

Hebrews Chapter 1

I. Jesus, God's Son, is greater than the angels

Vocabulary:

reflects: to show an image like a mirror

pure: sinless

for all times: forever

superior: above, better, higher

reign: rule as a king

In early times, God spoke to us through the prophets. God spoke using many different ways. God spoke to Daniel through dreams and visions. He spoke through angels. God spoke directly to Adam and Eve, and to Moses. Later, God chose to send His only Son. God made everything on earth through Jesus. Jesus was present during creation. Colossians tells us that Jesus created everything. He holds everything together.

Read John 1:3 (page 1125), I Corinthians 8:6 (page 1210), Colossians 1:15-16 (page 1245), Hebrews 1: 1-2 (page 1267)

Jesus reflects God's glory. He is the exact likeness of God's being. We know God because Jesus shows us who God is. Jesus provides us with the way to be pure from sin. Jesus died for us – once and for all times. After Jesus rose from the dead, He returned to Heaven. Even now, Jesus is sitting at God's right hand. Jesus' work of salvation is finished and now He sits in a place of honor. Jesus is greater than the angels. Angels stand in the presence of God but Jesus sits. Jesus' very name – the Son of God – places Him in a position above the angels.

Read Hebrews 1: 3-4

Jesus is superior to the angels. We can see this throughout the Old Testament. God said that Jesus was His Son. God never said this about any angel. God created the angels to be as fast as the wind and as powerful as fire. But, God commands the angels to worship Jesus. God created the angels to serve Him. But, Jesus is a King with a throne. Jesus is righteous and just in all things.

The author of Hebrews mentions again that Jesus was involved in creation. But, the author adds something very important. Everything that was created will change and die. But Jesus, the Creator, will remain forever. Jesus is the King and He will reign over everything including His enemies.

What is the purpose of angels? Angels are spirits who serve God. But they also serve all who have salvation in Christ.

Read Hebrews 1: 5-14 (page 1267), Psalm 45: 6-7(page 603)

Questions

1. How has God spoken to us in the past?
2. How can we know God?
3. What did Jesus do for us? Where is He now?
4. Give examples that show that Jesus is superior to the angels.
5. Jesus created all things. What will happen to the things that were created? What will happen to Jesus?

Hebrews Chapter 2

II. A great Salvation

A. Pay attention

Vocabulary:

connect: join

concentrate: focus on

drift away: move without direction

penalty: the sentence for a crime

escape: to be safe from harm

ignore: don't pay attention to

attested: confirmed or agreed that something was true

The author of Hebrews begins this chapter with the word “so”. The author is using this word to connect this chapter to the previous one. It means that because Jesus is God’s Son and the very image of God, we must pay attention to the gospel. If we concentrate on the gospel of Christ, we won’t drift away from the truth. What is the gospel? It is the amazing story of Jesus. Jesus left his throne in Heaven to become a man. He was perfect but Jesus chose to die for our sins. After His death, God raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus paid our penalty so that we can belong to God. Before Jesus came to earth, people were under the Law (Ten Commandments). When people disobeyed the Law, they were punished. How can we escape if we ignore God’s great gospel? This salvation cost the very life of God’s Son.

How do we know that it is “great”? First, the Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed this gospel. Secondly, the disciples and Jesus’ followers attested to it. Third, God Himself gave witness to this salvation through signs, wonders and miracles. God uses many different ways to show us His salvation. Finally, God gave witness through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Paul mentions the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his letter to the Corinthians. The gifts include wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, prophecy, the power to perform miracles, and speaking in unknown languages. The purpose of each gift is to point to the gospel. God gives these gifts to believers according to His will and pleasure.

Read Hebrews 2: 1-4 (page 1267), I Corinthians 12: 1-11 (page 1213)

B. Jesus Christ, the King, became a man

In the future, there will be a new Heaven and earth. Jesus will rule over this new world. The author uses Psalm 8 to talk about Jesus. God caused Jesus to be lower than the angels. This occurred when Jesus lived on earth in human form. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he also talks about this. We are reminded to think in the same way as Jesus. Jesus is equal to God but He gave up this privilege. Jesus chose to be made in human form. He chose to obey God his Father. Jesus chose to die for our sins.

Read Hebrews 2: 5-9 (page 1268), Philippians 2: 5-11 (page 1242)

God has done everything perfectly and for a reason. Jesus Christ who is perfect died as the perfect sacrifice. This was done so that we can share in God's glory. Because Jesus became a man, we are now descendents from the same family. We all descended from Adam. Jesus came to tell His "brothers and sisters" about God. If we believe in the gospel of Christ, we are God's children. It was essential for Jesus to be a man. Only in human form could He destroy Satan's power. Death comes from sin. But Jesus conquered death by dying for our sins.

