Lesson One • Part I

By Faith

Hebrews 11:9–23

For those of you out in television, we do cherish your letters, we appreciate them, they are such an encouragement and we just continue to pray that the Lord will give us Lydias; hearts that He’s opened and that are responsive to the Gospel, and as always we covet your prayers.

Now we’re going to get right back into where we left off in our last program. We’re in Hebrews chapter 11 and we’re about ready to go into verse 8 - and in fact we touched on it a little bit in the last program. Now as I’ve been going through Hebrews almost at the beginning of every four programs, I remind our listening audience that this letter is written primarily, not exclusively, to Jewish people who were having a hard time making the break with Judaism (with the Temple worship and the sacrifices), and stepping away from it into this Age of Grace by faith in Paul’s Gospel, plus nothing, for salvation.

Now, I’m always emphasizing, that is not easy. We see it in cult people or we see people that are just so totally indoctrinated in a legalistic religion, it is so hard to just break away and say, "You mean, I don’t have to do anything but BELIEVE?" That’s exactly right! And of course a lot of people just can’t accept that. But, if Christ finished the work of the cross, and because it was finished He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High, then we have to take His word for it.

Now that doesn’t mean that we just simply say, "Well, I believe" and then continue right on with our same old lifestyle. No, we have to realize that when we become a believer of that finished work, or what we call Paul’s Gospel, that mandates a change in our lifestyle. We’re going to live lives, hopefully, pleasing in His sight. And we’re going to seek His will in every aspect of life. And that’s all a follow-up to our believing. And so I never want to leave folks with the idea, "Well, as long as I believe, I’m all right." Well, don’t take advantage of that because there are responsibilities that follow our believing.

But nevertheless, Hebrews, now as a main theme, is directed to Jews who were having a hard time making a break out of legalism and into this glorious Age of Grace. Consequently, as I’ve said over and over, you don’t find the plan of salvation as we
present it, in the book of Hebrews. In other words, if you’re leading someone to the Lord, you don’t go to the book of Hebrews to show them how to be saved, it’s just not in here. But, like the Old Testament, all of these things are for our learning. And for the believer now to come into the book of Hebrews, we get all of this reinforcement of our faith and that’s the whole thrust.

All right now then, let’s continue our study in Chapter 11 - "the faith chapter." And again, it’s just to show us that these Old Testament people walked and lived and were saved by faith even as we are. But, here’s where we have to be careful. They didn’t place their faith in a finished work of the cross; it hadn’t happened yet. So what did they believe? What God said to them! It was God’s Word to them. And we’ve already covered the pre-flood people. And Noah is a good example.

God didn’t tell Noah, "Now believe that I’m going to die on a Roman cross and be raised from the dead." No way. But what did God tell Noah? "There’s going to be a flood. I’m going to destroy the human race. Build an Ark for the saving of yourself and your house." Now believing what God said, what did Noah do? He built the Ark. And so all the way up through the Old Testament it has always been by faith, but not in that finished work of the cross as we experience today (and what God tells us to believe through the Apostle Paul’s writings), but rather in the Old Testament they believed what God told them in that day.

All right, so now then as we come into verse 8, and like I said, I know we touched on it in the last part of our last program, but his great epitome of faith, the man, Abraham, who was steeped in idolatry down there in the lower end of the Euphrates River. Remember Joshua tells us his whole family was idol worshippers. The whole city was given over to idolatry, and yet God goes down, and I think person-to-person, like He did with Abraham more than once, confronted him. And God said, "Abram I want you to leave all this, I want you to get away from this pagan environment. I want you to get out of your pagan family and go to a place that I’ll show you." He didn’t tell him that it would be Canaan. He just said, "Go to a place that I will show you." And what’d Abraham do? He left. Why? Because he believed what God said, plus nothing. He wasn’t circumcised. There was no Law to keep. He just simply obeyed what God said and God counted it to him for what? Righteousness. See? He didn’t repent. He didn’t grovel. He just simply believed God and God reckoned him a righteous man. Now verse 9.

Hebrews 11:9a

"By faith…" By faith; by just simply believing what God had said, now I can comprehend that it was probably easier for the man to believe something when he had seen God, Who I’m sure came down in human form, as He did in Genesis 18. I think
you’re all acquainted with that chapter. When the Lord and two angels came walking up the path and Abram ran to meet them, what did he do? Killed the fatted calf and they had a meal like you wouldn’t believe. And they ate. That was the Lord Himself in what we call a theophany - God in human form. And that happened periodically in the time of the Patriarchs.

Now, many times we have to look at these things logically and ask ourselves, "Why?" And I guess I’d never really answered it myself until the last 24 hours. **Because they didn’t have a written Word.** Now just think about that. All the way from Adam until we get to Moses, there was no written Word from God. So how did He communicate with them? He appeared to them from time to time and He instructed them, and so maybe it was a little easier to believe what God said since they saw Him say it. But it’s the same God that speaks through this Book. **And so now we’re under that same set of responsibilities - that we are to believe what God has said.**

In fact, go back to Hebrews chapter 1 and that just sort of confirms what I said. Hebrews chapter 1, right up there at verses 1 and 2 - and this is just exactly what we’re saying. And the very first word is what? "God." Remember God never changes. He’s been the same from eternity past and He will be into eternity future. He never changes. But He certainly changes, what I refer to over and over as, His modus operandi - His means of operating. In other words, He deals with us totally differently than He dealt with Adam and Eve, Abraham and Moses, and all the others. **In this Age of Grace, under the writings of the Apostle Paul, He deals with us quite differently than all the others, yet still by faith.**

All right, so here’s the whole idea. There was no written Word. There was no organized system of worship. Now that makes a big difference. All right, so now you come into the text:

**Hebrews 1:1**

"*God, who at sundry* (or various) *times and in diverse* (different) *manners spake in time past unto the fathers* (how?) *by the prophets.*" He didn’t come down and speak to the people, face-to-face like he did with Abraham, Adam and Eve or even Jacob. But He spoke through the prophets. Now verse 2, and here God changes things:

**Hebrews 1:2**

"*Hath in these last days* (that is since His first advent) *spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom* (the Son) *also he made the worlds;*"
Now when God speaks to us through the Son, that’s why the Apostle Paul then tells us that all of his revelations came directly from where? The ascended Lord. So when we read Paul’s epistles now we realize that God is speaking to us through God the Son Who in turn is inspiring this Apostle to write what we are to understand and believe for salvation, and it’s that much difference. All right, so these Patriarchs were still believers of what God said and when they responded to it, God in turn responds by calling them righteous. They were in right relationship with Him. Now back to chapter 11.

**Hebrews 11:9a**

"By faith (by taking God at His Word) he (Abraham) sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country,..." And indeed it was. It was foreign territory to a Syrian down there in the Euphrates. The Canaanites were dwelling in the land. Now I’m not going to mention it in this program, but I will before the afternoon is over; we’re going to be looking at the difference between the Canaanites and the Arabs. There is a big difference. The Canaanites were not Arabs. And so the Canaanites were in the land of promise and it was amongst the Canaanites that Abram, or later Abraham and Sarah and then later on Isaac and so forth - it was among the Canaanites that they sojourned.

Now I think I pointed out in one of the previous programs, does that give you an inkling? What did Abraham have to do as he moved across the country with his flocks and herds? Well, he would have to ask permission. "Can I run my flocks through your orchard?" And he would probably guarantee that they wouldn’t harm anything that was productive. "But, can we just have the grass?" Because he was a foreigner. He was a sojourner in a foreign land. Even though it was the land that God had promised. So you’ve got to keep all these things in your mind as you read about these.

**Hebrews 11:9b**

"...dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:"  

All right, so he "sojourned in a strange land" only because he knew he could trust the God who told him to leave Ur. Now, just to show you what patience that took to maintain that kind of faith, I can’t pinpoint it in Scripture so I’ll again just have to simply say, it’s my own personal feeling, that Abram was probably 50 years old when God first spoke to him in Ur of the Chaldees. Now, I think all of you know - how old was he when the promised son was born, Isaac? One hundred! So how many years did that poor man live day in and day out by faith, waiting for the birth of that son? Fifty years.
Now today we’re living in a time of instant gratification. I want it NOW! But Abraham waited fifty years before he finally got that son of promise, Isaac. So this is why he is such an example of faith and patience and integrity, that he was willing to just know that someday God is going to come through. He’s faithful. So, *"he sojourned in the land, dwelling in tabernacles."* Now what’s the other word for tabernacle? Tents. Well, what was the purpose? Well, he couldn’t build a home of stone and concrete because he was just simply sojourning up and down the land, waiting for something to gel, of course. But until it did, he was living in tents that were temporary abodes that could be taken up and moved.

"And he was dwelling in tents with Isaac, and all the way on up into time of Jacob." Nothing is concrete yet so far as the promises are concerned. But they were all *"heirs with him of the same promise."* Now we’ve got to go back, don’t we? It’s been a long time since we’ve taught Genesis. And let’s go back briefly to the Abrahamic Covenant itself. I’m not going to go into it in detail, but back in Genesis chapter 12, the Abrahamic Covenant. And I’ve made the statement over and over and over through the years. **If you can’t understand the Abrahamic Covenant, then this Book is a dilemma. You can’t figure it out until you understand how all of this promise of a Messiah came about.**

All right, Genesis chapter 12. Now, I always make reference that the very first promise of a coming Messiah was right after Adam and Eve fell in Genesis 3:15 - where we have the promise of the coming of the "seed of the woman." But, for those first 2,000 years it just sort of laid there dormant. There was just nothing transpiring to get that seed growing. It was there, because Abraham comes out of one of the three sons of Noah remember. And God was in control of all that. **But beginning with Abraham 2,000 years after Adam, 2,000 years before Christ, things are now going to start moving.** Now here is the Abrahamic Covenant.

**Genesis 12:1**

"**Now the LORD had said unto Abram,** (in chapter 11) **Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will (sometime in the future) shew thee:**" See He doesn’t tell him here, for example, I’m going to send you up to the Mediterranean. He doesn’t tell him I’m going to send you up to the land of the Canaanites. No. He just says, "Leave Ur and go to a land that I will show you." Well now, this is all means of testing the man’s faith. Now here come the promises, verse 2.

**Genesis 12:2-3a**
"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee:..." Do you see all those "I will’s." Those are promises from God Himself to the man Abraham. And again as I’ve said so often on this program, all you have to do is become a student of history and you’ll see that this has never fallen short. Every empire, every king, every despot that turned on the Nation of Israel met their own doom. And it’s never changed. You can bring it all the way up; I always like to use Great Britain as probably the best example in modern history. When Great Britain stabbed Israel in the back after World War II, Great Britain went down and they’ve been a no-account nation ever since. And, morally, spiritually, Great Britain is in the gutter, and it was primarily precipitated because of their treatment of the Jew. All right, but then the best promise of all is the last part.

**Genesis 12:3b**

"...and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Not just the nation coming from his loins but every person on earth would one day feel the ramifications of this promise made to Abraham, which of course, was what? The coming of the Christ and His going to the cross. His death, burial and resurrection and all that was brought about because of the promises made to this man. And so, consequently, we can say that through Abraham, then, all the families of the earth were blessed.

Now we’re going to see where God repeats this same covenant, if I may call it that, to the next one on the scene, which is Isaac. And Isaac, too, is going to be given the covenant promises over in chapter 26.

**Genesis 26:1-3**

"And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine THAT WAS IN THE DAYS OF Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar, 2. And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: 3. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, (now here it comes) and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;" He’s telling Isaac the same covenant that I made with your father Abraham, I’m bringing it on to you. All right, now let’s go up to the next generation and chapter 28. Here comes Jacob. Years are going by but God doesn’t change. God never forgets.

**Genesis 28:1-4**
"And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. 2. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother’s father, and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother’s brother. (now here it comes) 3. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people: 4. And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham."

The world today knows nothing of this. The world today won’t even recognize anymore the authenticity of this Book. And if you try to tell them, well this is what the Scripture says, they’ll probably scornfully rebuke you and say, "Well, that Book doesn’t count." Well, I beg to differ. As I’ve said on this program over and over, this is the only Book on earth that can prove itself as the revealed Word of God. And everything we’re seeing in the Middle East today is fulfilling everything that was started back here in Genesis. How can they miss it? I’ll never know.

But here it is, that all the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with regard to that nation of people inheriting the land of Canaan. And God later would promise that they would be scattered into every nation under Heaven because of their disobedience. But that someday in the future, He would what? Bring them back again. And then when people scoff and shake their heads and say "Ah, well that’s Old Testament," remind them that Paul writes the same thing in Romans 11, that just because God broke them off as the main trunk of the tree, and scattered them into the nations and grafted in the Gentiles by virtue of the Body of Christ. He says, "Now take heed. Don’t you get puffed up because the same God that could break off those original branches and graft in foreign branches can break you off and bring Israel in and what’s the word? "Again." That’s what it says in Romans 11. "And I will graft them (Israel) in again."

And of course, that’s what we’re seeing the beginnings of. Now they’re not totally there, where they’re going to be. They are still there, for the most part, in unbelief - but listen, tell the world. They’re there as a result of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And that’s the whole idea of Hebrews 11. These people were there by virtue of their faith in the promises that God made starting with Abraham, repeated to Isaac, and repeated to Jacob - and then of course, it follows all the way up through Israel’s history as we’re going to see in the succeeding verses. All right, reading on now then in verse 9 before we go on to verse 10.

Hebrews 11:9
"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country; dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same (what?) promise;"

God promised it and they all believed it even though it took so many hindrances - my goodness, just stop and think of the confrontation between Jacob and Esau. Who would ever dream that, out of that, God would fulfill the promises, but He did. And so Jacob has to flee for his life, never seeing his mother again. He goes on up into the area of Syria to her kinfolk and begins to put together the family, then, that brought about the twelve sons, which in turn brought out the twelve tribes of Israel, but it isn’t until they end up down in Egypt in slavery that God says, "they will become for the first time a nation of people!"
Lesson One • Part II
By Faith
Hebrews 11:9–23

Now let’s continue with our Bible study in the Book of Hebrews. In our last lesson we finished verse 9 of chapter 11. So let’s go to verse 10.

Hebrews 11:10a

"For he…” Abraham - because of that Abrahamic Covenant. And I just put on the board the basics of the Abrahamic Covenant - and those of you who have heard me teach at seminars and so forth, this is almost a staple of my teaching format; that that Abrahamic Covenant in a nutshell, was that out of Abraham would come a nation of people. And one day God would move them into a strip of land that He had promised and deeded to Abraham. And then someday in the future, of course never setting dates, that someday in the future He would provide their government in the Person (Christ as) their King.

And so all of the Old Testament then, from Genesis chapter 12 on up until the New Testament opens up, is looking forward to that coming promised King. As I mentioned in the last program, they became a nation of people when they were in Egypt in slavery. And maybe we should go look at the verse. Come all the way back to Genesis chapter 46, and let’s start with verse 1. And of course, we’re up to the time of Jacob, and his son Joseph is already down in Egypt.

Genesis 46:1-3a

"And Israel (the man Jacob) took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba, (which is down in the Negev or South of Jerusalem) and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. 2. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I." 3. And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt;…” Now you remember in the last program we read where God told Isaac what? Don’t go to Egypt. Sojourn in the land of promise and I will bless you. So it was a forbidden territory to go down into Egypt. But now you see, God in His Sovereignty, He can do this. Now He tells Jacob:

Genesis 46:3b
"...fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there (down in Egypt) make of thee a great nation:" See how plain this is. Now they were down in Egypt then another 215 years. That’s a long time. See I’m afraid, too many times, people do not take time in Scripture in its full impact because we look at the whole period of 6,000 years and consequently we think 200 is just a drop in the bucket. But, 200 years is 200 years. That’s a long time. Look what America has done in the last hundred, let alone two hundred. And so, 215 years from the time that Jacob goes down into Egypt until Moses brings them out, and they are now several million people. I always say from six to seven million. And they were the largest individual nation group in the whole Middle East. And so they were a great nation of people, all because of Abraham’s response of faith. Now back to Hebrews chapter 11, and verse 10.

Hebrews 11:10

"For he looked for a city (a city of which this King would be ruling and reigning) which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Now, of course, the book of Revelation hadn’t been written yet and so that gorgeous city foursquare had not been even mentioned anywhere in Scripture. But I think that has a part in everything that Abraham was looking forward to - that when God would literally rule on the planet and He would be in control, it would be Heaven on earth. And that’s why it’s called then "the Gospel of the Kingdom" because Heaven would come down on earth in the Person of the King. Well, all that was out in the future from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s day, but they looked forward by faith. All right, now verse 11.

Hebrews 11:11

"Through faith also Sara (the true wife of Abram) herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child (when?) when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised." It was a miraculous birth. They were way beyond the age of childbearing. But God, in His Sovereignty brought it about and so she was delivered when she was past age because of her faith.

Now you’re going to probably get tired of hearing me hammer faith, but remember, this is what God is looking for. God wants people who will believe what He says. And it’s just a matter of responding to His Sovereignty - to say, "Yes, God I believe you. I believe every word you say and have said." And that’s pleasing to His ears. All right, that’s the whole idea, how that God responds to the faith of human kind. Now verse 12. So because of the faith of Abraham and Sarah:

Hebrews 11:12a
"Therefore sprang there even of one, (one man) and him as good as dead,…"

Because he was a hundred. I hope there’s no hundred-year-old ones in here!

(Laughter) I’ve had a few in my classes over the years. In fact, I think the lady might have just passed away. Owen, where are you? When I was teaching some over in your nursing home, we had that lady who was a little over a hundred and she and her husband had actually served the American Government with Chiang Kai-shek, you remember that Owen? That’s a long time ago. Oh, she said, we had many a formal dinner with Chiang Kai-shek and his lovely wife. But she was a hundred years old. And that’s a long time of living. But that’s how old Abraham was when Isaac is born. Even in that period of time it was past the age of normal childbearing. All right, so "him as good as dead." Now finishing the verse.

Hebrews 11:12b

"...so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable." Now I’m sure that that’s a play on words. It’s just simply to show us that the number of people that came from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were such a multitude. Now again, I’m stressing everywhere I teach, and I haven’t done much of it on the program, but I’ll probably hit a little more in a later half hour today. But, do you realize that the Jewish people who had been scattered into every nation under heaven for the last, you might say, 2,600 years, going back to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian captivity - they have been scattered out amongst all the nations of the world. They should have disappeared. They should have just simply been assimilated into the other nations of people, by intermarriage and what have you.

But because of these promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob there, they are back in the land tonight. And the world can’t comprehend it. But the little Nation of Israel is there because God has kept them under His wing, even though they’re there in unbelief. I wouldn’t doubt but that there are more almost agnostic, if not atheistic Jews in Israel than believers of any sort. But God has kept them in spite of all of their adversity. They have not intermarried to the place that they lose their identity and they’re still God’s covenant nation. And I don’t think people stop to analyze that. That a little nation of only an average of 10 million people should have disappeared. They should have just gone out into the various nations by intermarriage and lost their identity. But they didn’t. And there they are. A Jew is a Jew is a Jew.

I was reading in some magazine the other night. A Jewish community clear up in the boondocks of Siberia. And they had their Synagogue and they had been practicing Judaism for centuries. Just a little pocket of them. Well, that’s the way it’s been all the way around the world. And they have kept their identity. All right, so here it is. Verse 13 now.
Hebrews 11:13a

"These all died in faith,..." They never stopped believing that this Abrahamic promise was going to be fulfilled through this nation of people coming from these three men. All right, they didn’t receive the promises. Not on this earth.

Hebrews 11:13b

"...not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Why? Well, as yet they don’t have a designated homeland. They do not have a designated king or government or constitution. They are just simply held together by God’s invisible power. But nevertheless, they’ve always survived as a nation of people. All right now then, verse 14.

Hebrews 11:14

"For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." One that would be ruled by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Now let’s see, let’s go back to Luke. I don’t think I did this in the last several programs and if I did, it won’t hurt to repeat. Let’s go back to Luke chapter 1 - and this of course is the father of John the Baptist at the time of John the Baptist’s birth. So, we’re approaching the coming of the Messiah but He certainly hasn’t made His appearance as yet. So the father of John the Baptist by virtue of being filled with the Holy Spirit, up there in verse 67:

Luke 1:67-68a

"And his father (that is the father of John the Baptist) Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, (or spoke forth) saying, 68. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel;..."Now every time I teach this I make the point - there’s no Gentile in here. Not a reference to anybody but Jews. Israel. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." Now we know the Abrahamic Covenant looks way past all this to when this Messiah will become the Savior of the whole world but, remember, He’s going to deal with Israel first. You know I’m always quoting Romans 15 verse 8 - I guess I’ll quote it every chance I get.

