

KINGDOM SPIRIT



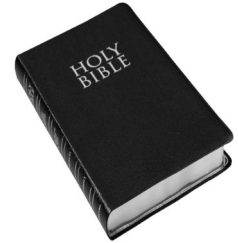
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 2210

MARRIAGE-DIVORCE REMARRIAGE A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HOSEA

(Read Hosea 7:1-7) God continues to give reasons why Israel was to be attacked and taken into captivity by the Assyrians. It is important that we know and understand these reasons that we might better understand history, but it is also important that we understand them that we don't repeat the same reasons. Unfortunately, as a nation we are well on the road to repeat Israel's history, but as individuals, we need to make sure we are not guilty of the same thing.

God was always ready to help Israel, until they finally went too far. It appears that they tried to fool God, were dishonest in their worshipping Him. He says that they seemed to think that God did not remember their wickedness. He compares them to the baker. He lets the fire that heats the oven die down while he kneads the bread and lets it rise. God is saying that the people, including the king and the princes back down on their wickedness, apparently thinking He will forget, for a time, but the fire never goes out, i.e. they never change their heart condition toward God. During the time the baker sleeps while the bread is raising, God likens the Israelites to that time, but then in the morning the baker stirs up the fire to get the oven hot. Like the baker getting the oven hot, the Israelites then show their wickedness with intensity. As a result, they have destroyed all semblances of God fearing government.

(Read Hosea 7:8-16) He accuses Ephraim of mixing themselves among and with the pagans. He likens them to a pancake that isn't turned. It is burned on the bottom and moist on the top, so that it is unfit to eat. Strangers have devoured his strength, but Ephraim appears to not know that it has happened. As a result, they still refuse to turn to God. He says they

are like a silly dove with no sense. They tried to get help from Egypt, but they are going to Assyria. When they go, God says He will chastise them as they have been told that He would. They are going to other nations for help instead of going to Him. He says they have fled from Him to their own destruction. Though He has redeemed them, they still have transgressed against Him and spoken lies about Him. They are like a worthless bow, it can't be depended on to shoot an arrow. They cry but not from the heart. Because of their swaggering tongue, their leadership will die and they will be held in derision in Egypt.

(Read Hosea 8) God says to sound the warning. The Assyrian is coming on them as an eagle because they have transgressed His covenant and rebelled against His law. Israel is going to cry to God saying they know Him. But it is too late. They have cast God off from them, their enemy will pursue them. God says they have set up kings and princes, but not by Him. Eight of the nineteen kings of Israel were killed by the men that succeeded them. This gives us a little bit of an idea of the unrighteousness that was taking place within Israel. Their biggest problem was they forgot the first commandment, **“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”** (Ex. 20:3) God tells them that their calf, referring to the two calves that Jeroboam set up to keep the Israelites from going to Jerusalem to worship, had cast them off. Though the prophets continually warned against idolatry, these two calves were never taken down. Common sense tells us that if man made it, it cannot be a god.

A common saying today comes from verse 7, **“For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.”** We sow seed expecting that seed to multiply. In saying they have sown the wind, they have sown their wickedness, it will come back to them greatly multiplied. They are no longer special in the sight of God, but are among the rest of the nations **“as a vessel wherein there is no pleasure.”**

Though God has promised that they will multiply in number, He says that they are going to diminish in numbers first because they ignored His law. God has written His law to them, but they have counted it a strange thing. He is not accepting their sacrifices, He is now remembering their iniquity and they will be as they were in Egypt. Israel and Judah are both to be judged for they have forgotten their maker, their God.

(Read Hosea 9) If you recall, Isaiah told us in chapter 30 that a number of Israelites, especially the more well to do, took it upon themselves to go to Egypt thinking to save themselves and their property. God warned them that it would not work. He is again telling them that to go to Egypt will be in vain. It is a little difficult to understand why the people did not respond to prophets like Hosea and Isaiah. Everything they told them came to pass.

