

The Epistle to the Hebrews

A New Rendition

Michael D. Rhodes
and
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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY



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About the Brigham Young University New Testament Commentary Series

Welcome to the BYU New Testament Commentary, a project by a group of Latter-day Saint specialists offering to readers a careful, new look at the biblical records that witness the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and the first generation of his church. The commentary series seeks to make the New Testament more accessible to Latter-day Saint general readers and scholars by employing much of current biblical scholarship while reflecting important LDS insights. At the same time, this effort may also be helpful to interested readers of other faiths who want to learn how a group of Latter-day Saint scholars understands the Bible. A fundamental article of faith for Latter-day Saints (Mormons) affirms the Bible “to be the word of God” while adding, understandably, that it needs to be “translated correctly” in order for it to be accurately comprehensible to modern language speakers.

These objectives have helped shape the purposes and parameters of this commentary series. Serious LDS readers of the Bible search the scriptures, looking for depth and breadth in passages whose meanings and mandates may ultimately be plain but not shallow. Such readers and interpreters are served by treatments that unite faith and research, reason and revelation, in prayerfully confronting profound and difficult issues that arise in the texts and affect one’s path of progression. The New Testament has served as an influential guide to western civilization for centuries. As such, its records have long been studied by lay people and scholars alike, resulting in a rich reservoir of information that illuminates the New Testament era culturally, historically, and linguistically. Selectively, the BYUNTC builds upon this vast body of knowledge, resting on the Greek texts of the New Testament and connecting helpful elements of linguistic, literary, historical, and cultural research and traditional scholarship together with LDS scriptures and doctrinal perspectives. The combination of all these features

distinguishes the BYUNTC from other commentaries, which are readily available elsewhere and which readers may also want to consult for more encyclopedic or specialized discussions.

The tone of the BYUNTC aims to be informative rather than hortatory, and suggestive rather than definitive in its interpretation. The opinions expressed in this series are the views of its contributors and should not necessarily be attributed to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Brigham Young University, where many of those involved here are headquartered; or anyone else, though these works have benefited from input and guidance from a number of colleagues, advisors, editors, and peer reviewers.

Each volume in this series contains a new working translation of the New Testament. Calling this a new “rendition” clarifies that it does not seek to replace the authorized KJV adopted by the LDS Church as its official English text. Rather, it aims to enhance readers’ understanding conceptually and spiritually by rendering the Greek texts into modern English with LDS sensitivities in mind. Comparing and explaining the New Rendition in light of the KJV then serves as one important purpose for each volume’s notes, comments, analyses, and summaries. This effort responds in modest ways to the desire President J. Reuben Clark Jr. expressed in his diary in 1956 that someday “qualified scholars [would provide] . . . a translation of the New Testament that will give us an accurate translation that shall be pregnant with the great principles of the Restored Gospel.”

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The Epistle to the Hebrews

God Has Spoken by His Son (1:1–4)

1 In many and various ways, God formerly spoke to our ancestors through the prophets. 2 In these latter days he has spoken to us through a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, and through whom he also made the worlds. 3 He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact appearance of his actual being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he, by himself, had made a purification of sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. 4 He became so much better than the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

The Son Is Superior to the Angels (1:5–14)

5 For to which one of the angels has he ever said,

“You are my son. Today I have fathered you”? [Ps. 2:7]

And also,

“I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to me.” [2 Sam. 7:14]

6 And also when he brings his firstborn into the world, he says:

“Let all the angels of God worship him.” [Ps. 97:7]

7 Referring to the angels he says:

“He makes his angels as winds and his servants as flames of fire.”
[Ps. 104:4]

8 But about his Son he says:

“Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and a scepter of justice is the scepter of your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness. For this reason, O God, even your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy more than your companions.”
[Ps. 45:6–7]

10 And,

“You, O Lord, in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. 11 They will perish, but you continue to exist forever. They will all wear out like clothing, 12 and like a cloak you will roll them up, and like clothing they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end.” [Ps. 102:25–27]

13 But to which of his angels has he ever said,

“Sit down on my right until I have made your enemies as a footstool under your feet”? [Ps. 110:1]

14 Are not all angels ministering spirits who are sent forth to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Warning Not to Drift Away (2:1–4)

1 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. 2 For if the word spoken by angels proved to be valid, and every transgression and act of disobedience received just retribution, 3 how will we escape if we disregard so great a salvation? This salvation was first spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard him. 4 God also testified with signs, wonders, and various miracles, and also with gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his will.

