

## Notes on the Letter to the Hebrews

(two of two)

### Chapter Nine

#### **Vs. 1: Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary.**

*First* (protos) in the sense of an order where a sequence is to be expected in distinction from arche as noted in 7.2 where it pertains more to the notion of a first principle; “covenant” is not used in the Greek text.

*Regulations* (dikaioima): the verbal root dikaioo implies that this term pertains to anything deemed right and which has the force of law; it is equivalent to the Hebrew mishpat. “For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation but the free gift following many trespasses brings *justification*” [Rom 5.16].

In the verse at hand, such regulations pertaining to the Torah are two-fold:

- 1) *Worship* or latreia; cf. 8.5 which contains the verbal root for this noun, latreuo: “They *serve* a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary.” The original sense of latreia pertains to any service for hire or for a wage. Also cf. vs. 6: “performing their *ritual duties*.” The LXX of Ex 12.25 has this term: “You shall keep this *service* (havodah, literally, ‘work’).”
- 2) *Earthly sanctuary* (hagion kosmikon): two terms consisting of two different realities: hagion or an adjective used as a noun, “that which is holy,” and kosmikon, another adjective, which refers to anything worldly. “Training us to renounce irreligion and *worldly* passions” [Tit 2.12]. In the verse at hand, hagion is not used in the profane sense but in contrast with the appearance of Jesus Christ (cf. vs. 11 ff.). Verses one through ten serve to describe this earthly sanctuary in some detail.

#### **Vs. 2: For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place.**

*Tent* (skene): also can mean “tabernacle;” cf. 8.2 for details where this term refers to the one established by Jesus Christ. Here skene is posited first after which comes the Holy of Holies mentioned in vs. 3. Note the refinement implied by another use of the adjective protos which signifies that skene was first in order or sequence to the Holy of Holies, that is, as the first sacred area to enter.

The tent is *prepared* (kataskeuazo); cf. 3.3: “Yet Jesus has been counted worthy of as much more glory than Moses as the *builder* of a house has more honor than the house.” This verb is passive (“was prepared”), to indicate that skene was acted upon by a greater (divine) agent.

The verse at hand concludes with an alternate term for skene, *Holy Place* or Hagia, neuter plural of the adjective hagios as in vs. 1. Thus Hagia may read “Holy Places” as if to indicate a multitude of sacred rooms. “In my Father’s house there are many rooms” [Jn 14.2].

This skene/Hagia contains two objects:

- 1) *Table* or trapeza. “You cannot partake of the *table* of the Lord and the *table* of demons” [Lk 10.21].
- 2) *Bread of Presence* (prothesis ton arton): literally, “the placing before of breads.” The regulation for this offering is set down in Lev 24.5-9; cf. vs. 7: “And you shall set them in two rows, six in a row, upon the table of pure gold.” Such a table was revealed to Moses: “And you shall make a table of acacia wood” [Ex 25.23].

#### **Vs. 3: Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies,**

*Second* or deuteron, which follows the protos or *first* in order; here it refers to the *curtain* (katapetasma) which is not mentioned in the text. Cf. 6.19: “a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the *curtain*.” The chief reference with regards to this verse is Ex 26.37: “And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia and overlay them with gold.” The Hebrew for screen/curtain is masak, an image associated with a virgin covered by a veil.

Hagia Hagion for the Hebrew qodesh haqodeshym as in Ex 26.34: “You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the *most holy place*.”

**Vs. 4: having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold which contained a golden urn holding the manna and Aaron’s rod that budded and the tables of the covenant;**

The previous verse speaks of the tent and Holy of Holies after which comes this list of three items; the first (golden *altar* or thumiaterion) was located in the tent, not the Holy of Holies. “You shall make an *altar* to burn incense upon; of acacia wood shall you make it” [Ex 30.6]. Compare this term with thusiaterion of 7.13: “...from which no one has ever served at the *altar*.” The former (only New Testament use) pertains to incense and the latter to burnt offerings. Note that thumos (*passion, heat*) forms part of this word in reference to the coals or the burning incense itself.

“Ark of covenant” (kibotos): described in Ex 25.10-22, the Hebrew word being ‘aron. Note its construction of acacia wood, the same as the altar of incense (25.1). Kibotos is used for Noah’s ark in Mt 24.38: “For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking...until the day when Noah entered the *ark*.” Here the Hebrew term is tevah (*chest*) similar to ‘aron but seems to connote a larger container.

*Covered* (perikalupto): the sense of this verb is a thorough wrapping *on all sides* (panothen), here with gold. “And you shall overlay it with pure gold, within and without shall you overlay it” [Ex 25.11]. The Hebrew for *overlay* is tsaphah which means “to shine, be bright” as well as “to view.” Thus the idea relates to keeping watch both “within” and “without” paralleled by the cherubim’s function of maintaining vigil (cf. vs. 5). For another use of perikalupto, cf. Lk 24.64: “They also *blindfolded* him.”

The golden *urn* (stamnos; only New Testament use) is found in Ex 16.33 (LXX) for the Hebrew tsintseneth (only Old Testament use): “Take a *jar* and put an omer of manna in it and place it before the Lord to be kept throughout your generations.” That the next verse has Aaron placing it “before the testimony” as though this manna were a reminder for God about his feeding Israel during forty years of wandering prior to entrance into the Promised Land. Such manna was specifically intended only for a day’s use (“Let no man leave any of it until morning,” vs. 19); if it were hoarded, the manna would spoil. However, the manna kept before the Lord is immune to corruption.

Aaron’s *rod* or rhabdos (cf. 11.21) is described in Num 17.10, especially vs. 10: “Put back the *rod* of Aaron before the testimony, to be kept as a sign for the rebels, that you may make an end of their murmurings against me, lest they die.” Such a *rod* or mateh can refer to kingly power (cf. Ps 110.2); it also means a walking stick as well as a branch or twig. For a correspondence between rhabdos and mateh as a staff, cf. Mt 10.10: “Take no...bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor a *staff*.” Note that Aaron’s rod produced blossoms and ripe almonds (cf. vs. 8). Presumably this budding rod continues to flower “before the testimony” much like the manna immune from corruption.

The *tables* (plax) of the covenant correspond to the Hebrew luach upon which Moses wrote the laws and covenant while on Sinai and which he broke upon seeing Israel’s apostasy (cf. Ex 32.19); later it was renewed or better, written by God himself (cf. 34.1). “And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on *tablets* of stone but on *tablets* of human hearts” [2 Cor 3.3].

**Vs. 5: above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot speak in detail.**

Continued reference to the ark, for example, Ex 25.18: “And you shall make two *cherubim* of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat.” In the verse at hand, the cherubim are of *glory* (*doxa/kavod*) which suggests brightness or radiance. At the same time, the brightness of these cherubim have the opposite function, of overshadowing (*kataskiazo*, only New Testament use), of providing shade *according to* (*kata*) their “bright” nature. For a corresponding sense: “and the power of the Most High will *overshadow* you” [Lk 1.35] where the verb is *episkiazo*), that is, provide shade *over* (*epi*) the Virgin Mary.

*Mercy seat* (*hilasterion*): a place of propitiation as noted in Rom 3.25: “whom God put forward as an *expiation* by his blood, to be received by faith.” The Hebrew for *hilasterion* is *kaphoreth*, literally, “covering” (cf. Ex 30.6). Such covering is reminiscent of Solomon’s litter: “King Solomon made himself a palanquin from the wood of Lebanon” [Sg 3.9] or carriage borne by “sixty might men” in which he lay hidden from sight and in anticipation of his bride.

*In detail* (*kata meros*): literally, “according to part,” and reminiscent of Jn 21.25: “But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were everyone of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.”

**Vs. 6: These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent performing their ritual duties;**

*Preparations* (*kataskueazo*): perfect passive participle (“these having been prepared”); the same verb was used in vs. 2, “a tent *was prepared*.” In the verse at hand, *kataskueazo* sets the stage for a description of priestly functions through vs. 10.

The (Levitical) priests are presented as entering the outer tent *continually* (*dia pantos*), literally, “through all.” “For I tell you that in heaven their angels *always* behold the face of my Father who is in heaven” [Mt 18.10]. This “*outer* (*protos*) tent” already mentioned was accessible to priests, the Holy of Holies being set aside for the high priest to enter once a year. Compare with the prophetess Anna: “She did not depart from the *temple*, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day” [Lk 2.37]. Here the term is *hieron* signifying the outer part of the temple accessible to Jews as opposed to the Holy of Holies. For a more specific reference to vs. 6, cf. Num 17.6: “And behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites...to do the service of the tent of meeting.”

*Go...into* (*eiserchomai...eis*): note two uses of the preposition signifying a full presence within the outer tent.

Within (*eis*) this sacred precinct yet before the Holy of Holies the priests *perform* (*epiteleo*) their *ritual duties* (*latreia*; cf. vs. 1). The verb *epiteleo* is used in 8.5 in the sense of constructing, of bringing to fulfillment: “for when Moses was about to *erect* the tent.” In the verse at hand, the fulfillment of the Levitical priestly rites can be intimated in light of Christ’s priesthood.

**Vs. 7: but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.**

The verb “to go” is lacking in the Greek text; entry into the *second* (*deuteron*) is signified by the preposition *eis*; for a reference to *deuteron* in the sense of a sequence, cf. vs. 3: “behind the *second* curtain.” Here the archiereus is permitted to enter, again, a forerunner of Jesus Christ. *Apax tou eniautou* (*once a year*) literally reads as “once for each year.”

The high priest brings blood into the Holy of Holies, rather, *not without* (*ou choris*) it, a more vivid expression along with “but once a year” which suggests the solemn nature of this act. Such blood has a two-fold purpose: the high priest *offers* (*prosphero*; first encountered in 5.1) it for himself and the people’s *errors* (*agnoema*), literally, “ignorance.” For a context of this ignorance, cf. Lev 4.1 & 3: “If anyone sins *unwittingly* in any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done...then let him offer for the sin which he has committed a young bull without blemish.” The Hebrew adverb derives from the

verbal root shagag, *to err, commit a fault* (by wandering). In sum, the offerings noted in the verse at hand do not necessarily apply to deliberate offenses but those which are indirect.

**Vs. 8: By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing**

An incomplete, lengthy sentence which continues into the next verse.

*Indicates* (deloo): better, “makes clear” as in 1 Cor 3.13: “Each man’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it.” Here the verb apokalupto is used for *become manifest*. The former seems more related to the declaration of something whereas the latter, its actual discovery. The author of Hebrews has the Holy Spirit (Pneuma) as agent of deloo; compare with Holy of Holies in vs. 3, almost as though the latter were in competition with this Third Person.

*Way* (hodos): here with respect to hagion (*sanctuary*) or literally, “the way of the holies” which may include the Holy Place and Holy of Holies. For another use of hodos: “I am the way and the truth and the life” [Jn 14.6]. Such a way is presented as “not yet opened,” phaneroo being the verb used which better means “to be manifest.” I.e., the way may be taken as already existing but requires someone (Holy Spirit) pointing out its location.

The hodos remains concealed *as long as* (eti; connotes something in the present and continuing) the prote skene (*outer* or “first tent”) is standing. Note the use of the noun stasis (*standing*) with the verb echo (*to have*); i.e., “having a standing.” Stasis refers to an unmoved object and resistant to the concept of hodos which suggests motion; i.e., it is made even more static by the verb echo, as though stasis were in possession of its static nature.

**Vs. 9: (which is symbolic for the present age). According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,**

The “outer (protos) tent” is given almost by way of footnote as representative of the author’s time which he terms *present age*: this phrase is composed of kairos or special occasion—used both positively and negatively—and the verb enistemi, literally, to “stand in.” Use of kairos intimates that the time contemporaneous with the author can extend both forward and backward, that is, does not necessarily involve chronological time. In addition to the preposition eis (enistemi), note the use of eis: “into the present age,” that is, the “outer tent” is fully contemporary with the kairos of which the author is speaking.

*Symbolic* (parabole): literally, a placing of one thing by the side of another with the intent of making a comparison. “From the fig tree learn its lesson” [Mk 13.28]...that is, put the fig tree beside something in the human realm to see if this physical entity can mirror something in the spiritual realm. In the verse at hand, the “outer tent” is placed-beside the “present age,” better, *into* (eis) it.

Kath’ hen: *according to this arrangement* or “according to which.” The preposition kata sets up a negative description of the outer temple’s function, if you will, in light of Christ as high priest (cf. vs. 11).

“Gifts and sacrifices:” referring to such things as animal sacrifices which are unable to *perfect* (teleioo; cf. 7.28 for last usage & 5.9, both with respect to Jesus Christ) or bring to a telos that for which they are intended. This would imply conformity with the *beginning* or arche discussed several times earlier in this document. Here telos in the sense of an “end” is used with respect to a worshiper’s *conscience* (suneidesis), literally, “knowledge together,” thus implying that knowledge needs to be shared for it to become actualized. “They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their *conscience* also bears witness” [Rom 2.15]. In the verse at hand, conscience pertains to the *worshiper* (latreuo; cf. vs 1); the verb is used signifying that the person is engaged in the act of worship.

**Vs. 10: but deal only with food and drink and various ablutions, regulations for the body imposed until the**

## **time of reformation.**

Reference to food, drink, ablutions and regulations suggests attention to ritual details by the Pharisees against which Christ railed in Mt 23: "So practice and observe whatever they tell you but not what they do; for they preach but do not practice" [vs. 2].

Such observances which can be traced to the Book of Leviticus are acceptable for a limited period, that is, during the *time of reformation*: kairos diorthoseos. Here kairos-as-event is used with diorthosis, "setting straight," the only New Testament occurrence. That is to say, the regulations governing temple worship or the "outer (protos) tent" are superceded by the "second" of Jesus Christ. This verse may be taken in light of the heavenly Jerusalem's descent; it lacked a temple because "its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb" [Rev 21.22].

## **Vs. 11: But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)**

The verb paraginomai (*to appear*) bears a certain correspondence with diorthosis (*reformation*) of the previous verse which literally means "setting straight." That is to say, Christ "has placed himself *beside/near* (paraginomai)" by reason of his office of high priest. An image of Christ is presented here where he is set alongside the pre-existing temple or encloses it much like a smaller box is fully nested within a larger one. Such is the meaning of Mt 5.7: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have not to abolish them but to *fulfil* them." Here the verb pleroo parallels paraginomai.

The verse at hand specifies this placing-beside: Christ not only as an archiereus but one with regard to those *goods* (agathon) already present (*have come*: genomenon). That is to say, Christ remained (potentially) hidden in the person of those high priests offering earlier sacrifices and observances associated with Jewish temple worship.

The author of Hebrews now proceeds with Christ entering (verb is in next verse) or going *through* (dia: in sense of "by means of") the *tent* or skene which is greater and more *perfect* (teleios: i.e., tending towards a greater sense of fulfilment, telos).

This other tent harkens back to Ex 15.17 where God himself is builder of the temple, that is, as mentioned in the Song of Moses after Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea from the Egyptian army: "You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O Lord, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established." This verse is set in the larger context of the Exodus and at the very point of entry into the Sinai wilderness when God revealed himself forty years prior to Israel's entry into the Promised Land. With this in mind, vs. 11 regarding Christ's entry into the Holy Place (vs. 12) bears a certain parallel this crucial point in Israel's history.

Note the correspondence between this temple not made by human hands and not of this creation, i.e, it is eternal and unbegotten, just like the sanctuary in Ex 15.17 made by God.

## **Vs. 12: he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.**

This and the previous verse are reminiscent of Christ's crucifixion when "the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom" [Mt 27.51]. The words anōthen and kato (*top* and *bottom*) show the thorough rending of the veil, not simply that it had been removed or taken aside.

*Enter/into* (eiserchomai/eis): two uses of the preposition *into* which may be viewed in light of anōthen/kato above. Ephapax (*once for all*) designates permanent entry, as though there was no turning back; cf. its use in 7.27: "he did this *once for all* when he offered up himself." Ta hagia (*Holy Place*): cf. 9.2 as "the holy things." In the Greek of vs. 12, these first words follow those pertaining to goats, etc., as if to first posit Levitical

practices in anticipation of Christ's relationship to the Holy Place.

Instead of using the verb "taking" the Greek text reads "*through* (dia) the blood of..." dia is also used with respect to Christ's blood, the vehicle, as it were, enabling entry into ta hagia.

"Eternal *redemption*" (lutrosis): in the sense of releasing, from the verb luo; the noun implies that a person had been previously bound, in captivity. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and *redeemed* (noun) his people" [Lk 1.68]. The verb eurisko (*securing*) is used with respect to redemption; more properly it means "to find" in the sense of securing.

**Vs. 13: For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh,**

This verse forms the first part of one sentence continued in vs. 14 with "if" setting up the contrast to be made. Implied here is Lev 16.3: "But thus shall Aaron come into the *holy place*: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering" (and so forth). A key point is *holy place* which in the LXX reads to hagian (singular compared with ta hagia in vs. 12) for the Hebrew qodesh.

*Sanctifies* (hagiazō): the verb for ta hagia. "Father, *hallowed* by your name, your kingdom come" [Lk 11.2]. In the verse at hand, hagiazō has a direction of pros (*for*) or in-the-direction-towards *purification* (katharotes) of the physical body ("flesh"); this is the only New Testament use of the term.

**Vs. 14: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.**

"How much:" intended to balance the "if" which begins vs. 13.

Here the *Spirit* (Pneuma) as *eternal* (aionos) is intimately related to Christ as high priest in the *offering* (prosphero, verb) of himself to God which implies the equal attribute of "eternal" to himself. Christ relates to the Spirit *through* (dia) him which results in him being *without blemish* or amomos. "To be accepted it (freewill offering) must be perfect; there shall be *no blemish* (mum, Hebrew) in it" [Lev 22.21]. For an elevated sense of mum, cf. Sg 4.7: "You are all fair, my love; there is *no flaw* (momos ouk) in you."

Christ's blood is intended for *purification* (katharizo, verb) of a person's *conscience* or suneidesis..."knowing-together"...as in vs. 9 above and pertaining to Levitical worship: "gifts and sacrifices...which cannot perfect the *conscience* of the worshiper."

The "dead works" parallel the "*futile ways*" of 1 Pt 1.18 or mataios, reminiscent of Ecclesiastes' "*vanity of vanities.*" This verse is related to the adjective amomos found in the next one, "the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb *without blemish* or spot."

The purpose of such purification: eis to latreuein, literally, "*into the to serve*" the living God. Note the connection between "living" and latreia as in 9.1 which originally meant liturgical worship according to the Levitical law. Furthermore, purification leads *into* (eis: full presence-in) such latreia.

**Vs. 15: Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred which redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.**

"Therefore" introduces a sentence which sums up the previous verses beginning with Christ having entered the Holy Place (cf. vs. 12); it presents Jesus Christ as *mediator* or mesites as noted in 8.6. Here it is in conjunction with a "*new covenant*" (diatheke; cf. vs. 22, "better covenant" plus 8.6). The function of a mediator is to stand in between, as it were, a fact suggested by dia (*through*)-theke. This term is lacking in the Old Testament but is indicated by Aaron acting as mediator between Moses and Pharaoh (cf. Ex 4.15-6..."and you shall be to him

as God”).

“Those who are *called*” (*kaleo*): the verb is a perfect passive participle; the agent doing the calling is not specified but presumably is God. “We know that in everything God works for good with those who live him, who are *called* according to his purpose” [Rom 8.28]. Here *purpose* (prothesis) is a “setting *before* (pro);” in 9.2 it is “bread of the *Presence*” in the sense of being a preparation.

*Promised* (*epaggelia*): here a noun; cf. 8.6. It is used in reference to “eternal *inheritance*” (*kleronomia*). “This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his *inheritance*” [Mt 21.38].

Death is mentioned without the definite article, i.e., “(a) death.” Although it pertains to Jesus Christ, this term is presented almost in an impersonal fashion, perhaps a way of expressing the link between Christ’ crucifixion and the earlier Levitical sacrifices. The chief difference is that the death of Christ effects *redemption*: note the Greek expression, *into* (*eis*) *apolutrosin*. That is to say, his death—which pertains to those “who are called”—leads “into” this redemption. “They are justified by his grace as a gift through the *redemption* which is in Christ Jesus” [Rom 3.24].

Such redemption is effected with regard to *transgression* (*parabasis*). Note the preposition *para* (*besides*) which suggests a going-besides or running parallel but not quite in tune with divine reality. Cf. 2.2 where *parabasis* is identified with disobedience, a failure to hear God: “For if the message declared by angels was valid and every *transgression* or disobedience received a just retribution.”

