Prophets about Jesus Christ as the Messiah

At the very beginning of the epistle, St. Paul writes that God "at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets" (Heb 1:1). St. Paul is telling us that God revealed Himself in many different ways: through nature, conscience, law, revelation, and through the prophets and priests.

We can see through the prophecies of the Old Testament how God revealed that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of His plan for salvation.

God spoke through the prophets and told them from where Jesus would come. God spoke to Adam and told him that the Savior would come from the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). God spoke to Abraham and told him that the Savior would come from his seed (Gen 12:3;18:18; 22:18). God spoke to Jacob and told him that the Savior would come through the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10). God spoke to David and told him that the Savior would be born of his house (2 Sam.7:13). God spoke to Micah and told him that the Savior would be born at Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). God spoke to Isaiah and told him that the Savior would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14).

God spoke to the prophets in various ways. To Moses, God spoke in a great thundering voice in the midst of a storm (Ex. 19:19, Deut. 5:22). To Elijah, God spoke in a still small voice (1 Kings 19: 12). To Isaiah, He used a vision (Isaiah 1:1) and to Samuel in a dream (1 Sam 3:5).

God loves humanity and has not left us in the dark grasping and struggling to find the truth of life, death and the hereafter. Rather, God has spoken to mankind and revealed the truth about where we come from, why we are here, where we are going, and how we can conquer trials, evil and death.

### Hebrews 1: 4 – 14: the Superiority of Christ to the Angels

St. Paul, in this portion of Hebrews, refers to 7 key verses in the Old Testament which describe how the Son of God is superior to the angels and worthy of their worship.

- |   |               |
|---|---------------|
| • The Son's position is unique                | (Ps. 2:7)     |
| • The Son as the head of the Davidic Covenant | (2 Sam. 7:14) |
| • The Angels worship the Son                  | (Ps. 97:7)    |
| • The Angels serve the Son                    | (Ps. 104:4)   |

- The Son is anointed to rule the Kingdom (Ps. 45:7-8)
- The Son is the Creator (Ps. 102:25-27)
- The Son is enthroned at the right hand of God the Father (Ps. 110:1)

There are some important facts about angels that we should all know.

Firstly, there are seven archangels: Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Souriel, Sadakiel, Sarathiel, and Ananiel.

Additionally:

- Angeles are created beings, superior to men (Ps. 104:4, Heb. 1:14, Col. 1:16).
- Angels are numerous (Psa, 68:17, Mt. 26:53, Heb. 12:22, Rev. 5:11).
- Angels are extremely superior to men in intelligence and knowledge (2 Sam. 14:20, Psa. 103:20, Psa. 104:4).
- Angels have great power (2 Kings 19:35, Mt. 28:3, 2 Pt. 2:11, Rev. 20:1-2).
- Angels observe men (Eccles. 5:6, 1 Cor. 4:9, Eph. 3:10).
- Some angels fell with Satan from their original state (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6, Rev. 20:10).

## II. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest and the Greatest Covenant (Hebrews 5 – 8)

First of all, we must examine what is the meaning of the word “priest.”

There are several qualities and qualifications to a High Priest. High Priests were to be selected from mankind (Heb 5:1) and served as representatives of men before God (Heb 5:1, 8:6, 1 Tim 2:5). It was a priest’s duty to offer both gifts and sacrifices on behalf of man (Heb 5:1) and to have a pastoral heart toward the people (Heb 5:2, 4, 5). Jesus Christ exhibits all these and is our heavenly High Priest (Heb 5:4 – 5, II Cor. 5:21, I Pt. 1:21-22).

Secondly, we should examine where the priesthood came from.

In the Old Testament, the priests could only come from the tribe of Levi and must be descendants from the line of Aaron. The priest served as a mediator between God and the people: he spoke to God on behalf of the people and spoke to the people on behalf of God.

In the New Testament, Jesus came from the tribe of Judah and He is the High Priest who is also the Sacrifice (Heb 2:17) After the Sacrifice was completed, then some people were called to become priests (Heb 5:4).

St. Athanasius of Alexandria spoke concerning this, saying:

“Truly, He did not take the nature of angels, but the nature of the seed of Abraham, therefore, it was appropriate that He resembles His brothers in everything so He may be a merciful and faithful High Priest in what concerns God, achieving reconciliation for the sins of the people. He suffered being tempted so He may aid those who are tempted. Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him.”

Thus, Jesus Christ is the High Priest and the Sacrifice, He is the Offering and the One offering (“offerer”).

Finally, Hebrews 7 mentions several ways in which our Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest.

- Our Lord Jesus Christ is our King of Righteousness (v 2)
- He is our King of peace (v 2)
- He is without beginning and ending (v 3)
- He is indestructible (everlasting) (v 16)
- He will never die nor need to be replaced (v 23 – 24)

### Typology of the Old Testament (Compare with College, or put in HS material)

#### 1. Melchizedek as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ: Hebrews 5:10 and 7: 1 - 4

St. Ambrose stated that Melchizedek was a holy man and a priest, a symbol of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he was not an angel as some Jews claimed.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was a Priest “called by God as High Priest ‘according to the order of Melchizedek’” (Heb 5:10). Melchizedek was a priest of God the most high (cf. Gen. 14, Ps. 110:4, Heb 7:1 – 7), and he was both a king and a priest. In this dual office of king and priest, he is able to reconcile the justice of God (the business of a king) with His mercy (the business of a priest).

Melchizedek’s name even holds symbolic significance. “Melchizedek” means king of righteousness, while “King of Salem” means king of peace (Heb 7:2). Additionally, Melchizedek had the authority to receive tithes from Abram. Since tithes can only be given from the lesser person to the greater, this symbolizes that Christ is greater than Aaron and Aaron’s priesthood. Moreover, Melchizedek used bread and wine in his service, obviously symbolizing the Eucharist established in the Last Supper by our Lord.

Finally, Hebrews 7:3 describes Melchizedek as “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.” The fact that neither a father or mother were ever mentioned in describing Melchizedek is symbolic of Christ having no father according to His humanity and no mother according to His divinity. Also, “having neither beginning of days nor end of life” mentioned about him is symbolic of Christ being everlasting and eternal.

To summarize the typology of Our Lord Jesus Christ and Melchizedek, please see the chart below:

Melchizedek	Christ
Neither father nor mother are mentioned	No father according to His humanity, and no mother according to His divinity
Neither beginning nor end of his life are mentioned	He is everlasting and eternal
King	King of kings
King of Righteousness	Righteous and Holy alone
King of Salem	King Of Peace
He offered bread and wine	The Sacrament of the Eucharist

He blessed our father Abraham, “now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better.”	Christ’s priesthood is greater than the priesthood of the Levi.
--	---

St. John Chrysostom explained this symbolism in one of his homilies (Homilies on Genesis 35:16):

What is conveyed to us by this comment, “the king of Salem and priest of God the most high”? He was, for one thing, king of Salem, the text says. Blessed Paul, after all, said the same in drawing attention to them when writing to the believers among the Hebrews, calling to mind his name and his city or origin. At the same time he plumbed the significance of his name and employed some degree of etymology in saying, “Melchizedek, king of righteousness.” You see, in the Hebrew language the word Melchi means “kingdom” and Sedek, “righteousness.” Then, moving on to the name of the city, he says, “king of peace,” Salem, after all, meaning “peace.” On the other hand, he was a priest, possibly self-appointed, this being the way with the priests of the time, you see. So in face his peers had either accorded him the honor on account of his preeminence in age, or he had made it his business to act as a priest, like Noah, like Abel, and like Abraham when they used to offer sacrifices. In a particular manner he was to prove a type of Christ. Hence Paul too understands him in this role in the words, “with no father, with no mother, with no family history, lacking beginning of days and end of life, he yet resembles the Son of God and remains a priest forever” (Heb 7:3). How, you ask, is it possible for a person to have no father or mother and to lack beginning of days and end of life? You heard that he was a type; well, neither marvel at this nor expect everything to be found in the type. You see, he would not be a type if he were likely to contain every feature that occurs in reality. So what does the saying mean? It means this: just as Melchizedek is said to have no father or mother on account of there being no mention of his parents and to have no family history on account of there being no history for him, so too Christ, on account of his having no mother in heaven or father on earth, is said to have no family history and in face has none.

## 2. Aaron as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ

Hebrews 7 exhorts the need and greatness of a New Priesthood established in Jesus Christ. St. Paul examines the differences between the priesthood of the Old Testament, as exemplified by Aaron, and that of the New Testament, specifically Jesus Christ the High Priest.

Aaron	Jesus Christ
From the tribe of Levi	From the tribe of Judah
A priest	A priest, a prophet, and a king (Heb 3:1, 4:14 – 16)
Represents the priesthood of the Old Testament	Represents the priesthood of the New Testament. From the order of Melchizedek

<p>A mediator and an intercessor. Accordingly, he bears the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate.</p>	<p>Atoning intercession: His intercession is the basis of our acceptance.                  “Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”                  (Romans 8:34)</p>
<p>The high priest is the only one who can enter into the Holy of Holies</p>	<p>Our Lord Jesus Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, which is but a mere copy of the true one, but rather He entered into heaven itself that He might appear before God the father on our behalf.</p>
<p>The High Priest performs a reconciliation service between a sinner and God through the blood of the sacrifice that he takes during the day of atonement.</p>	<p>Christ offered His own Blood.                  “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb 9:14)</p>

3. The New Covenant and the Greatness of Christ’s Sacrifice (Hebrews 8, 9,10)

Upon conclusion of our discussion of the priesthood, it is clear that there are many contrasts between the ministry or priesthood of the Old Covenant and that of the New Covenant. “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises” (Heb 8:6).

Old Covenant	New Covenant
There were repeated sacrifices	There was only one sacrifice
The sacrifices were the blood of animals	Jesus’ own blood was used for the sacrifice
The sacrifice was performed for Israel only	Jesus was sacrificed for all sinners
The sacrifice simply left the earthly sanctuary	The Sacrifice entered heavens and remains there
The priest came out of the sanctuary to bless the people	Christ will come again to take His people to heaven

The sevenfold ministry of our Lord Jesus on our behalf:

- 1- His incarnation (Hebrews 1:2, Hebrews 2:16-17)
- 2- His earthly ministry (Hebrews 5:7-9)
- 3- His crucifixion (Hebrews 2:9, Hebrews 7:27, Hebrews 9:28)
- 4- His resurrection (Hebrews 13:20)
- 5- His ascension (Hebrews 4:14, Hebrews 6:20)
- 6- His heavenly intercession (Hebrews 7:25, Hebrews 8:1-2, Hebrews 9:12, 24)
- 7- His second coming (Hebrews 9:28)

#### 4. The Tabernacle as a Type of Our Lord Jesus Christ

In his discussion of the priesthood and the sacrifice, St. Paul also must make mention of the tabernacle (Heb. 8, 9).

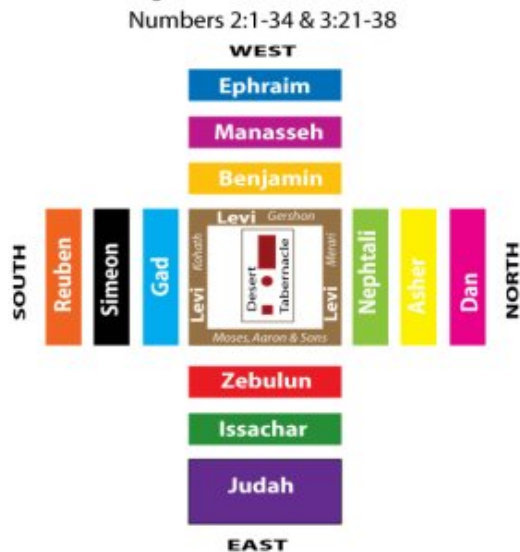
The tabernacle is known by many names: tent, dwelling, tent of meeting, tabernacle of the testimony. The Tabernacle was a moveable “tent of meeting.”

“Tabernacle” means the tent of meeting and was believed to be where the meeting between God and His people took place. God comes to dwell with His people by being in the tabernacle (Ex. 25 – 40). Therefore, the tabernacle stood in the center of Israel’s camp.

Since the tabernacle is where God dwells, it symbolizes the church and St. Mary the Theotokos.

The tabernacle is an announcement of the Lord’s glory. “Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these [rites]” (Heb 9:23).

### Encampment of the Tribes



The image depicts how the tribes were arranged in the Israel camp, with the tabernacle in the center of all the tribes. It is not a mere coincidence that it is in the shape of a cross.

### God Gave Exacting Instructions of How to Build the Tabernacle

The tabernacle of the Old Testament was made according to the precise divine instructions given to Moses (Heb. 8:5). The tabernacle’s description was written down in sixteen chapters in Exodus and the tabernacle was mentioned in more than fifty chapters between the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Hebrews.

The tabernacle was made exactly to the pattern and instruction given to Moses. Thus, it is written: “Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished. And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did”, “According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work.” (Ex. 39:32, 42) “Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did” (Ex. 40:16).

It was important that the tabernacle be exactly like the pattern given because each and every item in the tabernacle represented something to come in the future: either a pattern type or figure. “Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Heb 9: 23 – 24).

### The Purpose of the Tabernacle

We study the tabernacle to understand God’s pattern of how we should worship. The tabernacle shows how common people can have fellowship with a holy God.

The tabernacle was the Lord’s meeting with His people, a place of worship to the Israelites.

The Lord made Himself a tent amidst the tents of the Israelites; He is the One who took the initiative to make the tabernacle. The Tabernacle was located in the center of the tents of the Israeli people, symbolizing that God is the center of our lives. The Lord is dwelling among us. Moreover, our lives rotate around God. “And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel” (Ex. 25: 22).

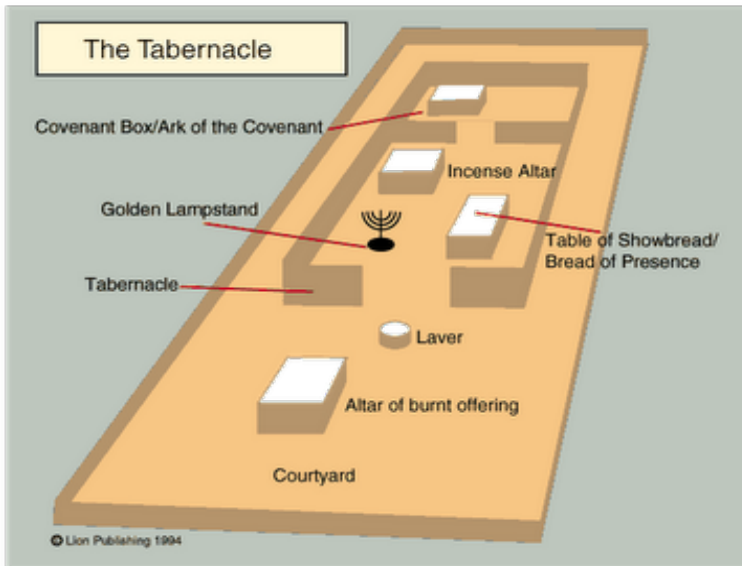
The Lord wants to be and is very close to us, not just in the days of the Old Testament but today as well. “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (Ex. 25:8). Further, God says, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Cor 3:16) ...“I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (2 Cor, 6:16). And of course, “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away’” (Rev 21:3-4).