Jesus Was Made Like His Brothers (2:5–9)

5 For God did not put the world to come, about which we are talking, under the control of angels. 6 But somewhere someone testified saying, “What is man that you care for him, or the son of man that you are concerned about him? 7 You have made him a little less than angels. You have crowned him with glory and honor. 8 You have put all things under his feet.” So in putting all things under his control, he did not leave anything outside his control. But at present we do not yet see all things under his control. 9 But we see Jesus, who, for a little while, was made less than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he would experience death for the sake of everyone.

The Leader of Our Salvation (2:10–13)

10 It was fitting for God, for whom and by whom all things exist, to make him perfect through suffering, who was the founder of their salvation and who had led many of God’s children to glory. 11 Because both he who makes holy and those who are made holy are all of the same family. And for this reason he is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, 12 saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the assembly I will sing your praises.” [LXX Ps. 21:23]

13 And again,

“I will trust in him.” [Isa. 8:17]

And again,

“Here I am with the children that God has given to me.” [Isa. 8:18]

The Merciful and Faithful High Priest (2:14–18)

14 Now since the children share blood and flesh, he also in just the same way shared their humanity, so that through his death he might render the one who holds the power of death ineffective, that is, the devil, 15 and free them who through fear of death were in bondage their entire life. 16 For he is certainly not concerned about angels, but he is concerned about Abraham’s descendants. 17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every way, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest over the things relating to God, to atone for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself has endured trials and temptations, he is able to help those who are tried and tempted.

Jesus Greater Than Moses (3:1–6)

1 Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, partners in a heavenly calling, carefully consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess. 2 He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just like Moses was in all God’s household. 3 For Jesus has been found to be worthy of greater glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. 4 For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. 5 Now Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s

household, to testify of the things that were going to be said. 6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's household, whose household we are, if we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope we are proud of.

Warning against Unbelief (3:7–19)

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,

“Today, if you would listen to his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, during the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 when your ancestors tried and tested me and saw my works for forty years. 10 For this reason I was very angry with that generation and said, ‘They are always going astray in their hearts and they have not understood my ways.’ 11 So I swore an oath in my anger, ‘They will certainly not enter into my rest.’” [LXX Ps. 94:8–11]

12 Brothers and sisters, beware that none of you have an evil, unbelieving heart so that you rebel against the living God. 13 Rather encourage each other daily while it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will become hardened by the deception of sin. 14 For we have become partners with Christ, if indeed we hold fast to our initial resolve until the end. 15 As quoted above,

“Today, if only you would listen to his voice. Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” [LXX Ps. 94:8]

16 For who heard and rebelled? Was it not everyone who came out of Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was God angry for forty years? Was it not those who sinned, whose dead bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter into his rest if it was not those who were disobedient? 19 And so we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

The Rest That God Promises (4:1–13)

1 Therefore let us be concerned, while the promise of entering into his rest still stands, that none of you should be found to have failed to reach it. 2 For we have also had the gospel preached to us even as they did, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united with those who listened in faith. 3 For we who have believed enter into that rest, as he has said:

“So I swore an oath in my anger, “They will certainly not enter into my rest” [LXX Ps. 94:11], although God’s works have been finished since the founding of the world.

4 For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day as follows:

“And God rested on the seventh day from all of his works.” [LXX Gen. 2:2]

5 And as cited earlier,

“They will certainly not enter into my rest.” [LXX Ps. 94:11]

6 Now since it remains for some to enter into that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not enter in because of disobedience, 7 God again appoints a certain day, “Today,” speaking through David much later, as has been previously cited,

“Today, if only you would listen to his voice! Do not harden your hearts.” [LXX Ps. 94:7]

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later of another day. 9 Consequently a sabbath rest remains for the people of God. 10 For anyone who enters into God’s rest, he also rests from his works just as God rested from his own works. 11 Therefore, let us strive to enter into that rest, so that no one will fall into that same pattern of disobedience. 12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword that penetrates until it separates soul and spirit, joint and marrow, and is able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 No one is hidden from his sight, but everything is open and laid bare to the eyes of him to whom we must give an accounting.

