



The Book of Hebrews
Revealed Ways to
Forgiveness And Salvation

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Hebrews

OVERVIEW:

Judaism was not second-rate or easy. Divinely designed, it was the best religion, expressing true worship and devotion to God. The commandments, the rituals, and the prophets described God's promises and revealed the way to forgiveness and salvation. But Christ came, fulfilling the Law and the Prophets, conquering sin, shattering all barriers to God, and freely providing eternal life.

This message was difficult for Jews to accept. Although they had sought the Messiah for centuries, they were entrenched in thinking and worshiping in traditional forms. Following Jesus seemed to repudiate their marvelous heritage and their profound Scriptures. With caution and questions they listened to the gospel, but many rejected it and sought to eliminate this "heresy." Those who did accept Jesus as the Messiah often found themselves slipping back into familiar routines, trying to live a hybrid faith.

Hebrews is a masterful document written to Jews who were evaluating Jesus or struggling with this new faith. The message of Hebrews is that Jesus is better, Christianity is superior, Christ is supreme and completely sufficient for salvation.

Hebrews begins by emphasizing that the old (Judaism) and the new (Christianity) are both religions revealed by God (Hebrews 1:1-3). In the doctrinal section that follows (Hebrews 1:4-10:18), the writer shows how Jesus is superior to angels (Hebrews 1:4-2:18), superior to their leaders (Hebrews 3:1-4:13), and superior to their priests (Hebrews 4:14-7:28). Christianity surpasses Judaism because it has a better covenant (Hebrews 8:1-13), a better sanctuary (Hebrews 9:1-10), and a more sufficient sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 9:11-10:18).

Having established the superiority of Christianity, the writer moves on to the practical implications of following Christ. The readers are exhorted to hold on to their new faith, encourage each other, and look forward to Christ's return (Hebrews 10:19-25). They are warned about the consequences of rejecting Christ's sacrifice (Hebrews 10:26-31) and reminded of the rewards for faithfulness (Hebrews 10:32-39). Then the author explains how to live by faith, giving illustrations of the faithful men and women in Israel's history (Hebrews 11:1-40) and giving encouragement and exhortation for daily living (Hebrews 12:1-17). This section ends by comparing the old covenant with the new (Hebrews 12:18-

29). The writer concludes with moral exhortations (Hebrews 13:1-17), a request for prayer (Hebrews 13:18-19), and a benediction and greetings (Hebrews 13:20-25).

Whatever you are considering as the focus of life, Christ is better. He is the perfect revelation of God, the final and complete sacrifice for sin, the compassionate and understanding mediator, and the *only* way to eternal life. Read Hebrews and begin to see history and life from God's perspective. Then give yourself unreservedly and completely to Christ. Don't settle for anything less.

THE BLUEPRINT

A. THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST (Hebrews 1:1-10:18)

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. [2] But now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he made the universe and everything in it. [3] The Son reflects God's own glory, and everything about him represents God exactly. He sustains the universe by the mighty power of his command. After he died to cleanse us from the stain of sin, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God of heaven.

Hebrews 1:1-10:18

[4] This shows that God's Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is far greater than their names. [5] For God never said to any angel what he said to Jesus:

"You are my Son.
Today I have become your Father."

And again God said,

"I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son."

[6] And then, when he presented his honored Son to the world, God said, "Let all the angels of God worship him." [7] God calls his angels

"messengers swift as the wind,
and servants made of flaming fire."

[8] But to his Son he says,

"Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever.
Your royal power is expressed in righteousness.
[9] You love what is right and hate what is wrong.
Therefore God, your God, has anointed you,
pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else."

[10] And,

"Lord, in the beginning you laid the foundation of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.

[11] Even they will perish, but you remain forever.

They will wear out like old clothing.

[12] You will roll them up like an old coat.

They will fade away like old clothing.
But you are always the same;
you will never grow old."

[13] And God never said to an angel, as he did to his Son,

"Sit in honor at my right hand
until I humble your enemies,
making them a footstool under your feet."

[14] But angels are only servants. They are spirits sent from God to care for those who will receive salvation.

[2:1] So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it. [2] The message God delivered through angels has always proved true, and the people were punished for every violation of the law and every act of disobedience. [3] What makes us think that we can escape if we are indifferent to this great salvation that was announced by the Lord Jesus himself? It was passed on to us by those who heard him speak, [4] and God verified the message by signs and wonders and various miracles and by giving gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever he chose to do so.

