

SHORT COMMENTARY

- I. The mediation of revelation to Israel is greater in the Son (New Covenant) than it was in angels for the Son came to earth and revealed God as a man (1:1-2:18).
- A. Christ the ultimate speaker and actor for God (1:1-14).

This Son was the ultimate revealer of God's word to Israel, who has spoken⁹² in these last days, i.e., the Messianic age (1:1-2).

This was to be contrasted to the former ages, when the Old Covenant was given to the "fathers in the prophets in many portions and many ways" (1:1). This was the revelation of the old covenant at Sinai, brought by angels, God's messengers. This new revelation was not brought by messengers, but was brought by Himself, in the person of His Son.⁹³

He has appointed Jesus the heir of all things. This means that all things are summed up in Him; judgment, John 5; revelation, John 1, and the plan of God, Phillipians 2. He made the ages⁹⁴, that is, God's plan for creation, including the Old Covenant picture, and the New Covenant reality, as the message of the book will display.

In 1:3, it states He is the perfect image of God. (See Gen. 1:26). Adam was to be that image, but was not the seed of God, nor was he obedient. His word was displayed as powerful.⁹⁵

At the end of 1:3, following the same track as John 1 (Jesus as the perfect revelation of God), he points out that this revealer also functioned as priest. The priest designation included God representing Himself to man, while previously this was the function of the prophet, and the priest normally represented man to God. This will be the main theme of the author's book, to show that Jesus, the Son, was revealer of God a major function of the high priest (cf. 3:1). The

⁹²Note here that God "has spoken" is in the perfect tense, implying that He continues to speak. This is, as is shown in the appendix to this professor's dissertation (The Author of Hebrews Use of Melchizedek from Genesis 14), indicating that Christ's words are still effectively speaking to us, though He spoke them long ago.

⁹³Note here that "Son" is without the article, stressing quality. It is SON revelation.

⁹⁴the word here is *aion* which is signifying time, not "world" as is so often translated.

⁹⁵"Word of power" here is the word "dunamis" used in Acts 1:8 to demonstrate that the power given to Jesus Christ would also be given to apostles. It is not power given to the people, but to Jesus and to those who were speaking the words of Jesus.

purification of sins was the function of the priest, as any O.T. reader would readily comprehend. However, the author raises the level somewhat, as he states that this Son, following the purification ritual, sat down. The Old Testament priest had no where to sit down, and continually offered sacrifices, indicating that he was never through. Further, this Son's position when sitting down is at the right hand of the Father, showing His authority as the One who acted for God. The act was completed on behalf of God.

1:4 begins the topic which will follow now through 1:14. The Son, revealer of God, and priest of the ultimate sacrifice is better than the angels as revealers, since He came and represented God as ruler (image, Son) over all creation. The angels, of course, were the messengers of the Old Covenant (Acts 7:53, Gal. 3:19). They were considered representatives of God to some degree. The author's purpose is to show the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old Covenant in that Son (God Himself), the ultimate representative of God, brought the revelation, not angels, who were only messengers. Thus the Son brings the revelation to Israel. So as Israel was the great national mediator of God, they needed a mediator in the Son to bring them the revelation of Himself, that of God.

In 1:5 is the use of Psalm 2. Psalm 2 speaks of the King as the image or son of God. He was to be the representative of God to the people. It clearly speaks of the ultimate King, the Seed of the woman who would rule for God and put down the nations. This Son accomplished this. The deliverers of the Old Covenant on behalf of God did not do that. They were messengers only.

1:6 is the use of Psalm 97:7 to show all who would be the representatives of God (angels, men) are to worship God. 1:7 is a contrast. Angels are only ministers while the throne of God's Son is forever and ever. Thus this mediator to Israel is greater than the angels of the Old Covenant.

The summary is in 1:13-14. The author moves to Psalm 110, which appears to be the theme of his book. Here YHWH tells David's Lord that He is to sit at God's right hand (see 1:3) until He has placed all things under His feet. (Genesis 1:26, 28, Gen. 3:15, Psalm 8). The final verse shows that angels are the ministering spirits to God, sent to render deliverance (the final cycle which brings the New Heart, Deut. 30:1-6) to the saints. This is important to the reader for now he can see the relative importance of God's administration. The Son has brought the ultimate revelation, angels still continue to aid the saints on behalf of God.

In this chapter, the author shows that Christ was the very image (Genesis 1:26) of God Himself (1:1-3), who God chose to inherit Sonship, i.e., ultimate kingship as in Psalm 2 (1:4-9), who will exist forever and subdue all God's enemies (1:10-14).

- B. Warning: The need to pay attention to the new revelation through Son is the need to recognize the mediator of revelation to Israel (2:1-4).

Chapter 2 then begins with a warning, if the old covenant was to be taken so seriously, and violations of ignorance were punished so severely, then how much more will this revelation from a Son, the ultimate King, mete out a just recompense for those who ignore it (2:1-2). The deliverance here, and in 1:14 are the cycle referred to in Deut. 30:1-6. This deliverance was the deliverance which was promised, that of a new heart.

