

CONTEXT:

"The Bible is about Jesus. It's not about us and what we must do – it's about Jesus and what He has already done..."

(see the "both/and" of God's Word)

"Even though all of Scripture points to Jesus – and we read it with the intention and expectation of finding Jesus in Scripture – it doesn't mean we can't find anything useful in Scripture concerning ourselves. The opposite is true."

- Disciples Path

The epistle to the Hebrews is a tribute to the incomparable Son of God and an encouragement to the author's persecuted, fellow believers. The author feared that his Christian readers were wavering in their endurance. The writer had a twofold approach: (1) He exalted Jesus Christ... as the only One who can serve as Mediator between God and man; AND (2) he exhorted his fellow Christians, "Let us go on to maturity," and live "by faith..."

In concluding the book of Hebrews, the author wrote, "Brothers, I urge you to receive this message of exhortation..." (13:22). - HCSB Study Bible

Hebrews frequently encourages the audience to persevere and warns against leaving Christ

(2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:12; 10:19-39; 12:1-29).

- ESV Study Bible

TEXT:

Hebrews 3:7-19 (ESV)

⁷ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, ⁹ where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. ¹⁰ Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ ¹¹ As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’” ¹² **Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. ¹⁵ As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” ¹⁶ For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷ And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹ So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.**

Hebrews 4:1-2 (ESV)

¹ Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, **let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.**
² For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, **because they were not united by faith with those who listened.**

VIDEO: “Hold Nothing Back” (faith of Abe/Isaac)

Hebrews 4:6b (ESV)

⁶ *...those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience,*

Hebrews 4:10-11 (ESV)

¹⁰ *for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.*

Great PRIVILEGE:

New creation! (2 Cor. 5)

"a chosen people" (1 Peter 2:9)

Freed slaves (to sin) (Jn.8: 32 & 36)

Adopted children of God (Galatians 3:26)

"Children of the promise" (Rom.9:8)

"co-heirs with Christ, IF..." (Rom. 8:17)

Friends of God (John 15:15)

Brothers & Sisters

Blood-bought, redeemed

Bride of Christ

"The called of Jesus Christ" (Rom.1:6)

Beloved of God (Rom.1:7)

"Chosen ones" – (Ps. 105:6)

"good seed" (Matt. 13:38)

"attendants of the Bridegroom" (Matt.9:15)

"Light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8)

"Children of light" (Eph. 5:8)

"sons of the resurrection" (Lk. 20:36)

"the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27 & Eph.3:6)

"partakers of the promise" (Eph.3:6)

“treasured ones” of God (Ps. 83:3)
“a consecrated people” (Deut. 26:19)
“sheep/His flock” (Isaiah 40:11)
“citizen of heaven” (Philippians 3:20)

¹¹ *Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.*

Hebrews 4:12 (NASB)

¹² *For the word of God is living and active (alive & powerful) and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge/expose the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

The sense is, that the truth of God is all-penetrating and searching, and that the real thoughts and intents of the heart will be brought to light; and that if there is insincerity and self-deception, there can be no hope of escape... There can be no escape from the penetrating, searching application of the word of God. His truth has power to show what man is, and it's like a penetrating sword that lays open the whole man. - Barnes

“For the word of God”

It is the living voice of God that gets right to the bottom of things.

2 Peter 1:21... 2 Timothy 3:16... & John 1:1ff

“living & active/powerful/mighty” = awakening the conscience; alarming the fears; to make sinners tremble...

“The ‘sword’ metaphor suggests that the Bible functions much like a surgeon’s scalpel...” - Disciples Path

“Much more than merely reading Scripture, we must let Scripture read us.” – DP

QUOTE: The Bible is humanity’s ultimate “translator” & “authenticator” of both actions & attitudes... In a world filled with lies & liars, deceit & deceivers, the confused and the confusing – God’s Word is the unshakable source of ALL truth and defining definitions – like it or not... we and our spiritual condition are who & what God & His Word say we are. -JDP

Hebrews 5:7a (ESV)

⁷ In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears

VIDEO: “Tho You Slay Me”

Hebrews 5:9 (ESV)

⁹ ...He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

Hebrews 5:11 (ESV)

¹¹ About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

Hebrews 6:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. ⁸ But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

(again... see the **both/and**)

*** God & His Word charge US to lead His charge!**

A. John 20:21 ("AS"/kathOs = key!)

B. Acts 1:8

C. Matthew 28:18-20

D. John 17

E. Matthew 10:16

Both, the Gospel AND the Word of God... will always, ultimately... divide the crowds and unify the Church! - JDP

a. Great RESPONSIBILITY:

- a. Witnesses (Acts 1:8)
- b. Global missionaries (Acts 1:8)
- c. Church! (see Rev. 2-3)
- d. Cross-carrying disciples
- e. Doulos/slave (like Paul)
- f. Faithful-followers
- g. Fishers of men
- h. Salt
- i. "Light of the world"
- j. Ministers of reconciliation
- k. Ambassadors (2 Cor. 5)

- l. Aroma
- m. Royal Priesthood (1 Pt. 2:9)
- n. Holy nation
- o. “called Christians”
- p. “the Way”
- q. “imitators of God” (Eph. 5:1)
- r. “fruit bearing branches”
- s. “bearers of much fruit”
- t. “talent-investors”
- u. Examples (1 Tim.4:12)
- v. Family of God (Lk. 8:21)

“My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.”

- w. Soldiers (2 Timothy 2)
- x. Workers (Lk.10 & Eph. 2:10)
- y. Disciplers (Matt. 28:18-20)
- z. “members of His body”

One of the ways to see that distinction in action is to watch how crowd members respond to God’s Word... While most everyone will quickly & gladly accept the privileges promised to God’s people, counterfeit Christians reject & rebel against much of the Bible’s requirements and responsibilities. - JDP

“Serving God is NOT punishment... it’s nourishment!” - Wiersbe

CLOSE:

"We go into God's Word... SO THAT, God's Word, 'alive & active,' will go into us - that God's Word would work IN us, ON us, & ultimately THRU us!" - JDP

VIDEO: "Irish Elk" See Hebrews 10:19-12:2!!!

Every Christian's faithful-allegiance is to BE committed to Christ-like, faithful-obedience; obedience that is de-fined within the guardrails of God's Holy Word, AND re-fined through the guidance of God's Holy Spirit (noting all the while that the Two will not, yea, they CANNOT contradict one another). - JDP

"The Word of God is not intended to beat you up, but rather, to wake you up and build you up – for the glory of God!" - JDP

Let's PRAY!

VIDEO: "We Believe!"

Quote: Charles Spurgeon – *“AS the rain soaks into the ground, so pray the Lord to let His gospel soak into your soul.”*

Quote: *“Even though all of Scripture points to Jesus – and we read it with the intention and expectation of finding Jesus in Scripture – it doesn’t mean we can’t find anything useful in Scripture concerning ourselves. The opposite is true. When we immerse our lives in God’s Word – through faith in the living Word that is Jesus and through immersing our lives in the written Word that is the Bible – we find an unshakable identity from which our entire lives can flow.”* - Disciples Path

Quote: *“If we’re not memorizing & meditating on God’s Word on a consistent basis, we cannot expect to fend off Satan’s attacks. The more we study God’s Word, the more we learn about our identities and what God expects from us as His children.”* - D.P.

If Jesus turned to and applied God’s Word in the heat of battle & when presented with temptation, how much more so should we?

“Immersing” ourselves in God’s Word means:

- A. Knowing the Word**
- B. Believing the Word**
 - a. Creator
 - b. Creation
 - c. Christ
 - d. Corruption
 - e. Cure
- C. Applying the Word**
 - a. Yes... Lord
 - i. Help me...
 - ii. Thank You!
 - b. No... Lord
 - i. Diluted
 - ii. Deceived
 - iii. Dead

TEXT:

Hebrews 4:12 (NASB)

¹² *For the word of God is **living and active (alive & powerful)** and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and **able to judge/expose the thoughts and intentions** of the heart.*

TIMELESS TRUTH:

“Immersing ourselves in God’s Word provides the foundation for our identity & life.” - DP

Disciple’s Path Quotes:

A. General references:

- **“Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation points to Jesus. Simply put, the Bible is about Jesus. It’s not about us and what we must do – it’s about Jesus and what He has already done.”**
- **“When we find Christ in Scripture we will know better how to be His followers. We will be able to communicate with Him and know who He is. And... we will begin to understand who we are in relation to Christ... We are both more broken than we dare let on AND more loved than we dare let in. In God’s Word we find our true identities... It’s only when we immerse our entire lives in God’s Word that we begin to live the lives God designed & desires for us.”**
- **“Being saturated & immersed in God’s Word... transforms how we see God, ourselves, and the world around us.”**

B. Luke 24 references:

- **Jesus quotes the Old Testament 78 times in the Gospels**

CONTEXT: Hebrews

For

- ***Here comes a contextual crescendo...***
- ***Akin to a “therefore”***

“the word of God”

- ***Christ***
- ***Scripture***
- ***Divinely prophetic messages***

“living & active” (alive & powerful)

- ***Living***
- ***Active***

Psalm 119:9-16 & 105 (ESV)

- ⁹ How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.
¹⁰ With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments!
¹¹ I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.
¹² Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes!
¹³ With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.
¹⁴ In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches.
¹⁵ I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.
¹⁶ I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.
- ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

“and sharper than any two-edged sword”

- ***Sharper than***
- ***Any***
- ***Two-edged sword***

“piercing”

- ***Penetrating***
- ***Cutting into...***
- ***Dissecting***

“as far as the division of soul & spirit, of joints & marrow”

- ***as far as***
- ***the division***
- ***of soul & spirit***
- ***of joints & marrow***

“and able to judge/expose”

- *You are what God's Word says you are!*
- *Your actions are what God's Word says they are!*
- *Your attitude(s) are what God's Word says they are!*
- *God's Word is our light & defining interpreter of all things!*
- *The Word of God is NEVER wrong or contradicting...*

“the thoughts & intentions/motives”

- ***Thoughts***
 - *The Bible turns the internal lights on...*
 - *The Bible turns the external lights on...*
 - *The Bible defines your very thoughts...*
 - *The Bible over-rules you... on you & your thoughts!*
- ***Intentions***
 - *The Bible defines your intentions*
 - *The Bible exposes hidden sin & reveals holy humility*
 - *The Bible is very clear & direct:*
 - *Self-centeredness & self-righteousness are SIN*
 - *Self-less Christ-likeness brings glory to God!*

“of the heart”

- *The core of our being...*
- *The deepest seat of our emotions & intentions*
- *The Bible is needed to expose, reveal, & define our heart's actions because:*
“the heart is deceptively wicked/sick...”
 - *We can't always trust ourselves to interpret our own hearts...*
 - *Many a blinded, impassioned hearts have been deceived...*
 - *Many a blinded, impassioned hearts have spread deceit... & evil.*
 - *Sincerity is no substitute for biblical truth!*
 - *Interpersonal relationships should not sway biblical truth!*
 - *NOTHING trumps biblical truth-in-love.*
 - *The Bible is a trustworthy but seldom viewed spiritual mirror.* - JDP

NOTE: Link [2 Peter 1:21](#) for clarity...

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

NOTE:Link [2 Timothy 3:16](#) for context...

All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness,

NOTE:Link John 1 for Christology!