[5] And furthermore, the future world we are talking about will not be controlled by angels. [6] For somewhere in the Scriptures it says,

"What is man that you should think of him,
and the son of man that you should care for him?

[7] For a little while you made him lower than the angels,
and you crowned him with glory and honor.

[8] You gave him authority over all things."

Now when it says "all things," it means nothing is left out. But we have not yet seen all of this happen. [9] What we do see is Jesus, who "for a little while was made lower than the angels" and now is "crowned with glory and honor" because he suffered death for us. Yes, by God's grace, Jesus tasted death for everyone in all the world. [10] And it was only right that God—who made everything and for whom everything was made—should bring his many children into glory. Through the suffering of Jesus, God made him a perfect leader, one fit to bring them into their salvation.

[11] So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters. [12] For he said to God,

"I will declare the wonder of your name to my brothers and sisters.
I will praise you among all your people."

[13] He also said, "I will put my trust in him." And in the same context he said, "Here I am—
together with the children God has given me."

[14] Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—Jesus also became flesh and blood by being born in human form. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil, who had the power of death. [15] Only in this way could he deliver those who have lived all their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

[16] We all know that Jesus came to help the descendants of Abraham, not to help the angels. [17] Therefore, it was necessary for Jesus to be in every respect like us, his brothers and sisters, so that he could be our merciful and faithful High Priest before God. He then could offer a sacrifice that would take away the sins of the people. [18] Since he himself has gone through suffering and temptation, he is able to help us when we are being tempted.

[3:1] And so, dear brothers and sisters who belong to God and are bound for heaven, think about this Jesus whom we declare to be God's Messenger and High Priest. [2] For he was faithful to God, who appointed him, just as Moses served faithfully and was entrusted with God's entire house. [3] But Jesus deserves far more glory than Moses, just as a person who builds a fine house deserves more praise than the house itself. [4] For every house has a builder, but God is the one who made everything.

[5] Moses was certainly faithful in God's house, but only as a servant. His work was an illustration of the truths God would reveal later. [6] But Christ, the faithful Son, was in charge of the entire household. And we are God's household, if we keep up our courage and remain confident in our hope in Christ. [7] That is why the Holy Spirit says,

"Today you must listen to his voice.

[8] Don't harden your hearts against him
as Israel did when they rebelled,
when they tested God's patience in the wilderness.

[9] There your ancestors tried my patience,
even though they saw my miracles for forty years.

[10] So I was angry with them, and I said,
'Their hearts always turn away from me.

They refuse to do what I tell them.'

[11] So in my anger I made a vow:
'They will never enter my place of rest.' "

[12] Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. [13] You must warn each other every day, as long as it is called "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. [14] For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. [15] But never forget the warning:

"Today you must listen to his voice.

Don't harden your hearts against him
as Israel did when they rebelled."

[16] And who were those people who rebelled against God, even though they heard his voice? Weren't they the ones Moses led out of Egypt? [17] And who made God angry for forty years? Wasn't it the people who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? [18] And to whom was

God speaking when he vowed that they would never enter his place of rest? He was speaking to those who disobeyed him. [19] So we see that they were not allowed to enter his rest because of their unbelief.

[4:1] God's promise of entering his place of rest still stands, so we ought to tremble with fear that some of you might fail to get there. [2] For this Good News—that God has prepared a place of rest—has been announced to us just as it was to them. But it did them no good because they didn't believe what God told them. [3] For only we who believe can enter his place of rest. As for those who didn't believe, God said,

"In my anger I made a vow:
"They will never enter my place of rest,' "

even though his place of rest has been ready since he made the world. [4] We know it is ready because the Scriptures mention the seventh day, saying, "On the seventh day God rested from all his work." [5] But in the other passage God said, "They will never enter my place of rest." [6] So God's rest is there for people to enter. But those who formerly heard the Good News failed to enter because they disobeyed God. [7] So God set another time for entering his place of rest, and that time is today. God announced this through David a long time later in the words already quoted:

"Today you must listen to his voice.
Don't harden your hearts against him."

[8] This new place of rest was not the land of Canaan, where Joshua led them. If it had been, God would not have spoken later about another day of rest. [9] So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. [10] For all who enter into God's rest will find rest from their labors, just as God rested after creating the world. [11] Let us do our best to enter that place of rest. For anyone who disobeys God, as the people of Israel did, will fall.