For this word had been witnessed by disciples (2:3), then had been attested by signs, wonders,⁹⁶ and miracles during the apostolic period. This is the administration of the New Covenant as in John 14:26, 16:13. The words of Jesus were carried by the apostles to the people by the Holy Spirit. This was the fulfillment of the word written in their hearts. It was the Word which created the new heart/life (John 5:24).

C. The necessity of God making the Son lower than angels (2:5-18).

Now in the rest of this section (2:5-18), the author takes on the argument of why this Son, in heaven had to come down to be a man. For all the readers had witnessed was this physical body, and that was slain.

The author points out that from the earliest (Gen. 1:28), God's plan was to have man subject all of creation under his feet. Adam had failed in the garden, since he had obeyed a serpent who was to be under his order. The author notes that this was obviously not completed at the time of his writing (2:8). The reason the author quotes the Psalmist is to show that the ultimate man, along with Psalm 110, was awaiting that time of subjection, since being made a man. But Jesus, is the One who would do this, and He had been made a man so that He might die for all, bring many sons to glory, deliver from the devil and the fear of death (2:8-16).

This is really a development of Genesis 3:15. The seed of the woman was to be obedient (the second Adam), but would be bruised on the heel undeservedly. It would take His death to crush the serpent. His resurrection would be the result of His obedience, God's vindication that the obedient One would rule.

The reference to Psalm 22:22 is a reference to the Messiah (David in his messianic role) speaking of those who believe as his brothers. Thus the Messiah

⁹⁶"Signs and wonders" is the same wording used in Acts to characterize those gifts of power given to Jesus and the Apostles to vindicate them and the Word. "Works of power" here is the word "dunamis" used in Acts 1:8 to demonstrate that the power given to Jesus Christ would also be given to them. It is not power given to the people, but to those who were speaking the words of Jesus.

would be accompanied by those who had faith in God through Him. Verse 13 and 14 are from Isaiah 8:17-18. Isaiah and his children are physical, but also spiritual children. Isaiah has just pronounced judgment on Ahaz and his children are representative of a remnant who trusts in the Lord during the time of judgment on the nation. Hebrews is pointing out that the believers are the children of God due to their trust in Him. He is beginning to point out the remnant theme. While the nation is apostasizing as it was in Ahaz' day, God is calling a remnant out who believe, as Isaiah and his children.

Verse 14 indicates that God partook of flesh and blood so that He might overcome the serpent, who brought death (Gen. 3). Because of the fear of that judgment (Old Covenant condemned man, made him deserving of death) who were under the slavery of the Old Covenant and the Old Testament which offered no hope in itself, but looked only to a new heart.

Verse 16 is for the point of finishing up the redemption theme. Angels were only messengers. The object of God's deliverance was mankind, particularly the seed of Abraham, Israel in Deut. 30:6.

Now that He has done this, He takes His role as the ultimate of High Priests, and is able to aid all the tempted (2:17-18). Since He was required to be a man in order to reverse the role of the serpent as ruler, and bring many, who through trust in Him, became brothers, there was still the requirement that this Son became a priest. A priest is one who ministers to God on behalf of the people, a mediator. Now having brought the revelation of God (Apostle) He must be a High Priest in order to minister to God on behalf of the people.

II. The Superiority of Christ over the Old Covenant (3:1-10:39).

A. Christ the superior leader over Moses of the Old Covenant in leading them to a rest (3:1-4:16).

The contrast shifts in Chapters 3-4, to that of leadership. Beginning in Chapter 3, there will be seen the leadership of Moses and the nation Israel under him, and the final entry into the land under Joshua. They will be warned not to make the same mistake that the people made at Kadesh-Barnea, reject their leader.

1. Christ superior over Moses (3:1-6).

The point of verses 1-6 here is that Moses was faithful as a servant within the house, but the builder of the house is God (v. 4). Now Moses was simply a 'type' (Deut. 18:15) indicating what was to come later, that is, Christ, (v.5), who came and was faithful as a Son (1:2). His point is that those readers, believers are part of that house of Christ, that proceeds under His leadership, if they don't abandon Him.

This section begins in 3:1 where Jesus is identified as an apostle, or messenger, of God as well as a High Priest. Moses in chapters 3-4 is the example of the apostle, messenger, or speaker for God, while the High priest issue begins in chapter 5.

Verse 2 speaks of Jesus and Moses were both faithful. Jesus was the prophet of the New Covenant, as was Moses of the Old Covenant. Israel is the house spoken of here. Moses was the servant of God who was part of Israel. Christ, as God, was the builder of Israel. The Israel spoken of here is not all believers. The author is speaking of those who are of the physical seed and the spiritual seed (belief). This house is true Israel (See Romans 9:1ff.).

In verse 5 it displays that Moses' faithfulness was partial indicator of the ultimate covenant, the New Covenant. In verse 6, the author points out that the difference between Christ and Moses is the difference between servant and Son. The benefits of the house, now a faithful remnant, can be accomplished only on those who follow the Son, as on those who followed Moses as a servant.