We have a Savior who was human. Jesus understands everything that we suffer. Jesus knows what it means to suffer during temptations. He endured temptations from Satan. In Matthew, we read about Jesus' temptations. Satan tried to get Jesus to use His power to satisfy His needs. Jesus was hungry and Satan tried to get Him to make bread out of stones. Satan tried to get Jesus to use His position of authority over the angels. Finally, Satan tried to get Jesus to sin against God. Satan tried to get Jesus to worship him (Satan). Each time Jesus was tempted, He responded with scripture. We should know the bible well so that we can use scripture when we are tempted.

Read Hebrews 2: 10-18 (page 1268), Matthew 4: 1-11 (page 1031)

Questions

1. What do we have to pay attention to?

2. What is the gospel?

3. How do we know that the gospel is “great”?

4. When did Jesus become lower than the angels?

5. Why did Jesus die as the perfect sacrifice?

6. How does Jesus know what it means to suffer during temptations?

Hebrews Chapter 3

III. Jesus is superior

A. Jesus is greater than Moses

Vocabulary:

apostle: someone who is sent

quotes: to repeat something that someone said or wrote

wander: to roam around aimlessly

hold firmly: do not waver in your faith

Promised Land: the land of Canaan

missed out on: could not enjoy

The author greets his readers as holy brothers and sisters. We are holy because we are set apart by God, we are part of his family. We are his family because God chose us. Therefore, we must keep thinking about Jesus. He is our apostle. This term is used because Jesus was sent to earth. Jesus is our high priest. The Jewish high priest was the only one who could enter the holy place in the temple. The high priest presented sacrifices to God. Jesus was the perfect high priest – He presented a perfect sacrifice – His own sinless body.

Moses was a great Jewish leader. God chose Moses to give the Ten Commandments to the people of Israel. Moses was faithful to God. Jesus was faithful to God in all things. But Jesus is worthy of greater glory than Moses. A builder has greater honor than the house that he builds. A house isn't built by itself. There is a builder and God is the builder of all things. Moses was a faithful servant. But Jesus is faithful as a Son over God's house. The word house represents believers in Christ.

Read Hebrews 3: 1-6 (page 1268)

B. Warning against unbelief

The author quotes from Psalm 95. This Psalm warns people about being stubborn. When the people of Israel fled from Egypt, they wandered in the desert. They became very thirsty and demanded water from Moses. The people of Israel kept arguing with Moses and complaining. They turned

against God and were stubborn. God provided the people with water but He was very angry with them. The people of Israel were stubborn and had sinful hearts so God made them stay in the desert for 40 years. God said that the people of Israel would not enter into God's rest. God meant that the people living at that time would not enter into the land that God promised his people.

Read Exodus 17: 1-7 (page 72), Numbers 14: 21-23 (page 154) Hebrews 3: 7-11 (page 1268)

The author of Hebrews warns us not to be like the people of Israel. He says, "Do not let an unbelieving heart turn you away from the living God". This is a choice that we make. We must decide to turn to God regardless of feelings. But this can be difficult. We need help from other brothers and sisters in Christ. We need to encourage one another.

We must hold firmly to our faith. The bible says that we will be persecuted just as Jesus was. We must listen to God's voice. How do we hear God's voice? The Holy Spirit speaks to us as we read the bible. We must listen and obey. We should not be stubborn like the people of Israel. When the people of Israel refused to obey, God became angry. Because of this disobedience, the people could not enter the Promised Land. They missed out on the wonderful blessing that God had planned for them.

Read Hebrews 3: 12-19 (page 1269)

Questions

1. Why are Christians called "holy" brothers and sisters?
2. How was Jesus the perfect High Priest?
3. Why is Jesus greater than Moses?

4. What did the people of Israel do in the desert that made God angry?

5. We must turn to God regardless of feelings. What or who can help us with this?

6. How do we hear God's voice?

Hebrews Chapter 4

IV. The promised rest

Vocabulary:

Sabbath: the day to worship God - Saturday

reveals: shows

motives: the true reason for what we do

When the people of Israel escaped Egypt, God promised to give them a new land. He promised to give His people rest. God's promise is still true today. We can enjoy God's rest if we stand firm in our faith. The people of Israel didn't understand God's promise. They didn't have faith. If we believe and have faith in Jesus, we can enjoy this rest.

Read Hebrews 4: 1-3 (page 1269)

The author of Hebrews compares this rest with the Sabbath rest. After God created everything in heaven and earth, He rested. His work of creation was finished and God rested. The rest offered to the people of Israel meant the Promised Land. But God says, "Today, listen to my voice. Don't be stubborn. Come into my rest." If this were a promise only for the people of Israel, God would not have said "today".