[12] For the word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are. [13] Nothing in all creation can hide from him. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes. This is the God to whom we must explain all that we have done.

[14] That is why we have a great High Priest who has gone to heaven, Jesus the Son of God. Let us cling to him and never stop trusting him. [15] This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same temptations we do, yet he did not sin. [16] So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it.

[5:1] Now a high priest is a man chosen to represent other human beings in their dealings with God. He presents their gifts to God and offers their sacrifices for sins. [2] And because he is human, he is able to deal gently with the people, though they are ignorant and wayward. For he is subject to the same weaknesses they have. [3] That is why he has to offer sacrifices, both for their sins and for his own sins. [4] And no one can become a high priest simply because he wants such an honor. He has to be called by God for this work, just as Aaron was.

[5] That is why Christ did not exalt himself to become High Priest. No, he was chosen by God, who said to him,

"You are my Son.
Today I have become your Father."

[6] And in another passage God said to him,

"You are a priest forever
in the line of Melchizedek."

[7] While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could deliver him out of death. And God heard his prayers because of his reverence for God. [8] So even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. [9] In this way, God qualified him as a perfect High Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him. [10] And God designated him to be a High Priest in the line of Melchizedek.

[11] There is so much more we would like to say about this. But you don't seem to listen, so it's hard to make you understand. [12] You have been Christians a long time now, and you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things a beginner must learn about the Scriptures. You are like babies who drink only milk and cannot eat solid food. [13] And a person who is living on milk isn't very far along in the Christian life and doesn't know much about doing what is right. [14] Solid food is for those who are mature, who have trained themselves to recognize the difference between right and wrong and then do what is right.

[6:1] So let us stop going over the basics of Christianity again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start all over again with the importance of turning away from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. [2] You don't need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. [3] And so, God willing, we will move forward to further understanding.

[4] For it is impossible to restore to repentance those who were once enlightened—those who have experienced the good things of heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit, [5] who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the power of the age to come— [6] and who then turn away from God. It is impossible to bring such people to repentance again because they are nailing the Son of God to the cross again by rejecting him, holding him up to public shame.

[7] When the ground soaks up the rain that falls on it and bears a good crop for the farmer, it has the blessing of God. [8] But if a field bears thistles and thorns, it is useless. The farmer will condemn that field and burn it.

[9] Dear friends, even though we are talking like this, we really don't believe that it applies to you. We are confident that you are meant for better things, things that come with salvation. [10] For God is not unfair. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love to him by caring for other Christians, as you still do. [11] Our great desire is that you will keep right on loving others as long as life lasts, in order to make certain that what you hope for will come true.

[12] Then you will not become spiritually dull and indifferent. Instead, you will follow the example of those who are going to inherit God's promises because of their faith and patience.

[13] For example, there was God's promise to Abraham. Since there was no one greater to swear by, God took an oath in his own name, saying:

[14] "I will certainly bless you richly,
and I will multiply your descendants into countless millions."

[15] Then Abraham waited patiently, and he received what God had promised.

[16] When people take an oath, they call on someone greater than themselves to hold them to it. And without any question that oath is binding. [17] God also bound himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that he would never change his mind. [18] So God has given us both his promise and his oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can take new courage, for we can hold on to his promise with confidence.

[19] This confidence is like a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls. It leads us through the curtain of heaven into God's inner sanctuary. [20] Jesus has already gone in there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest in the line of Melchizedek.

[7:1] This Melchizedek was king of the city of Salem and also a priest of God Most High. When Abraham was returning home after winning a great battle against many kings, Melchizedek met him and blessed him. [2] Then Abraham took a tenth of all he had won in the battle and gave it to Melchizedek. His name means "king of justice." He is also "king of peace" because Salem means "peace." [3] There is no record of his father or mother or any of his ancestors—no beginning or end to his life. He remains a priest forever, resembling the Son of God.

[4] Consider then how great this Melchizedek was. Even Abraham, the great patriarch of Israel, recognized how great Melchizedek was by giving him a tenth of what he had taken in battle. [5] Now the priests, who are descendants of Levi, are commanded in the law of Moses to collect a tithe from all the people, even though they are their own relatives. [6] But Melchizedek, who was not even related to Levi, collected a tenth from Abraham. And Melchizedek placed a blessing upon Abraham, the one who had already received the promises of God. [7] And without question, the person who has the power to bless is always greater than the person who is blessed.