But note verse 17, **“My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.”** This is the intent of God’s plan. The people have actually, through their wickedness, implemented His plan.

(Read Hosea 10) Israel has been trying to fool God by keeping the rituals of the law, but never turning to Him with their heart. God has blessed them, but the more they were blessed the more they turned to their idols. Now, He says, they shall be found guilty. God is going to break down their altars and images. Because they have dealt falsely in making a covenant, judgment will spring up as weeds in a furrow. They have put their faith in the golden calves that Jeroboam set up, now those golden calves are going to the king of Assyria as a present. “Aven” in verse 8 is another word for idolatry. Because of their idolatry, their high places where they worshipped their idols are going to be destroyed and the thorn and thistle will cover their altars.

The reference to Gibeah refers to a Levite who was living in Ephraim. He had taken a concubine who ended up fleeing from him. He went after her and was bringing her back to his home and stopped in Gibeah for the night and was taken in by a man of Gibeah. Certain men of Gibeah, who were apparently sodomites, first tried to get the man’s host to bring the Levite out to them, but he refused. Finally the Levite sent his concubine out to them and they abused her all night until she died. The Levite then went to his home and cut her up in pieces and sent the pieces to all the tribes who then gathered together and ultimately decided to attack Benjamin because the Benjamites refused to produce the men who had killed the woman so that justice could be done. The end result was that all of the people of Benjamin were killed with the exception of 600 men who escaped into the wilderness. Because the rest of the Israelites had sworn not to let their daughters marry Benjamites, they had to devise a

way for these 600 men to get wives so that the tribe of Benjamin could continue to exist. (See Judges 19-20)

Apparently the men who committed the sin in Gibeah were not chastised, though they may have been killed in the battle. The principle, I believe, is that the children of iniquity have not been chastised from the days of Gibeah to the Hosea’s time, but God is saying that this is going to change as it is His desire to chastise them. The marginal rendering to the last part of verse 10 would read, **“and the peoples shall be gathered against them, when I bind them for their transgressions.”**

Ferrar Fenton translates verse 11 as **“For Ephraim was a heifer, delighting to thrash; But I put a rider on Ephraim’s fair neck; And she now ploughs for Judah, and harrows for Jacob.”** Hosea tells Israel to change her ways, to sow righteousness that they might expect to reap mercy. It is time for them to turn to God. They have sown wickedness and reaped iniquity. Because they have trusted in the might of their army instead of God, Hosea says there will be a terrible tumult among them and all of their fortresses will fall. Their original sin of worshipping the golden calves that were put up in Dan and Bethel is going to be their undoing. In a morning, their king will be completely cut off, presumably this is speaking of Hoshea, the last king of Israel.

(Read Hosea 11:1) This verse is both historical and prophetic. It is historical in that God called and brought forth Israel out of the land of Egypt. God calls Israel His son and says that He loved him. I think it reasonable, since God calls Israel His son, to assume that Egypt was his mother. It was in Egypt that the gestation took place that brought Israel to the point of being born as a nation.

This verse is prophetic in that Hosea is looking forward to the birth of Jesus Christ. When Jesus was born, King Herod set out to kill Him. Matt. 2:13-15 tells us, **“And when they (the wise men) were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.”** Of course this prophetic saying is quoting Hosea 11:1 that we are studying.

There is more prophecy in this verse as well, though a little harder to discern. If you recall, Abraham married an Egyptian princess named Hagar, that the king of Egypt and given him for a bond servant, because his wife Sarah encouraged him to do so be-

cause she thought she could not have any children. Sure enough, Hagar had a son whom Abraham named Ishmael and a few years later, Sarah, though beyond child bearing age also had a son whom Abraham named Isaac. We're not told the ages of these two sons of Abraham when the following happened. The Bible says that Ishmael was mocking Isaac and Sarah caught him doing it. There is evidence that he was actually trying to kill Isaac. At any rate, when Sarah caught Ishmael mocking Isaac, she went to Abraham demanding that Hagar and Ishmael be sent out of Abraham's house. Abraham agreed to do this and sent Hagar and her son away. They left the house and while traveling they ran out of food and water and thought that they both would die, whereupon an angel met her and made some promises concerning Ishmael and met her needs so that she could continue on. We know today that the Arab people are descended from Ishmael.