Romans 15:8

"Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:" That’s what Paul writes in Romans, that Jesus Christ came to confirm these promises that Hebrews is also
reviewing. And now this is what Zacharias is talking about. The promises that have
been made to Israel. All right, verse 69.

*Luke 1:69-70*

"And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us (Israel) in the house of his servant
David; (how many Gentiles in the House of David? None. We’re not talking to
Gentiles. We’re talking to Israel. Read on.) 70. As he spake by the mouth of his holy
prophets, (the Old Testament) which have been since the world (ages) began:" Here
it comes in verse 71.

*Luke 1:71a*

"That we (the Nation of Israel) should be saved from our enemies,..." Now
goodness sakes, who were Israel’s enemies at the time of the birth of John the Baptist?
Well, the same ones that are there today. Nothing’s changed. The Egyptians hated the
Jews. The Syrians hated the Jews. The Arab world hated the Jews. This is nothing
new. And so this is what Zacharias is proclaiming. "Oh, when their Messiah comes
they’ll be protected from all their enemies."

*Luke 1:71b-73*

"...and from the hand of all that hate us; 72. To perform the mercy promised to our
fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73. The oath which he sware to our
father Abraham," They hadn’t forgotten what God had promised to Abraham. That’s
been handed down - and then the prophets started writing as the Spirit moved them
and everything is moving toward the time when the promises made to Abraham would
become fulfilled. And then, goodness sakes, because of the rejection of the Messiah
and crucifying Him, God stretched out another 2,000 years by dispersing them into
the nations of the world and turned to us Gentiles with the Gospel of Grace through
the Apostle Paul. But listen, everything we’re seeing on the planet today is screaming
- now I don’t set dates, it may be another 50 years, you know a year is nothing in
God’s sight. **But it certainly wouldn’t appear that it could be that long because
everything now is getting ready for the final fulfillment of all these promises.**

Israel is back in the land for the most part. Oh, they’ve still got a tough row to hoe.
They’re not through by any means. In fact come back with me to Matthew chapter 24,
and this tells you that Israel’s worst is still ahead of them and I think we all realize
that it must be awful to live in constant fear of somebody blowing up your bus or
shooting at your car. But, they’ve still got, at least for now, America as a friend.
They’ve got a few other areas of the world that still are friends of Israel, but listen,
this is what’s coming. And this is from the words of the Lord Himself. And if
anybody…anybody shows any doubt about the current scenario in the Middle East, just show them a verse like this. Hey, this is all promised. Israel is just at the beginning; the worst is yet to come.

Matthew 24:9

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, (that is the powers that be.) and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake." Now, never forget, why are the Jews such a hated people? Because Satan knew, from the day that God told Abraham, that that nation of people would be the nation through whom all the blessings of the world would come. **And Satan knew that if he could destroy the Jewish people, then everything that God said falls through the cracks.** And so this is why they’ve been under such intense pressure. Satan is doing everything he can to thwart the will of God and if God does not have the Nation of Israel on which He can fulfill His promises, then He’s lost His Sovereignty and Satan knows that. And so this is why we have to pray for the Jewish people - they are under a Satanic attack, because Satan wants to destroy them.

Come back to Luke chapter 1, I didn’t quite finish there. Luke chapter 1 again, and just another verse or two, then we’ll go back to Hebrews. We did verse 73. "The oath which he sware to our father Abraham." Now here comes the promise again. Now remember this Zacharias, a priest of Israel, is under the power of the fullness of the Holy Spirit as he speaks.

Luke 1:74-75

"That he would grant unto us, (the Nation of Israel) that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him (their Messiah, their King, their Savior, their Redeemer. How?) without fear, (it’ll be Heaven on earth. See?) 75. In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Now that’s what Israel is waiting for. When they can live in total peace and in fellowship with their God and they can see fulfilled these covenant promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. All right, let’s come back to Hebrews chapter 11 once again and make a little headway this half-hour. And now verse 13.

Hebrews 11:13

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, (they never did have that king. They never did have that glorious kingdom on earth. They died looking for it.) but (they)having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, (by faith, remember) and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." They alone were in that place of promised blessings. All right, verse 14.
"For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned." Now that’s kind of a tough verse because it’s a lot of "double" in there. But, had they been mindful of the Ur of Chaldees or maybe even Egypt, then they would have been from the human side, drawn back, and they would have never had the faith to accept the glorious thing that was still future. Because you remember, when they came out of Egypt and they were under all the trials and tribulations of that desert existence, what was their murmuring statement? "Oh, would to God that we’d stayed in Egypt." See? At least we didn’t have to swallow dust every day. But, the whole idea was that out of their adversity would come the blessings.

And I guess the lesson is for us isn’t it? You know I’ve said on this program over and over - God never, through Paul’s writings or anybody else, promises the believer a life of a rose-petaled pathway. A lot of people try to tell us that but it’s not true. God does not promise us a rose-petaled pathway. On the other hand we are promised that we are going to have tribulation. We’re going to suffer. We’re going to have obstacles ahead of us. And in spite of it all our faith keeps looking past all of that.

And so this is a whole concept of Christian living that we don’t have to have all these good things every day of our lives. That’s not what we’re here for. But we are going to suffer adversity as well as enjoy the blessings. Okay, now verse 16. Here we come to that word that we’ve seen all through the book of Hebrews. What is it? Better. B-E-T-T-E-R. Verse 16.

"But now (because of faith) they desire a better country,..." Remember how we’ve been stressing this all through Hebrews that everything in the past was okay, it was good. But this is so much better - even the eternal view. This is so much better, because now they were looking for not just the earthly things, but heavenly things.

"...that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city." I was going to take you back to Revelation this time, but I don’t have to, because you all know what it is. The streets paved with pure gold. The gates made of pure pearl. And all the gemstones that you can imagine are the stones of the foundation. Oh, that city is coming. God hasn’t forgotten. God is
never going to go back on His Word. And so this beautiful city that they were looking for by faith, will one day become a reality!
Lesson One • Part III

By Faith

Hebrews 11:9–23

For those of you joining us on television, we just like to make sure you understand we’re just an informal Bible study. And like someone wrote the other day, they hadn’t heard verse-by-verse teaching for years and years. So, I guess maybe I’m about the only one (at least that I’m aware of on television), where we are teaching verse-by-verse. But it’s the only way I know how to teach. I don’t know what I would do if I would have to put together a separate little message for every thirty minutes. Boy, that would be hard. But all I have to do is just pick up where we left off in the last lesson and we just go from there. Now for a little quick review we’ll look at verse 16 again in Hebrews chapter 11.

Hebrews 11:16a

"But now they desire a better country, (and we commented on that in the last half-hour) that is, an heavenly:…" Not just to have the earthly blessings that the patriarchs enjoyed. Now I hope you all realize that when the patriarchs were faithful, God blessed them materially. They were all wealthy, at least in their day and time. But, you see, too many people think that you bring that concept up into the Church Age - and that flies in the face of Scripture, because Paul in his letters to the churches never, never promised earthly blessings in response to our Christian behavior.

All of our promises are heavenly. Now granted, we’re blessed in earthly things, I don’t deny that. But, by and large, our blessings, our rewards, are waiting for us in Glory. And it’s there that we’re going to one day come to cash in, if I can call it that. But for the Old Testament patriarchs, their blessings were earthly. Flocks and herds and children and what have you. But they, too, one day will enter into a heavenly kind of existing, even though it will be Heaven on earth. All right, let’s go on into the next verse now, verse 17.

Hebrews 11:17

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, (or tested) offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son," Now let’s go back and look at it. That’s in Genesis chapter 22, because a lot of these little things I think the average reader or even student, overlook, and they’re pertinent, they’re important.
Now we’ve already stressed in the earlier programs this afternoon that Abraham was fifty years waiting for the promised son.

Of course, he and Sarah took things into their own hands, you remember, back when he was about 86 and they had Ishmael by way of the slave girl, Hagar. **But see, God never recognized Ishmael as the promised son, because he wasn’t. God had nothing to do with the birth of Ishmael.** That was strictly in the flesh between Abraham and Sarah and the girl Hagar. But, the promised son wouldn’t come for another fourteen years, which made a total then, as I said earlier, of about 50 years that Abraham was waiting for the son of promise, Isaac.

All right, but now Isaac is a young lad himself. And now after waiting 50 years for the lad to be born, enjoying his companionship for 17-18 years, now God tells him what? "Give him up to Me, as a sacrifice." That must have been horrendous. But remember, God was doing it for only one purpose. And what was it? To test Abraham’s faith. My, you wouldn’t think God would have had to test Abraham anymore - he’d already been tested for 50-some years. But, nevertheless, God is going to test the faith of this man of faith, Abraham, once again.

*Genesis 22:1-2*

"And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt (or test) Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. (now look at verse 2. Watch this carefully.) 2. And he said, Take now thy son, thine (what’s the next word?) only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; (present day Jerusalem) and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Goodness sakes, Ishmael is fourteen years older. But see, God never recognized Ishmael as a son. He was not the promised son, but rather the promised son was Isaac.

*Genesis 22:3-4*

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave (or held) the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. 4. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off." So often in Scripture we have"**Three days.**" It’s just amazing if you make a study of it, and here’s another one. They left Beersheba down in the South and three days later they see Mount Moriah, which is present day Jerusalem, the Temple Mount.

*Genesis 22:5*
"And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, (now underline the next part of that verse.) and come again to you."

By himself? No. Both of them. Would he be carrying Isaac over his shoulder? A corpse? No. They would both be coming back alive. But hadn’t God told him you’re going to have to give Isaac as a sacrifice? Yes. All right again, by faith, and oh, I can’t emphasize this enough, what did Abraham know? That if he would have to kill Isaac, God would raise him up so he could go back home with him. He knew that. Now that’s faith. All right, let’s read on. Now verse 6.

Genesis 22:6-7

"And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. (no servants. Just the two of them.) 7. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And I think here in verse 8, Abraham said a mouthful that he didn’t realize was going to be fulfilled to the last jot and tittle.

Genesis 22:8

"And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together." But what had God told Abraham? "To sacrifice Isaac." It would be Isaac, but somehow or other, Abraham knew one of two things. If he would have to offer Isaac, God would raise him from the dead. And if he didn’t offer Isaac, God would provide the lamb. And of course, we know that’s what happened.

Genesis 22:9

"And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood." Now that almost seems beyond human comprehension, it seems beyond the God that we know of Scripture. How could God expect a man to lay his own son, when we know that one of the horrors of Israel’s history was child sacrifice and yet here God commanded Abraham to lay Isaac on that altar bound, hand and foot, although there is no indication that Isaac resisted. He was totally obedient to the father as he’s laid on the altar.
Now, I’m not going to make you go back to Romans, but another verse that I always use in Romans 15 is verse 4 and that verse says: "Now all these things were written aforetime (like we’re reading right here) for our learning that we through the Scriptures might have comfort and hope." All right so what are we to glean from this? We’re to learn. This isn’t just some legend. This isn’t just some story to fill the page. But this is even for you and I in this Age of Grace, to look back at and see how the God Whom we serve is telling us something. And what’s He telling us? That God did bring about a Human sacrifice, the greatest one of all. The Lamb that took away the sin of the world was nailed to that Roman Cross. Just as surely as Isaac was laid on that altar on Mount Moriah. There are so many parallels. Number one, as I’ve already pointed out, Isaac was the only begotten son. Isaac fulfilled everything pertaining to Christ’s sacrifice by being totally obedient to be that sacrifice. And all through the eyes of faith. God said it and they could rest on it.

**Genesis 22:10**

"And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." And I don’t think Abraham was being a Hollywood actor. He was ready to carry it out, heartbroken as he must have been. But on the other hand knowing that God would bring him back to life. All right verse 11.

**Genesis 22:11a**

"And the angel of the LORD..." And I’ve always stressed, Who’s that? Well, that’s God the Son.

**Genesis 22:11b-12**

...called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Now there’s the emphasis - that as Isaac was the only son of Abraham in God’s eyes, so Christ was referred to as the only begotten Son of God. Now here’s the beautiful part that I think that, whether it was by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the mind of Abraham, but here it’s immediately fulfilled when he said, "God would provide the lamb," in the earlier verses.

**Genesis 22:13**

"And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." In both these instances, was there any
opposition? From Isaac or from the ram? No. Scripture would have told us. But Abraham could just simply walk to the thicket, take that ram, probably with Isaac’s help and they put it on the altar without a struggle, without opposition and again it was a beautiful picture of the Lamb that finally did take away the sin of the world. He didn’t fight the cross. He didn’t oppose any of the beatings and the misuse of the Romans. He went meekly as a lamb. And so all this is just a preview of that which would be fulfilled there at the cross. All right, and so now verse 14.

*Genesis 22:14*

"Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: (which means that Jehovah would provide) as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen." And so what a glorious statement of faith and at the same time a preview of the cross - in fact as you go back to Hebrews, stop at Philippians chapter 2, as we use this quite often. And this is just simply the fulfilling of all that we’ve seen back in Genesis. Let begin with verse 5:

*Philippians 2:5-8*

"Let this mind be in you, (now remember, Paul is writing to Gentile believers like you and I) which was also in Christ Jesus: 6. Who, being in the form of God, (He was God, totally) thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (because He was God, I can’t emphasize that enough.) 7. But (as God, as the Creator God of the universe) made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, (or a bond slave) and was made in the likeness of men: 8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." So the picture is, in the Old Testament even as Isaac was obedient unto death, Christ was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross for your sins and mine.

Well, that’s another tremendous lesson that we glean from these patriarchs and their walk of faith. All right, come back to Hebrews chapter 11, and let’s read verses 18 and 19 again just to confirm everything that I’ve said as we looked at Genesis 22.

*Hebrews 11:18-19a*

"Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19. Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead;..." You see that? Scripture tells us that if Abraham would have carried out the killing of Isaac, God would have raised him from the dead - but of course, He did the alternative. He provided the sacrifice.

*Hebrews 11:19b*
"...from whence also he received him in a figure." (or a type) So I was scripturally A-OK by taking you back to Genesis 22 and showing how that the offer of Isaac was the beautiful picture of the obedience of the One that was to be put to death, and Christ fulfilled it. All of Scripture, I guess if there’s one compliment that I enjoy from our listening audience, is that right there. That we are taking all of Scripture and making them fit from cover to cover.

And it does, it just thrills me when people are beginning to see that this isn’t a bunch of jumbled up legends and stories and so forth. It’s a composite that fits from cover to cover. And you don’t see it until you study it. The casual reader will never get it. All right, let’s go on to verse 20.

Hebrews 11:20

"By faith (again) Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come." Many people don’t realize that. Why do you suppose the Arab world is so high in numbers? Because God promised Ishmael that He would bless him. They’re not there by accident. They’ve been blessed.

You know, I always have to think, not only do they have 50 times more people than Israel (they’ve got almost that much more land area than Israel), but on top of that what’s under all their sand? Most of the world’s oil! They can’t complain, my they’ve got blessings that they don’t even want to admit. And so God hasn’t turned His back on them. And so even Isaac when he blessed the sons, he blessed Esau just as well as he did Jacob. But, Jacob of course, is the man of faith. Now verse 21.

Hebrews 11:21a

"By faith Jacob, when he was a dying,..." You go back to Genesis and you can pick up all the blessings that he placed upon those sons.

Hebrews 11:21b

"...blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." As he was dying, passing off the scene. All right now we jump up into the next generation. In verse 22 - of Joseph, the favored son of Jacob. And you all know the story of Joseph; I don’t have to rehearse that. Joseph ends up down in Egypt. And as the Jews have done from the onset of the nation, even though they’re hated, they’re despised, they’re persecuted - invariably some of them will end up where? At the top. You just stop and think about it. What percentage of the Nobel Prize winners are Jews? If I’m not mistaken, it’s about 50%. Yet the Jews are only less than one percent of the world’s population. They’re blessed.
Look at the talented people in the entertainment industry. What are most of them? Jews. Look at successful writers. What are most of them? I won’t say all, but what are most of them? Jews. Medical science. My goodness. Beginning with the polio vaccine, Jonas Salk, what was he? Jew or Gentile? He was a Jew. All the master scientists of the atomic energy program, what were they? Most of them were Jews. Oh, they’ve been blessed beyond human comprehension in spite of the world’s hating them, in spite of the satanic pressures to get rid of them.

And so never lose sight of that (even Joseph). Here he’s sold as a common slave, taken down into Egypt, becomes nothing more than a house servant but where does he end up? Second man in Egypt and I imagine if he had wanted to usurp Pharaoh’s seat, he could have. Daniel goes out into Babylon, nothing more than a manacled slave. Where does he end up? Second man in Babylon. Almost that far in the next empire, the Medes and the Persians. And so all the way up through human history, you’ve seen that these Jews with their talent, their intelligence, their energy, they just come to the top.

All right, now here’s Joseph. Went through the life of a slave, imprisoned (as far as I can tell) about 10 years. Then he comes out and rises up to the second man in Egypt - but when he dies, they all die remember. And when he died he made mention of the departing out of Egypt of the Children of Israel and gave a command concerning his bones. Well, you all know what that was, don’t you? Joseph told the Children of Israel of his day, "That one day, God is going to take you out of here and you’re going to go back to the land promised to our forefathers. And when you go, you take my bones with you."

Now what prompted him to request that? Well, I think it carries through to the Jew of the present day. If a Jew has got the money and the wherewithal, and he’s got any connection with his Old Testament Scriptures, where would he like to be buried? Anybody know? As close to the Temple as they can get. Most of your guides will tell you that, won’t they? If they had the money, they would be buried right next to the Temple itself. Well, Joseph already had a comprehension of that, that when the Lord came to set up this kingdom, he wanted to be in the land of promise at resurrection day. That’s what he’s looking at. He’s looking at resurrection day. And so, by faith, knowing the promises made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that a Redeemer, Messiah, King is coming. He wanted to have his bones in the Promised Land, when that day comes, so he gave commandment that they were to take his bones with them.

Well, I wish I had time to take you back and show you, because when Joseph said, "take my bones with you," when they got back in the Promised Land, did they just bury him at the first place that they came across? No. He was buried in a
particular place and the amazing thing is, there are three pieces of ground in the homeland of Israel that were bought and paid for with current money, of silver. Three of them. And those three same identical places are the points of greatest controversy and bloodshed today.

But see, all of this ties in Ancient Israel, and what’s going on today is tied together. You can’t separate them. And it’ll just thrill your hearts in our next program, when we show you those very plots of ground that were bought and paid for with money, not counting the deed that God made to Abraham, that the whole land belonged to the Nation of Israel, but those three segments were bought and paid for, for a particular reason - and so one of them is where the bones of Joseph are going to go.

And so again, we’ll look at it when we come to the next program, but the next verse, verse 23, we’ll pick that up as well, that it was by faith that all of these men and women moved, relying strictly on what God had promised. Now what’s the lesson for us? Well, we’re the same way. "We walk by faith."
Lesson One • Part IV

By Faith

Hebrews 11:9–23

We do appreciate so much those of you watching out on television, and we appreciate so much hearing from you and so many of you have written that you feel like you’re sitting on the back row. And that’s just exactly the way we want to come across, that you’re just part of a Bible class. I don’t claim to be a theologian or anything like that. I’ve compared it more than once to just a Sunday school class. We’re just simply studying the Word and comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Okay, let’s go back where we left off and for those of you that were watching our last program (for some of you it’s a week ago, for some of you it was the day before), I wanted to mention three crucial areas of the Middle East that were intrinsic to the book of Genesis. And so before we go back and pick up in Hebrews chapter 11, we’re going to look at those three a moment. The first one of course is in Genesis 23, where we have the death of Sarah, Abraham’s beloved wife, the one who was part and parcel of that Abrahamic Covenant and the birth of Isaac. But now she dies and I think starting right here we find that part and parcel of the whole Jewish mental makeup is a reverence for their burial sites. And even today if bulldozers are working in Israel and they turn up human bones, they have to stop. Now in America all it takes is a Snail Darter or some endangered species like that, but in Israel if they turn up human bones, then everything stops because they have such a respect for the human dead. And I think it began right back here with Abraham making such a big deal over a burial place for his beloved wife Sarah.