The concluding words of vs. 15 are “*first* (*protos*) covenant,” another mention of *diatheke*, that is, the one given to Moses. The adjective *protos* contrasts with the one describing the “*new* (*kainos*) covenant” established by Christ; *kainos* connotes something which is recent whereas *protos*, that which is first in a sequential order.

The preposition *epi* (*upon*) is used with respect to the first covenant, here in English as “under” in the sense of “by.”

#### **Vs. 16: For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established.**

The author of Hebrews continues with an impersonal approach in that he wishes to isolate a particular human faculty to make his message that much clearer to his readers.

*Will* (*diatheke*): the same term as used for “covenant;” this and vs. 17 are the only New Testament occurrences. Since *diatheke* (refer back to the previous verse, i.e., what was given to Moses by God on Mt. Sinai) can be conceived as a will or as pertaining to inheritance, it pertains not only to the present but to the future, that is, Israel as well as the “will’s” fulfillment in Jesus Christ (“new covenant”).

In human affairs, the person who drew up the will has to pass away before it is handed over to the party designated as heir. A legal process is suggested in vs. 16, that is, the person’s death requires (*anagke*: adverb for *must*) verification; it is used with respect to the person who *made* (*diatithemi*) the will. This is the verbal root for *diathesis*, to make a covenant. Thus vs. 16 has a legal as well as a communal overtone which is borne out by the verb *pheresthai* (*phero*), *to be established*.

#### **Vs. 17: For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.**

*Takes effect* (*bebaios*): the Greek adjective is used which means something stable or firm. “For if the message declared by angels was *valid* and every transgression or obedience received a just retribution” [2.2]. In the verse at hand, *bebaios* is related to death, inferring that of Jesus Christ.

*In force* (*ischuo*): in the sense of having strength and validity; this verb is parallel in meaning to *bebaios*, i.e., both connote firmness and integrity. Here the will lacks force as long as the person who *made* (*diathemenos*) it remains alive, the verbal root for *diatheke* (*will*).

**Vs. 18: Hence even the first covenant was not ratified without blood.**

Both the first and new covenants required the shedding of blood for *ratification* (egkainizo; cf. 10.20): this verb pertains to the making of something *new* (kainos, as in *new covenant*) as well as “to inaugurate.” A reference to the first covenant: “And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people and said, ‘Behold, the blood of the *covenant* which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words” [Ex 24.8]. Note that in vs. 7 Moses read the book of the covenant to the people; reading leads to a baptism of sorts, that is to say, it makes the people kainos.

For an example of egkainizo in the Old Testament (LXX), cf. 2 Chron 15.8: “Asa...*repaired* the altar of the Lord that was in front of the vestibule of the house of the Lord.”

**Vs. 19: For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,**

“Every *commandment*” (entole): note that they were spoken to the people as opposed to having been written by God on Mt. Sinai. These individual commandments are “of (kata) the law” (Torah), better, “*according* to the law” which means a correspondence of many ordinances with reference to the whole or the Torah itself. “All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do:” such was the people’s response, Ex 24.3. Their willingness follows an order, a kata, if you will, which comes after the words, “Moses alone shall come near to the Lord” [vs. 2]. It is as though this physical separation sets the stage for Moses’ declaring to the people.

The verse at hand implies Lev 14.4 and Num 19.6, liturgical gestures with respect to cleansing from ritual impurity. Moses first sprinkled the *book* (biblios) and then all the people...in that order; this sequence is akin to Moses’ coming near to the Lord (that is, to hear him) followed by his declaration to the Israelites of what the Lord had written down on tablets.

Moses received the Torah on Mt. Sinai, “the two tablets of the testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God” [Ex 31.18]. The ritual to which vs. 19 refers takes place before the people’s apostasy in chapter 32; Moses broke the two tables (cf. 32.19) on the same mountain where he received them. Later in chapter 34 Moses re-ascends Sinai but as vs. 27 indicates, he, not God, does the writing or re-writing of the original Torah. Thus this second set of tablets written by Moses represents a type of secondary transmission or speaking. Furthermore, Moses’ face shone after this second writing; he had to put a veil on his face whenever he spoke with the people (cf. 34.35).

This whole process of transmission from God to Moses to the people may follow the outline: God writing—>people willingly hear writing transmitting through speaking—>Moses’ breaking the tablets (writing)—>Moses writing them again—>declaring the new tablets, only now with Moses’ face veiled.

The verse under discussion describes Moses ritual purification. It is almost as though this secondary writing necessitated purgation by reason of it coming after the original hearing of Moses on the mountain. Since Moses destroyed the first set of tablets (written by God), the re-telling to the people from the second set (written by Moses) does necessitate purification because the second set comes through man, not God.

**Vs. 20: saying, “This is the blood of the covenant which God commanded you.”**

A continuation of vs. 19 which concludes here in dramatic form. The same verb (*saying*, laleo) was used to introduce vs. 19 in the Greek text (*declared*); it picks up on the theme discussed there, God writing followed by the people hearing through Moses as mediator.

Emphasis is placed upon the primacy of blood (cf. vs. 7 and following) which is sprinkled upon first the book and then the people. Vs. 20 is lifted from Ex 24.8 and has direct bearing upon Christ’s institution of the Eucharist: “Take, eat; this is my body”...“Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant which is

poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" [Mt 26.26 & 27-8]. Here the bread/body is distinct from the cup/blood, as though the latter were derived from the former much as an animal's blood comes from its body. Also, the bread/body is not identified with the covenant per se, only the blood. Moses actively sprinkled the people who remained passive; the disciples were "active" in that they were commanded to both eat and drink.

"Saying *this*" (touto): the Hebrew equivalent is hineh; it translates better as "behold," an act of getting someone's attention. Hineh is more proper to speaking as opposed to writing. Also the Hebrew has karath for the Greek entellomai (*to command*) which basically means "to cut" and conveys a more intimate sense compared with imparting a command. Entellomai (entello) connotes enjoining which is a fuller meaning than the giving of an order: "...when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and *commands* the doorkeeper to be on the watch" [Mk 13.34].

As a side note...after Moses sprinkled the people with blood, he, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy elders ascended Mt. Sinai. "They saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank" [Ex 24.9-11].

**Vs. 21: And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship.**

*In the same way* (homoios): that is, after Moses had sprinkled the book and people. Even though Moses follows an order, homoios suggests that each part contributes to a whole of this liturgical gesture. "And Moses killed it (a ram) and threw the blood upon the altar round about" [Lev 8.19].

*Sprinkle* (rhantizo): as in vs. 19. This verb is used in the LXX of Lev 6.27 with the preposition epi (*upon*) prefixed to it and refers to a similar liturgical gesture: "When any of its blood is *sprinkled* on a garment, you shall wash that on which it was *sprinkled* in a holy place." For a verb paralleling this notion of sprinkling, cf. Rev 19.13 which speaks of "The Word of God" clad in a robe dipped in blood. Here his robe is *dipped* or bapto (related to the verbal root for baptism), that is, it was fully immersed in blood.

*Worship* (leitourgia): in the "liturgical" and public sense as opposed to veneration offered by individual persons. Cf. 8.6 which brings out another aspect of this noun: "But as it is, Christ has obtained a *ministry* which is as much more excellent than the old..."

**Vs. 22: Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**

*Almost* (schedon): alternately, "I may also say." This verse sums up the preceding ones and prepares the reader for the rest of the chapter which pertains to Christ and his sacrifice. Note the connection between schedon and "*under* (kata, *according to*) the law" or the sequential nature of the Torah's individual ordinances. Implied are those ordinances not purified by blood. The importance of blood is brought out in Lev 17.11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life." The Hebrew for *life* is nephesh which more properly refers to the human soul.

*Shedding of blood* (haimatekchusia): the only occurrence in the New Testament, composed of haima + ekchuno. The implied sacrifice necessary to obtain blood releases, as it were, the victim's nephesh. As a result there is "*forgiveness* (aphesis, cf. 10.18) of sins." This noun suggests a releasing, a setting-free. "For this is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many for the *forgiveness* of sins" [Mt 26.28]. Here aphasis is used with the preposition eis (*into*), signifying presence-*in* of this forgiveness.

**Vs. 23: Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.**

Note the relationship between *necessary* (anagke) and *but* (de) which makes the transition between liturgical

rites of the Torah to its fulfillment in Jesus Christ which the author of Hebrews proceeds to delineate.

*Copies* (hupodeigma): as discussed in the context of 8.5 which is more specific or concerned with one object (“They serve a *copy* and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary”) whereas here it encompasses all rites and practices ordained by Moses. In the verse at hand, this term is related to *heavenly things* which in the Greek text literally reads, “the copies of *things* (ton) in the *heavens*” (en tois ouranois). Thus the contrast between hupodeigma and ton (“...in the heavens”) is brought out as well as by *rites* (toutois, literally, “by these”).

The phrase *heavenly things* (ta epourania) is used again only with the author’s intent to contrast them with the “copies” associated with the Levitical rites, that is, through *sacrifices* (thusia). Cf. 8.3: “For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and *sacrifices*.” In the verse at hand, this word is in the plural; compare ta epourania with ouranos in the first half of this verse: the former has the preposition epi (*upon*) prefixed to it as if the author wished to intimate a greater sense of transcendence. He does this by the relative pronoun auta (*themselves*). As for thusia, compare with 10.12: “But when Christ offered for all time a single *sacrifice* for sins.” Here thusia is singular as opposed to the plural in the verse at hand.

“*Than* (para) these:” in reference to the earlier sacrifices; para is comparative here and connotes two things placed alongside each other to effect a comparison.

**Vs. 24: For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.**

After several verses related to sacrifices in and by themselves, the author of Hebrews comes back to the notion of a sanctuary which was last mentioned in vs. 8. Here the term is hagia as in vs. 12 (*holy place*) which there was noted as being in the plural, “the holy things.”

The verse at hand presents Christ first as having *entered* (eiserchomai) this sanctuary. Note the preposition eis (*into*) prefixed to the verb which is used with cheiropoietos (*made with hands*). “...circumcision, which is *made* in the flesh *by hands*” [Eph 2.11].

*Copy* (antitupos): this copy has been fabricated by *hands* (cheiro-poietos). This English term was used in vs. 23 for hupodeigma. As the literal meaning of antitupos suggests, it signifies a striking *against* (anti) and therefore has a dynamic connotation; it is as though the antitupos was determined to be set apart from and different from what it had been compared to at an earlier time. “Baptism, which *corresponds* to this (in reference to Noah), now saves you” [1 Pt 3.21]. This is the only other New Testament reference here used as a verb in English where the sacrament of baptism stands “against” the flood when Noah was rescued.

By way of note, compare huodeigma with “copy:” hupo (*under*) + deiknumi (*to show, point out*); it lacks a more assertive force as in antitupos.

*True one* (alethinos): an adjective used with the definite article literally meaning “of true things;” compare the plural with ta hagia (*sanctuary*, as in 8.2).

Christ has *entered* (eiserchomai, as just noted) *into* (eis) *heaven* (ouranos); note the use of autos (*itself*) which further sets apart this “hand-less” made sanctuary from those associated with the Jewish dispensation.

This double eis, if you will, results in Christ *appearing* (emphanizo) or putting himself in the presence of someone or something. “I will love him and *manifest* myself to him” [Jn 14.21]. In the verse at hand, emphanizo is with respect to God’s *presence* (prosopon), literally, “face;” not just the divine presence but “*on our behalf*” (huper). “And *for their sake* I consecrate myself” [Jn 17.19].

**Vs. 25: Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly with blood not his own;**

“Nor:” the other half of this verse’s significance is in vs. 26 which is introduced by “but.”

The *offering* (prosphero, verb) presented here is in the context of the Jewish archiereus who makes sacrifice *repeatedly* (pollakis) which parallels *yearly* (kat' eniauton). Implied in this verse is that sacrifice is subject to becoming routine without any end in sight; emphasis is upon a cyclic nature of time. This repeated nature of time is further signified by the high priest having blood which is not his, i.e., it is from the sacrifices that have been offered.

Eiserchomai (*to enter*) is coupled with eis with respect to the *Holy Place* or Ta Hagia (cf. 9.2).

**Vs. 26: for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.**

Further stress upon time's cyclic nature with regard to (animal) sacrifices by another use of the word *repeatedly* (pollakis). The suffering of Christ as high priest would have to correspond to this endless perception of time "from the *foundation* (katabole) of the world." Cf. 4.3 for another use of katabole: "although his works were finished from the *foundation* of the world," words which contrasts with the divine rest regarding Israel.

*Appeared* (phaneroo): connotes a public manifestation; compare with emphanizo of vs. 24. For another use of the verb at hand, cf. 9.8: "that the way into the sanctuary is not yet *opened*."

The appearance of vs. 26 is apax (*once for all*, as in 6.4 & 9.7), that is, definitively. Such conclusiveness is conveyed by "at the *end* (sunteleia) of the age:" sun (*with*) telos (*end*). This noun corresponds to the sense of the verb teleioo of 5.9: "and *being made perfect*." With regard to sunteleia, completion is conveyed by the preposition epi (*at*): also it is "upon"—as fulling situated-upon—this termination of *age* or aion. Aion is found in 1.2 as "world;" it manifests a given period of time or epoch which in the context of vs. 26 is the seemingly endless cycle of time.

At the end of this given aion Christ as high priest *puts away* (athetesis, noun) sin, the only other New Testament use being 7.18 which there has a legal connotation: "on the one hand, a former commandment is *set aside* because of its weakness and uselessness." With the legality of athetesis in mind, Christ's *sacrifice* (thusia) of himself is implied as being both within and transcending the Torah.

**Vs. 27: And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment,**

"And" introduces the first half of the author's intent and is balanced off by "so" which begins vs. 28 and completes Chapter Nine.

*Appointed* (apokeimai): the present tense suggests that the subject under discussion (death) is continuously in effect as in Col 1.5: "because of the hope *laid up* for you in heaven." Note the two uses of the preposition apo (*by means of, about, etc.*) prefixed to apokeimai and apothnesko (*to die*, in the sense of being at death's door).

Another use of the adverb apax (*once*) in contrast to vs. 26 where it refers to Christ's appearance.

The preposition meta (*after*) signifies the finality of death as with apax, only here it sets the stage for the more or less immediate presence of divine *judgment* (krisis). "Yet even if I do judge, my *judgment* is true, for it not I alone that judge, but I and he who sent me" [Jn 8.16].

**Vs. 28: so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**

*Once* or apax as used yet again to indicate the finality of Christ's *offering* (anaphero) of himself; cf. 7.27 for the verb: "he did this once for all when he *offered up* himself." In this verse an adverb similar to apax is used, ephax (*once for all*, literally, "upon" or epi all). Compare anaphero with prosphero of vs. 25: the former

involves something related to *above* or *ana*; the latter, with respect to *towards* or *in-the-direction-of* (*pros*). I.e., we have a “vertical” and “horizontal” offering.

*Appear* (*orao*): has the fundamental meaning of seeing, perceiving; compare with the two verbs noted above, *hupodeiknumi* and *phaneroo*. “And there *appeared* to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense” [Lk 1.11]. In the verse at hand, Christ will appear a second time (*deuteron*); cf. vs. 7: “but into the *second* only the high priest goes,” this word meaning second in the sense of succession. The first appearance could apply to Christ’s birth in the flesh; understanding of the second appearance can be expanded through the Book of Revelation. “Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him” [Rev 1.7].

*Choris*: *without*; in vs. 28 it is used in the sense of “not to deal with sin,” i.e., not to be burdened further by sin (that is, with regard to one’s own person). The first coming of Christ was in order to abolish sin: “sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh” [Rom 8.3].

In place of sin, the author of Hebrews presents Christ engaged in the act of *saving* (*soteria*); the Greek text has a noun with the preposition *eis*: “into salvation.”

This “into salvation” is in reference to those persons *eagerly awaiting* Christ (*apekdechomai*). “For the creation *waits* with *eager longing* for the revealing of the sons of God” [Rom 8.19].

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## Chapter Ten

**Vs. 1: For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices which are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who draw near.**

*Shadow* or *skia* as in 8.6 to which the verse at hand bears a close parallel: “They (sacrifices by Levitical priests) serve a copy and *shadow* of the heavenly sanctuary.” Here the law or Torah is a *skia* used with the present active participle echo (*having*) which intimates that although a semblance, the Torah participates in the *good things to come* (*ton mellonton agathon*). Cf. 9.11: “When Christ appeared as a high priest of the *good things* that have come.” We have the same *agathon* in the plural only in this verse it is in the past tense compared with the present tense of 10.1. *Mello* connotes on the point of doing or being something, that is, it is immanent. Here *ton agathon* with respect to Torah-as-shadow are about to overtake it, not blot it out. “Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them” [Mt 5.17]. Note the contrast between *kataluo* (*to abolish*) and *pleroo* (*to fulfill*), a sentiment intimated in the verse under discussion.

“True *forms* (*eikon*):” the term for “image” as in Gen 1.27: “So God created man in his own *image*, in the *image* of God he created him.” Also: “and have put on the new nature which is being renewed in knowledge after the *image* of its creator” [Col 3.10]. In the verse at hand, *eikon* is the antithesis of *skia*; it is directly related to *realities* or *pragma*, that which is done or pertaining to that which is real.

The phrase *year after year* (*eis to dienekes*) is used in 7.3, *forever*; as noted there, the preposition *eis* (*into*) signifies full presence within that which is unbroken and is not subject to temporal sequence. “Shadow” can be tied in with this phrase, that is, as something which waxes and wanes in the course of a given year. *Sacrifices* (*thusia*) similarly offered point to the repetitious or cyclic nature of time. They are unable to *make perfect* (*teleioo*)...effect a *telos*...in the sense that Jesus Christ can effect where this same verb is used: “...appoints a Son who *has been made perfect forever*” [7.28].

Such making of a *telos* pertains to persons who *draw near* (*proserchomai*), the author’s intent of approach as pointed out in 7.25: “He is able for all time to save those who *draw near* to God through him.”

**Vs. 2: Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered? If the worshipers had once been cleansed, they**

would no longer have any consciousness of sin.

*Otherwise* (epeí) introduces a rhetorical question which the author of Hebrews answers. Epei alternately means “since” as in 9.26 (“for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly”). At issue is the repetitious nature of time and hence sacrifices, themes already noted. This sentence can read, “For if it were otherwise, would they have not ceased to be offered?”

*Cleansed* (katharizo): as in 9.14 (“purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God”). Use of the perfect means that cleansing has taken place definitively. Katharizo is with respect to *worshippers*, the verb *latreuo* being used and was discussed in 8.5 (“they serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary”). Thus *latreuo* can apply to a liturgical act and representative of a greater, transcendent reality. “For we are the true circumcision who *worship* God in spirit” [Phil 3.3].

The adverb *once* (apax) is used in a hypothetical situation, that is, with respect to worshippers having had the possibility of being cleansed. It is to be considered in conjunction with the first word of vs. 3 (*but* or *alla*) which deals with the cyclical nature of sacrifice.

The author of Hebrews does not simply mention *sin* (hamartia) but *consciousness* of it, *suneidesis*, as treated in 9.9 & 14, that is, as a “knowing-together” (*sun*).

**Vs. 3: But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year.**

Note the suggested parallel between the cyclic nature of time/sacrifice and memory: *year after year* (*kat' eniauton*) and *anamnesis* (*reminder*). Compare the former with vs. 1's *eis to dienekes*; the Greek in the verse at hand is used in 9.25: “as the high priest enters the Holy Place *yearly*.” This phrase taken literally can read “according to year,” that is, following an order with liturgical overtones.

*Anamnesis*: a term freighted with Plato's conception of knowledge as recollection. It better reads “a calling *again*” (*ana*); this preposition also suggests an upward motion, as if memory were returning to a transcendent state congenial with human nature. “Do this in *memory* of me” [Lk 22.19], words associated with the institution of the Eucharist.

“*In* (*en*) these sacrifices:” this preposition with its presence-*in* almost intimates that those offering sacrifices were stuck “in” them, equivalent to the unbroken cycle of “year after year.”

**Vs. 4: For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.**

*For* (*gar*): this word completes the above-described notion of cyclic sacrifices coupled with *adunaton* (*it is impossible*). Vs. 4 has in mind Lev 16.15: “Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering which is for the people and bring its blood within the veil...sprinkling it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat.” The Hebrew for *mercy seat* is *kaporath* which translates into English as “veil;” from the verbal root *kaphar*, *to cover*. The Leviticus verse has *paroketh* for *veil*, also derived from *kaphar*.

The verse at hand implies—in light of Christ's sacrifice—that this action of sprinkling blood is itself an act of “covering” that which is already covered. Hence, the *adunaton* of this gesture with regard to *taking away* (*aphaireo*) sins.

**Vs. 5: Consequently, when Christ came into the world he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me;**

*Consequently* (*dio*): this word prepares a transition from the cyclic nature of Levitical sacrifices (“but,” “for”) to that of Jesus Christ which is presented in terms of Ps 40.6-8 (LXX).