2. Warning on disobedience after the fashion of Moses' leadership (3:7-4:16).

Now the author quotes from the Old Testament, concerning the Jewish nation at Kadesh Barnea. His point is that the nation of Israel during that present age was no different than the nation back at Kadesh-Barnea, and that they had rejected God's revelation and were not proceeding into the land once more, this time under Christ and were staying under the Old Covenant (3:7-11). Here the author uses a Psalm (after the initial landing in the land under the Old Covenant) and shows that the Old Covenant people were still being called to enter a rest. It was not there, and in fact, they had rejected it.

The author then warns that they could have in their group of believers one who would like to join that group who are not proceeding on with the new revelation (v. 12-15). Essentially, he states that we are partakers and continue to be partakers if we stay with Christ, not the apostate nation as they were in the wilderness. The encouragement here is the encouragement of sharing the benefits *in Christ*. This is not general encouragement.

He clearly points out that the Jewish nation that rebels today against Christ, is the very same nation that had to be chastised by God in the wilderness. (vv. 16-19). The verse 16 should read, "for some hearing provoked, but not all those who came out of Egypt by Moses." Thus the

author is stating that not all Israel rejected Moses at Kadesh-Barnea. Caleb and Joshua were accepting. It was they who were allowed to proceed to the promised land. Now they were at the point of accepting the benefits of the rest, yet rejected Moses. In other words, they rejected what he led them to. These believers were now afraid of the giants, and were asking to go back to their past (the Old Covenant).

The point is that there are some believers in this group that are having a hard time leaving Judaism and the Old Covenant. They would tend to have a belief that the millennium and the promises were part and parcel of Judaism, and if they left it, they would not receive them. What the author is pointing out is that back at Kadesh-Barnea, the body of Judaism (except Caleb and Joshua) were the ones who were disobedient. Thus it becomes a necessity, if one is going to obey God to leave this judged group today, as it was yesterday. For they are full of unbelief.

He increases his warning now in Chapter 4, and describes the rest which those who abandon Christ will lose.

It becomes necessary at this point to define some of the terms. First of all, works must be defined. Works within the context of Hebrews are not what the 20th Century believer thinks of works. In Hebrews, works are the 'works of the Law.' It was primarily the sacrifices, and other rituals that one had to do to keep himself holy. If he did not do the prescribed 'works', he was not a sanctified person. Basically then the law was a system of 'works.' The individual was never free from the guilt of sin, for he had to continually sacrifice. This conclusion comes from the use of 'works' in Hebrews. Never is it in an 'earning of salvation' sense, but always in the sense that the believer was continually 'working' to place his sacrifice on the altar and receive mercy from God.

Now it follows from this that we must define the rest that is offered here. It is not millennial rest, except in an ultimate sense. It is not eschatological rewards, although this does not negate their reality. What rest Christ is offering here is the rest from the 'works of the Law.' Since He has done it all (Ch. 10), one can now rest from sacrifices, and the guilt that accompanied a temporary sin exposing law.

4:3 points out that the believers enter that rest. That is, when one believes in the self-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, he has entered the rest. He no longer has to work or worry about sin. 4:10 essentially repeats this doctrine. The believer has rested from putting forth one iota of work or guilt for his sin. Christ has finally paid it all. The sacrifices never removed sin, but they were necessary to look forward to Him. Thus the believer had to 'work' in this temporary mode, to constantly bring his sin before himself.

Now Chapter 4 continues to point out that some enter the rest (belief) and some do not (unbelief). Thus we have (believing remnant) and they have not (Jewish nation) (4:1-6).

Verse one indicates that fear that the New Covenant believer, might continue in his own sacrificial "works" thus rejecting that Christ had completed them. Verse 2 indicates that the word through Jesus needs to be accepted just like the word of God to those at Kadesh Barnea. While there were giants in the land, there is opposition also here to these believers, yet it needs to be confirmed by faith in God's word.

Verse 3 speaks of those who have believed (perfect tense) indicating the ones who believed and continue to believe enter that rest. The author goes back to Genesis to indicate that God had finished His works in Genesis 1. From that point man was on a movement to enter the same rest that God had. Clearly under the Old Covenant man had not entered it (v. 5). Now under the New Covenant he enters it. He has the new life, not the life of the Adamic flesh, forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Spirit, not the physical breath.

He points out by quoting the Psalms that David looked forward to this day, since he recognized that the rest Joshua gave them was not the ultimate rest(4:7-8). Here he speaks of the fact that we are in the Messianic age. He states that the Sabbath rest remains after David, and is present now (4:9-10).

Further, we must be careful that all those who have claimed to be entering that rest, not slip back into resting on the non-valid sacrifices, or Judaism, which is under judgment. For God's word will determine the hearts of all of you, even if you seek to hide it (4:12-13). God's word here is the Old Testament and Jesus' word. The point is that God's word will judge, and Jesus' words will definitely judge them. Since God's word still speaks.