[8] In the case of Jewish priests, tithes are paid to men who will die. But Melchizedek is greater than they are, because we are told that he lives on. [9] In addition, we might even say that Levi's descendants, the ones who collect the tithe, paid a tithe to Melchizedek through their ancestor Abraham. [10] For although Levi wasn't born yet, the seed from which he came was in Abraham's loins when Melchizedek collected the tithe from him.

[11] And finally, if the priesthood of Levi could have achieved God's purposes—and it was that priesthood on which the law was based—why did God need to send a different priest from the line of Melchizedek, instead of from the line of Levi and Aaron?

[12] And when the priesthood is changed, the law must also be changed to permit it. [13] For the one we are talking about belongs to a different tribe, whose members do not serve at the altar. [14] What I mean is, our Lord came from the tribe of Judah, and Moses never mentioned Judah in connection with the priesthood.

[15] The change in God's law is even more evident from the fact that a different priest, who is like Melchizedek, has now come. [16] He became a priest, not by meeting the old requirement of belonging to the tribe of Levi, but by the power of a life that cannot be destroyed. [17] And the psalmist pointed this out when he said of Christ,

"You are a priest forever
in the line of Melchizedek."

[18] Yes, the old requirement about the priesthood was set aside because it was weak and useless. [19] For the law made nothing perfect, and now a better hope has taken its place. And that is how we draw near to God.

[20] God took an oath that Christ would always be a priest, but he never did this for any other priest. [21] Only to Jesus did he say,

"The Lord has taken an oath
and will not break his vow:
'You are a priest forever.' "

[22] Because of God's oath, it is Jesus who guarantees the effectiveness of this better covenant.

[23] Another difference is that there were many priests under the old system. When one priest died, another had to take his place. [24] But Jesus remains a priest forever; his priesthood will never end. [25] Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save everyone who comes to God through him. He lives forever to plead with God on their behalf.

[26] He is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has now been set apart from sinners, and he has been given the highest place of honor in heaven. [27] He does not need to offer sacrifices every day like the other high priests. They did this for their own sins first and then for the sins of the people. But Jesus did this once for all when he sacrificed himself on the cross. [28] Those who were high priests under the law of Moses were limited by human weakness. But after the law was given, God appointed his Son with an oath, and his Son has been made perfect forever.

[8:1] Here is the main point: Our High Priest sat down in the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. [2] There he ministers in the sacred tent, the true place of worship that was built by the Lord and not by human hands.

[3] And since every high priest is required to offer gifts and sacrifices, our High Priest must make an offering, too. [4] If he were here on earth, he would not even be a priest, since there already are priests who offer the gifts required by the law of Moses. [5] They serve in a place of worship that is only a copy, a shadow of the real one in heaven. For when Moses was getting ready to build the Tabernacle, God gave him this warning: "Be sure that you make everything according to the design I have shown you here on the mountain."

[6] But our High Priest has been given a ministry that is far superior to the ministry of those who serve under the old laws, for he is the one who guarantees for us a better covenant with God, based on better promises.

[7] If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. [8] But God himself found fault with the old one when he said:

"The day will come, says the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant
with the people of Israel and Judah.

[9] This covenant will not be like the one
I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand
and led them out of the land of Egypt.

They did not remain faithful to my covenant,
so I turned my back on them, says the Lord.

[10] But this is the new covenant I will make
with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their minds
so they will understand them,
and I will write them on their hearts
so they will obey them.

I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

[11] And they will not need to teach their neighbors,
nor will they need to teach their family,
saying, 'You should know the Lord.'

For everyone, from the least to the greatest,
will already know me.

[12] And I will forgive their wrongdoings,
and I will never again remember their sins."

[13] When God speaks of a new covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and ready to be put aside.

[9:1] Now in that first covenant between God and Israel, there were regulations for worship and a sacred tent here on earth. [2] There were two rooms in this tent. In the first room were a lampstand, a table, and loaves of holy bread on the table. This was called the Holy Place. [3] Then there was a curtain, and behind the curtain was the second room called the Most Holy Place. [4] In that room were a gold incense altar and a wooden chest called the Ark of the Covenant, which was covered with gold on all sides. Inside the Ark were a gold jar containing some manna, Aaron's staff that sprouted leaves, and the stone tablets of the covenant with the Ten Commandments written on them. [5] The glorious cherubim were above the Ark. Their wings were stretched out over the Ark's cover, the place of atonement. But we cannot explain all of these things now.