*Come into* (*eiserchomai*): with respect to Christ who is not mentioned in the Greek text. This verb which is

prefaced by the preposition *eis* is used with the same preposition, “*into* the world.” *Kosmos* pertains to an adornment as well as the sum total of everything, i.e., the universe. “From the foundation of the *world*” [4.3].

The verses from Ps 40 quoted in vss. 5-7 are put into Christ’s mouth to show his role of high priest discussed earlier in Hebrews.

The object of *sacrifices* (*thusia*) and *offerings* (*prosphora*): the latter as in 10.18 (“Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any *offering* for sin”). Also, Eph 5.2 which uses the same terms as in the verse under consideration: “...as Christ *loved* (*agapao*) us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant *offering* and *sacrifice* to God.” Note the phrase here, *eis osmen euodias*, which literally reads, “into a smell of sweet fragrance” and fills out the meaning of vs. 5.

God did not *desire* (*thelo*) the two gestures of Levitical liturgical rites: this verb basically means something a person wishes or intends and involves the correct application of free will. *Thelo* is the LXX for the Hebrew *chaphats* which connotes a sense of intense delight. “He (King Cyrus) is my shepherd and shall fulfil all my *purpose*” [Is 44.28].

*Prepared* (*katartizo*): the object of which is *soma* or *body* as opposed to Levitical sacrifices; it indicates not only the sacrificial body to be offered (Christ’s) but can infer his incarnation. *Katartizo* more specifically means arranging something for a purpose, putting into proper condition, as well as restoring to order. “...equip you with everything good that you may do his will” [13.21]. The preposition *kata* (*according to*) suggests this order.

Instead of the phrase “but a body you have prepared for me,” the Hebrew reads “ears you have *dug* for me,” *karah*, suggesting the digging of a well. With this association of a well and listening in mind, cf. Jn 4.14: “the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” *Karah* also means *to buy, to make a feast*: “So he *prepared* for them a great *feast*” [2 Kg 6.23].

#### **Vs. 6: in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.**

The third citation from Ps 40 which adds to sacrifices and offerings those offerings which are *burnt* (*holokautoma*) and are related to *sin* (*hamartia*). The former suggests that which is offered in *totality* (*holos*, adjective); the latter is the common term for “sin” and is not specified by anything especially related to offering, most likely being joined with the former. The preposition *peri* (*concerning*) is used. The Hebrew terms are *holah* and *chata’ah*; the former derives from a verbal root meaning “to go up” (as smoke ascending) and the latter is the common word for “sin.”

*Take pleasure* (*eudokeo*): the verb which has as its object the two offerings, rather, what God does not delight in. The preface by *eu* (*well*) is added to the verb *dokeo* (*to think, suppose*), i.e., to be disposed favorably towards something. “You are my beloved Son; with you I am *well pleased*” [Mk 1.11].

The Hebrew has the verb *sha’al* which means *to ask* as well as *to inquire*, thus implying a request which respects the person making the offering. In the verse at hand, God does not make the *sha’al*, a more polite form of withholding.

#### **Vs. 7: Then I said, ‘Lo, I have come to do your will, O God,’ as it is written of me in the roll of the book.”**

*Then* (*tote*): this word serves to counter the negative aspect of sacrifices of the previous two verses and shifts to a direct statement (by Christ) to God in the words of the psalmist.

*Lo* (*idou*): an exclamation which here demonstrates Christ’s readiness and prefaces his willingness to effect God’s will. “And Mary said, ‘Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord’ [Lk 1.38]. The Hebrew has ‘*az* (*then*) for *idou* as in Gen 1.29: “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed.”

The Greek text reads, "I have come; in the roll of the book it is written of me to do your will, O God." First is (Christ's) coming, rather, having come which in itself signifies readiness for action. Such action demonstrates the importance of the *roll* (kephalis, of book or the Torah; only New Testament use), the diminutive form for "head." The Hebrew for kephalis is migilah; from the verbal root galal, *to roll* (up, as a book).

*Book* (biblion): in the sense of a scroll as in Rev 5:1: "And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a *scroll* written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals." An example which pertains to the verse at hand is Mt 1:1: "The *book* of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Both a scroll and a book are rolled up when not in use, i.e., they are relatively compact for storage and carried easily. The Hebrew for biblion is sepher which also pertains to the act of counting: "they were more than could be *numbered*" [Ps 40:5].

In this "roll of the book" the author of Hebrews finds words to put into Christ's mouth, that is, *of me* (peri emou) in the sense of concerning.

*Will* (thelema): "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the *will* of my Father who is in heaven" [Mt 7:21]. The Hebrew text has ratson an emotion which connotes delight in addition to an act of the will. Thus "doing" this "delight" conveys a richer meaning.

Verse eight restates the words of Ps 40 quoted in vs. 5 and adds (in parentheses, **RSV**), "these are offered according to the law." It seems the author of Hebrews wishes to re-enforce the distinction between the Old Testament sacrifices and that of Jesus Christ.

Verse nine similarly restates the words of Ps 40 quoted in vs. 7. The second half of this verse contains the statement: "He abolishes the first in order to establish the second." Here an order is posited : *first* (proton) and *second* (deuteron). Two references already discussed: "He (Melchizedek) is *first*, by translation of his name" [7.2]. "Behind the *second* curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies" [9.3].

Proton and deuteron involve two verbs of opposite meaning:

- 1)-*abolish* (anaireo) which can apply to execution as in Lk 23:32: "Two others also who were criminals were led away *to be put to death* with him." This verb literally means "to take away" in the sense of *up* (ana).
- 2)-*establish* (histemi): "But whoever is firmly *established* in his heart" [1 Cor 7:37].

**Vs. 10: And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

Another mention of *will* (thelema) which alludes to the Hebrew ratson and its association of delight. Note the passive mode of this sentence instead of something like "that will has sanctified us." Perhaps the author wishes to emphasize the contrast he has been making throughout Hebrews with regard to the Old Testament sacrifices and that of Jesus Christ. The passive highlights "we" as the object of this *sanctification* (hagiazō, verb). 2.11 uses both the active and passive of the same verb: "For he who *sanctifies* and those who are *sanctified* have all one origin."

In the verse at hand, sanctification occurs *through* (dia) the medium of Christ's *offering* (prosphora) which stands in contrast to that of vs. 5, borrowed from Ps 40: "Sacrifices and *offerings* you have not desired." Prosphora has a specific object, the soma of Jesus Christ. "But he spoke of the temple of his body" [Jn 2.21]: here is a verse which parallels Christ's own soma with the Jerusalem temple.

*Once for all* (ephax): that is, definitely as in 9.28: "so Christ, having been offered *once* to bear the sins of many."

**Vs. 11: And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.**

“*Every (pas) priest:*” that is, those priests responsible for the Levitical rites and sacrifices. *Pas* connotes multiplicity as opposed to the unique priesthood of Jesus Christ; it stands in contrast to *ephax (once for all)* as noted in the previous verse, *pas* being associated with the constant repetition of Old Testament liturgical gestures.

*Stand (histemi; cf. vs. 7):* the perfect of this verb refers to being in position—almost with a sense of future expectation—as well as being faithful with respect to the spot where one’s duty is performed. Here it involves the priest’s *service* or *leitourgeo*; the verb is used from which *leitourgia* is derived. Cf. 8.6: “But as it is, Christ has obtained a *ministry* which is as much more excellent than the old.” In the verse at hand, there is an obvious correspondence between *histemi* and *leitourgeo*.

*Daily (kath’ hemeran):* as in 7.27 with the same sense of repetition. “He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices *daily*.” The preposition *kata* also means *according to*, that is, according to the cyclic nature of time.

*Repeatedly (pollakis):* as in 9.25 & 26 with regard to the high priest making sacrificial offerings. The recurrent nature of these offerings is enhanced in a two-fold way: 1) by being the *same* (*autas*). 2) *never* (*oudepote*), that is, with regard to these sacrifices never being able *to take away* (*periaireo*) sins. This verb means a total removal or destruction, literally a “taking from *around*” (*peri*). “But when a man turns to the Lord the veil is *removed*” [2 Cor 3.16]. In this verse, note the verb *to turn*, (*epistrepho*) or “to turn oneself...*upon*” (*epi*); it effects the *peri-aireo* or taking away of sins just noted.

**Vs. 12: But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,**

Instead of “Christ” the Greek text has *this one* (*houtos*) which counters “every priest” of the previous verse by stressing Christ’s special role; also, the impersonal character of *houtos* makes his priesthood stand out that more dramatically in comparison with the Levitical one.

“*Single (heis) sacrifice:*” alternately, “one” in the sense of indicating uniqueness which is further underscored by *for all time* (*eis to dienekes*) first noted with regard to 7.3: “but resembling the Son of God he (*Melchizedek*) continues a priest *forever*.”

“*For (huper) sins:*” this preposition also means “on behalf of;” it suggests the intercessory role of Jesus Christ’s priesthood and offering of himself.

*Sat down (kathizo):* verb is in the past tense, signifying a clean break not only with Levitical sacrifices and their cyclic, endless nature, but it serves to introduce a new concept of time or *kairos*. *Kathizo* was first encountered in 1.3: “he *sat down* at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” This verse is an introduction of sorts and comes after the author of Hebrews said (same verse) that Christ “made purification for sins.” His sitting is developed in the context of Ps 110.1, 1.13: “*Sit* at my right hand.” Also, cf. 8.1...“such a high priest *seated* at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.”

In distinction to these references the verse at hand has *houtos* seated at God’s right hand as opposed to 1.13’s “my right hand.” The Hebrew of Ps 110.1 reads, “at *my* right hand.” Note that this verse has “The *Lord* (YHWH) says to my *lord* (‘adon). The verb *na’am* (in the sense of echoing God’s voice as opposed to a simple saying) is in the present tense. YHWH or the proper divine name does this *na’am* to ‘adon, a term also applied to God and often used in place of YHWH. Thus the verse can be taken as God the Father addressing God the Son.

**Vs. 13: then to wait until his enemies should be made a stool for his feet.**

This verse is situated within the context of Ps 110.1 already used earlier in Hebrews: cf. 1.13 and 2.8.

The sitting at God's right hand in vs. 12 was noted as a break with the cyclic, endless nature of Levitical sacrifices and the introduction of a new concept of time or *kairos*. It is passive and complemented by the active role Christ plays in the Book of Revelation which also deals with sitting in conjunction with God's throne. Such sitting is midway, as it were, between having brought to completion Levitical sacrifices and the commencement of Christ's reign. Hence the author interjects the notion of *waiting* (*ekdechomai*), this verb (with its sense of expectation) being used in 11:10: "For he *looked forward* to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The notion of waiting is combined with the similar one of reigning as in 1 Cor 15:25: "For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet."

Vs. 13's waiting connotes temporal extension by *to loipon* (*then*)...*heos* (*until*). In a sense this is true; more accurately, it seems to be an infusion of chronos-logical time by that *kairos* of the divine reign already discussed.

**Vs. 14: For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.**

The theme of cyclic time and *kairos* has been noted thus far which here is continued by the phrase "*single* (*heis*) sacrifice" first discussed in vs. 12, that is, as opposed to the continuous sacrifices of the old dispensation.

*Perfected* (*teleioo*): first noted in 2:10 and used elsewhere on numerous occasions. Such perfecting or bringing to an "end" rejoins the theme of chronos/*kairos* by the words *for all time* (*eis to dienekes*) first encountered in 7:3: "but resembling God he continues a priest *forever*."

The object of *teleioo*: *those who are sanctified* (*hagiazō*). Cf. vs. 10: "And by that will we have been *sanctified*."

**Vs. 15: And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,**

Such *bearing witness* (*martureo*) by the Holy Spirit is presented in vss. 16-7 which quotes from the prophet Jeremiah. The wording of the Greek text follows as : witness, us and the Holy Spirit. I.e., the function expressed by this verb comes first with "us" in between it and the Spirit who bears witness to the priestly action of Jesus Christ as he fulfills the Levitical dispensation. "...even the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will *bear witness* to me" [Jn 15:26].

The verse at hand continues into the next two verses or two parts which are comprised of "after saying" and "then he adds."

**Vs. 16: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds,"**

The author of Hebrews now presents the first part of the Holy Spirit's bearing witness, i.e., "after saying."

This verse was used in 8:10, and the following is intended to flesh-out what had been noted there:

*Covenant* (*diatheke*): from the verb *diatithememi* (*I will make*). "As my Father *appointed* a kingdom for me, so do I *appoint* for you" [Lk 22:29]. In the verse at hand, the verb is in the future tense; the covenant is not made for the present but takes effect "after those days" or when "I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" [Jer 31:32], words preceding those from the same prophet in vs. 16. Thus covenant equals time after the Exodus.

While the Holy Spirit is bearing witness here, keep in mind the Hebrew, "*says* (*na'am*) the Lord." As mentioned under vs. 12, *na'am* is fuller in meaning than a simple saying; it is more like an uttering. Unlike the Greek, the Hebrew makes a distinction between *covenant* (*beryth*) and *make* (*karath*); the latter fundamentally means "to cut" as noted under 9:20 and is reminiscent of God writing the Torah on the two tablets of stone (cf. Ex 31:18).

The Greek text has "*with* (*pros*) them, this preposition signifying in-the-direction-towards-which;" the Hebrew

has “house of Israel.” Note the play on words: beryth/bayth (*house*), as if to make an identity between the divine and human spheres.

*Laws* (nomos): for the Hebrew Torah, also in the plural. They are placed “*on* (epi: full situation upon) their *hearts*” (kardia). The Hebrew for kardia is qerev, literally, “in the midst;” the verbal root qarav means *to draw near, to approach*. With this notion of centrality in mind, the Greek preposition epi may be said to be at the top of an axis, that is, on top of the heart.

*Write* (epigrapho): literally, “write *upon*” (epi) which may be taken with the preposition just noted. The Hebrew uses karath; again, keep in mind the “cutting” of the two tablets on Mt. Sinai.

*Minds* (dianoia): here the “writing-*upon*” (epi) is intended to pervade or go *through* (dia) minds which are akin to the two tablets of the Torah. The Hebrew has *hearts* (lev).

**Vs. 17: then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their misdeeds no more.”**

“Then he adds” is not in the Greek text; kai (*and*) is used.

Refer to 8.12 which quotes these words from Jer 31.34 with a fuller sense of this verse: “For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” Vs. 17 adds “their *misdeeds*” (anomia), that is, a condition disposed to being outside the *law* (nomos/Torah). “For just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater *iniquity*” [Rom 6.19].

God will no longer *remember* (mimnesko) this insubordination as noted in 2.6 quoting from Ps 8: “What is man that you *are mindful* of him?” The Hebrew has zakar which as noted under 8.12 (a variant reading of mimnesko) connotes propagation of a blood line through the “male” part of human lineage.

The full quote of Jer 31.34 should be kept in mind with respect to this. Note that the part excerpted in vs. 17 can be viewed in light of “knowing:” “And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother saying ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me from the least of them to greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

**Vs. 18: Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.**

*Forgiveness* (aphesis): in reference to the sins and misdeeds of the previous verse. Cf. 9.22: “and without the shedding of blood there is no *forgiveness* of sins,” an alternate meaning as noted there is “setting free.”

The verse at hand means that absence of sins and misdeeds does not necessitate *offering* (prosphora) for sin. In light of vs. 17 which quotes Jer 31.34, the lack of *remembrance* (mimnesko) is bound up with such forgiveness. This can be further clarified if we keep in mind the Hebrew zakar (*to remember*) as connoting the male element in physical propagation: no zakar equals no begetting or offering (for sin).

**Vs. 19: Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus,**

*Therefore* (oun): this signifies that the “brethren” have grasped the meaning of the Jeremiah quote of vss. 1-7 and marks a transition to a spiritual understanding of heaven’s spiritual sanctuary.

*Confidence* (parresia): this newly found trust reveals that the “brethren” have obtained a full comprehension of the difference between the cyclic nature of Levitical sacrifices and the unique one of Jesus Christ (“blood of Jesus”). Parresia connotes frankness and boldness of speech technically belonging to citizens of a Greek city-state. Cf. 3.6: “And we are his house if we hold fast our *confidence* and pride in our hope.”

In the verse at hand, parresia pertains to *entering* (eis ten eisodon) the *sanctuary* (hagios), the blood of Jesus acting as a kind of door. Note the two uses of the preposition eis (*into*) signifying full and permanent entry as well as abiding there. “Sanctuary” is in the plural, literally, “of holy (things).” For a similar use, cf. 9.8: “...that

the way into the *sanctuary* is not yet opened as long as the outer tent is still standing.”

“By (en) the blood of Jesus:” the preposition en as *in* which parallels eis just noted...“*in* the blood of Jesus.” Here blood is not unlike a vehicle (something in which we are present) which brings us eis...*into*...the “holy things.”

**Vs. 20: by the new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,**

A continuation of the previous verse which carries over the force of “therefore” to a completion of the sentence.

*Opened* (egkainizo): as in 9.18 which has another sense of this verb: “Hence even the first covenant was not *ratified* without blood.” The verb literally means “to make something *new*” (kainos).

The notion of kainos in egkainizo is amplified by the adjective *new* or prosphtatos, the only New Testament use of this word which literally means something freshly slaughtered. For a LXX verse: “And there is nothing *new* under the sun” [Eccl 1.9]. The notion of a recently butchered animal (for sacrifice?) is re-enforced by the adjective *living* (zao).

Both zao and prosphtatos are used to describe *way* or hodos, a term which Jesus Christ used as applying to himself: “I am the *way*, the truth and the life (i.e., the zao)” [Jn 14.6].

*Curtain* (katapetasma): here equals Christ’s *flesh* or sarx, a term often referring to human nature. Both words connote a certain thickness or density as opposed to the spirit which is accentuated by the preposition *through* (dia), that is, with regard to Christ’s sarx. Two other verses containing katapetasma: 6.19 (“a sure hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the *curtain*”) & 9.3 (“Behind the second *curtain* stood a tent”). “The *curtain* of the temple was torn in two” [Mk 15.38], that is, by means of Christ’s body which had been crucified and “newly slaughtered” (prosphtatos).

**Vs. 21: and since we have a great priest over the house of God,**

“*Great* (megos) priest:” equivalent to *high priest* or archiereus as in 7.1. He is situated *over* (epi, upon) God’s *house* (oikos). “Just as Moses was faithful in God’s *house*” [3.2]. Note the difference: Christ is epi this house whereas Moses is *in* (en) it.

**Vs. 22: let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**

*Draw near* (proserchomai): as in 4.16 (“Let us then with confidence *draw near* to the throne of grace”). Both are exhortations, the verse at hand allowing this proserchomai as result of Christ being *over* (epi) God’s house. Also cf. 7.25: “He is able for all time to save those who *draw near* to God through him.”

The preposition meta (*with*) is associated with this act of drawing near and has three parts:

- 1) “*true* (alethinos) heart:” this is specified further, namely, “in *full assurance* (plerophoria) of faith.” Cf. 6.11: “the *full assurance* of hope until the end.”
- 2) *sprinkled clean* (rhantizo): cf. 9.19 & 21 in reference to Moses making purification with regard to liturgical matters, whereas here sprinkling pertains to *conscience* (suneidesis), in making it free from evil. Cf. 9.9: “gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot perfect the *conscience* of the worshiper” or the knowing-together (sun) of the worshiper.
- 3) “*pure* (katharos) water:” for *washing* (louo) the body. “He who has *bathed* does not need to wash except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean, but not all of you” [Jn 13.10]. Although water is mentioned, it is within the context of sprinkling which was done with blood.

This transference of ritual purification to the human person with respect to God traces much of its influence from God purifying the house of Israel in Ezk 36. For example, cf. vs. 25: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you." The purpose: "I will put my *spirit within* you" [vs. 27] or the ruach of God qerev Israel; cf. 8.10 which treats this word within the context of this Ezekiel passage.

**Vs. 23: Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful;**

The first of two "Lets," the second introducing vs. 24 which forms part of the verse at hand.

*Hold fast* (katecho): as in 3.14: "For we share in Christ, if only we *hold* our first confidence *firm* to the end." This verb has the preposition kata (*according to*) which suggests holding in accord with a given order which is the "*confession* (homologia) of our hope." Cf. 3.1: "Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our *confession*." Here the *kata*-echo is based upon *hope* (elpis): "Now faith is the assurance of things *hoped* for."

*Unwavering* (aklinos): used to describe hope which literally means "not inclining," the only New Testament occurrence. This constancy is reminiscent of 1 Sam 6.4: "And the cows went straight in the direction of Beth-shemesh along one highway, lowing as they went; they turned neither to the right nor to the left, and the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh."