Jesus the Great High Priest (4:14–5:10)

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, even Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to our confessed allegiance to him. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but although he was tried and tempted in every way just like us, he was without sin. 16 So let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

1 Now every high priest who is chosen from among mankind is put in charge of matters pertaining to God in their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and those who have gone astray, since he himself is beset with weakness. 3 And because of this, he must make sin offerings for himself as well as for the people. 4 Now no one takes this honor for himself, on the contrary, he is called by God, just like Aaron. 5 Thus Christ also did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, rather he was glorified by the one who said to him,

“You are my son. Today I have begotten you.” [LXX Ps. 2:7]

6 As he also said in another place,

“You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” [LXX Ps. 109:4]

7 During his mortal life, Christ offered prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent devotion to God. 8 And although he was a son, he learned obedience through the things that he suffered. 9 And having become perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him, 10 and he was designated by God to be a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

A Castigation on Unwillingness to Learn and Spiritual Immaturity (5:11–14)

11 We have much to say about this that is difficult to explain, since you have become hard of hearing. 12 For although you should already have become teachers by this time, you need someone to again teach you the fundamental principles that God has spoken. You have gone back to needing milk, not solid food. 13 For anyone who drinks only milk, being still an infant, is unacquainted with the teachings of righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of their maturity have their faculties trained to distinguish between good and evil.

Not Laying Down Again the Foundation (6:1–3)

1 Therefore let us advance beyond the elementary principles of Christ's teachings and go on to full maturity and not lay down again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God, 2 of the

teachings of baptisms and the laying on of hands, of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And we will do this, if God permits.

The Peril of Falling Away (6:4–8)

4 Now it is impossible, concerning those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have become partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 and who have tasted the good word of God and the wonders of the world to come, 6 if they should fall into apostasy, to restore them again to repentance. Because they crucify the Son of God again for themselves and hold him up to contempt. 7 For if soil soaks up the rain that often falls upon it and produces useful vegetation for those on whose account the land is tilled, it receives a blessing from God. 8 But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and is going to be cursed. In the end it will be burned.

Do Not Become Apathetic (6:9–12)

9 Now although we speak in this way, dear friends, regarding you we are confident of better things that pertain to salvation. 10 For God is not unjust so as to overlook your labor and love that you have demonstrated for his name by having served the saints and continuing to do so. 11 Now we desire that each of you demonstrate the same earnestness toward the full assurance of your hope until the end, 12 so that you do not become lazy, but emulators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The Certainty of God's Promise (6:13–20)

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he did not have anyone greater to swear by, he swore by himself, 14 saying,

“I will surely bless you and multiply you.” [LXX Gen. 22:17]

15 And thus because Abraham waited patiently, he received the promise. 16 For people swear by something greater, and an oath provides a confirmation that brings an end to their entire dispute. 17 In regard to this, because God desired to show more clearly to the heirs of the promises the unchangeable nature of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, 18 so that by these two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge, might have strong encouragement to seize the hope that is placed before us. 19 This hope

we have as an anchor for our souls, that is firm and reliable, that enters into the inner sanctuary behind the veil. 20 There Jesus, who ran before us, went in on our behalf, because he had become

“a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” [LXX Ps. 109:4].

The Greatness of Melchizedek, the “Priest of the Most High God” (7:1–10)

1 Now this Melchizedek, a king of Salem, a priest of the Most High God, met Abraham as he was returning from the defeat of the kings, and he blessed him. 2 Abraham also apportioned to him one tenth of everything. First, the name Melchizedek means “King of Righteousness,” but he was also King of Salem, that is “King of Peace.” 3 Without father or mother, without a genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, being like the Son of God, he remains a priest for all time. 4 But look how great he was! Abraham the patriarch gave him a tenth of his plunder. 5 Indeed the sons of Levi who have received the priesthood have a mandate, according to the law, to collect tithes from the people, that is from their brothers, even though they are also descendants of Abraham. 6 But Melchizedek, who was not of the same ancestry as the Levites, has collected tithes from Abraham and has blessed him who had the promise. 7 Now beyond all doubt, an inferior person is blessed by one who is higher in rank. 8 And in one case tithes are received by mortal men, but in the other case by one who is declared to be alive. 9 Indeed, one might say that Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, 10 for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

Christ and the Melchizedek Priesthood (7:11–17)