In Galatians 4, Paul is dealing with the problem of the Jews who believed that they still had to keep the law, particularly that of circumcision and the sacrifices, to be saved. Paul is trying to explain to them the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. (Read Gal. 4:21-31) The two women are used to represent the two covenants, Hagar representing the Old Covenant that God had made with Israel at Mt. Sinai, and Sarah representing the New Covenant. They also represent the two Jerusalems, Hagar representing the old literal city of Jerusalem (the Old Covenant) and Sarah representing the New Jerusalem (the New Covenant). As Isaac was the son of promise, born after the Spirit, so are the true Christians. Those who wish to stay with the Old Covenant are as Ishmael, born after the flesh. Not only does this apply to the Jews who refused to acknowledge Christ, but to all that believe that they can do something for their salvation.

Verse 30 tells us, **"Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."** For us to become "Sons of God" we have to cast out the bondwoman and her son from our thinking. Because Hagar was Egyptian by birth, and representing the Old Covenant, the Son's of God have to come out of the Old Covenant thinking, or out of Egypt, and into the New Covenant, or the promised land. Paul is talking about the Jews here primarily, but it applies to us today as well. Any time that we put up something man has to do for our justification, our thinking is Hagar thinking, or Old Covenant or Old Jerusalem or Egypt. We need to think of all of these terms together as meaning the same thing. I knew a very well educated man once who believed Egypt was

our primary enemy, not Egypt as a country as we know it today, but rather the thinking engendered from the Egypt of old. I argued with him that our primary enemy was Babylon. It has only been since I have understood what Paul was saying here in Galatians that I realize that we were actually talking about two different things. I certainly have to agree with him thinking as Paul was thinking. I hope he has since realized what I was thinking as far as the overall enemy of mankind being man himself manifested in the Babylonian system that we face today. In a sense they are the same thing, but not as we were discussing them.

(Read Hosea 11:2-4) Verse 2 is a little confusing. The first "they" refers to the prophets. As the prophets called the people, the people turned from the prophets and what the prophets were telling them and went and sacrificed to Baalim and burned incense to idols. God says He taught Ephraim (used as a name for Israel) to walk taking them by their arms. But He says they did not know that it was He who healed them. He drew them from the land of Egypt with bands of love, removed the yoke of slavery that had been placed on them in Egypt, and fed them.

(Read Hosea 11:5-11) Even though some of the people were trying to go to Egypt for their own safety, God says that they are not to go back to Egypt, but were going to go to Assyria because they had refused to repent. There is going to be war as the Assyrians march on the cities of Israel. Many will be destroyed. Dr. Bullinger render the phrases in verse 7, **"though they called them"** as **"though they called upon the Most High"** and **"none at all would exalt Him"** as **"He shall not altogether lift them up."** This rendering appears more in line with the next 2 verses. Admah and Zeboim were cities that were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorah. God is asking how He could give up Israel, how could He destroy them as Admah and Zeboim as this is the judgment that Israel had actually brought on herself. He then says that His heart has turned within Him and His compassions are burning. Then in verse 9 He says **"I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee, and I will not enter into the city."** He is not going to destroy Israel because He is God and not man. The love of God is something that we humans cannot fathom completely. Israel had done everything against God that they could do it seems, and with many nations, God had destroyed them for less than this. But because God is God and because He has made promises to Abraham, He will keep His promises and not destroy Israel completely like He had done to Sodom and Gomorah, and Admah and Zeboim. Because God is

God, not only Israel, but mankind overall has a hope. This doesn't mean that Israel is going to escape judgment, but their judgment is not going to be utter destruction, as we have seen already in Hosea 1. Rather through their judgment they are going to accomplish what God has chosen them to do. The day will come when they will walk after the LORD, but it will come after their judgment of captivity to the Assyrians, and they recognize God as God. We are still to see the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy, but I believe most of us can see that the fulfillment is in process.