Read Hebrews 4: 4-9

If God rested from His work, we should also rest. But what are we resting from? Since Jesus completed the work for our salvation, we can rest in Jesus. We do not need to work for our salvation. There is no work that we can do. But this rest also is our future. We will rest in the new heavens and new earth.

How do we escape the disobedience of Israel? We escape by using God's word. God's word is scripture from the Holy Bible. God's word is living and active. Reading God's word is not enough. We must make it a part of our lives. We must respond to what we read by obedience. God's word is powerful. It reveals our thoughts and our motives. God knows everything that we do. When we try to do something in our own power, God knows. He knows when we refuse to rest in Him. Jesus says, "Come to me,

all of you who are tired.... I will give you rest.” How do we find this rest?
We must become servants of Christ and learn from Him.

Read Hebrews 4: 10-13, Matthew 11: 28-30 (page 1041)

Questions

1. How can we enjoy God’s rest?
2. What did God do after He created the Heavens and the earth?
3. God rested after creation. What are we resting from?
4. How do we escape the disobedience of Israel?
5. Is just reading God’s word enough?

Hebrews Chapter 5

V. Jesus is the great High Priest

Vocabulary:

endured: to continue through pain or difficulty

go-between: intercessor

qualification: the characteristics or skills needed for a job

pleaded: begged

We have a great High Priest – He is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Two important characteristics of a high priest are that he must be a part of the community and have access to God. A high priest must be able to understand when people are hurting. Jesus is the perfect High Priest. He was God’s Son who came to earth in human form. Jesus endured temptation and physical pain. But Jesus never sinned. Because of this, we can come to God through Jesus. We don’t need any other priest or person. In I Timothy, we read that there is only one “go-between” for God and man. That is Jesus Christ. Not only can we come to God through Christ, but also we can come boldly. We don’t have to fear. When we come to God boldly, we will receive mercy.

Read Hebrews 4: 14-16 (page 1269), I Timothy 2: 5-6 (page 1256)

What was the qualification of a high priest? A high priest was chosen from his community. But only God chose who would be high priest. His job was to intercede between God and the people in his temple. The high priest offered gifts and sacrifices to God for the sins of the people. A high priest helped people who made mistakes because he understood them. The high priest made mistakes also. He had to make sacrifices to God for his sins. He had to make sacrifices to God for the sins of the people.

Read Hebrews 5: 1-4 (page 1269)

Even Jesus did not become a high priest by Himself. God appointed Jesus to be our High Priest. In Psalm 110, Jesus is called a priest forever just like Melchizedek. Melchizedek was king of Salem and high priest. In Genesis, Melchizedek is called “priest of God Most High”. Abram (Abraham) gave Melchizedek one tenth of everything he owned.

A high priest was part of the community. Jesus, God's Son, came to earth to live as a man. He became part of the community. In His human form, Jesus prayed and pleaded for His followers and anyone God placed before Him. Jesus was God's Son but He obeyed God through His suffering. Because Jesus never sinned, His sacrifice was perfect. His perfect sacrifice means salvation for all who obey Him.

Read Genesis 14: 17-20 (page 12), Hebrews 5: 5-10 (page 1270)

Questions

1. What are two characteristics of a high priest?
2. Who is our "go-between" to God?
3. What was the qualification of a high priest?
4. What is the job of the high priest?
5. Who appointed Jesus as our High Priest?

6. How did Jesus become part of the community?

7. Why was Jesus' sacrifice perfect? What does His perfect sacrifice mean for us?

Hebrews
Chapter 6

VI. A warning against turning away from God.

Vocabulary:

immature: not mature, not responsible
solid food: meat, potatoes/ not baby food
soaks up: to take up liquid like a sponge
confidence: to believe in someone
are sure: are true

The author wanted to explain more about Jesus as High Priest. However, he was concerned that the readers were too immature. These Christians should have been firm in their faith. They should have been teaching others about Jesus. Instead, the people needed to hear the basics of the gospel over and over again. They were like babies who needed milk. They were not mature enough to eat solid food. We can read about a similar problem in Corinthians. When Paul first spoke to the Corinthians, he had to treat them as babies. But even later, the Corinthians still had not grown up. They were jealous. They were not ready for solid food.

Read Hebrews 5: 13-14 (page 1270), I Corinthians 3: 1-9 (page 1205)

If we believe in Christ, we must grow in faith. The gospel tells us to turn from our sin, to have faith in God, and to be baptized. We learned about healing, that we will rise again, and that God will judge everyone. Now we must move forward, and begin to grow in our faith. In Philippians, we read about Paul's journey into maturity in his Christian life. Paul understood that all he had and was could not be compared to Christ. Although Paul belonged to God through Christ, he still wanted to know Christ better. Paul wanted to become more and more like Christ.