*Promised* (epaggellomai): which is equivalent to God being *faithful* (pistos). Cf. 6.13 for this verb: "For when God *made a promise* to Abraham." It pertains to making an announcement and is related to epaggelia (*promise* and hence the Gospel).

**Vs. 24: and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,**

The second of two "Lets," the first which introduced vs. 23 and here with regard to the verb katanoeo (*to consider*) as in 3.1: "*Consider* Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession." As noted there, we are to put our *minds* (noeo + nous) *according to* (kata) a given order, the one the author of Hebrews presents here in vs. 24.

The word "how" is missing in the Greek text.

The order just noted applies to *stirring up* (paroxusmos) our fellows; "one another" suggests this fellowship or "brethren" as in vs. 19. Paroxusmos is a noun connoting a state of irritation or sharp disagreement. "And there arose a *sharp contention*, so that they separated from each other; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed" [Acts 15 39-40].

In the verse at hand, the noun paroxusmos with its negative connotations is used in conjunction with agape and "*good* (kalos) works;" kalos more specifically pertains to anything beautiful.

**Vs. 25: not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.**

This verse pertains to gatherings of Christians for worship. It may be read in light of frequent Old Testament allusions to worship and liturgical practices described thus far in Hebrews. Immediately comes to mind gatherings of the Apostles mentioned in Acts including their assembly prior to Pentecost.

*Neglecting* (egkataleipo): as noted before, the preposition kata (*according to*) can imply not going in accord with the "order" of assembly. For another use of this verb: "At my first defense no one took my part; all *deserted* me" [2 Tim 4.16].

*Meeting* (episunagoge): the only other New Testament reference being 2 Thes 2.1: "Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our *assembling* to meet him." Note the preposition epi (*upon*) prefixed to synagoge which can indicate a more solemn type of gathering.

*Habit* (ethos): with reference to egkataleipo, of not following the “order” (kata) as constituting the church assembly. This term connotes long established behavior with regard to an individual or a group. “Jesus...will change the *customs* which Moses delivered to us” [Acts 6.14].

*Encouraging* (parakaleo): note the preposition para (*beside*) prefixed to the verb, almost as though the act of encouraging were gathering a group together with people beside each other. This is the verbal root for Paraclete or the Holy Spirit. Cf. 3.13 for another use of this verb: “but *exhort* one another every day.”

*Day* (Hemera): The **RSV** puts this term in capital letters in reference to Christ’s second coming. Compare the verse at hand with 9.28: “...will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.” Compare the last-ness of this Day with Jn 16.23: “In that *day* you will ask nothing of me.” In the verse at hand, this Hemera has not yet arrived but is *drawing near* (eggizo). “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven *is at hand*” [Mt 3.2]. Also, the author of Hebrews realizes that his audience has intimations of its nearness.

**Vs. 26: For if we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,**

*Deliberately* (hekousios): used with respect to sin, better, in light of “knowledge of the truth.” The notion of an voluntary act is suggested by this adverb as in 1 Pt 5.2: “Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but *willingly*.”

*Knowledge* (epignosis): in the sense of recognizing someone or something; the preposition epi (*upon*) gnosis connotes a “knowing upon,” here with respect to the truth. “Bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the *knowledge* of God” [Col 1.10]. Such epignosis is made all the more noteworthy (as opposed to simple gnosis) by reason of the inability for sacrifice to abolish sins: “no longer *remains*” (apoleipo); this verb suggests a ceasing or leaving off intensified by the preposition apo (*from*).

**Vs. 27: but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries.**

Two objects of apoleipo (*remains*) mentioned in the last verse:

- 1) “fearful *prospect*” (ekdoche): in the sense of expectation. The only use of this word in the New Testament, here with respect to krisis or *judgment*. “And when he comes (Counselor...Parakletos...or Holy Spirit), he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of *judgment*” [Jn 16.8].
- 2) “*fury* (zealos) of fire:” in the sense of “zeal” which means any intense feeling or with respect to things divine: “*Zeal* for your house will consume me” [Jn 2.17]. Zealos concerning the consuming nature of fire may be viewed in light of Rev 20.9: “but fire came down from heaven and consumed them.” Esthio is the verb used in the verse at hand; katesthio is in the verses from John and Revelation, the prefix kata (*according to*), again, in the sense of a given (divine) order.

*Adversaries* (hupenantios): the only New Testament use of this word other than Col 2.14: “having canceled the bond which *stood against* us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross.” Such foes can be among the author of Hebrews’ audience: “if we sin deliberately” [vs. 26].

**Vs. 28: A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses.**

*Violated* (atheteo): literally, “to place aside,” and akin to the notion of *sin* or hamartia, that is, as a failure to hit the mark. “...but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to *break* his word to her” [Mk 6.26]. For an example of such transgression on which vs. 28 rests, refer to Dt 17.6: “On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses he that is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.”

In the verse at hand, *atheteo* is situated in the context of the Torah (*nomos*) given to Moses which embraces the need for multiple *witnesses* (*martus*).

“Without *mercy*” (*oiktirmos*): “So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, and affection and *sympathy*” [Phil 2.1]. Here *oiktirmos* is connected with a comparable word, *splagchnon* (*affection*, literally “bowels:” note that the last two words are plural in the Greek text). Both are equivalent to the Hebrew *rachamym*: “Because her *heart* yearned for her son” [1 Kg 3.26].

The Greek text lacks “testimony;” *martus* contains its meaning.

**Vs. 29: How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God, and profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace?**

*Punishment* (*timoria*): alternately, “help,” “assistance” (with respect to someone who has been wronged). This is the only New Testament use of the word and is found in the LXX of Prov 19.29: “*Condemnation* is ready for scoffers, and flogging for the backs of fools.” Such *timoria* is *deserved* (*axioo*; has the connotation of being suitable, often for requital) and has three objects:

1) with respect to a person who has *spurned* (*katapateo*) the Son of God (first mentioned in 4.14); the verb literally means “to trample,” “to stomp upon” which is enhanced by the preposition *kata* (*against*) and imparts a violent action. “It (salt) is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and *trodde* under foot by men” [Mt 5.13].

2) with respect to a person who has committed a *profanity* (*koinon hegeomai*, verb): literally, “to consider (as) common.” That is to say, to consider the covenant’s blood as pro-fanus or *outside* (*before*)-*the-temple*. This verse is to be read in context of Ex 24.8: “And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people and said, ‘Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.’” “Making common” the covenant’s blood is all the more disturbing because the person who has done it had already been *sanctified* (*hagiazo*). Cf. 2.11: “For he who *sanctifies* and those who are *sanctified* have all one origin.”

3) with respect to a person who has committed an *outrage* (*enubrizo*): the only New Testament use of this verb; it connotes mockery, here with respect to the “Pneuma of grace.” The sentiment of this verse resembles Mk 3.29: “But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin.”

**Vs. 30: For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.”**

Two quotations from the Old Testament to back up the three-fold object of *timoria* in the previous verse:

1) Dt 32.35 reads in full, “Vengeance is mine and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.” In addition to *vengeance* (*naqam/ekdikesis*) is divine *recompense* (*shilem* in Hebrew and related to *shalom*; the Greek is *antapodidomi*: “For what thanksgiving can we *render* to God for you,” 1 Ths 3.9). Parallel this verse with Lk 21.22: “For these are days of *vengeance* to fulfil all that is written.” Note that *time* in the Deuteronomy verse is *kairos* and pertains to when Israel’s (collective) foot will slip or fall away from God. Rom 12.19 incorporates this verse: “Beloved, never avenge yourselves but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’” the words “says the Lord” are not in the original text.

2) Dt 32.36 which reads in full, “For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.” This better situates divine *judgment* (*dyn/krino*, verbs). Note that it occurs when God sees Israel’s *power* (*yad*; also means *hand*) depleted as well as no free or slave remaining which implies Israel in its entirety.

The Dt 32.36 verse is also found in Ps 135.14: "For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants."

**Vs. 31: It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

*Fearful thing* (phoberon): with respect not only to God but the *living* (zao); perhaps this adjective is intended to distinguish the God of Israel and Jesus Christ from idols which are considered dead.

To *fall* (empipto): compare with 1 Tim 6.9: "But those who desire to be rich *fall into* temptation." This fate is in the context of the last two verses, that is, with respect to the person who "has spurned the Son of God." "Hands" signify action by God as opposed to simply being present before him. Note the preposition eis (*into*) as well as em- (en, eis) prefaced to the verb pipto.

**Vs. 32: But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings,**

*Recall* (anamimnesko): note the preposition ana (*again, upwards*) prefixed to the verb which signifies a fuller sense of recollection in that the reader is bidden to make-present-again in "former days" or those days which were proteros or first in the sense of the beginning of sequence. The plurality of "days" suggests a time which although indefinite, is nonetheless to be fixed in the memory. For an example of anamimnesko, cf. 1 Cor 4.17: "Therefore I sent to you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to *remind* you of my ways in Christ."

In the sequence of this special application of memory, the author of Hebrews first mentioned the time after his listeners were *enlightened* (photizo). Cf. 6.4: "For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been *enlightened*." Most likely vs. 32 is in the same context of repentance.

In addition to speaking about enlightenment, the author of Hebrews situates anamimnesko in the context of a "hard *struggle*" (athlesis), the only New Testament occurrence of this term which derives from athleo, *to complete in a contest*. Such an athlesis involves *sufferings* (pathema, singular). Cf. 2.9: "Jesus...crowned with glory and honor because of the *suffering* of death."

This struggle was *endured* or hupomeno (cf. 12.7), literally, "to remain under." "But he who *endures* to the end will be saved" [Mk 13.13].

**Vs. 33: sometimes being publically exposed to abuse and affliction and sometimes being partners with those so treated.**

A continuation of the previous verse which is more specific as to the distress of "former days." Note that such afflictions are not private, as it were, but open to the view of all. They follow upon personal or inner enlightenment of vs. 32:

1) *publically exposed* (theatrizo): the only New Testament use of this verb; for a related word (theatron), cf. 1 Cor 4.9: "Because we have become a *spectacle* to the world, to angels and to men." The object of such public gaze: *abuse* (oneidismos) and *affliction* (thlipsis).

2) *partners* (koinonos): a second use of touto (*sometimes*) as if to express the occasional as opposed to constant notion of persecution. For another sense of this noun, cf. 1 Cor 10.20: "I do not want you to be *partners* with demons." In the verse at hand, koinonos is in conjunction with "those so *treated*" (anastrepho): this verb pertains to conducting one's life in accord with certain principles which here would involve the time of persecution. "Among these we all once *lived* in the passions of our flesh" [Eph 2.3].

This stress upon persecution continues to the end of Chapter Ten and sets the stage for examples of faith in the next chapter.

**Vs. 34: For you had compassion on the prisoners, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.**

*Compassion* (sumpatheo, verb, as in 4.15, a “suffering-with”) as related to prisoners or most likely Christians suffering for their faith. In this verse the persons demonstrating sympathy are not in prison, whereas the other group is; both have in common a *possession* (huparxis) which is two-fold: *better* and *abiding* (meno). The noun huparxis literally means “staying-under” (hupo) and connotes a state of existence. For the only other New Testament reference, cf. Acts 2.45: “And they sold their *possessions* and goods and distributed them to all as any had need.”

The author of Hebrews says that those suffering this fate did so *joyfully* (meta charas, literally, “with joy”). This is reminiscent of one of the beatitudes: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” [Mt 5.10].

**Vs. 35: Therefore do not throw away your confidence which has a great reward.**

Here is presented a direct correspondence between *confidence* (parresia) and *reward* (misthapodosia). The first term was encountered in 3.6: “And we are his house if we hold fast our *confidence* and pride in our hope.” The second term is found only in one other place, 2.2: “For if the message proclaimed by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just *retribution*.”

The author of Hebrews bids his audience not to *throw away* (apoballo) this two-fold gift. “Let us then *cast off* the works of darkness and put on the armor of light” [Rom 13.12].

**Vs. 36: For you have need of endurance so that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised.**

*Endurance* (hupomone): literally, a “remaining under;” compare with *possessions* of vs. 34, (hup)-arxis. “By your *endurance* you will gain your lives” [Lk 21.19]. In the verse at hand, the author of Hebrews intimates that his audience lacks this trait and requires it. Such hupomone is two-fold:

1) God’s *will* or thelema: here to put it into effect. “And by that *will* we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” [10.10].

2) The putting into effect of divine thelema results in a *reception* or komizomai (verb) which is amplified in 11.13: “These all died in faith, not having *received* what was promised.” Cf. Eph 6.9: “knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will *receive* the same again from the Lord.” The object of such reception is *what is promised* (epaggelia), a noun often noted in Hebrews and first encountered in 4.1: “Therefore, while the *promise* of entering his rest remains.” Thus in the verse at hand there is a direct correspondence between *doing* (poieo) God’s will and epaggelia.

**Vs. 37: “For yet a little while and the coming one shall come and shall not tarry;**

This and the next verse contain a quote from Hab 2.3-4; the LXX differs from the Hebrew text. The expression mikron hoson hoson (literally, “small much as much as”) implies the immediacy of God’s arrival. “What does he mean by ‘a *little while* (to mikron)’ [Jn 16.18]?”

The notion of “little while” is in the context of Jesus Christ (i.e., the “coming one”) not *tarrying* (chronizo), that is, by not extending time in the sense of chronos. “As the bridegroom was *delayed*, they all slumbered and slept” [Mt 25.5].

Note the association of the *coming one* (erchomenos) with chronos (-izo); action of the person (Jesus Christ, presumably) so coming is in the present combined with the future tense of hexo, another verb meaning *to come*. The association of erchomenos with (not) *tarrying* or spending chronos is in the future tense.

The Hebrew of this verse (3) from Habakkuk runs as follows in full: “For still the vision awaits its time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seem slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.” This vision has a specific *time* (Hebrew: *mohed*) which may be taken as a *kairos* event, that is, in distinction to one of *chronos* (-izo). It may allude to Daniel’s vision of 8.19 which speaks of “an appointed time of the end,” again, a *kairos* event. Applied to the Hebrews verse at hand which connotes persecution, it sees a link between this distress and the final coming of Jesus Christ.

**Vs. 38: but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”**

The conclusion of the Habakkuk quote begun in the last verse. Here we have the *righteous* person or *dikaios* which has a fuller meaning in the Hebrew as *tsadyq* which involves a type of straightness, almost in the physical sense; it may be contrasted with the serpent of Gen 3.14: “upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.”

This *dikaios/tsadyq* lives “*by* (ek) faith,” better, *from* faith; being “from” something is mere derivative and shows a closer relationship with the source which is faith.

*Shrink back* (*hupostellomai*): in the sense of withdrawing or disappearing from a position. “But when they came he (Cephas) came he *drew back* and separated himself” [Gal 2.12]. The hesitation of this verb results in God having no *pleasure* (*eudokeo*), rather, his *psuche* having no pleasure. Attribution of *psuche* to God intimates a more human aspect of divinity, as it were, compared with *pneuma*; *psuche* involves human life in all its aspects which includes both physical and spiritual realities. Cf. 10.6: “in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have *taken* no *pleasure*.”

The Hebrew of this verse (4) reads as follows: “Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail (literally, ‘is not puffed up’), but the righteous shall live by his faith.” Here *nephesh* corresponds to the LXX *psuche* as described in the last paragraph; it is (not) *upright* or *yashar* which is akin to *tsadyq* (note: *righteous* in the second half of this verse) in that it implies straightness and is more suggestive of a physical, vertical position than the moral/spiritual one of *tsadyq*.

The verb *haphal* (*to swell, be puffed up*) is the exact opposite of the vertical *yashar*; such swelling originates from within a person, balloon-like, as opposed to divine intervention.

In contrast to the “ek faith” of the Greek, the Hebrew has “*in* (b-) faith.”

**Vs. 39: But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and keep their souls.**

*Shrink back* (*hupostole*): the only New Testament occurrence of this word which is a noun derived from the verb *hupostellomai* as in the previous verse. The noun is used in conjunction with *apoleia* (*destruction*), a noun in the Greek text. This phrase literally reads, “(a) shrinking back *into* (eis) *destruction*.” For a fuller sense of this term, cf. Rev 17.11: “As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to *perdition*.”

In contrast to this *hupostole/apoleia* the author of Hebrews places himself and his readers among persons who “have faith” or in the Greek, “of faith.” It is joined to the *keeping* (*peripoiesis*) of their souls by the preposition *eis*...“*into* keeping.” Note the singular use of *psuche* in conjunction with the plural “we.”

The noun *peripoiesis* also means “possession” or that which has become one’s own. “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people (literally, ‘a people *for* or *eis*...*into*...his *possession*’)” [1 Pt 2.9]. Note the preposition *peri* (*around, besides*), as though such keeping of *soul* (again, singular *psuche*) were endowed by divine protection.

## Chapter Eleven

### **Vs. 1: Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**

Two elements which comprise *faith* (pistis):

1) *assurance* (hupostasis): for another sense, cf. 1.1: “He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his *nature*.” This noun suggests something “under” (hupo) and therefore stable by reason of its reliability. Here it is used in conjunction with *things hoped for* (elpizomenon; from elpizo). By its nature hope is not based in the present, only the future, yet the association of this word with hupostasis means the object of hope...it’s “nature” (the alternate translation of hupostasis)...is already present. Actually the indefinite pragma (*things*) are hoped for; elpizomenon is an adjective which describes them.

2) *conviction* (elegchos): alternately as “proof,” refutation,” a term used by Socrates to evoke the truth through the dialogical process. “But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is *convicted* by all, he is called to account by all” [1 Cor 14.24]. Elegchos seems to differ from hupostasis in that it is something which demands an account and is more liable to be examined; by reason of its nature, hupostasis is more a more hidden, abiding reality upon which elegchos rests. In the verse at hand, elegchos pertains to *things not seen* (ou blepomenon; from blepo, the common word pertaining to sight).

### **Vs. 2: For by it the men of old received divine approval.**

“It” referring to faith as hupostasis and as elegchos. The Greek text literally reads “*in* (en) this,” signifying full presence within.

The author of Hebrews attributes the two-fold nature of pistis to *men of old* or presbuteros (singular), an indirect way of contrasting their pistis with the relative weakness of his audience. Presbuteros can apply to those who presided over the Church: “and they did so, sending it to the *elders* by the hand of Barnabas and Saul” [Acts 11.30].

*Received divine approval* (martureo): the Greek text lacks “divine;” this verb denotes the giving of witness, of being a martyr. In the verse at hand, such illustrious men from Israel’s past which will soon be described in Chapter Eleven, are “borne witness to.” “You also *are witnesses*, because you have been with me from the beginning” [Jn 15.27].

### **Vs. 3: By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.**

Many verses in this chapter begin with the phrase, *by faith* (pistei); as noted with respect to the first verse, it encompasses hupostasis and elegchos which relate to things invisible.

Here faith leads to *understanding* (noeo, verb) or careful consideration; i.e., it is the application of our nous which connotes a given position to which we owe allegiance. “Let the reader *understand*” [Mt 24.15]. The object of noeo: the *world* or aion, more specifically, a long or particular segment of chronos-logical time. “a Son whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the *world*” [1.2]. More specifically, that this world/time was created by God’s *word* or rhema. “Upholding the universe by his *word* of power” [1.3]: cf. remarks there which distinguishes this term from logos.

The world/time under discussion was *created* (katartizo) which has a fuller sense of being outfitted or brought to perfection. “*Equip* you with everything good that you may do his will” [13.21]. For another sense of this verb, cf. 1 Cor 1.10: “that all of you *agree* and that there be no dissensions among you.”

In the second half of this verse note the contrast between *what is seen* (to blepomenon) and those things *which do not appear* (me ek phainomenon, literally “not from those things which have appeared”). The common verb blepo—it signifies what is apparent to all—differs from phainomai which implies the ability to produce light or to shine. This lack of “shining” with respect to “what is seen” suggests the deeper ability of faith to grasp the distinction between seen/unseen.

**Vs. 4: By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain through which he received approval as righteous, God bearing witness by accepting his gifts; he died, but through his faith he is still speaking.**

Here the hypostasis/elegchos of faith is delineated in the context of Abel’s offering who was the second child of Adam and Eve, that is, after Cain. The Genesis story focuses more upon Cain’s attitude which is summed up in 4.7: “And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.” Here is an interplay between *desire* (shuq) and *master* (mashal); the former literally means to run after something from which is derived the noun “leg.” The latter implies making like, the process of assimilation, which here is in connection with that “running” aspect attributed to desire.

The preposition para (*besides, by*) is used with respect to Cain which sets up a comparison between the two brothers’ *sacrifice* or thusia (cf. 8.3). The adjective pleion (*more acceptable*) is used with respect to Abel’s sacrifice, i.e., “better.”