All right, Genesis chapter 23 and let’s start at verse 3. Now we’re not going to read all these, we’re just going to hit a couple of the highlights. But in Genesis 23, Abraham has been mourning over his wife Sarah.

**Genesis 23:3-7**

"And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, (now remember it’s still the land of Canaan) 4. I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. 5. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, 6. Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury the dead. 7. And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth." I’m always
making mention of the fact that he must have had his eye on this place for quite a while that if, and when, somebody was going to die, that’s where he wanted them buried, or even himself. Now verse 8.

*Genesis 23:8-9*

"And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, 9. That he may give me (not a cave, but) the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, (Abraham had his eye on one in particular) which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you." Well now in the intervening verses, they haggle over the price and so on and so forth, but now come on down to verse 16.

*Genesis 23:16-18*

"And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham (now watch this, underline it, pass it on to anybody that will listen) and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. 17. And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure. 18. Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city." In other words, they deeded it to him and it was agreed in the presence of those Canaanites that it was a done deal.

*Genesis 23:19*

"And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: The same is Hebron in the land of Canaan."

All right, now Mamre, the cave of Machpelah is today’s Hebron. It’s in the news constantly because it is a controversial place now between the Palestinians and the Jews. Now when I say Palestinians, that brings another thought. How many people are confused by the term Palestine? Now it’s a Scriptural word, you’ll find it way back in Exodus. But I’m going to make a point. You want to remember that the word Palestine is merely a term of geographical area. Much like we refer to the Mid-West, here in the United States. Now there’s not a person here in this room that doesn’t know what we’re talking about when we talk about the Mid-West. But, does the Mid-West have a definitive border? No. Does the Mid-West have a capital? No. Does the Mid-West have a flag? No. Does the Mid-West have a government? No. It’s merely a geographical area.
Another area is the Sahara. Same thing. Does the Sahara have definitive borders? No. Is the Sahara a nation? No. Does the Sahara have a flag or a constitution? No. Does it have an intrinsic language? No. But again, there isn’t a person in this room that if I speak of the Sahara you know what I’m talking about - that huge area of the northern part of Africa.

I can give you another one. The South Pacific. The South Pacific is a huge geographic area. Everybody knows what you’re talking about. Does it have a government? No. Does it have a flag? No. See? All right, that’s Palestine. Palestine is just a generalized geographical area there in the Middle East from the Mediterranean out east. It has never, never been a definitive area. It has never had a government. It has never had a definitive language. It’s just simply like the Mid-West. The Sahara. The South Pacific. Palestine. It’s an area in which various people have lived.

Now when you go back into Biblical history then, who were the true Palestinians. Well, early on it was the Canaanites. They were living in the area of Palestine. Then it became the deeded land of Israel so the Jew was the true Palestinians. And then the Arabs started coming in for whatever reason. All right, now what it really should boil down to is that we should define the people as the Palestinian Jew, and a Palestinian Arab. But everybody’s got it all wrong. They have gotten to the place now because of the propaganda machine that the Palestinians are the occupiers of the land of Palestine. Well they’re not. They don’t occupy all of Palestine. In fact a good portion of Palestine is the present day Jordan. A good part of Palestine as the term implies is maybe even parts of Syria. Well so, it’s just become a complete mix-mash of definitions but Palestine is not a nation. It is not a definitive government; it’s merely people living in a generalized geographical area. Now maybe that’ll help.

So the Jews then, are inhabitants of Palestine ever since they became a nation, especially under Moses. And it’s been their homeland all right, but go back further than Moses, go to Abraham. He already bought a tract of land and paid silver for it in what is today the city of Hebron.

All right, let’s look at the second one. Jump up ten chapters and go to Genesis chapter 33. Jacob has just come back from his twenty years with his uncle Laban and you all know that account. And as he’s coming back he has just met with his brother Esau in the early part of this chapter but now drop in at verse 18. Now this is what I call Bible study. This just simply compares Scripture with Scripture. What does the Book say?

**Genesis 33:18**

"And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city." (That is of
Shechem.) 19. And he bought (now watch this all carefully) a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for an hundred pieces of money. 20. And he erected there an altar, and called it El-el-o-he - Israel.” In other words, a recognition of Jehovah. All right now, let’s jump over to the last verses of Joshua chapter 24. Now you can see why I left Hebrews when it spoke of Joseph’s bones because here it is.

Joshua 24:29

"And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old." Now remember the history here. When Israel came into the land of Canaan, Moses had died and Joshua picked up the leadership. And Joshua, I think, ruled the Nation of Israel something like 26 years, if I’m not mistaken. Not a long, long time. But anyhow, at the end of Joshua’s life, then, he dies being 110 years old.

Joshua 24:30-32

"And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathserah, which is in mount Ephraim on the north side of the hill of Gaash. 31. And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel. (now here it comes) 32. And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."

Now you see why I stopped in Genesis 33. Same piece of ground. It’s still recognized as belonging to the children of Israel and in that piece of ground they buried the bones of Joseph, see? And it became the inheritance, then, of the children of Joseph. And there’s nothing, nothing to abrogate that. It’s still valid. It’s still their deeded property. They bought it, they paid money for it. All right, so that’s the present day city in Israel of Nablus. Watch for Nablus in the News. Every once in a while there’s another bombing. There’s another shooting. Whatever. Because it’s a point of controversy. Now, who is the progenitor of every point of controversy? The Devil. That’s Satan’s work. All right so we’ve got two of them covered. Hebron, Abraham bought it. Nablus, Jacob bought it.

Now for Jerusalem. Let’s now jump all the way up to II Samuel chapter 24, and let’s start at verse 18. Now David is king. And of course, early in David’s reign, Hebron was his capital. And then he moved the capital from Hebron up to Jerusalem and this is the beginning of that.
II Samuel 24:18

"And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite." Remember the Jebusites lived in the area of what is now Jerusalem.

II Samuel 24:19-21

"And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. 20. And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him: and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground. 21. And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people." Now of course, at this time there was a plague on Israel for a rebellious act. Now verse 22.

II Samuel 24:22-25

"And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold, here be oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and other instruments of the oxen for wood. 23. All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king, (David). And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee. 24. And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. 25. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel."

All right, what spot is this threshingfloor? Well, it’s the Temple Mount. It’s where the Temple was built years later under Solomon. So here again, you’ve got a piece of property that was bought and paid for (by David in this case), which today is one of the disputed places in our everyday news – Jerusalem, the Temple Mount. And all these things just simply scream at us that if people would just simply know and believe the Word of God, we wouldn’t have any problems. But the world won’t do it. The Arabs won’t. The UN won’t. Western Europe won’t. And so, it’ll just continue to deteriorate of course, until the King of Kings comes and you know, I’ve instructed over the years, when you pray for the peace of Jerusalem, what are you praying for? For the Lord the come. Jerusalem will know no peace until Christ returns. It’s going to be a point of controversy right up until the Second Coming itself.
Well now, come back to where we left off in the last lesson to Hebrews chapter 11. Now we’ll pick up another one of our faith people in Moses. What a place of instruction again. Now, I’ve got to always remind you. Why do we study these Old Testament things? They’re for our learning. I can’t take you back here in Genesis and show you the plan of salvation, no more than I can do it in Hebrews. But oh, you can sure learn a lot. How that all of the workings of God have been coming down human history bringing us to the time of Christ and His finished work of the cross. The appearance of the Apostle Paul and the revelations that gave us the Gospel of the Grace of God.

You know, that reminds me - I’ve always said, I won’t attack people. I don’t attack names, or groups or anything like that. But once in a while I read things that just curl my hair. And one of them was early this morning - I was reading from a gentleman that is no longer alive, a well-known highly respected Bible scholar and he was pointing out that Jesus and the Twelve preached the same Gospel of salvation that Paul did. And oh, my toes just doubled up in my boots! How can they say something like that when Paul’s Gospel says, "Christ died for you and rose from the dead." Could they preach that before it ever happened? See that’s my question. How could they preach death, burial and resurrection back here in His earthly ministry? Well they can’t, and they didn’t!

Well then, some people like to tell me, well, they must have known. No. They didn’t know. Luke 18 is just as plain as day that they didn’t know. The Lord says in those verses, "We go up to Jerusalem. Everything written by the prophets will be accomplished. He will be scourged. He will be beaten. He’ll be put to death and the third day He will rise again from the dead." So far so good. But what does the next verse say? Most of you know. "And they knew none of these things, because it was hid from them." So the Twelve didn’t know, and if they didn’t know what He was talking about in those verses, how could they have preached it?

See what I’m saying? How could they preach death, burial and resurrection when they had no idea that it was going to happen. And then they tell me that they preached the same salvation message that Paul preached. You see why I get a little up tight? Common sense tells me they couldn’t preach Paul’s Gospel of salvation, because all of Paul’s Gospel was resting on that death, burial and resurrection. How can you preach something that hasn’t happened? Well you can’t. And they didn’t! Now back to Hebrews chapter 11.

Hebrews 11:23a
"By faith Moses, when he was born,..." The minute the little fellow hit fresh air, what did they know. Hey, he’s something special. He’s not just another little Jew. He’s not just another Israelite. This little fellow is something special.

Hebrews 11:23

"By faith Moses, when he was born, (because of their faith) was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper (or a special) child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment." Now I don’t think he was born with a halo around his head. I don’t think he was born with some kind of an intrinsic baby doll face. But there was something about that little infant that those parents knew right away; this isn’t an ordinary child. We can’t throw him into the Nile River.

And so they secretly built that little crib that would float on the river because they had to keep this little child alive. All right, and so he was, "...hid three months because they saw he was proper, and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment." Now stop and think a minute. We are now about 350 years after the call of Abraham, and the children of Israel have never had a printed book. Think about it. What held them together? Faith. But oh, how do you pass faith from one generation to the next? By word of mouth. And so the Patriarchs were faithful in passing on their faith.

That’s what’s happened to America. That’s what’s happened to the Western world. Christendom. Parents have been guilty of not passing on their faith. And I blame my generation the most of all. We were raised up in the Depression and we said, "My kids are not going to be deprived of everything like I was. And what have we done? We’ve ruined everything."
Lesson Two • Part I

The Father’s Chastening

Hebrews 11:24 – 12:17

As you know by now we’re just an informal Bible study and we’re strictly non-denominational. I can’t find denominations in this Book; I just can’t find them. So, we’ll just teach the Word and we’ll just sort of, as I’ve said, let the chips fall as they may.

And again, we always like to thank our listening audience for your prayers and for your financial support. My, I think this last month was one of the best months we’ve ever had and for most ministries summertime is the doldrums. But you’ve been faithful and we just thank the Lord for each and every one of you.

All right, in our last program we were in Hebrews chapter 11 and we left off with verse 23 with the review of the faith of Moses. And remember that Hebrews chapter 11 is a chapter that just simply reminds of the faith of all the Old Testament Patriarchs. Now over the months that we’ve teaching Hebrews, I’ve been constantly reminding all of us, myself included, that the Book of Hebrews is written to Jewish people who were primarily being plagued with the dilemma of coming out of Judaism and all of its Law-keeping and stepping into Paul’s doctrines of Grace.

And we compare it with cult people today. It is hard for someone who has had these things drummed into them for years and years to finally just make the break and pull away from it and not be drawn back. Well, the Jewish people were under the same kind of a dilemma. Judaism was just pulling them back. Now you want to remember that when Hebrews was written, Jerusalem hasn’t been destroyed, the Temple is still operating with all the sacrifices. See, that’s why he said back in chapter 6, that if they were to go back into Temple worship and sacrifices (which had no validity whatsoever, and even though the Jews were still doing it every day in Jerusalem), they would be canceling out Grace.

But now, as I feel Paul is the writer of the book of Hebrews, Paul is going to appeal to his Jewish readers or listeners - that on the basis of all the Old Testament Patriarchs, it’s always been by faith. Always. Many people will call and ask me, "Well what was the basis of salvation back in the Old Testament?" Well, it’s always been by faith. Not faith plus nothing, like we are today in this Age of Grace, but it was always based on their faith, first and foremost. And so this great chapter 11 is a review of the faith of these Old Testament people by which we learn.
Now I think before we go any further, that we’ll flip back to Romans chapter 15 - and I like to use a verse like this just to show that we cannot come into some of these Old Testament portions, or into a Book like Hebrews for example, and find the plan of salvation and lead someone to the Lord. Looking ahead when we get to the epistles of James, and Peter, and John, they too were all predominately Jewish. You can’t go into one of those letters and find the plan of salvation and lead someone to the Lord - it’s next to impossible because it’s not in there.

And as I’ve said from day one, the plan of salvation isn’t in the Book of Hebrews; it’s not in the Old Testament. You have to go to Paul to find that. But, look what Paul says in Romans chapter 15 verse 4, and this is the whole crux of the idea. This is the heart of why we study all of the Scripture even though we pick up our basic doctrines from Paul. We ‘learn.’

**Romans 15:4a**

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,..." Because even though we are saved by faith plus nothing, yet our faith has to rest on all that’s gone before and so in order to have a good understanding of what you believe, you have to go back to the beginning and see how all of this has progressed up through human history and so this is why Paul says, "all these things were written for our learning." So that you’ll know why you believe what you believe. So repeating the verse again:

**Romans 15:4**

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Well, that’s the whole purpose then, of studying all these Jewish portions of our Bible. All right, come back to Hebrews chapter 11 and we’ll move on. And now it’s by faith then in verse 24:

**Hebrews 11:24a**

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years,..." Now we in the English-speaking world, we immediately think of what age? Twenty-one years old. But it wasn’t 21 in the case of Moses - it was 40. When Moses was 40 years old, after having spent those first 40 years in the house of Pharaoh (as Pharaoh’s daughter, remember, picked him up out of the river Nile). Forty years he had been living as a son of Pharaoh. Now again, we’ve got to go back to Acts chapter 7, that great dissertation by Stephen.
And Stephen picks up with things that were left out in the Old Testament account, and that’s why we have to look at some of these other portions. Acts chapter 7 verse 20. And remember Stephen is rehearsing all this to the Nation of Israel, which of course, they’re going to reject and they’re going to stone him by the time we get to the end of the chapter. But here’s what he says:

*Acts 7:20-21*

"In which time (that is after the Pharaohs and after Joseph had died) Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, (we covered that in a previous verse in our last program) and nourished up in his father’s house three months: (his legitimate parents) 21. And when he was cast out, (that is in the little ark in the river Nile) Pharaoh’s daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son." Now look at verse 22, as a son of Pharaoh’s daughter, living in the palace:

*Acts 7:22*

"And Moses was learned (educated) in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."

Now you’ve heard me say this over and over - in antiquity, Egypt was the United States of that period of time. Egypt was the consumer nation of antiquity. Egypt was the high point of civilization. So Moses isn’t stuck in some antiquated, pagan, uncivilized society - it’s a thriving economy. They’re building, they’ve got tremendous military; and for their day and time, they were the innovators and the scientists - and you see the Scripture tells us that Moses was educated in all of that. He had everything going for him. And on top of being the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, he got all of the perks that went with it. The lifestyle, the sumptuous living, the banqueting, the beautiful women, just like our pro athlete’s today - you know, there’s nothing withheld from them.

Well, it was no different back here, probably even more so. And so Moses had all of this at his disposal. Non-Scripture information tells us that he was probably even a civil engineer - they think Moses was probably one of the ‘movers and shakers’ of building some of the cities of Egypt. He was a tremendous individual. All right, now come back to Hebrews and I’m doing all this to show what Moses turned his back on. All right, chapter 11 verse 24:

*Hebrews 11:24-25a*

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, (when he was 40 years of age. Having been educated and enjoyed all of the good things of Egypt,) refused to be called the
Now here we come to what people are confronted with today and what is it? Choices. People will call that they’ve got a loved one, or someone who’s a drug addict, or this or that. Well, how did they get there? Choices. Bad choices. But you see, every human being, every one of us have been faced with choices. We are what we are by virtue of what we have chosen to do. All right, Moses was no different. These people were just as human as we are. They too, had to make choices and so Moses makes a choice now (in spite of all that’s going for him; the sumptuous living, his clout, his power politically, militarily and in business - he had it all). Second man in Egypt. But now he makes a choice. And so "when he came to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter."

*Hebrews 11:25*

"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, (now I’ll add the word, ‘rather’) than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;" You see why I made reference to our present day athletes? And how all of the pleasures of the immoral world are at their disposal. It was no different. Moses had the same thing and he had all the opportunity for the pleasures of sin. And let’s face it, especially during the youthful years, sin can be pleasurable. Oh, it’s going to take its toll sooner or later, but while they’re in it, they think they’re having a good time. And Moses was no different, but when he was 40 years old, right at the prime of life, what does Moses choose? The other direction. And he turns his back on all the sumptuous living - all of the sinfulness that was at his disposal, and he chose rather to cast his lot with the people of God.

Now even for young people today, that’s not an easy choice, is it? We sometimes wonder why our kids are so reluctant to choose the Christian lifestyle. Well, that’s not where the exciting pleasures lie. Not for the time. But that’s when many times they make wrong choices that will lead them deeper and deeper into these situations from which they can’t withdraw. But always remember, the Scripture is so adamant that we are faced with choices, and Moses here is the perfect example - that he chose of his own volition (by of course God’s leading), to "suffer the affliction of the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin (in Pharaoh’s household) for a season."

Now there again, I suppose I could go 10-15 minutes on just those three words. "For a season." What does that tell you? Sin can be ever so great for a little while. But how do most of them end up? Suicide. Alcoholics. Drug addicts. Sleeping under the bridge. How many of our successful athletes, especially, end up poverty stricken. Why? They enjoyed the pleasure of sin for a little while, but it doesn’t last. And then they pay the wages of it. Well, you see, Moses was in the same place. He could enjoy the pleasures of sin for a little while. Now verse 26:
"Esteeming the reproach of Christ…" Now you’ve got to remember that the word Christ, we do not have it back in the Old Testament. In other words, when you read about Moses in Exodus, you don’t see the name Jesus Christ. But it’s the same person. Jehovah was the same person, He was in His Old Testament economy, but it was the same person of the Godhead that was dealing with Moses and the Patriarchs as deals with us today.

Today of course, we now have the benefit of that finished work of the Cross, but nevertheless, so far as his operating out of the Godhead, the Person of the Godhead that dealt with Moses was the same one that we deal with today. And so that’s why the terminology is correct.

"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt:…" Now don’t lose sight of the fact that Egypt was the America of its day. They lived sumptuously. They knew how to live, as we say, ‘high on the hog.’ And they knew how to throw fancy banquets. They knew how to dress with beautiful clothes. They had all that going for them, and yet Moses turns his back on all that and aligns himself with the slaves out there in the brick kilns of Israel in Goshen. Quite a choice, wasn’t it?

And yet, the lesson for us is it’s no different today. And oh, if our young people could realize that Moses knew what he was doing when he "esteemed the riches of Christ as a greater treasure than the sins and the pleasures of Egypt." And why did he make the choice? We find the answer in the last half of verse 26:

"...for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." He suddenly got, I think, a spiritual understanding of "the recompense of the reward." Now you want to remember that for the pleasures of sin, even if they could enjoy it to the full, up until the end of a normal lifespan, we’ll even go on up into the 80’s and 90’s, what if? What if we could enjoy all those youthful pleasures all the way up until we die? What is it compared to eternity? Nothing! Absolutely Nothing! It’s just a blink of the eye compared to eternity.

Now I made the comment, several months ago I guess on one of the programs, that I had read the back of a T-shirt and that was a T-shirt I wish more people would wear. And it said,"Eternity. Have you thought about it?" Well, someone turned right
around and made a lapel button out of that very same thing and we got a few in the mail the other day and would to God that more people would consider eternity. **That’s forever.** And for the believer it’s going to be enjoying all the rewards of our right choices, not just for a lifetime, but forever!