Read Hebrews 6: 1-3 (page 1270), Philippians 3: 7-11 (page 1243)

The author writes about people who turn away from God. They have learned about God and His goodness. They have experienced His love and the power of the Holy Spirit. But these people choose to turn away from God's goodness. They will lose everything. The author further illustrates this with a story. Good soil soaks up water. This soil is very fruitful and

produces good crops. Other soils only produce weeds and thorns. This soil is worthless.

Does this mean that we can lose our salvation? Jesus said that God didn't want Him to lose anyone the Father gave Him. Also, Jesus said that no one could take His sheep from His hand. If we are truly God's, we are His forever. What does this passage of scripture mean? Maybe it's a warning of what could happen. But it may refer a person like Simon the evil magician. Simon heard about Jesus from Philip. Simon believed and was baptized. But later Simon offered money to Peter and John. He wanted the power that they had to heal and give the Holy Spirit. Simon's heart was not right with God.

Read Hebrews 6: 4-8 (page 1270), John 6: 39 (page 1132), John 10: 27-29 (page 1138), Acts 8: 9-23 (page 1162)

Although this passage is a warning, there is also a confidence in the believers. The author knows that the readers have faith and are working for the Lord. God is faithful and He knows our hearts. He knows when we help others for His sake. But we need to continue and never stop. If we continue, we will receive all that God promises.

Read Hebrews 6: 9-12 (page 1270)

God's promises are sure. God made a promise to Abraham and Abraham received the promise. God made an oath to Himself that He would fulfill this promise. An oath is like a pledge that you will do what you said. An oath makes a promise certain. It will happen – there is no doubt.

Verse 18 says that God took an oath so that we would have good reason not to give up. This means that the promise continues for us. What is this promise? That God will multiply the descendants of Abraham – the children of God. Our hope is sure and certain – God does not lie. Our hope is also based on Jesus' sacrifice. As both the High Priest and sacrifice, Jesus makes it possible for us to go before God.

Read Hebrews 6: 13-20 (page 1270)

Questions

1. The author is writing to Christians who were immature. They were like _____.
2. If we believe in Christ, what must we do?
3. What did Paul want? (Phil. 3: 7-11)
4. What happens if people choose to turn away from God's goodness?
5. Can we lose our salvation?
6. How do we know that God's promise is sure?

Hebrews
Chapter 7

VII. Jesus is like Melchizedek

Vocabulary:

righteousness: to do what is right

recorded: written down

foreshadows: to show something or someone ahead of time

traditional: an activity which is common in a culture

During the time of Abraham, Melchizedek was the king of Salem. He was also the priest of God Most High. Abraham's nephew Lot was attacked and taken prisoner. Abraham took soldiers and fought to get Lot back. After the battle, Abraham met King Melchizedek. Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of all he owned. The name Melchizedek means king of righteousness. Melchizedek was king of Salem – "Salem" means peace. There is no recorded information about Melchizedek's family. We have no information about his age or when he died. King Melchizedek foreshadows Jesus Christ.

The traditional Jewish priesthood came through the family of Levi. Levite priests collected a tenth from the people who worshiped God. Abraham gave a tenth to Melchizedek. But Melchizedek was not a Levite. Melchizedek gave Abraham his blessing. This shows that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham.

Read Hebrews 7: 1-10 (page 1271)

The priests of Levi could not make people perfect. The law was given to make people perfect. Why do we need another kind of priest? Why can't we continue to have priests through Levi? Why did we need a priest like Melchizedek? We need a different priest because the priests of Levi and the law cannot make us perfect. Jesus came from the family of Judah. No priest had even come from that family. Jesus is our High priest. He didn't become a priest because of his ancestors. Jesus became a priest because of who He is. Psalms 110 tells us that Jesus is a priest forever like Melchizedek. The old use of priests through Levi didn't work. The law can't make anyone perfect. Now, through Christ, we have a better hope.

Read Hebrews 7: 11-19

Jesus is a priest forever because God made an oath. God will not change His mind. There were many different priests of Levi. Death continued to require more priests. But Jesus lives forever. He will intercede for us always. Jesus' sacrifice saves us completely and for all times. Only Jesus can meet our needs. He is pure, sinless, and Holy. Earthly priests needed to make a sacrifice for their own sins as well as the sins of the people. Jesus made the final sacrifice giving His own life. No other sacrifice will ever be needed.

