English: Bible Commentary for Hebrews

Formatted for Translators

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### Introduction to Hebrews

## Overview

There is nothing in the New Testament that is like this book. In many ways, it is like a letter. However, it does not have the typical greeting that most New Testament letters have. The author wrote powerfully about why Jesus, who is the Messiah, is the Lord and ruler of all things. The author also wrote about how followers of Jesus need to think and behave in ways that honor God. They need to do this all the time because they are Christians.

See: Messiah (Christ)

#### Who wrote this book?

No one knows who wrote this book. Some scholars think the apostle Paul wrote it. More scholars do not think Paul wrote it.

#### To whom did the author write?

The author wrote to people who were Jewish Christians. They were discouraged because other people were persecuting them. They were tempted to return to their former beliefs and following the Law of Moses.

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Tempt (Temptation); Law of Moses

#### What the author wrote about in this letter

The author wrote strongly that Jesus is greater than everyone and everything. He did this by comparing Jesus to angels, prophets, and priests. He showed that Jesus is greater than all of them. This is why God made Jesus ruler over all things, especially the better world that God will create in the future.

The author wrote that Jesus changed everything and people should not try to obey the Law of Moses. Jesus taught a new way of thinking and living. Jesus gave Christians a special confidence for how the future will be. So, Christians need to think the way Jesus taught them to think. They need to live in a way that they know God will create this special future world for them.

See: Angel; Prophet; Priest (Priesthood)

#### Why did the author write this letter?

Scholars think the author seemed to know the people to whom he wrote. He was comfortable in challenging them and warning them to live in a way that honors God.

## Outline of Hebrews

1. Jesus is greater than God's prophets and angels (1:1-4:13)
2. Jesus is greater than the priests who serve in the temple in Jerusalem (4:14-7:28)
3. Jesus' service and what Jesus taught is greater than the covenant that God made with Moses (8:1-10:39)
4. What faith is like (11:1-40)
5. Encouragement to believe God and follow him (12:1-29)
6. Concluding encouragements and greetings (13:1-25)

See: Prophet; Angel; Priest (Priesthood) ; Temple; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Faith (Believe in)

### Hebrews 1 Commentary

## 1:1-4

#### How did God change the way he spoke to people?

[1:1, 1:2]

The author wrote about God and the things God wanted to do as if God was speaking to mankind. Normally, people cannot see or hear God. They could only see God when Jesus came to the earth. However, God sometimes sent messages to prophets using visions, dreams, spoken prophecies, written prophecies, and in many other ways. The prophets told people the things God wanted them to know. However, people did not completely understand when the prophets told them these messages from God.

Therefore, God changed the way he spoke to people by sending his son, Jesus. God came to earth as the man Jesus. He came to tell all people clearly and completely who God is and the things that God wanted them to do. People can now know more about God because of what Jesus said and did. He walked and talked the way other people do. He spoke truth about God in ways that people could understand. He did miracles and healed many people. This showed people that he cared about them.

Then, Jesus died so that people could have peace with God and live together with God in heaven forever. In this way, he saved everyone who will believe in him. This is a type of gift from God. It showed how much God loves all people.

See: Prophecy (Prophesy) ; Prophet; Vision; Miracle; Son of God

#### What are the last days?

[1:2]

See: Last Days

#### How did the author explain why Jesus could speak for God to mankind?

[1:2, 1:3, 1:4]

The author wrote about seven things that showed people that Jesus is the Son of God. This means Jesus could speak for God because he is God. The seven things are:

1. God appointed Jesus heir of all things (See: Psalm 2:7-8). This means that in the end, he will possess and rule the whole world without anyone fighting against him.
2. Jesus created the universe. (See: John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16)
3. The author wrote about Jesus as if he was special light that comes from God. This means that God shows people his power through Jesus.
4. Jesus is the “representation" (χαρακτήρ/g5481) of God’s "essence" (ὑπόστασις/g5287). Jesus is God. So, when he came to earth, he showed people who God is. He did not just do the things that God did. He is God.
5. Jesus keeps everything in the world going. Jesus spoke and created the world and everything in it. By his speaking, he enables all things to accomplish his purpose. (See: Colossians 1:17)
6. Jesus made “payment" (καθαρισμός/g2512) for people’s sins. This is something the book of Hebrews talks about many times. In the Bible, when someone sins, it makes unclean, that is, they cannot please God. However, Jesus can make people clean, that is, take away their sin. Nobody else could pay for everyone's sins. Only God could do this.
7. The author wrote about Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, that is, on the right side of God in heaven. The people who wrote the Bible often used the metaphor of sitting when they wanted to say someone was ruling like a king or leader rules. Also, they wrote about the right hand when they wanted to talk about using power or giving power. God the Father gave Jesus permission to rule with him. Some scholars also believe that Jesus is seated because he finished doing the things that he wanted to do. He is now resting while he reigns over his new kingdom. (See: Luke 22:69, 1 Corinthians 15:24, and Psalm 110:1)