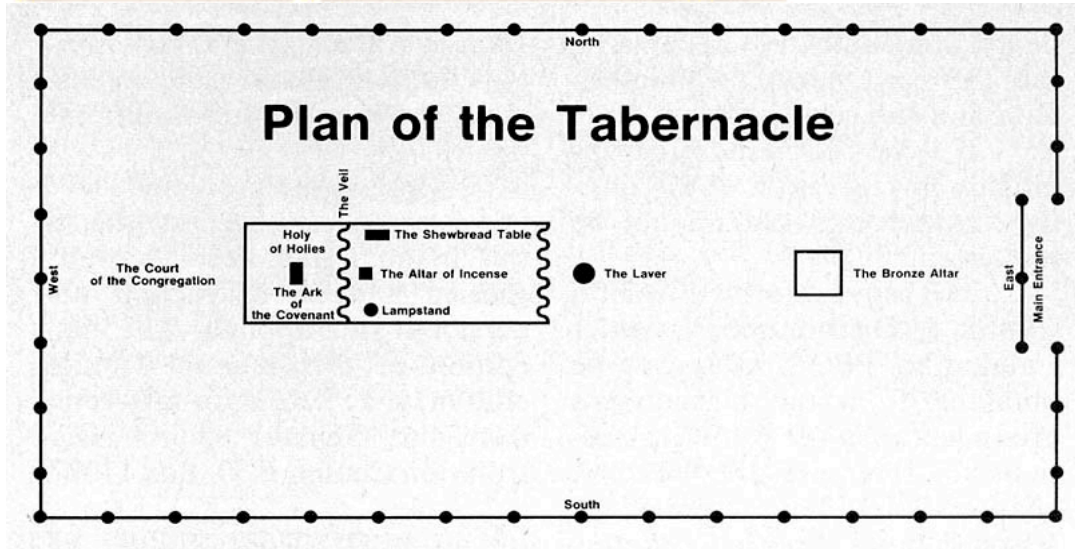
“Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?” But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them;<sup>1</sup>and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said” (Jn. 2: 19 -22).

The Lord resembles us in everything except sin. “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren” (Heb. 2:17).



Some images of the Tabernacle:





### III. Hebrews Chapter 11: Chapter of Faith

Faith is defined as the assurance of unseen things. “For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end” (Heb 3:14).

Faith, as described by the fathers of the Church:

- If you do not believe, you will not understand. ~ St. Clement of Alexandria
- Faith is the eye that enlightens conscience. ~ St. Cyril of Jerusalem
- IN Faith the devil is disarmed. ~ St. John Chrysostom

#### Chapter 11’s Heroes of Faith

- |                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| ■ God as Creator | ■ Moses              |
| ■ Abel           | ■ Pharaoh’s Daughter |
| ■ Cain           | ■ Rahab              |
| ■ Enoch          | ■ Gideon             |
| ■ Noah           | ■ Barak              |
| ■ Abraham        | ■ Samson             |
| ■ Isaac          | ■ Jephthah           |
| ■ Jacob          | ■ David              |
| ■ Sarah          | ■ Samuel             |
| ■ Esau           | ■ Prophets           |
| ■ Joseph         |                      |

The decisions we make today will determine the rewards tomorrow. More than this, our decisions should be motivated by the expectation of receiving rewards. Our father Abraham obeyed God because “he looked for a city” (Heb 11:10).

#### The Actions and Rewards of some of the Heroes of faith:

- Abel: blood is the only way (the worthy/acceptable sacrifice)
- Enoch: faith through fellowship; he did not die
- Noah: faith through obedience; saved his family
- Abraham: faith through departure, becoming a foreigner in a strange land; miraculous birth of Isaac; willingness to sacrifice Isaac and he was convinced that God would raise him back to life
- Jacob: blessed the two sons of Joseph (his hands were in a cross)
- Joseph: by requesting his bones be taken and placed to rest in Israel
- Parents of Moses: hiding Moses against the law of Pharaoh
- Moses: by refusing to be called son of Pharaoh’s daughter; he kept the first Passover

#### The Sayings of the Church Fathers about the Heroes of the Faith

- Abel: Heb 11:4 – Talks through his faith. ~ St. Ephrem the Syrian
- Enoch: Heb 11:5 – Faith was the cause of Enoch’s pleasing God. ~ St. John Chrysostom

- Noah: Heb 11:7 – Faith works righteousness. ~ St. John Chrysostom
- Abraham: Heb 11: 8-10 – By faith, Abraham obeyed and left his father and family ~ St. Ephrem the Syrian. Abraham believed God could raise the dead. ~ St. Ephrem the Syrian. Abraham believed in a resurrection that had not yet happened. ~ The scholar Origen
- Sarah: Heb 11:11 – received the powers and youth that were necessary for conception and bearing. ~ St. Ephrem the Syrian. Fulfillment of faith is worth the wait. ~ St. Gregory of Nyssa
- Isaac: Heb 11:20 – Isaac is a type (of Jesus). ~ St. Clement of Alexandria
- Jacob: Heb 11: 21 – Jacob first prefigured the cross when he adored the top of the rod of Joseph (see Gen 47:31); and when he blessed Joseph’s sons with his hands crossed (Gen 48: 13 – 15). ~ Fr. John of Damascus
- Joseph: Heb 11: 22 – He then not only believed himself but led the rest also to faith, that, having exodus always in mind – for he would not have “given directions concerning his burial” unless he had been fully assured of this – they might look for their return to Canaan. See! Even righteous people had care about their sepulchers. ~ St. John Chrysostom
- Moses’ parents: Heb 11:23 – Faith’s courage
- Moses: Heb 11: 24 -26 – Moses refused the palace. ~ St. John Chrysostom
- Israel: Heb 11:29-30 – Everywhere faith goes beyond human reasoning...Faith can do all things. ~ St. John Chrysostom.
- Rahab: Heb 11:31 – She received the trinity. ~ St. Irenaeus

These great men and women (Heb. 11:31, 35) of faith "lived in the future tense" and thus were able to overcome the temptations of the world and the flesh.

#### IV. Hebrews Chapter 12

St Paul exhorts us to be constant and persevere. In Heb 12:1-2, he says to look to the example of the great witnesses of Christ, the martyrs, and get rid of any weight and sin that prevents us from running a strong race. (my words) As in 1 Cor 9: 24 – 27, He urges us to run a marathon of endurance.

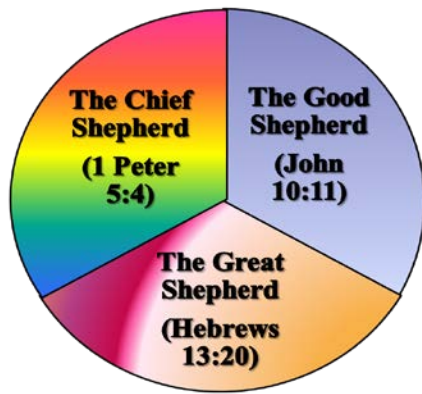
In verses 18 – 22, St. Paul talks about the Church as a spiritual place likened onto Mount Zion. It is the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, with an innumerable company of angels and a great cloud of witnesses.

#### V. Hebrews Chapter 13

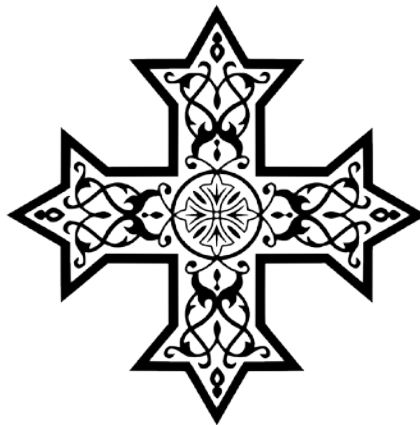
St. Paul ends his epistle with exhortations to the Hebrews. Verses 1 – 7, 16, and 17 reminds the people to let brotherly love continue, to be hospitable to strangers, to remember the prisoners who are one with us in the Body of Christ, to keep marriage honorable, to let their conduct be without covetousness, to do good works and share (Kononia) (Heb 13:16), and to obey the spiritual fathers.

In verses 7- 15, St. Paul provides some concluding religious doctrines. He tells us that the clergy is our model of faith, to remember that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8) and thus not to follow strange doctrine such as the Kosher laws of the Old Testament.

Finally, he ends his epistle with a benediction, mentioning Christ as the Great Shepherd in verse 20.



This image illustrates the various titles given to Christ as the Shepherd.



# YOUTH SPIRITUAL COMPETITION 2013

## COLLEGE LEVEL

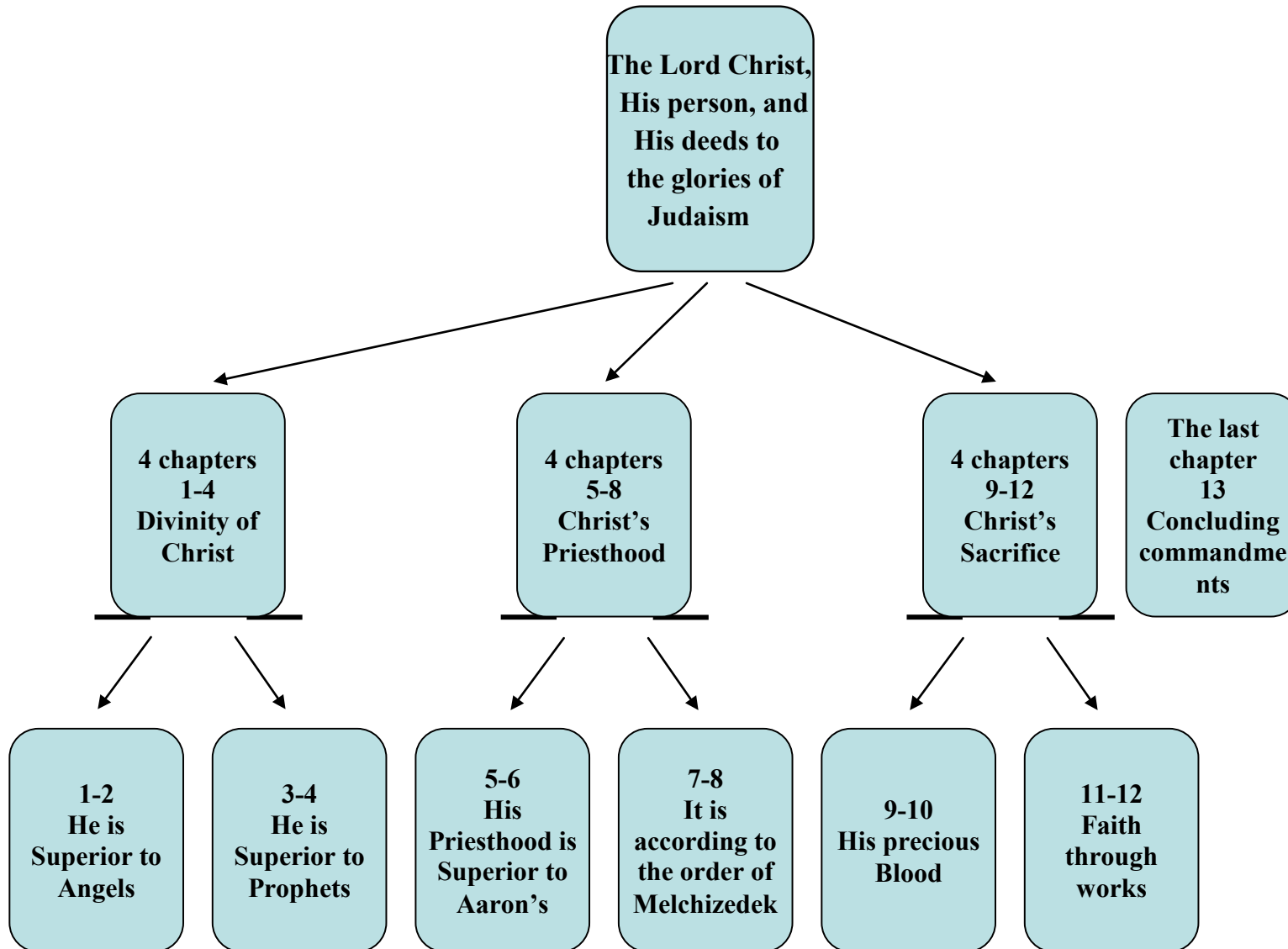
# A Study of The Epistle to the Hebrews

---



## Part II

# Introduction to The Epistle to the Hebrews



**In the Epistle to the Hebrews every two consecutive chapters grouped together provides a certain theme:  
 The First of these two chapters presents: The Faith Doctrine of the theme.  
 The Second: The manifestation of this faith doctrine.**

<b>1. Christ superior to Angels</b>	<b>2. He was incarnate and became man like us and called us His Brethren</b>
<b>3. Christ superior to Moses</b>	<b>4. He leads us to Rest (Heaven) as Moses led his people.</b>
<b>5. Christ as the High Priest is superior to Aaron’s high priesthood</b>	<b>6. We need to understand this superiority through the (Holy Spirit), upon which we would cease from sinning since we are served in the church by a “Heavenly Priesthood” coming from Christ Himself</b>
<b>7. Christ is the High Priest according to the Order of Melchizedek. A person in the Old Testament who’s Genealogy is not recorded. He offered Abraham Bread and Wine.</b>	<b>8. He gave us a new covenant instead of the old one and the old Priesthood, where He offers us Himself through Bread and Wine.</b>
<b>9. Christ offered His Blood and not an animal Sacrifice</b>	<b>10. Having boldness (authority) to enter the Holiest (the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle), where the High Priest enters once a year to offer repentance for his sins and that of all the people. Christ entered Paradise by His Blood, which is a symbol of Christ, offering Himself as a Sacrifice in front of the Father, and hence opening Paradise to all of us afterwards.</b>
<b>11. The Key to Heaven is this Faith (the Faith in</b>	<b>12. This Faith should be striving with perseverance,</b>



<b>Christ as being the end and the goal of the Law and the Prophets). This Faith has been portrayed vividly in the lives of saints of the Old Testament who believed in the coming of a Savior.</b>	<b>resisting sin even until bloodshed.</b>
<b>13. Finally, the road that was opened to Heaven needs guidance and love.</b>	

- **Christ is Superior to all that is written in the Old Testament.**
- **His Blood ties the Old Covenant with the New Covenant**
- **The Epistle was written to the Hebrews, which is why St. Paul did not mention his name. He is being humble by omitting his name because he does not want to appear as a teacher over them. But rather he starts it with the word “God.” This would exhort the Jews to read it.**

- **Written also to the Jews who have fallen in despair upon their faith in Christ due to persecution that befell them. St. Paul is attempting to encourage them after they believed in Christ to endure persecution: .**

*“But recall the former days in which, after your were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven” (Heb. 10:32-34).*

- **It portrayed a marvelous comparison between the Old Testament with its symbols to the New Testament, which has been founded by and upon Christ. The epistle also shows how the symbols are fulfilled in the real thing that it symbolized.**
- **The word Superior is repeated 13 times in this Book**

<b>From Old</b>	<b>To New</b>
<b>Imperfect</b>	<b>Perfect</b>
<b>Shadow</b>	<b>The real image</b>
<b>Blood of Calves and Ox</b>	<b>Blood of Christ</b>
<b>Shadow</b>	<b>The Truth</b>
<b>The great</b>	<b>The Superior</b>
<b>The Symbol</b>	<b>The original</b>
<b>Dim morning light</b>	<b>Bright morning light</b>
<b>A high priest with a weakness</b>	<b>The Son who has been perfected forever Heb. 7:28</b>
<b>Covenant of the Law</b>	<b>Covenant of Christ</b>
<b>Perishing priests</b>	<b>An eternal Priest “There were many priest, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.” Heb. 7:23,24</b>
<b>God speaks to us through prophets</b>	<b>God speaks to us though His Son “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;” Heb.1:1,2</b>
<b>An Old House</b>	<b>A New House (Heaven)</b>

# Chapters 1 & 2

## Christ is Superior to Angels

---

### *Chapter 1*

The Jews sanctified the Angels because of the Jewish tradition; The Law was handed to Moses by an Angel. *“For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward” Heb.2:2*

*“This Moses whom they rejected, saying, ‘Who made you a ruler and a judge? Is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush.’” Acts: 7:35*

<b>Angels</b>	<b>Christ</b>
<b>God Spoke to the people of old in many ways among them through the Angels</b>	<b>God speaks to us now through His Son, who “has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He make the worlds” (Heb. 1:2).</b>
<b>Angels are created “Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire” Heb. 1:7</b>	<b>Christ is the Son of God</b>
<b>Angels praise and glorify the God “Let all the angels of God worship Him” Heb. 1:6</b>	<b>Christ is sitting on the Throne “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom” (Heb. 1:8).</b>
<b>Angels minister to us and help us. “Are thy not all ministering spirits send forth to minister for the those who will inherit salvation” Heb. 1:14</b>	<b>Christ grants us salvation through His Body and Blood. “Granted us salvation and remission of sins and eternal life to those who partake of Him” The Holy Liturgy</b>



**“Having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” Heb. 1:4**

## *Chapter 2*

- **The Lord Jesus Christ, in spite of Him being greater than the angels, He became Incarnate and made Himself less than them even though He is superior to them. *“but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angel, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone/” Heb.2:9 He died for us. He resembled us in everything except for sin. *“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Heb 2:14****
- **And He suffered in order to save us *“For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, he is able to aid those who are tempted”.* Heb.2:18**
- **Therefore, having all this plan being carried out by Christ for our sakes, we should care for our salvation as the verse says *“how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.”* Heb 2:3 [the angels were not able to offer to us what Christ offered us]**

# Chapters 3&4

## Christ is Superior to Prophets

---

### Chapter 3

The comparison in this Chapter is drawn between Christ and Moses, for the latter was the first prophet to lead his people the Israelites out of the land of slavery and crossed with them to the wilderness and stopped by the mountain of Moab to hand them to Joshua to the promised land. Then Christ the real commander, was capable of taking us from the bitterness of slavery to Enter His Rest (Heaven).