Hebrews 4:12 (KJV)

¹² For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

CONTEXT:

Hebrews

Introduction

The epistle to the Hebrews is a tribute to the incomparable Son of God and an encouragement to the author's persecuted fellow believers. The author feared that his Christian readers were wavering in their endurance. The writer had a twofold approach: (1) He exalted Jesus Christ, who is addressed as both "God" and "the Son of Man," and is thus the only One who can serve as mediator between God and man; and (2) he exhorted his fellow Christians, "Let us go on to maturity," and live "by faith."

Message and Purpose

The author of Hebrews wanted to exalt Jesus Christ. A verbal indication of this desire is the consistent and repetitive usage of the Greek word *kreitton*, which means "more excellent," "superior," or "better." This word is the common thread that binds together the complex and subtle theological argumentation of the book. **In comparison to everything else in the divine plan for creation and redemption, Jesus Christ is superior.** The author described the superiority of the new covenant to the old covenant because he wanted his readers to remember that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the law and God's promises in the OT. In this light, readers should be careful about "recrucifying the Son of God and holding Him up to contempt" (6:6). The author wanted to move these believers from their arrested state of development into a pattern of growth in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Contribution to the Bible

No other book in the NT ties together OT history and practices with the life of Jesus Christ as thoroughly as the book of Hebrews. Just as Jesus Christ taught that the OT was fulfilled in Himself (Mt 5:17-18; Lk 24:27), so the author of Hebrews taught that the old covenant was brought to completion in the new covenant (7:20-8:13). Hebrews also shows that because the old covenant has been fulfilled in the new covenant, the new covenant is actually "better" (7:22). **The new covenant was made superior by the ministry of Jesus Christ.**

Structure

In concluding the book of Hebrews, the author wrote, "Brothers, I urge you to receive this message of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly" (13:22). If the literary style of Hebrews indicates anything, it is that it is a written theological sermon. It is not so much a letter—although it certainly ends like one—because it has no opening subscription, as was the norm with ancient letters. Hebrews instead begins with an introductory essay about the superiority of Jesus Christ (1:1-4). However, its capacity to encounter the reader's soul indicates it is more than just a literary essay. Indeed, it has a definite sermonic character since it expounds the Scriptures at length in order to challenge the reader to faith and faithfulness. The sustained development of a complex, holistic theology of covenant indicates that

Hebrews is a written theological sermon that discloses the broad sweep of God's grand redemptive plan for humanity.

Outline

- I. The Superiority of the Son of God ([1:1-2:18](#))
 - A. The exaltation of Jesus Christ ([1:1-4](#))
 - B. The divine nature of the Son ([1:5-14](#))
 - C. The human nature of the Son ([2:1-18](#))
- II. The Superiority of the Son's Faithfulness ([3:1-4:16](#))
 - A. The faithfulness of the Son ([3:1-6](#))
 - B. A warning ([3:7-19](#))
 - C. The way forward ([4:1-16](#))
- III. The Superiority of the Son's Work ([5:1-6:20](#))
 - A. The work of the Son ([5:1-10](#))
 - B. The call to maturity ([5:11-6:3](#))
 - C. The way forward ([6:4-20](#))
- IV. The Superiority of the Son's Priesthood ([7:1-10:39](#))
 - A. The superiority of His order ([7:1-19](#))
 - B. The superiority of His covenant ([7:20-8:13](#))
 - C. The superiority of His ministry ([9:1-28](#))
 - D. The superiority of His sacrifice ([10:1-18](#))
 - E. The way forward ([10:19-39](#))
- V. The Superiority of the Christian Faith ([11:1-12:2](#))
 - A. The hall of heroes ([11:1-40](#))
 - B. The way forward ([12:1-2](#))
- VI. The Superiority of the Father's Way ([12:3-29](#))
 - A. The work of God ([12:3-13](#))
 - B. The way forward ([12:14-29](#))
- VII. The Superiority of the Christian Life in the Church ([13:1-25](#))
 - A. The way forward ([13:1-19](#))
 - B. A blessing from the author ([13:20-25](#))

- HCSB Study Bible.

Introduction To The Letter to The Hebrews

The author of Hebrews neither names himself nor clearly designates his audience. The traditional title “to the Hebrews” reflects the ancient assumption that the original recipients were Jewish Christians.

The author’s identity has been a matter of significant conjecture throughout church history. In antiquity, authorship was attributed to figures such as Barnabas or especially Paul. However, several of the most astute church fathers recognized considerable differences in style and method of argument between this book and Paul’s named writings. Scholars have suggested other possible authors, such as Clement, Luke, or Apollos. However, most today concede that this author remains anonymous. It seems that the judgment expressed by Origen (d. c. A.D. 254) remains correct: “Who actually wrote the epistle, only God knows”

The author clearly knew his recipients and longed to be reunited with them (Heb. 13:19). They had a mutual friend in Timothy (13:23), and probably this was the same Timothy who ministered alongside Paul. The author was presumably male, since he refers to himself using a masculine participle (see 11:32: “would fail me to tell”). Since “us” included the author in 2:3 (the salvation “attested to us by those who heard”; also 2:1), it appears that he was not an eyewitness of Jesus. The author passed on the greetings of those “from Italy” (13:24). Scholars debate whether he was in Italy writing to the church elsewhere or was outside Italy (though accompanied by Italians) and writing back to an audience in Italy (possibly at Rome).

The audience’s social situation can be inferred from commands to “remember those who are in prison” and who are “mistreated” (13:3). Timothy himself had just been set free (13:23). Indeed, **the author of Hebrews commended his audience for their former endurance of persecution, for their compassion on those in prison, and for having “joyfully accepted the plundering of your property” (10:32-34).**

The author warned against “strange teachings” in the church (13:9), and these teachings may have been related to the use of ritual foods (13:9-10). **Moreover, he repeatedly called his audience to persevere in the faith and cautioned them about the danger of leaving the Christian communion, as he sought to show the superiority of Christ to Mosaic sacrifices and rituals (chs. 3-10).** Hence the early church was likely correct to assert that Jewish Christians (as well as Gentiles who had previously been drawn to the Jewish religion) were the intended audience for this book (see “our fathers,” 1:1). Furthermore, such an audience would have well understood the book’s many citations and allusions to the OT (and would have shared in the writer’s frequent use of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT).

Date

Hebrews was almost certainly written in the first century and probably before A.D. 70.

Reasons for asserting a first-century date include the mention of Timothy ([13:23](#)), who was known to be active in the first century, and the influence of Hebrews (and its way of thinking) on [1 Clement](#) (written c. A.D. 96).

The crucial issue in dating the book concerns whether the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (A.D. 70) had already occurred. Hebrews speaks of the Jewish sacrificial system as if it were a still-present reality ([Heb. 7:27-28](#); [8:3-5](#); [9:7-8](#), [25](#); [10:1-3](#); [13:10-11](#)), which does not seem likely after the cessation of the Jerusalem temple sacrifices in A.D. 70. Admittedly, Hebrews focuses on the Mosaic tabernacle rather than the Solomonic (or the Herodian) temple. Nonetheless, if the writer was attempting to convince his readers of the inferiority of the Mosaic system (and possibly dissuade church members from returning to Jewish practices), an obvious argument would have been to mention the cessation of the temple sacrifices, if they were in fact no longer taking place.

Theme

Christ is greater than any angel, priest, or old covenant institution; thus each reader, rather than leaving such a great salvation, is summoned to hold on by faith to the true rest found in Christ and to encourage others in the church to persevere.

Purpose, Occasion, and Background

The genre of Hebrews is unusual. The book is without an introduction or other early indications that it is a letter. Yet the final verses do pass on greetings and blessings ([13:23-25](#)), and the author speaks of having “written to you” ([13:22](#)). However, **the author also identifies his work as a “word of exhortation”** ([13:22](#)).

The careful rhetorical progression of the book, along with its frequent practical exhortations, has led many to consider it a single sermon.

Hebrews may be best understood as a sermonic letter.

Hebrews frequently encourages the audience to endure and warns against leaving Christ

(2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:12; 10:19-39; 12:1-29).

These warning passages are interspersed throughout the book (see [chart](#)) and have noticeable structural similarities (esp. in terms of **exhortation and threatened consequence**). Around these passages the argument of the book progresses carefully. Moreover, these specific exhortations themselves flow out of the surrounding material. Thus the book is unified in both structure and intent.

The warning passages exhort church participants to remain faithful.

The more expository sections of the epistle show the superiority of Christ and his new covenant work to angels, Moses, the tabernacle priesthood, and the sacrificial system. The implication is that these are so inferior to Christ that it is futile to return to them (or to go anywhere else).

Thus the book encourages the church to hold fast to its faith, because that faith is grounded in the most superior revelation.

The background of such exhortations must have been the audience's need to continue enduring through persecution and the trials of life

(e.g., [ch. 12](#)).

- They appear to have grown less attentive to Christian instruction (5:11-14); and
- some apparently have ceased regular attendance at their meetings (10:25).
- Nonetheless, the author reminds them of their past faithfulness and communal love in the midst of persecution (10:32-34).
- He encourages their faithfulness by careful exposition of the OT in light of the revelation in Jesus Christ.

The soteriology (salvation teaching) of Hebrews is rooted in its Christology—the Son of God became the heavenly high priest, who offered himself as a sacrifice once for all. Christ obtained salvation for all who approach in faith (6:1; 11:6; cf. 4:2), **AND such faith perseveres until it receives the promised eternal reward (6:12; 10:22, 38-39).**

Key Themes

1. Jesus is fully God and fully man. [1:1-14](#); [2:5-18](#)
2. Jesus as Son of God reveals God the Father, is the agent of creation, and sustains all creation. [1:1-14](#)
3. Jesus serves as the eternal high priest, who as a man sympathizes with human weaknesses, and yet who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin. [1:3](#); [2:10-18](#); [4:15-16](#); [9:11-10:19](#)
4. Jesus is superior to angels, to Moses and the Mosaic covenant, and to the earthly tabernacle and its priesthood. [1:4-2:18](#); [3:1-6](#); [5:1-10](#); [7:1-10:18](#); [8:1-13](#)
5. All humanity faces eternal judgment for sin. [4:12-13](#); [9:27-28](#); [10:26-31](#)
6. **Faith is necessary to please God and to participate in his eternal salvation promises. Faith requires conviction about the unseen realities of God and his promises. Such faith produces perseverance.** [4:2-3](#); [6:1](#), [12](#); [10:22](#), [38-39](#); [11:1-40](#)
7. **Perseverance is necessary in the Christian life, and thus church participants are warned against a lack of endurance.** [2:1-4](#); [3:7-4:13](#); [5:11-6:12](#); [10:19-39](#); [12:1-29](#)
8. God's promises are trustworthy, including his promise of eternal salvation. [6:13-20](#)
9. With the advent of Jesus Christ, the last days have begun, though they await consummation at his return. [1:2](#); [2:5](#); [4:9-11](#); [9:9-28](#); [12:22-29](#)

History of Salvation Summary

Christ has accomplished final salvation, has brought the final word of God, and has become the final priest and the one atoning sacrifice to which the OT pointed. (For an explanation of the "History of Salvation," see the [Overview of the Bible](#).)

Literary Features

As noted above (see [Purpose, Occasion, and Background](#)), the book of Hebrews has affinities with the genres of both the epistle and the sermon. **The [first 12 chapters](#) conduct a sustained theological argument about the superiority of Christ over a number of rivals and about the need to persevere in following this vastly superior Messiah.** While following many ancient customs of rhetorical argumentation, these chapters can remind the modern reader of an essay with a thesis, a series of

subordinate generalizations, and supporting proof consisting of data and commentary on that data.