[6] When these things were all in place, the priests went in and out of the first room regularly as they performed their religious duties. [7] But only the high priest goes into the Most Holy Place, and only once a year, and always with blood, which he offers to God to cover his own sins and the sins the people have committed in ignorance. [8] By these regulations the Holy Spirit revealed that the Most Holy Place was not open to the people as long as the first room and the entire system it represents were still in use.

[9] This is an illustration pointing to the present time. For the gifts and sacrifices that the priests offer are not able to cleanse the consciences of the people who bring them. [10] For that old system deals only with food and drink and ritual washing—external regulations that are in effect only until their limitations can be corrected.

[11] So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that great, perfect sanctuary in heaven, not made by human hands and not part of this created world. [12] Once for all time he took blood into that Most Holy Place, but not the blood of goats and calves. He took his own blood, and with it he secured our salvation forever.

[13] Under the old system, the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow could cleanse people's bodies from ritual defilement. [14] Just think how much more the blood of Christ will purify our hearts from deeds that lead to death so that we can worship the living God. For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. [15] That is why he is the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, so that all who are invited can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.

[16] Now when someone dies and leaves a will, no one gets anything until it is proved that the person who wrote the will is dead. [17] The will goes into effect only after the death of the person who wrote it. While the person is still alive, no one can use the will to get any of the things promised to them.

[18] That is why blood was required under the first covenant as a proof of death. [19] For after Moses had given the people all of God's laws, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, and sprinkled both the book of God's laws and all the people, using branches of hyssop bushes and scarlet wool. [20] Then he said, "This blood confirms the covenant God has made with you." [21] And in the same way, he sprinkled blood on the sacred tent and on everything used for worship. [22] In fact, we can say that according to the law of Moses, nearly everything was purified by sprinkling with blood. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

[23] That is why the earthly tent and everything in it—which were copies of things in heaven—had to be purified by the blood of animals. But the real things in heaven had to be purified with far better sacrifices than the blood of animals.

[24] For Christ has entered into heaven itself to appear now before God as our Advocate. He did not go into the earthly place of worship, for that was merely a copy of the real Temple in heaven. [25] Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, like the earthly high priest who enters the Most Holy Place year after year to offer the blood of an animal.

[26] If that had been necessary, he would have had to die again and again, ever since the world began. But no! He came once for all time, at the end of the age, to remove the power of sin forever by his sacrificial death for us.

[27] And just as it is destined that each person dies only once and after that comes judgment, [28] so also Christ died only once as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again but not to deal with our sins again. This time he will bring salvation to all those who are eagerly waiting for him.

[10:1] The old system in the law of Moses was only a shadow of the things to come, not the reality of the good things Christ has done for us. The sacrifices under the old system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. [2] If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared.

[3] But just the opposite happened. Those yearly sacrifices reminded them of their sins year after year. [4] For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. [5] That is why Christ, when he came into the world, said,

"You did not want animal sacrifices and grain offerings.

But you have given me a body so that I may obey you.

[6] No, you were not pleased with animals burned on the altar or with other offerings for sin.

[7] Then I said, 'Look, I have come to do your will, O God— just as it is written about me in the Scriptures.' "

[8] Christ said, "You did not want animal sacrifices or grain offerings or animals burned on the altar or other offerings for sin, nor were you pleased with them" (though they are required by the law of Moses). [9] Then he added, "Look, I have come to do your will." He cancels the first covenant in order to establish the second. [10] And what God wants is for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time.

[11] Under the old covenant, the priest stands before the altar day after day, offering sacrifices that can never take away sins. [12] But our High Priest offered himself to God as one sacrifice for sins, good for all time. Then he sat down at the place of highest honor at God's right hand. [13] There he waits until his enemies are humbled as a footstool under his feet. [14] For by that one offering he perfected forever all those whom he is making holy.

[15] And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. First he says,

[16] "This is the new covenant I will make
with my people on that day, says the Lord:
I will put my laws in their hearts
so they will understand them,
and I will write them on their minds
so they will obey them."

[17] Then he adds,

"I will never again remember
their sins and lawless deeds."

[18] Now when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.