In a similar fashion to the way the author closed off chapter 1, he now closes off chapter 4, that is, that this high priest, Christ, is superior to Moses, He has passed through the heavens, and we may find help with Him. Here the author summarizes all of what he has previously stated. Jesus became a man to conquer the serpent, and make us brothers. He suffered just as these believers are suffering for their faith. But now this High Priest is able, since He is a man, yet God, may now mediate for the believer and aid Him through his struggle, that is through His word and the impartation of it to the believers heart.

B. Christ the High Priest of men superior to a high priest over Israel (5:1-10:39).

Now the author moves to the core of his argument, that Jesus is a high priest in every sense, and here in the sense of an ultimate high priest. He will compare Him with all the priests of Israel, their duties, their covenants, and will demonstrate that Christ surpasses them all. This will convince them of two points, first that He needs to be accepted as such by Israel (like Melchizedek) and second that this High Priest is in place right now to mediate for them as the faithful remnant.

1. The nature of a high priest (5:1-4).

First, the qualifications of a high priest are laid out. 5:1 illustrates that a high priest must be taken from among men in order to serve men in things pertaining to God. The second condition is found in verse 4 and regards the appointment to the office. Thus it is stated, Aaron did not take the position unto himself, but was appointed.

Verse 1 states that the high priest offered gifts (praise) and sacrifices for sins (the ministry of God to the people).

Verse 2 indicates that the priest can deal with the people, since he is weak also. The point is that the priest shares in the flesh, knowing the temptations, etc. that one must suffer. This is the comparison of the weakness of the flesh with the superiority of God. This Old Covenant priest had the same problems as the people he served. He even had to offer sacrifices for his own sin. Secondly the author points out in verse 4 that he had to be chosen (as was Aaron⁹⁷) as was Melchizedek.

2. Christ fulfills the ultimate High Priest (5:4-10).

Now, the author points out that Christ fulfilled these qualifications. First, He was a Son, the ruler, the representative of God, then He was appointed priest in Psalm 110. First, He was appointed (v.6), not according to the line of Aaron, but according to the Order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110). Secondly, He was a man ("in the days of His flesh"), and "offered up prayers and supplications." This indicates that the believers here share with Christ, His suffering. Verse 8 indicates that Christ was obedient, to identify the believers there with the suffering that Christ also participated in. Remember He was rejected by the nation, and they also will be rejected by the nation, as they presently were.

⁹⁷Refer to Korah's rebellion which was over the question of whether any Levite, as Korah was, could be a High Priest. The answer clearly was one of being chosen by God as in the case of Aaron.

In verse 9, this suffering resulted in completion, and in His case, He became the One who brought forth the eternal deliverance fulfilling the Genesis 3:15 prophecy. This one thus (Psalm 110) was *chosen* as the priest after Melchizedek.

The author returns to his point about Christ being according to the order of Melchizedek, but hesitates for a moment to point out the importance of their attention to Him. The author's point is that before he mentions Melchizedek he needs to address their dullness of hearing.⁹⁸

3. Warning: Problem of returning to the old high priest, after having participated in the order of the New High Priest (5:11-6:12).

Now the author moves to impress upon his readers the import of their actions with respect to this high priest.

First, it becomes necessary to make a small explanation of the basis of the problem which the readers were suffering.

These men were on a dispensational cliff. The old covenant days were over. While they had proceeded into the new dispensation (accepted Jesus as Messiah, received the Holy Spirit of the New Covenant, become part of the church, etc.) there were strong questions over how they were going to inherit the promises if they were separate from Judaism. In Chapter 3-4, the author explained that they were in the same situation as those at Kadesh-Barnea, it was a time of judgment, and the righteous needed to separate himself or be judged.

However, when they had been brought up in the old covenant, in the sacrifices, and had seen their validity according to the revealed word, they were obviously having trouble forsaking the old ways. For the duration of their whole life, these sacrifices had contained some value for covering their sins. It was difficult to leave something that would give you so much relief, year after year (10:1), or day after day (10:11).

But one must, simply because the work had been completed by Christ. To continue was to say that it had not been enough. This was the dispensational problem. The 'old testament saint' must leave his crutches and proceed on in faith in the unseen sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The textual clue here is the use of the Greek word 'telios.' This is translated differently by the translators depending upon whom it is used with. If it is used with Christ, then it is translated 'perfect' (5:9). If it is used with men it is translated 'mature' (5:14, 6:1). However, one loses the

⁹⁸This is inclusio. "Dullness" here is repeated in 6:12.

author's meaning by not translating it literally in all cases, and letting the chips fall where they may.

- a. The readers are rebuked for not leaving elementary principles and moving on in the age of Christ (5:11-14).

In 5:9, the author's argument is that Jesus was made complete by the things He suffered. Thus He was able to save us (offer us aid) as an obedient Son. The author goes on to say that these men have become hard of hearing since they do not appropriate the full value of this truth in their lives. While they should be teaching the value of Christ's high priestly aid, they are still having to be taught themselves. Thus they are not complete or perfect (5:14), since they have not appropriated this truth entirely for themselves (that is, left the crutch of the sacrifices). Therefore they need to "press on to completeness", that is, find in Christ the "source of eternal salvation" or the source of their power to become involved in the process of sanctification.