11 Therefore, if perfection had been possible through the Levitical priesthood, for based on it, the people received the law, then what further need would there have been to speak of a different kind of priest arising according to the order of Melchizedek rather than according to the order of Aaron? 12 For if the priesthood is changed, then there must also be a change in the law. 13 For the one about whom these things are said belongs to another tribe from which no one has ever officiated at the altar. 14 For it is clear that our Lord arose from Judah,

and Moses said nothing about priests from that tribe. 15 And it is still more clear if another priest arises in the same way as Melchizedek, 16 who has become a priest not according to a legal requirement with regard to his ancestry, but according to the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is declared,

“You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”
[Ps. 110:4]

A Better Hope by Which We Draw Near to God (7:18–28)

18 For there is an abrogation of the former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness 19 (for the law made nothing perfect) but there is now a better hope by which we draw near to God. 20 And it was not without an oath, (for some have become priests without an oath). 21 But Jesus did become a priest with an oath sworn by him who said to him,

“The Lord swore and will not change his mind, ‘you are a priest forever.’” [Ps. 110:4]

22 For that reason Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. 23 Now there were many who became priests because they were prevented by death from continuing in their priestly office, 24 but Jesus, because he continues to live forever, has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore, he can also completely and eternally save those who come to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, having been separated from sinners, and exalted higher than the heavens. 27 One who does not on a daily basis need to first offer sacrifices for his sins, and then for the sins of the people, as the other high priests did, because he did this once when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath that came after the law appoints a son who has been made perfect forever.

Priests Serve as an Example and Shadow of Heavenly Things (8:1–6)

1 Now the main point in what is being said is this: we have such a high priest who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in

the heavens. 2 He is a minister of the sanctuary, even the true tabernacle, which the Lord, not man, set up. 3 Now every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices, therefore it is necessary that this high priest also have something to offer. 4 So if he were on earth, he would not even be a priest, since there are already priests who offer gifts according to the law. 5 These priests serve as an example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was warned as he was about to erect the tabernacle, for God said,

“See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain.” [Ex. 25:40]

6 But as it is, Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry, to the extent that he is also a mediator of a better covenant that has been legally enacted on better promises.

The First Covenant Is Now Obsolete (8:6–13)

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second one. 8 For finding fault with them he says:

“Look, days are coming, says the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their ancestors in the day that I took them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not continue in my covenant, and I ceased to be concerned with them, says the Lord. 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. 11 And no one will teach his fellow citizen and no one will teach his brother saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because everyone will know me from the least to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful toward their iniquities and I will no longer remember their sins.” [LXX Jer. 38:31–34]

13 By saying “new,” God has declared the first covenant obsolete, and what becomes obsolete and grows old will soon vanish.

A Worldly Sanctuary (9:1–10)

1 So the first covenant had requirements for worship as well as an earthly sanctuary. 2 For a tent was set up, and in the front section were the

lamp stand, table, and presentation of the loaves. This section is called the Holy Place. 3 And after the second curtain there was another section called the Most Holy Place. 4 Within it were the golden incense altar and the ark of the covenant that was completely overlaid with gold, in which were the golden jar containing the manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the tablets of the covenant. 5 Above the ark were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Now is not the time to speak of these things in more detail. 6 After these things had been prepared in this manner, the priests were continually entering into the outer section of the tent performing worship services. 7 But only the high priest entered into the inner section of the tent, once a year, and not without bringing the blood that he offered for his own sins and the sins of the people. 8 By this the Holy Spirit was making it clear that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been revealed while the outer section of the tent still existed. 9 This was a symbol pointing to the then-present time indicating that the gifts and sacrifices they were offering could not perfect the worshipper with respect to his conscience, 10 since they are only concerned with food, drink, various washings, and external regulations imposed until the time of reformation.

He Offered Himself without Spot to God (9:11–14)

11 But when Christ came, a high priest of good things that have come, he passed through the greater and more perfect tent that was not made by human hands, that is not of this creation. 12 And it was not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, that he entered once into the Holy Place after he, by himself, had obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are impure sanctifies them so that their bodies are cleansed, 14 how much more does the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself as an unblemished offering to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to worship the living God.