Verse 12 should probably have been a part of chapter 12, so we will begin our next issue with this verse. JRL

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

We were looking at chapter 9 in our last issue. The author is using a Last Will and Testament to help understand the Covenants, so were reviewing the elements of a Last Will and Testament. So let us continue.

We know from our studies that not only did this people not keep the covenant, the agreement they made with God, but God ultimately had to remove Israel from the land and disinherit them from the inheritance. However, we also know that this was all part of God's plan since before the creation.

We just read in chapter 8 that there is also a New Covenant, or Testament, in God's plan. It also was made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, i.e. the whole house of Israel, but it was not to be like the Covenant, or Testament, He made with Israel at Mt. Sinai. We saw that instead of the **"IF you will obey my voice and keep my covenant,"** it, in effect, says **"you will obey my voice and keep my covenant,"** because He says, **"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."** The Aaronic priesthood, the executors of the First Covenant, could not do this, it is a human impossibility to change the heart of another individual. We might help, encourage, and teach, but man does not have the capability to accomplish this with another individual. So this requires a different executor, one who does have this ability to change men's hearts. Thus God has provided another priesthood, one with greater authority than the Aaronic priesthood that does have this ability, Jesus Christ, a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. We could

look at this New Testament as having the same conditional provision in a sense, in that it will still be necessary that men appear before God perfect, before the distribution of the estate can be made. But now, through the new executor, this is not only a possibility, it is assured.

So let's look at this New Will and Testament. The testator is still God. It is a New Testament—certain provisions of the original will are now invalid. The new executor is Jesus Christ, High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. He has all power and responsibility. No succession provision is necessary since He is priest forever. Obedience is through imputation through Jesus Christ—not dependent on man.

In the Dispositive Provisions, the Beneficiary is the same, however, as we have discussed in past lessons, the determination of who is an Israelite depends on faith in Jesus, not genealogy. There is no need for a succession provision as ultimately all will be resurrected to immortal life. The actual disposition remains the same—world rulership under Christ.

Getting back to Heb. 9: 16, 17, if you have written a Last Will and Testament, how much authority does it have right now? It has no authority now, right? A will has no authority until the testator dies, then it has all the force of law. The same thing had to happen to put God's will and testament into effect. Death is in the nature of man, not angels, not God in all His glory. So for God's will to go into effect, God had to die as a man. This, of course, He did manifested as man in Jesus Christ. But now, not only is He the testator, but He is also the mediator, or executor of His own will.

(Read Heb. 9:18-21) (Read Ex. 24:6-8) The blood that Moses sprinkled on the people validated the First Testament or Covenant.

(Read Heb. 9:22) This is the basic principle of Biblical law on which the whole of God's plan rests. One can believe that Jesus Christ lived, was a great teacher, a great humanitarian, a great prophet, but if they do not believe that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for sin of all mankind, they are antichrist. No other religion has a leader, or founder, that is capable of dying sacrifice for the sin of man.

(Read Heb. 9:23, 24) It was necessary that the copies of the things in the true tabernacle be cleansed with the blood of bulls and goats. God revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai the true tabernacle, the spiritual structure and Moses was instructed to copy what he saw in the spiritual realm in an earthly form. What Moses copied expressed spiritual truths, but what he constructed was only a copy, not the real thing. Yet, for the copy to be a true copy, it had to be sprinkled with blood, which itself was only a copy of the blood of Jesus Christ

that was to be sprinkled on the people at the appointed time. For this reason, Christ did not enter the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem, but rather entered the true tabernacle in the heavens.

(Read Heb. 9:25, 26) Because His sacrifice was the perfect sacrifice, it only had to be offered once.