But on the other hand, for the lost person who has chosen wrong, he’s going to suffer the ramifications of that forever. Eternity is forever. Someone came up with the answer, but it wasn’t me. **How long is eternity? As long as God lives!** Isn’t that what it was, Joy? As long as God lives! That’s eternity. And He’s from eternity past to eternity future. Now that’s beyond our human comprehension. But this is what Moses considered. Moses considered that these pleasures of Egypt for a little while were nothing compared to the rewards of eternity. And oh, if we could only just get this across to people - stop and think. It’s not just for a few years. Not even for a few hundred years. It’s for forever. Verse 27:

**Hebrews 11:27a**

"**By faith, he forsook Egypt,**…." Moses didn’t just take off blindly. Moses just didn’t take out into the wilderness wondering what was going to be his lot. Moses knew that God was in control. Now I think I made the comment in our last program, just before we closed, that they didn’t have any written Bible in those days. He didn’t have the written Word to depend on like we do. So how did these people keep the faith generation by generation? **By the word of mouth.** They passed it on to their kids. And that’s the statement I think that I made in our closing remarks in our last program. That’s where we have failed. **We haven’t passed it on to our younger generation and so now we’re living in a society where most kids don’t even know anything of the Scripture.**

It’s just mind boggling of how ignorant most of our younger people are of Scripture. They can’t tell a Bible verse from a sentence from a poem. Iris can tell you that. Years back, she went into a card shop and asked the young lady behind the counter to help her find a card with a Bible verse. And what do you suppose she came up with? What was it honey? "God Bless You?" Something like that. It wasn’t a Bible verse. But she thought it was. Now, that’s pitiful. But anyway, Moses left Egypt knowing, by faith, that he was under God’s control.

Now of course, the circumstances were less than perfect because you remember he had killed the Egyptian, and because of that he had to flee. But, nevertheless, by faith he left Egypt:

**Hebrews 11:27a**
"By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: (who of course, put a price on Moses’ head.) for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." What does that tell you? What kept Moses going was his faith in the invisible God, and he never lost that. Now verse 28:

**Hebrews 11:28a**

"Through faith he kept the Passover,…"

Now, as the Scripture does so often, we skip 40 years. Because 40 years have gone by from the time that Moses flees from Egypt; goes to the backside of the desert, remember? And he herds sheep for 40 years. And then one day he saw the burning bush. Now that’s all been skipped here in the verses of Hebrews. Well, after he stopped to see the burning bush (it was God speaking), the Lord told him that now it was time to go back into Egypt and to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Now if you know your Old Testament at all, I hope you realize that that in itself was not a shock to Moses, to lead Israel out of Egypt, because that’s what he wanted to do in the first place. That’s why he went out to the Children of Israel when he killed the Egyptian and again, that’s in Acts. Let’s go back there again. Acts chapter 7 just fills in so many of the details that the Old Testament doesn’t give us. Acts 27 verse 23.

**Acts 7:23-24**

"And when he was (this is speaking of Moses now in Egypt) full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. 24. And seeing one of them (an Israelite) suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote (or killed) the Egyptian:" I don’t think he intended to murder him. He probably just hit him harder than he intended to and he killed him. All right, now verse 25 - this is what I wanted you to see. This is what Moses was thinking when he turned his back on Egypt and went out to the children of Israel. This is what was on his mind.

**Acts 7:25**

"For he supposed (he thought) his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not." So what did Moses really have on his mind when he went out to visit the children of Israel? That he was going to start the ball rolling to move the Nation of Israel out of Egypt and back to the Promised Land. Because that was all handed down by faith, you see?
But the whole problem was, it wasn’t in God’s timing. **Moses was hoping to do it under his own power, because of his own ability, his own political situation instead of waiting for God.** Sound familiar? But forty years later, now, God can call him aside at the burning bush and say, *"All right, Moses, now I’m ready to have you lead the children of Israel out of Egypt."* So, all of this was still based on the man’s Faith.

All right, so come back to Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 28. After skipping those forty years on the back side of the desert, we skip that time of the plagues with the Pharaoh’s there in Egypt and we come down to the last event that Israel experiences in Egypt. And what is it? The night of the Passover. The night of the Passover when the blood was applied to the doorpost and the death angel passed over.

**Hebrews 11:28a**

*"Through faith (taking God at His Word!) he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of the blood,…"* Which we know from Exodus was simply taking a piece of hyssop, dipping it in the basin of blood and applying it to the two side posts and the lentil. And that here it’s just referred to as "the sprinkling." But, it’s the application of the blood of that Passover lamb and it is what caused the death angel then, to pass over the houses of the Israelites, now reading on in verse 28:

**Hebrews 11:28b**

*"...lest he that destroyed the firstborn (that is of Egypt. All the firstborn of Egypt remember, were stricken) should touch them."* The blood of the Passover lamb kept the death angel from touching the children of Israel. Now again, what did it take to take the lamb’s blood and apply it to a doorpost? Faith! They had nothing else to go by. But God had said, if you apply the blood in such and such a way, as the death angel is striking the firstborn all across Egypt, if I see the blood, I’ll pass over you. And so what was the basis for putting the blood on the door? Faith. They had no other way of knowing. They had no way of knowing that that death angel would pass over, **they could only take God at His Word.**

Now you see, we come right back to that same concept today. Over and over I have to ask people, *"Are you trusting nothing but that finished work of the cross for salvation?"* Or are you trusting your denomination? Are you trusting your local church? Now there’s nothing wrong with all those things but they will never save anybody. Our faith has to be in what God has said. And what has God said? *"That when I see you place your Faith in that finished work of the cross, you’re Mine!"* And we take that by faith. We believe it in our heart! But oh, it’s so hard for
people to leave it alone after believing in your heart. But human nature says what? But I’ve got to do...something! No we don’t!
Lesson Two • Part II

The Father’s Chastening

Hebrews 11:24 – 12:17

I had a lady write the other day, and she said, "I caught your program a couple of years ago, and I’ve been in church all my life. Until after I watched your first program, I had never read my own Bible, but now I’m in it every day." Well, what more can we ask for, because if we can just get people to study their own Bible then good for them - all I’m here for is just to enlighten and to maybe clarify. But, we want people to study on their own, because as I’ve said over and over on the program, old Tyndale said, he wanted a copy of the Scriptures in the hands of every plowboy in England. How much education did English plowboys have? Just enough to read. And that’s all it takes.

Okay, let’s get right into where we left off in Hebrews chapter 11 and we’re still dealing with Moses. And by faith now, he has come through 80 years of his lifetime. And he’s now leading the children of Israel out of Egypt and the first thing they’re going to have to confront is the Red Sea and you know when we teach Exodus we make it a point that here come the children of Israel – mountains impassible on both sides, the Egyptian army behind them and the Red Sea in front of them. And what did God tell them? Did He say, "Well hurry up and build rafts. Do something, so that you can float the Red Sea?" No, that’s not what God said. He said what? Stand still! Don’t do anything.

The lesson for salvation is the same way today. When the sinner realizes he’s lost and he’s hopeless, he doesn’t go out and try to work and work and work to get saved. He does nothing but stand still and believe in that finished work of the cross. And I know I put it on the program maybe several months ago now, time goes so fast. But, I don’t think I slept much all that night for just reviewing it in my own mind - the unbelievable gift of the work of the cross. That it was so perfect. It was so complete that like creation back there in Genesis 1 - you remember, I tied the two together. That’s when God looked at the finished work of creation - He saw in the last verse of chapter 1 that it was what?

*Genesis 1:31a*

*And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good,...* It was perfect. And so what did He do in chapter 2?

*Genesis 2:2a*
"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day,..." He rested. There wasn’t anything more He could do. It was done. Well, the same thing with the work of the cross. After He’d finished it and ascended back to glory, what did He do? He sat down. Why? Because it was perfect. And ever since then what has mankind been trying to do? Smear it, by adding this and adding that to it with one thing or another. But, just like Israel standing on the shores of the Red Sea, God doesn’t say, "Well, hurry up and do something!" He says, "Stand still!"

So here’s the verse now in verse 29:

Hebrews 11:29

"By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned." By simply taking God at His Word, He opened up the Red Sea, piled up the water on both sides - and listen, do you think those Jews didn’t know that that water was stacked up? And at a moments notice the whole thing could come rushing back in. They were just as human as we are. But how did they know that water wouldn’t come back? God’s Word.

God said, "Go through on dry ground." And so it was by faith that they crossed the Red Sea on dry ground, not worrying about that water crashing in. But you know, as soon as the last Jew went up on the other side, then what happened? Here it came and the Egyptians were caught in it. But you see, for the people of faith, they walked in and they walked across on dry ground, because that’s what God said to do.

All right, so "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as dry land." It wasn’t muddy. It wasn’t wet. It was like dry land. And then the Egyptians were drowned because the water came back. But, you see, that’s what it means to take God at His Word. It’s not always easy. It’s not always easy to just simply say, "Well God said it and I can depend on it." But this is what God expects. This is what He’s looking for. He is simply looking for our believing and trusting in what He has said. The problem is, most don’t read far enough in their Bibles to get those instructions from the Apostle Paul. All right, let’s move on into verse 30.

Hebrews 11:30

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days." Now that’s probably one of the things in Scripture that is scoffed at as much as anything. The world will not believe that all Israel had to do was walk around it seven times. But, they believed God. Now again, they were just as human as we are. Don’t you suppose a lot of those Israelites, as they were marching around that well-fortressed city, must have had some scoffing ideas within their own mind? I can hear some of them saying, "Well, what in the world is this going to do? How in the world
is this going to defeat Jericho?" But they did it. And it happened. Because God said it would.

And you see, we’re up against the same thing today. I suppose if I get more letters of disagreement on any one thing, it’s the Rapture - and I’m addressing it in my next newsletter. Why can’t people accept the concept of the Rapture? Because it takes a lot of faith, and I know that. I can see that the unbelieving world thinks we’re crazy as loons to think that all of a sudden, someday, God’s going to give a shout, a trumpet’s going to sound and we’re going to be gone from this earth. They can’t believe that! Well, I can understand that to a point. It does stretch the imagination. But listen the Lord Himself said, back there in Matthew, that "with God nothing is impossible."

Do you think it’s impossible for Him to suddenly take every believer off the planet? No. It’s not impossible, and He’s going to do it because the Word says He will. But that’s where faith comes in. We take it by faith. I can’t explain it, and you can’t explain it but, oh, we can believe it because it’s what the Word says.

All right, so they marched around Jericho, foolishness in the eyes of men, but God said that’s what it took. Now again, to this very day, archaeologists like to argue, "Did the walls fall down?" Some maintain that they went straight down. But regardless of which way they went – they went! And Jericho was a sitting duck for the Israelites. But it takes faith to believe it. All right, verse 31:

*Hebrews 11:31*

"*By faith (by just simply believing what she heard) the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.*" A woman of ill repute, and yet with what little bit she had heard, what’d she do with it? She believed it. In fact, Rahab is one of my favorite subjects for how little faith it takes for God to grab the person. How much did Rahab know? Very little. The only thing she knew was that she’d heard that this little nation of people coming out of Egypt had come through the Red Sea on dry ground. She had heard how they had defeated some of the more powerful enemies in the then-known world. And on the basis of what she had heard, she what? She believed it. Now she didn’t understand all of Scripture. She didn’t understand the Sovereignty of God. She didn’t understand the grace of God. She didn’t understand all of the ramifications that we sometimes think people have to know. No, she knew precious little, but what little she knew, she believed it with all her heart, because she trusted the God that was behind it. And God did everything else.
Rahab was a perfect example of how God will save a person who doesn’t have an awful lot going for them. And so Rahab, *perished not with those who believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.* Well, why did she receive those Jewish spies? Because – let’s go back and look in Joshua chapter 2, and see this is so simple. **You know, mankind has made salvation so difficult.** My, we think we’ve got to put people through this and through that and then somehow or other, they’ll get there. No, that’s not God’s way. Joshua chapter 2 verse 9. Rahab hasn’t had any Bible School, she’s never been to Sunday School, she’s never been to church. All she has heard are things that had come through the grapevine in Jericho.

*Joshua 2:9-11a*

"And she said unto the men, (the spies) I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land (that is the land of which Jericho was the major city) faint because of you. (now here it comes in verse 10.) For we have (what?) heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side of Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. 11. And as soon as we had heard these things,…" She didn’t even see the results of it. She wasn’t sitting on some high point watching the Red Sea open up and Israel coming through - that would have been a little different wouldn’t it? But she had merely heard that these things had happened. And what’d she do with it? **She believed it,** see? All right, and so it says:

*Joshua 2:11a*

"And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt,…" And so, because of what she had heard knowing that behind it all was the God of Israel, God in turn responds to her faith. All right, on your way back to Hebrews, let’s just stop at another portion of Scripture that speaks of hearing. And that is in Romans chapter 10. Even at the pen of the Apostle Paul this is the key word. And it’s all the same concept.

*Romans 10:17a*

"So then faith (faith, being able to take God at His Word) cometh by (what?) hearing,…" Not seeing! But rather by hearing it. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Now verse 18.

*Romans 10:18-21*

"But I say, (Paul says) Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. 19. But I say, Did not Israel
know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. 20. But Esaias (Isaiah, see here we go back to the Old Testament again) is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. 21. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." And what was their problem? They couldn’t believe. But for those who could believe God does everything that needs to be done. All right, let’s come back again to Hebrews, chapter 11. Now he’s going to make just a quick review of some of the Old Testament characters. Most of which we have heard in our Sunday school classes and Vacation Bible School stories. Now verse 32, and Paul says:

**Hebrews 11:32a**

"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon,…" Now you all know the story of Gideon -when the multitudes of Israelites that came out to be a part of his army, God said, send them home. And you know how He went through the elimination process. And how many did He keep? **Three hundred** to confront the thousands of the enemy. Seems ridiculous? But God is famous for doing the ridiculous. And it was by their faith that those three hundred men defeated the enemy.

**Hebrews 11:32b**

"...and of Barak, and of Samson,..." Now you see Samson is the epitome of both sides of the coin. He was the man of faith who could do the miraculous but his unbelief took him down to the depths of despair. But nevertheless, he is still a good Old Testament example.

**Hebrews 11:32c**

"...and of Jephthae, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:" I don’t have to spend any time on David. You all know his escapades and his conquests, as well as his failures. "And Samuel, the prophets." Now verse 33, all of them…all of them:

**Hebrews 11:33**

"Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions." Now of course, we’re jumping up to Daniel in that one aren’t we? But always remember, what was the percentage of even Israel that were men of faith? Precious few. And it’s always been that way. Only the small percentage were people that could believe what God said. But He’s always had the few, and still does, and He will until the end. All right, verse 34:
Hebrews 11:34

"Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Well, the Old Testament’s full of those accounts, how that just a small number of Israelites would defeat vast numbers of the enemy. Simply because they did what God told them to do, which may have sounded foolish, but they believed what God said. All right, verse 35 and again, the whole concept, remember, is that by faith…

Hebrews 11:35a

"Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured,…" Now these are not very pretty verses. You see, we have been living the last several hundred years in Western Civilization without really suffering the torture of martyrdom, haven’t we? We don’t know what it’s like, but other areas of the world still do. In fact, I think you’ve probably read the same thing I have. There have probably been more Christians killed in the last century than almost the previous 18 or 19 before that and we’re not aware of it because we’ve got it so good. But that’s not to say that it can’t happen. And so we’re reminded that all the way up through human history, people of faith were victorious on the one hand, but they suffered martyrdom on the other. All right, verse 36:

Hebrews 11:36-37

"And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, (for their faith) yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented:" Not pretty is it? But that’s too often been the lot of the believers. All you have to do is go back and read a book like Fox’s Book of Martyrs. Man it’s frightening what Christians have gone through for their faith. And then what you have to ask ourselves is, "Could we do it? If all of a sudden we were confronted with torture or recanting, could we stand?" And this is the lesson - that God is able to keep the believer by faith, through whatever his circumstances, be they good or bad. Verse 38.

Hebrews 11:38a

"(Of whom the world was not worthy:)…" So why did they do it? Because, as we saw earlier in the chapter, because of the recompense of the reward in eternity.

Hebrews 11:38b
"...they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Now again, if you know anything of history, even of Christendom, my, how many of the true believers were chased from mountain range to mountain range, uprooted and indeed they had to eke out a living in caves and dens. Now verse 39:

**Hebrews 11:39**

"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:" All God was looking for was their faith. And they still did "not receive the promise." It’s almost enough to make you cry, isn’t it? In spite of all that they went through, now this is again dealing primarily with the Old Testament believers. All of this suffering and yet they didn’t receive the promise. At least not in this life, because what was the promise that they were all looking for? Well, the Kingdom! The Heaven on earth. **The Old Testament is full - how that God would rule and reign on the earth and Israel would be the top nation of the nations.** That’s what they were looking for. **And yet, they never saw it.** Was it because they were foolish? No. Because God in His own timing is still going to bring it about. But they went through life, lived it by faith, and yet never saw those promises fulfilled on earth. Now they’re going to see it in the eternal, of course. Verse 40:

**Hebrews 11:40a**

"God having provided some (what’s the next word?) better thing for us,..." This world is nothing compared to what God has in store for us. Nothing. Whether it was the Old Testament living back in antiquity, or if it’s us living today, the comparison is the same. The things of this world are nothing compared with the eternal that’s waiting for us. And so God has provided something better.

**Hebrews 11:40b**

"...that they without us should not be made perfect." In other words, brought to this place of spiritual completeness. And so history is replete with believers who suffered and died for their faith, never having received that which they thought they were looking for. But, oh it’s still out there. It’s still coming. And we never have to lose sight of that.

All right, now we’ll go on into Hebrews chapter 12 and here we want to take a moment of time to clarify something that even good men have completely muddled the thinking of thousands if not millions of people with. Verse 1 of chapter 12, it’s going to ring a bell as soon as you see it.

**Hebrews 12:1a**
"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,..." In other words, all of these heroes of the faith, are referred to as a "cloud of witnesses." Now I get letter after letter asking, "Does that mean that our loved ones are sitting up there watching us?" No way. I know good men say that’s true, but I tend to disagree. And it’s because of the two different Greek words that we have to compare in looking at this verse.

**Hebrews 12:1a**

*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,...* Now the Greek word for witnesses here is "martyras." And it’s the same Greek word that is referred to in John chapter 1 verse 7. Now I probably won’t have time to finish this completely but we’ll at least get a good start on it. John chapter 1 verse 7, the same Greek word is used. Oh, I’m going to run out of time. Oh well, that’ll just make people tune in tomorrow. (Chuckles)

**John 1:7a**

*The same came for a witness, (John the Baptist, he was a martyras) to bear witness of the Light,...* Now that didn’t mean that John the Baptist was sitting up there in the stands someplace watching Jesus, but what was he? He was proof that Jesus was the Christ. That’s what it meant to be a witness of who he was. All right, we’ll pick up the rest in the next program.
Lesson Two • Part III

The Father’s Chastening

Hebrews 11:24 – 12:17

As we get our mail each day, we just want to thank God for each of you. I’ve got a couple of letters that I’ve been carrying in my Bible, and I just ask people, "Can you believe this?" And I just let them read it. It is just unbelievable the testimonies that we get of how, after just watching the program for a time or two, the Lord just reaches out and brings them into a saving knowledge. So we do welcome your letters and your prayers. Okay, Hebrews chapter 12, we only just got a little start in verse 1 on the last program so we’ll just pick up as though we never even started. And the verse says:

Hebrews 12:1a

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,..." Making reference of course, to all these that have been mentioned in this great faith chapter 11. And when you stop to realize that, then this is what we are to do. But we want to stop here to cover this "cloud of witnesses" around which there is so much confusion. How many times have you heard or have you read that all those that have gone on before are up there like in an amphitheater watching us. Horror of horrors! That wouldn’t be Heaven. That’d be anything but! If they’d have to be up there seeing what’s going on down here – no way. But the witnesses, as we showed in our last program and we’re going to redo it, is from the Greek word "martyras," whereas the word if it meant spectators then it would be "autopisis" from which we get autopsy. And what do you do at an autopsy? You look at it. And that’s the Greek word, but the Greek word here in chapter 12 is "martyras."

Now let’s do like we did in the last program. Let’s go back to John’s Gospel chapter 1, where John the Baptist is a witness of the ministry of the Lord Jesus. John’s Gospel chapter 1, starting at verse 6.

John 1:6-7a

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. (this is John the Baptist) 7. The same came for a witness, (a martyras, an M-A-R-T-Y-R-A-S) to bear witness of the Light,..."  