B. THE SUPERIORITY OF FAITH (Hebrews 10:19-13:25)

Jews who had become Christians in the first century were tempted to fall back into Judaism because of uncertainty, the security of custom, and persecution. Today believers are also tempted to fall back into legalism, fulfilling minimum religious requirements rather than pressing on in genuine faith. We must strive to live by faith each day.

The superiority of Christ over everyone and everything is clearly demonstrated by the author. Christianity supersedes all other religions and can never be surpassed. Where can one find anything better than Christ? Living in Christ is having the best there is in life. All competing religions are deceptions or cheap imitations.

1. Christ is greater than the angels
2. Christ is greater than Moses
3. Christ is greater than the Old Testament priesthood
4. The new covenant is greater than the old

Hebrews 10:19-13:25

And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus. [20] This is the new, life-giving way that Christ has opened up for us through the sacred curtain, by means of his death for us.

[21] And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's people, [22] let us go right into the presence of God, with true hearts fully trusting him. For our evil consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

[23] Without wavering, let us hold tightly to the hope we say we have, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. [24] Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds. [25] And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.

[26] Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received a full knowledge of the truth, there is no other sacrifice that will cover these sins. [27] There will be nothing to look forward to but the terrible expectation of God's judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies. [28] Anyone who refused to obey the law of Moses was put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. [29] Think how much more terrible the punishment will be for those who have trampled on the Son of God and have treated the blood of the covenant as if it were common and unholy. Such people have insulted and enraged the Holy Spirit who brings God's mercy to his people.

[30] For we know the one who said,

"I will take vengeance.
I will repay those who deserve it."

He also said,

"The Lord will judge his own people."

[31] It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

[32] Don't ever forget those early days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you remained faithful even though it meant terrible suffering. [33] Sometimes you were exposed to public ridicule and were beaten, and sometimes you helped others who were suffering the same things. [34] You suffered along with those who were thrown into jail. When all you owned was taken from you, you accepted it with joy. You knew you had better things waiting for you in eternity.

[35] Do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord, no matter what happens. Remember the great reward it brings you! [36] Patient endurance is what you need now, so you will continue to do God's will. Then you will receive all that he has promised.

[37] "For in just a little while,
the Coming One will come and not delay.

[38] And a righteous person will live by faith.
But I will have no pleasure in anyone who turns away."

[39] But we are not like those who turn their backs on God and seal their fate. We have faith that assures our salvation.

[11:1] What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see. [2] God gave his approval to people in days of old because of their faith.

[3] By faith we understand that the entire universe was formed at God's command, that what we now see did not come from anything that can be seen.

[4] It was by faith that Abel brought a more acceptable offering to God than Cain did. God accepted Abel's offering to show that he was a righteous man. And although Abel is long dead, he still speaks to us because of his faith.

[5] It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying—"suddenly he disappeared because God took him." But before he was taken up, he was approved as pleasing to God. [6] So, you see, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

[7] It was by faith that Noah built an ark to save his family from the flood. He obeyed God, who warned him about something that had never happened before. By his faith he condemned the rest of the world and was made right in God's sight.

[8] It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. [9] And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in a tent. And so did Isaac and Jacob, to whom God gave the same

promise. [10] Abraham did this because he was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.

[11] It was by faith that Sarah together with Abraham was able to have a child, even though they were too old and Sarah was barren. Abraham believed that God would keep his promise.

[12] And so a whole nation came from this one man, Abraham, who was too old to have any children—a nation with so many people that, like the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them.

[13] All these faithful ones died without receiving what God had promised them, but they saw it all from a distance and welcomed the promises of God. They agreed that they were no more than foreigners and nomads here on earth. [14] And obviously people who talk like that are looking forward to a country they can call their own. [15] If they had meant the country they came from, they would have found a way to go back. [16] But they were looking for a better place, a heavenly homeland. That is why God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a heavenly city for them.

[17] It was by faith that Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice when God was testing him. Abraham, who had received God's promises, was ready to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, [18] though God had promised him, "Isaac is the son through whom your descendants will be counted." [19] Abraham assumed that if Isaac died, God was able to bring him back to life again. And in a sense, Abraham did receive his son back from the dead.

[20] It was by faith that Isaac blessed his two sons, Jacob and Esau. He had confidence in what God was going to do in the future.

[21] It was by faith that Jacob, when he was old and dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons and bowed in worship as he leaned on his staff.