(Read Heb. 9:27-28) This completely denies the idea of reincarnation. Also we need to note that though judgment comes after one dies, it does not mean that man cannot be saved after he dies. Verse 28 tells us that the judgment process does not begin until the return of Christ, i.e. the first resurrection.

Hebrews 10 is, at least in thought, a continuation of chapter 9, so to briefly refresh our memory, let's read at least Heb. 9:24-28. (Read Heb. 10:1, 2) Verse 1 is referencing the Day of Atonement sacrifices. (Read Lev. 16:3-28) This was to be done once a year on the 10th day of the seventh month. Atonement means covering. The day is called Yom Kippur today, Kippur being the word Atonement is translated from. Heb. 10:1 tells us that the law was a shadow of good things to come, but not the things themselves. The high priest was to select two goats, one for the atonement sacrifice, the covering, and the other to confess all the sins of the people over and send it away into the wilderness. The good things to come, that this ritual was a shadow of, are the two works of Christ. The blood of the first lamb was offered as an atonement, or covering for sin. But this alone did not take away the sins of the nation, it only covered them. Likewise the first work of Christ, His blood sacrifice, covered the sins of all the people. The blood of the atonement lamb was symbolic of the blood of the true Atonement Lamb, Jesus Christ. But the blood of the atonement lamb could not make the people perfect. If it did, they would not have had to continue making the sacrifice as once the people were purged, or cleansed, they would have had no more unpardoned sins. But with the blood of the true Atonement Lamb, all sin is covered. This takes us to the second lamb. All the people's sin was said over it and it was taken away into the wilderness and turned loose. This speaks of the second work of Christ. In John 1:29, John the Baptist says, upon seeing Jesus coming to him for baptism, "**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.**" This is important. It is not sufficient that all sin be covered, it must be removed, or taken away. This is the second work of Christ, His second coming. We need to try to understand how this is to be done.

The ritual with each of the two goats teaches us the distinction between the two kinds of right-

eousness. Since the blood of the first goat covered the sin of the people, but did not take it away, it speaks of imputed righteousness. Paul speaks of this in Rom. 4 where the Greek word *logizomal* is used 15 times and is translated impute, reckon, or count. An example of the meaning of the word is in verse 17 (Read). God says, before Abraham had any children, that He made Abraham father of many nations. Then at the end of the verse Paul says that "**(He) calleth those things which be not as though they were.**" He imputes us righteous even though we are not. He calls us righteous based on the first goat, i.e. Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross. His blood has covered our sin. This first work was a dying work.

The second work will be a living work. I think we could consider the earth to compare to the wilderness the second goat went into. Not only will Christ come from the true Holy of Holies in heaven, but He will come from, or be manifest in the sons of God, His earthly tabernacle or temple (I Cor. 3:16, II Cor. 6:16). As we read in Heb. 8:10, "**I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.**" This takes away sin. It is a process that true Christians are in throughout their lives once they have accepted the free gift of justification that culminates in the first resurrection.

(Read Heb. 10:3, 4) It was necessary to repeat those sacrifices year after year because it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. The goats were animals, thus imperfect types of Christ. The sacrifices were a reminder that the blood of animals could never bring man to perfection, so it would take a yet greater sacrifice to do this.

(Read Heb. 10:5-7) This is a quotation from Psa. 40:6-8, but it is quoted from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the original Hebrew. David is prophesying of Christ in this Psalm. The King James Translation translates Psa. 40:6-8 from the original Hebrew and the two translations appear quite different. Verse 6 in the Septuagint reads "**but a body hast thou prepared me.**" In the King James, it reads "**mine ears hast thou opened.**" I am not sure what the connection might be. My guess is that the passage concerning the ears being opened might refer to Ex. 21:5, 6 where the discussion is about a servant that loved his master so much that when it came time for his release as a servant, he refused to go preferring instead to stay with his master. When this happens, the master was to take him to the judges and then to "**bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.**" King David understood that the blood of animals was only an imperfect type and shadow of the real sacrifice by Christ, so he prophesied of the greater sacrifice to

to come. Through the incarnation, God took on Himself a body in the person of Jesus Christ. But consider also that Christ was a willing servant. The opening of His ears would indicate this. So in this sense, both translations would be technically correct so far as the missions that Christ came for in His first coming. While David prophesied of Christ in the Psalms, the author of Hebrews takes this passage in Psalms and applies it directly to Christ.