The book of Hebrews is one of the most stylistically polished books in the NT. The writer is a master of imagery and metaphor, allusions to the OT, comparison and analogy, contrast, and long, flowing sentences that build to a climax and often use parallel construction of clauses.

The rhetoric of the book is partly argumentative, as the author conducts a sustained theological exposition such as modern readers might expect in a debate or in a theology book. The persuasive strategy adheres to one of the classical ways of arguing a thesis, which is to repeat the main idea often and from a variety of angles. In addition to the rhetoric of argument and debate, readers will find in the book of Hebrews a persuasive rhetoric of exhortation in which the writer appeals to his readers not to abandon their faith.

The central motif of the book is the formula “better,” with the cluster of **words “better,” “more,” and “greater” appearing a combined total of 25 times.** The comparative motif, in which one thing is declared superior to another thing, is the main rhetorical strategy of the book. A common rhetorical form by which the comparison is conducted is analogy, with something in the OT being declared similar to the person and work of Christ. But the analogies are not between two equal things; rather, the author argues from the lesser to the greater.

Outline

1. Jesus Is Superior to Angelic Beings ([1:1-2:18](#))
 1. The supremacy of God’s Son ([1:1-14](#))
 1. Introduction: summary of the Son’s person and work ([1:1-4](#))
 2. Evidence of his status as Son ([1:5-14](#))
 2. Warning against neglecting salvation ([2:1-4](#))
 3. The founder of salvation ([2:5-18](#))
2. Jesus Is Superior to the Mosaic Law ([3:1-10:18](#))
 1. Jesus is greater than Moses ([3:1-6](#))
 2. Warning: a rest for the people of God ([3:7-4:13](#))
 1. The failure of the exodus generation ([3:7-19](#))
 2. Entering God’s rest ([4:1-13](#))
 3. The high priesthood of Jesus ([4:14-10:18](#))
 1. Jesus the great high priest ([4:14-5:10](#))
 2. Pause in the argument: warning against apostasy ([5:11-6:12](#))

3. The certainty of God's promise ([6:13-20](#))
4. Return to main argument: the priestly order of Melchizedek ([7:1-10](#))
5. Jesus compared to Melchizedek ([7:11-28](#))
6. Jesus, high priest of a better covenant ([8:1-13](#))
7. The earthly holy place ([9:1-10](#))
8. Redemption through the blood of Christ ([9:11-28](#))
9. Christ's sacrifice once for all ([10:1-18](#))
3. Call to Faith and Endurance ([10:19-12:29](#))
 1. The full assurance of faith ([10:19-39](#))
 1. Exhortation to draw near ([10:19-25](#))
 2. Warnings against shrinking back ([10:26-39](#))
 2. By faith ([11:1-40](#))
 3. Endurance until the kingdom fully comes ([12:1-29](#))
 1. Jesus, founder and perfecter of faith ([12:1-2](#))
 2. Do not grow weary ([12:3-17](#))
 3. A kingdom that cannot be shaken ([12:18-29](#))
4. Concluding Exhortations and Remarks ([13:1-25](#))
 1. Sacrifices pleasing to God ([13:1-19](#))
 2. Benediction ([13:20-21](#))
 3. Final greetings ([13:22-25](#))

- ESV Study Bible

1. Key terminology/definitions:
 - a. Inerrancy
 - b. Infallibility
 - c. Inspiration
 - d. Special Revelation
 - e. Redemptive History
2. Disciples Path – “Immerse Yourself In God’s Word”
 - a. Know the Story: Luke 24:25-27; 44-49
 - b. Unpack the Story:
 - i. Scripture reveals Jesus.
 1. Jesus used Scripture to explain Himself
 - a. See Luke 24... “Road to Emmaus...”
 - b.
 - c. Live 58
 - d. “You have heard, but I tell you...”
 - e.
 - ii. Scripture reveals who we really are:

QUOTE: *“Even though all of Scripture points to Jesus – and we read it with the intention and expectation of finding Jesus in Scripture – it doesn’t mean we can’t find anything useful in Scripture concerning ourselves. The opposite is true! When we immerse our lives in God’s Word - through faith in the living Word that is Jesus, and through immersing our lives in the written Word that is the Bible – we find an unshakable identity from which our entire lives can flow.”* –
Disciples Path

Both, the Gospel AND the Word of God... will always, ultimately... divide the crowds and unify the Church! - JDP

One of the ways to see that distinction in action... is to watch how crowd members respond to God’s Word... While most everyone will quickly & gladly accept the privileges promised to God’s people, counterfeit Christians reject, rebuff, & rebel against much of the Bible’s requirements and responsibilities. Hence, I say again, the Word of God will divide the crowds and unify the Church – Amen & AMEN! - JDP

“Marinade Instructions”

➤ **Get-in**

- Immerse
- Submerge
- Parallel to the metaphorical meaning of baptism
- **Get-under**
 - *“We can’t understand Scripture until we get under it.”* – D.P.
 - *“Buffet-believers are an oxy-moron.”* – JDP
 - *“Much more than merely reading Scripture, we must let Scripture read us.”* – DP (see Hebrews 4:12)
 - *“When we stand above Scripture and the posture of our hearts has more authority in our lives than God’s Word, it is tempting to believe partial truths or even lies... rather than the truest things that God says...”* – D.P.
- **Get-thru**
 - We need to let Scripture work its way thru us!!!
 - Sometimes the Word is like God’s chisel in our lives...
 - *“Let the truth of God’s Word get through ever layer of who you are.”* – D.P.
- **Get-transformed**
 - Like a marinade... God’s Word tenderizes us...
 - Like a marinade... God’s Word transforms us...
 - Unlike marinade... God’s Word never stops transforming us – Amen!

Transforming Power of Scripture:

- Head knowledge without Heart activation & Hands application is dangerous
- See Hebrews 4:12-13

“The ‘sword’ metaphor suggests that the Bible functions much like a surgeon’s scalpel when a doctor carefully identifies the location for the incision, penetrates the flesh with the depth that required, and with great accuracy cuts out the infected area. Similarly, and with the Spirit’s guidance, God’s Word is a tool that clears away the infected parts of our hearts, transforming us to look more like His Son.” - Disciples Path

Q: “How have you experienced Scripture locating infected areas of your heart?”

“How would it change your relationship with God if you allowed Him to narrate your life using the words of Scripture?”

What IF you let God alone, thru His Word alone, affirmed by His Spirit alone:

1. **INFORM** your life’s definitions, expectations & applications?
2. **INSPECT** your life’s definitions, expectations & applications?
3. **INSPIRE** your life’s definitions, expectations & applications?

Psalm 119:105-112 (ESV)

- ¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
¹⁰⁶ I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules.
¹⁰⁷ I am severely afflicted; give me life, O LORD, according to your word!
¹⁰⁸ Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O LORD, and teach me your rules.
¹⁰⁹ I hold my life in my hand continually, but I do not forget your law.
¹¹⁰ The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I do not stray from your precepts.
¹¹¹ Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart.
¹¹² I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end.

See the both/and of who and what are we?

a. Great PRIVILEGE:

- a. New creation! (2 Cor. 5)
- b. “a chosen people” (1 Peter 2:9)
- c. Freed slaves (to sin) (Jn.8: 32 & 36)
- d. Adopted children of God (Galatians 3:26)
 - i. Sons (small s) of God
 - ii. Daughters of God
- e. “Children of the promise” (Rom.9:8)
- f. Heirs of the kingdom
- g. “co-heirs with Christ, IF...” (Rom. 8:17)
- h. Friends of God (John 15:15)
- i. Brothers & Sisters
- j. Blood-bought, redeemed
- k. Bride of Christ
- l. Hope of the world
- m. “The called of Jesus Christ” (Rom.1:6)
- n. Beloved of God (Rom.1:7)
- o. “Chosen ones” – (Ps. 105:6)
- p. “good seed” (Matt. 13:38)
- q. “attendants of the Bridegroom” (Matt.9:15)

- r. "Light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8)
- s. "Children of light" (Eph. 5:8)
- t. "sons of the resurrection" (Lk. 20:36)
- u. "the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27 & Eph.3:6)
- v. "partakers of the promise" (Eph.3:6)
- w. "treasured ones" of God (Ps. 83:3)
- x. "a consecrated people" (Deut. 26:19)
- y. "sheep/His flock" (Isaiah 40:11)
- z. "citizen of heaven" (Philippians 3:20)

b. Great RESPONSIBILITY:

***"Serving God is NOT punishment...
it's nourishment!"*** - Warren Wiersbe

- a. Witnesses (Acts 1:8)
 - i. Tell & teach the truth
 - ii. Show & share the truth
 - iii. Find the Lost, Grow the Found
- b. Global missionaries (Acts 1:8)
 - i. Local
 - ii. Regional
 - iii. Global
- c. Church! (see Rev. 2-3)
- d. Cross-carrying disciples (Lk. 14:26)
- e. Doulos/slave (like Paul)
- f. Faithful-followers
- g. Fishers of men
- h. Salt
- i. "Light of the world" (Matt. 5:14)
- j. Ministers of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5)
- k. Ambassadors (2 Cor. 5)
- l. Aroma
- m. Royal Priesthood
- n. Holy nation

(see 1 Peter 2:9) But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

- o. "called Christians" (Acts 11:26)

- p. "the Way" (Acts
- q. "imitators of God" (Eph. 5:1)
- r. "fruit bearing branches" (John 15)
- s. "bearers of much fruit" (John 15:8)
- t. "talent-investors"
- u. Example (1 Tim.4:12)
- v. Family of God

(see Luke 8:21) "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

(see 1 John 3:10) By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

- w. Soldiers (2 Timothy 2)
- x. Farmers (2 Timothy 2)
- y. Workers (Lk.10 & Eph. 2:10)
- z. Disciplers (Matt. 28:18-20)
- aa. "letter of Christ" (2 Cor. 3:3)
- bb. "member of His body" (Eph. 5:30_

1. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
2. Hebrews 4:12

What do all these verses tell us (in their entirety) about how God's Word shapes & defines us?

"The Word of God is not intended to beat you up, but rather, to wake you up and build you up!" - JDP

TEXT: Exegetical Study

- Given Hebrew's structure & purpose...
- **Read Revelation 2&3 for a peek at direct application!**

Verse 12. For the word of God. The design of this and the following verse is obvious. It is to show that we cannot escape the notice of God; that all insincerity, unbelief, hypocrisy, will be detected by him; and that since our hearts are perfectly open before him, we should

be sincere, and should not attempt to deceive him. *The sense is, that the truth of God is all-penetrating and searching, and that the real thoughts and intents of the heart will be brought to light; and that if there is insincerity and self-deception, there can be no hope of escape.* There has been a great variety of opinion here about the meaning of the phrase "the word of God." Some have supposed that it means the Lord Jesus; others the whole of the divine revelation; others the gospel; others the particular threatening referred to here. *The "word of God" is that which God speaks—whether it be a promise or a threatening; whether it be law or gospel; whether it be a simple declaration or a statement of a doctrine. The idea here is, that what God had said is fitted to detect hypocrisy, and to lay open the true nature of the feelings of the soul, so that there can be no escape for the guilty. His truth is adapted to bring out the real feelings, and to show man exactly what he is. Truth always has this power—whether preached, or read, or communicated by conversation, or impressed upon the memory and conscience by the Holy Spirit. There can be no escape from the penetrating, searching application of the word of God. That truth has power to show what man is, and is like a penetrating sword that lays open the whole man.* Comp. [Isaiah 49:2](#). **The phrase "the word of God" here may be applied, therefore, to the truth of God, however made known to the mind.** In some way it will bring out the real feelings, and show what man is.