*Received approval* (martureo): in the same sense as in 11.2 just noted, i.e., “borne by (divine) *witness*.” Abel was a “keeper of sheep” and Cain, “a tiller of the ground.” In the context of Hebrews with its detailed descriptions on Old Testament sacrifices to highlight that of Jesus of Christ, the sacrificial offerings (animals) make more sense than anything offered from the ground. It is interesting to note that Cain, despite his being a wanderer upon earth, became the ancestor of sedentary dwellers (cf. 4.17); this same verse says that Cain was the father of Enoch who later in 5.24 “walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.”

In contrast to Cain, Abel was found *righteous* or dikaios: “but my *righteous one* shall live by faith” [10.38].

“*God bearing witness*” (martureo): the same verb with respect to “received approval,” this second time concerning Abel’s *gifts* (dorea) which according to Gen 4.4 are “the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.” Note that this same verse continues with “And the Lord *had regard* for Abel and his offering,” the Hebrew verb shahah connoting a looking towards someone for assistance. In the verse at hand, the prefix epi (*upon*) is used with respect to “gifts,” i.e., God “had regard” epi such offerings.

The verb apothnesko (*to die*) used concerning Abel does not necessarily refer to his murder by Cain although it is implied. Despite Abel’s death, he “still *speaks*” (laleo), more accurately, his blood: “The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground” [Gen 4.10].

The specific word “faith” (“but through his faith”) is lacking in the Greek text; it reads “*through* (dia) which.”

**Vs. 5: By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was attested as having pleased God.**

In the previous verse mention was made of Cain (who slew his brother Abel) being the father of Enoch. Note: “and he built a city and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch” [Gen 4.17]. Perhaps a comparison can be made between this city and the heavenly Jerusalem of Revelation: that is, since Enoch was taken into heaven without seeing death, so the heavenly Jerusalem is symbolic of immortality.

*Taken up* (metatithemi): used twice in this verse and once as a noun; it alternately means “to change, transpose, translate.” The literal sense of this verb is a “placing after,” a transposition to a place other than the familiar one. For another use of this verb, cf. 7.12: “For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a *change* in the law as well.” Gen 5.24 puts the verse at hand in context: “Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.” Here is a correspondence between *walking* (halak), *was not* (‘eynenu) and

*taking* (laqach). The striking 'eynenu almost means that Enoch "was not-ed" ...blotted out of existence while he was walking along or living his life. The verb laqach does not imply a *taking up* (halah) as with the prophet Elijah in 2 Kg 2.11.

The words "not see death" suggests a blindness of sorts, a blinding of Enoch's eyes to the reality of human death.

"Was not found" is not in the Hebrew of Gen 4.24; 'eynenu takes its place. To be "found" can mean that people were looking for Enoch but were unable to discover him.

*Attested* (martureo): in other words, "was given *witness*" which may apply to those persons attempting to find Enoch but could not.

The Hebrew of Genesis' account with regard to Enoch does not say that he *pleased* (euaresleo) God, that is, except reference in Sirach 44.16: "Enoch *pleased* the Lord and was taken up." The only other use of this verb is in 13.16: "for such sacrifices are *pleasing* to God."

**Vs. 6: And without faith it is impossible to please him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.**

*To please* (euaresleo): as noted in the previous verse with respect to Enoch. This verb which connotes a sense of delight is directly related to pistis and therefore casts pistis in a pleasing light. The first sentence of vs. 6 may be seen in connection with Wisd 4.10 which also touches upon Enoch: "There was one who *pleased* (euaresleos) God and was loved by him, and while living among sinners he was taken up."

*Draw near* (proserchomai): as in 10.22: "Let us *draw near* with a true heart in full assurance of faith." Such *pros-erchomai* with respect to God in the verse at hand pertains to an ever closer approach, not necessarily an attainment as this verb indicates.

The requirement for such a *pros*: believe that he *exists* (estin, alternately as "is") which hearkens back to the name of YHWH revealed to Moses: "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'" [Ex 3.6].

Consequent upon this belief in the divine is-ness, as it were, comes an expected *reward* or misthapodotes, the only occurrence of this noun in the New Testament. It better translates as "rewarder."

*Seek* (ekzeteo): note the preposition ek (*out, from*) which indicates a more intense form of searching. Cf. 12.17: "for he (Esau) found no chance to repent, though he *sought* it with tears."

**Vs. 7: By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an ark for the saving of his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which comes by faith.**

Here pistis is situated in the context of a *warning* (chrematizomai, verb) as in 8.5: "for when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was *instructed* by God." Note the two uses of this verb with respect to physical construction: that of a tent and that of an ark.

Events as yet *unseen* (medepo blepomenon) suggest a prophetic side to pistis. The Genesis account of this warning on Noah's behalf is not specifically mentioned. However, God does say (not necessarily to Noah but almost rhetorically): "For I am sorry that I have made them" [6.7]. Again, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold, I will destroy them with the earth" [6.14]. This second "warning" is directly addressed to Noah as opposed to the first.

"By God" is lacking in the Greek text.

The act of chrematizomai as being "instructed" relates directly to Noah's *construction* (kataskeuazo, verb) of

the ark; note the preposition kata (*according to*), as though Noah followed a divine plan outlined in Gen 6.14-16. This verse is akin to Moses' instruction by God on Mount Sinai, Exodus 20 ff.

*Ark* (kibotos): as in 9.4: "having the golden altar of incense and the *ark* of the covenant covered on all sides with gold." The Hebrew for kibotos is tevath as in Ex 2.5: "She (Pharaoh's daughter) saw the *basket* among the reeds and sent her maid to fetch it."

Before constructing/being instructed with respect to the kibotos, Noah *took heed* or eulabeomai. For the only other New Testament occurrence, cf. Acts 23.10: "The tribune, *afraid* that Paul would be torn in pieces by them." In the verse at hand the sentiment of anxiety contained in this verb pertains to the *saving* (soteria) of Noah's *household* (oikos). A certain parallel exists between this household and the ark in which it was inserted. The final touch to Noah's soteria, as it were, is when "the Lord shut him in" [Gen 7.16].

The verb act of constructing the kibotos was a *condemnation* or katakrino (verb). Note another use of kata prefixed to the verb, as if to parallel that of kataskeuazo (*to construct*), implying that a plan of sorts were being followed. Such condemnation was not directly evident to Noah's contemporaries who, according to Mt 24.38, "were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage." Kosmos (*world*) is the object of Noah's censure; compare aion as *world* in 11.3.

*Righteousness* of dikaiosune results from faith ("by or kata faith"), a third feature of faith in addition to hupostasis and elegchos of 11.1. Also we have a third use of kata in the same verse or an order with regard to faith. More accurately, Noah becomes an *heir* of such righteousness or kleronomos. Cf. 6.17: "So when God desired to show more convincingly to the *heirs* of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath."

**Vs. 8: By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go.**

Vss. 8 through 12 relate to Abraham as well as vss. 17 through 19.

With respect to Abraham, there is a correspondence between his pistis and *obedience* (hupakouo, verb). I.e., faith primed him, as it were, to listen (this verb's fundamental meaning) or more specifically, his capacity of "listening *under*" (hupo). Cf. 5.9: "he became the source of eternal salvation to all who *obey* him."

Note: The part which concerns the author of Hebrews is Chapter Twelve of Genesis, that dealing with Abram; his name is not changed to Abraham until 17.5.

Abraham's "listening under" took the form of migration, of *going out* (ex-erchomai) *into* (eis) an unknown destination or *place* (topos). Even though he was in the process of migrating, Abraham carried with him the hupo of hup-akouo, as it were, throughout his journey. This ex-eis process culminates in Abraham's inheritance or "*into* (eis) *inheritance*" (kleronomia). Cf. 9.15: "so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal *inheritance*."

Abraham *goes out* (ex-erchomai again) without *knowing* (epistamai) his destination; the latter verb implies being acquainted with someone or something, "being epi" or *upon* the object of one's knowledge. "Brethren, you *know* that in the early days God made choice among you" [Acts 15.7]. As for this not-knowing, Abraham and his family departed for Canaan, more specifically, Shechem (cf. 12.6), which was a commercial crossroads at the time. That is to say, Abraham did not randomly set off but had many people with him, so most likely he choose a well-established road. Abraham did not "go out" alone but enjoyed the company of family members. Compare with Moses later on who left Egypt with the Israelites but did not see the promised land.

**Vs. 9: By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.**

*Sojourned* (paroikeo): literally, to dwell *alongside* (para) of in the sense of having a temporary residence. “Are you the only *visitor* to Jerusalem who does not know the things that happened there in these days” [Lk 24.18]? In the verse at hand, Abraham lives para, as it were, with respect to the land of promise which at first glance seems curious because God had given it to him and his descendants as a permanent dwelling.

“Land of *promise*” (epaggelia): compare a parallel use with 4.1: “Therefore, while the *promise* of entering his rest remains.” Here “rest” pertains to the Sabbath rest which was preceded by the six days of creation.

In light of this Sabbath rest, the land of promise is analogous to a *foreign land* (allotrios), the word “land” not in the Greek. This is an adjective which literally means “belonging to another.” For another use, cf. Jn 10.5: “A *stranger* they will not follow, but they will flee from him.”

The fact that Abraham *lived* (katoikeo) in tents with Isaac and Jacob enhances the temporary aspect of their residence. On the other hand, they were acquainted with this form of living due to their nomadic background. Compare katoikeo with paroikeo: the former suggests a mode of living more or less permanent or in this instance, a way of life with regard to tents (kata: *according to...a given mode*). “And that Christ may  *dwell* in your hearts through faith” [Eph 3.17].

All three patriarchs are *heirs* (sugkleronomos) of the epaggelia, the same term used three paragraphs above with respect to the “land of *promise*.” The preposition sug (or sun, *with*) means “fellow heir.” “And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and *fellow heirs* with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” [Rom 8.17].

One important context of the verse at hand is Gen 23.4: “I am a stranger and a sojourner among you,” that is, among the Hittites. In Hebrew *stranger* is ger and *sojourner* is toshav which is derived from a verb meaning to sit or dwell. Refer to an article on this Lectio Divina Home Page entitled “Biblical References Pertaining to the Concept of Exile.”

#### **Vs. 10: For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.**

*Looked forward* (ekdechomai): alternately, “to await expectantly.” Note the preposition ek prefixed to the verb dechomai (*to receive, expect*), as if Abraham were getting something “out of” or “from” his condition as sojourner. The city he anticipates has *foundations* or themelios (cf. below); Abraham and his sons had their own tent city, as it were, without foundations.

*Builder* and *maker* (technites and demiourgos): with reference to God as opposed to a human founder. Note that Enoch was the first person to have built a city (cf. Gen 4.17) discussed in connection with vs. 5. The first term pertains to a craftsman and designer; the second (only occurrence in the New Testament) suggests a public workman.

The verse at hand anticipates the heavenly Jerusalem; if we keep themelios as representative of the twelve apostles, Abraham anticipated this city in the person of these founders of the church of Jesus Christ. “And the wall of the city had twelve *foundations*; and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” [Rev 21.14]. To Abraham, the twelve apostles have special import as the twelve tribes of Israel from his son Jacob/Israel.

#### **Vs. 11: By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised.**

Attention now shifts to Abraham’s wife in reference to *power* or dunamis which she had received. The verb lambano is used; compare with Abraham and his inheritance. The biblical sense of dunamis has various shades of meaning from miraculous occurrences to the ability to perform an action. For a sense of this word paralleling the verse at hand: “To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his *ability*” [Mt 25.15].

*Conceive* (eis katabolen spermatos): this phrase consists of two nouns: katabole or literally “a casting down” as if to sow seeds; note the use of eis (*into*) as if to indicate full awareness of the action involved. Cf. 9.26 for another use: “for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the *foundation* of the world.” Sperma or *seed* which alternately reads “descendant” as in vs. 18 below.

*Age* (kairos): the particular time in the sense of special event often mentioned in these **Notes**.

*Faithful* (pistos) and *promised* (epaggello) go hand-in-hand here. “For when God *made a promise* to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself” [6.13]. Since the author of Hebrews uses epaggello in conjunction with Abraham, it is easy in this light to see it apply to his wife Sarah.

The context of this verse is Gen 17.19; 18.11-4 and 21.2.

**Vs. 12: Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.**

*Good as dead* (nekroomai): “*Put to death* what is earthly in you” [Col 3.5]. This verb is one half of the paradox, the other half being Abraham’s descendants. The verse has nekroomai in the aorist passive as to show the equally passive role of Abraham regarding future generations and as though he were merely the agent. Such passivity is often found in the interaction between God and humans, a prime example being the Virgin Mary.

For another use of nekroomai in the same context of vs. 12, cf. Rom 4.19: “He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as *good as dead* because he was about a hundred years old.”

The verse at hand is largely lifted from Gen 15.5 and 22.17 to form one sentence. The former is preceded by “And he brought him outside and said,” this “outside” being outside a tent which was noted in vs. 9, that is, a temporary dwelling. Vs. 6 completes the sense of vs. 5: “And he believed the Lord; and he reckoned it to him as righteousness.” As for 22.17, vs. 18 similarly amplifies its meaning: “and by your descendants shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves because you have obeyed my voice.”

**Vs. 13: These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.**

*In faith* (kata pistin): as noted several times earlier, kata connotes an order which in this verse pertains to belief. “These” are Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Sarah whom the author of Hebrews mentioned thus far in Chapter Eleven.

*Received* (komizo; for another use, cf. vs. 19: “figuratively speaking, he did *receive* him back.”): in the sense of coming into the possession of something which did not happen, better, regarding “what was *promised*” (epaggelia, noun). Consider this verse in light of vs. 9: “By faith he sojourned in the land of *promise*.” From one point of view, the claim about the seven persons not having achieved the divine promise is inaccurate. Abel seems to be the only one who suffered the greatest injustice; the others did enjoy actual presence in the promised land even though they had to intermingle with the native inhabitants. Keep in mind that they were present there before the descent into Egypt and hence, the Exodus which in Israelite history was the prelude to possession of the land...possession in the full sense after their experience at Mount Sinai and all this entailed.

Despite not being fulfilled, the seven persons mentioned thus far did have a glimpse of the divine promise. First comes *seeing* (orao, the simple verb for this action; cf. 9.29, *appear*) followed by *greeting* (aspazomai); both may be taken in the context of distance, that is, from *afar* (porrothen). This verb is often used at the conclusion of St. Paul’s letters, for example, Rom 16.3: “*Greet* Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus.”

Such vision and salutation at a distance is concomitant with an *acknowledgment* (homologeō, verb) that the seven persons involved here are both *strangers* (xenos) and *exiles* (parepidemos). This verb alternately implies a confession as well as a commitment. “If you *confess* with your lips that Jesus is Lord” [Rom 10.9]. The latter term is stronger than the former; it is comprised of two prepositions: para (*besides*) and epi (*upon*) prefixed to the noun demos (*land, district*). The significance is that an exile is one living besides native inhabitants as well as “upon” them in the sense of depending on them. Thus a paradox in that exiles are both independent and dependent at the same time. “Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and *exiles* to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul” [1 Pt 2.11].

The verse at hand is specific with regards to xenos and parepidemos: the earth, rather, “on (epi) the earth,” and this earth can include the promised land as well as other locales which are distinct from the land of Sabbath rest.

**Vs. 14: For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.**

“People” includes not only the seven Old Testament witnesses just recounted by those like them which includes those to whom the Letter to the Hebrews is addressed. To “speak thus” suggests a permanent, habitual outlook of being a sojourner with regard to earthly existence. Their mode of speech *makes clear* (emphanizo) their intent. Cf. 9.26 for another sense of this verb: “...he has *appeared* once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” I.e., Christ made his incarnation “clear” to all persons, especially to strangers and exiles.

The object of emphanizo, as it were, is the search for a *homeland* (patris), alternately, “fatherland” in the sense of one’s birth place. “He went away from there and came to his *own country*” [Mk 6.1]. This *search* (epizeteō, verb) is more intense by reason of the preposition epi (*upon*). If we keep in mind the epi with regard to par(epi)demos, this search takes place by reason of exposure to those persons focused upon earthly existence.

**Vs. 15: If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.**

*Thinking* (mnemoneuo; cf. 13.7): better, “to remember” which intimates innate knowledge with respect to patris or *homeland*; in the context of Hebrews it may be taken as that Sabbath rest. “*Remember* Lot’s wife” [Lk 17.32].

The object of such thinking/remembering: the land from which the seven Old Testament exemplars had *left* (ex-bainō). Thus mnemoneuo does not focus exclusively upon such “ex,” for despite its innate knowledge, “remembering” is forward looking.

*Opportunity* (kairos): here with respect to *returning* (anakamptō). Kamptō means *to bend, to curve*; the preposition ana (*on, upward*) suggests a return in the sense of re-appropriation of ways which were left behind. Ex 16.3 conveys the longing for a return but in a different sense: “Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt when we sat by the fleshpots and ate bread to the full.”

**Vs. 16: But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.**

*But as it is* (nun): alternately, “now” or “the truth is.” The author of Hebrews uses nun to get at the heart of the matter with regard to these sojourners: their *desire* (oregomai, verb) which is rooted in memory (cf. mnemoneuo of vs. 15). For another use of this verb, cf. 1 Tm 6.10: “It is through this *craving* (for money) that some have wandered away from the faith.” I.e., oregomai is often associated with longing with regard to lust and gain.

The object of desire here is for *better* (kreittonos), “country” not being used in the Greek text which is contrasted with its opposite adjective, epouranios (*heavenly*), as is used in 8.5: “They serve a copy and shadow

of the *heavenly* sanctuary.” I.e., the downward pull commonly associated with desire is presented in an upward movement, towards heaven.

*Ashamed* (aischunomai): “As it is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be at all *ashamed*” [Phil 1.20]. The author of Hebrews averts this sentiment in the verse at hand as it pertains to God. Keeping in mind the seven notables in Chapter Eleven, refer to Ex 3.6 when God reveals himself to Moses. Here he is “not ashamed” to identify himself as “the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Note the identity of “God” with each of these three patriarchs.

*City* (polis): a term freighted with Hellenistic connotations; contrast with the tents in which Abraham and his sons dwelt as sojourners (vs. 8+). The general sense of God *preparing* (etoimazo) this polis is a central theme to the Book of Revelation, especially 21.11-21. Those expecting its descent may be said to have this vision in mind, even seminally. Also, refer to **Notes on the Life of St. Anthony** elsewhere on this Home Page.

**Vs. 17: By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son,**

“By faith:” a resumption of this phrase begun in vs. 3 and interrupted in between vss. 12 and 16; here it gets back to the central figure of Abraham’s *test* (peirazo, verb) by God. Compare with Jesus Christ in 2.18: “For because he himself has suffered and been *tempted*, he is able to help those who are *tempted*.”

The temptation consisted in Abraham offering his only son, Isaac as recounted in Gen 22.1-10. After his ordeal, Abraham “called the name of that place the Lord will provide” [vs. 14] or in Hebrew, “the Lord will *see* (ra’ah).” In the next verse he exclaims, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided” or in Hebrew, “he will be seen.” Perhaps reference is to the angel’s appearance at the moment when Abraham was about to slay Isaac as well as Abraham’s exclamation in vs. 11, “Here am I,” that is, here am I, ready to be seen.

The verse at hand says that Abraham *offered* (prosphero; cf. 8.3) Isaac but the Genesis account says that he was about to but was prevented by the angel.

Abraham *received* (anadechomai) promises; note the plural which can include Abraham’s (plural) descendants which will be vast as the stars (cf. 15.5). The only other New Testament occurrence of this verb: “...the chief man of the island named Publius who *received* us and entertained us hospitably for three days” [Acts 28.7].

Abraham’s readiness (the adjective “ready” is not used in the Greek text) to sacrifice Isaac is summed up in his words, “Here am I” [Gen 22.1] which in Hebrew is hineny, more akin to “behold.”

**Vs. 18: of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your descendants be named.”**

The conclusion of the sentence begun in the previous verse which shows the importance of Isaac regarding future generations.

The Greek text has the preposition “en (*in*) Isaac;” i.e., future generations are present in him going back to his position on the altar when Abraham was about to slay him. Also, the above mentioned verses from Genesis may be said to be bound up with Isaac: “The Lord will see” and “On the mount of the Lord he will be seen” [22.14].

The quote in the verse at hand is found in Gen 21.12 (cf. Rom 9.7 for this quote as well) which reads in full: “But God said to Abraham, ‘Be not displeased because of the lad and because of your slave woman (Hagar); whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your descendants be named.’” The favor shown towards Isaac is taken in the context of the banishment of Hagar and her son Ishmael who was also destined to be a “great nation” [vs. 18] but one through whom descendants would be blessed by God although differently compared with Isaac.