Now do you get the concept? John the Baptist wasn’t sitting there in an amphitheater watching Jesus perform His miracles. That’s not what it meant. John the Baptist was
confirming Who He was. His whole ministry was to announce that the Messiah had come. He was a witness to Who He was. See the difference? All right, now then let’s go back and briefly look at Hebrews 12 verse 1 again so that we get this locked in to our thinking,

**Hebrews 12:1a**

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,"

"**Martyras.**" Like John the Baptist, who is confirming that the God of Scripture is real. That’s their purpose. That’s why we started out two programs ago with Romans 15:4. All these things were written for our "learning." To prove to us that we’re not placing our faith in something that is not true. It is true! The witnesses have proven it. All right, now the other term as I’ve already made mention of is "**autopisis**" and that is used in II Peter chapter 1. And this is witnesses we see here who are looking at something that’s being performed. This is the other meaning and is not the one used in Hebrews 12:1. Now let’s look at it here in II Peter chapter 1 verse 16, where Peter writes:

**II Peter 1:16-17**

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Now remember, Peter says, "we were eyewitnesses of all this, we saw this." Now verse 18, "

**II Peter 1:18**

"And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." What’s he talking about? The Mount of Transfiguration. Now for Peter, James and John it was just like sitting in a theater, and they were watching all this unfold. They heard the voice from Heaven. They saw Moses and Elijah appear and then they saw Christ transfigured right in front of them. They saw all that. That’s the different meaning. But Hebrews chapter 12:1 isn’t talking in that vein. **Hebrews is saying that these people in the Old economy are proof that our faith has been placed in something concrete and real and believable. Not that they’re sitting up there watching us perform. You see the difference?**
And see, here’s where a lot of times, like I’ve always said, I’m not a Greek student but once in a while it behooves us to just compare words, how they’re used in the New Testament and that’s our best rule of thumb. All right now then, we come back to Hebrews chapter 12, seeing then that we have all these past people of faith who prove that God is real, and now we can trust Him, and we can believe Him. All right, now that being the case, let’s read on:

_Hebrews 12:1b_

"...let us lay aside every weight,...." Now, you know, this is another reason I think Hebrews is written by the Apostle Paul. What does Paul constantly refer to in his illustrations? Well, the Olympics. Over and over – running the race; beating the air like a boxer, see? All right, here again, when he says lay aside every weight, what do you suppose he’s thinking about? An Olympic runner. An Olympic runner isn’t going to win the 100-yard dash if he’s got lead weights in his shoes. He’ll never make it. So what’d they do? They got down to the bare minimum so that they wouldn’t have to be carrying any extra weight, so they could run the race to victory.

All right, that’s what we’re to do as believers. **We’re to shed anything that would tend to slow us down.** Now, every one of you can determine on your own what’s the weight that is slowing you down. It’s different for all of us. Totally different. We don’t all have the same weight. Now let’s read the next part of the verse.

_Hebrews 12:1c_

"...and (lay aside) the sin which doth so easily beset us,..." Now I’m going to take this in two categories. I think there is one universal sin that plagues every believer, and what is it? **Unbelief.** You got it. Unbelief. We all tend to say, "**Will it really happen?**" See? I can never forget my dear old mother shortly before she died, we were talking about the Rapture and I’ll never forget her question. She said, "**Les, He won’t miss anybody, will He?**" See? What is that? Well that’s human doubt. Will He really get every believer and never miss a one when He comes for us? **Faith tells us what? He won’t miss a one!** Unbelief says what? How can He help it? How can He help but miss a few?

But see, that’s what unbelief does. Unbelief comes in and says, "Is it really the way I believe?" And I think that is something that besets all of us. But in the second category, we all have weaknesses that only we ourselves realize and we have to deal with that on a personal basis. So whatever it may be that slows down your Christian running of the race (that you might win the prize), that’s between you and the Lord. We all are plagued with this constant temptation to doubt but we all again have an individual weakness that besets us and Paul says, "deal with them." **Deal with these**
weights that tend to slow us down. Deal with unbelief. Deal with an individual weakness - and then now finish the verse,

Hebrews 12:1d

"...and let us run with patience the race that is set before us," How did Paul put it? Let’s go back to II Timothy chapter 4 - and I just revel in things like this. This is something that everyone of us can say along with the Apostle. And I think the Lord wants everyone of us to say this with the Apostle. Now remember this is just shortly before he’s martyred.

II Timothy 4:6-7

"For I am now ready to be offered, (that is his life) and the time of my departure (that is from this life) is at hand. (Here it comes.) 7. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:"

What do you suppose he’s referring to? The boxing matches in the Olympics. That was always his illustration. "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course." Now what’s he talking about? The race. See? The course for the race. Whether it was a half-mile or quarter-mile or whatever, it was a prescribed course that those runners followed. And Paul says, "I’ve run it."

I have run the race, "I have finished my course, (I have gone the prescribed way that God laid out for me.) I have kept the faith." Now listen, go back with me to II Corinthians chapter 11, and in this passage, Paul isn’t bragging. You know when we were teaching Corinthians, we were constantly reminding folk that Paul had to defend his apostleship. You remember that? Well, this is what he did to defend his apostleship. This is what he went through constantly for almost 25 years for the sake of the Gospel. Well, the Lord may expect some of us to do the same thing, see? All right, II Corinthians chapter 11 and I’ll just jump right in at verse 22. And remember, he’s defending his apostleship. Some were saying, "Well who are you? We’ll follow Peter or we’ll follow Christ." But you see this was his reply to them that said that, and questioned his Apostleship.

II Corinthians 11:22-23a

"Are they Hebrews? (speaking of the Twelve back there in Jerusalem) so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. 23. Are they ministers of Christ? (now in parenthesis his humility comes in even thought it’s inspired by the Holy Spirit. He said.) [I speak as a fool] (but here’s the truth of the
matter. Compared to the Twelve he’s what?) **I am more:**" As far as I’m concerned, he’s more the minister of Christ than all Twelve put together, and here’s the reason.

*II Corinthians 11:23b*

"...in labours more abundant," Now you’ve got to know your book of Acts. What did he mean here when he said, "he had labours more abundant?" How much do you hear of the Twelve after you get past Acts chapters 2 or 3? Almost nothing with the exception of Peter, James and John. The other nine you hear nothing of. Why? **They never left Jerusalem.** All Twelve of them just stayed right there at Jerusalem for the most part. They didn’t go out into the Roman world. They weren’t out under all the pressures and the afflictions of the Roman Empire. Hey, they stayed in Jerusalem. In spite of all the persecution that was upon those Jewish believers, they all scattered except who? Except the apostles. They didn’t leave. They stayed in Jerusalem. But this man is out amongst that Roman Empire, and now look what happened.

*II Corinthians 11:24*

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one." (or the thirty-nine.) And listen, none of us can even have the foggiest notion of what a horrible experience it was to be beaten with those thirty-nine stripes. Most ordinary men couldn’t even survive one of these whippings, and he went through five of them. Imagine, with the whole torso from the belt up, front and back, was made like hamburger. With no antibiotics. Can you imagine what that body looked like by the time he died? Scar tissue on scar tissue on scar tissue. But that’s what he suffered for the sake of the Gospel. But that’s only a part of it. Read on.

*II Corinthians 11:25a*

"Thrice (three times) was I beaten with rods, (and that is despicable. You and I can’t comprehend what it was like to be beaten with rods.) once was I stoned, ..." And we picked that up of course outside of Derby and Lystra, back there in the book of Acts as they dragged him out of the city like a dead horse. That’s what the Greek implies. They tied a rope around his foot and drug him out and left him for dead. All for the sake of the Gospel.

*II Corinthians 11:25b*

"...thrice (three time) I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;" In other words for 24 hours straight he was in the ocean. Now verse 26. You want to remember, his ministry covered a period of about 25 years.
II Corinthians 11:26a

"In journeyings often,…" Now I just told somebody at break time, we travel a lot. It isn’t because we love to. If it was for anything but the Lord, I’d rather stay home, because I love it on the ranch, and I’d rather just stay there. And so I can just get a little inkling of what Paul meant here. Why was he constantly traveling? For the sake of the Gospel. That’s all. It wasn’t that he enjoyed living out of a suitcase. He did it for the sake of the Gospel. See?

II Corinthians 11:26-28

"In journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, (that’s why the Jews had beaten him and had scourged him those five times) in perils by the heathen, (the non-Jewish world) in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

And in addition to all those hardships, he was concerned for all these little congregations that he had started throughout the Roman Empire. Now that’s what it means to "run the race." That’s what he meant when he said, "I have finished my course." And that’s what he meant when he said, "Through it all his faith never wavered." He kept the faith.

Well all of that is just good instruction for us. All right, so back to Hebrews chapter 12. Using himself as an example, I’m sure, he admonishes his fellow believers to "run the race with patience that is set before us." Now move on to verse 2, as we run the race, as we fight the battles of life, we are to be:

Hebrews 12:2a

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith;…" Now in another place in Hebrews it’s referred to as the "file leader." And if you’ll remember way back, several months ago, my how long have we been in Hebrews? A year or two? It’s been a long time, but you know, I made the analogy of the words "file leader" and I went back to some of the old movies of the western cavalry and I’m sure you’ve all seen pictures of how that line of horse cavalry would just wind down the mountainside. You’ve seen them. Who was at the head? Not the private, but the top-ranking officer. He led his troops. Well, that’s the picture that we’re to get here of Christ. He is our "file leader." As we wind on into eternity, He is the Author, He is the Leader.
Now, of course, Paul says, that he’s right behind Him, and then we follow behind Paul. That’s the picture he leaves.

But the whole concept here from Hebrews is that Christ is not only the "author and the finisher of our faith," He is our file leader. We follow Him, and Him alone. All right, so we look unto Jesus, up there at the front, leading us on into eternity "and the finisher of our faith." In other words, not only did He begin it, He finished it.

*Hebrews 12:2b*

"...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,..." Now that is hard to comprehend isn’t it? He knew what was coming. He knew exactly what every Roman soldier would do to Him. He knew the horrors of having all the sin of the world laid on Him, long before it happened.

Go back to Philippians. We like to use as many Scriptures as possible because that’s the name of the game, compare Scripture with Scripture. And this is one that I have used over and over on the program. Philippians chapter 2 and I usually like to start up there in verse 5. If you read it often enough, first thing you know, you can quote it - have you found that out yet? If you just use a few verses often enough, it isn’t long until you can quote them. At least be close enough that you’re not hurting it any. All right:

*Philippians 2:5-6*

"Let this mind be in you, (think as He thought,) which was also in Christ Jesus: 6. Who (speaking of Christ) being in the form of God, (He was God. Never anything less than God.)thought it not robbery to be equal with God:" In other words, when He claimed to be God, He was not taking anything away from the power of the Godhead. Now verse 7:

*Philippians 2:7-8*

"But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, (or a bond slave is the true Greek meaning) and was made in the likeness of men: (now here it comes)8. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Now I think I shared in one of our seminars in Carolina, I don’t think I’ve ever met a believer that can comprehend ALL that took place at that cross. Now you just think about it. There is so much more there than meets human understanding - we’ll never comprehend it until we get to eternity; how that God laid all the sin and
guilt of the whole human race on Him. I can’t comprehend that His shed blood was such that would pay the last iota of sin debt of the human race. I can’t understand that. I believe it, but to comprehend all this? No. And I don’t think any human being can - that all was accomplished when He finished the work of the cross.

Now just to show you that He knew just exactly what was coming, come all the way back with me to Luke 18 - verses that we’ve used in years gone by. Just to show that He knew exactly what was coming. He could have named the Roman soldiers who would taunt Him. He could have named the Roman soldiers who would nail Him to the cross. He could have named those people that sat around Him scoffing, long before it happened. And yet He never flinched. He never had second thoughts about finishing the work of the cross. All right, Luke 18 verse 31. This is shortly before they go up to Jerusalem.

*Luke 18:31-33*

"Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. (And here He speaks of it.) 32. For he (speaking of Himself) shall be delivered to the Gentiles, shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: 33. And they shall scourge him, (now you know what scourging was, that was just about like what Paul got five times.) and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again." He knew it was coming to the last detail. But the Twelve didn’t. And I always tell people, don’t stop there. Read that next verse.

*Luke 18:34*

"And they, (the Twelve) understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." The Twelve had no idea what was going to happen. And like I’ve said over and over, that’s why they couldn’t preach Paul’s Gospel, which is faith in the death, burial and resurrection for salvation, like we see in I Corinthians 15:1-4, and Romans 10:9-10, because it hadn’t happened yet. They didn’t know it was going to happen, otherwise why would they have been sitting outside the tomb on Resurrection morning?
Lesson Two • Part IV

The Father’s Chastening

Hebrews 11:24 – 12:17

I had one young lady write a while back saying, "I saw you on television for a minute or two and I thought, how boring, and so I moved on." She continued, "Several days later I happened to catch you again and I thought, ‘well maybe I should listen,’ and in five minutes I was hooked. Now I watch you every day." I imagine a lot of people see this program and think, "How boring. No music, no entertainment." But anyway, we appreciate all your letters and your prayers and your financial help because, after all, it does take money to pay the bills. So now coming back to where we left off in Hebrews, chapter 12, let’s start at verse 2.

Hebrews 12:2a

"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 is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." So we continue on with this whole concept that Christ is not only our Savior and our Lord - He is the author, He is the file leader of everything that we believe and "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame...", (and as a result of having finished that glorious work of the cross, He what?) sat down."

Remember several month’s ago I said that twice in all of human history God did something so perfect, so flawless that even He Himself could add nothing to it. And what did He do? He sat down, and rested. The first time was after creation. The last verse of Genesis 1 says, "and He looked and it was very good." Which in the Hebrew just means, it was perfect. He couldn’t do another thing to make it any better. And then we don’t have that repeated until the book of Hebrews when it says, "and after He had purged us from our sins" or He had finished the work of the cross, again it was something so perfect, so flawless. Something to which nothing could be corrected or improved upon and again, there was nothing left to do but what? Sit down. It was done.

And so all through Scripture then we have this constant repetition that after he had finished the work of the cross, **He sat down at the right hand of the Father having finished the work of the cross.** And here’s another one - in fact, the first one, just flip back a few pages to Hebrews chapter 1 verse 3, because this is what we have to realize, **that when He finished it, it was so perfect that He could sit down. But, you see, that was not enough for mankind.** And people have come along, and have
preached and taught "But you’ve got to do that, you have to do this." No. If that’s the case, then He didn’t finish it. If you have to do something else besides believe it, then it was not perfect. There was something left to be done. But it was finished. And we dare not try and add to it, or Christ will profit you nothing. All right, Hebrews 1 verse 3 says it even plainer than Hebrews 12:

Hebrews 1:3

"Who (speaking of God the Son) being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty of high;" Why? Because it was perfect. There wasn’t anything more to be done. And so all through the book of Hebrews we have this emphatic statement that He was the Son. He finished the work of redemption and when He finished it, He "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." All right, now then, let’s move on into Hebrews chapter 12 verse 3.

Hebrews 12:3

"For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." In other words, go back and experience some of the things he went through leading up to the crucifixion. And Paul says to these people:

Hebrews 12:4

"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." What’s it speaking of? I think it’s speaking of those sweat drops of blood that came on His brow as He was approaching the work of the cross. Now verse 5;

Hebrews 12:5

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:" Now of course, Paul as I’ve said so often, can shift gears. Now all of a sudden he’s coming back to the response of the people to whom he’s writing and he says, "You haven’t gone through anything like this, but you have forgotten a lot of things, one of which was that God is going to chasten the one that He loves." Now many people don’t like to accept that. But you see, whenever God puts the believer through a hard situation, it isn’t because He doesn’t love Him; it isn’t because He has left off taking care of him - but rather it’s for what purpose? To increase their faith. It’s to increase our trust that, come what may (yes it may entail suffering, it may
entail some sickness, it may entail the loss of a loved one, but), through it all what’s the promise? "I’ll never leave you nor forsake you." He’ll never leave off being all that He has claimed to be. All right, so he says, "Don’t despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked." Now here’s the reason in verse 6.

Hebrews 12:6

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." He’s going to discipline us from time to time. And He’s going to "scourge every son whom he receiveth." Now it isn’t because of meanness. It isn’t because he likes to see us grovel and suffer, **but He is disciplining us in order to have us walk a stronger walk of faith.** And again, you take all the witnesses of chapter 11, they didn’t have a rose-petaled pathway and I’ve used that expression over and over on the program. When we become a believer it is not that all of a sudden everything is going to go our way. Most of the time it’s the opposite. It’s tougher to be a believer than it is to be out there in the world, because we’ve got all the opposition of satanic forces against us. Satan has hated everything that pertains to God ever since Adam and Eve were in the Garden and that hasn’t changed. And so we have to be aware that things are going to come up in our lives that we think are rather uncomfortable. Some of it God permits as a chastening process to increase our faith, to increase our Christian discipline. All right, verse 7:

Hebrews 12:7a

"If ye endure chastening,…" He’s going to use the example of physical parents. Why do we discipline our kids? Why, because we love them. Not because we love to disappoint them. We discipline them because we love them. All right, and he’s bringing it right into the Christian experience.

Hebrews 12:7

"If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" If a father never disciplines, he’s not a father. His kid becomes a wastrel. All right, verse 8:

Hebrews 12:8

"But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, (illegitimate) and not sons." "If you be without chastisement..." In other words, if nothing ever happens to make you run to the Lord for help, then we have every right to doubt that maybe we’re not a child of God, because we’re going to have
problems. Satan’s not going to leave us alone if we’re a true child of God. Now verse 9:

**Hebrews 12:9a**

"**Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh** (see, here he brings it into the earthly experience) **which corrected us,** and we gave them reverence:" I bet I can make everyone in this room smile. When did your parents lay the switch to you? Sure, every one of you can remember. I can remember one in particular, and I imagine I can strike a cord with all of you. After Dad had given me a good whipping, I’ll never forget, he sat me on a concrete well base where the water pump stood and he says, "Give dad a hug." I wouldn’t do it. (Laughter) And so he told me what had happened was because he loved me. And you’ve all been there. Every one of you.

And so parents do these things because they love their kids, and a child should respond knowing that this is why they got it, for their own good. All right, Paul is saying the same thing spiritually. See? So he says, "$\text{We’ve had fathers in the flesh which corrected us}" or spanked us, whipped us, switched us, whatever the case may be. I always say switched because my Mom’s favorite weapon was a willow stick. Have you ever been hit with a willow stick around the calf of your leg. Yeah, stings like fire. Doesn’t hurt you all that much but it sure stings. All right, that’s what God does to us - He chastens us. All right, now then, if our earthly fathers got that kind of response:

**Hebrews 12:9b**

"...shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" Now verse 10, he comes back again to the earthly scenario.

**Hebrews 12:10**

"**For they** (our parents, our Mom and Dad) **verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure;** (that was their responsibility. But, what was their reason?) **but he for our profit,** (for our own good) **that we might be partakers of his holiness.**" Now verse 11 – oh, this is so true.

**Hebrews 12:11**

"**Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.**" Is it joyous to chasten? Of course not. When we were kids and we got that whipping, we cried our eyes out, right? It was awful. But the end
result, hopefully, was for our good. All right, now Paul is bringing it right back into the spiritual, "Nevertheless afterward it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Verse 12. What’s the first word? "Wherefore." In other words, learn the lesson that as a child is disciplined for his own good, God does the same thing with us, to increase our faith.

Now, I’ve always made a warning as long as I’ve been teaching - always be careful that when a believer is going through hard times, that you don’t say (in your own mind, or even speak it to others), "Well they must be guilty of some sin and God is spanking them." No, not necessarily. Because there are two reasons God brings adversity into the life of the believer - two, not one. The one is, yes, he needs disciplining and needs to be brought back into fellowship and God will discipline for that. The second one is as Abraham was told to give up Isaac - it wasn’t because Abraham needed discipline. What was the purpose? His faith. To exercise his faith. And so always remember that. If a believer is going through hard times (health, finance or whatever), God may be just doing all this to increase their faith, and just strengthen them spiritually. And I always tell people, the individual himself knows what it is. The individual believer knows if God is spanking him because he’s been a disobedient child. He knows it. It’s not for you and I to determine and so we just look at it that God in His own purposes deals with the believer as He sees fit. Now verse 12.