Is quick. Gr. ζῶν-*living*. It is not dead, inert, and powerless. **It has a living power**, and is energetic and active. It is *adapted* to produce this effect.

And powerful. Mighty. Its power is seen in *awakening the conscience; alarming the fears; laying bare the secret feelings of the heart; and causing the sinner to tremble with the apprehension of the coming judgment.* All the great changes in the moral

world for the better, have been caused by the power of truth. They are such as the truth in its own nature is fitted to effect; and, if we may judge of its power by the greatness of the revolutions produced, no words can over-estimate the might of the truth which God has revealed.

Sharper than any two-edged sword. Literally, *two-mouthed sword* δίστομον. The word *mouth* was given to the sword because it seemed to devour all before it. It consumed or destroyed, as a wild beast does. **The comparison of the word of God to a sword, or to an arrow, is designed to show its power of penetrating the heart, Ecclesiastes 12:11.** "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies." Comp. Isaiah 49:2; **"And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword."** Revelation 1:16; **"And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword;"** Revelation 2:12,16, 19:15. The comparison is common in the classics, and in Arabic poetry. See Gesenius, on Isaiah 49:2. The idea is that of piercing, or penetrating; and **the meaning here is, that the word of God reaches the heart—the very centre of action and lays open the motives and feelings of the man.** It was common among the ancients to have a sword with two-edges. The Roman sword was commonly made in this manner. **The fact that it had two edges made it more easy to penetrate, as well as to cut with every way.**

Piercing even to the dividing asunder. Penetrating so as to divide.

Soul and spirit. The animal life from the immortal soul. The former word here—ψυχή—*soul*—is evidently used to denote the animal life, as distinguished from the mind or soul. The latter word—πνεῦμα—*spirit*—means the soul; the immaterial and immortal part; that which lives when the animal life is extinct. This distinction occurs in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 "your whole spirit, and soul, and body ;" and it is a distinction which we are constantly in the habit of making. There is the body in man - the animal life - and the immortal part that leaves the body when life is extinct. Mysteriously united, they constitute one man. When the animal life is separated from the soul, or when the soul leaves the animated body, the body dies, and life is extinct. To separate the one from the other is, therefore, the same as to take life—and this is the idea here, that the word of God is like a sharp sword that inflicts deadly wounds. The sinner "*dies*;" that is, he becomes dead to his former hopes, or is "slain" by the law. Romans 7:9, "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." **This is the power referred to here—the power of destroying the hopes of the sinner; cutting him down under conviction; and prostrating him, as if a sword had pierced his heart.**

And of the joints and marrow. The figure is still continued of the sword that takes life. Such a sword would seem to penetrate even the joints and marrow of the body. **It would separate the joints, and pierce through the very bones to the marrow.** A similar effect, Paul says, is **produced by truth.** It seems to penetrate the very essence of the soul, and lay it all open to the view.

And is a discerner of the thoughts. **It shows what the thoughts and intentions are.** Prof. Stuart, Bloomfield, and some others, suppose that the reference here is to *God* speaking by his word. But the more natural construction certainly is, to refer it to the word or truth of God. It is true that God searches the heart, and knows the thoughts; but that is not the truth which is prominent here. It is, that **the thoughts and intents of the heart are brought out to view by the word of God.** And can any one doubt this? **See [Romans 7:7](#).** Is it not true that men are made to see their real character under the exhibition of the truth of God? That in the light of the law they see their past lives to be sinful? That the exhibition of truth calls to their recollection many long forgotten sins? And that their feelings are brought out when the truth of God is proclaimed? Men then are made to look upon their motives as they had never done before, and to see in their hearts feelings whose existence they would not have suspected, if it had not been for the exhibition of the truth.

The exhibition of the truth is like pouring down the beams of the sun at midnight on a dark world; and the truth lays open the real feelings of the sinner, as that sun would disclose the clouds of wickedness that are now performed under cover of the night. Many a man has a deep and fixed hostility to God, and to his gospel, who might never be sensible of it, if the truth was not faithfully proclaimed.

The particular idea here is, that **the truth of God will detect the feelings of the hypocrite and self-deceiver.** They cannot always conceal their emotions, and **the time will come when truth, like light poured into the soul, will reveal their unbelief and their secret sins.**

They who are cherishing a hope of salvation, therefore, should be on their guard lest they mistake the name for the reality.

Let us learn from this verse:

(1) the power of truth. It is *fitted* to lay open the secret feelings of the soul. There is not an effect produced in awakening a sinner, or in his conviction, conversion, and Sanctification, which the truth is not *adapted* to produce. The truth of God is not dead; nor fitted to make man *worse*; nor designed merely to show its own *weakness*, and to be a mere occasion on which the Holy Spirit acts on the mind;—it is, in its own nature, FITTED to produce just the effects which are produced when **it awakens, convicts, converts, and sanctifies the soul.**

(2) The truth should be preached with the feeling that it is adapted to this end.

Men who preach should endeavor to understand the nature of the mind and of the moral feelings, as really as he who would inflict a deadly wound should endeavour to understand enough about anatomy to know where the heart is, or he who administers medicine should endeavour to know what is adapted to remove certain diseases.

And he who has no belief in the efficacy of truth to produce any effect, resembles one who should suppose that all knowledge of the human system was needless to him who wished and who should cut at random—to perform a surgical operations piously leaving it with God to direct the knife; or he who should go into a hospital of patients, and administer medicines indiscriminately—devoutly saying, that all healing must come from God, and that the use of medicine was only to show its own weakness!

Thus many men seem to preach.

Yet, for aught that appears, *truth is just as wisely adapted to save the soul, as medicine is to heal the sick;* and why, then, should not a preacher be as careful to study the nature of truths and its adaptedness to a particular end, as a student of the healing art is to understand the adaptedness of medicine to cure disease? The true way of preaching is, to feel that truth is adapted to the end in view; to select that which is best fitted for that end; to **preach as if the whole result depended on getting that truth before the mind and into the heart, and then to leave the whole result with God - as a physicians with right feelings, will exert all his skill to save his patient, and then commit the whole question of life and health to God.**

He will be more likely to praise God intelligently who believes that he has wisely adapted a plan to the end in view, than he who believes that God works only at random.

QUOTE:

The Bible is humanity's ultimate "translator" & "authenticator" of both actions & attitudes... In a world filled with lies & liars, deceit & deceivers, the confused and the confusing – God's Word is the unshakable source of ALL truth and defining definitions – like it or not... agree with it or not... Whether you accept this truth OR reject it – you and your condition are who & what God & His Word say you are... period! - JDP

(*) "word" [Isaiah 49:2](#)

(*) "piercing" [Revelation 1:16](#)

(*) "discerner" [Psalms 139:2](#), [Jeremiah 17:10](#), [Revelation 2:23](#)

- Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.

[4:11-13](#)

The concluding third part of the exposition of [Psalm 95:7-11](#) emphasizes the accountability which comes to those who have heard the Word of God. Scripture records the examples of those in the wilderness with Moses, those who entered Canaan with Joshua, and those who received the same opportunity in David's day.

It is the Word which must be believed and obeyed and the Word which will judge the disobedient (cf. [1 Cor. 10:5-13](#)).

[4:12](#) *two-edged sword.*

While the Word of God is comforting and nourishing to those who believe, it is a tool of judgment and execution for those who have not committed themselves to Jesus Christ. Some of the Hebrews were merely going through the motions of belonging to Christ. Intellectually, they were at least partly persuaded, but inside they were not committed to Him. God's Word would expose their shallow beliefs and even their false intentions (cf. [1 Sam. 16:7](#); [1 Pet. 4:5](#)).

division of soul and spirit. **These terms do not describe two separate entities (any more than "thoughts and intents" do) but are used as one might say "heart and soul" to express fullness** (cf. [Luke 10:27](#); [Acts 4:32](#); see note on [1 Thess. 5:23](#)).

Elsewhere, these two terms are used interchangeably to describe man's immaterial self, his eternal inner person.

4:13 open to the eyes of Him. *Open* is a specialized term used just this one time in the NT. It originally meant to expose the neck either in preparation for sacrifice or for beheading. Perhaps the use of *sword* in the previous verse triggered the term. Each person is judged not only by the Word of God (cf. [John 12:48](#)), but by God Himself. **We are accountable to the living, written Word** (cf. [John 6:63, 68](#); [Acts 7:38](#)) **and to the living God who is its author.**

- The MacArthur Bible Commentary.

Hebrews 4:12-13 **Critical and Exegetical Notes**

Ver. 12. **Word of God.**—Either

- (1) the personal Word, the Λόγος; or
- (2) the revealed word, to which the writer has been appealing; or
- (3) the spoken word of God, which may come to men through human agents now. Probably the second is the more preferable explanation, because to this writer **Scripture is constantly thought of as a *direct* Divine utterance. It is not simply the written word, but that word as the voice for every age of the living God.**

Quick.—**Alive, active.**

Soul.—**ψυχή, the animal soul, spirit; πνεῦμα, that part of our nature in which the Divine Spirit works. Not a separating of these things from one another, but a dividing so as to lay them both bare to view.**

“The awakening and alarming of the conscience, the felt opening up, the dissection of the ultimate principles of the moral and spiritual life, is the effect of the word here intended” (*Webster and Wilkinson*).

For the sword-figure see [Isa 49:2](#); [Eph 6:17](#); [Rev 1:16](#); and [Wis 18:15-16](#).

Joints and marrow.—A very strong figure. Dividing the joints or limbs from the body, and piercing through the very bone to the marrow. “The divine commination is of the most deadly punitive efficacy.”

- Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary

v.12 *For the word of God.* **The Israelites came short because they refused to hear the word of the Lord. If we could enter in, we must take heed to the word.**

It is *living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword.*

Cutting keenly and in all directions.

Dividing of soul and spirit.

It not only gives life, but slays, as was the case with the Israelites who fell in the wilderness, and pierces to the soul and spirit. It reaches the very fountains of life.

A discerner of the thoughts.

It lays bare the thoughts and intentions.

Johnson's Notes on the New Testament.

Proper and Powerful Arguments and Motives to Faith and Obedience

[4:11-16](#)

In this latter part of the chapter the apostle concludes, first, with a serious repeated exhortation, and then with proper and powerful motives.

I. Here we have a serious exhortation:

Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, [v. 11](#). Observe,

1. **The end proposed-rest spiritual and eternal, the rest of grace here and glory hereafter-in Christ on earth, with Christ in heaven.**
2. The way to this end prescribed-labour, diligent labour; this is the only way to rest; **those who will not work now shall not rest hereafter**. After due and diligent labour, sweet and satisfying rest shall follow; and labour now will make that rest more pleasant when it comes. **The sleep of the labouring man is sweet**, [Ecclesiastes 5:12](#).

Let us therefore labour, let us all agree and be unanimous in this, and let us quicken one another, and call upon one another to this diligence. It is the truest act of friendship, when we see our fellow-christians loiter, to call upon them to mind their business and labour at it in earnest.