*Descendants* (sperma): literally, “seed.” Cf. 11.11: “By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive.”

**Vs. 19: He considered that God was able to raise men even from the dead; hence, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.**

*Considered* (logizomai): implies the careful weighing of evidence, of taking into account the logos or heart of the matter. Cf. Rom 9.8 in the context of the discussion at hand: "...but the children of the promise are reckoned as descendants."

Abraham's ability to see the logos or reason of his near sacrifice of Isaac allows him to *figuratively* (en parabole) receive him back. Cf. 9.9: "which is *symbolic* for the present age." I.e., both the substance of a given incident—the logos or object of log(os)-izomai—is able to be perceived en parabole, or better, is explained in this fashion.

Komizo (*receive back*): as in vs. 13, "These all died in faith, not having *received* what was promised."

**Vs. 20: By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau.**

*Invoked* (eulogeo): literally, "to speak well" as in 6.14: "Surely I will *bless* you and multiply you."

The context of the verse at hand is Genesis 27. Note that the author of Hebrews imparts blessings on *both* Jacob and Esau as opposed to Jacob alone which is the theme of this chapter. The blessing upon Jacob reads as follows: "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed! May God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you" [vss. 27-9]! Such a blessing Isaac mistakenly bestows upon Jacob who disguised himself as Esau. Later Isaac blessed Esau as follows: "Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and away from the dew of heaven on high. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you break loose you shall break his yoke from your neck" [vss. 39-40].

**Vs. 21: By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff.**

*Blessed*: another use of eulogeo as in the previous verse ("invoked").

The author of Hebrews omits Jacob's blessing of his twelve sons in Egypt (cf. Gen 49), perhaps because they had maltreated Joseph and were not worthy of mention despite their being patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. Instead, focus is upon Joseph's sons: "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has led me all my life long to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and in them let my name be perpetuated, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth" [Gen 48.15-6]. Later in vs. 20 Jacob says, "By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, 'God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh.'" Over Joseph's objection Jacob prefers Ephraim over Manasseh who is the first-born of Joseph. This incident is reminiscent of Isaac having been deceived by Jacob with help from his mother Rebekah; perhaps Jacob had it mind when preferring Ephraim over Manasseh.

The context of Jacob's staff is Gen 47.31 which reads in the LXX: "Then Israel bowed upon the head of his *staff* (rhabdos)." Cf. 9.4 for another use of this word: "...and Aaron's *rod* that budded." The Hebrew is mitah (*bed*) which the LXX confused as mateh; both are from the same verbal root.

Note that mention of Jacob and his staff occurs before his blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh. The context is his request to Joseph not to be buried in Egypt but with his fathers. Joseph made a similar request (cf. Gen 49.29), this despite the generosity Egypt had shown to both Jacob and Joseph as well as their descendants there until the time of the Exodus.

**Vs. 22: By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his burial.**

*End* (teleutao, verb): in the sense of Joseph's life coming to completion (cf. telos as in 7.3, etc.). "...the patriarch David that he both *died* and was buried" [Acts 2.29].

In the verse at hand a close connection exists between Joseph's telos and the Exodus. Note the verb *mnemoneuo* (*made mention*) as in vs. 15: "If they had been *thinking* of that land from which they had gone out." There was mentioned how *mnemoneuo* pertains to memory, of remembering; it is consistent with Joseph who was endowed with the gift of prophecy.

Chapter Fifty of Genesis first speaks of the death of Jacob, Joseph's father who as noted in vs. 21 along with his son, did not wish to be buried in Egypt but with his fathers.

*Gave directions* (entellomai): as in 9.2 ("This is the blood of the covenant which God *commanded* you"). The instructions are found in Gen 50.24-5 where Joseph enjoins his brothers by oath to take his body from Egypt when God visits them. It is fulfilled in Ex 13.19: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him." Note that Joseph does not mention Egypt by name but calls it "this land" [50.24] and contracts it with "the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob" [also, vs. 24].

*Burial* (osteon): literally, "bone," which is consistent with Ex 13.19 just noted. Joseph's bones are placed in a *coffin* or 'aron, the same word for "ark" in the sense of ark of covenant (cf. Ex 25.10).

**Vs. 23: By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid for three months by his parents because they saw that the child was beautiful; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.**

A display of Moses' faith through vs. 28. The faith here does not pertain to Moses *per se* but to his parents who were of the house of Levi (cf. Ex 2.1). When it became impossible to hid their son, the mother put him in a *basket* or *tevah*. Cf. 9.4 which mentions this word in conjunction with Noah's *ark*, etc.

*Beautiful* (asteios): in the sense of an uncommon loveliness; literally it pertains to what pertains to a city. The only other New Testament reference is Acts 7.20 and again refers to Moses: "At this time Moses was born and was *beautiful* before God."

The king's *edict* or *diatagma* (only New Testament occurrence of this word) is as follows: "Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live" [Ex 2.22]. Moses' parents did obey the edict but in a different sense.

**Vs. 24: By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,**

Despite his having been raised by Pharaoh's daughter, Moses identified with the Hebrews, the turning point being when he saw an Egyptian maltreating one of the Hebrews (cf. Ex 2.11-15). Note that vs. 11 has "one of his people," that is, one of Moses' people.

**Vs. 25: choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.**

The conclusion of the sentence begun in vs. 25.

*Share ill-treatment* (sugkakoucheo): the only New Testament occurrence of this verb, literally, "with-to be evil." Moses fled Egypt when he slew the Egyptian maltreating a fellow Hebrew; the Exodus text does not say that Moses actually engaged in slave-like toil but was the leader, a different type of *sugkakoucheo* in that he was responsible for the Israelites' well-being. It is interesting to observe that before God revealed himself to Moses we have this verse by way of preface, "And the people of Israel groaned under their bondage and cried out for

help, and their cry under bondage came up to God" [Ex 2.23]. At the time Moses perceived no clear-cut connection between Israel's distress and the revelation of God's name.

*Fleeting* (proskairos): note the preposition pros (*towards, in the direction of*) prefixed to kairos, last noted in vs. 15 as "opportunity." "They have no root in themselves, but endure for *a while*" [Mk 4.17]. This adjective is used with regard to sin's *pleasures* (apolausis, singular). The sense of such illicit enjoyment is implied with the option Moses would have had if he remained in Pharaoh's household where he was raised. The only other New Testament reference: "...nor to set their hopes on uncertain riches but on God who richly furnishes us with everything to *enjoy*" [1 Tim 6.17].

**Vs. 26: He considered abuse suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he looked to the reward.**

*Considered* (hegeomai): alternately, "to function as a leader." "...and *count* them as refuse in order that I may gain Christ" [Phil 3.8]. The object of the verb is *abuse* (oneidismos), better, *reproach*: "The *reproaches* of those who *reproached* you fell on me" [Rom 15.3]. The English word "suffered" is not in the Greek text; "Christ" is in the genitive case, i.e., "abuse of Christ."

Oneidismos is equated here with its opposite, *wealth* (ploutos) which is set in opposition to Egypt's *treasures* (thesauros). "Lay up for yourselves *treasures* in heaven" [Mt 6.20]. Again, there is no direct association of Moses with this wealth except for having been raised by Pharaoh's daughter and all that entails. For a parallel sense, consider how the Israelites despoiled the Egyptians just before the Exodus (cf. Ex 12.35-6).

The author presupposes that Moses knew Jesus Christ; associated bound up with the Second Person of the Trinity is the revelation of the divine name in Ex 3.14, "I am who am." Also, cf. Jn 5.46: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me."

*Looked* (apoblepo): the only occurrence of this verb in the New Testament which literally means "look away from (apo)" but also means "look upon." The object of this verb: misthapodosia (*reward*) as in 10.35: "Therefore do not throw away your confidence which has a great *reward*."

**Vs. 27: By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king; for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.**

In this verse the author of Hebrews has Moses leaving Egypt; there is no mention of him leading Israel from this land: cf. vs. 29 for a reference but again, no mention of Moses. Since vs. 27 speaks of that which is visible and invisible (this occurs before the theophany to Moses on Mount Sinai after the Exodus), reference to divine transcendence may allude to the revelation of the divine name **YHWH** in Ex 3.14.

*Left* (kataleipo): connotes not just a simple departure but one fully *in accord* (kata) with the notion of leaving, that is, a thorough forsaking of one's previous dwelling. For another sense of this verb, cf. 4.1: "while the promise of entering his rest *remains*." "And *leaving* them, he went out of the city to Bethany and lodged there" [Mt 21.17].

*Anger* (thumos): "Let all bitterness and wrath and *anger* and clamor and slander be put away from you" [Eph 4.31]. Pharaoh had expressed his thumos towards Moses and Israel more through hardening his heart as with the ten plagues, for example, Ex 7.13. The culmination is found in 14.17: "And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his hosts, his chariots and his horsemen."

*Endured* (kartereo): the only New Testament use of this term, here with respect to *seeing* (horao) God who is *invisible* (to aoraton, from the same verb, "the invisible one"). The Exodus account is full of instances where God is manifest to the people as well as to Moses. Perhaps the author of Hebrews has in mind "and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen" [33.23].

**Vs. 28: By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood so that the Destroyer of the first-born might not touch them.**

*Kept* (poieo): the simple verb *to make*, as if to indicate that the Passover was something actively carried through as distinct from the common understanding of a rite to be observed.

*Sprinkled* (proschusis): noun, the only occurrence of this word in the New Testament and object of the verb poieo. The first mention of sprinkling with respect to sacrificial blood is 9.19: "He took the blood of calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and *sprinkled* both the book itself and all the people." The verb here is rhantizo, different from proschusis, which connotes a pouring-out or a more thorough dousing. The verb proscheo is used in the LXX of Ex 24.6: "And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he *threw against* the altar."

*Destroyer* (olothreuo): literally, "he who destroys," action being carried out in the present and which is ongoing. "...nor grumble, as some of the did and were *destroyed* by the *Destroyer*" [1 Cor 10.10]. In the verse at hand, the Destroyer pertains to a guise assumed by the Lord to slay the *first-born* (prototokos). Note the time, the middle of the night: "At midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon" [Ex 12.29]. Prototokos is used in reference to Jesus Christ as in 1.6: "And again, when he brings the *first-born* into the world."

*Touch* (thiggano) is also found in 12.20: "If even a beast *touches* the mountain, it shall be stoned." In both instances thiggano is equivalent to death and was the final impulse that made Pharaoh drive out Israel from Egypt.

**Vs. 29: By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land; but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.**

*Crossed* (diabaino): literally, "to cross through" which is in accord with Ex 14.22: "And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left." Here the people are presented as having gone into, not crossed, the sea. The Hebrew has betok (*in the midst*) or the very center of the water, as it were, which is emphasized by water piled up on their left and right. Vs. 29 has "as if" whereas the Exodus account omits this in favor of the actual presence of Israel betok the Red Sea.

*Drowned* (katapino): literally, "to swallow down." The Hebrew of Ex 14.27 puts it interestingly: "And the Lord shook off the Egyptians *in the midst* (betok: the same betok as with Israel) of the sea." The idea of *shaking off* (nahar) the Egyptians suggests a casual throwing off almost in a comical sense. For another use of the verb katapino, cf. 1 Pt 5.8: "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to *devour*."

**Vs. 30: By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been encircled for seven days.**

Note the passiveness communicated by the two verbs: "fell down" and "had been encircled." While Joshua and the Israelites were actively involved, the author of Hebrews wishes to impart the fact that God effected Jericho's fall.

Chapter six of Joshua describes the siege of Jericho where the number seven occurs repeatedly: seven priests, seven trumpets, seven encirclements of Jericho, seven days. Once the city walls fell, Joshua devoted everything to the Lord for *destruction* (cherem: a paradoxical word, in a sense, for it connotes devotion to God by means of destroying something which is of value; cf. vs. 17).

**Vs. 31: By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish with those who were disobedient because she had given friendly welcome to the spies.**

Rahab's faith was rooted in her words, "I *know* that the Lord has given you the land and that the fear of you has fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land melt away before you" [Jos 2.9]. The Hebrew verb *yadad* used here can refer to intimate knowledge as well as having a more common sense. Rahab seems to have gotten her information from neighboring people who heard about the fact that God delivered Israel into its hands. This occurs early in Joshua; no mention is made about warfare, so perhaps local inhabitants heard reports of Joshua's address to Israel which implies hostility: "then you shall return to the land of your possession and shall possess it, the land which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise" [1.15]. Thus Rahab heard the reports circulating in the neighborhood which probably included news about Israel's exodus from Egypt some forty years prior and how God destroyed the Egyptian army at the Red Sea.

The author of Hebrews calls the (presumed) inhabitants of Jericho *disobedient*, from the verb *apeitheo*. "So they have now been *disobedient* in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may receive mercy" [Rom 11.31]. Compare with vs. 8: "By faith Abraham *obeyed* when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance." The verb here is *hupakouo*, literally, a "listening under;" *apeitheo* consists of *peitho* (*to persuade*) with alpha privative prefixed to it, i.e., the inhabitants of Jericho were not persuaded.

*Friendly welcome* (*dexamene met' eirenes*): literally, "having received with peace" those sent by Joshua to spy out the land. Although Rahab was instrumental for Israel's success, her favorable disposition centered upon her own safety and that of her household. Jos 6.25 says that the spies, having lived up to their oath, allowed Rahab and her extended family to live, "and she dwelt in Israel to this day because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho."

**Vs. 32: And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—**

*Fail* (*epileipo*): the only occurrence of this verb in the New Testament, a sentiment which parallels that of the conclusion of John's Gospel: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were everyone of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written."

This notion of "failing" with regard to words concerning these Old Testament notables—Jdg 6-8; 4-5; 13-16; 11-12; 1 Sam 16-30; 2 Sam 1-24; 1 Kg 1-2.11; 1 Sam 1-12; 15.1-16.13—is closely related to the lack of *time* or *chronos*.

Vss. 33-8 describe in some detail the ability of these persons to overcome horrendous obstacles. They are omitted here because their accounts do not pertain directly to the content of these **Notes**.

Vs. 38 says that the "*world* (*kosmos*) was not worthy" of such persons. Cf. vs. 7 for a similar sentiment: "by this (Noah's construction of the ark) he condemned the *world* and became an heir of the righteousness which comes by faith." The deserts, mountains, dens and caves of vs. 38 are similar in meaning to Noah floating over the submerged world, that is, both examples demonstrate a distance or detachment from the *kosmos* and parallels the sentiments of sojourner, etc., depicted earlier in Chapter Eleven.

**Vs. 39: And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised.**

*Well attested* (*martureomai*): literally, "to bear witness" here with respect to faith, that faith demonstrated by the Old Testament examples in Chapter Eleven beginning with Abel.

"By their faith:" note the preposition *dia* is used here or "*through* their faith."

"Receive what was promised:" a restatement of vs. 13 which reads, "These all died in faith, not having received what was promised" (etc.).

**Vs. 40: since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.**

The author of Hebrews states his purpose for having recounted in some detail Old Testament worthies, that is, their relationship to “us” or Christians of his time.

*Had foreseen* (problepomai): the only New Testament use of this verb which bears a certain parallel to Rahab in vs. 31 having foreknowledge of the spies’ mission. This verb consists of blepo (*to see*) prefixed by pro, *before...i.e.*, a “seeing before” events. Since this pro-blepomai was worked out in the context of Old Testament persons who did not attain divine promises as Hebrews had recounted, their partial completion is deliberate. That is to say, they were not *made perfect* or teleioo “apart from us,” an indirect way of implying the revelation of Jesus Christ and the foundation of his church.

The contrast between the two different modes of time, kairos and chronos, are essential for understanding Chapter Eleven. The author’s audience or “us” who live in the present chronos—as well as the Old Testament examples who were subject to the same chronos by reason of being sojourners and suffering persecution—are lifted from its restrictions into a new dimension or kairos which is fulfilled through the priesthood of Jesus Christ, an earlier theme of Hebrews.

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## Chapter Twelve

**Vs. 1: Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,**

Not just *witnesses* (martus, singular) but a *cloud* (nephos) of them, referring to those Old Testament examples mentioned in the last chapter. There are two chief examples of a cloud to demonstrate both hiddenness and revelation:

- 1) Ex 19.16: “On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a *thick cloud* upon the mountain.” The Hebrew words here are hanan kaved, kaved being related to kavod or *glory*.
- 2) Mt 17.5: “He was still speaking when lo, a *bright cloud* overshadowed them.” The Greek words here are nephele photeine; nephele is closely related to vs. 1’s nephos, the only use of this term in the New Testament which is more suggestive of the oppressive weight of darkness. Nephele is the LXX translation of hanan.

In the verse at hand, this cloud is *so great* (tosoutos) in the sense of “such a one,” that is, connoting its uniqueness.

*Surrounded* (perikeimai): “we” are the ones so embraced by this cloud which suggests it has greater capability to lead the Christian community into it much like Moses ascending Mount Sinai. For another use of this verb with a different sense, cf. 5.2: “He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward since he himself is *beset* with weakness.”

The “cloud of witnesses” allows the author of Hebrews to present two exhortations (“let us”):

- 1) *lay aside* (apotithemi): this verb also refers to putting off one’s clothes; in the verse at hand we may associate these clothes with “every *weight*” (ogkos). “Let us *cast off* the works of darkness and put on the armor of light” [Rom 13.12]. The type of burden is not specified, but it is *every* or pas, that is, all-inclusive with the exception of sin which is noted separately. This is the only New Testament use of ogkos. The second object of laying aside is sin which *clings closely* (euperistatos, the only New Testament occurrence). This adjective has a broad meaning: “*well* (eu) surrounded,” “easily avoided,” “having easy distress.” The general idea is an almost natural affinity with sin.
- 2) *run* (trecho): i.e., to make haste, again, in the company of this “cloud of witnesses.” “So *run* that you may obtain it” [1 Cor 9.24]. Such running is in the context of a *race* or agon which also means “struggle:” “engaged in the same *conflict* which you saw and now hear to be mine” [Phil 1.30]. In the verse at hand, the running is with *perseverance* (hupomone, literally, a “standing-under”) as noted in 10.36: “For you have need of *endurance*

so that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised.” The race in vs. 1 has not yet been undertaken but is *set before* us or *prokeimai*; this word is used in the next verse, “for the joy that was *set before* him.”

**Vs. 2: looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**

*Looking to* (aphorao): the object being Jesus; this verb connotes turning *away* (apo-horao) from one thing and focusing attention on something else. The only other New Testament use of this word is in Phil 2.23: “...just as soon as I see how it *will go* with me,” that is, assuming the advent of more accurate knowledge.

Aphorao has two objects or sees Jesus in two ways; it is used with the preposition *eis* (*into*) to show that such looking-to involves a full presence-in Jesus:

1) as *pioneer* (archegos) which is found in 2.10: “...should make the *pioneer* of their salvation perfect through suffering.” In the verse at hand, archegos is associated with “our faith” as distinct from “their salvation.”  
2) as *perfecter* (teleiotes) and used in 6.1: “Let us leave the elementary doctrines of Christ and go on to *maturity*.” Note the use of archegos which is closely associated with arche (*beginning*) and teleiotes which is related to telos (*end, completion*). It is as though the author of Hebrews were expressing Jesus Christ as Alpha and Omega or the beginning and end (cf. Rev 1.8) of “our faith.”

*Joy* (chara): it is *set before* or *prokeimai* Jesus similar to the race of the previous verse, thus hinting that the endurance of the cross as a type of race. The text implies a kind of spacial perception of joy through this verb and closely related to *endurance* (hupomeno, verb; the object of which is the cross)...i.e., a pro- conditioned by a hupo- or “before” conditioned by “under.” “Enter into the *joy* of your master” [Mt 25.21].

The preposition *anti* (*for*, in the sense of “for the sake of”) is used in conjunction with joy; it implies the making of an exchange or substitution.

*Shame* (aischune): associated with the cross which Jesus did not *despise* or *kataphroneo*, literally as “to think down (kata: *according to*) something.” “Or do you *presume* upon the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience” [Rom 2.4]?

This verse concludes with Jesus seated at the right hand of God’s throne; the perfect active indicative of *kathizo* (*to be seated*) means that he is remains in this position. Compare with 8.1: “We have such a high priest, one who is *seated* at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.” Thus vs. 2 points to the priestly role of Jesus Christ.

**Vs. 3: Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.**

*Consider* (analogizomai): This verb implies careful deliberation, a summing up of one’s impressions, and is the only New Testament occurrence. The object is Jesus Christ and his *endurance* (hupomeno, verb) used in vs. 2 with respect to “cross.” In the literal sense of this verb, Christ “remained-under” *hostility* or *antilogia* from sinners. “...and in all their *disputes* an oath is final for confirmation” [6.16]. In the verse at hand such *antilogia* is directed “*against* (eis) himself,” this preposition implying full penetration of hostility *into* Jesus.