Read Hebrews 7: 20-28

Questions

1. Who was Melchizedek?
2. What does the name Melchizedek mean? What does Salem mean?
3. From which family did Jewish priests come?
4. Why do we need a different priest?
5. What makes Jesus' priesthood different? List the differences.

Hebrews Chapter 8

VIII. The High Priest of a New Covenant.

Vocabulary:

set up: started, made

faultless: having no fault or blame

Jesus Christ is our great High Priest. He is now sitting at the right hand of God in heaven. The temple where Jesus serves is the true temple set up by God. Every priest must offer gifts and sacrifices here on earth. But the priests on earth are only a shadow of what is in heaven. God told Moses to build the holy tent (tabernacle). God told Moses to build it exactly as he was told. The tabernacle was the earthly representation of the true Heavenly throne.

Read Hebrews 8: 1-5 (page 1272)

Jesus' ministry as high priest is more excellent than the old covenant. The new covenant through Christ is faultless, and has better promises. The better promise is the forgiveness of sin that is possible only through Christ. If the first covenant were perfect, there would be no need for a second. God found fault with the people of Israel. Jeremiah records God's promise of a new covenant. God promised to make a new covenant with His people. This covenant would be through the family of Judah. Jesus was born from the family of Judah. The old covenant was made with the people of Israel when God led them out of Egypt. But the people of Israel did not remain faithful.

Read Hebrews 8: 6-9

In the new covenant, God puts His laws on the minds and hearts of His people. This covenant is more intimate and personal. It is an inward change that is not dependent on external perfection. Now, God makes Himself known to His people through Christ. This new covenant is relational. There is now a relationship between God and man. We are loved with the love of Calvary.

Read Hebrews 8: 10-13

Questions

1. Where is Jesus Christ now?
2. What was the tabernacle?
3. Why is the new covenant better?
4. Why didn't the old covenant work?
5. How has God's relationship with His people changed in the new covenant?

Hebrews Chapter 9

IX. Worship in the Holy tent

Vocabulary:

tabernacle: a special structure that God designed for worship

lampstand: candelabra (candleholder)

fine: small grains

continual: constant

provision: something that is provided or given

access: a way to get to something or someone

cherubim: angel-like creatures (cherub)

ceremonial washing: a ritual of cleaning

shed: something that is removed

mediator: someone who intercedes

A. The tabernacle and old covenant

In the first covenant, God gave rules for worship. The people had a special tabernacle to worship God in on earth. In the tabernacle, there was a lampstand, a table and special bread. In Leviticus, we find that God gave special orders about the lampstand and the bread. The lamps in the stand must remain lit at all times. The bread must be made with fine flour. The bread reminded the people that all good things come from God. The part of the tabernacle containing the table and lampstand was called the Holy room. A thick curtain separated this room from the next room. This special room was called the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies.

The Ark of the Covenant was in the Holy of Holies. In the Ark of the Covenant were the 10 Commandments, a jar of manna, and Aaron's staff. These articles provided continual reminders of God's covenant (the Ten Commandments), of His provision (the manna), and access to God through the priesthood (Aaron's staff). The cover of the ark was made of gold. This cover contained Cherubim. The wings of the cherubim were spread over "the place of atonement". This cover was the meeting place between God and the priests.

Read Hebrews 9: 1-5 (page 1272), Leviticus 24: 1-9 (page 127), Exodus 25: 22 (page 80)

Priests entered the Holy room in the Tabernacle to burn incense and offer the bread. But only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies. The high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement. This shows us that, in the first covenant, there was no direct access to God. The Holy of Holies represented the presence of God. When the high priest entered, he was required to have a blood sacrifice. This blood sacrifice was for his sins as well as the sins of the people. However, the gifts and sacrifices were not enough. The sacrifices couldn't remove the guilt of sin from the people. The people participated in ceremonial washings but this didn't clear them inside.

Read Hebrews 9: 6-10 (page 1273)

B. The blood of Christ

Jesus Christ came to be High Priest of the new covenant. As High Priest, Jesus' tabernacle is not an earthly one – it is the heavenly throne of God. Jesus entered the Holy of Holies by spilling His own blood. He did not use a sacrifice of animals but Jesus used His own blood and body. In the old covenant, the high priest came to sacrifice every year. But Jesus' sacrifice was one time and forever. His sacrifice sets us free.

When sacrifices were made, the blood of the animals was sprinkled on the Jewish people. This was an outward action to make the people clean and holy. Jesus' sacrifice was superior. Jesus died on a cross. His blood was shed for us. This blood has the power to clean us on the inside. Jesus' blood washes away the guilt of our sin.