(Read Heb. 10:8-10) I am not sure what the thinking was of the people as they offered these sacrifices, but in reading the prophets it appears to me that there were at least a couple of thoughts that seemed to be prominent. One is that they were doing God a favor by offering these sacrifices. The other was that they began to worship the sacrifice ritual itself instead of God. They in effect, became their own god in that they controlled their own destiny by whether or not, and how well they made their sacrifices. The only truly acceptable blood sacrifice, or life sacrifice, for sin was the true sacrifice by Jesus Christ, i.e. the sacrifice by God Himself to Himself. Keep in mind that God is sovereign, we have no right to question His actions or His plan. Our obligation is to understand it to the best of our ability. God told Adam and Eve that if they ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they would die. It was not the fruit of the tree that caused them to die. It was their disobedience, their transgression of His law, their sin. So we know the penalty of sin is death. However, remember that Paul told us in Romans 5:12 that we die the mortal death because of Adam's sin, not our own. Adam's sin is imputed to us even though we have not done the same sin as he. It is the second death that our own sins are responsible for. We also know from God's laws of judgment that His judgment is restorative in nature, i.e. they are designed to return things back to the way they were before a sin has been committed. Ultimately, this means restoration back to the way man was before Adam sinned. But we are not able to restore ourselves, or anyone else, to life. Neither were the blood sacrifices that were offered by the priests year after year. These were given to Israel to teach them the principle of the one true sacrifice. The blood, or life, of animals did not have the ability to restore life, so as such were unacceptable to God for that ultimate purpose. But what the people did with those sacrifices, thinking they were doing God a favor and worshipping the sacrifice ritual itself, made them an abomination to God. But as a reminder of their sin, and to keep them mindful of the purpose of the true sacrifice that was yet to come, it was necessary for them to repeat these sacrifices year after year. But then at the appointed time, in the personage of Jesus Christ, He came to do the will of God. By offering Himself for sin, He didn't just offer it for past sins of

the people for the last year, or for what they did yesterday, His sacrifice was for all sin, period. So it was no longer necessary to repeat the sacrifice year after year, it was made once for all sin, for all time and for all people. Through His resurrection, God demonstrated the power of His sacrifice to restore life. So no longer is the type or shadow needed, we have the real sacrifice. Thus the change in the law of the priesthood that we discussed in Chapter 7.

Christ, as a man, or with a body, came to do the will of the Father and it is through this will, the offering of Jesus Christ once for all, that we are sanctified, or set apart.

(Read Heb. 10:11-14) With the priests under the Old Covenant, they were dealing with an external law, a law written on stone, so to speak, that could not take away sin, but rather just define sin. But under the New Covenant priesthood, the law is being applied internally, on the hearts and minds of man so that sin can be completely taken away. The words "for ever" in verses 12 and 14 are from the Greek *eis to dienekes* which means "continuously." So the author is saying, Christ offered one sacrifice for all sin and it perfects continuously those that are sanctified. He is now at the right hand of the Father waiting until His enemies be made His footstool. A footstool is for one's comfort. What will be a comfort to Christ when His enemies (all of us at one time or another) are perfected in His life, His blood.

(Read Heb. 10:15-18) Other translations help us understand this a little bit better. The NASB adds "Then He says" at the end of verse 16. The LAMSA renders verse 15, "**The Holy Spirit is also a witness to us; for he had said before,**". The point is that not only do we have Christ's death and resurrection as proof that Christ covers and takes away our sin, but the Holy Spirit, through the prophet Jeremiah in telling us of the New Covenant, as another witness, told us "**And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.**" There is no longer a necessity for more sacrifices.