Hebrews 12:12-13

"Wherefore (because of what we should learn from this experience) lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." In other words, bring all of these things into the right perspective. Now verse 14, and admonition in our everyday experience.

Hebrews 12:14-15

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;" Now, I’m going to come down quickly to the next verse because here’s to me, the meat of this chapter.

Hebrews 12:16a

"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau,..." Now you’ve got to reflect back. You go all the way back to Genesis again. What was Esau’s problem - if you remember my teaching back in Genesis? He was destitute of faith. Esau never
saw any good in anything that God said. He may have been a nice guy (you know I’ve said that over and over. Esau was probably a nicer young man than his brother Jacob), but he had no faith.

What God said meant nothing to Esau. Now if you have a man destitute of faith, what is he - not always - but what is he most apt to be morally? The pits. **Because faith is what maintains biblical morality, and without it there’s no constraint.** That’s what’s the matter with the world today. They no longer believe this Book. It’s no longer relevant. And so, consequently, their morality is accordingly. All right, that was Esau. Esau had no biblical morality, and the reason he didn’t have any morality was because he had no faith. All right, and so this is the example:

**Hebrews 12:16**

"Les there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat (food) sold his birthright." Well, why did he give up the tremendous future opportunity of the birthright for a bowl of beans? Because he had no faith. That birthright didn’t mean a thing to Esau because it was a spiritual thing. And spiritual things mean nothing to people who have no faith. And so Esau is the perfect example through Scripture of a man destitute of faith - and, consequently, becomes immoral and he counts for nothing spiritually. And so that was Esau. He gave up the birthright for a bowl of red beans because he saw no value in it. But Jacob, with what little faith he had, knew that there was something to be gained spiritually, not materially, but spiritually. And Esau said, "Who cares?" Now verse 17.

**Hebrews 12:17a**

"For ye know how that afterward, (after he had given up the birthright for a bowl of beans, then sometime later you remember,) when he (could have or) would have inherited the blessing, (which was the material part of the estate,) he was rejected:" Now of course, you’ve got to go all the way back and pick up the story. It was literally preordained by a Sovereign God that this should fall into place - but you remember how Jacob sort of befuddled Isaac, and got there before Esau and got the blessing. Now here comes Esau. The spiritual aspect meant nothing to him, but the material? Hey, that meant everything. Look what he did:

**Hebrews 12:17b**

"...when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." He cried his eyes out as a man. Why? Because he lost the material part of the estate that was going to be his. Now you have to read this verse carefully when it says that he was rejected "for
he found no place of repentance." It wasn’t that Esau was looking for repentance for himself. Who was he expecting to repent or change his mind? His father. See he was trying to get Isaac to change his mind and Isaac wouldn’t. And so this is what the Scripture is showing us. Esau isn’t trying to repent himself. Esau is only trying to convince Isaac to change his mind and take it back from Jacob and give it to Esau - but it was all for nothing. And so even though he sought it carefully with tears, well, what’s the lesson? Don’t be caught in unbelief. Unbelief is devastating. **Unbelief causes people to lose the peace with God, the tranquility, the joy of this life - but far more important, eternity.** In fact, come back with me to Romans chapter 5 verse 1. And see, this is what we have to learn from examples like Esau. He was destitute of faith - spiritual things didn’t mean a thing to him. Oh, he was a tremendous deer hunter. Didn’t take him long to go out and come home with the venison. But, spiritually he had nothing, so he couldn’t care for anything spiritual. But for us who believe, look at the difference - Romans 5 verse 1 - my, what a promise.

**Romans 5:1**

"**Therefore being justified by (what?) faith,** (the same thing we’ve been talking about here in Hebrews 11) **we have** (in the here and now) **peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:**" What more could we ask for? To be at peace with the Sovereign, Eternal, Ruler of the Universe, Who no longer has one ounce of controversy against us. Why? Because we’ve believed. We’ve placed our faith in that finished work of the cross.

**Romans 5:2**

"**By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.**" I have to always go from here right over to Romans 8 verse 1 - one of my favorite verses.

**Romans 8:1a**

"**There is therefore now no condemnation** (do you see that? Because of what he’s just been saying, including this verse in chapter 5. Therefore, there is now no condemnation) **to them which are in Christ Jesus,**…” Isn’t that a fabulous position to be in? God cannot make one accusation against us because it’s under the blood. Our faith has caused Him to cancel it. Now that’s not license. That doesn’t tell us to go and do as we please. Quite the opposite. But, nevertheless, this is that whole concept of faith that causes God to give us peace with Himself and takes away all condemnation. And that makes us totally opposite, coming back to Hebrews, of people like Esau. Now remember, Esau isn’t the only man like this. This is the world in general. The world, in general, is more like Esau than they are anything else. They
have no faith. They have no concern about what God says. My, they’ve got money in the bank and got a roof over their head and food to eat. That’s all they care about. **But for us who know better, our faith becomes everything.**

*Hebrews 12:18a*

"For ye..." Never forget that Paul is speaking to these Hebrews, and is trying to convince them that the whole concept of salvation is through grace by faith alone! It is so much better than the Law and Judaism and all the things that came from the Old Testament believers.

*Hebrews 12:18a*

"For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire,..." Where’s he taking them? Back to Mount Sinai - and what happened at Mount Sinai? The Law was given. And he says, you’re not under that.
Lesson Three • Part I

The Believer’s Sacrifice

Hebrews 12:18 – 13:25

Always remember that when other groups claim to have truth, you can compare what they use with this Book. No other book on earth can prophesy things hundreds and hundreds of years in advance and have them be fulfilled to the last detail like our Bible does. And one of the examples I gave the other night was, "Do you realize that King Cyrus, the Meade and Persian king that sent the Jews back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple after the 70 years of captivity, was named by an Israeli prophet 150 years before he was born?" Now, no other book on earth can do that. And even as we just see the whole Middle East scenario tonight, everything that we’re seeing in the world today has been prophesied in this Book like no other. So this is why we study - to prepare hearts and minds for even tomorrow’s newspaper.

Alright, we’re going to wind up the Book of Hebrews in these next four lessons. So, Hebrews chapter 12 and where we left off in our last program, which was verse 18.

Again, the whole Book of Hebrews is directed to Jews who were battling the spiritual warfare of coming out of Judaism with all of its law and demands and "works religion," and stepping into Paul’s Gospel of Grace. Now, of course, Paul doesn’t reveal himself because the Jews hated him, and so he wasn’t about to show his card. But, nevertheless, we’re convinced that Paul is the writer of this epistle. He uses several Pauline statements, as well as what Peter says in his little epistle "remember what the Apostle Paul has written unto you." And we know that Peter is addressing Jews so that sort of puts the frosting on the cake that Paul is writing to Jewish people who are fighting this battle of overcoming the draw back into Judaism. Consequently, all the way up through Hebrews (and I’ve been pointing it out whenever it comes along, that yes, the past in the Old Testament and Law and the Four Gospels was good, but) pure grace under Paul’s teachings is so much better. So as we begin Paul is going to make a reference to Mt. Sinai in verse 18.

Hebrews 12:18-19

"For ye are not come unto the mount (that is, Mt. Sinai back there when God was on the mount. with thunder and fire and all of that) that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest. 19. And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word not be spoken to them any more:" In other words, the Law as I’ve said over and over even in the Four Gospel accounts, was what? Severe! The Law had no room for
argument. If someone was taken in adultery, what did the Law demand? Instant death! No trial by jury and 15 years of appeals. The Law was severe. And here, too, when God came down on Mt. Sinai, it wasn’t with love and mercy and grace. It was with power and might and it scared the Israelites to death. And then the warning was, "Don’t even touch the mountain lest you die. Don’t let an animal touch it. If he does you’re to put him to death." So this is what we have to understand.

Now it’s interesting, as I’ve said before back in Romans and other areas where Paul writes, that he divides these things into groups of seven. Now there are seven visible things concerning Mt. Sinai, and I’m sure that Paul didn’t sit down and think before he started - I think he probably dictated most of his letters. And I don’t think Paul sat down and racked his brain and said, "Now, how can I put up seven points?" Now you know, a lot of preachers make a big deal over a three-point sermon. And that’s all well and good. But my, they’ll spend hours putting together a three-point sermon. I don’t think Paul did that. Paul didn’t have to sit back and say, "Well now, how can I put all this in groups of seven." I don’t think it even entered his mind. But the Scripture says that he, like all other writers of Scripture, were moved by the Holy Spirit.

And so, here again, this is what I’m always referring to as the intricacy of Scripture. There is again, no man-made book can do it like the Holy Spirit has done with this one. And here we have seven visible things concerning Mt. Sinai, so let’s look at them. *For you are not come to the mountain.* Now everybody knows what a mountain looks like and Mt. Sinai in particular. And that it could not be touched and it burned with, what? Fire! Now, when God came down, the flame was up on the top of the mountain. Alright, so there’s two. "nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest." The mountain, the fire, the blackness - and you know some explorers feel that they’ve found the evidence of this on top of a mountain there in Arabia where it had a burnt rock that was black.

**Hebrews 12:19**

"*And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:*" All of these things were outwardly visible and they could hear it and it just made the children of Israel quake. And the voice of words, God spoke - it was scaring them to death. Now verse 20:

**Hebrews 12:20a**

"*(For they could not endure that which was commanded,…)"* God was absolute, He was Holy, He was Righteous. And Israel feared and quaked in His presence. Even
Moses, the great man that he was, just feared being in the presence of this Almighty God. Now completing verse 20:

Hebrews 12:20b

"(…And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:…)" Now what is that? That’s severe. That’s driving the fear of God into these people. You were not just fooling around with some pagan idol here. You are dealing with the Almighty, living God. The God with power, and might, and holiness, see? The world, today has lost a lot of that, which of course, is as it should be. We’re not dealing with a God of wrath and anger today. We’re dealing with a God of grace. But nevertheless, this is what Israel came up against when they came around Mt. Sinai and were waiting for the Law to be given. Now verse 21.

Hebrews 12:21

"(…And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)" Even Moses (let alone the poor everyday Israelite) said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." Why? Because of Who God was! The Almighty, see? Alright, now we come to seven better things. Now this is where we are. And here again, it’s in a group of seven. Isn’t it amazing how Scripture does that over and over and over. Now verse 22, what’s the first word? "But!" Now, I think I’m known for saying the "flip-side." Whereas Israel was dealing with this frightening experience with God, the flip-side brings us to where we are.

Hebrews 12:22-24

"But ye are come unto Mt. Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, (which we feel is the Body of Christ, fellow believers) which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just (or righteous) men made perfect. (and I’m going to read it on to the end of these seven) 24. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better (see there it is again) things than that of Abel."

Now let’s go back and count them. Come back and look at verse 22 and the first tangible thing that we come to that is completely opposite from the visible manifestations at Mt. Sinai - we step now into the spiritual realm, because after all, everything for us in the new Age of Grace is a spiritual connection. Not earthly. Not material. Not physical. Alright, and so we have "come to the city of the living God." The city, that’s the first one. "And to innumerable company of (what?) angels." We’re actually going into the angelic realm. Alright, "to the
general assembly of the first born." And of course, that’s you and I as believers. We are the first born because of our relationship with Christ, "who are written in heaven and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits just (or righteous) men made perfect." Verse 24: The sixth one I think now is the "Mediator of the new covenant" and then the seventh, "the blood of sprinkling."

Now I’m just pointing that out - not that you have to remember the seven of seven, but just to show you how intricately the Holy Spirit puts Scripture together. It’s not haphazard. It is beautiful in its construction. Alright let’s go back up and pick the verses apart now. Come with me to verse 22. As Grace Age believers now (members of the Body of Christ), we have been made accessible to the city of the Living God.

Now, I’m going to have to bring you back in order to clarify it from one of Paul’s other epistles. And that would be back to Colossians chapter 1, and let’s just drop in at verses 12 and 13. Now here is our heavenly connection. Everything under the old covenant, everything pertaining to God and Israel, was earthly. They were an earthly people with earthly promises, an earthly temple and an earthly priesthood. Everything concerning God and Israel was earthly. For us, everything is heavenly. We’re connected to the Head, Who is in heaven. Our citizenship is in heaven. Our rewards are piling up in heaven. And we’re just strangers in this earth. We’re not citizens of this planet at all.

**Colossians 1:12**

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet (or prepared us) to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:" Now what’s an inheritance? It’s something you gain by being an heir. Now I didn’t intend to do this but we’ve got to tie all of this together. Come back with me to Romans chapter 8 because I want people to see that we’re not just digging something and making something of it without showing that it’s tied all the way through Scripture. Now for us, of course, the main parts of Scripture are Paul’s epistles. Paul alone deals with this Age of Grace. All the rest of Scripture deals with the earthly people, Israel. But here this apostle of the Gentiles, the apostle of grace, or as one author put it, I think, in the title of his book, "The Apostle of Souls Set Free." Hey, I like that. That’s what he’s done. It’s through Paul’s writings that we’ve been set free.

Somebody told me in one of our seminars up in Minnesota how he had come out of this religious background of "do this and do that." And he said, "Now I’m free." And I suppose I looked kind of quizzical, so he said, "Les have you ever carried a bag of potatoes on your back?" I said, "Well, something close to it. I carry feed every day." He said, "What does it feel like when you drop it?" Well, there’s the example. He said, "That’s what it’s like. You come out of all that legalism and all that demands and
you’re set free." Well, yeah, that’s what the apostle was. He was the apostle of the souls set free. **He’s the apostle of grace.** Don’t you love that? You know, I just told a lady this morning who came out of one of these backgrounds, "You know, you folks are so much more exuberant than a lot of the people that I have generally grown up with, because you have experienced being set free." And many of you here know what I’m talking about.

**Romans 8:14**

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (or the children) of God. 15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit (that’s capitalized, which is a reference to the Holy Spirit) of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Now then we find that same Spirit beareth witness with our spirit. Now that’s a communal relationship.

**Romans 8:16**

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we (hope to be?) are the children of God." Can you see the difference? How many of the religions of the world tell their people, "Well you can’t really know. The best you can do is hope." That’s not what my Bible teaches. My Bible says the Holy Spirit communes with me and convinces me, confirms with me that I am, you are, not "hope to be," see? Alright, now here it comes. That’s why I came back here.

**Romans 8:17**

"And if (you’re) children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." You’re an heir! You’re an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. Now that’s our relationship as believers in this new Age of Grace. We’re not under the Law. We’re not under bondage. We’re not under the heavy burden of works, works, works. But we’ve been set free and now we are under that joint heirship with Christ. Now, back to Colossians 1.

**Colossians 1:12**

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:" That’s what took me back to Romans 8. Now verse 13. This same God:

**Colossians 1:13**
"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us (already) into the kingdom of his dear Son:" Now goodness sakes, where’s the Son? Well, He’s in heaven, not here on earth. And we are connected to His kingdom in heaven - not the earthly kingdom promised to Israel, but that heavenly connection that we have with Christ. Now let’s come back to Hebrews chapter 12; and so we have not come to a physical mountain, Sinai, that can’t be touched by man or beast, but we have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and that brings us into consort with what? "The innumerable company of angels." or in the margin of your Bible, probably says the myriads of angels. That’s part of heaven.

You know, in part of our retreat in Wisconsin a couple of weeks ago, one morning in particular) I don’t know why (whether it was the songs we sang or whatever), but it was a taste of heaven. And I told the young lady that put it together afterwards, "You know, this has been as close a taste of heaven as I have ever experienced." It was just goose-bump producing.

Alright, now to just get a glimpse of the glory that’s waiting for us. Now I wish I could get Christians excited. It seems everybody’s in the doldrums. I know the world is tough and I know that the news is never good, but listen, like one person wrote a while back, "The worse it gets, the closer we are to the Lord’s coming." And so you and I can rejoice. The worse it gets, the closer we are to His coming. It has to get bad before the end comes. And so here we are, introduced into the heavenlies with that innumerable company of angels. Now verse 23.

Hebrews 12:23a

"To the general assembly and church of the firstborn,...." We had just gotten back from two weeks up north, and every place we go, we meet people for the first time. We step into the front door and it’s as if we’ve known each other all our lives. Why? Because we're like-minded believers. You’re not strangers. We’re not strangers. And Paul is expressing that, and this is the difference. I hope you’re catching it now. What a difference from the fear and the admonition of the roaring God on the top of Mt. Sinai compared to our relationship as members of the Body of Christ - and we enter into the heavenlies constantly in the realm of the spirit, without fear, without trepidation. And we’re immediately in consort with like-minded believers. What a difference, see?

Hebrews 12:23a

"To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all,..." Now you know for the unbeliever that would be
frightening - to have God one day judging their life. But not for us as believers. Now let me take you back to II Corinthians chapter 5 and let’s just drop down to verse 9.

**II Corinthians 5:9-10a**

"Wherefore (Paul says) we labour, (as believers now. Not for salvation, because of it) that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. 10. For we must all (believers) appear before the judgment seat (now in the Greek I like it better. It’s the Bema Seat. The seat of the judges) of Christ;…” Now there won’t be any unbelievers at this judgment. This is strictly for the believers and members of the Body of Christ.

**II Corinthians 5:10b**

"…that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Now, the consoling thing here is that never, when we come before the Lord Jesus as our judge, will we be confronted with our sin. Never again will we have to meet Him with our sin. That’s been forgiven. It’s been placed under the blood. And in Micah, our sins have been what? They’ve been buried in the deepest sea, never to be brought back up to us again. But we will come before Him to be judged for our rewards according to what we have done as a believer. Have you been wasting your time or have you been out there doing the things for Christ for all the right reasons? Let’s go back to I Corinthians chapter 3, and here is just another view of that same event when we’re going to come before the Lord Jesus, not as our judge concerning eternal doom or eternal life (that’s settled), but we will come before Him to determine our reward. What have you done as a Christian to gain reward?

**I Corinthians 3:12-13**

"Now if any man build upon this foundation (which of course is Christ and His finished work) gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: 13. Every man’s work (as a believer) shall be made manifest: for the day (this judgment day for the believer at the Bema Seat) shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; (that is the fiery eyes of the Lord Jesus) and the fire shall try (test) every man’s work of what sort it is." Is it gold, silver, and precious stones which fire can’t touch, or would it be wood, hay or stubble which will go up in a puff of smoke. Well, that’s obvious, then, that if you have works that are counted as gold, silver and precious stones, they will abide and you’re going to receive reward for all eternity.
Lesson Three • Part II

The Believer’s Sacrifice

Hebrews 12:18 – 13:25

Many have written and said you feel like you are sitting there on the back row of our class, and that’s just exactly the way we want you to feel, that it’s a learning experience and we trust you’ll do as everybody does here. They have their own notes and Bibles and we just trust that we can show what the Scriptures say. It doesn’t matter what Les Feldick thinks or what anybody else thinks, it’s what does the Word of God say.

As this class begins, we’re in Hebrews chapter 12, and let’s pick right up where we left off in our last program. We were in the middle of verse 23, and reading the whole verse, remember, we pointed out that there were seven things that pertained to the physical and the visible aspect of Mt. Sinai. And the flip-side was these seven that are associated with our spiritual relationship and position in the heavenlies. And so we came through verse 22 where we have come to the city of the living God, "the heavenly Jerusalem," not the earthly one, and "to an innumerable company of angels" which is part of the heavenly abode:

Hebrews 12:23a

"To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven,…” Which of course in Paul’s language is a reference to those of us in the Body of Christ.

Hebrews 12:23b

"… which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all,…” Now we covered that at the close of the program - how that every believer will come before the Bema Seat to be judged for reward.

Hebrews 12:23c

"…and to the spirits of just men made perfect." I couldn’t just pass that part up. We have to stop for this. Who are the spirits of just men made perfect? Well, let’s go back to Romans chapter 3 so that we pick up the scriptural account of what Paul is talking about. I always like to drop down to verse 23 where we have, what shall I say, the culmination of everything that has been building in the first three chapters here in
Romans - and that is the conclusion that mankind are sinners, with none excepted - Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, good or bad; it doesn’t make any difference.

**Romans 3:23**

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" But it doesn’t stop there. You move right into the next verse and here we have that glorious hope of salvation that is extended to every human being, none excepted - and that is that we are justified by His grace.