The elementary principles of the oracles of God is the Old Covenant anticipation of the New Covenant. Milk is the simple principles. The meat is the new covenant. The babies are those who are still dealing with the picture and not the reality. Verse 14 states that milk is for the complete, i.e., those who share the completeness which Jesus accomplished in 5:9. The good and evil is the difference, not between moral works as such, but between those who recognize Jesus and those who do not. Righteousness is imputed righteousness through Jesus Christ, clearly imparted in chapter 2.

- b. The readers are urged to leave the elementary teaching about Judaism's place in the new order (6:1-3).

Now beginning in Chapter 6:1-3, the author encourages them to leave these elementary principles, those principles of Judaism which are examined under the light of Christianity, i.e., the Messiah.⁹⁹ Specifically he lists "repentance from dead works" (leaving the sacrificial works system) (9:14), "faith toward God" (cf. Ch. 11), etc. Verse 2 appears to indicate many doctrines which were being questioned concerning the foundation of Christianity in the apostolic age. Now having pointed out God's will (6:3) in all this (cf. 2:4, 10:36), for this is what they were seeking; God's will, he moves on to the negative portion of the warning passage (6:4-6).

⁹⁹The "word of the beginning" in v. 1 could refer to Gen. 3:15 or the words of Christ initially.

- c. The case of those who have once been partakers of the new order but have rejected it is explained: They are prevented from being repentant, and rejoining the new order (6:4-6).

The qualifications of those who need the warning are first given. They are those "who have once been enlightened" (10:32) (understood clearly the teachings of Jesus as Messiah), "have tasted (2:9) of the heavenly gift" (have participated in the sacrifice given from heaven through Jesus Christ, i.e., conversion; 'gifts' is always used in Hebrews as a synonymous term with offering), and have been "made partakers of the Holy Spirit" (the indwelling Holy Spirit would have set apart clearly a partaker in the New Covenant, cf. Jer. 31), "and have tasted the good word of God" (cf. 1:3,11:3, 12:19 as word is related to the revelation of God in power, i.e., the creation, the establishment of the covenant, the dispensational change with His Son) and "the powers¹⁰⁰ of the age (aionas) to come" (here the Messianic age which began with Christ's death, cf. also 1:2).

Thus, in summary the qualifiers are those who have been 'old covenant saints' but have clearly crossed the line into receiving the ultimate sacrifice, Jesus Christ, and have become members of the New Covenant.

Now what happens to them. It must again be repeated as in chapters 3-4, that the Jewish nation, the Jewish religious system is under judgment for the rejection of Jesus Christ and His revelation. They will be punished as the Israelites were punished for 40 years in the wilderness under Moses. As Caleb and Joshua did, these believers must separate if they desire to avoid the judgments that must fall on God's nation and His people.

Having said that, these qualifiers in 6:4-5, who have fallen away, i.e., gone back into the Judaistic system, and rejected the sole salvation of the Christian system, will not be able to repent again (come back to the Christian system). The reason is simple, they become just like the Jewish system that they are joining, they are guilty of crucifying the Christ again, as they reject Him and His sacrifice. Further, the Jews shamed Christ openly, since the Jews were His own people. Here this one qualifies as he repeats the

¹⁰⁰ *dunamis* here is the use of the word to designate the Lord's power and apostles power to administrate the word in this new age.

process that the Jews so completely finished. Thus his punishment is that he is stuck within this old order, this order under judgment, this order cursed by God. He will never enjoy the benefits of the New Covenant, since He is not part of the New Order. This was similar to the rejection of Moses. There was no deliverance for those who rejected the land. They would not see it. This implies the same as it did in the Old Covenant. Those who rejected it could not come into its promises in this life. They can never appropriate the realization of the spiritual promises which the New covenant made to them. They will never realize any benefits in this life.

- d. Illustration: Ground that brings forth what it was intended for (the new order) is blessed, but if it brings forth thorns and thistles (opposes the new order) it must be burned (eliminated) (6:7-8).

In verses 7-8 he gives an illustration of this very point. He states that the Jewish nation has been 'watered' regularly, with the purpose of bringing forth fruit to aid other saints. However, if they do not bring forth fruit, but bring forth thorns, then the ground must be burned off, so that the fruit can grow. Thus, this nation must be judged since it opposes the purpose of God in the ages. Any apostate will be part of that judgment, since he too opposes the moving forth of the new order. *Adokimos* is used here as in 1 Cor. 9:27, meaning disapproved. Even the apostle Paul was fearful of being excluded from blessing.

- e. Reassurance: The author is convinced that they will proceed on as is the normal occurrence for the saint (6:9-12).