This concludes an argument for the priesthood of Christ, a priest after the order of Melchisedec, that started in chapter 5:1.

(Read Heb. 10:19-22) If we understand what the author has written thus far, he says we should have the boldness to enter the true Holy of Holies, or the presence of God, by the blood of Christ which is a new and living (stress the living) way which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is His flesh. No longer is the Holy of Holies for the Aaronic high priest only. Because we are the body of Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, we in effect are a part of this high priest as well. No longer was the Aaronic high priest the mediator between man and God. Christ is our new mediator and we are a part

of Him, thus we have direct access to God through Christ. Therefore, having this knowledge (thus boldness) we're told in verse 22, **"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."** Water often represents God's Word symbolically. I believe that is probably the meaning of the word here.

(Read Heb. 10:23-25) Keep in mind that the author is talking to Jews who have become Christians, but are wavering between total faith in Christ and the rituals of the Old Covenant, or Judaism. The author is encouraging them to hold fast to the profession of our faith. He encourages them to work with each other to provoke each other unto love and good works. But he warns against forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is. In Jerusalem, the temple had been all they knew all their lives as the place of assembly. The assembling was on the Sabbath, or our Saturday. As we can see by Paul's writings, these Jews turned Christian were, especially in Jerusalem, trying to at least have the appearance of keeping the law. However; according to the writings of most of the early church fathers, many of the apostles and disciples gathered together on the first day of the week, in respect to the resurrection of Christ on that day. So in Jerusalem their meetings were on both days, the Jews, and those who were trying to give the appearance of keeping the law, on the Sabbath and the Christians on the first day of the week. I believe that the fact that the author mentions the gathering together here, he is referring to the Christians that were meeting in homes on the first day of the week, since he is trying to exhort the Jews to whom he is writing to break completely from Judaism. He encourages them to meet together outside of the temple and synagogues, and to exhort each other all the more as, he says, they see the day approaching.

(Read Heb. 10:26-31) Verse 26 is used by many to threaten others that if they sin on purpose, that they are lost and gone to hell forever. We have to keep in mind the subject that the author is dealing with here. He is trying to convince Jews to give up their Old Covenant rituals and become Christians through faith. But when he says "if someone sins willfully," we need to stay in context of the subject being discussed. Sinning willfully here would mean having professed Christ and then rejecting Him and going back to the rituals of Judaism. If they have rejected the sacrifice of Christ, and the ritualistic sacrifices of Judaism are no longer operative so far as God is concerned, having rejected the true sacrifice, there is no more sacrifice for them. All they had to look forward to is judgment and as the author says, the **"fiery indignation, which shall devour the**

adversaries." If we understand the "lake of fire" as being God's judgment by law, I think we can understand the meaning of this. Anyone who violated a non-restorable law, such as murder, and 2 or 3 witnesses witnessed it, that person was put to death without mercy, but the author can't imagine what the penalty will be for one who has turned from a knowledge and faith in Christ and gone back to Judaism. That person will have to face He to whom vengeance belongs and he says in verse 31, **"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."**

It is a sad thing to me that for most people, when they die, their future is either heaven or hell and they have no idea what either means. The Bible has a great deal to say about what happens after death if we would just study it. But it doesn't say anything about what most people seem to believe.

(Read Heb. 10:32-34) In trying to encourage these Jews turned Christian, he asks them to look back on what they withstood when they were first converted. I think we often feel that the pressure we encounter because we profess Christ is great. But look at what many of these people had to endure. (Which makes it even more difficult to understand why one would want to return to Judaism once they had endured this as Christians) The author says that they were made the object of ridicule partly because of what they professed to believe and partly because of their associating with other Christians. The words "in my bonds" in vs. 34 should be translated "prisoners." Ferrar Fenton probably has the right spirit of verse 34. He translates it, **"For you have indeed suffered with the prisoners, and have accepted the plundering of your possessions with joy knowing you possess for yourselves a better and more enduring property."** (The words "in heaven" in this verse in the King James have been added by a translator.)