"Come, Sirs, let us all go to work; why do we sit still? Why do we loiter? Come, let us labour; now is our working time, our rest remains." **Thus should Christians call upon themselves and one another to be diligent in duty; and so much the more as we see the day approaching.**

II. Here we have proper and powerful motives to make the advice effectual, which are drawn,

1. *From the dreadful example of those who have already perished by unbelief: Lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. To have seen so many fall before us will be a great aggravation of our sin, if we will not take warning by them: their ruin calls loudly upon us; their lost and restless souls cry to us from their torments, that we do not, by sinning as they did, make ourselves miserable as they are.*

2. *From the great help and advantage we may have from the word of God to strengthen our faith, and excite our diligence, that we may obtain this rest:*

The word of God is quick and powerful, [v. 12](#). By the word of God we may understand either the essential or the written word: the essential Word, that in the beginning was with God, and was God ([John 1:1](#)), the Lord Jesus Christ, and indeed what is said in this verse is true concerning him; but most understand it of the written word, **the holy scriptures, which are the word of God**. Now of this word it is said,

(1.) That is quick; **it is very lively and active, in all its efforts, in seizing the conscience of the sinner, in cutting him to the heart, and in comforting him and binding up the wounds of the soul.**

Those know not the word of God who call it a dead letter; it is quick, compared to the light, and nothing quicker than the light;

It is not only quick, but quickening;

it is a vital light; it is a living word, *zōn*.

Saints die, and sinners die; but the word of God lives.

All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever,
[1 Peter 1:24, 25](#).

Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever? But my words, which I commanded the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? [Zechariah 1:5, 6](#).

(2.) **It is powerful.** When God sets it home by his Spirit, **it convinces powerfully, converts powerfully, and comforts powerfully.**

It is so powerful as to pull down strong holds ([2 Corinthians 10:4, 5](#)), to raise the dead, to make the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk. It is powerful to batter down Satan's kingdom, and to set up the kingdom of Christ upon the ruins thereof.

(3.) It is sharper than any **two-edged sword**; it **cuts both ways**; it is **the sword of the Spirit**, [Ephesians 6:17](#). **It is the two-edged sword that cometh out of the mouth of Christ**, [Revelation 1:16](#). It is **sharper than any two-edged sword, for it will enter where no other sword can**, and make a more critical dissection: it pierces to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, the soul and its habitual prevailing temper; it makes a soul that has been a long time of a proud spirit to be humble, of a perverse spirit to be meek and obedient. **Those sinful habits that have become as it were natural to the soul, and rooted deeply in it, and become in a manner one with it, are separated and cut off by this sword. It cuts off ignorance from the understanding, rebellion from the will, and enmity from the mind, which, when carnal, is enmity itself against God. This sword divides between the joints and the marrow, the most secret, close, and intimate parts of the body**; this sword can cut off the lusts of the flesh as well as the lusts of the mind, and make men willing to undergo the sharpest operation for the mortifying of sin.

(4.) **It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, even the most secret and remote thoughts and designs.** It will discover to men the variety of their thoughts and purposes, the vileness of them, the bad principles they are actuated by, the sinister and sinful ends they act to. **The word will turn the inside of a sinner out, and let him see all that is in his heart.** Now such a word as this must needs be a great help to our faith and obedience.

3. From the perfections of the Lord Jesus Christ...

(1.) His person, particularly his omniscience: Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, [v. 13](#). This is agreeable to what Christ speaks of himself: All the churches shall know that I am he that searches the reins and hearts, [Revelation 2:23](#). None of the creatures can be concealed from Christ; none of the creatures of God, for **Christ is the Creator** of them all; and there are none of the motions and workings of our heads and hearts (which may be called creatures of our own) but what are open and manifest to him with whom we have to do as the object of our worship, and the high priest of our profession. He, by his omniscience, cuts up the sacrifice we bring to him, that it may be presented to the Father. Now as the high priest inspected the sacrificed beasts, cut them up to the back-bone to see whether they were sound at heart, so all things are thus dissected, and lie open to the piercing eye of our great high priest. An he who now tries our sacrifices will at length, as Judge, try our state. We shall have to do with him as one who will determine our everlasting state. Some read the words, to whom with us there is an account or reckoning. Christ has an exact account of us all. He has accounted for all who believe on him; and he will account with all: our accounts are before him. **This omniscience of Christ, and the account we owe of ourselves to him, should engage us to persevere in faith and obedience...**

- Matthew Henry's Commentary

[Hebrews 4:12](#) is an often-quoted and frequently memorized verse. As such, **it may seem that the writer suddenly shifts topics, from rest to the Word of God. Actually, he is emphasizing a point. He began his discussion of rest at 3:7 by quoting from scripture, attributing not a psalmist, but the Holy Spirit for the text. The psalm is a warning against hardening one's heart and rebelling against God.**

So the point he makes in [4:12](#) is that God's Word is nothing to be taken lightly.

It can never be ignored or dismissed with impunity. **It is the living voice of God that gets right to the bottom of things.** Someone may look fine in the eyes of other people, but **God's Word exposes the true condition of the heart, the real character of one's faith, and reveals a genuine spirit.**

Critical Observation

The phrase “soul and spirit, joints and marrow” ([4:12](#)) is simply a way to refer to the inner life of a human being in all of its aspects. Although some people use this verse as evidence that a person is composed of three parts (spirit, soul, and body), someone else could just as easily cite [Mark 12:30](#) to speculate that people have four parts (heart, soul, mind, and body).

God sees every action. He knows every thought and attitude. No matter how hard people try to hide their sins, the truth will eventually come to light and they will be expected to give an account ([4:13](#)).

How much better it is to respond to God and await His rest. According to the writer of Hebrews, “today” won't last forever.

Take It Home

The modern church can benefit by a renewed excitement over the celebration of a Sabbath—one day each week set aside for refreshing rest in anticipation of the eternal rest of God that awaits us in the world to come. With a focus on rest and worship, the principle of Sabbath can keep alive one's immediate sense of joy and expectation of even better things to come. Is this typical of your own experience? If not, what needs to change in order for you to make the most of your Sabbath days and preparation for the ultimate rest of God?

- Layman's Bible Commentary

Notes for Verse 12

Verse 12. For—Such *diligent striving* ([Heb 4:11](#)) is incumbent on us FOR *we have to do with a God whose "word" whereby we shall be judged, is heart-searching, and whose eyes are all-seeing* ([Heb 4:13](#)). *The qualities here attributed to the word of God, and the whole context, show that it is regarded in its JUDICIAL power, whereby it doomed the disobedient Israelites to exclusion from Canaan, and shall exclude unbelieving so-called Christians from the heavenly rest.*

The written Word of God is not the prominent thought here, though the passage is often quoted as if it were. Still the word of God (the same as that preached, [Heb 4:2](#)), used here in the broadest sense, but with special reference to its *judicial* power, INCLUDES **the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit with double edge, one edge for convicting and converting some (Heb 4:2), and the other for condemning and destroying the unbelieving** ([Heb 4:14](#)).

[Rev. 19:15](#) similarly represents the Word's judicial power as a sharp sword going out of Christ's mouth to *smite* the nations.

The same word which is saving to the faithful ([Heb 4:2](#)) *is destroying to the disobedient* ([2Cor 2:15, 16](#)).

The personal Word, to whom some refer the passage, is not here meant: for He *is* not the sword, but *has* the sword. Thus reference to Joshua appropriately follows in [Heb 4:8](#).

quick—*Greek*, "living"; having living power, as "the rod of the mouth and the breath of the lips" of "the living God."

powerful—*Greek*, "energetic"; **not only living, but energetically efficacious.**

sharper—"more cutting."

two-edged—sharpened at both edge and back. Compare "sword of the Spirit... word of God" ([Eph 6:17](#)). Its *double* power seems to be implied by its being "two-edged." "It judges all that is in the heart, for there it passes through, at once *punishing* [unbelievers] and searching [both believers and unbelievers]" [CHRYSOSTOM]. PHILO similarly speaks of "God passing between the parts of Abraham's sacrifices ([Gen 15:17](#), where, however, it is a 'burning lamp' that passed between the pieces) with His word, which is the cutter of all things: which sword, being sharpened to the utmost keenness, never ceases to divide all sensible things, and even things not perceptible to sense or physically divisible, but perceptible and divisible by the word." Paul's

early training, both in the *Greek* schools of Tarsus and the Hebrew schools at Jerusalem, accounts fully for his acquaintance with Philo's modes of thought, which were sure to be current among learned Jews everywhere, though Philo himself belonged to Alexandria, not Jerusalem. Addressing Jews, he by the Spirit sanctions what was true in their current literature, as he similarly did in addressing Gentiles ([Ac 17:28](#)).

piercing—*Greek*, "coming through."

even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit—that is, reaching through even to the separation of the animal *soul*, the lower part of man's incorporeal nature, the seat of animal desires, which he has in common with the brutes; compare the same *Greek*, [1Cor 2:14](#), "the natural [animal-souled] man" ([Jude 1:19](#)), from the spirit (the higher part of man, receptive of the Spirit of God, and allying him to heavenly beings).

and of the joints and marrow—rather, "(reaching even TO) *both* the joints (so as to divide them) and marrow." **Christ "knows what is in man" ([John 2:25](#)):** so His word reaches as far as to the most intimate and accurate knowledge of man's most hidden parts, feelings, and thoughts, dividing, that is, *distinguishing* what is *spiritual* from what is *carnal* and *animal* in him, the *spirit* from the *soul*: so [Pr 20:27](#). As the knife of the Levitical priest reached to dividing parts, closely united as the *joints* of the limbs, and penetrated to the innermost parts, as the *marrows* (the *Greek* is *plural*); so the word of God divides the closely joined parts of man's immaterial being, soul and spirit, and penetrates to the innermost parts of the spirit. The clause (reaching even to) "*both* the joints and marrow" is subordinate to the clause, "even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." (In the oldest manuscripts as in *English Version*, there is no "both," as there is in the clause "*both* the joints *and*..." which marks the latter to be subordinate). An image (appropriate in addressing Jews) from the literal dividing of joints, and penetrating to, so as to open out, the marrow, by the priest's knife, illustrating the previously mentioned spiritual "dividing of soul from spirit," whereby each (soul as well as spirit) is laid bare and "naked" before God; this view accords with [Heb 4:13](#). Evidently "the dividing of the soul from the spirit" answers to the "joints" which *the sword, when it reaches* unto, *divides asunder*, as the "spirit" answers to the innermost "marrow." "Moses forms the soul, Christ the spirit. The soul draws with it the body; the spirit draws with it both soul and body." ALFORD'S interpretation is clumsy, by which he makes the soul *itself*, and the spirit *itself*, to be divided, instead of the soul *from* the spirit: so also he makes not only the *joints* to be divided asunder, but the *marrow* also to be divided (?). The Word's dividing and far penetrating power has both a punitive and a healing effect.

discerner of the thoughts—*Greek*, "capable of judging the purposes."

intents—rather, "conceptions" [CRELLIUS]; "ideas" [ALFORD]. AS the *Greek* for "thoughts" refers to the *mind* and *feelings*, so that for "intents," or rather "mental conceptions," refers to the *intellect*.

A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments.

Let us labor ([vv. 9-13](#)). "Give diligence" is a good translation of this admonition. Diligence is the opposite of "drifting" ([Heb. 2:1-3](#)). How do we give diligence? By paying close attention to the Word of God. Israel did not believe God's Word, so the rebels fell in the wilderness. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" ([Rom. 10:17](#)).

In comparing the Word of God to a sword, the writer is not suggesting that God uses His Word to slaughter the saints! It is true that the Word cuts the heart of sinners with conviction ([Acts 5:33; 7:54](#)), and that the Word defeats Satan ([Eph. 6:17](#)). The Greek word translated "sword" means "a short sword or dagger." The emphasis is on the power of the Word to penetrate and expose the inner heart of man. The Word is a "discerner" or "critic."

The Israelites criticized God's Word instead of allowing the Word to judge them. Consequently, they lost their inheritance.