[22] And it was by faith that Joseph, when he was about to die, confidently spoke of God's bringing the people of Israel out of Egypt. He was so sure of it that he commanded them to carry his bones with them when they left!

[23] It was by faith that Moses' parents hid him for three months. They saw that God had given them an unusual child, and they were not afraid of what the king might do.

[24] It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be treated as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. [25] He chose to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin. [26] He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of the Messiah than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the great reward that God would give him.

[27] It was by faith that Moses left the land of Egypt. He was not afraid of the king. Moses kept right on going because he kept his eyes on the one who is invisible. [28] It was by faith that Moses commanded the people of Israel to keep the Passover and to sprinkle blood on the doorposts so that the angel of death would not kill their firstborn sons.

[29] It was by faith that the people of Israel went right through the Red Sea as though they were on dry ground. But when the Egyptians followed, they were all drowned.

[30] It was by faith that the people of Israel marched around Jericho seven days, and the walls came crashing down.

[31] It was by faith that Rahab the prostitute did not die with all the others in her city who refused to obey God. For she had given a friendly welcome to the spies.

[32] Well, how much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. [33] By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They shut the mouths of lions,

[34] quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight. [35] Women received their loved ones back again from death.

But others trusted God and were tortured, preferring to die rather than turn from God and be free. They placed their hope in the resurrection to a better life. [36] Some were mocked, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in dungeons. [37] Some died by stoning, and some were sawed in half; others were killed with the sword. Some went about in skins of sheep and goats, hungry and oppressed and mistreated. [38] They were too good for this world. They wandered over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

[39] All of these people we have mentioned received God's approval because of their faith, yet none of them received all that God had promised. [40] For God had far better things in mind for us that would also benefit them, for they can't receive the prize at the end of the race until we finish the race.

[12:1] Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. [2] We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward. Now he is seated in the place of highest honor beside God's throne in heaven. [3] Think about all he endured when sinful people did such terrible things to him, so that you don't become weary and give up. [4] After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.

[5] And have you entirely forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you, his children? He said,

"My child, don't ignore it when the Lord disciplines you,
and don't be discouraged when he corrects you.

[6] For the Lord disciplines those he loves,
and he punishes those he accepts as his children."

[7] As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Whoever heard of a child who was never disciplined? [8] If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children after all. [9] Since we respect our earthly fathers who disciplined us, should we not all the more cheerfully submit to the discipline of our heavenly Father and live forever?

[10] For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always right and good for us because it means we will share in his holiness.

[11] No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it is painful! But afterward there will be a quiet harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

[12] So take a new grip with your tired hands and stand firm on your shaky legs. [13] Mark out a straight path for your feet. Then those who follow you, though they are weak and lame, will not stumble and fall but will become strong.

[14] Try to live in peace with everyone, and seek to live a clean and holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. [15] Look after each other so that none of you will miss out on the special favor of God. Watch out that no bitter root of unbelief rises up among you, for whenever it springs up, many are corrupted by its poison. [16] Make sure that no one is immoral or godless like Esau. He traded his birthright as the oldest son for a single meal. [17] And afterward, when he wanted his father's blessing, he was rejected. It was too late for repentance, even though he wept bitter tears.

[18] You have not come to a physical mountain, to a place of flaming fire, darkness, gloom, and whirlwind, as the Israelites did at Mount Sinai when God gave them his laws. [19] For they heard an awesome trumpet blast and a voice with a message so terrible that they begged God to stop speaking. [20] They staggered back under God's command: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." [21] Moses himself was so frightened at the sight that he said, "I am terrified and trembling."

[22] No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to thousands of angels in joyful assembly. [23] You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge of all people. And you have come to the spirits of the redeemed in heaven who have now been made perfect. [24] You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which graciously forgives instead of crying out for vengeance as the blood of Abel did.

[25] See to it that you obey God, the one who is speaking to you. For if the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, how terrible our danger if we reject the One who speaks to us from heaven! [26] When God spoke from Mount Sinai his voice shook the earth, but now he makes another promise: "Once again I will shake not only the earth but the heavens also." [27] This means that the things on earth will be shaken, so that only eternal things will be left.

[28] Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. [29] For our God is a consuming fire.

[13:1] Continue to love each other with true Christian love. [2] Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! [3] Don't forget about those in prison. Suffer with them as though you were there yourself. Share the sorrow of those being mistreated, as though you feel their pain in your own bodies.