Read Hebrews 9: 11-14 (page 1273), John 8: 31-36 (page 1135)

Because of Jesus' perfect sacrifice, He is the perfect mediator between God and man. Through Christ, we inherit eternal life. People create wills to designate who will receive money or property. This future money or property is called an inheritance. However, you cannot receive an inheritance unless someone dies. An inheritance is like a future promise or a covenant. Even in the first covenant death was required. In that case, it was the death of animals that provided the cleansing blood.

When Moses first shared the Commandments with the people of Israel, he used blood. Moses applied the blood of calves to the people, the

scroll (containing the commandments), and the holy tabernacle. Blood was required for forgiveness to occur. Jesus also says this about the new Covenant. So the earthly tabernacle could be made pure through earthly sacrifices. But the true heavenly tabernacle required a perfect sacrifice.

Read Hebrews 9: 15-23 (page 1273), Mark 14: 22-25 (page 1083)

Jesus offered Himself as a living sacrifice. He did this once for all times. If not, Jesus would have to suffer over and over. Because Jesus became a human, He died once. All people will die one time and then be judged. The sacrifice that Jesus made puts an end to sin and its control. When Jesus comes again, He will bring us the fullness of salvation.

Read Hebrews 9: 24-28

Questions

1. What are some rules that God gave the Jews in the first covenant to worship?
2. What was found in the Holy of Holies? Why were these articles important?
3. When did the high priest enter the Holy of Holies? What did he have to do?
4. Where is Jesus' tabernacle? How did He enter the Holy of Holies?

5. Why were the Jewish people sprinkled with blood? What does Jesus' blood do for us?

6. How do we "inherit" eternal life?

7. What is the result of Jesus' sacrifice?

Hebrews
Chapter 10

X. Christ's sacrifice is once and for all time.

Vocabulary:

desire: want

minions: people who serve someone – who are under their control

boldly: without fear

cleansed: to make clean

habitually: like a habit – to do something continually

The law and the old covenant are only a shadow of God's goodness to us. The sacrifices made by the high priests were made every year. The law and the old covenant cannot make us perfect. If people were made perfect by animal sacrifice, then the sacrifices would not need to be repeated. The animal sacrifices were a constant reminder of the people's sins. But the blood of animals could not remove the guilt of sin.

In Psalm 40, we read that God does not desire sacrifices and burnt offerings. Instead, God sent Jesus to be born in human form. Jesus came to do God's will – to be our perfect sacrifice. We have been made holy through Christ's sacrifice.

Read Hebrews 10: 1-10 (page 1274)

Jesus died once for our sins and now He sits at God's right hand. He is waiting for Satan and his minions who will be under Jesus' control. Through the Holy Spirit, God said "I will put my laws in their hearts, I will put my laws on their minds. I will not remember their sins." God gave us a new covenant that was personal.

Read Hebrews 10: 11-18

Because of Jesus, we can boldly come before God. We can approach the Holy of Holies because Jesus gave us access. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we have been cleansed from the guilt of sin. Through Jesus' righteousness, we can come to God with an honest and true heart. Because of Jesus, we can look forward to our promised future – eternal life. We look forward in confidence because God is faithful.

Read Hebrews 10: 19-23, I Corinthians 1: 9 (page 1204)

God loved us so much that He sacrificed His Son for us. The author of Hebrews tells us to encourage one another to love. As Christians, we are all part of the same body – the body of Christ. We must work together in Christ. We must comfort one another.

We should not continue to sin habitually. In Christ, we are new creations. If we continue to sin on purpose, then there is no offering for our sin. God will judge. He will determine the punishment for refusing His Son's gift.

Read Hebrews 10: 24-31 (page 1274), I Corinthians 12: 12-27 (page 1213), II Corinthians 5: 17-18 (page 1222)

The author told the people to remember when they first received Christ. Many times they endured persecution. Many times they helped others who were persecuted. We have also endured times like this. We endured because we knew that God was with us. This memory helps us to remain faithful to God. Jesus will come again. We must continue in faith until He returns.

Read Hebrews 10: 32-39 (page 1275)

Questions

1. What was the purpose of animal sacrifices? What could these sacrifices NOT remove?
2. Why did Jesus come to earth?
3. How are we made holy?

4. Why are we now able to approach God boldly?

5. Why do we have confidence and hope for the future?

6. Why should we encourage one another to love?

Hebrews Chapter 11

XI. Living by faith

Vocabulary:

to claim: to accept

certainty: to be absolutely sure

handiwork: a quality product that someone created

right with God: righteous

conquer: to win a battle

We must live by faith. But what is faith? Faith is believing without doubt. It means to claim with certainty God's promise of eternal life through Christ. We have faith because we have seen God's handiwork. We can see that God created heaven and earth. Many of God's people mentioned in the Old Testament had faith. It was Abel's faith that made his sacrifice better than Cain's. Because of Abel's faith, he is remembered throughout history. His faith is an example for us.