See: Son of God; Jesus is God); Clean and Unclean; Kingdom of God; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

#### How did the author say that Jesus can speak for God?

[1:1, 1:4]

The author wrote that Jesus could speak for God. He did this by comparing Jesus to others who spoke for God in the past. He could also speak for God because he is God.

#### How did the author begin to compare Jesus to others?

[1:4]

The author used the word “better" (κρείττων/g2909) many times in this book to compare Jesus to other people. The author said Jesus is better than all other people or creatures. In verses 1-2, the author wanted to say that Jesus was better than any ancestor of the Jews or any prophet. In the rest of Hebrews 1 and 2, the author explained how Jesus is better than the angels.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Prophet; Angel

## 1:5-14

#### How is Jesus better than angels?

[1:5, 1:6, 1:7]

God sent angels to give messages to people. The author talked about five things that proved Jesus is better than angels.

1. Jesus is better than the angels because God says Jesus is his Son. The author wanted to say that God never called any angels his son. However, many times in Hebrews, the author wrote about Jesus, the son of God. In verse 5, the author asked, “When did God ever say angels were God’s sons?” (See: Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14). This question expects an answer of “not one angel.” The author expected that people reading to know these Scripture verses and understand that he wanted to say that God had never done this.
2. The author wrote that God was talking about Jesus when he said, “Let all the angels of God worship Him” (see: Deuteronomy 32:43). Jesus is God and deserves to be worshipped. The angels do not deserve to be worshipped. Therefore, Jesus is better than the angels. The lesser being worships the greater one. The angels worship the Son. Therefore, Jesus is greater than angels.
3. The author wrote that angels were created to serve God. This makes them like any other thing created by God. Jesus was not created. Instead, he has always existed. Therefore, Jesus is better than the angels (See: Psalm 104:4).
4. God honored Jesus in special ways. The author wrote in verses 8-9 that God spoke to Jesus directly. God said that Jesus rules forever in a way that honors God (see: Psalm 45:6-7).
5. Jesus created the world. The world he created includes the angels. The angels are a part of creation and may change, but Jesus will never change (see: Psalm 102:25-27).

At the end of this section, the author wrote another question contained in Scripture. This question was, “Did God ever ask angels to watch while God defeated their enemies?” (see: Psalm 110:1). This question expects an answer, “not one angel.” Instead, God did for Jesus, the messiah.

See: Angel; Messiah (Christ)

### Hebrews 2

## 2:1-4

#### Why do Christians need to “give more attention”?

[2:1]

The author told Christians to "give more attention" (προσεχω/g4337) to what Jesus said. Jesus was greater than any other messenger from God. So what he said was greater than what any other messenger from God had said before. If people believed in what the other messengers of God said, but not in what Jesus said, God will punish them more.

1. Some scholars think that the author wrote that Christians were going to have a greater punishment if they stopped believing in Jesus and started following the Law of Moses again. Because they knew about Jesus the messiah, they would be punished more that people who did not know about Jesus and just disobeyed the law of Moses. They think that these Christians would no longer be at peace with God.
2. Other scholars think that the author wanted to say that people who might "drift away" (παραῤῤνἑω/g3901) from believing in God never really believed in God. If they believed in God and were at peace with him, then they would not “drift way.”
3. Other scholars think Christians might "drift away" from obeying God. If they did this, they would not be punished. Instead, God would not reward them.

The author wanted readers to remember how God had severely punished people who disobeyed the laws given through angels. Also, He wanted readers to know that God will punish people who ignore the things Jesus said to them.

**Advice to Translators**: A messenger is someone who is sent by someone else. They tell people the things the person who sent them want to tell them.

See: Law of Moses; Messiah (Christ); Punish (Punishment); Reward

#### Why is Jesus’ message better than the angel’s message?

[2:2, 2:3]

The author said that Jesus was better than angels. Several things make the things Jesus said better than the what the angels said.