[4] Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery.

[5] Stay away from the love of money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said,

"I will never fail you.

I will never forsake you."

[6] That is why we can say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper,
so I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?"

[7] Remember your leaders who first taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and trust the Lord as they do.

[8] Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. [9] So do not be attracted by strange, new ideas. Your spiritual strength comes from God's special favor, not from ceremonial rules about food, which don't help those who follow them.

[10] We have an altar from which the priests in the Temple on earth have no right to eat. [11] Under the system of Jewish laws, the high priest brought the blood of animals into the Holy Place as a sacrifice for sin, but the bodies of the animals were burned outside the camp. [12] So also Jesus suffered and died outside the city gates in order to make his people holy by shedding his own blood. [13] So let us go out to him outside the camp and bear the disgrace he bore. [14] For this world is not our home; we are looking forward to our city in heaven, which is yet to come.

[15] With Jesus' help, let us continually offer our sacrifice of praise to God by proclaiming the glory of his name. [16] Don't forget to do good and to share what you have with those in need, for such sacrifices are very pleasing to God.

[17] Obey your spiritual leaders and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they know they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this joyfully and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.

[18] Pray for us, for our conscience is clear and we want to live honorably in everything we do. [19] I especially need your prayers right now so that I can come back to you soon.

[20] [20-21] And now, may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, equip you with all you need for doing his will. May he produce in you, through the power of Jesus Christ all that is pleasing to him. Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep by an everlasting covenant, signed with his blood. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen. [21]

[22] I urge you, dear brothers and sisters, please listen carefully to what I have said in this brief letter.

[23] I want you to know that our brother Timothy is now out of jail. If he comes here soon, I will bring him with me to see you.

[24] Give my greetings to all your leaders and to the other believers there. The Christians from Italy send you their greetings.

[25] May God's grace be with you all.

MEGATHEMES

THEME: Christ Superior Is

EXPLANATION:

Hebrews reveals Jesus' true identity as God. Jesus is the ultimate authority. He is greater than any religion or any angel. He is superior to any Jewish leader (such as Abraham, Moses, or Joshua) and superior to any priest. He is the complete revelation of God.

IMPORTANCE:

Jesus alone can forgive your sin. He has secured your forgiveness and salvation by his death on the cross. You can find peace with God and real meaning for life by believing in Christ. Don't accept any alternative to or substitute for him.

THEME: High Priest

EXPLANATION:

In the Old Testament, the high priest represented the Jews before God. Jesus Christ links us with God. There is no other way to reach God. Because Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, he is the perfect substitute to die for our sin. He is our perfect representative with God.

IMPORTANCE:

Jesus guarantees our access to God the Father. He intercedes for us so we can boldly come to the Father with our needs. When we are weak, we can come confidently to God for forgiveness and ask for his help.

THEME: Sacrifice

EXPLANATION:

Christ's sacrifice was the ultimate fulfillment of all that the Old Testament sacrifices represented—God's forgiveness for sin. Because Christ is the perfect sacrifice for our sin, our sins are completely forgiven—past, present, and future.

IMPORTANCE:

Christ removed sin, which barred us from God's presence and fellowship. But we must accept his sacrifice for us. By believing in him we are no longer guilty, but cleansed and made whole. His sacrifice clears the way for us to have eternal life.

THEME: Maturity

EXPLANATION:

Though we are saved from sin when we believe in Christ, we are given the task of going on and growing in our faith. Through our relationship with Christ we can live blameless lives, be set aside for his special use, and develop maturity.

IMPORTANCE:

The process of maturing in our faith takes time. Daily commitment and service produce maturity. When we are mature in our faith, we are not easily swayed or shaken by temptations or worldly concerns.

THEME: Faith

EXPLANATION:

Faith is confident trust in God's promises. God's greatest promise is that we can be saved through Jesus.

IMPORTANCE:

If you trust in Jesus Christ for your complete salvation, he will transform you completely. A life of obedience and complete trust is pleasing to God.

THEME: Endurance

EXPLANATION:

Faith enables Christians to face trials. Genuine faith includes the commitment to stay true to God when we are under fire. Endurance builds character and leads to victory.

IMPORTANCE:

You can have victory in your trials if you don't give up or turn your back on Christ. Stay true to Christ and pray for endurance.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print