Note that a prophet by definition is the one who brings God’s word to the people, and also urges them to repentance. Keeping these roles in mind, Christ very-well can be called a prophet.

<b>Moses (only a prophet)</b>	<b>Christ ( A Prophet and Priest)</b>
<b>Minister to the house of God (The Tabernacle)</b>	<b>Christ is the Builder and owner of the house</b>
<b>He was a prophet only and gave the Priesthood to Aaron</b>	<b>Prophet and a High priest “Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.” Heb. 3:1</b>
<b>Did not enter the promised land “so I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest” Heb. 3:11</b>	<b>Christ promised us Heaven</b>
<b>Joshua finished Moses’ mission</b>	<b>Christ accomplished our salvation to the end</b>

## Chapter 4

**As Moses has led the people, Christ leads us to Enter God's Rest (Heaven), so we fear lest we get rejected like the Israelites *"Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it."* Heb. 4:1**

**God promised the people rest with the Promised Land, but God rejected them at the end. Therefore, we ought also to be vigilant that we do not lose our eternal life, after being born in the church.**

***"For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?" Heb.3:16***

***"And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?" Heb.3:18***

# Chapters 5&6

---

## Chapter 5

**Priesthood in the Old Testament was a dignified office, offered only to Aaron and His sons, later to the tribe of the Levites. But Christ’s Priesthood was not according to Aaron’s, i.e. was not doing the same rituals of offering animal sacrifices, as the priests of the Old Testament. Christ’s priesthood was called to be according to the order of Melchizedek (Genesis 14) , i.e. offering Bread and Wine. Starting with Aaron being the first High Priest called directly by God, but Christ is superior to him because he enters with us to the Heaven and intercedes on our behalf to the Father.**

<b>Qualities of the High Priest</b>	<b>Qualities of Christ</b>
<p><b>Choosing the High Priest among the people “For every High priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins” Heb 5:1</b></p>	<p><b>One of Christ’s titles is the Son of Man</b></p>
<p><b>Appointed for the people and their ministry</b></p>	<p><b>Christ came to minister and save us (“For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve”)</b></p>
<p><b>Has compassion on the people and knows their weaknesses “He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also for himself is also subject to weakness.” Heb.5:2</b></p>	<p><b>(Christ being tempted suffering can have empathy on those who are tempted) “Who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard</b></p>

	<b>because of His godly fear.” Heb. 5:7</b>
<b>The Priest has his own sins and offers sacrifices for himself and for the people. “Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.” Heb. 5:3</b>	<b>Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice (This is He who offered Himself as an acceptable sacrifice on the cross for our salvation, His Good Father smelled it at evening on Golgotha) The Hymn of Fai Etaf Onf</b>
<b>Has his own sins (weakness)</b>	<b>Without sin</b>
<b>God calls him and the Priest seeks this job on his own. “And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was”.Heb.5:3</b>	<b>Christ also, did not glorify Himself to become High Priest but, it was He who said “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.” Heb. 5:5</b>
<b>The Priest dies</b>	<b>Christ is a Priest forever “As He also says in anther place: “You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.” Heb. 5:6</b>

## *Chapter 6*

- **We should understand the sacrifice of Christ for us on the Cross, which He offered once for all for our salvation and we accepted it through Baptism in His name. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come”. Heb 6:4,5**
- **For if we sinned, we crucify Christ again “if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.” Heb. 6:6 For we only have repentance and confession.**



# Chapters 7&8

---

## *Chapter 7* Christ is a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek

**It is so important to for our salvation to understand that Christ is a High Priest. Because approaching God in worship is based on priesthood. Where the congregation approaches God in his house offering their gifts through the priesthood. Or offering their repentance to God in the presence of the priest. This was all a symbol for Christ coming Offering Himself (him being the “offering”) by Himself to death in order to give us Life. “Him” offering Himself means that He is a High Priest.**

**The goal of this Chapter is that St. Paul is proving that the priesthood of Christ is higher in value than that of the Old Testament priesthood, which is the priesthood of Aaron (called in this Chapter the “Aronic priesthood”)**

**He shall do that by two arguments:**

- 1 – The first argument is that Abram (Abraham) gave “tithes” to Melchizedek**
- 2 – The second one, is that Christ came from a tribe that has nothing to do with the Old Testament priesthood. Christ came from the tribe of Judah, but the Old Testament priesthood is kept in the tribe of Levi.**

**Let us understand point number 1:**

**Let us shed some light on Melchizedek. This will explain to us here why Melchizedek is brought into the discussion by St. Paul. Melchizedek is mentioned in Genesis Ch 14:17-20**

<sup>17</sup> After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

<sup>18</sup> Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out **bread and wine**. He was priest of God Most High, <sup>19</sup> and he blessed Abram, saying,

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,  
Creator of heaven and earth.

<sup>20</sup> And praise be to God Most High,  
who delivered your enemies into your hand.”

Then Abram gave him a **tenth** of everything.

**The Key Transaction here is that:**

**Melchizedek gave Abram bread and wine, and Abram gave Melchizedek the tithe (one-tenth)**

**This shows that Abram revered Melchizedek. St. Paul says this means that Abram (Abraham) is less than Melchizedek because the payment of tithe goes from the less religiously to the higher religiously (similar to us as a congregation we give our tithe to the church). And since the Levites (who will be the priests of the Old Testament) will come from the children of Abram, then the Levites are less than Melchizedek. Therefore the priesthood of the Levites is less in power than that of Melchizedek. Also, Melchizedek offered Abram bread and wine, which is a very “unique” offering. This never before or after appeared in the Old Testament. And that is why we call Christ a priest forever according to the Order of Melchizedek (i.e. the system of offering of Melchizedek, i.e. bread and wine)**

**Let us understand Point number 2:**

**That Christ came from another tribe other than Levi, St. Paul is proving to the Jews that Christ’s High Priest is NOT related to Aaron’s priesthood. That the New Testament priesthood is completely novel, and it started by Christ, NOT being an “extension” to the Old Testament priesthood.**

**Not let us delve into the analogy between Melchizedek and Christ, using the following table**

<b>Melchizedek</b>	<b>Christ</b>
<p><b>Offered bread and wine as a sacrifice and they are considered blessings of the earth and time. It was strange for anyone to offer a sacrifice of bread and wine, for it never happened in the Old Testament, but it was a prophecy of Christ</b></p>	<p><b>The body and blood of Christ is eternal life (Antidote for not dying and elixir of life and eternity)</b></p>
<p><b>The meaning of the name is king of peace, King of righteousness Heb. 7:2</b></p>	<p><b>Christ is the king of peace and righteousness (The Hymn of Eporo, sung at the feasts that pertain to Christ: “King of peace, grant us Your peace) The Hymn Eboro</b></p>
<p><b>“Without a father or mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the son of God, remains a priest continually” 7:3</b></p>	<p><b>Christ as the Son of God, has no parents who gave birth to Him. Has has been born, according to the Flesh, from a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit overshadowing her.</b></p>
<p><b>“but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed by the better” Heb.7:6</b></p>	<p><b>“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” Eph. 1:3</b></p>
<p><b>As for priesthood, he is a priest forever “remains priest continually” 7:3</b></p>	<p><b>Christ is a priest forever “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” 7:17</b></p>

- **Christ is the priest according to the order of Melchizedek and not Aaron because he was the symbol of the blessing of the new covenant.**
- **“Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?” Heb.7:11**

<b>What did the Priests according to Aaron’s order offer? (The Law)</b>	<b>What did Christ the Priest according to the order of Melchizedek offer? (New Covenant)</b>
<b>Offered the Law, which was orders and fleshly commandments.</b>	<b>Offered an eternal life</b>
<b>“Who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life”. Heb. 7:16</b>	
<b>Old Testament commandments are difficult to save</b>	<b>Now we have hope for salvation through Christ’s commandments</b>
<b>“For on the one hand there is annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitable ness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God”.” Heb. 7:8,19</b>	
<p><b>The High Priests had sins and offered sacrifices for themselves first and then for the people.</b></p> <p><b>“Also there were many priests, because they wee prevented by death from continuing” Heb. 7:23</b></p> <p><b>“Who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins and then for the people’s for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself” Heb. 7:27</b></p>	<b>Without sin, offered Himself for our sake</b>

<b>Subject to weakness</b>	<b>Without Sin</b>
<b>“The law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints The Son who has been perfected forever: Heb. 7:27</b>	

## *Chapter 8*

- **After The Lord led the Israelites out of Egypt and instructed Moses on the Tabernacle, He instituted a Priesthood to minister to them, established a covenant, and gave them the Law on the Tablets, but the people did not keep the covenant with God.**
- **Then came Christ, the superior High priest, and gave us a New eternal covenant, not as the old one. He is the Minister and Priest to the real house (Heaven) established by God, not by humans, and granted us better promises. He is the Redeemer of sins and trespasses, for the Old Testament priesthood which was based on rituals with animal sacrifices was not able to renew in the internal sinful nature of mankind.**

# Chapters 9 & 10

---

## *Chapter 9*

*A. Comparison between the Two Covenants: The Old and the New*

*B. Confirming the heavenly Covenant provided by Christ as the New Covenant*

**A Covenant or a Testament means a “contract” or an enforceable action or way of interaction between two persons. In the case between God and man, it focuses on the way of the forgiveness of sins. It requires also a place to execute the covenant, or live the covenant, and agents who will carry the covenant out.**

**In the Old Testament, the place is the Tabernacle, and the agents are the priests of the Old Testament. And the repentance (forgiveness of sins) is limited and is done by offering animal sacrifices.**

**In the New Testament, the place is the Church, and the agent is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, followed by the priests whom He ordained. These are the Apostles, who ordained the Bishops, and priests after them, and keeps going till the second coming.**

**The repentance is full, because it has been done by the Blood of Christ, and is propagated in the Church by Baptism and Chrismation to be done once. And if sin comes again, then by Repentance and Confession.**

## **The Tabernacle**

**The place of worship in the Old Testament. It has the items for carrying out the Covenant between God and Man.**

**It has the sanctuary and the outer court.**

**The sanctuary is divided into: The Most Holy and the Holy parts.**

- ❖ **The Most Holy has the Ark of Covenant containing: the Urn of Manna, Aaron's rod, and the Ten Commandments Tablets.**
  
- ❖ **The Holy Part has the Lampstand, the Altar of Incense, and the Table of Showbread.**

**The Outercourt has the Bronze Altar for offering Sacrifices, and the Laver for washings with water.**

**A.**

<b>Old Testament</b>	<b>New Testament</b>
<p>The Holy is ministered by many Priests everyday, while the Most Holy is entered by the High Priest Once a Year only.</p>	<p>The most Holy points to Heaven and it being entered only by the High Priest once a year is symbolic of Christ who entered ONCE and for all by His own Blood on the day of His Crucifixion.</p>
<p><b>Items Found In The Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Golden Censer</u></b></p>	<p><b>It symbolizes...</b></p>
<p>Arch of Covenant symbolizing the divine ember, overlaid with gold from all sides and made of Acacia wood</p>	<p>Emmanuel, God is with us or even better in us through Communion</p>
<p><b><u>The Ark has</u></b></p>	<p><b>Symbolizing...</b></p>
<p>The Pot of Manna which has the manna that came down from God so the people won't die</p>	<p><b>Communion</b></p>
<p><b>The Rod of Aaron</b></p>	<p><b>Christ is the Good Shepard</b></p>
<p><b>The 2 Tablets with God's commandments</b></p>	<p><b>Christ is the Word of God</b></p>
<p>Above the Ark is the Cherubim (two angels) overshadowing the mercy seat</p>	<p>A sign of our unity with the heavenly through Christ</p>
<p><b><u>Sacrifices</u></b></p>	
<p>Sacrifices of the blood of Oxen and Calves sprinkled on the sides "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy place once for all, having obtained eternal</p>	<p><b>Christ offered His Blood You, Christ, are the Priest and you are the Sacrifice, You are the Offerer and the offering</b></p>



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>redemption” Heb. 9:12</b>  <b>“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Heb. 9:14</b></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Purifying the flesh</b>  <b>“For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh” Heb. 9:13</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The consciences and the inner depth of the soul</b>  <b>“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Heb. 9:14</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Blood of animals</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Blood of the Son of God</b></p>

**B. What does a Testament mean in a civil sense: There was a Roman law**

**If the Testator lives then the testament has no power (it can be withdrawn or changed)**

**God (The testator) and the testament (The Law)**

**If the testator dies, then the testament is in force (No one can change it)**

**On The Cross (Christ died), then the testament (covenant) is sealed and confirmed it for us to enjoy Heaven**

## *Chapter 10: Animal sacrifices are limited*

**Covers the idea of limitedness of animal sacrifices, because they were just symbols of the real sacrifice that erases the sin, that is our Lord Jesus Christ.**

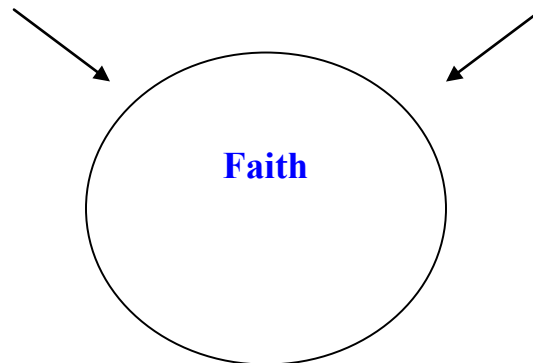
- 1. The weakness of the animal sacrifices**
- 2. The power of the Ultimate sacrifice, our Lord Jesus Christ: Done once, and opens Heaven permanently.**
- 3. Entering the Most Holy can only happen by Blood. The High Priest had to have Blood of animals to sprinkle inside when he enters the Most Holy place once a year. He enters 3 times: once with incense to fill the place with incense , then a second time with the blood of animal that was killed for the priest's sins, and a third time, with the blood of an animal killed for the whole congregation's sins.**
- 4. Through perseverance and faith in The Blood of Christ we can in turn enter the Kingdom of Heaven that has been opened by Christ.**

## *Chapter 11: Definition and saints who showed faith*

It is logical here in the epistle that St. Paul mentions FAITH, for it is what is needed not in order to move from the OLD to the NEW. He proves that by mentioning people of the Old Testament who believed in the coming of a New Covenant. They believed in God so they did things that were out of the ordinary.

1. What is ...

Who are the Men of...