1. Jesus said these things while he was on earth.
2. People who heard the things Jesus said told other people about the things Jesus said.
3. People told the author of this letter about the things Jesus said. These people heard it when Jesus said these things. They also told the people who read this letter about the things Jesus said.
4. God "testified" (σνϋεπιμάρτυρέω/g4901) while all of this was happening. God proved the things Jesus said were true. He also gave special gifts through the Holy Spirit. God did all of these things. He did not just send people to say things. They also did things and served Jesus and served other people.

See: Angel; Sign; Testify (Testimony)

## 2:5-18

#### What is God's plan for the world?

[2:5]

The author wrote about the "world to come." That is, God will end the world people live in now and create a new one that is perfect. That is, this new world will not have any suffering and nothing will die. Some scholars think God started this new world when he raised Jesus from the dead and gave him permission to rule over all things. This will continue until God makes the earth and heaven “new” (see Revelation 21). This “new heaven and new earth” will last forever. Other scholars think John was only talking about the “new heaven and new earth.” God has not yet begun to make the world new. Other scholars think John was talking about the world when Jesus would rule for 1000 years (see: Revelation 20:1-7).

Angels will not rule the world to come. Jesus will rule. God the Father has given him permission to rule the world to come.

See: Kingdom of God; Angel; God the Father

#### What did Jesus do after he went back to heaven?

[2:7]

After Jesus died and came back to living, he went back to heaven. When he did this, God gave him great honor. He was honored more than anything or anyone else. God's plan for Jesus did not end when Jesus died and rose from the dead. When Jesus suffered and died on the cross, he was made lower than angels. This is a metaphor. He wanted to say that Jesus was humiliated by dying on the cross. However, after Jesus rose from the dead and went back to heaven, God gave him glory and honor above all things and all people. Jesus will never stop ruling over all things. He will rule all things when God creates the new heaven and earth. He will always be the king of all kings.

See: Heaven; Resurrect (Resurrection); Cross; Metaphor; Glory (Glorify)

#### How did Jesus save people who believe in him from their sins?

[2:10]

Jesus is able to save people who believe in him from their sins because he is different from every other person. Jesus and people are the same because Jesus was human in the same way that people are human. Also, Jesus and people are different because Jesus is also God. People are not God. This difference is what made Jesus able to save people who believe in him from their sins.

The author used Psalm 8:4-6 to tell how God first planned for people to rule the earth. When God created the world, he gave Adam and Eve permission to rule over the earth. God gave these two people nearly the same power and honor as the angels. They ruled over all things on earth. However, they did not do what honored God. This was the first sin. Because they did not honor God, God said that they will suffer and die. Also, their descendants will suffer and die. That is, all mankind. Adam and Eve lost their special permission from God to rule. They were no longer just a little lower than the angels, but a lot lower. This is because they did not honor God.

When people do not trust God and they do not do what honors him, this is a very bad thing. God must punish those who do not honor him. This punishment is “death” (see: Romans 6:23). The author wrote that Jesus died so that people did not have to die. That is, he was punished for them. Like Adam, Jesus was a man. Unlike every other person, Jesus did not sin once. That is, Jesus always did what honored God. Also, Jesus is God, and he is holy. When he came to earth, Jesus the Son did everything God the Father wanted him to do. Because Jesus always honored God, he was always holy. Because of this, he could die for those who did sin. Jesus did not die because of sins he committed. Jesus chose to honor God and die to be punished for everyone who believes in him.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Jesus is God; Angel; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Punish (Punishment); Die (Death); Atone (Atonement); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); God the Father

#### What does God do for those who believe in Jesus?

[2:11, 2:12]

God makes those who believe in Jesus “children of God.” Before believing in Jesus, people fight against God in some way. But after they believe in Jesus, they are God’s children. Jesus calls Christians his brothers and sisters. Jesus was a person in the same way they are people. He was born, he suffered, and he died. He lived in the same way as people, but he did not sin. Because of this, he had the power to save other people. That is, he could bring them to God and make them at peace with God. In the same way the high priest of the Old Testament brought sacrifices so that God would forgive them, Jesus brought his own sacrifice to God so that God would forgive people. That is, because Jesus died, God forgives people because Jesus was punished for them. Jesus is the greatest high priest. In the same way the high priest brought people to God, Jesus brings people to God. He is still there to help those who suffer and are tempted to sin. He helps them. Jesus also saves people from the power of the devil. The devil wants to make people slaves to do the things he wants them to do, things that do not honor God. However, Jesus makes them free this when someone believes in him.

See: Family of God; Children of God; Sin; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); High Priest; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Sacrifice; Tempt (Temptation); Tempt (Temptation); Serve (Servant, Slave); Free (Freedom)

#### Will Christians be greater than angels?

[2:16]

Jesus has made it so that people can live with God in heaven. Men and women are children of God. God honors his children more than angels. People will rule with Jesus in the world to come. Angels will serve them and help them. Jesus died to save men and women, not angels.