Of course, God sees our hearts ([Heb. 4:13](#)); but we do not always know what is there ([Jer. 17:9](#)). God uses the Word to enable us to see the sin and unbelief in our own hearts. The Word *exposes* our hearts; and then, if we trust God, the Word *enables* our hearts to obey God and claim His promises. This is why each believer should be diligent to apply himself to hear and heed God's Word. In the Word we see God, and we also see how God sees us. We see ourselves as we really are. This experience enables us to be honest with God, to trust His will, and to obey Him.

All of this is possible because of the finished work of Jesus Christ. (The two "He's" in [Heb. 4:10](#) refer to Jesus Christ.) God rested when He finished the work of Creation. God's Son rested when He completed the work of the new creation. We may enter into His rest by trusting His Word and obeying His will. We can do this as we listen to His Word, understand it, trust it, and obey it. Only in this way can we claim our inheritance in Christ.

Before Joshua conquered Jericho, he went out to survey the situation; and he met the Lord Jesus Christ ([Josh. 5:13-15](#)). Joshua discovered that he was second in command! The Lord had a sword in His hand, and Joshua fell at His feet in complete submission. It was this action in private that gave Joshua his public victory.

We too claim our spiritual inheritance by surrendering to Him and trusting His Word. We must beware of an evil heart of unbelief.

- Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Confident

(Hebrews).

Jesus on the Old Testament Scriptures:

What did Jesus teach about the Old Testament?

by Ryan Turner

Many people today do not believe in the authority of the Old Testament as Scripture. However, Jesus had some quite different things to say regarding the Old Testament. Here is a brief list of some of what Jesus taught about the Old Testament:

1. Source of Authority

1. **When confronted by Satan, Jesus appealed to the Old Testament as a source of authority by stating, "It is written,"** ([Matt. 4:4](#), [7](#), [10](#)).

2. Imperishability

1. "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished," (NASB, [Matt. 5:18](#)).

3. Unbreakability

1. **"The Scripture cannot be broken,"** (NASB, [Jn. 10:35](#)).

4. Source of Doctrinal Authority

1. Jesus appealed to Scripture when correcting false doctrine stating, **"You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God,"** (NASB, [Matt. 22:29](#)).

5. Truthfulness

1. **"Your word is truth,"** (NASB, [Jn. 17:17](#)).

6. Historical Reliability

1. Jesus affirmed the historical existence of Jonah ([Matt. 12:40](#)), Noah ([Matt. 24:37-38](#)), and Adam and Eve ([Matt. 19:4-6](#)).

7. Scientific Reliability

1. **Jesus affirmed that God created the world** ([Mk. 13:19](#); cf. [Matt. 19:4](#)).

8. Old Testament Canonicity¹

1. **Jesus made reference to the Law and Prophets as a unit**, "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill," ([Matt. 5:17](#)).
2. **Jesus explained the Scriptures**, "Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures," (NASB, [Luke 24:27](#)).
3. **Jesus referred to the entire Canon by mentioning all the prophets from Abel (from Genesis, the first book and first martyr) to Zechariah (Chronicles, the last book, and the last martyr)** ([Matt. 23:35](#)).²

What does this mean?

Since Jesus is God in flesh, performed a life of miraculous healings, died on the cross, and was miraculously resurrected three days later, what He taught on issues of doctrine is vastly important. Since He was God in flesh, whatever He taught is true. This means that we can trust the accuracy of the Old Testament Scriptures on issues of history, science, and moral instruction.

-
- 1. The word "canon" means basically "rule, standard, or norm." In this context, it refers to the accepted books that were in the Jewish Scriptures. These books were the standard by which the Jews taught and lived.
 - 2. In the Jewish Canon of Scripture there were 24 books. They are exactly equivalent to the Protestant 39 books of the Old Testament, but they were just arranged differently. In the Jewish arrangement, the first book was Genesis and the last book was Chronicles.

Notes: Seeing the Gospel in the Old Testament

What is the Gospel?

Answer: (see the 4 spiritual laws)

God, Man, Christ, Response

GOD is our holy Creator and righteous Judge. He created us to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever (Gen. 2:7, 16-17; 18:25; Matt. 25:31-33). Man was created in God's image in order to worship and reflect Him.

MAN-kind rebelled against God by sinning against His holy character and law (Gen. 3:1-7). We've all participated in this sinful rebellion, both in Adam as our representative head and in our own actions (1 Kings 8:46; Rom. 3:23; 5:12, 19; Eph. 2:1-3). As a result, we have alienated ourselves from God and have exposed ourselves to His righteous wrath, which will banish us eternally to hell if we are not forgiven (Eph. 2:12; John 3:36; Rom. 1:18; Matt. 13:50). But God sent Jesus Christ to rescue lost and helpless sinners, while they were yet His enemies.

CHRIST, being fully God and fully man, was sent by God to die the death that we deserved for our sins—the righteous for the unrighteous—so that God might both punish our sin in Christ and forgive it in us (John 1:14; Rom. 3:21-26; 5:6-8; Eph. 2:4-6). Christ bore the wrath that man deserved, and was raised to new life in order that those who put their faith in Him would be saved.

RESPONSE: The only saving response to this Good News (a.k.a. —the gospel||) is repentance and belief (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 3:7-9; John 20:31). We

must **(MIRACULOUSLY) repent of our sins** (turn from them and to God) and **(MIRACULOUSLY) believe in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of our sins and reconciliation to God**. Through repentance from our sin and faith in the death and resurrection of Christ, we are welcomed into the family of God as those declared righteous in the sight of God. **As we grow in grace and truth, God transforms us into the image of Christ and we begin to bear the fruit of righteousness.**

See Titus 3:4-7 and Eph. 1:7-10 as summaries of the gospel; see 2 Cor. 3:18; Jn 17:17; Rom. 12:1-2 for a summary of sanctification; and see Col. 1:15-20; Phil 2:5-11; Heb. 1:1-4 for Christology.

Unity of Scripture:

One unifying thread of the Bible is its divine authorship. Every book of the Bible is God's word. Through the Holy Spirit, God directed the revelation and writing of His word through inspiration of human instruments who recorded it.

God's word was written for our instruction that through endurance and the encouragement that it provides, we might come to have the hope of glory which is Christ in us (Rom. 15:4; Col. 1:27). Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Ps. 19, 119.

God's Plan for History: God has a unified plan for all of history.

—His ultimate plan for the fullness of time [is] to unite all things in him [Christ], things in heaven and on earth... to the praise of his glory." (Eph. 1:10-12). Cf. Eph. 1:1-14

God has had this plan from the very beginning.

"...remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, „My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish my purpose" (Isaiah 46:9-10).

“When the fullness of time had come, God send forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who are under the law.” (Gal. 4:4-5).

In fact, **Christ’s atoning death was intended (Rev. 13:8) and our redemption was planned (Eph. 1:4) before the foundations of the world were ever laid.**

The work of Christ on earth is the climax of history.

It was through Christ’s work that God accomplished salvation for His people (cf. Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7; Phil. 2:5-11). At Christ’s return, God will finish what he started (Phil. 1:6; Rom. 8:19-23; 1 Cor. 15; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-22:5) in creating a holy people and a perfect home (we will be –new creatures in Christ|| in –new heavens and the new earth||).

Since God’s plan has been unified throughout history, it is appropriate for him to make earlier promises and predictions that would later experience fulfillment. Some of these promises are explicitly clear (i.e., God promises Messiah in Is. 9:6-7) and at other times these promises are symbolic (i.e., animal sacrifices that are a symbol of forgiveness of sins (Lev. 4) which fully and finally comes only through Christ (Heb. 10:1-18).

Christ in the Old Testament: **God’s plan focuses on Christ and His glory (Eph. 1:10), therefore it is legitimate that the**

promises of God and the symbols of the OT should point forward to him.

–For all the promises of God find their Yes in him [Christ]” (2 Cor. 1:20).

Luke 24:24-27 and Luke 24:44-47 indicate that all of Scripture is ultimately about the person and saving work of Christ. Jesus showed the disciples how to understand all of Scripture, including the OT, as pointing to Him. See also: Jn. 5:39-40; Acts 8:34-35; 26:22-23; 1 Peter 1:10-12.

Law of Moses which includes Genesis-Deuteronomy.

The Prophets which include the historical books/former prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, and 1-2 Kings; the latter prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel; and the 12 Minor Prophets: Hosea-Malachi.

The Psalms which includes the wisdom literature and writings (Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ruth, Esther, Job, Lamentations, Song of Solomon, etc).

The OT as a whole, therefore, through its promises, symbols, and pictures of salvation points forward to the actual accomplishment of salvation that took place once-for-all in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Promises/Blessings of God Point Forward to Christ: (1) The promise of salvation (Gen. 3:15) and God's commitment to His people (Gen. 17:7)

point forward to the work of Christ. (cf. Mic. 5:2/Matt. 2:1-12; Isa. 25:6-9; 60:1-7).

(2) God promises: –I will be their God, and they shall be my people.|| (cf. Jer. 31:33; Hos. 2:23; Zech. 8:8; 13:9; Heb. 8:10). **God's promises can only find its ultimate fulfillment through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.**

Sometimes God gives immediate temporal blessings, but these blessings are only a foretaste of the rich eternal blessings that come through Christ (2 Cor. 1:20; Eph. 1:3).

Warnings/Curses of God Point Forward to Christ:

(1) God's holiness (Lev. 11:44) requires that He righteously react to sin. God cannot look on sin; Romans 6:23 states that the wages of sin is death. God's judgment of sin (warnings/curse) ultimately point to Christ as the Lamb of God, the sin-bearer who became the curse for us (John 1:29; 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13). – **Every instance of the wrath of God against sin, and his punishments of sin, looks forward to the wrath that was poured out on Christ on the cross.**||

(2) Christ, at His second coming, will put an ultimate end to sin and death (1 Cor. 15).

Covenants Point Forward to Christ:

(1) Covenant: a binding contract between God and man that expresses God's commitment to man and man's commitment/obligation toward God. – When God makes a covenant with man, God is the sovereign, so he specifies the obligations on both sides.||

The covenant blessings and curses are both fulfilled in the person of Christ and are only experienced by His people through saving faith in Him.

Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:1-2); Mosaic Covenant (Ex. 19:1-8; 20:1-10; 24:1-8); Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:4-17); New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-33; Ez. 36:26-27).

(2) Christ was fully God and fully man. As a man, he stands with His people to fulfill the obligations of the covenant that they have failed to uphold (Heb. 5:8). **Christ is the ultimate covenant-keeper while we are the repetitive covenant-breakers.**

His perfect obedience and bearing the curse secures for them the covenant blessings of God. Christ was rewarded for His obedience (Phil. 2:9-10) and **as a result reconciled believers to God (2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 5:6-11) so that they might enjoy the intimacy of being His children (Rom. 8:14-17)**. In Isaiah, Christ is even called the covenant for God's people (Is. 42:6; 49:8).

Offspring Point Forward to Christ: (1) Genesis 3:15, immediately after the fall, God promises that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent who seduced her.

(2) Abraham is promised that he will be a father of many nations (Gen. 17) and that they will receive the blessing of land and a blessed name. Abraham-Isaac-Jacob-12 Sons-12 Tribes/Nation of Israel and later Christ as the supreme descendent (Matt. 1:1). **Paul notes that it was Christ who was referred to in Genesis (Gal. 3:15; Gen. 3:16).**

(3) Abraham trusted God and it was credited to him as righteousness (Rom. 4; Gal. 3:9; Heb. 11:8-12-19; Gen. 17:1). He wasn't entirely blameless, but one of his offspring would be entirely without sin, Christ (Heb. 4:15). Believers, therefore, are Abraham's offspring through faith in Christ, as heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:28-29).