Without the Shedding of Blood There Is No Forgiveness (9:15–22)

15 And for this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who have been called might receive the promise of an eternal inheritance through his death by which he redeemed them from the transgressions under the first covenant. 16 Now where there is a testamentary covenant, the testator's death must be established. 17 For a

testamentary covenant is valid only with respect to dead people, since it is never in force while the testator is alive. 18 For this reason not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. 19 For after every commandment of the law had been declared to all the people by Moses, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop and sprinkled the scroll itself and all the people, 20 saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God has commanded you to keep” (Ex. 24:8). 21 He also sprinkled the tent and all of the things used in the worship service with blood. 22 Indeed almost everything is purified with blood according to the law, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

He Now Appears in the Presence of God for Us (9:23–28)

23 Therefore it was necessary that the models of these heavenly things be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves need better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, to now appear in God’s presence on our behalf, 25 nor to offer himself again and again, like the high priest enters the sanctuary every year with blood that is not his own, 26 for otherwise he would have had to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. But now he has appeared once and for all at the close of the present age to take away sin by his sacrifice. 27 And just as human beings are destined to die once, and then afterwards face judgment, 28 so also Christ, after he was once offered up to bear the sins of many, will also appear a second time to those who eagerly wait for him, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation.

The Blood of Bulls and Goats Contrasted to That of Christ (10:1–10)

1 Now since the law is but a shadow of good things to come and not the actual form of these things, it can never, by the same sacrifices continually offered year after year, perfect those who come to worship. 2 Otherwise would not the sacrifices have ceased being made? For the worshippers would have no longer had a consciousness of their sins, having been cleansed once for all. 3 On the contrary, in those sacrifices there was a yearly reminder of their sins, 4 because it is impossible to

remove sins by the blood of bulls and goats. 5 So when Christ came into the world, he said,

“You did not want a sacrifice and an offering, but you prepared a body for me. 6 You did not delight in burnt offerings and sin-offerings. 7 Then I said, ‘See, I have come—in a papyrus scroll it has been written about me—to do your will, O God.’” [LXX Ps. 40:7–9; KJV Ps. 39:6–8]

8 When he said above, “Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin-offerings you did not want nor did you delight in them” (which are offered according to the law), 9 he then said, “See, I have come to do your will,” he abolishes the first so that he can establish the second. 10 It is by his will that we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

No Longer an Offering for Sin (10:11–18)

11 And every priest stands daily serving and frequently offering sacrifices that are never able to remove sins. 12 But Christ, after he had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sin, sat down on the right hand of God, 13 then waiting until his enemies are placed as a footstool under his feet. 14 Indeed, by a single offering he has forever perfected those who are sanctified. 15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after having said,

16 “This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, says the Lord, I will put my laws on their hearts and I will write them on their minds” [Jer. 31:33],

17 he also says,

“I will no longer remember their sins and transgressions.” [Jer. 31:34]

18 Now where there is forgiveness for these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Drawing Near to God in Enduring Faith (10:19–25)

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, 20 which opens up to us a new and living way through the veil, that is, through his body, 21 and since

we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us approach the sanctuary with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts cleansed from a consciousness of evil and having our body washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold firmly to our confession of hope without wavering, for the one who made the promise is trustworthy. 24 Let us consider how we can urge each other to love and good works 25 and not neglect our own meetings, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage each other, all the more since you see the Day drawing near.

A Warning against Sin (10:26–31)

26 For if we intentionally sin after we have received a knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains any sacrifice for sins, 27 but only a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a consuming ardor of fire that will devour God's adversaries. 28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses dies without mercy

“on the testimony of two or three witnesses.” [Deut. 17:6]

29 How much greater punishment do you think someone deserves who has treated the Son of God with disdain, and who has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who has outraged the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know the one who said,

“Vengeance is mine, I will repay!” [Deut. 32:35]

and also

“The Lord will judge his people.” [Deut. 32:36]

31 It is a frightening thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

An Admonition Not to Abandon One's Confidence in God (10:32–39)

32 But remember the former days in which you endured a great struggle with suffering after you had been enlightened. 33 Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insults and afflictions, at other times you were partners with those who were so treated. 34 For you indeed had compassion on prisoners, and you cheerfully accepted the seizure of your possessions, recognizing that you yourselves have a better and enduring possession. 35 So do not abandon your confidence; it has a great reward. 36 For you need endurance so that after you have accomplished God's will, you will receive the promise. 37 For

“just a little longer” [Isa. 26:20],

and

“he who is coming will arrive and he will not delay.” [Hab. 2:3]

38 “But my righteous one will live by faith, and if he hesitates to act, my soul will not be pleased with him.” [Hab. 2:4]

39 But we are not the kind of people who hesitate to act, which results in destruction, but we are the kind of people who believe, which results in preserving the soul.