See: Heaven; Children of God; Angel; Atone (Atonement)

### Hebrews 3

## 3:1-6

#### How is Jesus a high priest?

[3:1]

The author called Jesus a high priest. That is, he does the same things the high priest in the Old Testament did. Jesus helps people to be at peace with God. He helps Christians. He talks to God for Christians. However, Jesus does these things better than the high priest because he is God’s son. He is perfect, so he can go to God all the time. The high priest was unable to do this because they were sinners in the same way other people were sinners.

See: High Priest

#### Why is Jesus greater than Moses?

[3:3]

The author said that Jesus was greater than Moses because he was the son of God. He wrote this letter to people who were Jewish. Jewish people thought Moses was the most important prophet in their history. God chose Moses to be a great leader. Moses trusted God and did what God wanted. He spoke what God told him to speak. He spoke about things coming in the future. He was completely obeyed God. So, God greatly honored God.

However, Jesus came after Moses. Jesus deserves greater honor than Moses. Jesus is the messiah. This makes him greater than even the greatest leader and prophet. Jesus perfectly trusted and honored God. He did everything God wanted him to do. Jesus obeyed God more than Moses. So, Jesus deserves even greater honor than Moses.

The author used the metaphor of a house to tell how Jesus was greater than Moses (see: Numbers 12:7). He wrote that Moses was to obey God in the same way an honored “servant”(θεράπων/g2324) did in God’s house. However, Jesus is God's son. God chose his son, Jesus, to rule over God’s house, that is, all Christians. So, Jesus is much more than a faithful servant. In fact, Jesus actually created God's house, the temple, in which Moses served. In all these ways, Jesus was even more faithful than Moses.

The author called Jesus "apostle" and "high priest" of God. He called Jesus an apostle because God sent Jesus to tell people about the gospel. Jesus was able to speak for God better than other apostles or prophets. This is because he is God’s son, not just a prophet. He is God.

**Advice to translators**: The word "faithful" is used throughout this chapter. The desired meaning is what is described in the last paragraph above. Use a word or phrase that has that meaning, in each place that "faithful" occurs in the commentary.

See: Son of God; Prophet; Messiah (Christ); Metaphor; Apostle; Jesus is God

## 3:7-19

#### Why must Christians obey God?

[3:12, 3:15, 3:18]

The author wrote that Christians must obey God. If they are not, God will punish them. He wanted readers to know how God will think if they stop believing and trusting in him. He called this having an "evil heart of unbelief" (see: 3:12). That is, Christians need to always keep believing the things God said. If they did this, then they will do the things that honor him.

The author used Israel’s history to talk about obeying God. He said the same thing as Psalm 95 (see: Psalm 95:1-7). The writer of this psalm wrote about when the Israelites left Egypt and followed Moses into the wilderness. God chose Moses as their leader. Moses told them what God wanted them to do. But the people did not do what Moses told them to do. When they disobeyed Moses, they disobeyed God. Because they did this, God punished them.

The author of Hebrews told them that the Holy Spirit spoke the words in the psalm. That is, God spoke these words. The author wanted his readers to know God said to them “do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion” (see: 3:15). That is, what happened to the Israelites can happen to Christians if they do not obey God.

In 3:16-19, the author wrote three questions so that his readers might better know what Psalm 95 was talking about:

1. All the Israelites who Moses led disobeyed God. That is, the people who God took out of Egypt disobeyed God.
2. God was angry with all the people of Israel, except Moses, because they sinned. They forgot how God helped them to leave Egypt, and they did not honor him. He punished them by letting them die in the desert.
3. God made a promise to the people who rejected him. He said that they will never enter his "rest." That is, he did not reward them, but he punished them. He punished them by keeping them from going into the promised land. Also, some scholars think the author wanted his readers to think about heaven when he wrote about God's "rest." So, God kept the Israelites from going into the promised land because they stopped believing in him. They committed sins and did not do what God wanted. The author wanted his readers to know God will also punish them if they do not do what he wants them to do.

See: Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Psalm; Sin; Punish (Punishment); Reward; Canaan (Promised Land)

### Hebrews 4

## 4:1-13

#### What is "God's rest"?

[4:1]

When the author wrote about God's "rest," some scholars think he wanted readers to think about living together with God in heaven. This is because people in the Old Testament time period spoke of heaven in this way. (see: Exodus 33:14; Psalm 95:11; Isaiah 55:11). That is, heaven is a place of rest. Other scholars think he wrote about this because the Old Testament writers sometimes wrote about "rest" when they wanted to talk about Israel going into the promised land of Canaan. So that was "God's rest" because God promised peace to the people of Israel.