The application of *analogizomai* is directed towards *psuche* (*soul*) which is not mentioned in the English translation. I.e., these “souls” are not to be subject to *kamno* nor *ekluomai*. The former is associated with sickness: “and the prayer of faith will save the *sick man*” [Jms 5.16]. The latter means a slacking or loosening: “lest they *faint* on the way” [Mt 15.32].

**Vs. 4: In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.**

*Struggle* (antagonizomai, verb): the only New Testament occurrence of this term which suggests an athletic contest; here it is with regard to sin which puts the struggle in a more positive sense than in English translation. The force of this verb is underscored by the preposition pros (*against* in the sense of in-the-direction-towards-which).

*Resisted* (antikathistemi): the only New Testament occurrence of this verb which contains the preposition anti (*against*) as well as anta(i)gonizomai.

**Vs. 5: And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons?—"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord nor lose courage when you are punished by him.**

The beginning of a quotation from Proverbs 3:11-2 which continues into the next verse.

*Exhortation* (paraklesis): for two alternate uses of this word cf. 1) 6:18: "...we who have fled for refuge might have strong *encouragement* to seize the hope set before us." 2) 13:22: "...bear with my word of *exhortation*."

The author of Hebrews questions his listeners with regard to the words of Proverbs he is about to quote; exlanthano (*to forget*) is the only New Testament use of this word, the verb lanthano being accentuated further by the preposition ex (*out*) to signify a more intense forgetfulness.

*Addresses* (dialegomai): connotes a sense of instructing, of handing over (dia, *through* or a thorough penetration) one's intent to a listener which here are "sons." "And he *argued* in the synagogue every sabbath and persuaded Jews and Greeks" [Acts 18.4].

*Discipline* (paideia): involves a more comprehensive notion of education, that is, as applied to the whole person with the intent of responsible living. "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the *discipline* and instruction of the Lord" [Eph 6.4]. Also cf. 12.8 & 11. The Hebrew word for paideia is mosar which corresponds more to the English "discipline" as pertaining to child rearing.

*Regard lightly* (oligoreo): the only New Testament use of this word which pertains to paideia; it literally means "to make small." The Hebrew is ma'as which connotes rejection and condemnation.

*Lose courage* (ekluo): alternately, "to be exhausted" and literally, "to loose from." "...lest they *faint* on the way" [Mt 15.32]. The Hebrew verb is quts, *to be weary*. The context is with regard to *punishment* (elegcho, verb) which also means "to scrutinize," "to disapprove." "But Herod the tetrach, who had been *reproved* by him for Horodias" [Lk 3.19]. The Hebrew verb is yakach which has the sense of reproof and the manifestation of proof.

**Vs. 6: For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves and chastises every son whom he receives."**

The second half of the Proverbs citation begins with the verb paideuo, the noun paideia having been discussed in the previous verse. The Hebrew verb is yakach noted in vs. 5 as being equivalent to elegcho.

Such manifestation of divine paideia has two objects: 1) the person whom God *loves* (agapao/'ahav) and the person whom he *chastises* (mastigoo). "And they will mock him, and spit upon him, and *scourge* him, and kill him" [Mk 10.34].

The Hebrew of the second part of vs. 6 reads "as a father (reproves) the son in whom he delights." The verb here is ratsah, *to receive graciously*. The Greek paradechomai (*to receive*) corresponds to the hospitality connoted by ratsah. "When they came to Jerusalem, they were *welcomed* by the church and the apostles and the elders" [Acts 15.4]. The preposition para (*besides*) implies a bringing alongside, of placing this son beside (God).

**Vs. 7: It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his**

## father does not discipline?

“For discipline” or *into* (eis) *discipline* (paideia) which is used with the verb *hupomeno* (*to endure*) as found in vs. 3: “Consider him who *endured* from sinners such hostility.” That is to say, divine paideia requires a “remaining *under* (hupo).”

*Treating* (prosphero): literally, “to carry forward.” This verb is found several times in Hebrews with the alternate meaning of *to offer* as in 5:1: “For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to *offer* gifts and sacrifices for sins.” Perhaps the idea of sacrificial offering is implied in the verse at hand and mirrors Christ’s relationship with his Father.

The verb paideuo is used again in a rhetorical manner as being part and parcel of child rearing. This concept is found in 2 Sam 7.14: “I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men.”

**Vs. 8: If you are left without discipline in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.**

Being *without* (choris) paideia is comparable to being *illegitimate* (nothos) and not being sons. This adjective, the only New Testament occurrence, connotes birth outside wedlock as well as not enjoying legal status. The author of Hebrews acknowledges that in normal circumstances everyone has *participated* (metochos, noun) in the paideia essential to child rearing. “...and have become *partakers* of the Holy Spirit” [6.4].

**Vs. 9: Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?**

*Besides* (eita): alternately as “then” as if to supplement God’s paideia in the previous verses by human or paternal paideutes (*discipline*, noun). The only other use of this word in the New Testament is Rom 2.20 which applies more to the English concept of discipline as distinct from the more comprehensive notion of paideia: “a *corrector* of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth.”

“*Earthy* (sarkos) fathers”: literally, “of the flesh.” These human fathers imparted through discipline *respect* (entrepomai, verb): literally, “to turn to;” this verb connotes respect, indicating special status towards someone as in Mt 21.37: “They will *respect* my son.”

Both discipline and the ensuing respect are models for *subjection* (hupotassomai, verb) concerning God the Father. The fuller sense of this verb is found in 1 Cor 15.27 which is a quote from Ps 8.6: “For God has put all things in *subjection* under his feet.” It is amplified in vs. 28: “When all things are *subjected* to him, then the Son himself will also be *subjected* to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to everyone.”

The author of Hebrews identifies God the Father as being a Father “of *spirits*” (pneuma) perhaps to contrast his earlier analogy of fathers “of the sarx.” Here the connection between subjection and spirit results in true *living* (zao).

**Vs. 10: For they disciplined us for a short time at their pleasure, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness.**

“They” of course referring to “fathers of the flesh” whose paideuo is for a “short time” or literally “*for* (pros) a few days.”

*Pleasure* (dokeo, verb): in the sense of being in accord with what is probable, not necessarily in truth. For another use of this verb, cf. Mt 3.9: “and do not *presume* to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our

father.”

The author of Hebrews contrasts human paideia with that which is divine: *for our good* (epi to sumpheron) or literally, “upon the best;” even more literally, “*with* (sum) bring together.”

The “upon-ness” of epi is carried over to a *sharing* (metalambano); it used with the preposition eis (*into*), “a taking-with.” Cf. 6.7 for another use of this verb: “...receives a blessing from God.” The object of metalambano is divine *holiness* or hagiotes, the only other New Testament use of this word being 2 Cor 1.12: “...with *holiness* and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God.”

**Vs. 11: For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.**

Human paideia is *for the moment* or pros (in the sense of being directed *towards* it) to paron, another way of saying it is *painful* (lupe, noun) as opposed to *pleasant* (chara, noun), a noun which also means “joy.” “...who for the *joy* that was set before him endured the cross” [12.2].

The “for the moment” nature of paideia is contrasted with *later* or husteron. There (to use a special term) is present righteousness’ “*peaceful* (eirenikos) fruit.” The only other New Testament occurrence is Jms 3.17: “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then *peaceable*, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity.” Here too “good fruits” is identified with peace and by implication, *righteousness* (dikaiosune). Note that in 7.2 dikaiosune is associated with Melchizedek, “king of dikaiosune” [7.2].

Paideia is related to *training* (gumnazo, verb); the perfect passive participle indicates a complete state or condition. This verb applies to gymnastic exercise: “...who have their faculties *trained* by practice to distinguish good from evil” [5.14].

**Vs. 12: Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees,**

A quote from Is 35.3 which in the English RSV reads “Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.” The next verse situates this encouragement in terms of “your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God.”

*Lift* (anorthoo): literally, “set straight (upright) again.” “And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was *made straight*, and she praised God” [Lk 13.13]. The Hebrew verb here is chazaq which applies more to imparting strength.

*Drooping* (pariemi): in the sense of letting fall (one’s hands) to the side, presumably which were held aloft in a gesture of prayer or supplication. The Hebrew term is rapha’, an alternate definition which applies to healing, perhaps with the idea of relaxing inherent bodily and mental stress.

The verse at hand applies anorthoo to knees as well as hands; “strengthen” is not in the Greek text. The Hebrew ‘amats (*to make firm*) suggests alertness and swift-footedness with respect to standing in an upright position.

**Vs. 13: and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.**

A continuation of the previous verse quoting from Isaiah. The first part of vs. 13 is a paraphrase from Sir 25.23: “Drooping hands and weak knees are caused by the wife who does not make her husband happy.” Vs. 13 intimates John the Baptist’s call citing Isaiah: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” [Mt 3.3].

In the verse at hand “make *straight*” (orthos) is with respect to one’s *paths* or trochia, a word which pertains

to ruts made by a cart and continues the athletic theme of *gumnazo* (*to train*) in vs. 11; here the image can apply to a person about to run a course or race. Trochia differs from the *paths* of Mt 3.3 which uses the term *tribos* and connotes a defined track or route.

*Lame* (*cholos*) suggests miracles performed by Jesus: “the blind receive their sight and the *lame* walk” [Mt 11.5]. Vs. 13 does not situate *cholos* in terms of walking but in preparation for it and can apply to other bodily limbs. The verb *ektreptomai* (*to put out of joint*) literally means “to turn away” as in 1 Tim 1.6: “Certain persons by swerving from these have *wandered away* into vain discussion.”

The Greek *iaomai* (*to be healed*) can correspond to the Hebrew *rapha'* noted in vs. 12.

**Vs. 14: Strive for peace with all men and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.**

*Strive* (*dioko*): suggests hunting, eager pursuit and continues the theme of healing and athletic imagery just noted. “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the *upward* call of God in Christ Jesus” [Phil 3.14]. *Upward* (*ano*) is in reference to a spiritual contest as opposed to one that is athletic or physical. In the verse at hand, this vertical dimension also has a horizontal dimension, “peace with all men.”

The second object of *dioko* applies more to that which is “upward:” *holiness* or *hagiasmos*; compare with *hagiotēs* in vs. 10. “...our wisdom, our righteousness and *sanctification* and redemption” [1 Cor 1.30].

In the verse at hand, holiness is the condition for seeing the *Lord* (*Kurios*). The common verb *orao* is used here; the upward nature of this athletic contest bears a certain parallel with Moses' ascent to Mount Sinai where he did not directly see the Lord except his back (cf. Ex 33.23).

**Vs. 15: See to it that no one fail to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” spring up and cause trouble, and by it the many become defiled;**

*See to it* (*episkopeo*): alternately, “to watch *over* (*epi*),” as though divine *grace* or *charis* were situated below, an aerial view if you will. The only other New Testament occurrence of this verb is 1 Pt 5.2: “*Tend* the flock of God that is your charge.” In the verse at hand, such an exhortation with regard to *epi* is that (literally) people are not “lacking *from* (*apo*) the grace of God.”

Reference to the “root of bitterness” is from the LXX of Dt 29.18: “Lest there be in you a root springing up with gall and bitterness.” The Hebrew reads: “Lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit.” The context is Moses' third address to Israel.

*Cause trouble* (*enochleo*): *ochlos* translates as *crowd*, thus giving the image of a multitude (i.e., the “root of bitterness”) on the threshold of riot. The only other New Testament use of this verb is Lk 6.18: “and those who were *troubled* with unclean spirits were cured.”

The verb *phuo* (*to spring up*) refers to the growth of plants, etc. The only other New Testament occurrence is Lk 8.6 as well as vs. 8, the parable dealing with various seeds which fell to earth: “And some fell on the rock; and as it *grew up*, it withered away because it had no moisture.”

Such (vegetative) growth causes *defilement* (*miaino*, verb). “They themselves did not enter the praetorium so that they might not be *defiled*” [Jn 18.28].

**Vs. 16: that no one be immoral or irreligious like Esau who sold his birthright for a single meal.**

A continuation of the previous verse's theme where the author of Hebrews exhorts his listeners not fail to “obtain the grace of God.” Here as well as in the next verse, the author centers upon the example of one person, Esau.

Esau is both *immoral* ( pornos ) and *irreligious* ( bebelos ); the former connotes sexual immorality, also noted in 13.4: "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the *immoral* and adulterous." The latter refers to that which is pointless or worthless: "Avoid such *godless* chatter, for it will lead people into more and more *ungodliness* ( asebeia ) [ 2 Tim 2.16 ].

Reference is to Gen 25.29-34; evidence to Esau being pornos and bebelos does not seem present here, rather, the text speaks of gluttony and indifference regarding his birthright. "Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents" [ Gen 25.27 ].

*Birthright* ( prototokia ): the only New Testament use of this term which corresponds to the Hebrew berokah: "He took away my *birthright*; and behold, now he has taken away my blessing" [ Gen 27.36 ]. There is a play on the words berokah and berakah, the latter meaning *blessing*.

**Vs. 17: For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.**

"For you know" points to the audience's familiarity with the story of Esau and Jacob including the Old Testament as a whole. The context of this verse is Gen 27.30-40.

*Inherit* ( kleronemeo ): as in 1 Cor 6.9: "Flesh and blood cannot *inherit* the kingdom of God." Perhaps the author of Hebrews has in mind a contrast between Esau and Jesus Christ as *first-born* ( prototokos ). Esau sought a *blessing* or eulogia from his father Isaac, this term literally meaning "a saying well," that is an oral blessing. Cf. 6.7: "For land which has drunk the rain...receives a *blessing* from God."

The verb thelo ( *to desire* ) is used here with respect to blessing; it pertains more to a willing as opposed to an ardent longing.

*Rejected* ( apodokimazo ): the verb dokimazo ( pertains to something examined carefully ) prefixed with the preposition apo ( *away from* ). "The very stone which the builders *rejected* has become the head of the corner" [ Mt 21.42 quoting Ps 118.22-3 ]. In the case at hand, such rejection by Isaac was effected by feeling the skin of both Esau and Jacob.

*Repent* ( metanoia, noun ): despite his tears, Esau plotted to kill Jacob after his father's death: "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob" [ Gen 27.41 ]. Metanoia is a classical New Testament term, one of many examples being Mt 3.11: "I baptize you with water for *repentance*."

The verse at hand says that Esau *sought* ( ekzeteo ) Isaac's blessing/inheritance yet failed to obtain it even though Jacob deceived his father. Contrast the example of Esau with 11.6: "...that he rewards those who *seek* him."

**Vs. 18: For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest,** The author of Hebrews switches themes to Moses and Mount Sinai ( cf. Ex 19.12-22 ); it is interesting to keep in mind that the verses above which pertain to Esau come just before Jacob's dream at Bethel in chapter 28.

*Have come* ( proserchomai ): noted several times in Hebrews as 4.16: "Let us with confidence *draw near* to the throne of grace." Presumably this throne may be *touched*, the verb being psalaphao which also connotes handling, as if to feel the ripeness of a piece of fruit. Compare with the touching of Jesus Christ: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and *touched* with our hands, concerning the word of life" [ 1 Jn 1.1 ]. The Sinai episode uses touching with respect to the mountain: "Take heed that you do not go up into the mountain or *touch* the border of it; whoever *touches* the mountain shall be put to death" [ Ex 19.12 ]. The Hebrew verb nagah also applies to drawing near as well as touching.

The author of Hebrews gives four characteristics of Mount Sinai:

- 1) "blazing fire:" corresponds to "the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln" [19.18].
- 2) *darkness* (gnophos): the only New Testament use of this word which corresponds to the Hebrew choshek: "And when you heard the voice out of the midst of the *darkness*" [Dt 5.23].
- 3) *gloom* (zophos): usually applies to the nether world; there is no LXX use of this word. "For them the nether *gloom* of darkness has been reserved."
- 4) *tempest* (thuella): the only New Testament use of this term. "And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, *cloud* (hanan, Hebrew) and gloom" [Dt 4.11].

**Vs. 19: and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers entreat that no further messages be spoken to them.**

The conclusion of the sentence begun in vs. 18 and following the revelation to Moses on Mount Sinai.

*Trumpet* (salpigx): a term which connotes the immediate presence of the Last Day. Salpigx may be related to the Hebrew sophar as used with regard to Mt. Sinai: "And as the sound of the *trumpet* grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder" [Ex 19.19]. Also cf. Rev 1.10: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a *trumpet*." A trumpet is a musical instrument only, but in the verse at hand it is associated with *words* (rhema); cf. 1.3 for a discussion regarding the meaning of this term.

Contrast the two verbs paraiteomai (*entreat*) and prostithemi (*be spoken*): the first has the preposition para (*besides*), as if those making supplication were already present with God. The second has the preposition pros (*towards*) in the sense of *messages* (logos; compare with rhema) being addressed in their direction. This second verb literally means "to place to," "to add to."

**Vs. 20: For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned."**

*Order* (to diastellomenon; from the verb diastello): perhaps associated with the trumpet/rhema noted in the previous verse. "And he *charged* them to tell no one" [Mk 7.36].

The divine order is found in Ex 19.13: "No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live." This same verse contains the sentence "When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain." The author of Hebrews singles out *beast* (therion) as opposed to humans. This word which connotes something wild is applied to the Anti-Christ in Rev 11.7: "And when they have finished their testimony, the *beast* that ascends from the bottomless pit will make war upon them and conquer them and kill them." It is interesting that therion is used with regard to the Exodus scene because the Israelites kept domestic animals such as sheep, goats and cattle.

*Touch* (thiggano): cf. 11.28, and compare with psalaphao in vs. 18.

*Stoned* (lithoboleo): For another reference, cf. Mt 21.35: "And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another and *stoned* another."

**Vs. 21: Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear."**

*Sight* (to phantazomenon; from the verb phantazomai): the only New Testament occurrence of this verb; the noun phantasma derived from it means an *apparition* (cf. Mt 14.26).

Reference to the words of Moses is Dt 9.19: "For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure which the Lord bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the Lord hearkened to me that time also." The Greek for *fear* in the verse at hand is ekphobos (adjective), the preposition ek (*out, from*) intensifying this

sentiment. Note that “anger” in the Deuteronomy verse is used with *hot displeasure* or chemah. The only other New Testament occurrence of ekphobos: “For he did not know what to say, for they were *exceedingly afraid*” [Mk 9.6].

Moses *trembles* (entromos, adjective). “And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came *trembling*” [Lk 8.47].

**Vs. 22: But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,**

The first of three “comings” (pros-erchomai, as in 7.25, etc.) which are enumerated through vs. 24. The verse at hand contains three as distinct from Mount Sinai: Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem and angels. Perhaps Zion embraces the other two as well as “the assembly of the first-born” (vs. 23) and “Jesus” (vs. 24).

“Heavenly Jerusalem:” cf. Rev 21.2: “And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

“*Innumerable* (murias) angels:” “...the voice of many angels, numbering *myriads of myriads* and thousands of thousands” [Rev 5.11]. Compare with 11.12: “descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as the *innumerable* grains of sand by the seashore.” Here the word is anarithmetos, innumerable in the literal sense of the term.

*Festal gathering* (paneguris): the only New Testament use of this term, originally used in the context of an athletic contest, again reminiscent of the heavenly Jerusalem of Revelation.

**Vs. 23: and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,**

The second of three “comings,” this one continued from the previous verse and lists three groups:

1) *assembly* (ekkllesia): the familiar New Testament word meaning “church.” “I will proclaim your name to my brethren, in the midst of the *congregation* I will praise you” [2.12]. In the verse at hand, assembly consists of *first-born* or those who are prototokos as noted in 1.6: “And again, when he brings the *first-born* into the world.” This ekkllesia differs from the earthly one (“in heaven”); those in it are *enrolled* or apographo, literally, “to write off.” Cf. Lk 2.3: “And all went to be *enrolled*, each to his own city.” Also cf. Lk 10.20: “but rejoice that your names are *written* (eggrapho) in heaven.”

2) *judge* (krite) who is God. “You do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it and he will be the *judge*” [Jn 8.50].

3) *spirits* (pneuma): here, not only of the just but the just who have been made *perfect* or teleioo, a word along with its variations often noted in Hebrews which first occurs in 2.10: “...should make the pioneer of their salvation *perfect* through suffering.”

**Vs. 24: and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel.**

The last of the three “comings,” this one having two aspects:

1) Jesus as *mediator* (mesites): for another reference to this covenant, cf. 8.6: “...the covenant he *mediates* (noun) is better since it is enacted on better promises.”