(Read Heb. 10:35, 36) The word translated "confidence" is the same word translated "boldness" in verse 19. If one has the boldness to enter the Holy of Holies, or the presence of God (and this is not a boldness based on how tough one might think he or she is, but rather based on a knowledge of and faith in God and His purpose through Jesus Christ), it is a rare thing and something not to be cast away. The author is telling them to just have patience as once they have done God's will in their lives, they will receive the promise, the inheritance.

(Read Heb. 10:37-39) The author is quoting from Habakkuk 2:3, 4, but he is quoting from the Septuagint again. Again the two translations vary considerable. The full quote starting with

verse 2 in the Septuagint is, **“And the Lord answered me and said, Write the vision, and that plainly on a tablet, that he that reads it may run. For the vision is yet for a time, and it shall shoot forth at the end, and not in vain: though he should tarry, wait for him; for he will surely come, and will not tarry. If he should draw back, my soul has no pleasure in him: but the just shall live by my faith.”**

Paul uses this last phrase in Rom. 1:17 and Gal. 3:11 to establish justification by faith alone. Here it is used as a warning to the Judaizers who are trying to relegate Christ to the Old Covenant and who despise the blood of the true Sacrifice for sin by continuing to advocate the effectiveness of animal sacrifices.

Claiming to have faith in Christ, yet adhering to animal sacrifices is not true faith according to the author. To shrink back to the animal sacrifices is to shrink back into destruction, or perdition. Jesus called Judas the “son of perdition” because of his betrayal of Christ. Saying one has faith in Christ and yet wanting to adhere to animal sacrifices is a betrayal as well, thus the same end result, destruction. Paul then desires to include his readers with himself in believing to the saving of the soul, of life.

Hebrews 11 is often referred to as the “Faith Chapter of the Bible.” At the end of chapter 10, the author warns those whose faith is not genuine against falling back into perdition, or destruction, and urges those to whom he is writing to have patience to endure. Chapter 11 picks up on the subject of faith with more encouragement. Faith could probably be considered both qualitative and quantitative. We’re told in Rom. 10:17, **“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** Though two people both hear the same word, it doesn’t necessarily mean that their faith is affected in the same way or in the same amount. Faith probably starts by our being persuaded, or convinced, of a particular fact or viewpoint. But if the persuasion does not endure, it is not faith. We can think of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt as an allegory. They were all persuaded to leave Egypt. They had the faith to leave Egypt. But as soon as they faced trials, many wanted to return.

When they arrived at Mt. Sinai, they did not have the faith to hear God speak to them. With the exception of Caleb and Joshua, their faith did not endure long enough for them to enter into the Promised Land. Caleb’s and Joshua’s faith endured through their patience for them to enter the Promised Land. Heb. 11 gives us a number of examples of enduring faith.

Referencing Rom. 10:17, the word translated “hearing” here in the New Testament does not indicate obedience, but the Hebrew word most used in the Old Testament translated “hear”, *shamea*, has a double meaning, to hear and to obey. It is more than possible in my mind that if we hear, are persuaded, but fail to do anything about it, that persuasion will not last. James tells us in James 2:17, **“Even so faith, if it hath no works, is dead, being alone.”** And again in James 2:20, **“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”** Many want to believe that Paul and James were at odds about this, but it simply isn’t so. As we study this 11th chapter of Hebrews, I believe we will see that Paul and James were very much in agreement.

With this preface to chapter 11, we will begin with Hebrews 11:1 in our next issue. JRL

My Wife and I

Want to Wish Each of Our Readers a

VERY HAPPY

THANKSGIVING

May God Bless Each of You

And Your Families

**But, Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
And His Righteousness
And all these things shall be
Added unto you. Matt. 6:33**