A Description of Faith (11:1–3)

1 Now faith deals with the reality of things that are hoped for, the evaluation of the truth of things that are not seen. 2 For by it our ancestors were commended by God. 3 By our faith we understand that the worlds were organized by the word of God, so that what is visible was made by what is invisible.

The Examples of Abel, Enoch, and Noah (11:4–7)

4 By faith Abel offered a greater sacrifice to God than Cain, for which he was commended as righteous, God himself commending him for the gifts; moreover, by faith, although he has died, he still continues to speak. 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he did not experience death,

“and he was not found because God took him up.” [Gen. 5:24]

Before his being taken up, he was commended for

“having pleased God.” [Gen. 5:22, 24]

6 Now without faith it is impossible to please God, for one who approaches God must believe that he is and that he rewards those who seek him. 7 By faith Noah, after he had received a divine warning about things not yet seen, out of reverent regard, built an ark to save his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of righteousness in accordance with his faith.

The Faith of Abraham (11:8–22)

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he would receive as an inheritance, and he went out without knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt as a foreigner in the

land of promise, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who were joint heirs of this same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to a city that had firm foundations, whose designer and builder was God. 11 By faith Abraham, although he was advanced in years, received the capability to father a child with Sarah, since he considered the one who made the promise to be trustworthy. 12 Therefore from one man, although he had become impotent, there arose posterity

“as numerous as the stars of heaven and as innumerable as the sand on the seashore.” [Gen. 22:17]

13 All these people died, true to their faith, without having received those things that were promised, but saw them in the distance and welcomed them, and acknowledged that they were strangers and sojourners on this earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 And if they had been thinking of that country they had come from, they would have had an opportunity to return to it. 16 But in fact, they long for a better homeland, that is, a heavenly one. 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice even his only son, 18 concerning whom he was told,

“through Isaac your posterity will be called.” [Gen. 21:12]

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, because he prepared a city for them. 19 He reasoned that God could even raise someone from the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back from there. 20 By faith Isaac also blessed Jacob and Esau concerning future things. 21 By faith Jacob, being about to die, blessed each of Joseph's sons and

“worshipped as he leaned on his staff.” [LXX Gen. 47:31]

22 By faith Joseph near the end of his life mentioned the exodus of the children of Israel and gave instructions concerning his bones.

The Faith of Moses (11:23–28)

23 By faith Moses, after he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was handsome, and they did not fear the king's edict. 24 By faith Moses, after he grew up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather

to endure persecution together with the people of God than to enjoy the short-lived pleasures of sin. 26 He regarded disgrace suffered for Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he fixed his attention on the reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger, for he persevered, seeing as it were the one who is unseen. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn did not touch them.

The Faith of Other Israelite Heroes (11:29–40)

29 By faith they crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to cross it, they were drowned. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell after the Israelites had marched around them for seven days. 31 By faith Rahab, the prostitute, was not destroyed with those who were disobedient, because she had welcomed the spies in peace.

32 And what more might I say? For there would not be enough time for me to go into detail about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the other prophets, 33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, acted righteously, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were strengthened in weakness, were made mighty in battle, caused enemy armies to retreat. 35 Women received their dead raised again to life.

But others were tortured having refused deliverance so that they might attain a better resurrection. 36 Still others experienced derision, floggings, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, sawn in two, murdered by the sword. They wandered about wearing sheepskins and goatskins, impoverished, oppressed, maltreated— 38 the world was not worthy of them—wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

39 And although they were all commended by God because of their faith, they did not obtain what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better with regard to us, so that without us they could not be made perfect.

God Disciplines His Children (12:1–13)

1 Therefore, since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us put aside every impediment and hindering sin, and with

steadfast endurance, run the race that is set before us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was placed before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and

“sat down on the right hand of God’s throne” [Ps. 110:1; LXX Ps. 109:1].

3 Indeed, consider him who endured such hostility toward himself by sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 You have not yet resisted unto the shedding of your blood as struggle against sin. 5 And you have completely forgotten the encouragement that is spoken to you as children,

“My child, do not disregard the Lord’s discipline, nor give up when you are corrected by him. 6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every child he accepts” [Prov. 3:11–12].