Read Hebrews 11: 1-4 (page 1275), Genesis 4: 1-4 (page 4)

Enoch had faith. He walked with God and God was pleased with Enoch. One day, Enoch was gone because God took him from the earth. How do we know that Enoch had faith? The bible says that without faith, we cannot please God. Since Enoch pleased God, he must have had faith.

Noah had faith in God. God told him to build an ark. Noah trusted God and was obedient. The world was full of disobedience and sin. But Noah had faith and this made him right with God.

Read Hebrews 11: 5-7 (page 1275), Genesis 5: 21-24 (page 5), Genesis 6: 9-12,22 (page 6)

Abraham had faith. God told Abraham to leave his home and Abraham obeyed. He went to live in a foreign land because of faith. God told Abraham that he would be a father of nations. Abraham had faith even though Abraham and Sarah were too old to have children. Now, Abraham's descendants are too many to count.

Read Hebrews 11: 8-16 (page 1275), Romans 4: 11-13 (page 1191)

Abraham showed his faith when God put him to the test. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac. God promised to build a nation through Isaac. Abraham trusted God to fulfill His promise. He knew that God could raise Isaac from the dead.

Isaac and his son Jacob showed faith as they passed their belief onto their children. Joseph lived his life by faith. At the end of his life, Joseph reminded his brothers and the people of Israel about God's promises.

Read Hebrews 11: 17-22 (page 1276), Genesis 22: 9-12 (page 20), Genesis 50: 24-25 (page 54)

Moses had faith but so did his parents. Moses' parents had faith that God would use their son. They chose to hide Moses and disobey Pharaoh's command. After Moses grew up, he refused to be a part of Pharaoh's family. Instead, Moses chose to join the people of Israel. Moses had faith in God even though he was treated badly. The author of Hebrews says that Moses suffered shame because of Christ. This is true because we know that Jesus has been present since the beginning of creation. Jesus understands our suffering. In Isaiah, we read that the Lord is with His people in their suffering. When Moses fled to Midian, it was not out of fear. Moses was being obedient to God.

Later, Pharaoh refused to let the people of Israel leave Egypt. God sent many plagues but nothing happened. Moses continued to have faith in God. He showed his faith when Moses commanded the people to put blood on the doorways. The people of Israel showed faith as they passed through the Red Sea.

Read Hebrews 11: 23-29 (1276), Exodus 2:1-2 (page 55), Isaiah 63: 8-9 (page 801)

To claim the Promised Land, the people of Israel had to conquer the city of Jericho. Joshua and the people of Israel had faith so the walls of Jericho fell down. Rahab was a prostitute who lived in Jericho. She had faith in God and helped the Israelite spies.

There are many more examples of people who had faith – great men like King David, Samuel, Gideon, and Samson. What is interesting is that each of these men had weaknesses. They were not perfect but were sinners

who still had faith. Because of faith, these men were able to win battles, escape harm from lions and fires. Because of faith, some women were given their dead back. In I Kings, we read about a widow whose son was brought back to life. Jesus also raised the son of a widow as well as Lazarus from the dead.

Many faithful followers have suffered greatly. They have suffered from physical persecution as well as emotional. But they remained faithful. They still have not seen the true promise of a new Heaven and Earth. We still look for this in faith.

Read Joshua 6: 12-17 (page 229), I Kings 17: 17-24 (page 376), Hebrews 11: 30-40 (page 1276)

Questions

1. What is faith?
2. Why do we have faith?
3. Why was Abel's sacrifice better than Cain's?
4. How do we know that Enoch had faith?
5. How did Noah and Abraham show that they had faith?

6. How did Moses show that he had faith?

7. What does it mean that Moses suffered because of Christ?

8. What is interesting about King David, Samuel, Gideon, and Samson?

Hebrews
Chapter 12

XII. God trains His children

Vocabulary:

lightweight: clothing or something that does not weigh much

weighted down: to wear or carry something heavy

obtain: receive

struggle: to try very hard to do something

perspective: to think about something in relation to other things

The great people of faith who have died are now in Heaven. They are witnesses of all that we do. We should continue in our faith. Like athletes, we are running a race. When you run a race, you need to wear lightweight clothes. You can't run fast if you are weighted down. In our Christian race, we must get rid of any sin that weighs us down. Paul also writes about running a race. He tells us to run so that we can obtain our prize.