(4) Adam drew all men into sin (Gen. 3; Rom. 5) but Christ is the Last Adam (Rom. 4; 1 Cor. 15:45-49) who freed believers from sin. Like Adam, Christ represents all who belong to him, and Christ reverses the effects of Adam's fall.

Shadows, Prefigures, and "Types"

The NT constantly speaks of the salvation that Christ has brought. The OT does the same thing through way of anticipation. **The OT portrays the gospel through types and shadows (1 Cor. 10:6, 11; Heb. 8:5).**

The events of the Israelites in the wilderness was an example for us (1 Cor. 10:6, 11). **The Greek word for –example|| (1 Cor. 10:6, 11) is typos, which gives us the word type (Rom. 5:14).**

A "type" in the biblical language of theology, is a special example, symbol, or picture that God designed beforehand, and that He placed in history at an earlier point in time, in order to point forward to a later, larger fulfillment."

Examples: Animal sacrifices (types) prefigured Christ's final sacrifice (antitype) (Heb. 4). Temple, dwelling place of God prefigured Christ, the ultimate dwelling place of God (Matt. 1:23; John 1; 2:21; Col. 1:23; 1 Cor. 3:16-17). OT priests were types of Christ is the ultimate high priest (Heb. 7:11-8:7).

Creation (new heaven/earth 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-22:5) and Jerusalem (new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2). [Garden sanctuary—Tabernacle— Temple— Christ—Church—New Garden Sanctuary at end of time]

Fulfillment takes place preeminently in Christ (Eph. 1:10; 2 Cor. 1:20).

Christ the Mediator

Sin: Ever since the fall of Adam (Gen. 3; Rom. 5), sin has affected all of mankind. As a result, all have fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3), experienced alienation from Him (Col. 1), and have experienced death (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2).

Holiness: Since God is holy, sinful man cannot see His face (Ex. 33:20). Sinful man needs a mediator who will approach God on his behalf. While Moses and other sometimes served as imperfect mediators who prefigured Christ, the Scriptures are clear that there is only one true mediator, Jesus Christ: –There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all|| (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

–God welcomed Moses into his presence only because, according to the plan of God, Christ was to come and make atonement for Moses. The benefits of Christ’s work were reckoned beforehand for Moses’ benefit. And so it must have been for all the OT saints.

There is only one way of salvation (Acts 4:12).

Physical deliverance prefigures spiritual salvation and physical restoration...

Mediators in the OT include prophets, priests, and kings. –Prophets bring the word of God from God to the people. Kings, when they submit to God, bring God’s rule to bear on the people. Priests represent the people in coming before God’s presence. Christ is the final prophet, king, and priest who fulfills all three functions in a final way (Heb. 1:1-3).|| One may also consider wise men who bring God’s wisdom, warriors who brings God’s deliverance from enemies, and singers who bring praise to God on behalf of the people and proclaim the character of God to others.

Mediation occurs not only through human figures but also through institutions: Covenants where God’s word is brought to His people; the

Temple that brings God's presence to His people; Sacrifices that bring forgiveness to God's people. In these ways, all the symbolic types and shadows of the OT point forward to the person of Christ.

*This study was greatly aided by the ESV Study Bible article entitled –Overview of the Bible: A Survey of the History of Salvation,|| as well as, Dever and Alexander, The Deliberate Church. Adaptations have been made for a teaching context, but the meat of this study is taken from these two sources.

SEEING THE GOSPEL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In witnessing to someone who is not Jewish you can easily present the Gospel from the New Testament, laying out the claims of Jesus as Messiah, showing how man is sinful and separated from God, and discussing reconciliation and redemption. But when talking to Jewish people about Jesus, the New Testament is not acknowledged or recognized as authoritative in their life today. So the Gospel is best presented from the Old Testament.

Listed below is a chain of Old Testament passages, which, when linked together, help to clearly present the Gospel.

You may wish to write these down in your Bible. Write the first verse in this Bible chain in the front of your Bible. When you have turned to the first verse, write down the second Bible verse at the bottom of that page. When you turn to the second Bible reference, write the third Biblical reference at the bottom of that page, etc. Your Bible will contain intact an entire chain of thought, without needing to memorize all the verses.

There are other parallel verses beyond the ones I list here, and you may wish to add to these.

ISAIAH 59:1-2

First, I turn to Isaiah 59:1-2: *“Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.”*

In this important portion of Scripture we **demonstrate the nature of God and man, and the consequences of sin between God and man**. Some Jewish people consider sin as actions or misdeeds done against man or the Lord, rather than man’s chronic spiritual condition.

One Hebrew word used to denote sin is a word that translates to mean, “We fall short,” or “we miss the mark.” Use the example of an archer at an archery range, who aims an arrow at a target and most often misses the bulls-eye or is slightly off course. That is how our sinful nature infects our lives. We may strive to do good, but it is impossible for us, and we fall short of doing it.

LEVITICUS 19:2

Next, follow your Biblical references to Leviticus 19:2: *“Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.’”* Here we see what God’s real expectation and demand is for our life. His standard is perfection – measured against his revealed Law. We might try to live without sinning, but of course we find that **no one is capable of living up to that standard. We all fall short.**

Recognizing that we fall short of God’s standard on this earth, we also must help our Jewish brothers and sisters understand that **there are consequences of this shortfall**. Our sins cause us to be separated from God, so that He hides His face from us and does not hear. **Man and his Creator are separated when we sin** (Isaiah 59:1-2). **But there is a much greater consequence.**

EZEKIEL 18:1-4

The word of the LORD came to me: ‘What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: “The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge?” As surely

as I live', declares the Sovereign LORD, 'you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son — both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die.'

When God established His covenant with Moses and the people of Israel on Mt. Sinai, they cried with one voice and heart, “We hear and we will obey the laws of our God.” But the Lord knew that their hearts and minds would eventually rebel against Him. **He announced to them that some individual’s sins would cause consequences to fall not only on the individual who committed the sin, but would fall onto the second, third and perhaps fourth generation of that individual’s descendants.**

In this verse, **the Lord announces**, through the prophet Ezekiel, that **each individual will be held accountable for his own sin. All souls belong to God** — the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son. And each individual is held accountable: the one who sins will die.

The Scriptures talk about two different kinds of death:

1. Physical death, cessation of life as we know it, where the spirit or soul is separated from the body, and
2. **Spiritual death, or, eternal separation from God. The Lord is speaking about both physical and spiritual death as a consequence of sin.** Physical death is the result of the separation of mankind and God through sin. That **separation is not healed at death. That separation is only healed through redemption in Messiah.**

Even though physical death is everywhere around us, many Jewish people do not consider life after this life such an important issue. But, the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, and can speak to those who doubt the truthfulness of Scripture and the afterlife.

DANIEL 12:2

The next portion of Scripture to turn to is Daniel 12:2 (v.1 in the Hebrew text): ***“Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”*** Reform Judaism today focuses very little on life after this life. Conservative and Orthodox Judaism do speak of life after this life, but **Rabbis have disagreements as to whether there is a degree of punishment – short-term, long-term or eternal – for those who have committed sins against God.**

Many Jewish people today will respond in a traditional way, saying “the things that we do on earth determine what our future is going to be. So we must seek to offset our evil by doing good.”

ISAIAH 64:6

Isaiah 64:6 says: ***“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”***

I shared this verse in a class I was teaching in Ft. Lauderdale a number of years ago. One of the Christians present had invited her unsaved Orthodox Jewish friend to come and listen to the discussion. When I indicated to the class that the verse implies that our sins are like filthy rags she came up to me afterwards and proceeded to bore in on my comments. “How dare you imply that my good deeds done with a loving heart would be seen by God in such a disgusting manner?” My response was that those were not my words, but God’s. She then told me she was going to speak with her son who was a rabbi in Israel. I told her that would be a good idea and I took her phone number.

Two weeks later I called and asked what her son the rabbi said. She told me that he confirmed what I had said and that the Scriptures clearly indicate our good deeds are like filthy rags. That brought her to a point of a dramatic shift in her world view. She had lived many years thinking that her place in eternity was secured through her deeds, but discovered that it is not. While I have yet to hear that she has responded in faith to Y’shua – I pray that she and many others will realize God’s gift of love for us in the Messiah.

Because we are sinful by nature, even the good deeds we do cannot, in God’s eyes, avail enough to overcome our sinful nature. In fact, nothing we do of ourselves will avail anything for our relationship with God.

But our Lord does not leave us in a condition of hopelessness, condemned to eternal separation from Himself. From the beginning, the Lord desired a close personal relationship with His creation. In His covenant with Moses and the rest of the Hebrew people, **He established a means of restoring the severed relationship because of sin. That means was a sacrificial system in which atonement, or covering, could be made for the sins of the people.**

LEVITICUS 16

Leviticus 16 covers in great depth and detail the extent to which the Lord sought to make atonement for the Hebrew people's sins. Rather than review this entire chapter, I urge you to personally outline that chapter, so that, in a few minutes, you can present its basic principles.

The High Priest is permitted, once a year, to enter into the Holy of Holies, and to sprinkle blood of a sacrificed animal upon the mercy seat. He does it twice, once for himself and once for the people of Israel. The picture here demonstrates substitutionary atonement. The Hebrew word for atonement, Kippur, literally means to "cover over." **The blood of the animal sacrificed in our place covers over the sin which keeps us from God. God sees the blood of the sacrificed animal, atonement is effected, and a relationship with Him is restored.**

LEVITICUS 17:10-11

Next comes Leviticus 17:10-11. **Verse 11 tells us that without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness of sin.** As I see it, the central problem to traditional Judaism as it is practiced today is this: The Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70 of this era. Since the destruction of the Temple in Israel and its altar inside, there have been no animal sacrifices, no shedding of blood and no Yom Kippur sacrifices. So, in light of what the Scriptures command, no atonement can be made.

Yet, Yom Kippur remains central during the High Holy Days as a time of prayer, giving to charity and repentance. But these three were never sufficient to fulfill the Biblical injunction to shed blood for the forgiveness of sin.

A key question you might ask your Jewish friend: **"How do you find atonement, or forgiveness for your sin today, since no sacrifices are made?"**

Having established the problem, God answers the need in the promise of a New Covenant found in Jeremiah 31:31-34. Here the Lord announces the new covenant He is going to make between the house of Israel and Judah and Himself. **This New Covenant would be different from the law He established with Moses on Mt. Sinai, which**

was written upon tablets of stone. Instead, this New Covenant would be written upon men's minds and hearts, that they might know and be able to do the law of God. How would this New Covenant come about?

ISAIAH 52:13 - 53:12

Now, turn to Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12. You can focus on all or a portion of these Scriptures, but *look mainly to verses 4-6, where we see that One was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and as it says in verse 6, "the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."*

Many times I have had the opportunity to read the entire 53rd chapter of Isaiah to a Jewish individual. As I have read, I have asked them where they feel that portion of Scripture comes from. Frequently they respond, "Why, you are reading right out of the Christian New Testament, because it is talking about Jesus." **Most do not realize or recognize that Isaiah's prophecy was written some 700 years before the birth of Jesus. These words speak very clearly to the life, death and rejection of Messiah who would make final atonement for our sins once and for all.**

Now, the question of the hour is: **"How can we identify and recognize the true Messiah of Israel?"** There are many specific Messianic prophecies that focus on the coming of Messiah, His death, His resurrection and His return...