**Romans 3:24**

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:" Being justified by His grace, His unmerited favor! God didn’t have to do this, but He did. And so now we are justified freely by His grace through the redemption, or the process of paying our sin debt, that is in Christ Jesus. Now verse 25.

**Romans 3:25**

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, (that shed, atoning blood of the cross) to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;" And verse 26 is the verse I wanted to come to for "of just men made perfect" back in Hebrews. How? Paul says, at this time, that the righteousness of Christ, and because He, as the righteous One, has finished the work of redemption - He died the death that every sinner should have died.

**Romans 3:26**

"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." It’s something that anybody can do. There are no strings attached. That’s what makes it so simple. That God, the Righteous One, Who paid the price of redemption for every human being, finished the work of the cross that He, in turn, might be the One to justify anyone who believes in that finished work. It’s that simple. And oh, my goodness, as I have used the illustration over and over since we’ve come past Hebrews chapter 1, that twice in all of Biblical history, starting back in Genesis, God did something so perfect, so immaculately perfect, there wasn’t anything He could do but sit down to show that it was finished. The first one was creation and He looked at creation and everything was so perfect, there wasn’t anything He could correct.
In fact, I used this analogy in one of my classes the other night. I said, "How many of you have built a new home and, after you’ve moved in, you have to call your contractor back to correct mistakes?" I had one guy really nodding his head. Well, he wasn’t the guy who had the new home - he was the contractor! He knew only too well what it was to go back and correct little errors that they had made. A cupboard door didn’t fit or something like that. But God didn’t have to do that. It was perfect and He sat down. The second time was, as Hebrews places it then, that when He had purged us from our sin, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty. And again, why? Because the work of salvation, the work of the cross was so perfect there wasn’t anything He could do; it was all done.

And then I used this analogy. How would you like to have a little two-year-old come along, after you had a brass lamp perfectly polished, and smear it up? **Well, that’s what man has done with God’s perfect plan of salvation. They have smeared it all up with their additions of "do this" and "do that."**

How it must break the heart of God when He has made it so available that no matter who it is, no matter how vile they are, or how steeped in a false cult they may be - the moment they believe in that finished work, God justifies them! He declares them just. He declares them righteous. Oh, that’s beyond human comprehension and I don’t expect people to understand it, just believe it; God will take care of the rest. Just believe it. So now, if you’ll come back with me to Hebrews, maybe that verse will just jump off the page at you the next time you see it.

**Hebrews 12:23c**

"...and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect," He’s the "Judge of all and the spirits of just men," or righteous men. That’s what the word "just" here means. *Of righteous men made perfect." That is in God’s eyes. Not in the eyes of men, but in God’s eyes, the righteous Judge. Now let’s move into verse 24, and that also would be numbers 6 and 7 of these seven items that are in the area of the spiritual, now, instead of the physical. Verse 24:

**Hebrews 12:24**

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, ..." There’s the 6th item. It’s in the realm of the spiritual. It’s not a physical mountain like Sinai. It’s not thunder and lightening and voices like they heard. But these are things that we take by faith. So the fact that He is the mediator of this new arrangement, this new covenant as He uses the word right here. The New Testament is the word that we’re accustomed to hearing.

**Hebrews 12:24**
"And to Jesus the mediator …" Well, we’ve used it before so let’s use it again. Come back with me to I Timothy, chapter 2, because I prefer to let the Scripture do the talking. I think I’ll just start with verse 1 so we pick up the flow - and of course this is Paul admonishing his son in the faith, Timothy. And so he says:

**I Timothy 2:1-2a**

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2. For kings,..." That’s why I’m always stressing in my classes in Oklahoma, you pray for that president every day. You pray for him. The Scripture instructs us to.

**I Timothy 2:2-5a**

"For kings, and for all that are in authority; (and the end result is for our own pursuit of happiness, as our Constitution puts it) that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4. Who will have all men to be saved, (God’s not willing that any should perish) and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.. 5. For there is one God,..." One! Not several! Don’t you believe this old hogwash that you can pick and choose and take your own way. There is only one. Someone said to me one time up in Minnesota that he appreciated my teaching an exclusive gospel. At first I didn’t know what he meant, but I do now. And when I say exclusive, I mean there is no other. The Scripture is full of it – "There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." Paul says in I Corinthians, "Lord I have laid the foundation. There is no other foundation, but Christ Jesus." Here it is again.

**I Timothy 2:5**

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" Now remember, as we’ve come through Hebrews, Paul has been stressing the position of God the Son. The Son, but He was man, He was human, He walked, He talked, He ate; but He never stopped being God. And as such then, He can be the mediator between men and the invisible God. Alright, so read it again, verse 5: "There is one God, one mediator between that one God and man, and it’s the man Christ Jesus." Which of course, comes back to the fact that as a member of the Trinity, God the Son is just as much God as God the Father; and in their Triune headship, they are one. **But nevertheless, Jesus the Christ is the Mediator between man and God.** Alright, back to Hebrews chapter 12, then, and so this is one other part of the seven attributes there in the spiritual realm:

**Hebrews 12:24a**
"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling,..." That we already saw referenced in Romans chapter 3, that it was that blood that was the price of redemption that had to be paid for the satisfaction of our sin debt.

**Hebrews 12:24b**

"...that speaketh better things than that of Abel." The blood of Christ is far better than that animal sacrificial blood of Abel. Now I hope you haven’t been misled in Sunday school or anywhere else - that the comparison here is between the blood of Christ and the blood of Abel, who was murdered. That’s not what it’s teaching. That has nothing to do with it whatsoever. What we’re saying is that the blood of Christ was so far better than the animal blood that, of course, was used by Abel? It had to be. Animal blood was the requirement in the Old Testament economy. Now remember, just back up a page or two and we’ll see how God was satisfied with that animal sacrifice offered by Abel, and that’s in Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 4:

**Hebrews 11:4a**

"By faith (because this is what God instructed and that’s what Abel did) Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,..." Now we are not going to take time to go back to Genesis, but why was Abel’s more excellent than Cain’s? Abel brought the firstling of his flock, which implies (it doesn’t say it was a lamb, but it implies) that it was a lamb. Maybe a goat, but I prefer to think it was a lamb. Whereas you see, Cain brought of that which grew out of the ground, a bloodless offering, and God rejected it. Alright, now, so the comparison is, here the blood of Christ is so far above the animal blood of the sacrifice that Abel offered, because of what God has now done. Let’s look at it and we’ll move on.

**Hebrews 12:24**

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." The blood that He shed, was from the perfect Lamb of God. And it was far better than the blood sacrifice that Abel offered. Now let’s go on to verse 25. Now, this is a warning, and remember who He’s talking to. These verses are written first and foremost to Jews who were having a hard time breaking away from Judaism. He’s not talking so much to us Gentiles, as I said at the beginning of the study of Hebrews. This is primarily to Jews who were fighting the battle of making the break from legalism and Judaism and the Temple worship. Remember, the Temple is still going, and they had to step out of all that into this glorious Age of Grace. That’s the whole purpose of the Book of Hebrews. But, as we’ve seen now in the last two years, there is so much for us to learn. My, I’ve
learned, I hope you have. I’ve learned as I’ve prepared these lessons out of the Book of Hebrews, even though it is not directly written to me, it’s written to Jews. Yet, oh, how we learn.

Well, you see we studied the Old Testament on the same basis. The Old Testament isn’t written to us. When the Old Testament speaks of sacrifices and offerings and so forth, we don’t do that. But we certainly learn from it. And that’s the purpose. Well, the same way in the Four Gospels. Our Gospel of Grace isn’t found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - you can’t find it. Does that mean we throw it away? No! My goodness, we can learn so much of Christ’s compassion, of His power, and of His miracle working. But that’s not the plan of salvation. It’s just simply things for our learning, that prepare us, then, for this apostle of Grace who brings out then, this glorious Gospel of Grace in I Corinthians 15:1-4, and Romans 10:9-10 and many other places in his writings. So now then, verse 25. The warning is to these Jews, to these Jews who were having a hard time making the break.

*Hebrews 12:25a*

"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn from him that speaketh from heaven:" Now the casual reader will just gloss right over that, not having the foggiest notion of what he was talking about. But what’s he saying? You know that when God was dealing with Israel in the Old Testament economy, and Israel would just simply spurn God; and they would go on their own way and go into idolatry, what did God do? God judged them! When they went into the depths of idolatry, He sent old Nebuchadnezzar from the east and Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple - and the city and the nation was uprooted and taken captive all the way out to Babylon for 70 years. Why? Because His wrath fell upon a disobedient people. And over and over God would do that throughout Israel’s history. And He was speaking with them while they were, you might say, His objects of affection and everything, on earth. But now we’re under a far greater responsibility - now read on: "if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn from him that speaketh from heaven:"

Now you’ve got to look at the big picture again. While God was dealing with Israel in the Old Testament, there were a lot of things that they didn’t have going for them that we do. For example, they didn’t have the indwelling Holy Spirit. They didn’t have that benefit. All they had was that table of Law set in stone and all it could do was condemn them. And then they had the sacrificial system, which wasn’t always that easy to keep. But nevertheless, they didn’t have a lot of the advantages that we have today, and yet God held them responsible. God punished them when they turned in unbelief. Alright so now the comparison is, if God would punish Israel back in
those days when they didn’t have all this going for them, how much more will His wrath fall on these who reject Him as He speaks from heaven.

Now when we say He speaks from heaven, let’s come all the way back so we get the big picture. You can’t just pick and choose, you have to look at the whole scenario. Back in Acts chapter 1, He has just finished His 40 days after the resurrection. He’s been with the Eleven and now they’re on the Mount of Olives and He was about to ascend back to glory. The Father is now beckoning Him to come and sit at His right hand. So, look what it says: Verse 9.

*Acts 1:9-11a*

"And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; (we’re speaking of Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified, resurrected Christ) and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven (now have you got the picture? He is leaving earth and He is going up to heaven) as he went up, behold, two men (angels) stood by them in white apparel; 11. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven,…" That’s what I wanted you to see. So where is He? He’s in heaven! And so from this point on whenever He speaks, He speaks from heaven! That’s obvious isn’t it? Alright, now then, the Apostle Paul is constantly letting us know that that’s where he got his marching orders; from the Christ in heaven. Let me stop while you’re still in Acts, let’s jump over to chapter 22 and this is just an example of how Christ spoke to him from heaven. Acts 22 verse 17.

*Acts 22:17-18*

"And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18. And saw him (Jesus the Christ, in heaven) saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me," Now just jump across the page to chapter 23, verse 11. And Paul is under all the pressure now from these hateful fellow Jews.

*Acts 23:11*

"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Where is he speaking from? From heaven! Alright now you come all the way up and stop with me at Galatians chapter 1 and again, he’s rehearsing his experience on the road to Damascus and he’s letting us know that everything that he’s writing now in the Pauline epistles comes from the ascended Lord Who is in heaven.
Galatians 1 starting at verse 11, and all I want you to see is that Hebrews says how that so much more responsibility is upon us in this Age of Grace because He’s speaking from heaven (but through the Apostle Paul).

**Galatians 1:11-12**

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, (by men, but how did he get it?) but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." From where? From heaven! So everything now comes back quickly to Hebrews as we close out this half hour. Hebrews 12 again, verse 25:

**Hebrews 12:25b**

"...For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:"
Lesson Three • Part III

The Believer’s Sacrifice

Hebrews 12:18 – 13:25

We’ve got several people here today. In fact, we’ve got a couple here from Oregon. I really should mention that. That’s probably as far as anybody has ever come. We’ve had a lot from Indiana, Minnesota and Ohio; but Oregon, that’s fabulous. We appreciate that. Now let’s get back to where we left off in Hebrews chapter 12 and we are presently in verse 26. Remember we were talking about how that, if God Who spoke while dealing with Israel on earth was something to be feared, how much more we should respect that Voice that speaks from heaven. And of course, for the most part, for us today in this Age of Grace, that comes through the epistles of the Apostle Paul, to whom God revealed all of these doctrines that are for us today. Now that doesn’t mean the rest of scripture isn’t appropriate or that it’s not valid. All Scripture, even Paul himself writes, "All Scripture is profitable for reproof in instruction, in inspiration and so forth." But for those of us living in this Age of Grace, Romans through Philemon becomes our paramount place of instruction. Alright now in verse 26:

Hebrews 12:26-27

"Whose voice then shook the earth: (well God was dealing from Mt. Sinai) but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. 27. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." Now, in my own mind (being the farmer that I am), I couldn’t help but think of shaking and sifting grain. And whenever you sort grain with the sieve, the chaff and the junk falls through and the good remains. Well, I think you’ve got the same analogy here - that God’s just going to shake things and that which is superfluous and is unimportant will disappear and only that which counts will remain.

Now of course, we think Paul is probably making reference here, inspired by the Holy Spirit, to what Peter writes more in detail in his little epistle of II Peter chapter 3. Now you might want to turn over to that passage, and we’ll start with verse 10 - and of course, this is way out into the future, but nevertheless, it’s coming when God is going to judge this planet.

II Peter 3:10-12
"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements (that is all the things that make up the planet) shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. 11. Seeing then that all these things (that is the things of this earth) shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness. 12. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" But don’t give up - don’t despair, because that’s not the end. Let’s look at the next verse:

II Peter 3:13

"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Which of course is looking all the way past the 1,000 year Kingdom Age, which you and I as believers are going to be part of, and into eternity. So now if you’ll come back to Hebrews 12 once again we know that God is going to deal harshly with this planet someday. And the day will even come, I feel, that it will be totally melted down and destroyed and made over for the eternal earth that’s still coming. But be that as it may, now verse 28:

Hebrews 12:28

"Wherefore..." Seeing that the Creator God can do whatever He wants to do, and yet we are under His protective care –

Hebrews 12:28

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, (cannot be destroyed) let us have grace, (oh, that favorite term of the Apostle Paul) whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:" Now, you remember for us as believers, we don’t shake in our boots in the presence of God. Quite the opposite. We are instructed to come boldly into His presence because He has already removed everything that stood between Himself and us. That’s been done through the finished work of the cross. And we are now made at one with Him. We are, as we saw in an earlier program, joint heirs with Christ. Never forget that. And so we don’t have to serve Him, shaking in our boots with fear - but it is a reverential fear knowing that He is still the God of all creation. And then verse 29, as we’ve already seen from Peter.

Hebrews 12:29
"For our god is a consuming fire." He’s going to destroy this earth with fire one day and prepare everything for the eternal. Alright, now we will go into chapter 13 and hopefully, be able to wind up this study in the next half hour after this. He says in verse 1:

**Hebrews 13:1-2**

"Let brotherly love continue. (that is between the believers) 2. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: (one of the earmarks of Christianity is hospitality) for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Now, I think there’s two ways you can look at this. We know that back in Biblical history, angels were entertained by mortal man. The first time was Abraham in Genesis 18. And he saw three men coming down the path and he hasted out to meet them, having no idea who they were. They were just wayfaring strangers, so far as Abraham was concerned. He set the table, killed the fatted calf and come to find out, who were his three visitors? One was the Lord Himself and the other two were angels. So he actually entertained angels unawares. And I think Lot probably did, not realizing who was escorting him out of Sodom.

Well, I don’t think that the Scripture teaches that if we’re hospitable, that we’re actually going to have angelic creatures visiting our abode - but I think Iris and I can testify to the fact that you know when people stop in from all parts of the country (total strangers, and they sit down at the table with us and when they leave), it’s like having had angels in our attendance. It’s been a joyful experience and I think that’s what the Apostle Paul is talking about here. Don’t close your door to strangers. Be hospitable, because you might be experiencing an angelic experience, even though it won’t be in the winged variety. It will just simply be fellow believers. Alright, so "some have entertained angels unawares." Now then, verse 3, and this was especially appropriate in Paul’s day and, of course, in some areas of the world now - and will also be appropriate in the Tribulation period, when he says:

**Hebrews 13:3a**

"Remember them that are in bonds,..." Or those who are in prison. Because back in Paul’s day, the authorities didn’t provide the food, not even the swill that the BC character gets. They got nothing unless their friends and relatives brought them food. And so Paul says don’t forget those folks who are in prison for their faith. And I’m sure it’s probably that way in some areas of the world even today. And I know it will be in the Tribulation. Now, you say, how do you know that? Well, I always have to do everything with Scripture, don’t I? Come back with me to Matthew 25. Here in Matthew 25, we have the survivors of the Tribulation and remember, they are brought to Jerusalem, supernaturally, of course. We know this is after the Tribulation because the King has just established the Kingdom and He’s ready to get the ball rolling to re-
populate the planet. And we know from Isaiah 24 that there will be some survivors after the horrors of the Tribulation. Alright, here they come, supernaturally brought, and let’s begin with verse 31.

**Matthew 25:31-32a**

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: (in other words, as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And as King, on His throne there in Jerusalem) 32. And before him shall be gathered all nations:..." These survivors of the Tribulation from all the nations. Now there won’t be all that many. Just a few, and so he brings them all to Jerusalem - and since there will be saved and lost amongst the survivors, the first thing he does is separate them. He puts the saved on one side and they’re likened to the sheep, the lost go to his left and they are likened to a shepherd dividing his goats. But all I want you to see is that they are going to be visiting people in prison during the Tribulation and nourishing them with their gifts of food when he says in verse 34:

**Matthew 25:34-36**

"Then shall the King (Christ) say unto them on his right hand, (the believers) Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom (they can go into this thousand-year reign with Him) prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (now, here it comes) 35. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger and ye took me in: 36. Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Now of course, we know that the ones he’s talking about were the 144,000 Tribulation witnesses that God will seal - that no doubt suffered the privations listed here. But when these people became believers as a result of hearing those 144,000 Jews’ message, they risked their own neck in order to visit them in prison. Well, so much for that. That was just what I call sometimes in Oklahoma, "free for nothing." Now back to Hebrews.

**Hebrews 13:3**

"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body." "So remember those who are in bonds," Paul says: if they need food, take it to them. And "as bound with them; and those who suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body" That’s why I’m sure that Paul wrote this. Only Paul speaks of the Body of Christ in Scripture. And so this is what he’s telling these believers, that if they step on in and experience Paul’s salvation offer of faith in our Lord’s death, burial, and resurrection, then they become members of the Body of Christ. This is just one of the few times in
Hebrews that he says something that is intrinsically Paul. Now, Paul shifts gears, as I’ve said so often.

*Hebrews 13:4*

"Marriage is honourable in all, the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Well that falls right in line with what he says in Galatians 5, that those who live by the flesh are adulterers and fornicators and so forth, and they will have no part in the kingdom of heaven. Alright now, verse 5:

*Hebrews 13:5*

"Let your conversation (the word here is manner of living. Let your manner of living) be without covetousness; (in other words, we’re not to live by keeping up with the Joneses.) and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

We’ve got to take this with a grain of salt. Paul does not say, "Just throw your worries to the wind and don’t worry about where your next day’s bread comes from." He doesn’t say that. In Timothy he admonishes the parents to take care of their families. "Lay up for the children," so that children don’t have to take care of the parents. And so always remember that you have to look at more than one portion. When he says here, "Just be content with what you have," and he says, "I’ll never leave you or forsake you," that doesn’t mean that you can just carelessly say, "I don’t have to worry about tomorrow, God will take care of me." That’s not the name of the game in this Age of Grace. We are to work, Paul says, if you don’t want to work, you don’t eat! That’s plain and simple. But on the other hand, we have the promise that He will never leave us nor forsake us. Now verse 6. When we enter into this kind of a relationship with the Lord, constantly meeting our needs, then we can speak boldly,

*Hebrews 13:6*

"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Now let’s take a verse again out of Romans. Go back to Romans chapter 8, and you’ll see this is in the same vein.

*Romans 8:31-32*

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, (and Hebrews just told us that He will never leave us nor forsake us.) who can be against us? 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him
also freely give us all things?" See, that’s the promise. That’s what we have - that God will see to our every need. Then verse 33:

Romans 8:33-34

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge (or who can accuse) of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. 34. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, (which is where? In the heavenlies!! See, we come right back full circle every time. All of these things fit.) who also maketh intercession for us." Well, now I just like to do that to show that Scripture fits; it dovetails from one end to the other. Alright, back to Hebrews again, chapter 13, and verse 7. Now of course, this was especially applicable to these Jews who were under the priesthood first, and then came under the authority of the Twelve, especially back there in the early Acts. So this is especially appropriate to this kind of Jew.