The writer now voices hope, and expectation that they would now proceed on as would be expected of those who have accepted Christ. Now (vv. 9-12) he encourages them that he has seen them bring forth fruit for the aid of the body of saints (v. 10), and hopes that they continue that type of perseverance. The word here "deliverance" is not that of initial salvation, but that of temporal deliverance, ultimately into the kingdom. His point is that the things that accompany deliverance are suffering and endurance (9).

In verses 13ff., the author points out that they will inherit the promises by pressing on to completeness, and not become dull of hearing.

4. The new High Priest superior to Abraham, the order of Melchizedek (6:13-7:28).

The author now, having warned them, moves on to the issue at hand, Christ, after the order of Melchizedek.

- a. God made a promise to Abraham by the greatest authority He knew, Himself (6:13-16).

For the inheritance of the promises is sure, since God made an oath to Abraham, and Abraham through patience obtained the promise (Genesis 22). This describes Abraham as he, through the suffering of obedience (taking his son to sacrifice) received the oath, which at that time was based only on God's word.

- b. God made an oath that Christ is a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (6:17-20).

And now God has interposed a greater oath, that of a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (6:17-20). The oath which they are talking about here is not the oath in Genesis 22, but must follow that in Psalm 110, since 7:28 refers to it coming after the Law. Thus while they may be assured that they will inherit the promises through the seed of Abraham, they can be sure of Christ's work in the heavenlies, entering within the veil as a forerunner, due to the oath concerning the order of Melchizedek.

- c. Melchizedek defined (7:1-3).

Now the author gets to the meat of what he has been alluding to. Who is this Melchizedek and what is the significance to his argument about Christ.

- 1) Melchizedek blessed Abraham the conqueror (7:1).

First (7:1), he points out that Melchizedek was, King of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. Notice the points in this verse alone:

1. King of Salem (Jerusalem would be of great significance here to these Old Covenant Jews).
2. Priest of the Most High God (In the context of Genesis, this title seems to have a greater scope of reign than YHWH which would be the covenant God, of interest to Jews alone).

3. Abraham had slaughtered kings (was therefore higher ranking in God's scheme) yet was blessed by another king (who therefore was higher than Abraham).

2) Abraham submits to Melchizedek, king of righteousness, and king of peace (7:2).

Now in verse 2, Abraham submits to this one, willingly gives him a tenth of spoils. He gives the spoils back to God, who gave him the victory. Thus, this Melchizedek is an intermediary between Abraham and God. Now Abraham is an intermediary to all the people of the earth from Genesis 15 and following. Yet this one is an intermediary for Abraham. He is positionally higher.

3) Melchizedek has no recorded genealogy, parentage, beginning of days, nor end of life, but like the Son of God is a priest perpetually (7:3).

Verse three provides an interesting insight into the book of Genesis. For in Genesis, Melchizedek stands in contrast to Abraham and his line, in that he has no father or mother, genealogy. This would mean first of all that Melchizedek is outside of the line of Abraham, the promised seed. Secondly, he does not seem to be included in the birth - death motif of Genesis, yet is superior to those who are mentioned there. Further, being a man (5:1 requires this) he has no continuity, no genealogy to pass his priesthood onto. This illustrates that his priesthood is not genealogically inherited, not eliminated by death or passed on in a relationship similar to the seed of Abraham. If Melchizedek's priesthood, indicated in Genesis to be essential to the blessing of Abraham (Israel), was genealogically necessary for continuance, then it would have been traced as was Abraham's. It must then be by appointment.

d. Abraham submissive to Melchizedek, outside of the blessed genealogy of Abraham (7:4-10).

Now Abraham is the promised seed. In him all the hope was vested. Yet here is Melchizedek, superior and unrelated to

that line. Thus Abraham is submissive to Melchizedek, and Israel to Christ.

- e. Thus the Aaronic priesthood was imperfect, and thus required that another priest rise according to the order of Melchizedek, as Christ (from Judah) arose (7:11-14).

Since then the temporal nature of the Aaronic priesthood implies that there must be an ultimate order, which is the order of Melchizedek. And Christ was from Judah, while not being qualified for Aaronic Priesthood is qualified by appointment to the Order of Melchizedek. For it is clear that the ultimate priesthood could not be from Levi, since that was continued on genealogically, and Melchizedek's priesthood was not.

Thus Christ became the priest, not on the basis of physical relationship to Levi, but on an indestructible life as related in Psalm 110 (7:15-18). The Law was weak and useless and imperfect (7:18-19). God swore an oath that Jesus would be from the order of Melchizedek forever to guarantee a better covenant (7:20-22). Christ lives forever while the old covenant priests had to die and be replaced, thus He continues the intercession (7:23-25). As an eternal High priest He is exalted, yet offered up Himself, once for all (7:26-28).

- 5. The High Priest in the heavenlies (8:1-9:28).

In chapter 8 the author begins to point out the benefits of this high priest in the heavenlies. He shows that as there was an earthly tabernacle, it was a picture of a heavenly tabernacle in the heavenlies in which Christ operated as high priest (8:1-5). This high priest instigated a new covenant, a better covenant, in the same way the heavenly tabernacle is better than the earthly tabernacle. This covenant was predicted in the Old Testament, even while the old was operable, thus showing that the old was never intended to be ultimate.