Excerpted from *Beginning from Jerusalem* by Steve Cohen

Definitions:

SOUL The vital existence of a human being. The Hebrew word *nephesh* is a key Old Testament term (755 times) referring to human beings. In the New Testament, the term psyche retreats behind the ideas of body, flesh, spirit to characterize human existence. **In the Bible, a person is a unity. Body and soul or spirit are not opposite terms, but rather terms which supplement one another to describe aspects of the inseparable whole person.** See *Anthropology; Humanity*.

Such a holistic image of a person is maintained also in the New Testament even over against the Greek culture which, since Plato, sharply separated body and soul with an analytic exactness and which saw the soul as the valuable, immortal, undying part of human beings. In the Old

Testament, the use and variety of the word is much greater while in the New Testament its theological meaning appears much stronger.

The soul designates the physical life. Vitality in all of its breadth and width of meaning is meant by the soul. The basic meaning of *nephesh* is throat. Thus, the Bible refers to the hungry, thirsty, satisfied, soul ([Ps. 107:5,9](#); [Prov. 27:7](#); [Jer. 31:12,25](#)). **The soul means the entire human being in its physical life needing food and clothing** ([Matt. 6:25](#)). The breathing organs and the breath blown out from them also express individual life in animals as well as human beings ([Job 11:20](#); [41:21](#); [Acts 20:10](#)). **At times, then, soul can be interchanged with life** ([Prov. 7:23](#); [8:35-36](#)) and can be identical with blood ([Deut. 12:23](#)). **A person does not have a soul. A person is a living soul** ([Gen. 2:7](#)). **That means a living being that owes life itself to the Creator** just as does the animal ([Gen. 2:19](#)). For this life or soul, one gives all one has ([Job 2:4](#)). Satan is permitted by God to take health, that is flesh and blood, but Satan cannot take the bare life of a person ([Job 2:5-6](#)).

Soul designates the feelings, the wishes, and the will of humans. The work of the throat, its hunger and appetite, stands for the desire and the longing of the human being after power and sex, after satisfaction, and after even the evil ([Prov. 21:10](#)), but also after God ([Ps. 42:2-3](#)). **The soul can be incited, embittered, confirmed, unsettled, or kept in suspense** ([Acts 14:2,22](#); [15:24](#); [John 10:24](#)). **The word mirrors the entire scale of feelings under the influence of the human being**, even the psychological. The bitter soul of the childless, the sick, or the threatened ([1 Sam. 1:10](#); [2 Kings 4:27](#); [2 Sam. 17:8](#)) reminds us of the *nephesh* as the organ of taste that also stands for the entire embittered person.

The soul also knows positive emotions. The soul rejoices, praises, hopes, and is patient. Never in these cases is only one part of the human being meant. It is always the powerful soul as an expression of the entire personality ([Ps. 33:20](#)). In the command to love ([Deut. 6:5](#); [Mark 12:30](#)), the soul stands next to other expressions for the human being to emphasize the emotional energy and willpower of the human being all rolled into one.

The soul designates the human person. Soul is not only a synonym with life. One can also speak of the life of the soul ([Prov. 3:22](#)). **Every human soul** ([Acts 2:43](#); [Rom. 2:9](#)) **means each individual person. The popular expression used today “to save our souls” goes back to this biblical way of thinking** ([1 Pet. 3:20](#)). **It means to save the entire person.** In legal texts, the soul is the individual person with juristic responsibilities ([Lev. 17:10](#), a blood-eating soul). Connected with a figure showing statistics or numbers of people, soul becomes an idea in the arena of the statistician ([Gen. 46:26-27](#); [Acts 2:41](#)). At times, soul simply replaces a preposition such as the expression **“let my soul live,” which means “let me live”** ([1 Kings 20:32](#)). It is even possible for all the nuances of meaning to sound forth together in the same expression. For instance, in [Psalm 103:1](#), we read, “Bless, Yahweh, O my soul.” This includes the throat as the organ of life, the soul as the totality of capabilities; my own personal life which experiences the saving actions of Yahweh our God; my person; my own “I”; and the vital, emotional self.

Soul designates the essential life. Physical life is given and maintained by God ([Matt. 6:25-34](#)). **Meaningful and fulfilled life comes only when it is free to give itself to God as a disciple of Jesus Christ.** Life is the highest good when it is lived according to God’s intentions and not used up in search for material and cultural goods ([Mark 8:34-37](#)). This life is stronger than death and cannot be destroyed by human beings ([Matt. 10:28](#)). The soul does not, however, represent a divine, immortal, undying part of the human being after death as the Greeks often thought. **Paul, thus, avoids the word soul in connection with eternal life.** There is a continuity between the earthly and the resurrected life

that does not lie in the capabilities or nature of mortal humans. It lies alone in the power of the Spirit of God ([1 Cor. 15:44](#)). According to the Bible, a human being exists as a whole unit and remains also as a whole person in the hand of God after death. **A person is not at any time viewed as a bodiless soul.**

- Holman Bible Dictionary.

SPIRIT **The empowering perspective of human life and the Holy Spirit bringing God's presence and power to bear in the world.** A translation of the Hebrew word *ruach* and the Greek word *pneuma* which can be translated as "wind," "breath," or "spirit" depending upon the context.

In both Testaments, spirit is used of both God and human beings. *Spirit*, whether used of God or of human beings, is difficult to define. The kinship of spirit, breath, and wind is a helpful clue in beginning to understand *spirit*. In His conversation with Nicodemus ([John 3](#)), **Jesus said that the Spirit is like the wind in that one cannot see it but one can see its effects. This is true of both the Spirit of God and the spirit of a human being.**

Spirit of God At the beginning of creation, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters ([Gen. 1:3](#)). Elihu acknowledged to Job that the Spirit of God had made him and was the source of his life ([Job 33:4](#)). The animals were created when God sent out His "breath" ([Ps. 104:30](#) NRSV note).

The Spirit of God is present everywhere. The psalmist sensed that no matter where he was, God's Spirit was there ([Ps. 139:7](#)). The Pharaoh saw the Spirit of God in Joseph ([Gen. 41:38](#)). Moses realized that the Spirit of God was on him, and he desired that God's Spirit be on all of His people ([Num 11:29](#)). During the period of the Judges, the Spirit of the Lord came to individuals and empowered them to accomplish specific tasks ([Judg. 3:10](#); [6:34](#); [11:29](#); [13:25](#); [14:6](#); [14:19](#)). When Samuel, the last of the judges, anointed Saul, Israel's first king, he told Saul that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him. The result was that Saul prophesied and was changed into a different person ([1 Sam. 10:6](#)). Later, the Spirit departed from Saul ([1 Sam. 16:14](#)). Likewise, the Spirit came upon David when Samuel anointed him ([1 Sam. 16:13](#)). **In his last words, David said that the Spirit of the Lord had spoken through him** ([2 Sam. 23:2](#)).

Isaiah spoke of one who is to come from the line of Jesse, one on whom the Spirit of the Lord would rest. This person would have the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord ([Isa. 11:1-3](#)). **Ezekiel prophesied that God would put His Spirit within His people, removing from them hearts of stone and putting within them hearts of flesh that would be obedient to God's way** ([Ezek. 36:26-27](#)).

New Testament Teaching Each of the four Gospels has numerous references to the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was the agent of Jesus' miraculous conception ([Matt. 1:18,20](#)), came down on Jesus at His baptism ([Matt. 3:16](#)), led Him into the wilderness where He was tempted by the devil ([Matt. 4:1](#)), and enabled Him to heal diseases and cast out demons ([Matt. 12:28](#)). **Jesus promised the Spirit to His followers as He prepared to leave the world. The Spirit would serve as Comforter and Counselor, continuing to teach Jesus' followers and reminding them of what He had said to them** ([John 14:25-26](#)). **Not many days after Jesus' ascension, the promised Spirit came upon His followers during the Feast of Pentecost.** The advent of the Spirit was accompanied by a sound that was like a mighty wind. Those who witnessed this event saw what seemed to be tongues of fire resting

on the believers. Moreover, these disciples were empowered to speak in tongues other than their native language ([Acts 2:1-3](#)). **Throughout Luke's account of the early church, the Holy Spirit empowered and guided the followers of Jesus in their mission to the world** surrounding the Mediterranean ([Acts 11:12](#); [13:2](#); [15:28](#); [16:6-7](#); [20:22](#); [21:11](#)).

The Spirit is important in Paul's understanding of the believer's relationship to God. **The Spirit is a gracious personal presence who lives in one who has confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord. Relationship to God through Christ by the Spirit is revolutionary.** In Galatians, Paul argued that legalism and the way of faith are incompatible. God's Spirit comes to us as a gift based on our faith in Christ and His grace. ([Gal. 3:1-5](#)). God's Spirit comes into a believer's life, with assurance that we are God's children ([Rom. 8:16](#)). The Spirit is God's pledge to us that we shall be fully transformed and conformed to the image of Christ. ([Rom. 8:1-29](#); [2 Cor. 1:22](#)). Paul identified the Spirit with the Lord (the risen Christ) and asserted that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, a growing freedom from the law of sin and death ([2 Cor. 3:18](#); compare [Rom. 8:2](#)).

The Spirit distributes gifts in the church which are designed to equip God's people for serving and building up the body of Christ ([1 Cor. 12](#); [Eph. 4:7-13](#)). Evidence that the Spirit of God is at work in a person or group of persons is love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control ([Gal. 5:22-23](#)).

At the beginning of Scripture we see the Spirit at work in creation. As Scripture closes, the Spirit and the Bride, the church, issue an invitation for all who are thirsty to come and drink of the water of life ([Rev. 22:17](#)).

Human Spirits

In both the Old and New Testaments, *spirit* is used of humans and of other beings. **When used of humans, spirit is associated with a wide range of functions including thinking and understanding, emotions, attitudes, and intentions.** Elihu told Job it was *spirit* in a person, the breath of God, which gave understanding ([Job 32:8](#)). When Jesus healed the paralytic, He perceived in His "spirit" that the religious leaders present were questioning His forgiving the man's sins ([Mark 2:8](#)).

Spirit is used extensively with human emotions including sorrow ([Prov. 15:4,13](#)), anguish ([Ex. 6:9](#); [John 13:21](#)), anger ([Prov. 14:29](#); [16:32](#)), vexation ([Ecc. 1:14](#)), fear ([2 Tim. 1:7](#)), and joy ([Luke 1:47](#)).

A variety of **attitudes and intentions are associated with spirit.** **Caleb had a different spirit than most of his contemporaries in that he followed the Lord wholeheartedly** ([Num. 14:24](#)). **Sihon, king of Heshbon, had a stubborn spirit** ([Deut. 2:30](#)). **First Kings 22** refers to a **lying spirit**. **The psalmist called persons who have no deceit in their spirits, "blessed"** ([Ps. 32:2](#)). A person's spirit can be contrite ([Ps. 34:18](#)), steadfast ([Ps. 51:10](#)), willing ([Ps. 51:12](#)), broken ([Ps. 51:17](#)), and haughty ([Prov. 16:18](#)). **The Gospel of Mark has numerous references to Jesus healing persons with unclean or foul spirits.**

Spirit is used of nonphysical beings, both good and evil. Satan is called the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is at work in those who are disobedient ([Eph. 2:2](#)).

One of the perennial points of conflict between the Sadducees and the Pharisees was over whether there are angels and spirits. The latter believed that there were such while the former denied that such existed. When the risen Christ appeared to the disciples, they were startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a spirit. Jesus invited them to touch Him. He then reminded them that a spirit does not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:37-39). - **Holman Bible Dictionary.**