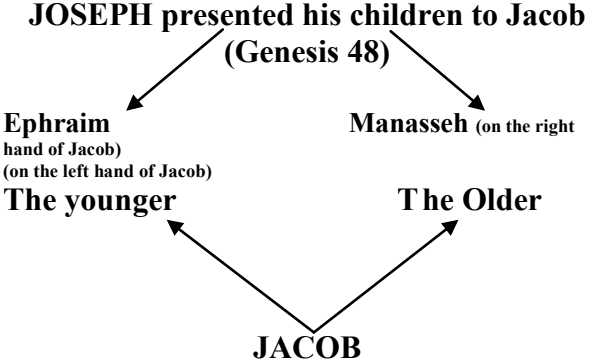
**What is FAITH?**

**“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of thing not seen.” Heb. 11:1**

<b>Men of faith</b>	<b>Sign of their Faith</b>	<b>The Verse</b>	<b>Spiritual lessons</b>
<b>Abel</b>	<b>Offered with faith a sacrifice, better than Cain’s (Even though he died, he speaks). Even though he was killed, through his faith he is alive and speaks with his blood from all the earth</b>	<b>“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks”. Heb. 11:4</b>	<b>We offer for our faith our lives a living sacrifice to Christ.</b>
<b>Enoch</b>	<b>All died in the Old Testament, but God took him and he did not die like the others because of his faith in God (overcame the power of death) Rarely was it said about anyone that pleased God “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” Rom. 3:23 Faith that overcame with its power the power of death because it became equal in its power the God’s love</b>	<b>“By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him” for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God” Heb. 11:5</b>	<b>In the midst of a deceitful and evil world we can shine among all</b>
<b>Noah</b>	<b>He built the Arch and all mocked him and he did not</b>	<b>“By faith Noah obeyed when he was called to go out to the</b>	<b>Noah and his household believed in God (8 people) believed and</b>

	<p>see anything yet his faith told him that if God promised He will fulfill and so Noah believed in God and forgot the world, built the Arch and God saved him.</p>	<p>place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.” Heb. 11:7</p>	<p>God saved them despite the whole world “But whoever keeps His word truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him” 2Pet.2:5</p>
<p>Abraham</p>	<p>God called him to leave his household (they were pagan worshipers except for Abraham) and so he left to the wilderness leaving his household and did not ask God to where He is taking him or what would happen to him, but he followed God.</p>	<p>“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out not knowing where he was going. For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God”. Heb. 11:8</p>	<p>Abraham’s faith allowed him to leave everything dear to him: his hometown, neighbors, and family. Faith is submitting yourself without conditions <i>to whom will take over to the unknown way and a place unknown!</i> ? Without a promise or covenant given, he had obedience without question or explanation. So Abraham fulfilled the definition of faith, faith in things not seen because of the faith in the things that are seen. He did not hope for anything except the face of God who called him.</p>
<p>Sarah</p>	<p>In the conception of Isaac past the age of childbearing.</p>	<p>“By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child</p>	<p>Sarah’s womb was dead, but God brought it back to life. As well as anything you think is dead in you,</p>

		<p>when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude-innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.”  <b>Heb. 11:11,12</b></p>	<p><b>God uses it in your life, God uses your weakness and raises it for St. Moses the black the adulterer became father of monks.</b></p>
<p><b>Abraham</b></p>	<p><b>Offered Isaac to death while remembering that God had promised him that through Isaac he would have a seed, so Abraham believed even if Isaac died that God would raise him because he promised him the seed is through Isaac.</b></p>	<p><b>Heb 11:17-19</b>  <b>(17) By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,</b>  <b>(18) Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:</b>  <b>(19) Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.</b></p>	<p><b>The one who endures tribulations will be crowned at the end. Let us persevere with what God gives us, even if it seems hard, for in it is our purification, sanctification, character building, and proof to God that we love Him.</b></p>

<p><b>Isaac</b></p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p>Eldership is a Blessing</p> </div> <p><b>ESAU being the Older, lost the blessing JACOB being the Younger, stole the blessing. It was the firm belief of JACOB in obtaining the Eldership blessing. A symbol that the later will be blessed more than the earlier. Christ will be source and seal of blessings to all the prophets who preceded Him</b></p>	<p><b>“ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.” Heb. 11:20</b></p>	<p><b>Let us run after the blessings given to us by our elders: the priests, our parents, ... For the older generation bestows prayers and love to the younger one.</b></p>
<p><b>Jacob</b></p>	 <p><b>JOSEPH presented his children to Jacob (Genesis 48)</b></p> <p><b>Ephraim</b> hand of Jacob) (on the left hand of Jacob) <b>The younger</b></p> <p><b>Manasseh</b> (on the right <b>The Older</b></p> <p><b>JACOB</b></p> <p><b>But Jacob CROSSED his hands while blessing them. So he gave the blessing to the younger with his right hand. This hand-crossing was a symbol to the blessings that will come to us by the Cross of Christ.</b></p>	<p><b>“By faith Jacob, when he was dying blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.” Heb. 11:21</b></p>	<p><b>Through the cross is the blessing and power It is the sign when choosing the work.</b></p>

<p><b>Joseph</b></p>	<p><b>Believed that the people will leave Egypt to the Promised land so he instructed them to take his bones with them.</b></p>	<p><b>“By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave them instructions concerning his bones”. Heb. 11:22</b></p>	<p><b>Despite that Joseph and his children lived in the land of Egypt he instructed that his bones be taken to the promised land, teaching us that when living on earth and see through faith the heaven from the earth.</b></p>
<p><b>Moses</b></p>	<p><b>Refused to be called the son of Pharaoh Kept the Passover And crossed the sea</b></p>	<p><b>Heb 11:24-29 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook</b></p>	<p><b>We also ought to focus on our new calling as being Christians, not caring if we are children of wealthy families, or having friends who can open doors in society for us. Moses relied on God and his heart was with his people</b></p>



		<p><b>Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.</b></p> <p><b>By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry <i>land</i>: which the Egyptians trying to do were drowned.</b></p>	
<b>Joshua</b>	<b>The walls of Jericho</b>	<p><b>“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days”. Heb. 11:30</b></p>	<p><b>Encircling the wall seven times did not make sense in the eyes of the unbelievers.</b></p>
<b>Rahab</b>	<p><b>She was a sinful woman, but believed the two Jewish men who came to spy the city of Jericho telling them that for sure they will be victorious. She hid them and took a promise from them that they will spare her family. But put it in practice by hanging the “scarlet ribbon” from her window.</b></p>	<p><b>Heb 11:31</b>  <b>(31) By faith the harlot Rahab <u>perished not</u> with them that believed not, when she had</b></p>	<p><b>This shows us that our past sins can be forgiven if we believe in the Blood of Christ, and act in a manner worthy of the Communion (the scarlet ribbon)</b></p>

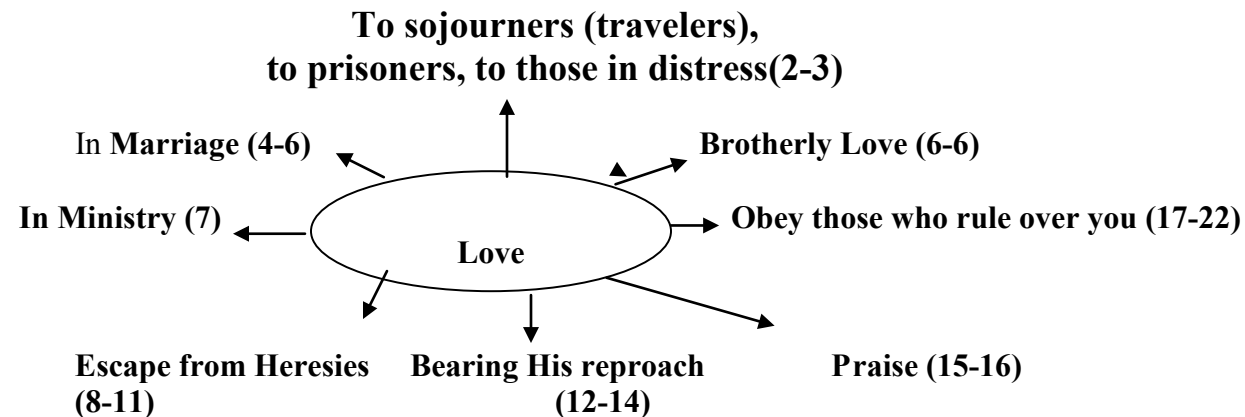
	<p><b>So the Israelites army saw the scarlet ribbon (red in color, like the blood) and spared all Rahab’s household . This Reminds us of the Passover Lamb in Exodus</b></p>	<p>received the spies with peace.</p>	
<p><b>Gideon Barak Samson Jephthah David Samuel</b></p>	<p><b>Defeated Midianites Defeated the Canaanites Defeated the Philistines Defeated the Ammonites Philistines, The Moabites , and the Ammonites The prophet of the country</b></p>		<p><b>When the Lord is for us, who can be of the devils against us!!</b></p>

## *Chapter 12: Enduring Faith Through Perseverance*

- 1. The Saints who are in heaven help us through their prayers for us during our struggles. The saints are mentioned here by St. Paul to show us two things: First, we are not alone in our struggles, and that there are others (being the saints) who went through them but they were able to overcome. Second, that the saints are alive, and that heaven is real, and it is the destiny of those who live it on earth in the church, and they attain it when they depart.**
- 2. Our goal in the struggle is becoming Christ-like; “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”. Heb. 12:2**
- 3. We must Strive against sin even if it reaches shedding our blood resisting it “ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin”. Heb 12:4**
- 4. Our eyes must be on heaven “For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and tempest” Heb. 12:18**

## Chapter 13 *Concluding commandments*

Here is a simple chart where Hebrews 13 is reminding us to love all; God, those who want to guide, and all the people



### The conclusion of the Epistle 23-25

#### 3 points:

1. I love to see you;
2. Send greetings to those who are entrusted with teaching you;
3. those who are here in Italy send you the salutation

#### Heb 13:23-25

(23) Know ye that *our* brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

- (24) Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.**  
**(25) Grace *be* with you all. Amen. <Written to the Hebrews from Italy, by Timothy.>**



YOUTH SPIRITUAL COMPETITION – COLLEGE - 2013

# Jesus Christ Our High Priest: A Study of Hebrews Chapters 7-10:18

---

Bible Study with Patristic Commentary

Prepared by Fr. Kyrillos Ibrahim



Úæo

# Contents

Introduction .....56  
Outline of Hebrews 7 – 10:18 .....62  
Hebrews – Chapter 7 ..... 63  
Hebrews – Chapter 8 ..... 73  
Hebrews – Chapter 9 - 10:18..... 79  
References ..... 91

+++++++ Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Los Angeles +++++++

## Introduction

++++ Please note that a general introduction and overview of the complete Epistle to the Hebrews is provided by the High School YSC Materials which the College is expected to review and be familiar with.++++

### On the Levels of Understanding Scripture

As handed down to the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the early Christians understood and transmitted to future generations that there are essentially two levels of understanding Scripture, especially the text of the Old Testament.

1. The Literal Meaning – The basic literal and historical context or event
2. The Spiritual Meaning – This level is further divided into three additional levels.
  - a. The Typological/Allegorical Sense – e.g. the sacrifice of Isaac, the bronze serpent. How the text relates to the Mystery of Christ.
  - b. The Moral Sense – What does the text teach me? It is the personal application.
  - c. Anagogical Sense – Greek “anago” means to go or rise up. It is the ultimate sense or “eschatological” (future age). It is to see the text from the vantage point of heaven and eternity. How it relates to the Kingdom of God.

### On Typology

St. Cyril of Alexandria emphasizes that his approach to the Old Testament, and indeed the Orthodox approach, to interpretation of the Divine Scriptures, is to first begin with the historical text and then to transfer the historical to the spiritual, especially as it relates to “the Mystery of Christ,” an expression commonly used by St. Cyril to describe the Person and redemptive works of Christ, most especially His Incarnation, Death and Resurrection.

St. Cyril of Alexandria:

“It will be useful to first present the historical acts and, after clarifying these appropriately and transforming the story from being a type and shadow, to make the narrative clear by having our word turn to the mystery of Christ and making Him the ultimate end...”

Thus, St. Cyril describes the progression as: **Historical → Type or Shadow → the Mystery of Christ**



St. Cyril was not an inventor of such a method. As we noted above, it is the Lord Christ Himself who gives us this exegetical method:

- Luke 24:27 – “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”
- John 5:46 – “If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote of Me.”
- Matt. 12:38-40 – “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.’ But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’”
- John 3:14 – “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” Referring to:
  - Numbers 21:8-9 - “Then the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.”
- John 6:48-50 – “I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.”

It is also clear that the Apostles and early Christians immediately began to read the Old Testament searching for Christ. By the second century, St. Irenaeus of Lyons expressed the exegetical tradition of the Church in this manner:

“If anyone, therefore, reads the Scriptures this way, he will find in them the Word concerning Christ...for He was indicated by means of types and parables, which could not be understood by human beings prior to the consummation of those things which had been predicted, that is the advent of the Lord.”

Thus, according to St. Irenaeus, Christ is revealed throughout all the Scriptures, though hidden in a sense, until the consummation (or the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and His accomplishing the works of our Salvation). Now, however, through Christ we find Christ! We see him, as St. Irenaeus points out, through “types and parables.”

Typology, the study of types and pre-figurative symbols, always has a “type” and an “antitype”. The antitype is the purpose and goal; the type is the symbol or shadow. Christ is, therefore, the antitype; Moses and Jonah are types.

Through the methods of interpreting Scriptures handed down to us by our Lord Jesus Christ and preserved and expounded over the generations of the Holy Fathers of the Church, we see the unity of the Biblical text, both Old and New Testament, converging

upon the single most important person in human history, our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ.

## Christ and Melchizedek<sup>1</sup>

Although Melchizedek is mentioned only twice in the Old Testament (OT), the Epistle to the Hebrews, which mentions him in a number of chapters, made of this early portrayal in the OT a basis for the most important teachings of Christianity on the Salvation offered by Christ and on His ministry as a Priest.

Melchizedek appeared first in the Genesis story of Abraham, when the king of Sodom received Abraham (cf. Gen. 14:18-20). Melchizedek was not a part of the war that involved nine kings (cf. Gen. 14:9). Rather, he appeared suddenly to bring forth bread and wine and offer them to God. He blessed God and Abraham, and received the tithe from him. The OT annals of the history of salvation do not mention Melchizedek any further; he suddenly disappeared as he suddenly appeared.

Historically speaking, when Abraham was returning home after defeating the kings and rescuing his nephew Lot from captivity, he passed by the city of Salem. The king of that city, Melchizedek, received him and brought forth bread and wine. In recognition of the king's priesthood, Abraham gave him a tithe of all he had. No doubt, the story puts Melchizedek in a higher rank than Abraham, because he blessed Abraham who acknowledged his priesthood – an act that bewildered Jewish scholars. This is made all the more complex by the wording of the Psalmist, "The Lord has sworn and will not **repent** (change his mind). You are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4), although priesthood has been completely separated from civil leadership and rule since the days of King Saul.

**Throughout history, the Jews never accepted the notion of a king who would combine the attributes of 'sovereign kingship' and 'priesthood.' The Bible and ancient manuscripts attest to the reality of Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18; Josh. 10:1), and to the fact that he combined both kingship and priesthood. The OT also tell us that the priesthood of Christ was according to the order of Melchizedek. These three facts are all what we can draw from the OT.**

The Epistle to the Hebrews made it clear that the mission of the priest is to offer sacrifices as a mediator between God and the people. So, his call to priesthood must come from God as stated in Psalm 110:4 about God's call for Christ to become a priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6). The Epistle underscored the sublime position of Melchizedek when he blessed Abraham and accepted the tithe from him, thereby endorsing the superiority of Melchizedek's priesthood. But Melchizedek was only the symbol of Christ.