2) “*sprinkled* (rhantizmos, noun) blood:” not just blood that was shed but that which was sprinkled or applied on the altar and people according to the Mosaic law. “By faith he kept the Passover and *sprinkled* the blood so that the Destroyer of the first-born might not touch them” [11.28]. Here the verb is proscheo; cf. this verse for the distinction between the two verbs. For another verse with rhantizo, cf. 1 Pt 1.2: “...sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for *sprinkling* with his blood.”

The author of Hebrews compares this sprinkled blood with that of Abel (presumably sprinkled) which is endowed with the ability to speak in the sense of giving witness: "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground" [Gen 4.10].

**Vs. 25: See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.**

The person who is speaking is obviously God, but Abel's blood "crying from the earth" may be included.

*Refuse* (paraitemai): cf. vs. 19: "and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers *entreat* that no further messages be spoken to them." A sound not unlike Abel's blood just noted; present active participle of "speaking" to indicate continuous addressing by God.

The author of Hebrews presents two forms of *escape* (ekpheugo):

- 1) Israel or when God had *warned* (chrematizo) them, that is, "on earth." This verb connotes the impartation of a divine message as well as giving a name or title. "For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was *instructed* by God" [8.5].
- 2) The that which pertains to the present (polu mallon, *much less*) or "from heaven." Compare Israel's *refusal* (paraitemai) with the *rejection* (apostrepho) existing in the present; also note the two prepositions para (*besides*, that is, on earth) and apo (*away from*, that is, from heaven), the latter considered worse by reason of the greater revelation.

**Vs. 26: His voice then shook the earth; but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven."**

Another comparison between heaven and earth, Israel and the Christian church.

"And the whole mountain quaked greatly" [Ex 19.18]: note that it was Sinai, not the earth as a whole, that quaked.

Two Old Testament verses are in mind here:

- 1) Jdg 5.4 (the Song of Deborah after having slain Sisera): "Lord, when you went forth from Seir, when you marched from the region of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, yes, the clouds dropped water."
- 2) Ps 68.8: "The earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain, at the presence of God; yon Sinai quaked at the presence of God, the God of Israel."

The words "yet once more" do not occur in both Hebrew verses; both tremble/quake before God passively, as it were, as opposed to being caused directly by God.

**Vs. 27: This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken, as of what has been made, in order that what cannot be shaken may remain.**

The author of Hebrews find importance in the phrase *yet once more* (eti hapax) and defines it in terms of a *removal* or metathesis; 7.12 uses this word in reference to a *change* in priesthood. Its focus is upon what is and is not *shaken* (saleuo) or Mount Sinai and heaven (i.e., Jesus Christ). The image resembles a sifting of that which is unstable to obtain that which *remains* (meino). Compare the use of saleuo here with Lk 22.31: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat."

**Vs. 28: Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe;**

The Greek for “let us be grateful” reads “let us have *gratitude* (charis).” It is *received* or *paralambano*; compare the use of *para* here with *para-itemomai* (*to refuse*) in vs. 25.

The author of Hebrews is clear in this verse with respect to that which is not subject to *saleuo*, i.e., a *kingdom* or *basileia*. “...then the *kingdom* of God has come upon you” [Mt 12.28].

*Worship* or *latreueo* (verb): cf. another use of this verb in 8.5: “They *serve* a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary.” In the verse at hand such worship is *acceptable* or *euarestos*, literally, “well pleasing.” “...to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and *acceptable* to God, which is your spiritual worship” [Rom 12.1].

Such worship involves *reverence* (*eulabeia*: “and he was heard for his *godly fear*,” 5.7) and *awe* (*deos*, the only use of this word in the New Testament), both terms suggesting a careful approach not unlike Israel at Mount Sinai.

### **Vs. 29: for our God is a consuming fire.**

A verse connected with the previous one almost by way of footnote yet intended to communicate the awesomeness of divine revelation from vss. 18 onwards. The author of Hebrews obviously has in mind Mount Sinai.

These words are taken from three Old Testament verses:

- 1) Dt 4.24: “For the Lord your God is a *devouring* fire, a jealous God.”
- 2) Dt 9.3: “Know therefore this day that he who goes over before you as a *devouring* fire is the Lord your God; he will destroy them and subdue them before you (etc.)”
- 3) Is 33.14: “Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?”

In the verse at hand, the verb *katanalisko* is used, the only New Testament occurrence. It used in the Deuteronomy verses (LXX) and is equivalent to jealousy.

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## **Chapter Thirteen**

### **Vs. 1: Let brotherly love continue.**

A statement just as brief as the concluding verse of Chapter Twelve.

*Philadelphia* is the term used here composed; it has the verb *phileo* which connotes the showing of affection. For another use of the noun, cf. 1 Pt 1.22: “Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere *love of the brethren*, love one another earnestly from the heart.” This verse contains the preposition *eis* (*into*), i.e., “*into philadelphia*.”

*Continue* (*meno*): as in 10.34: “...since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an *abiding* one.”

### **Vs. 2: Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.**

*Hospitality* (*philoxenia*): note the use of *phileo* as with *philadelphia* in the previous verse, this time shown towards those who are *strangers* (*xenos*), the adjective being contained in the same noun. Cf. Rom 12.13 for the only other New Testament occurrence: “Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice *hospitality*.”

*Neglect* (*epilanthanomai*): as in 6.10: “For God is not so unjust as to *overlook* your work (etc.)” Note the use of

the preposition *epi* (*upon*) which intensifies the verb *lanthanomai*.

*Unawares* (*lanthano*): the same verb as *epilanthanomai* as used just above minus the preposition *epi*. In the verse at hand, showing hospitality is taken for granted as part of the culture; the author of Hebrews thus shows that this gesture may include *entertaining* (*xenizo*) angels. The most common example is Gen 18.1-21, the three men whom Abraham receives. Note that after this hospitality they set off for Sodom and Gomorrah which is later destroyed. The Genesis text does not refer to Abraham entertaining them as angels.

**Vs. 3: Remember those who are in prison as though in prison with them; and those who are ill-treated since you also are in the body.**

Vss. three through five contain a series of exhortations; it is helpful to keep them in mind with allusion to the “angels” vis-a-vis Sodom and Gomorrah noted in the previous verse.

*Remember* (*mimnesko*): here equivalent to being in *prison with* (*sundeo*: literally, “to bind with”) those who are actually in prison. I.e., this form of remembrance centers upon *sun* (*with*) and keeps both parties on the same plane. Parallel this verse with Mt 25.36: “I was in prison and you came to me.”

*Mimnesko* also has a “sun” in union with persons who are *ill-treated* or *kakoucheo*. The only other use of this verb is in 11.37: “...destitute, afflicted, *ill-treated*.” It occurs towards the end of this chapter which gives examples from that “cloud of witnesses” who suffered “sun” much like those of the present time.

The author of Hebrews acknowledges that imprisonment and suffering ill-treatment are part of being *in the body* (*in somati*).

**Vs. 4: Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous.**

The second exhortation, this one pertaining to marriage which should be held *in honor* (*timios*).

*Marriage bed* (*koite*): for another definition: “Let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day...not in debauchery and *licentiousness*” [Rom 13.13].

Object of divine judgment: the *immoral* (*pornos*) and *adulterous* (*moichos*).

“Be sure of this, that no *fornicator* (*pornos*) or impure man or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God” [Eph 5.5]. For a reference concerning *moichos*: “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?...neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor *adulterers* nor sexual perverts” [1 Cor 6.9]. Note that both passages are situated within the context of inheritance and this with regard to the kingdom of God.

**Vs. 5: Keep your life free from love of money and be content with what you have; for he has said, “I will never fail you nor forsake you.”**

A third exhortation with regard to greed.

*Life* (*tropos*): more accurately, “manner of life” which involves a comprehensive moral stance in light of Christian teaching. For another use, cf. 1.1: “In many and various *ways* God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets.”

Such a *tropos* is two-fold:

- 1) *free from money* (*aphilarguros*): that is, not having a *philos...friendship...with* money. For the only other New Testament use, cf. 1 Tim 3.3: “no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and *no lover of money*.”
- 2) *content* (*arkeomai*): “*Be content* with your wages” [Lk 3.14]. In the verse at hand, such contentment is with

regard to *what you have* or *tois parousin*, better, “with those things that are present.”

The quotation is from Dt 31.6 which reads in full: “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear or be in dread of them: for it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you.” The context is God’s address to Moses just before he entrusted Joshua with care of the people. Note the two verbs: *aniemi* or *to fail* (literally, “to go up” and *eykataleipo*, *to desert*) are to be kept in mind as coming at the end of the Book of Deuteronomy just before Joshua leads Israel into the Promised Land.

**Vs. 6: Hence we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me?”**

*Confidently* (*tharreo*): present active participle; cf. Moses’ words to Joshua just after the quote from Dt 31.6 in vs. 7: “Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, ‘Be strong and of good courage.’” For another reference, cf. 2 Cor 7.16: “I rejoice because I have perfect *confidence* in you.”

The object of *tharreo* is based upon a quote from Ps 118.6: “With the Lord on my side I do not fear. What can man do to me?” In the verse at hand, *helper* (*boethos*) is the only New Testament occurrence of this noun. The Hebrew reads literally, “The Lord is “*to* (I-) me” or “in the direction towards me.”

**Vs. 7: Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith.**

A fourth exhortation, this with *remembrance* (verb: *mimnesko* again; cf. vs. 3) towards *leaders* or *hegeomai* (verb) or those in entrusted with governing the Christian community. Cf. vs. 17: “Obey your *leaders* and submit to them.” In the verse at hand, such leaders were responsible for speaking God’s *word* or *logos*. “The life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us” [1 Jn 1.2].

*Consider* (*anatheoreo*): literally, “have *theoria* back upon” which is closely related to a fuller sense of *mimnesko*. For the only other New Testament use, cf. Acts 17.23: “For as I passed along and *observed* the objects of your worship.” The object of *anatheoreo* in the verse at hand is the *ekbasis* (*outcome*) of the leaders’ *lives* (*anastrophe*), better, “the manner of life.” *Anastrophe* involves conduct of one’s life according to certain principles as in Gal 1.13: “For you have heard of my former *life* in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.”

*Imitate* (*memomai*): here with reference to the leaders’ faith. “Be *imitators* (noun) of me as I am of Christ” [1 Cor 11.1]. In the verse at hand, the Greek lacks “their:” “imitate the faith.”

**Vs. 8: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**

This sameness is to be understood in the context of the above mentioned exhortations and the church leaders who preached the *logos* of God. Vs. 8 lacks the future dimension and instead has *forever* or *eis tous aionas*, “into the *aion*” or into an indefinitely long period of time.

*Same* (*ho autos*): note that the Greek text has this with respect to the temporal dimensions of yesterday and today and does not apply it to “forever.”

**Vs. 9: Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings; for it is well that the heart be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefitted their adherents.**

A fifth exhortation taking place after the interlude, as it were, proclaiming Jesus Christ’s sameness.

*Led away* (*parapheromai*): literally, “to carry along, “lead away.” Note the preposition *para* (*besides*), as though such strange teachers ran parallel but not in accord with those of the Church. For another use of this verb: “Father, if you are willing *remove* this cup from me” [Lk 22.42].

*Diverse* (poikilos) and *strange* (xenos): in contrast to those which pertain to Jesus Christ. “So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles” [Eph 4.14].

*Well* (kalon): in the broader sense of kalos (*beautiful*). The author of Hebrews situates this well-ness in terms of the (singular) heart being *strengthened* (bebaioomai) by grace. “In order to *confirm* the promises given to the patriarchs” [Rom 15.8].

Contrast the singular charis (*grace*) with the multiple *foods* (broma) which are equivalent to the “diverse and strange teachings.”

*Adherents* (peripateo): literally, “to walk about.” For another use of this verb: “But when the disciples saw him *walking* on the sea” [Mt 14.25], that is, almost as though Jesus were taking a stroll on the sea.

**Vs. 10: We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.**

*Altar* (thusiasterion): cf. 7.13: “For the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe from which no one has ever served at the *altar*.” In the verse at hand, altar is closely related to persons (presumably priests) serving in the tent. The verb latreuo (*to serve*) as in 10.2 applies to worshippers: “If the *worshippers* had once been cleansed, they would no longer have any consciousness of sin.”

Those engaged in service/worship with regard to the *tent* (skene) belong to the Mosaic order of priesthood as distinct from that of Jesus Christ as noted in 8.2: “a minister in the sanctuary and the true *tent* which is set up not by man but by the Lord.”

*Right* (exousia): in the sense of being legal or lawful. “He has delivered us from the *dominion* of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” [Col 1.13].

**Vs. 11: For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.**

A contrast between “into the sanctuary” and “outside the camp.” The first has two instances of eis (*into*): as a preposition by itself and prefixed to the verb *brought* (eis-phero). The second is “*outside* (exo) the *camp* (parembole). “And they marched up over the broad earth and surrounded the *camp* of the saints and the beloved city” [Rev 20.9].

In the verse at hand, blood is extracted and allowed eis, whereas the bodies from which it came are placed exo. Reference to this practice is Lev 16.27: “And the bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall be carried forth outside the camp; their skin and their flesh and their dung shall be burned with fire.” The Hebrew for *atonement*—the reason for this regulation—is kiphurym; from the verb kaphar, *to cover*.

**Vs. 12: So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.**

The natural New Testament response to vs. 11 and keeping in mind Jn 19.17: “So they took Jesus and he *went out* (ex-erchomai) bearing his own cross to the place called in Hebrew Golgotha.”

The verse at hand mentions *gate* (pule) as opposed to camp in the previous verse; the same preposition exo (*outside*) is used. A gate suggests the presence of a city as opposed to the temporary notion of a camp.

Note the intimate connection between *suffered* (pascho) and *sanctify* (hagiazo). “For because he himself has *suffered* and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted” [2.18]. “For he who *sanctifies* and those who are *sanctified* have all one origin” [2.11]. Blood is that which binds the two together.

**Vs. 13: Therefore let us go forth to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured.**

A verse reminiscent of Mt 16.24: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

*Go forth* (exerchomai): note the preposition *ex* (*from*) prefixed to the verb in conjunction with *outside* (*exo*). Both are used with another preposition *to* (*pros*, in-the-direction-towards-which) or *pros* Jesus Christ. Here *parembole* (*camp*, as in vs. 11) is used instead of the implied city (cf. *pule/gate*, vs. 12).

*Abuse* (oneidismos): as in 11.26: "He considered *abuse* suffered for the Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt."

**Vs. 14: For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come.**

This verse is reminiscent of 11.10: "For he looked forward to the *city* (*polis*, that is, not a "camp") which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The verb for *lasting* is *meno* which also means "to remain."

*Seek* (*epizeteo*): as in 11.14: "For people who speak thus make it clear that they are *seeking* a homeland." *Patris* is the word for *homeland* which is more familial compared with *polis*. Such a city is fulfilled in Rev 21.2: "And I saw the holy *city*, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God."

**Vs. 15: Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.**

This "*through* (*dia*) him" *sacrifice* (*thusia*) takes place outside the camp (cf. 13). "...to put away sin by the *sacrifice* of himself" [9.26]. In the verse at hand, *thusia* is one of praise which is *continually* (*dia pantos*) which literally means "through all." Note the second use of the preposition *dia*, the first being with respect to "him."

"Fruit of lips" is reminiscent of Hos 14.2: "Take with you words and return to the Lord; say to him, "Take away all iniquity; accept that which is good and we will render the fruit of our lips." In this verse the Hebrew for "fruit" reads "bulls."

*Acknowledge* (*homologeo*): with respect to God's name. "If you *confess* with your lips that Jesus is Lord" [Rom 10.9].

**Vs. 16: Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.**

A sixth exhortation, the last one being in vs. 5.

*Neglect* (*epilanthanomai*): note the preposition *epi* (*upon*) prefixed to the verb which intensifies the meaning, that is, the sense of forgetting; cf. vs. 2: "Do not *neglect* to show hospitality to strangers." The object of this verb is two-fold:

- 1) *to do good* (*eupoiia*, noun): the only New Testament occurrence of this word.
- 2) *to share* (*koinonia*, noun): a classic New Testament term to demonstrate the fellowship enjoyed by the Christian community, this being the only time it occurs in Hebrews. "What you have" is missing in the Greek text.

*Pleasing* (*euaresteo*): the only other New Testament use is 11.5: "Now before he was taken he was attested as having *pleased* God." The object of this verb is *sacrifices* or *thusia* as used in the previous verse.

**Vs. 17: Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you.**

A seventh exhortation, this one with respect to *leaders* (*hegeomai*, verb) as in vs. 7, again possibly referring to

leaders of the Christian community.

*Keeping watch* (agrupneo): in vs. 7 the leaders “spoke the logos of God;” here their watch resembles that of Mk 13.33: “Take heed, *watch*; for you do not know when the time will come.” It is precisely because of this diligence that the author of Hebrews exhorts his audience to obey and submit to them.

Note that the leaders exercise agrupneo over *souls* (psuche) as opposed to government in the conventional sense. They have a strict relationship between their *account* (logos) which ties in with their other function of speaking the logos of God just noted.

*Joyfully* (charis): literally, “with joy.”

*Not sadly* (me stenazo): literally, “not *groaning*.” “...*groan* inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons” [Rom 8.23].

*No advantage* (alusiteles): the only occurrence of this term in the New Testament.

**Vs. 18: Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.**

*Pray* (proseuchomai): note the preposition pros (*towards*) used with the other preposition peri (“*for* us”), as though such direction-towards-which surrounded (peri) us.

*Conscience* (suneidesis): literally, a “*knowing-together*” (sun or *with*) as noted in 10.22: “our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil *conscience*.” In the verse at hand, such conscience is *clear* or kalos (alternately “beautiful”).

*To act* (anastrepho): as noted in 10.33: “and sometimes being partners with those so *treated*.” In the verse at hand, this verb is used with the adverb *honorably* or kalos which parallels the adjective “clear.”

**Vs. 19: I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.**

*Urge* (parakaleo): note the use of this verb with *more earnestly* or perissoteros which has the prefix peri. “But *exhort* one another every day” [3.13].

*Restored* (apokathistemi): “Elijah does come first to *restore* all things” [Mk 9.12]. In the verse at hand, such restoration is done to the author of Hebrews, that is, passively.

**Vs. 20: Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,**

This blessing continues into the next verse. Note the parallel between “God of peace” and “*shepherd* (poimen) of the sheep.” “I am the good *shepherd*” [Jn 10.11].

*Brought again* (anago): the notion of “again” is misleading which would almost imply that the Lord Jesus already had been among the dead. This verb means a leading from a lower to a higher point. “And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother and *led* them *up* a high mountain” [Mt 17.1].

“Eternal covenant” (diatheke): first noted in 7.33: “This makes Jesus the surety of a better *covenant*.” Eionios is the adjective for *eternal*.

**Vs. 21: equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

*Equip* (katartizo): as in 11.3 which has a different meaning: “By faith we understand that the world was *created* by the word of God.”

*Will* (thelema): that is, of God. “So that you may do the *will* of God and receive what is promised” [11.36]. In the verse at hand, thelema is involved with doing which in the Greek reads “*into* (eis) the doing.”

*Do* and *working* are from the same verb poieo: the former is active by persons and the latter is effected by God.

*Pleasing* (euairetos): alternately as “acceptable” as in 12.28: “and thus let us offer to God *acceptable* worship.”

*Forever and ever* (eis tous eionas [ton aionon]): literally, “into the ages [of ages].” Thus glory is presented as a dynamic element lasting for an indefinitely long period of time.

**Vs. 22: I appeal to you, brethren, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.**

The last verse brought to an end this letter judging by the fairly typical conclusion. Vss. 22-5 form an appendix, as it were.

*Appeal* (parakaleo): as in vs. 19 (*urge*). The object of this verb is the author’s “logos of *exhortation*” (paraklesis), a noun derived from the same verb.

**Vs. 23: You should understand that our brother Timothy has been released with whom I shall see you if he comes soon.**

*Released* (apoluo): obviously from prison or some type of custody. This verb has a wide variety of meanings in the New Testament, most of which have to deal with sending from one place to another, usually with a moral understanding. “And if she *divorces* her husband and marries another, she commits adultery” [Mk 10.12].

One reference among several pertaining to Timothy: “A disciple was there named Timothy” [Acts 16.2]. Timothy had a Jewish mother and Greek father (also, cf. vs. 1).

**Vs. 24: Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings.**

*Greet* (aspazomai): “but having seen it and *greeted* it from afar” [11.13]. The object here are *leaders* (hegeomai) and “saints,” the former as in vss. 7 & 17.

**Vs. 25: Grace be with all of you. Amen.**

*Grace* (charis): the verb “to be” is lacking in the Greek text which reads literally, “the grace with all you.”