Hebrews 13:7

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." (or their manner of living.) Now if you want to bring that on in to the local church, I won’t object to that. But since he is still talking to the Hebrews, I prefer to think he’s still talking to the leadership of the Jerusalem church in particular, and to some of the other Jewish congregations, which of course, these people were a part of. Now verse 8:

Hebrews 13:8

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." In other words, He never changes, He’s immutable. You know if people have an argument with me, they don’t like the fact that I separate Paul from Peter and the Church from Israel. And they’ve now picked it up in the word dispensational. I didn’t use the word for the first several years, but now they know I’m dispensational. And that makes a few people up tight. And this is my main obstacle when somebody opposes me. Their first argument is, "Well, he’s dispensational."Well, of course I am. I make no apology for it.

But without using the word, you can do this as well as I can, you just go back to these people that just almost detest dispensational teaching, which is rightly dividing the Word of Truth, and say, "Now look. Do you mean to tell me that when Adam and Eve came out of the Garden of Eden after the fall, everything was the same as it was before?" "No." "Well, you agree that everything changed?" "Yeah." "Alright, let’s go
a little further. When Noah and the families came off the ark, are you going to stand there and tell me that nothing had changed? Everything is the same? Is it? No!
 Everything is different. Now they can kill food and have meat. They now have to institute capital punishment. They now have a whole change in weather. Everything is different. But what has remained the same? God. God doesn’t change. He’s immutable. He’s the same, yesterday, today and forever. But He changes the modus operandi of mankind.

In other words, when Adam and Eve were in the garden, they didn’t have to worry about dealing with sin. It hadn’t been committed yet. They didn’t have to worry about death. They hadn’t faced it yet. But as soon as they came out of the garden, now God has to make provision for what? For their sin problem. And how does He do that? He introduces the blood sacrifice. And He gives them clothing to wear. Well the same way after the flood. Now God makes provision for a whole new economy that they knew nothing of. Well, what is that? It’s a change in dispensation. It’s a change in administration.

Now you come up through history. Here comes Abraham - and any student of Scripture has to admit that now, all of a sudden, you’ve got things totally different. What is it? You’ve got the appearance of a whole new race and nation of people through which God is going to send the Word of God, through which the Redeemer would come. That’s never been heard of before. And oh, I could just go on and on. You come out of the Old Testament and into the New, and Israel is under the Law, Temple worship, and they’re under the sacrifices.

Now here we come; and here comes the Apostle Paul going to the Gentile world now, after the work of the cross, and he says, "You’re no longer under the Law!" You’re going to tell me nothing has changed? Everything has changed. We’re no longer under the Law. We don’t have to go to the Temple. We don’t have to have a priesthood. We’re under Grace. Well you see, that’s all dispensationalism so far as I’m concerned. It’s just simply breaking the Scriptures down to realize that God’s immutable, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. He never changes! But He changes His dealings with mankind, according to the circumstances that have come about on the planet. And so now we are in what we call the dispensation of the Grace of God. It’s never been this way before. Mankind never had full access to the Father like we have.

Unheard of! Because the Jew had to approach Him through sacrifice and priesthood and so forth. And so that’s all dispensational means. You will hear somebody throw that word out at you, and say, "Don’t listen to Les Feldick, He’s dispensational." And listen, it’s happening. Don’t think I don’t know that. It doesn’t bother me a bit, because see, I can just blow them out of the water with what I’ve just said. How can
you tell me that things have never changed when I know everybody realizes it has. And every change is just a change in administration. And so don’t let that disturb you when someone says, "Oh don’t listen to that fellow, He’s dispensational." To me it’s almost laughable.

But alright, the part that got me started here is that even though all these changes have come upon the human race, **God never changed. He’s the same, yesterday, today and forever.** Now then verse 9. The people who think I am teaching strange doctrines are the ones to whom I’ll have to say, "Hey, wait a minute. Let’s put the shoe on the other foot." I’ll come back and say, "**Don’t you follow strange doctrines, cause that’s what the Scripture says.**" "**Rightly divide the Word of God.**"

**Hebrews 13:9a**

"*Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines....*" Hey, I don’t surf the Internet. I don’t know what’s out there, but I hear it from every direction. Do you realize that you can pick and choose everything from soup to nuts in the realm of spiritual things off the Internet - let alone in the book stores? And what’s it doing? It’s confusing the issue. People don’t know what to believe. I wrote one fellow a while back after he had written a couple of questions and I said, "Look, you people are getting pied pipered." Oh, he wrote back, "What do you mean by that?" Evidently he didn’t go to the same school as a kid that I did. You all remember the story of the pied piper don’t you? Well, he played the flute and I guess it was the rat (Iris finally decided), it was the rat that said, "Follow him into the river." That’s exactly what the human race is doing today. **You got pied pipers piping the tune and people are just following them to their doom.** And the Scripture is so plain, "Don’t be led away with every strange doctrine," but get rooted in the Word of God.

**Hebrews 13:9**

"*Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.* (teachings. That’s the other word for doctrine) **For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace;** (the freedom, the liberty, see.) **not with meats,** (or foods) **which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.**" What’s Paul saying? Hey when you’re under Grace, you’re not under a set of rules and regulations of how to approach God with this particular sacrifice or how to be in the Temple at this particular day and hour and so forth. **We’re set free from all that.** We now have free access into the throne room, any moment of any day. And I point out to people every once in awhile that back there in the Book of Acts, the disciples went up to the Temple to pray about the 9th hour. Why? Because for them it was a stipulated hour of prayer under the Law.
Lesson Three • Part IV

The Believer’s Sacrifice

Hebrews 12:18 – 13:25

We’re just going to get right back into the Book and Hebrews chapter 13 verse 10. Remember I’m always stressing I feel Paul wrote this Book of Hebrews, especially when he made mention of the Body, back there in one of the previous verses. Alright now he’s says in verse 10:

*Hebrews 13:10*

"We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle." (or the Temple.) In other words, those still under the Law. Now don’t forget, and I mentioned this before, that while Paul is writing this, the Temple in Jerusalem is still going. It won’t be destroyed for another several years. Now I don’t know exactly when Hebrews was written, I doubt that anyone does, but if it was written in the early 60’s then the Temple isn’t destroyed until 70 AD. So never forget that the Temple is still going while our New Testament is being written.

In fact, I think I made mention of it in one of the earlier lessons in Hebrews; that it just struck me while we were taping that day - that wasn’t it amazing that God didn’t permit any of the other empires or even the Romans to destroy the Temple until Paul’s epistles were completed. Because, after all, until Paul’s epistles were completed, and the Age of Grace was now made available, the Temple was necessary. It was the only approach to God. But now with the Age of Grace opened up and Paul’s epistles finished, God could permit the Temple to be destroyed, and it was. Alright, but now then, when he’s writing, it’s still operating. So we have an access to God that those who were still under Temple worship didn’t understand.

*Hebrews 13:11*

"For the bodies of those beasts, (those sacrificial animals) whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, (now that of course was a reference to the Day of Atonement) are burned without (or outside) the camp." Now the same here in Hebrews is a reference to the city of Jerusalem. And even in the Temple worship those beasts’ bodies were not burned there in the Temple complex, they were taken outside the city wall. Now verse 12.
**Hebrews 13:12**

"Wherefore (wherefore since even the sacrificial animal for the Day of Atonement had to be burned outside the city wall) Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, (in other words, his work of the cross, his death, his shed blood, he too) suffered (where?) without (or outside) the gate." In other words, the Jews would have never agreed to have such a horrible spectacle as the crucifixion take place inside their hallowed ground. So they made sure that the Romans carried out the crucifixion outside the city wall. Alright so it was all in a fulfillment of God’s divine purposes, so Christ also, you see, suffered outside the city walls.

**Hebrews 13:13**

"Let us (now then as believers) go forth therefore unto him without (or outside) the camp, (or outside the city) bearing his reproach." Now you see, present day Christendom has almost glorified the cross, haven’t we? We’ve glorified it. We’ve taken away the enigma and the shame and the reproach of the cross. But oh, it was a place of horrible shame and reproach. All the sin of the world, all the filth of mankind’s sin was laid on Christ as He hung on that cross, and we can’t comprehend it. There isn’t a man alive that can understand all that took place at that cross. You and I can’t comprehend it. When God reckoned all the sin of mankind as having been placed on the sin-bearer.

Now listen, you and I have got a vague notion of sin, but we can’t fathom the depths of it like God does. And yet, He laid it all on Christ, and so it became a place of horrible, horrible reproach. Nothing glamorous about it whatsoever, nothing. And yet it’s in that place of reproach that God poured out, not only His wrath, but also His what? Mercy! See, that’s why I maintain it’s no longer mandatory for us to pray the so called "sinners prayer – God be merciful to me a sinner." Hey, that’s already done. Why ask for something that’s done? It becomes ridiculous. God poured out His mercy. All of heaven’s mercy was poured out to compensate for the wrath of God; and for us to come back and say, "Oh God, be merciful to me." Hey, it’s ridiculous, it’s already done. And so we say, if you’re going to cry out for mercy, then you’re telling God He didn’t, but yes He did. And so His mercy has already been accomplished and so there is the admonition now then in verse 13 again, so "let us go out and bear that reproach that He bore."

Christianity has never been popular; you know that. From the very onset of Paul’s apostleship it was almost a guaranteed step leading to persecution. I can’t comprehend that, as I go back and look at Paul’s early believers who came out of paganism with all of its lust and all of its sexuality and all of its immorality, they turned their back on all of that and stepped into God’s saving grace; but at the same time, they stepped right in
to the jaws of persecution. It’s amazing that they withstood it. And the Thessalonians were the epitome of all that, and that’s why Paul wrote to them first - that they were withstanding the pressures of persecution as new believers. Now most of us have been raised up in it, we’ve been Christians all our life and if persecution comes, I imagine most of us will be able to withstand it. I don’t think all of us would, but most of us. But even for us, it’s something we don’t like to think about. But in the early days of Christianity, it was a guarantee to step out of that into persecution. It was a place of reproach. And how many believers today would be willing to do that? Now verse 14.

Hebrews 13:14a

“For here (in this earth, in this life) have we no continuing city,….” We’re just here for a little while, we’re just passing through; we’re strangers. We’re not even citizens of the planet. Now on the way up here today, I just happened to hear them quote our former president, and he claimed to be a citizen of this world. Well, so be it, but I’m glad I’m not in his shoes. I’m not a citizen of this world. The Bible says, I’m a citizen of heaven, and every believer is. Our citizenship, Paul says, is already in heaven. So we can’t be looking for a continuing city on this earth. Now Abraham did, we saw that back in chapter 11. Abraham looked for a city whose builder and maker was God.

Well Abraham was of the earthly promises, and he will yet one day experience those earthly promises. But for us, our citizenship is in heaven. We’re looking for that which is heavenly. And our citizenship is up there and we’re just strangers. You remember, I always use something different instead of the Great Commission (going out into all the world and baptizing people). I like the one a lot better that Paul gives in II Corinthians 5:20. What is it?

II Corinthians 5:20a

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ,..." Be an ambassador, because if our citizenship is in heaven and you’re here on this earth, where are you? Well, you’re in foreign territory. Well if you’re a citizen of one country and you are representing that country in a foreign area, what do you have to be? An ambassador. We are a reflection of our homeland, at least we’re supposed to be.

Alright and so the Apostle Paul is bringing out that when we identify ourselves with the reproach that was the cross and the world knows that now because we’re identified with His death, burial and resurrection; that we’re different, that we’re not like they are and hopefully that they can see we’re different in a better vein. But see this is what I think gets to be such a reproach to the Lord - so many Christians are not good ambassadors, they’re anything but. They are a bad reflection.
In fact, whenever I speak of our being ambassadors I’m always reminded of one of our bestsellers ten, fifteen, twenty years ago, and the title of it was, "The Ugly American." Maybe some of you remember reading it. What was it? It was an exposure of the horrible lifestyle of our American foreign service people, how that they lived lives of drunkenness and immorality in their places of duty in foreign countries. They were a bad reflection of America. And so the title was "The Ugly American." Well, you could write the same thing of Christians. Ugly Christians are Christians who are a bad reflection of their homeland in heaven. And so here we are to identify with the reproach of the cross, not a place of something beautiful. It’s a place that becomes glorious when He overcomes all this with His resurrection power. But the cross itself was a thing of reproach. It was God’s wrath being poured out for sinful men on God the Son. Now verse 15.

**Hebrews 13:15**

"By him (in other words, because of what Christ has done for us in the horrors of the cross) therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." Now that’s the kind of sacrifice God is looking for. The fruit of our lips, giving thanks to Him continually. Now I think I made a comment on one of the previous programs - there is nothing that God demands more or appreciates more from the life of a believer than, what? Thanksgiving. If you’re not living a life of thanksgiving, don’t expect God’s blessings, because God has every right for a believer to just constantly be thankful. Whenever I think of this verse, I have to think of Romans 12, and you know it backward and forward. But come back with me to Romans chapter 12, and I think this will make sense. Here Paul writes to you and I as blood-bought believers.

**Romans 12:1**

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies (your flesh and blood body) a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Now we normally think of a sacrifice as something that what? Gives up its life. But Paul isn’t talking about us going out and laying down our lives and all that. But we are to be "a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." In other words, it isn’t something that God is being unreasonable about. This is something that every believer should be able to do without any problem whatsoever, and that is to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Him. Now, keep that thought as you come back again the Hebrews chapter 13, and see why I make the connection. Verse 15 again:

**Hebrews 13:15a**
"By him…" Because of what he has done in that place of reproach, outside the city walls, where the religious community would have nothing to do with Him. Does that ring a bell? Most of Christendom today doesn’t want that much to do with the cross. They like a social gospel, but they don’t like the cross anymore. They sure don’t want the blood, because it’s a place of reproach. Alright, but now then, because of the place of reproach at what He’s accomplished, now we can come back and offer a sacrifice of praise.

**Hebrews 13:15**

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." Well goodness sakes, what are the lips a part of? Your body! And I think you can rightfully tie these two portions together. If you want to live a life that is pleasing to God, a living sacrifice, all you have to do is just use your lips in praise and thanksgiving and God will be pleased. I know He will. Alright, so we offer up the sacrifice of praise once a month? Once a quarter? No! "Continually," every waking moment of our lives we should be just simply praising God in one way or another. That’s not asking a bit too much. I dare say there isn’t a parent sitting here that just wouldn’t swell with pride if every day one of your kids would call from some distant place and just say, "Thank you Mom, thank you Dad, for all that you’ve done for me." Wouldn’t that just swell your whole being? Well, you think God’s any different? There’s nothing He likes better than to have His children approach Him with praise and thanksgiving for what He’s done, or what He’s doing, for what He is. Do you see that? Now when you do that the next verse just naturally follows.

**Hebrews 13:16**

"But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Now, maybe that could entail some financial sacrifice to help someone in need. Maybe it would involve sacrificing some of your time and using it for the good of someone else. You can use your own imagination for that. Now verse 17. He comes back to the same admonition that he had up there in verse 7. It’s almost a repetition.

**Hebrews 13:17**

"Obey them that have the rule over you, (now for the Hebrews this, of course, was the leadership of especially the Jerusalem church - Peter and the Eleven) and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." In other words, if you want to bring it in to your own church situation, there’s certainly nothing that’s saying you can’t. But if you do, then that tells the whole story. What is
the purpose of your church leadership? Welfare of the membership - for the person in the pew, for the young people and so forth, that they can become more spiritually minded. And so always remember that these things all fit together. Now then, in the closing verses of Hebrews, verse 18 to the end. These are just simple requests from the Apostle.

**Hebrews 13:18**

"Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly." Now you know the Apostle, especially in the Corinthian letters, emphasized the fact that he never brought them a perverted Gospel. He brought them nothing but truth. He said, "I didn’t bring to you a perverted product." And remember, way back in Corinthians, I chased the word down in the Old Testament and what it really amounted to - he did not sell them wine that was watered down, 50-50, remember that? Alright, he’s saying the same thing. Paul never approached people with something that was less than honest and that was less than the truth and honorable in everything he said and did. Now verse 19.

**Hebrews 13:19**

"But I beseech you (or I beg you) the rather to do this, (to pray for them) that I may be restored to you the sooner." In other words, the more people would pray for him, the further he could get making his rounds of all the people with whom he had a part. Now verse 20:

**Hebrews 13:20a**

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,..." Now what does that tell you? **Paul is always reminding us of the Gospel, that for salvation, you must believe in your heart that Jesus died for your sins, was buried and rose again. All through his letters, over and over and over, we find this beautiful Gospel that was given only to him for us, the Church Age believer.** And you know I had a gentleman call, I think it was from the twin cities quite a while back. And he had come out of a different background than what I’m teaching here. And he said, "Les, when I saw the truth of all this, I started asking the people that I use to associate with in my church environment, what’s the Gospel? And they didn’t know."

Some even thought the whole Bible was the Gospel. Now the Bible contains the Gospel, but you can’t just say, **"Well, believe the Bible and be saved."** But it’s ridiculous what people, who have been in church all their lives, can come up with and not even come close to the truth. And so Paul just says the same thing, **"that the Lord **
Jesus who was brought again to life from the dead," which is the crowning point of our salvation. That great Shepherd of the sheep. Now there again, he’s talking Jewish language.

Now I don’t set this in concrete and I don’t just get all shook up if people don’t agree with me, but if I understand the Scripture, you know that Gentiles were not referred to as sheep. It’s always Israel. It was the Nation of Israel, to whom the 23rd Psalm was really spoken. "The Lord is my shepherd..." The Lord Himself was always referring to the sheep and the shepherd. And when you get to the last sign miracle of John’s gospel and they’re having the fish on the fire and the Lord puts Peter on the spot and He says, "Peter, lovest thou me more than these?" And I’m sure He was pointing to the fish. And Peter says, "Lord, thou knowest I love thee." Jesus then said, "Feed my sheep." And the Lord comes back again with "Peter, lovest thou me more than these?" And Peter answers again, "Lord you know I love you." And again Jesus says, "Feed my sheep." And the third time and every time it was the same answer, "Feed my sheep."

Now isn’t it amazing that Peter, a man’s man, agreed to that with a handshake. You don’t know what I’m talking about do you? And I don’t expect you to know. Come back with me to Galatians. A gentlemen’s handshake. You know what that involves? Honesty, integrity.

Galatians chapter 2; and remember the setting. Paul has been out ministering to Gentiles for about 15-18 years, but what’s been happening? The Judaisers from the Jerusalem church are coming under his teaching and confusing the issue by telling Paul’s congregation that they had to keep the Law and practice circumcision and all that. (Acts 15:1-5) So here we come to this Jerusalem counsel to settle the question. And Paul is saying, "Stop having people come and tell my Gentile believers that they have to be circumcised and keep the Law." So they have this counsel and Peter and James and John finally see the light. I say, finally, because I think it took a long time. But anyway, now look what happens in chapter 2, and verse 8.

**Galatians 2:8**

"(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, [or Israel, the Jew] the same [Lord] was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:"

Now here comes that gentlemen’s handshake between Peter and Paul.

**Galatians 2:9**

"And when James, Cephas, (Peter) and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived (or understood) the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and
Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; (what does that mean? They shook hands! And what did they agree as they shook hands?) that we (Paul and Barnabas) should go unto the heathen, (or the Gentiles) and they (Peter, James and John and rest of the apostles would go where?) unto the circumcision." (The Jew or Israel). Now that was the gentlemen’s agreement. You think Peter ever backed off of that? I don’t think so, because he was too much of a man. And now back to Hebrews chapter 13 again. So here we have the whole concept that these Jews are under the control and headship of the chief shepherd. Now verse 21.

Hebrews 13:21a

"Make you perfect (in other words, get mature) in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, (how?) through Jesus Christ;..." Now what does Paul tell us in one of his other epistles? "I can do all things through Jesus Christ my Lord." So this is what he’s admonishing. Now, we’ve got to read on and wind it up just in time.

Hebrews 13:21-23a

"Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen. 22. And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. 23. Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty;..." Now who would naturally call Timothy his brother? Paul. And so here’s another reason I feel Paul is the writer.

Hebrews 13:23-25

"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." And so we come to the end of the Book of Hebrews.