*"For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him; and to him Abraham appointed a tenth*

<sup>1</sup> Taken from "Melchizedek", Bible Characters, St. Mark's Orthodox Fellowship, <http://smofonline.org/bible-characters/8-melchizedek-genesis-ch-14>

*part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he continues a priest for ever” (Heb. 7:1-3).*

**St. John Chrysostom discussed the subject in detail saying, “Who is the king of righteousness other than our Lord Jesus Christ? He is also the king of peace: It is He who reconciled himself with all people. He reconciled to himself all things in heaven and on earth (Col. 1:20). Who can be considered the king of righteousness and peace other than our Lord Jesus Christ?”**

The Epistle to the Hebrews also states in the next chapters that the Lord Jesus is the mediator of a new and a more perfect covenant (Heb. 8:6; 9:12, 12:24) and clarifies the superiority of Christ’s priesthood to that of Aaron on account of the following:

- 1) **There were many priests in the OT because they were susceptible to death (7:23), whereas Christ “Because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.” (7:24).**
- 2) **Whereas priests of the Jews were sinners who needed to offer sacrifices for their own sins (5:3, 9:7), Christ was without sin (4:15, 7:26).**
- 3) **OT priesthood was an office taken without an oath, contrary to the priesthood of Christ (7:21).**
- 4) **Sacrifice in the OT was temporary and needed to be offered repeatedly (10:11), but the sacrifice of Christ was unique and done once for all (7:27, 9:12, 9:25-28).**
- 5) **OT priests were human beings with certain weakness, but Christ is ‘the Son who has been perfected for ever’ (7:28).**

**Finally, the Epistle draws the important conclusion that Jesus Christ is the only mediator for a more perfect and a new covenant (8:6, 9:12, 12:24). This is also what St. Paul underscored when he said that “He is the only mediator between God and men’ (1 Tim. 2:5).**

### **The relationship between Aaron’s priesthood and that of Christ**

The Epistle to the Hebrews proves how impossible it is to find a direct relationship between Aaron’s priesthood and that of Christ for one simple reason: Our Lord descended from the tribe of Judah “from which no man has officiated at the altar” and “of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood” (7:13,14). It is therefore wrong to apply the ritual teachings of the OT to the NT since we are dealing with a new priesthood (enacted) according to Melchizedek, a new law and a new covenant (7:12; 8:6).

This does not in any way nullify or invalidate the OT, which is part and parcel of God’s word. But we ought to understand that it is a covenant of symbols and shadows. Only from this perspective do we find that the priesthood of Aaron symbolizes that of Christ

(which is after the order of Melchizedek). All the sacrifices of the OT symbolize that of Christ and help us to understand the allusions implied, bearing in mind the deficiencies and limitations of OT sacrifices and the fallibility and weakness of the OT priests. They represent a contrasting symbol of Christ in the same way that Adam was a symbol of Christ, and Eve of St. Mary.

### **The offering of Melchizedek**

The Lord's choice of bread and wine to establish the mystery of the Eucharist was evidence that His sacrifice was different from all the sacrifices of the Jews. It also clarified that the Lord's public call was not confined to a particular tribe or people, because He intended to make a feast unto all peoples (cf. Is. 25:6).

This all was a clear reference to the offering of Melchizedek as explained by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage in the 3rd century: "In the priest Melchizedek we see the sacrament of the sacrifice of the Lord prefigured, as the Divine Scriptures testify, since it says 'Melchizedek, the king of Salem brought bread and wine for he was a priest of the Most High God, and he blessed Abraham.' Who is greater than our Lord Jesus Christ to become a priest of the Most High God? He offered bread and wine – that is, His Body and Blood – to God the Father after the order of Melchizedek."

The same teaching was reiterated in the 4th century by Ambrose, bishop of Milan, who emphasized the fact that the priesthood of Melchizedek is older than that of Aaron: "The mysteries of Christians are earlier than those of the Jews. If the Jews recourse to Abraham's authority, the symbols of our mysteries existed even before. Melchizedek, the high priest, came to Abraham the victorious and offered him bread and wine. Who brought the bread and wine? Not Abraham but Melchizedek; therefore he is the founder of the sacraments."

St. Augustine finds a relationship between the prophecy of Malachi on the Eucharistic sacrifice (Mal. 1:11) and Melchizedek's offering: "Open your eyes at any time, from sunrise to sunset, to see that Christians do not offer sacrifices in one place only, as was prescribed for the Jews; they offer them in every place, even in Jerusalem itself, not according to the order of Aaron, but according to the order of Melchizedek."

## Outline of Hebrews 7 - 10:18

### **Chapter 7: The Priesthood of Melchizedek**

- A) The Greatness of Melchizedek in Relation to Abraham (7:1-10)
- B) The Greatness of Melchizedek's Order in Relation to the Levitical Priesthood (7:11-28)

### **Chapters 8 and 9: The New Covenant is Superior to the Old**

- A) Introduction (8:1-6)
- B) A Better Covenant (8:7-13)
  - 1) The Inadequacy of the Old Covenant (8:7-9)
  - 2) The Adequacy of the New Covenant (8:10-13)
- C) A Better Sanctuary (9:1-12)
  - 1) The Imperfection of the Earthly Sanctuary (9:1-10)
  - 2) The Perfection of the Heavenly Sanctuary (9:11-12)
- D) Better Sacrifice (9:13-9:28)
  - 1) The Necessity of Shed Blood (9:13-22)
  - 2) The Purification of the Heavenly Sanctuary (9:23-28)

### **Chapter 10:1-18: The Efficacy of Christ's Priesthood**

- A) The Permanence of the Sacrifice (10:1-18)
  - 1) The Inadequacy of the Levitical Sacrifices (10:1-9)
  - 2) The Adequacy of Christ's Sacrifice (10:10-18)

## Hebrews – Chapter 7

### *The Greatness of Melchizedek in Relation to Abraham (7:1-10)*

**1 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. 5 And indeed those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; 6 but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. 8 Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. 9 Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.**

- This section is introduced by the last two verses of Chapter 6: "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.." (6:19-20)
- The priesthood of Christ is examined at two levels: it is *connected* with the royal priesthood of Melchizedek and *contrasted* with the Levitical priesthood of Aaron.
- The name "Melchizedek" means "King of Righteousness" and he was king of "Salem" (later called Jerusalem), translated from Hebrew to mean "peace" – thus, he was the "King of Peace."
- Without father or mother – not literally but in contrast to the requirements for the Levitical priesthood which required proof of Aaronic descent on the father's side and compatible genealogy on the mother's side. Neither Melchizedek nor the Lord Jesus Christ were bound by these restrictions. (See Ezra 2:61-63, Neh 7:63-65)
- Neither beginning nor end – again not literally but in contrast to the age limits set for the priesthood where priesthood began at 30 and ended at 50 (see Num. 4:3, 43). Melchizedek was not restricted since he was before Levitical times and the Lord Jesus Christ's priesthood is forever (Heb 7:24).
- Melchizedek outranks Abraham (from whom would come the Levitical priesthood – i.e. "in his loins") because he blessed the Patriarch Abraham and he received a tithe from the Patriarch – as the priests receive offerings from the laity (Heb. 7:4, Gen. 14:20). For the law to take tithes see Num. 18:21-29.

### **7:1 Priest of the Most High God**

**A Priest Forever.** Eusebius of Caesarea: An ancient priest of the Mosaic order could only be selected from the tribe of Levi. It was obligatory without exception that he should be of the family descending from Aaron and do service to God in outward worship with the sacrifices and blood of irrational animals. But he that is named Melchizedek, which in Greek is translated “king of righteousness,” who was king of Salem, which would mean “king of peace,” without father, without mother, without line of descent, not having, according to the account, “beginning of years or end of life,” had no characteristics shared by the Aaronic priesthood. For he was not chosen by humans, he was not anointed with prepared oil, he was not of the tribe of those who had not yet been born; and, strangest of all, he was not even circumcised in his flesh, and yet he blesses Abraham, as if he were far better than he. He did not act as priest to the Most High God with sacrifices and libations, nor did he minister at the temple in Jerusalem. How could he? It did not yet exist. And he was such, of course, because there was going to be no similarity between our Savior Christ and Aaron, for he was neither to be designated priest after a period when he was not priest, nor was he to become priest, but be it. For we should notice carefully in the words, “You are a priest forever,” he does not say, “You shall be what you were not before,” any more than, “You were that before which you are not now”—but by him who said, “I am who I am,” it is said, “You are, and remain, a priest forever.” ...

And the fulfillment of the oracle is truly wondrous to one who recognizes how our Savior Jesus, the Christ of God, now performs through his ministers even today sacrifices after the manner of Melchizedek’s. For just as he, who was priest of the Gentiles, is not represented as offering outward sacrifices but as blessing Abraham only with wine and bread, so in exactly the same way our Lord and Savior himself first, and then all his priests among all nations, perform the spiritual sacrifice according to the customs of the church and with wine and bread darkly express the mysteries of his body and saving blood. This by the Holy Spirit Melchizedek foresaw and used the figures of what was to come, as the Scripture of Moses witnesses, when it says, “And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abraham.” And thus it followed that to him only was the addition of an oath, “The Lord God has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.’” Proof of the Gospel 5.3.

**Melchizedek Bore a Type of Christ.** Cyprian: Also in the priest Melchizedek we see prefigured the sacrament of the sacrifice of the Lord, according to what divine Scripture testifies and says, “And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine.” Now he was a priest of the Most High God and blessed Abraham. And that Melchizedek bore a type of Christ, the Holy Spirit declares in the psalms, saying from the person of the Father to the Son, “Before the morning star I begat you; you are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.” That order is assuredly this, coming from that sacrifice and thence descending, that Melchizedek was a priest of the Most High God; that he offered wine and bread; that he blessed Abraham. For who is more a priest of the Most High God than our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered a sacrifice to God the Father and offered that



very same thing which Melchizedek had offered, that is, bread and wine, to wit, his body and blood? And with respect to Abraham, that blessing going before belonged to our people. For if Abraham believed in God and it was accounted unto him as righteousness, assuredly whosoever believes in God and lives in faith is found righteous and already is blessed in faithful Abraham and is set forth as justified. This the blessed apostle Paul proves, when he says, "Abraham 'believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' So you see that it is people of faith who are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed.' So then, those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham who had faith." Thus in the Gospel we find that "children of Abraham are raised from stones, that is, are gathered from the Gentiles."<sup>24</sup> And when the Lord praised Zacchaeus, he answered and said, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham." In Genesis, therefore, that the benediction, in respect of Abraham by Melchizedek the priest, might be duly celebrated, the figure of Christ's sacrifice precedes, namely, as ordained in bread and wine. The Lord, completing and fulfilling, offered bread and the cup mixed with wine, and so he who is the fullness of truth fulfilled the truth of the image prefigured. Letter 62.4.

### ***7:2 The Name of Melchizedek***

**In This Name the Mystery Was Inscribed.** Ephrem the Syrian: Now the interpretation of the name Melchizedek is "king of justice" and "king of peace." The apostle indeed demonstrated that in this name the mystery of the grace and justice of the Son, Lord of Melchizedek, was inscribed. Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

### ***7:3 Resembling the Son of God***

**Likeness and Difference.** Chrysostom: And what does Paul say? "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God." And, what is especially noteworthy, he shows the difference to be great by the type itself. For as I said, he continually confirms the truth from the type, from things past, on account of the weakness of the hearers. "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek," whereas Melchizedek was dead and was not "priest forever," see how he explained it mystically...

"And who can say this concerning a man?" He does not assert this, in fact, Paul says; the meaning is that we do not know when or what father he had, nor what mother, nor when he received his beginning, nor when he died. And what of this, one says? For does it follow, because we do not know it, that he did not die, or had no parents? You say well; he both died and had parents. How then was he "without father or mother"? How, "having neither beginning of days nor end of life"? How? From its not being expressed. And what of this? That as this man is, from his genealogy not being given, so is Christ from the very nature of the reality....

Where is the likeness to the Son of God? That we know not of the one or of the other either the end or the beginning. Of the one because they are not written; of the other, because they do not exist. Here is the likeness. But if the likeness were to exist in all respects, there would no longer be type and reality; but both would be type. Here then, just as in representations by painting or drawing, there is something that is like and

something that is unlike. By means of the lines, indeed, there is a likeness of features, but when the colors are put on, then the difference is plainly shown, both the likeness and the unlikeness. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 12.2–3.

**Melchizedek Modeled on Christ.** Ambrose: Let no one claim Divinity resides in an order established by human beings when he encounters such an order. For the church does not consider even Melchizedek, by whose office Abraham offered sacrifice, an angel (as some Jewish interpreters do). It rather considers him a holy man and priest of God who, *prefiguring* our Lord, is described as “without father or mother, without history of his descent, without beginning and without end.” It does this in order to show beforehand the coming into this world of the eternal Son of God who was likewise incarnate and then brought forth without any father, begotten as God without mother, and was without history of descent. For it is written: “Who shall declare his generation?”

This Melchizedek, then, we have received as a priest of God based upon the model of Christ. However, the one we regard as the type, the other as the original. Now, a type is a shadow of the truth. We have accepted the royalty of the one [Melchizedek] in the name of a single city [Jerusalem], but that of the other [Jesus] as shown in the reconciliation of the whole world. For it is written: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself,” that is to say, the eternal Godhead was in Christ. Or, if the Father is in the Son, even as the Son is in the Father, then their unity in both nature and operation is plainly not denied. On the Christian Faith 3.11 [88–89].

**The Twofold Birth of Christ.** John Cassian: Listen, you heretic, to the passage you have garbled: hear in full and completely, what you quoted mutilated and hacked about. The apostle wants to make clear to every one the twofold birth of God. In order to show how the Lord was born [both] in the Godhead and in flesh, he says, “Without father, without mother.” The one belongs to the birth of divinity, the other to that of the flesh. For, as he was begotten in his divine nature “without mother,” so he is in the body “without father.” Though he is neither without father nor without mother, we must believe in him “without father and without mother.” For, if you regard him as begotten of the Father, he is without mother. If you regard him as born of his mother, he is without father. And so in each of these births he has one [parent]: in both [births] together he is without each. For, the birth of divinity had no need of mother; and for the birth of his body, he was himself sufficient, without a father. Therefore says the apostle “Without [father or] mother, without genealogy.” Incarnation of the Lord, Against Nestorius 7.14.

#### **7:4 See How Great He Is**

**The Superiority of Melchizedek.** Chrysostom: “Now consider,” Paul says, “how great this man is to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.” Up to this point he has been applying the type; henceforward, he boldly shows Melchizedek to be more glorious than the Aaronic priesthood. But if he who bears a type of Christ is so much better not merely than the priests, but even than the forefather himself of the priests, what should one say of the reality? You see how superabundantly he shows the superiority.... Have you seen the superiority? Have you seen how great is the interval between Abraham and Melchizedek, who bears the type of our High Priest? And he shows that the superiority had been caused by authority, not necessity. For the one paid

the title, which indicates the priest; the other gave the blessing, which indicates the superior. This superiority passes on also to the descendants. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 12.4.

*The Greatness of Melchizedek's Order in Relation to the Levitical Priesthood (7:11-28)*

**11 Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. 17 For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." 18 For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, 19 for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. 20 And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath 21 (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: "The Lord has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek' "), 22 by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. 23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.**

- God's oath to reestablish the priesthood of Melchizedek (vs. 17) implies that the priesthood of Aaron was deficient and destined to pass away. Its laws and services were powerless to cleanse and perfect the people.
- The Mosaic laws of worship must give way to the Messianic laws of worship (vs. 18-19) based not on the sacrificial rites of the blood of animals but on the efficacy derived from the Blood of Christ.
- Vs. 14 – the use of the word "Lord" (Kyrios) is significant as it is the title of God Himself in the Septuagint (Greek) version of the Old Testament, which was the one best known among the Jews of the first century. Christ sprang out of Judah –

the Kingly tribe not the priestly – Remember Melchizedek was both Priest and King.