To run our race well, we must keep our eyes on Jesus. Jesus lived by faith. Jesus shows us how to live by faith perfectly. Jesus suffered the shame and pain of dying on the cross. He did this with joy because Jesus was looking forward in faith. If we concentrate on Jesus, we won't lose hope.

Read Hebrews 12: 1-3 (page 1276), I Corinthians 9: 24-27 (page 1211)

Many times we struggle with sin. But we must keep this in perspective - the struggle will not lead to the spilling of blood. Many times God chooses to use our difficulties to train us. We must learn to accept God's training. God trains us because He loves us. He is our Heavenly Father. Just as we discipline our children, God disciplines us. God trains us because He wants us to become holy. Sometimes this discipline is hard for us. But we need to endure because the discipline will produce goodness. So we must persevere. We must continue to trust God.

Read Hebrews 12: 4-13 (page 1277)

We should make peace and holiness our aim. We should constantly remember God's grace to us. The author of Hebrews warns people to make

sure that a "bitter plant" doesn't grow. This relates to a passage in Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy 29, God through Moses tells the people to make sure that no one turns away from God. The people of Israel should not worship any other gods - this would spread bitterness among the people. We should be careful to focus on God. Esau was not a godly man. He chose earthly satisfaction over heavenly rewards. We should not imitate Esau.

Read Hebrews 12:14-17 (page 1277), Deuteronomy 29: 18 (page 216)

In the next section of scripture, the author of Hebrews compares the history of the Jewish faith with Christianity. First, he talks about Mt. Sinai. In Exodus, we read that the people of Israel came near Mt. Sinai. They were not allowed to touch the mountain. God appear on the mountain in a fire. When the people heard a trumpet blast, they went to the mountain. But they were not allowed to touch it. Even if an animal touched the mountain, it would be killed.

Read Exodus 19: 12-22 (page 74), Hebrews 12: 18-21 (page 1277)

But for believers in Christ, everything is different. We come to Mt. Zion. Mt. Zion was where Jerusalem was built. It is represents the home of God's people. Mt. Zion also represents the Heavenly Jerusalem. We will come to this mountain in joy not fear. We share what belongs to Christ. Because of this wonderful promise, we must obey God - we can't say no to God. When Christ returns, He will shake the earth. But God's heavenly Kingdom will not be shaken. So we should be thankful. We should worship God with respect and amazement.

Read Hebrews 12: 22-29

Questions

1. Why are Christians like athletes?

2. What should we get rid of that weighs us down?

Hebrews
Chapter 13

XIII. Final words

Vocabulary:

realize: fully understand

content: to be happy with your situation

ultimate: final

conform: to behave the way that most people do

The author reminds us to love each other and to be kind to strangers. We must remember people who are in prison - particularly people who are imprisoned for their faith. We must remember people who are suffering. We must be filled with compassion and understand their pain. We must love and honor our husbands and wives. We must keep our marriage vows.

Do not be controlled by the love of money. Learn to be content with what God has given you. God has promised that He will never leave us. Because of this promise, we don't have to fear other people.

Read Hebrews 13: 1-6 (page 1278)

Remember your Christian leaders. Keep them in your prayers. Imitate their faith. Trust in Jesus - He never changes. Jesus is our ultimate leader.

There are many temptations to listen to other religions. During the early church, there was a lot of pressure to conform to the old covenant and the rules of the Pharisees. Christians no longer have to worry about eating unclean animals. God has made everything perfectly.

Under the old covenant, people worshiped God using an altar to offer sacrifices. The true altar is in Heaven. In the old covenant, animals were sacrificed outside the tabernacle. The blood was carried into the Holy of Holies to the presence of God. In the new covenant, Jesus suffered and died outside of the city. We must be willing to suffer as Jesus suffered. We know that our reward will be a new eternal city.

Read Hebrews 13: 7-14

Now, we should offer God a new kind of offering - an offering of praise. We must remember to do good to everyone we meet - this is an offering that God desires.

Because we belong to God, we must obey those in authority. God has placed them in a position over us. The people in authority will be held accountable for what they do.

Read Hebrews 13: 15-19

Jesus Christ is the great Shepherd of the sheep. He is our guide and directs our path. God brought Jesus back from the dead. Jesus' blood was shed to fulfill the new covenant. When God raised Jesus from the dead, Jesus triumphed over death and Satan's power.

Read Hebrews 13: 20-25

Questions

1. In the first paragraph, what are the 5 things that we must do?
2. What should we be content with?
3. We should remember our Christian leaders. How can we do this?
4. Who was sacrificed in the new covenant? What must we be willing to do?

5. What kind of offering should we give to God?

6. Why did God bring Jesus back from the dead?