Now in chapter 9 this discussion continues with the parallels between the earthly tabernacle and the heavenly one. Basically, the earthly tabernacle demonstrated that the way into the holy place was blocked. Man could not approach a holy God, except on the basis of an imperfect mediator and imperfect sacrifices (9:1-10). Christ, however, once for all went through the greater tabernacle and gave His blood, not the blood of bulls and goats (9:11-22).

Thus having done that, He does not have to do it again. Since the principle is that men must die once and be judged, since Christ has done

that, he does not have to die again when he comes back, but can come to bring us with Him to eternal salvation.

6. Christ perfects the sanctified ones (10:1-39).

Now the author uses the hinge of 'salvation' in 9:28 to apply these benefits of the new covenant to the sanctified ones.

a. The doctrine of perfection through Christ (10:1-18).

The Law only cleansed the offerers for a year (10:1-4). But Christ did the will of God, and became the offered One (10:5-9). This sacrifice perfects the receiver once for all, and was not temporary like the priest who daily offered the sacrifices (10:10-14). The new covenant forgiveness was prophesied by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament; the Old Covenant sacrifices are useless (10:15-18).

b. The effects of the perfect sacrifice and high priesthood of Christ (10:19-39).

The first point having made these facts about the effect on the sanctified ones is to show that the way to the holy place is open, and that we have a great high priest over the house of God (10:19-21).

Then he moves into instruction toward gaining the desired results (10:19-25). He wants them to draw near with a sincere heart of full assurance of faith, etc., to hold fast their confession, and stimulating one another with good deeds, i.e., contributing to the care and unity of the assembly and the persecuted. For some have abandoned the assembly.

The negative results are now detailed if one desires to abandon the assembly (10:26-31). First, they will sin intentionally (cf. Num.15:30, Deut. 17:2,6), with full knowledge of what they are doing (rejecting the Christ). The problem is that they are going back to nothing. There is no more sacrifice (10:18), but what they do have is an expectation of judgment. What is being said here is there are two choices; the new order and the old order. The new order is the living way, the new revelation, God's way. The old order is sacrifices which have no value to God and is an order under judgment. Thus if you go back there, you will find invalid sacrifices (the very reason for going back), and instead you will find yourself in a system about to see impending judgment. Since these are the adversaries of God (yet His people). "The fury of a

fire which will consume the adversaries" refers to Isaiah 26:11. Here Isaiah refers to judgment which God brings on those who oppose His appointed righteous loving people. In this case it is the nation Israel, and those who join with them in opposing Christ.

Thus this individual will receive punishment comparable to the sin with a 'high hand' in Moses' day (10:28). He has 'trampled under foot...' means that he has done what the Jews did. For while Christ was to be subjecting His enemies under His feet, these Jews trampled Him under theirs as He took the punishment. The 'blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified' brings this seriousness to bear. While he has been a participant in the New Covenant, he has spurned it for the old, the blood of bulls and goats.

Verse 30 again points out that the Lord is going to judge the Jewish nation, and that this one has become a full-fledged participant in it. He shall not escape. Deut. 32:35,36 is where the quotations come from. Here it speaks of exactly that. One day the nation will turn against Him, and He will insure that they are judged.

In 10:32-39 he turns to encourage them to positive action. First he recalls their sufferings for the new order (vv. 32-35). He encourages them to perseverance on the basis of reward (vv. 36-38a). But again acknowledges that those who fall back will be caught in the judgment which surrounds the enemies of God (v. 39).

III. Faith: The daily walk must trust in the promises through the Son (11:1-13:25).

The author now moves into the area of faith. He wants to point out to these men that they must have faith in God's revelation and act on it rather than what seems right. The fact that 99% of their friends have rejected the new order is no reason for going with them for GOD HAS SPOKEN. Now faith based on the word of God is required.

A. The old order examples of faith in the promise of the Son (11:1-40).

In chapter 11 he gives the examples of those in the old testament who had no physical evidence for their actions, only the spoken word of God, yet they persevered and received their reward.

Gen. 1: By faith we know that the ages were made by God. Creation made out of what was not visible. Thus faith is in God's word, which was powerful enough to make visible, what was not seen.

Gen. 4: Abel's sacrifice was "better" than Cain's. "Better" here indicates that his sacrifice spoke of the Messiah, not the works of Cain's sacrifice. He obtained a testimony that he was righteous (imputed by belief in Messiah testified in 3:15). God testified about his offering. Notice that Abel still speaks, though dead. His faithful action, recorded in the Old Testament, still speaks, because God's word (the O.T.) is alive and speaks today, through the Holy Spirit.

Gen. 5: Enoch was faithful, since it states that he walked with God. The point is that he also believed in the promise of a seed.

Gen. 9: Noah suffered preparing an ark for the salvation of his household, when it had never rained before.