- Vs. 17 “a priest forever” – Psalm 110:4 (109 LXX) – the oath of perpetual priesthood on the heir of David (of the tribe of Judah not Levi) – Will be expounded more in 7:23-25. The priesthood of Aaron was without a Divine oath, a revocable and changeable arrangement.
- Vs. 22 ‘Surety’ – A legal term for someone who puts his life on the line for someone else (Sir. 29:15, Gen. 43:9). The oath is from eternity (which could not have been made if Christ were not “living”) and is realized among men at the time of the Incarnation.
- Vs. 25 – Christ exercises on ongoing priestly ministry in heaven interceding at the Father’s right hand.
- Vs. 26 speaks of the Perfect Humanity of Christ.
- Vs. 27 – There were daily sacrifices offered by the priests (Num. 28:1-8) and the annual sacrifice of the Day of Atonement which the High Priest offered for Israel and his own sins (Lev. 16:11-19). Christ, however, offered one sacrifice and for His people not for Himself. (see also Heb. 9:12, 26)

### ***7:11–12 If Perfection Had Been Attainable***

**The Law Comes to an End.** Theodoret of Cyr: If the priesthood according to the law contained perfection, he is saying, on the grounds that through it everything according to the law was fulfilled, why is the giving of another one intended? Why on earth is the promise made to give it not according to the order of Aaron but according to the order of Melchizedek? Actually, all the law’s requirements were fulfilled in the former one: it offered sacrifices, it gave purification from defilement, through it the commandments about festivals were fulfilled, the text says, “for under it the people received the law.”

After thus demonstrating the change of priesthood, he shows also the cessation of the law. The law was likened to the priesthood; so with priesthood coming to an end, the law also suffered the same fate. Interpretation of Hebrews 7.

### ***7:16 The Power of an Indestructible Life***

**Not Broken Down by Death.** Ephrem the Syrian: Paul says, “If perfection had been attainable” through the Levitic house, “for under it the people received the law”—that is, through its agency the law of the people was declared—“what further need would there have been” to elevate another priest from another place, “rather than one named after the order of Aaron,” who was the patriarch of those priests, “but after the order of” the uncircumcised “Melchizedek”?

After thus proving the necessity to change priesthood, Paul begins again to prove that, with this change in the priesthood, the law is changed too. “When there is a change in the priesthood,” he says, “there is necessarily a change in the law as well.” Is there need of a sacrificial law, if sacrifices and priesthood have been abolished?

So Melchizedek, “of whom these things are spoken” even though he was from that generation, came “from another tribe from which no one has ever served at the altar,”

and the one who received his priesthood was certainly not from the Levites, lest he might be estranged from Melchizedek because of his origin.

In fact, “it is evident that our Lord” Jesus Christ “was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.”

For this reason Uzziah was stricken with leprosy, because he wanted to transfer priesthood by his action and move it to the house of Judah, before Jesus, who was from Judah, came and took it in his hour.

“This becomes even more evident” because “another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest not according to a legal requirement concerning bodily descent,” that is, not by being appointed before the people through the aspersion, sanctification, and blood and anointment of priesthood, and through its garments. Our Lord, on the contrary, was appointed and accepted the priesthood “by the power of a life” which is not broken down by death.

He accepted the priesthood through the oath proffered by David, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” Therefore, “a former commandment is set aside,” as well as the previous priesthood, “because of its weakness and uselessness” as a rule. Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

### ***7:17 A Priest Forever, in the Order of Melchizedek***

**The True Pontiff, Jesus Christ.** Braulio of Saragossa: It is better to be in doubt about hidden matters than to quarrel about what is uncertain. Let us turn to what is true and firm, to what most assuredly keeps any Christian and good Catholic from doubting or quibbling. That is, through the sacrament, bread and wine offered to God become for us the true body and blood of Christ, according to the words of the Lord himself and the sacred Scriptures composed by the Holy Spirit. This sacrament the Catholic church offers daily on its altar “after the order of Melchizedek” by the true pontiff, Jesus Christ, with mystical understanding and an ineffable dearth of speech, because surpassing grace goes beyond everything. Letter 42.

**The Mystery of His Sacrifice Is Reenacted in the Eucharist.** Bede: And in the Apocalypse, John the apostle ... says, “Who loved us and washed from us our sins in his blood.” Not only did he wash away our sins in his blood when he gave his blood for us on the cross, or when each of us was cleansed in his baptism by the mystery of his most sacred passion. But he also takes away every day the sins of the world and washes us of our daily sins in his blood, when the memory of his blessed passion is reenacted on the altar, when a created thing, bread and wine, is transformed by the ineffable sanctification of the Spirit into the sacrament of his flesh and blood. Thus his body and blood is not poured forth and slain by the hands of the unfaithful to their own ruin, but he is taken by the mouth of the faithful to their salvation.

The lamb in the law of Passover rightly shows us a type of him, since, having once liberated the people from their Egyptian servitude, it sanctified the people every year by being immolated in memory of their liberation, until he came, to whom such a sacrificial offering gave testimony. When he was offered to the Father for us as a sacrificial offering and for a sweet savor, he transformed, by the lamb that was offered, the mystery of his passion into a created thing, bread and wine, having been made “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” Homilies on the Gospels 1.15.

### **7:18–19 *We Draw Near to God***

**The Law Was Incapable of Providing the Perfect Benefit.** Theodoret of Cyr: The law ceases to have effect, he is saying, and the hope of better things is introduced. It ceases to have effect, not for being evil (the frenzied view of the heretics), but for being ineffective and incapable of providing the perfect benefit. It must be noted, of course, that he refers to the obsolete prescriptions of the law as ineffective and useless—circumcision, sabbath observance and similar things; the New Testament also bids us observe to a greater extent the commandments, you shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, and suchlike things. In place of the former, therefore, we receive the hope of the good things to come: it relates us to God. Interpretation of Hebrews 7.

### **7:20–22 *An Oath and Surety***

**His Resurrection Confirms Our Hope.** Theodoret of Cyr: Since the New Covenant promised us the kingdom of heaven, resurrection from the dead and life everlasting, though none of these is in sight, he had to call the Lord Jesus its “surety,” who through his own resurrection confirmed the hope of our resurrection, on the one hand, and on the other continued to give his own resurrection through the miracles worked by the apostles. Interpretation of Hebrews 7.

**Priests Need to Cease Being Priests.** Theodore of Mopsuestia: He says that it shows the difference between Christ and Aaron in that Christ received the priesthood with an oath. For those who became priests without oaths became so because of their need to cease being priests at some time, but Christ entered the priesthood with oaths, since he intended to remain based on his rank. He shows his rank is far greater than those under the law, since he intended also to furnish a greater high priest to those coming to him. For in this way he says he becomes “a surety” ... for being the first to rise, just as he also calls him a “high priest,” so he pledges to us a similar resurrection. Fragments on the Epistle to the Hebrews 7.20–22.

### **7:25 *He Always Lives to Make Intercession***

**He Stands Before the Altar.** Origen: Jesus now stands “before the face of God interceding for us.” He stands before the altar to offer a propitiation to God for us. As he was about to approach that altar, moreover, he was saying, “I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until I drink it anew with you.” Therefore, he expects us to be converted, to imitate his example, to follow his footsteps, that he may rejoice with us and “drink wine with us in his Father’s kingdom.” For now, because “the Lord is merciful and gracious,” he “weeps with those who weep and desires to rejoice with those who rejoice” with greater feeling than this apostle. And how much more “this one mourns over many of those who sinned before and have not repented.” For we must not think that Paul is mourning for sinners and weeping for those who transgress, but Jesus my Lord abstains from weeping when he approaches the Father, when he stands at the altar and offers a propitiatory sacrifice for us. This is not to drink the wine of joy “when he ascends to the altar” because he is still bearing the bitterness of our sins. He, therefore, does not want to be the only one to drink wine “in the kingdom” of God. He waits for us, just as he said,

“Until I shall drink it with you.” Thus we are those who, neglecting our life, delay his joy. Homilies on Leviticus 7.2.3.

**As Man He Intercedes.** Gregory of Nazianzus: Petition does not imply here, as it does in popular parlance, a desire for legal satisfaction; there is something humiliating in the idea. No, it means interceding for us in his role of mediator, in the way that the Spirit too is spoken of as “making petition” on our behalf. “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” Even at this moment he is, as human, interceding for my salvation, until he makes me divine by the power of his incarnate humanity. “As human,” I say, because he still has with him the body he assumed, though he is no longer “regarded as human,” meaning the bodily experiences, which, sin aside, are ours and his. This is the “advocate” we have in Jesus—not a slave who falls prostrate before the Father on our behalf. Get rid of what is really a slavish suspicion, unworthy of the Spirit. It is not in God to make the demand, nor in the Son to submit to it; the thought is unjust to God. No, it is by what He suffered as man that He persuades us, as Word and encourager, to endure. That, for me, is the meaning of his “advocacy.” On the Son, Theological Oration 4(30).14.

**He That Has All Judgment Also Intercedes.** Chrysostom: For this cause then he saves, because he dies not. Inasmuch as “he always lives,” he has, he means, no successor; and if he has no successor, he is able to aid all people. For there under the law indeed, the high priest, although he were worthy of admiration during the time in which he was high priest as Samuel, for instance, and any other such, but, after this, no longer; for they were dead. But here it is not so, but “he” saves “to the uttermost.” What is “to the uttermost”? He hints at some mystery. Not here only, he says, but there also he saves them that “draw near to God through him.” How does he save? “Since he always lives,” he says, “to make intercession for them.” Do you see the humiliation? Do you see the manhood? For he says not that he obtained this by making intercession once for all, but continually and whenever it may be needful to intercede for them. “To the uttermost.” What is it? Not for a time only, but there also in the future life. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 13.6.

### **7:26–28 *The Appointed Son***

**He Became Us.** Basil the Great: Although we are not his brothers but have become his enemies by our transgressions, he who is not mere man, but God, after the freedom that he bestowed on us, also calls us his brothers. “I will tell of your name,” he says, “to my brethren.” Now, he who has redeemed us, if you examine his nature, is neither brother nor man; but if you examine his condescension to us through grace, he calls us brothers and descends to our human nature. He does not need a ransom, for he himself is the propitiation. Homilies on the Psalms 19.4 (Psalm 48).

**The Only Son of God.** Augustine: Who then is so just and holy a priest as the only Son of God, who had no need of a sacrifice for the washing away of his own sins, neither original sins nor those that are added from human life? And what could be so fittingly chosen by men to be offered for them as human flesh? And what so suitable for this immolation as mortal flesh? And what so clean for cleansing the vices of mortals as the flesh born in the womb without the contagion of carnal concupiscence, and coming from

a virginal womb? And what could be so acceptably offered and received as the flesh of our sacrifice made the body of our priest? Four things are to be considered in every sacrifice: by whom it is offered, to whom it is offered, what is offered, and for whom it is offered. On the Trinity 4.14.19.



## Hebrews – Chapter 8

### *Introduction (8:1-6)*

---

**1 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. 4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.**

---

- Vs. 1 – St Paul is indicating that this is the main idea of His Epistle. It is referring to Psalm 110 (109) being fulfilled in Christ. See Mt. 22:41-46 where in citing Psalm 110 (109) Jesus shows that he is not merely a descendant of David through physical lineage, but that as the divine Messiah He is much greater than David. Jesus is the Son of David in His humanity, and thus David's successor, while He is also the divine Son of God, and in this David's superior Lord.
- Christ ascended to Heaven with His Human Nature. This is a great mystery that the Son is now forever known as God and Man!
- Vs. 2 – the true tabernacle is the dwelling place of God in heaven, of which the Mosaic tabernacle was only a model and reflection of.
- Vs. 3 – the Levitical priests offered the blood of bulls and goats in the earthly sanctuary (Lev. 16:14-15). Christ offers His own Humanity, His Body and Blood as an eternal sacrifice. The Eucharist is a participation and realization of this once and for all sacrifice. Christ is the eternal celebrant of the Heavenly Liturgy.
- Vs. 4 is referring to the fact that Jesus was not of the tribe of Levi but of Judah.
- Vs. 5 – Moses received instruction (Ex. 24:18) on how to construct the Tabernacle based on a vision of the Heavenly sanctuary (Acts. 7:44).
- Vs. 6 – the word "ministry" is actually "leitourgias" in Greek, that is Christ is the eternal "liturgist" as a priest offering continuing intercession for us. The promises of the other covenant were earthly, but in the New, through our worship in the Divine Liturgy, we have a participation in the heavenly things and promises....a true foretaste of the Kingdom of God, where God Himself is our inheritance!

### **8:1-2 The True Tent**

**Sitting at the Right Hand Indicates Honor.** Basil the Great: What just defense shall we have in the day of the awful universal judgment of all creation, if, when the Lord clearly announces that he will come “in the glory of his Father”; when Stephen beheld Jesus standing at the right hand of God; when Paul testified in the Spirit concerning Christ “that he is at the right hand of God”; when the Father says, “Sit at my right hand”; when the Holy Spirit bears witness that he has sat down on “the right hand of the majesty” of God—what defense shall we have when we attempt to degrade him, who shares the honor and the throne, from his condition of equality to a lower state? Standing and sitting, I apprehend, indicate the permanence and entire stability of the nature, as Baruch, when he wishes to exhibit the immutability and immobility of the divine mode of existence, says, “For you sit forever and we perish utterly.” Moreover, the place on the right hand indicates, in my judgment, equality of honor. It is rash, then, to attempt to deprive the Son of participation in the doxology, as though worthy only to be ranked in a lower place of honor. On the Spirit 6.15.

**Christ Sent to Found a New Temple.** Lactantius: Let people therefore learn and understand why the Most High God willed that he should be clothed with mortal flesh, afflicted with torture and sentenced to death when he sent his ambassador and messenger to instruct mortals with the precepts of his righteousness. For since there was no righteousness on earth, he sent a teacher, as it were, a living law to found a new name and temple so that, by his words and example, he might spread throughout the earth a true and holy worship. However, in order that people might know for sure that he was sent by God, it was fitting that he should not be born as human beings are born, composed of a mortal on both sides. Rather, so that it might appear that he was heavenly even in the form of man, he was born without the office of a father. For he had a spiritual Father—God. And, as God was the Father of his spirit without a mother, so a virgin was the mother of his body without a father. He was therefore both God and man, being placed in the middle between God and man. From which the Greeks call him *Mesitēs*, that he might be able to lead humankind to God—that is, to immortality. For if he had been God only (as we have before said), he would not have been able to afford to people examples of goodness; if he had been man only, he would not have been able to compel people to righteousness, unless there had been added an authority and virtue greater than that of man. Divine Institutes 4.25.

### **8:3 Appointed to Offer Gifts and Sacrifices**

**The Word of God Sacrificed His Flesh for Our Salvation.** Athanasius: I am very much surprised how they have ventured to entertain the idea that the Word became man in consequence of his nature. For, if this were so, the commemoration of Mary would be superfluous. For nature has no conception of a virgin bearing apart from a man. By the good pleasure of the Father, being true God, and Word and Wisdom of the Father by nature, he became man in the body for our salvation in order that, having something to offer for us he might save us all, “as many as through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” For it was not some man that gave himself up for us; since every man is under sentence of death, according to what was said to all in Adam, “earth you are and unto earth you shall return.” Nor yet was it any other of the creatures, since every creature is liable to change. But the Word himself offered his own body on our

behalf that our faith and hope might not be in man, but that we might have our faith in God the Word himself. Letter 61, To Maximus 3.