7 Endure these things for the sake of discipline, God is treating you as children. For what child is not disciplined by his father? 8 But if you are not disciplined, as all children are, then you are illegitimate and not children. 9 Furthermore, we have had fathers of our bodies who corrected us, and we treated them with respect. Should we not then even more so submit ourselves to the Father of our spirits and live? 10 For our earthly fathers corrected us for a short time as seemed best to them, but our Heavenly Father corrects us for our benefit so that we can share in his holiness. 11 Now all discipline does not seem pleasant at the time, but painful. Later, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. 12 Therefore,

“strengthen your weak arms and your feeble knees” [Isa. 35:3],

13 and

“prepare straight paths for your feet” [Prov. 4:26],

so that you do not make worse what is already lame, but instead let it be healed.

Warnings against Rejecting God’s Grace (12:14–17)

14 Seek for peace with everyone, and for holiness, without which no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one fails to obtain God’s grace, and that

“no bitter root sprouts up” [Deut. 29:18]

to cause trouble by which many become defiled. 16 And see to it that there is no immoral or worldly person like Esau, who

“sold his own birthright for a single meal” [Gen. 27:29–34].

17 For you know that afterwards, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no opportunity for repentance even though he sought for it with tears.

Mount Sinai and Mount Zion Contrasted (12:18–24)

18 For you have not come to something that can be touched, to a burning fire, darkness, gloom, and a whirlwind, 19 to the sound of a trumpet and a voice speaking words which those who heard it pleaded that no further words be spoken to them, 20 for they could not endure what it commanded, namely:

“If even an animal touches the mountain, it will be stoned” [Ex. 19:12–13].

21 Indeed, the scene was so frightening that Moses said,

“I am terrified and trembling” [Deut. 9:19].

22 But you have come to Mount Zion even the City of the Living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 to a festal gathering, even the church of those who are firstborn, whose names are recorded in heaven, to God the Judge of all people, to the spirits of righteous people who have been perfected, 24 to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling which proclaims something better than the blood of Abel.

A Warning against Refusing God (12:25–29)

25 See that you do not reject the one who is speaking. For if those who rejected him who warned them on earth did not escape, how much less will we escape, if we repudiate him who is speaking from heaven. 26 At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, saying:

“Once more I will shake not only the earth but also heaven” [Hag. 2:6].

27 Now the phrase “once more” means the removal of the things that are shaken, that is, of things which have been made, so that the things which are not shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving an unshakeable kingdom, let us give thanks, by which we may acceptably serve God with reverence and awe, 29 for indeed

“our God is a consuming fire” [Deut. 4:24; 9:3].

Living a Life of Thanksgiving and Reverence (13:1–6)

1. Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. 2 Do not neglect hospitality, because by so doing, some have entertained angels without knowing it. 3 Remember those who are in prison as though you were fellow-prisoners, and those who are mistreated as though you were also suffering mistreatment. 4 Marriage should be held in honor by all, and the marriage bed kept undefiled, for God will condemn all fornicators and adulterers. 5 Your conduct should be free of the love of money, being content with what you have. For God himself has said,

“I will never desert or abandon you” [Josh. 1:5],

6 so that we can confidently say,

“The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?” [Ps. 118:6].

Further Counsel and Admonitions (13:7–17)

7 Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Carefully consider what they have accomplished in their lives and emulate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. 9 Do not be misled by deceitful and strange teachings, for it is well for the heart to be made firm by grace, not by ceremonial meals, which have not been of benefit to those who participate in them. 10 We have an altar from which they who serve in the tabernacle have no right to eat. 11 For the bodies of the animals whose blood is brought into the tabernacle by the high priest for a sin offering are burned outside the camp. 12 Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate so that he might sanctify the people by his own blood. 13 So let us go out to him outside the tabernacle enduring his reproach. 14 For we do not have here an enduring city, but we seek the city that is to come. 15 Therefore

through him let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips confessing his name. 16 And do not neglect good works and generosity, for God is pleased with such sacrifices. 17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as men who will give account of their responsibilities, so that they may do it joyfully without complaining, for that would be of no help to you.

The Final Benediction (13:18–21)

18 Continue to pray for us, for we are certain that we have a clear conscience and desire to conduct ourselves well in all things. 19 And I especially urge you to do this so that I may quickly be restored to you. 20 Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead the great shepherd of the flocks through the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, 21 make you complete in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is pleasing before him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever, amen.

Concluding Matters (13:22–25)

22 And I urge you, brothers and sisters, to bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you briefly in a letter. 23 Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you. 24 Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy send you greeting. 25 May grace be with all of you. Amen.