Gen. 12: Abraham moved to a land only on God's word. He was waiting for the promise of that city which had God dwelling in it. The reunification of heaven and earth. The "alien" reference of 11:9 is to point out by parallel that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob also suffered in a land where they were not welcome, just as these remnant suffer at the hands of an apostate nation.

Genesis 18: Sarah conceived, God was faithful.

13-16: Here they had the opportunity to go back (as the Hebrews had) but they did not for they were looking for that city, not one built by Abraham as in the Old Covenant (sacrifices done by men), but a city with the heavenly as part of it. God dwelling with His people.

1. Jacob anticipated the Delivering One when he gave double blessing to Ephraim and Manasseh and reversed the order of their prominence, and then bowed to Joseph, acknowledging the fulfillment of his dream and the rule of the Greater Joseph to come.

Jacob had come to faith when he fulfilled the dream that Joseph had which revealed that he and his brothers would bow before Joseph. Joseph pictured the future One of Genesis 3:15 who would be the Deliverer of his nation. He switches hands on the sons to show that as God had reversed him and his brother Esau at birth, Jacob now understands the sovereign choice of God rather than his own trickery. He knows that they will return to the land and that Joseph's ultimate will deliver the nation. Jacob has come to faith in the Messiah.

11:21 By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped (lit.: bowed down), *leaning* on the top of his staff.

Gen. 47:29 When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place now your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. Please do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place. "And he said," I will do as you have said. " 31 And he said, "Swear to me." So he swore to him. Then Israel bowed *in worship* at the head of the bed.

וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־רֹאשׁ הַמִּטָּה: ַךְ
the staff to head Israel and he bowed

40: The something better for us is the New Covenant, which had to come before the kingdom. They would not be made complete without the New Covenant.

- B. We need to proceed by the example of that faith (12:1-29).

Now in chapter 12 he reminds the reader of that great number of testimonies of old testament saints. Yet now he finishes with Christ as the ultimate example of perseverance even to the point of death. (12:1-3).

Then he goes on to point out that they are not being judged by God (like apostates), but are being chastised so that they might be sanctified, perfected. This is a normal, required process of the Christian, and actually indicates your sonship (12:5-11).

Having then straightened them out doctrinally on discipline, he then exhorts them to help those who are undergoing this discipline that they might be healed, not fall away (vv. 12-13). He then asks them to be peaceful with all men (likely their persecutors), and to pursue this process of sanctification (discipline, pursuing peace, strengthening each other) for it is part and parcel of ones salvation. If one doesn't have sanctification he isn't saved. So pursue it. It's good for you. God intended for you to go through it. So get out of it what you can (12:14).

Then he uses the illustration of Esau. For Esau despised the things of God. He could not find repentance, and God wouldn't grant it to him. (12:15-17). The point of this is that Esau rejected Messiah in the Seed and treated it as common when he rejected his birthright and traded it for a pot of stew. A rejection of Messiah after one possess Him (as Esau) is entering the realm of never being able to return to repentance (cf. 6:4-6). Esau had the birthright¹⁰¹, but rejected the suffering of hunger and traded his birthright for a simple relief from suffering. The issue here is the same for the Jewish Christians; they may trade Christ for the elimination of suffering and thus lose their ability to walk with God in this life.

Finally, the author points out the contrast between the mount of Sinai and the mount of Zion. The ultimate mountain has been opened to God through Christ Jesus. Now we must not ignore Him. We have eternal things given to us in Jesus Christ, thus let us live accordingly.

3. The services of the new order walk by faith (13:1-25).

The author now has as much as said, do you miss the sacrifices, here is how you can give temple service (cf. 'service', v. 28 to refer to liturgical service).

a. Principles of service (13:1-8).

One shows service to God by taking care of the brethren who are suffering, and living your own life in a manner which will preserve you through suffering. Remember Jesus Christ does not change, not in the old covenant, the new covenant, or in the future (the 'aionas').

¹⁰¹ Just as a thought, Israel here held the birthright to the Messianic blessings for the nation. Esau held likewise this Messianic blessing, but passed it away treating it as common. Esau was never a regarnder of the very Seed that he could have possessed. Israel, likewise is the natural inheritor of Messianic blessing, but is treating them as common and thus rejecting Christ. Having formally rejected Christ, they will not afterward in the judgment find a place for repentance as it will be too late.

b. Doctrine of service (13:9-14).

Don't think that the meats of the sacrifice will please, it is by grace of God in this new order (13:9). This grace is separate from those of the old order (13:10).

The sacrifice was taken outside the camp, and Christ had to suffer outside, so expect persecution, since we have no lasting city (13:11-14). Thus God desires the sacrifices of praise and thanks, good and sharing (13:15-16).

This paragraph may indicate that these people were tied to the temple sacrifices and Jerusalem closely. For here he indirectly implies that there is nothing left in this city, nor in this temple.

c. Final instructions in service (13:15-25).

Now he gives them some final specifics, all of these related to providing a special service to God. He closes with 'grace be with you all.' Grace is the very core word of the dispensational blessing in which they were being urged to continue.