**Christ the Perfect Priest, Perfect Victim.** Augustine: They do not understand that not even the proudest of spirits could themselves rejoice in the honor of sacrifices unless a true sacrifice was due to the one true God in whose place they desire to be worshiped. This sacrifice cannot be rightly offered except by a holy and righteous priest, and it also must be received by those for whom it is offered. And it also has to be without fault, so that it may be offered for cleansing those with faults. This is at least what everyone does who wants a sacrifice to be offered for themselves to God. Who then is so righteous and holy a priest as the only Son of God who had no need to purge his own sins by sacrifice, neither original sins nor those that are added by human life? And what could human beings more appropriately choose to be offered for themselves than human flesh? And what could be more fitting for this immolation than mortal flesh? And what could be cleaner for cleansing the faults of mortals than the flesh born in and from the womb of a virgin without any infection of carnal desires? And what could be more acceptably offered and taken than that the flesh of our sacrifice be the body of our priest? And so, where four things are to be considered in every sacrifice—(1) to whom it is offered, (2) by whom it is offered, (3) what is offered, (4) for whom it is offered—the same one and true mediator himself, reconciling us to God by the sacrifice of peace, might remain one with him [the Father] to whom he offered, might make those one in himself for whom he offered, and he himself might be in one both the offerer and the offering. On the Trinity 4.14.1 [19].

### **8:4–6 *Shadow of the Heavenly Sanctuary***

**Worthy of the Heavens.** Chrysostom: Here we must apply our minds attentively and consider the apostolic wisdom. For again he shows the difference of the priesthood, “who,” he says, “serve a copy and shadow of heavenly things.” What are the heavenly things he speaks of here? The spiritual things. For although they are done on earth, yet nevertheless they are worthy of the heavens. For when our Lord Jesus Christ lies slain as a sacrifice, when the Spirit is with us, when he who sits on the right hand of the Father is here, when sons are made by the washing, when they are fellow citizens of those in heaven, when we have a country and a city and citizenship there, when we are strangers to things here, how can all these be other than “heavenly things”? But what! Are not our hymns heavenly? Do not we also who are below utter in concert with them the same things that the divine choirs of bodiless powers sing above? Is not the altar also heavenly? How? It has nothing carnal. All spiritual things become the offerings. The sacrifice does not disperse into ashes or into smoke or into steamy savor. It makes the things placed there bright and splendid. How again can the rites that we celebrate be other than heavenly? For when he says, “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained,” when they have the keys of heaven, how can all be other than heavenly? On the Epistle to the Hebrews 14.3.

**Much More Excellent.** Theodoret of Cyr: He concisely brought out the superiority: whereas the Old Covenant had corporeal promises associated with it—a land flowing

with milk and honey, olive groves and vineyards, big families and suchlike things—the New had an eternal and heavenly kingdom. Interpretation of Hebrews 8.

*The Inadequacy of the Old Covenant vs. the Adequacy of the New Covenant (8:7-13)*

**7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- 9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." 13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.**

- The New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah 31:31-34 (LXX 38:31-34), the only place in the Old Testament where the “New Covenant” is mentioned specifically. The New Covenant is inscribed on the heart, makes a deeper knowledge of God possible, and wipes away the memory of sin through an efficacious remission of sins. Christ spoke of His “blood of the New Covenant” at the Last Supper.
- The New Covenant results in a true conversion and transformation, not through inheritance or outward adherence to laws and rites.
- Vs. 13 – A strong indication that the sanctuary (Jerusalem Temple) and its apparatus (Levitical Priesthood and sacrificial system) were still in place and the time of the writing of this Epistle. This was all brought to naught with the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. by the Romans.

**8:6–9 *The Mediator of a Better Covenant***

**Everything Is Better in the Lord.** Athanasius: “It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” Both in the verse before us, then, and throughout, does he ascribe the word *better* to the Lord, who is better and other than originated things. For better is the sacrifice through him, better the hope in him and also the promises through him, not merely as great compared with small, but the one differing from the other in nature, because he who conducts this economy, is *better* than things originated. Four Discourses Against the Arians 1.13.8 [59].

**8:10–11 *Written on Their Hearts***

**The Apostles Received Nothing in Writing.** Chrysostom: “No longer,” he says, “shall the covenant be in writings, but in hearts.” Let the Jew, in that case, show if this was ever carried into effect, but he could not, for it was made a second time in writings after the return from Babylon. But I show that the apostles received nothing in writing, but received it in their hearts through the Holy Ghost. Therefore also Christ said, “When he comes, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” On the Epistle to the Hebrews 14.5.

**A Holy Rental Agreement.** Clement of Alexandria: [He bestows] on us the truly great, divine and inalienable inheritance of the Father, deifying us by heavenly teaching, putting his laws into our minds and writing them on our hearts. What laws does he inscribe? “That all shall know God, from small to great”; and, “I will be merciful to them,” says God, “and will not remember their sins.” Let us receive the laws of life, let us comply with God’s exhortations; let us become acquainted with him, that he may be gracious. And though God needs nothing, let us give him the grateful compensation of a thankful heart and of a holy life as a kind of rental payment for our dwelling here below. Exhortation to the Heathen 11.

### **8:12–13 A New Covenant**

**New in Part.** Chrysostom: A covenant might be said to be “new” when it is different and shows some advantage over the old. Surely one might say it is new also when part of it has been taken away and part not. For instance, when an old house is ready to fall down, if a person, leaving the whole, has patched up the foundation, we say he has made it new when he has taken some parts away and brought others into their place. For even the heaven also is thus called “new,” when it is no longer “of brass” but gives rain; and the earth likewise is new when it is not unfruitful, not when it has been changed; and the house is likewise new, when portions of it have been taken away and portions remain.... But, do you see how this interpretation breaks down? I maintain that this covenant must be called “new” in the proper sense of the word.<sup>71</sup> ... In calling it new, Paul says, “he treats the first as obsolete, and what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.” ... Therefore it is done away with and is perishing and no longer exists.

Paul here used a familiar form of speech, as if one should say, the house is not faultless; that is, it has some defect, it is decayed. The garment is not faultless, that is, it is coming to pieces. He does not, therefore, here speak of the old covenant as evil, but only as having some fault and deficiency. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 14.6–7.

**Christ the Testator of the New Testament.** Lactantius: All Scripture is divided into two Testaments. What preceded the advent and passion of Christ—that is, the law and the prophets—is called the Old [Testament]; but what was written after his resurrection is named the New Testament. The Jews make use of the Old, we of the New. Yet, they are not dissonant. The New Testament is the fulfilling of the Old, and in both there is the same testator, even Christ who suffered death for us and made us heirs of his everlasting kingdom.... When, therefore, we who were in time past as it were blind, and as it were shut up in the prison of folly, were sitting in darkness, ignorant of God and of the truth, we have been enlightened by him, who adopted us by his testament; and having freed us

from cruel chains, and brought us out to the light of wisdom, he admitted us to the inheritance of his heavenly kingdom. Divine Institutes 4.20.

**The Old Man Vanishes in Christ.** Gregory of Nyssa: Mighty Paul knew that the only begotten God, who has the preeminence in all things, is the author and cause of everything that is good. Paul witnesses to the fact that the creation of all that exists was formed by the only begotten God. On top of this he also testifies that when the original creation of man had decayed and vanished away (to use his own language), and another new creation was formed in Christ, in this too no other than he [the only begotten God] took the lead. But he is himself the firstborn of all that new creation of human beings which is effected by the gospel. Against Eunomius 2.8.

## Hebrews – Chapters 9 through 10:18

### *The Imperfection of the Earthly Sanctuary (9:1-10)*

**1 Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. 2 For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; 3 and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, 4 which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; 5 and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. 6 Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. 7 But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; 8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. 9 It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience-- 10 concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.**

- The layout of the Mosaic Tabernacle – the Sanctuary was composed of two chambers: the outer tent or Holy Place, where the priests of Israel performed regular duties, and the inner tent, or Holy of Holies, where the High Priest alone could enter one a year. St Paul sees the two chambers as symbolizing the first (Mosaic) and second (New) covenants, as well as earth and heaven. Christ passed from the Old Covenant into the New once for all time when He ascended to sit at the Right Hand of the Father.
- Vs. 2 – the Holy Place consisted of lampstand (Ex. 25:31-37), a table overlaid with gold (Ex. 25:23-29) and 12 loaves of the bread of presence (Ex. 25:30, Lev. 24:5-8).
- Vs 3 – The second veil/curtain – Partition between the Holy Place and Holy of Holies (Ex. 26:31-33).
- The Holy of Holies – Housed the Ark of the Covenant, the golden chest that served as the earthly throne of God (Ex. 25:10-15). The Ark was topped with the mercy seat and its two cherubim (Ex. 25: 17-22) and inside it were the two tablets of the covenant (Ex. 25:16), a jar of manna (Ex. 16:33) and the rod of Aaron (Num. 17:8-10)
- Vs. 8 – its existence showed that the passage was not available to all, that perfect communion was not yet possible. It is Christ who leads His people through, from the earthly to the heavenly.

- Vs. 10 shows limitations of the effectiveness of the rites – they had to do with the body and the violation of a ritual nature.

### **9:1–5 A Tent Was Prepared**

**An Earthly Sanctuary.** Theodoret of Cyr: This is the term he used of the tabernacle, which represents a type of the whole world: it is divided into two down the middle by a veil, one part of it called Holy, the other Holy of Holies. While the Holy represented the way of life on earth, the Holy of Holies represented life in heaven. The veil itself performed the function of the firmament... Accordingly, just as he separates what is below from what is above, so the veil stretched out in the middle of the tabernacle divided the Holy of Holies from the Holy. Interpretation of Hebrews 9.

### **9:8–10 The Outer Tent Is Still Standing**

**The Present Age Is Before Christ.** Chrysostom: “This is a symbol for the present age,” the apostle says. What does he mean by “the present”? That time before the coming of Christ, for, after the coming of Christ, it is no longer a present age. How could it be, having arrived and being ended? There is something else as well that he indicates when he says, “which is symbolic for the present age,” that is, became the type. “Gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper.” You see now what is the meaning of “The law made nothing perfect,” and “If that first covenant had been faultless.” How? As pertaining to “the conscience.” For the sacrifices did not put away the defilement from the soul but still were concerned with the body: “after the law of a carnal commandment.”<sup>38</sup> On the Epistle to the Hebrews 15.3.

**He Does Not Reject the Law as a Whole.** Theodoret of Cyr: We are being taught through figures, he is saying, that the law bears of this life and is appropriate for those who still have a moral nature.... He also clearly taught us in these words that he does not reject the law as a whole—only the regulations about eating and drinking, menstruation, leprosy, childbirth and periods; they washed themselves and purified themselves with sprinkling, but none of this could make the conscience pure. Now none of these was imposed without reason but to meet some need, specifying which is not relevant at the present time. They were all temporary, however, looking forward to the time of perfection. Interpretation of Hebrews 9.

### *The Perfection of the Heavenly Sanctuary (9:11-12)*

---

**11 But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.**

---

- “Not made with hands” – Not earthly. No human effort was involved in building the great and more perfect tabernacle. See Mark 14:58.
- “Once for All” – as opposed to the once a year entrance of the high priests. He entered with His own blood into the heavenly tabernacle.



### **9:11 Priest of the Good Things**

**Not Made with Hands.** Theodoret of Cyr: Here he referred to human nature, which Christ the Lord assumed. It was not made in accordance with the law of marriage: the all-holy Spirit was responsible for the tabernacle. Interpretation of Hebrews 9.

**The New Tabernacle of the Church.** Severian of Gabala: The tent built under Moses was to signify servitude [to the law]. Therefore, the more perfect tent is the dwelling of grace, the body of Christ whose head is Christ himself. Fragments on the Epistle to the Hebrews 9.11.

---

#### *The Necessity of Shed Blood (9:13-22)*

---

**13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. 16 For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. 18 Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.**

---

- Vs 13 – See Ex. 24:5, Lev. 16:15, Num 19:1-13
- Vs 14 – Christ united His Humanity to His Divinity (eternal by nature) and His sacrifice is thus eternal. Through the Spirit indicates that all of the redemptive works of Christ are Trinitarian. The Savior's Body was prepared for sacrifice by the Holy Spirit (see Matt. 1:18-20; Lk 1:35).
- He Offered Himself – Jesus is both priest and victim (sacrifice). His sacrifice brings us into a new freedom for worship ("cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God"). The old sacrifices did not cleanse our conscience since they were external and did not penetrate to bring about a true transformation and renewal of our nature.
- Vs. 16 – Testament here means will, as in a last will, which goes into effect with the death of the testator (the one who made it). Christ's gift of eternal salvation to

sinner is effective because of His death! The first covenant was sealed and ratified in blood.

- Vs. 20 – Compare “This is the blood...” with Jesus’ words at the Last Supper, “This is my blood of the covenant.” (Mt. 26:28). He is drawing a parallel with Sinai (Old Covenant) and the Last Supper (New Covenant).

### **9:12–14 *Securing an Eternal Redemption***

**For All Nations.** Ephrem the Syrian: Our Lord did not enter yearly like their high priest. After his coming he entered only once, not into the shrine which ceases, like their priesthood, but “into the Holy” of Holies of eternity, and he made a propitiation through his blood for all nations. Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

**Dead Works Defile the Conscience.** Chrysostom: “Shall purify your conscience,” the apostle says, “from dead works.” And well said he “from dead works”; if any man touched a dead body, he was polluted. And here also, if any touch a “dead work,” those ones are defiled through their conscience.... Here the apostle declares that it is not possible while one has “dead works to serve the living God,” for they are both dead and false. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 15.5.

### **9:15–17 *The Mediator of a New Covenant***

**He Died for Us.** Chrysostom: How did he become mediator? He brought words from God and brought them to us, conveying what came from the Father and adding his own death. We had offended; we ought to have died. He died for us and made us worthy of the covenant. By this is the covenant secure, in that henceforward it is not made for the unworthy. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 16.2.

**The Death of the Testator Was Prefigured.** Augustine: Inasmuch as the apostle says to the Hebrews, “A will takes effect only at the death of the one who made it,” he therefore asserts that, with Christ’s death for us, the new covenant has become valid. Its likeness was the old covenant, in which the death of the testator was prefigured in the sacrificial victim. Therefore, if one should ask how it is that we, in the words of the same apostle, are “children and heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,” since of course the inheritance is made valid by the death of the deceased and since an inheritance cannot be understood in any other way, the answer is this: he himself having in fact died, we have become heirs because we were also called his sons. “The sons of the bridegroom,” he says, “do not fast while the bridegroom is with them.”<sup>35</sup> Therefore we are called his heirs, for he has left the peace of the Church, a peace which we possess in this life, in our possession through faith in the divine plan of salvation revealed in time. On Eighty-three Varied Questions 75.1.

### **9:19–22 *Sprinkled with the Blood***

**Why Is the Book of the Testament Sprinkled?** Chrysostom: “When every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both

the book itself and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.' " Tell me then, why is the book of the covenant sprinkled and also the people, except on account of the precious blood, figured from the first? Why "with hyssop"? It is close and retentive? And why the "water"? It shows forth also the cleansing by water. And why the "wool"? This also was used, that the blood might be retained. In this place blood and water show forth the same thing, for baptism is his passion. "And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." Why the "almost"? Why did he qualify it? Because those ordinances were not a perfect purification or a perfect forgiveness of sins, but [they were] half-complete and in a very small degree. But in this case he says, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Where then is "the book"? He purified their minds. They themselves then were the books of the new covenant. But where are "the vessels used in worship"? They are themselves. And where is "the tabernacle"? Again, they are; for "I will live in them," he says, "and move among them." On the Epistle to the Hebrews 16.3-4.

**Cleansed by the Lord's Blood.** Philoxenus of Mabbug: Those who desire perfection must keep all the commandments, since the working of the commandments heals the powers of the soul. The practice of the commandments is not accomplished simply and by chance, for it is written that, "There is no remission without the shedding of blood." Our nature first received renewal through the incarnation of Christ, and it participated in His passion and death, and then, after the renewal of the shedding of blood, our nature was renewed and sanctified and became able to receive his new and perfect commandments. For if the new commandments had been given to men before the shedding of the Lord's blood, before our nature was renewed and sanctified, then it is perhaps possible that even the new commandments, like those of old, would have merely cut off vice from the soul but would have been unable completely to pluck out the very root of vice from her. But now it is not so; now there is a secret labor that accompanies the new, spiritual commandments. When the soul keeps these through the circumspection of the fear of God, they renew her, sanctify her and secretly heal all her members. For it is obvious which passion is quietly cured in the soul by each commandment. The operation of the commandments is perceived only by the healer and the healed, after the likeness of the woman who had an issue of blood. Letter to Abba Symeon of Caesarea.

*The Purification of the Heavenly Sanctuary (9:23-28)*

---

**23 Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another-- 26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He**

**has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, 28 so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.**

---

- Vs. 23 - The purification or sanctification of earthly things that were patterns of heavenly things was necessary because they belonged to sinful man and part of the physical world corrupted by sin..
- Vs. 24 – Christ who is from Heaven returns in His glorified human nature, having made man worthy by His sacrifice...this we can now enter with Him. He is the “first-fruits”.
- Vs. 25 – Christ’s sacrifice is once for all, not in need of repetition in contrast with the old covenant.
- Vs. 28 – Christ will come again in glory to receive the saints to share in His glory.

### **9:23–24 *In the Presence of God on Our Behalf***

**Heaven Is What Is Ours.** Chrysostom: “Thus it was necessary for the copies,” he says, “of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” And how are they “copies of the heavenly things”? And what does he mean now by “the heavenly things”? Is it heaven? Or is it the angels? None of these, but what is ours. It follows then that our things are in heaven, and heavenly things are ours, even though they be accomplished on earth; since although angels are on earth, yet they are called “heavenly.” The cherubim appeared on earth but yet are heavenly. And why do I say “appeared”? No, rather, they dwell on earth, as indeed in paradise, but this is nothing, for they are heavenly. And “our commonwealth is in heaven,” and yet we live here. “But these are the heavenly things,” that is, the philosophy which exists among us, those who have been called to heaven.

“With better sacrifices than these.” What is “better” is better than something else that is good. Therefore, “the copies of the heavenly things” have become good, though the copies were not evil; else the things whereof they are copies would also have been evil. If then we are heavenly and have obtained such a sacrifice, let us stand in awe. Let us no longer continue on the earth; for even now it is possible, for him that wishes it, not to be on the earth. For whether one is or is not of the earth is the effect of moral disposition and choice. For instance, God is said to be in heaven. Why? Not because he is confined by space—far from it—nor as having left the earth destitute of his presence, but by his relation to and intimacy with the angels. If then we also are near to God, we are in heaven. For what care I about heaven when I see the Lord of heaven, when I myself am become a heaven? For he says, “We will come,” I and the Father, “and make our home with him.” Let us then make our soul a heaven. The heaven is naturally bright; for not even in a storm does it become black, for it does not itself change its appearance, but the clouds run together and cover it. Heaven has the Sun; we also have the Sun of Righteousness. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 16.6–7.

**The Heavenly Perspective.** Chrysostom: Let us then become heaven. Let us mount up to that height, whence we shall see people differing nothing from ants. I do not speak of the poor only, nor the many, but even if there be a general there, even if the emperor is there, we shall not distinguish the emperor or the private person. We shall not know what is gold or what is silver, what is silken or purple raiment. We shall see all things as if they were flies, if we are seated at that height. There is no tumult there, no disturbance or clamor....

For there is no hindrance, no, not any, but that we may rise above all people, if we have the will. For if we are so successful in arts that are beyond the reach of most people, much more may we rise in that which does not require so great labor. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 16.8–9.

**The Holy of Holies Is Heaven.** Origen: If the ancient custom of sacrifices is clear to you, let us see what these things also contain according to the mystical understanding. You heard that there were two sanctuaries: one, as it were, visible and open to the priests; the other, as it were, invisible and inaccessible. With the exception of the high priest alone, the others were outside. I think this first sanctuary can be understood as this church in which we are now placed in the flesh, in which the priests minister “at the altar of the whole burnt offerings” with that fire kindled about which Jesus said, “I came to cast fire upon the earth, and would that it were already kindled.” And I do not want you to marvel that this sanctuary is open only to the priests. For all who have been anointed with the chrism of the sacred anointing have become priests, just as Peter says to all the church, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.” Therefore you are a priestly race, and because of this you approach the sanctuary.... Therefore the priesthood is exercised in this way in the first sanctuary and the offerings are offered. And from this sanctuary the high priest, dressed in the sanctified garments, proceeds and enters into the interior of the veil just as we already pointed out above in citing the words of Paul, “Christ has entered not into a sanctuary made with hands but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.” Therefore, the place of heaven and the throne itself of God are designated by the figure and the image of the interior sanctuary. Homilies on Leviticus 9.9.3–5.

### **9:25–26 *Once for All at the End of the Age***

**Why “At the End of the World”?** Chrysostom: In this place he has also veiled over something. “But now once more in the end of the world.” Why “at the end of the world”? After the many sins. If it had taken place at the beginning, then no one would have believed. He must not die a second time; otherwise all would have been useless. But since later there were many transgressions, with reason he appeared, which he expresses in another place also, “Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.” “But now once in the end of the world, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” On the Epistle to the Hebrews 17.3.

**We Offer a Remembrance of This Death.** Chrysostom: What then? Do not we offer every day? We offer indeed, but making a remembrance of his death, and this remembrance is one and not many. How is it one, and not many? Inasmuch as that sacrifice was once for all offered and carried into the Holy of Holies. This is a figure of

that sacrifice and a remembrance of it. For we always offer the same, not one sheep now and tomorrow another, but always the same thing, so that the sacrifice is one. And yet by this reasoning, since the offering is made in many places, are there many Christs? But Christ is one everywhere, being complete here and complete there also, one body. As then, while offered in many places, he is one body and not many bodies, so also he is one sacrifice. He is our high priest, who offered the sacrifice that cleanses us. That we offer now also, which was then offered, which cannot be exhausted. This is done in remembrance of what was then done. For he says, "Do this in remembrance of me." It is not another sacrifice, as the high priest, but we offer always the same, or rather we perform a remembrance of a sacrifice. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 17.6.

### **9:27–28 To Save Those Who Wait Eagerly**

**Dying Is Not Death but Sleep.** Chrysostom: "And as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment." He next says why he died once only: because he became a ransom by one death. "It is appointed," he says "for men to die once." This then is the meaning of "he died once," for all. What then? Do we no longer die that death? We do indeed die, but we do not continue in it, which is not to die at all. For the tyranny of death, and death indeed, is when he who dies is never more allowed to return to life. But when after dying there is life, indeed a better life, this is not death, but sleep. Since, then, death was to have possession of all, he therefore died that he might deliver us. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 17.4.

#### *The Inadequacy of the Levitical Sacrifices (10:1-9)*

---

**1 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. 5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. 7 Then I said, 'Behold, I have come-- In the volume of the book it is written of Me-- To do Your will, O God.' " 8 Previously saying, "Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first that He may establish the second.**

---

- Vs. 1 – The sacrifices of the law merely prefigured the perfect sacrifice of Christ (Col. 2:16-17)
- Vs. 3 – Reminder of sin – the annual repetition of sacrifice on the Day of Atonement shows that it was not a true solution to the problem of sin. Sins were remembered but not removed. Under the New Covenant since are removed and thus no longer remembered.

- Vs. 5-7 – He quotes Psalm 40:6-8 (LXX Ps. 39) to show that the Body of Christ is the instrument used for sacrifice. It was created to be offered in obedience to the Will of God. His sacrifice is supreme since He was sinless and perfectly obedient to the Will of the Father.

### **10:1–2 *The Law Has but a Shadow***

**Law as Shadow, Gospel as Light.** Bede: The law was indeed given through Moses, and there it was determined by a heavenly rule what was to be done and what was to be avoided, but what it commanded was completed only by the grace of Christ. On the one hand, that law was capable of pointing out sin, teaching justice and showing transgressors what they are charged with. On the other hand, the grace of Christ, poured out in the hearts of the faithful through the spirit of charity, brings it about that what the law commanded may be fulfilled. Hence that which was written, “do not covet,” is the law given through Moses because it is commanded, but grace comes through Christ when what is commanded is fulfilled. Truth came through Christ because “the law has but a shadow of the good things to come, instead of the true form of these realities.” And, as the apostle says elsewhere, “These things happened to them as a figure.” But in place of a shadow Christ displayed the light of truth, and in place of the figure of the law he displayed the exact image of the things which were prefigured when, with the giving of the grace of the Spirit, he made clear to his disciples the meaning so that they could understand the Scriptures. The law was given through Moses when the people were commanded to be made clean by the sprinkling of the blood of a lamb. The grace and truth which were prefigured in the law came through Jesus Christ when he himself, having suffered on the cross, “freed us from our sins by his blood.” Homilies on the Gospels 1.2.

**Draw Near Continually.** Chrysostom: Many partake of this sacrifice the Eucharist once in the whole year, others twice, others many times. Our word then is to all, not to those only who are here but to those also who are settled in the desert. For they partake once in the year and often indeed at intervals of two years. What then? Which shall we approve? Those who receive once in the year? Those who receive many times? Those who receive few times? Neither those who receive once, nor those who receive often, nor those who receive seldom, but those who come with a pure conscience, from a pure heart, with an irreproachable life. Let such draw near continually, but those who are not such, not even once. Why, you will ask? Because they receive to themselves judgment, yea, and condemnation and punishment and vengeance. And do not wonder. For as food, nourishing by nature, if received by a person without appetite, ruins and corrupts all the system and becomes an occasion of disease, so surely is it also with respect to the awful mysteries. Do you feast at a spiritual table, a royal table, and again pollute your mouth with mire? Do you anoint yourself with sweet ointment and again fill yourself with ill savors? Tell me, I ask, when after a year you partake of the communion, do you think that the forty days are sufficient for you for the purifying of the sins of all that time? And again, when a week has passed, do you give yourself up to the former things? Tell me now, if, when you have been well for forty days after a long illness, you should again give yourself up to the food which caused the sickness, have you not lost your former labor

too? For if natural things are changed, much more those which depend on choice. As for instance, by nature we see, and naturally we have healthy eyes, but oftentimes from a bad habit of body our power of vision is injured. If then natural things are changed, much more those of choice. You assign forty days for the health of the soul, or perhaps not even forty, and do you expect to propitiate God? Tell me, are you ready for this?

These things I say, not as forbidding you the one and annual coming but as wishing you to draw near continually. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 17.7.

**Shadow, Image and Truth.** Origen: Paul distinguishes three levels in the law: the shadow, the image and the truth.... The law contains the shadow of future good things but not the very image of the realities, and this clearly shows that the image of the realities is different from what is designated as the shadow of the law. If anyone can describe the ceremonies of the Jewish worship, let him view the temple as not having had the image of realities but only their shadow. Let him see the altar as a mere shadow, and the rams and the calves brought to sacrifice also as a shadow. According to the Scripture, “our days on the earth are like a shadow.”

If someone wishes to go beyond this shadow, let him come to the image of the realities, and let him behold the coming of Christ made flesh. Let him contemplate him in his role as high priest, offering victims to the Father henceforth and in the future; let him understand that all this is an image of spiritual realities and that heavenly functions are denoted by corporeal functions. We employ the term *image* to refer to that which is intelligible at present and which human nature can observe.

If you can penetrate the heavens with your understanding and your mind and follow Jesus, who has penetrated the heavens and who stands as our intercessor before the face of God, you will find there those good things whose shadow the law contained and whose image Christ revealed through his incarnation. Those good things ... have been prepared for the blessed, which neither eye has seen nor ear heard, and which no person has ever even imagined or thought of. Homilies on the Psalms 38.2.2.

### **10:3–11 Sacrifices and Offerings**

**The Lord’s Body Is the Common Sacrifice.** Chrysostom: Do you see that the law takes its force from the place? And, since the city is gone, there can no longer be a priesthood. There can be no emperor if there are no armies, no crown, no purple robe, none of the other things that weld together an empire. So, too, there can be no priesthood if sacrifice has been destroyed, if offerings are forbidden, if the sanctuary has been trampled into the dust, if everything that constituted it has disappeared. For the priesthood depended on all these things....

That great and wonderful prophet, David ... made it clear that the one kind of sacrifice would be abolished and another brought in to take its place when he said, “You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us; none can compare with you! Were I to proclaim and tell of them, they would be more than can be numbered.” See how wise the prophet is. He said, “You have multiplied your wondrous deeds,” and he stood aghast at God’s power to work miracles. But he did not go on to tell us about the creation of the things we see—of heaven, earth, and oceans, of water in Egypt or of any other miracles like those. What did he say were wondrous works? “Sacrifice and offering you do not desire.” ...



David went on to say, "But a body you have fitted to me." By this he meant the Lord's body which became the common sacrifice for the whole world, the sacrifice which cleansed our souls, canceled sin, put down death, opened heaven, gave us many great hopes and made ready all the other things which Paul knew well and spoke of when he exclaimed, "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways."

David, then, foresaw all this when he said, "Many are the wondrous works you have done, O Lord my God." He went on to say, speaking of the person of Christ, "In holocausts and sin offerings you had had no pleasure," and then continued, "Then I said, 'Lo, I come.'" When was "then"? When the time was ripe for more perfect instructions. We had to learn the less perfect lessons through his servants, but the loftier lessons which surpass the nature of humankind we had to learn from the lawgiver himself. Discourses Against Judaizing Christians 7.2.1-7.

**The Abolition of Sacrifice.** Chrysostom: Here he does not blame those who offer, showing that it is not because of their wickednesses that he does not accept them, as he says elsewhere, but because the thing itself has been convicted for the future and shown to have no strength or any suitableness to the times. What then has this to do with the "sacrifices" being offered "oftentimes"? Not only from their being "oftentimes" offered, he means, is it manifest that they are weak and that they effected nothing, but also from God's not accepting them, as being unprofitable and useless. And in another place it is said, "If you had desired sacrifice, I would have given it." Therefore by this also he makes it plain that he does not desire it. Therefore sacrifices are not God's will, but the abolition of sacrifices. Wherefore they sacrifice contrary to his will. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 18.1.

*The Adequacy of Christ's Sacrifice (10:10-18)*

---

**10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. 15 But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, 16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," 17 then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." 18 Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.**

---

- Vs. 11 – He contrasts the posture of Levitical priests (standing) with that of the Lord Jesus (sitting) indicating that the work of the former was perpetually unfinished, while the work of the latter has been definitively accomplished, referring to His earthly sacrifice since His heavenly intercession is ongoing.
- Vs. 14 – We are being sanctified...made Holy.

- Vs. 15 – St Paul indicated that the Holy Spirit is the author of the Sacred Scriptures.

### **10:12–13 *Enemies Underfoot***

**He Executed the Priestly Office Once for All.** Chrysostom: Do not then, having heard that he is a priest, suppose that he is always executing the priest's office. For he executed it once and thenceforward "sat down." Lest you suppose that he is standing on high and is a minister, he shows that the matter is part of a dispensation or economy. For as he became a servant, so also he became a priest and a minister. But as, after becoming a servant, he did not continue a servant, so also, having become a minister, he did not continue a minister. For it belongs not to a minister to sit but to stand. On the Epistle to the Hebrews 13.8.

### **10:17–18 *He Promised Forgiveness***

**I Will Remember Sins No More.** Theodoret of Cyr: Now, this happened through the new covenant: we receive also in all-holy baptism the forgiveness of sins. In the life to come, when immortality is granted us, we shall live differently from everyone else, sin no longer capable of troubling those who have become immortal. May it be our good fortune to attain this life. We shall attain it if in the present life we embrace with enthusiasm the effort virtue involves and accept the struggles it requires. The Lord himself, who is the source of the future goods, will work with us. Interpretation of Hebrews 10.

## General References

The Orthodox Study Bible: Ancient Christianity Speaks to Today's World (Thomas Nelson: June 2008)

Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Hebrews (Vol. X), Edited by Erik M. Heen and Philip D. W. Krey (IVP Academic: December 2005)

Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: New Testament, Curtis Mitch and Scott Hahn (Ignatius Press: June 2010)

The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary, Archbishop Dmitri Royster (SVS Press:2003)