Other scholars think the author wanted to say that God himself rested. And people will join him in his rest. The rest of God began when God stopped creating the world. People who enter God’s rest will rest from their good works in the same way God rested (see: Genesis 2:2-3).

See: Heaven; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Israel; Canaan (Promised Land)

#### Who can enter into the promised "rest" of God?

[4:3]

People who believe in Jesus can enter "God's rest." This is because God invites them. When the author wrote about people "entering" God's rest, he wanted to say they will be with God forever in heaven.

When they were in the wilderness, God promised the people of Israel that if they did all he told them to do they will enter into his rest when they came into the promised land. But the people who fled slavery in Egypt disobeyed God. They did not believe the things God promised to them. They did not trust God. They did not keep the commands of God. So, God did not let them enter into the promised land. So, they missed the rest of God.

The author also wrote that the people of God did not enter his rest when the next generation went into the promised land. This was when Joshua led them. This was because they also disobeyed and did not trust God. Many years after the time of Joshua, David wrote many Psalms. In Psalms, David still told the people of Israel to obey God instead of disbelieving or disobeying. So the author wanted his readers to know that Israel never entered God's rest because they kept disobeying God.

However, the author wrote that God did not forget his promise and his promise did not stop. He still tells people who believe in and follow Jesus to enter this rest. This rest will continue forever.

See: Heaven; Wilderness; Canaan (Promised Land); Command (Commandment); People of God; Generation; Israel

#### What did the author write about the "word of God"?

[4:12, 4:13]

When the author wrote about the "word of God," he wanted readers to think about God's power to see and judge everything people do. Some scholars think that when the author wrote about the "word of God," he wanted to say all of Scripture. Some of these scholars also think that he also wanted to talk about all the different ways God talks to people. Other scholars think that when the author wrote about the "word of God," he wanted people to think about Jesus (see: John 1).

The author wanted readers to think about the word of God. Great things can happen when someone obeys the word of God. No one and nothing can hide from God when he uses the scriptures to change things. God will use it to judge everyone. So nobody will enter God's rest unless they say and do the things that the word of God says to say and do.

See: Word of God; Judge (Judgment)

## 4:14-16

#### How can human beings approach God?

[4:16]

The author stated that Christians can approach God because Jesus is their "high priest." The author wanted his readers to think about the Jewish high priest from the Old Testament. He talked to God for the people of Israel. The Jewish high priest went into the most inside part of the tabernacle or the temple to talk to God. Only the high priest entered this part of the temple because anyone else would die. He had to go through certain washings and made sacrifices to be able to cleans himself before entering this part of the Temple.

Christians do not have high priests like the ones in the Old Testament. But the author wrote that Jesus talks to God the Father for us. So in that same way he is similar to those high priests. Because Jesus is the high priest, all Christians can go directly to God. That is, Jesus will speak for them to God the Father so they will not die.

The author wrote that Christians can trust Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God. That is, he is God. But he is also human. He was born and lived on earth in the same way humans are born and live. So, Jesus knows what it is like to be human. The world tempted him in all the same ways it tempts other people. But he was different from other people in one way. He did not sin. So, Jesus was able to enter heaven and he is there now. So, he can talk directly to God for them. That is, he can talk to God the Father directly because he is God the Son, and because he died on the cross so that Christians can come to God the Father without there being a separation between them and God.

If people keep believing in Jesus and following him, they can talk directly to God the Father. This is what the author wanted to say when he wrote about going to the "throne of grace." We do not need to be afraid to talk to God about anything. Because Jesus is also talking to God for us, we can know that God listens. God will hear and answer.

**Advice to translators**: When someone talks to another person directly, they talk to them without anyone else helping them. When someone does not talk directly to someone, they talk to someone else first who then talks to the person they want to talk to.

See: High Priest; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Tabernacle; Temple; Sacrifice; Clean and Unclean; God the Father; Son of God; Jesus is God; Tempt (Temptation); Throne; Grace

### Hebrews 5

## 5:1-4

#### What did the author want people to think about the Jewish high priest?

[5;1, 5:2, 5;3]

The author wanted people to think about how the Jewish high priests could do only certain things. They did only certain things because they were only men. That is, they could serve God and lead people, however, Jesus could do much more.

See: High Priest

#### What were “gifts and sacrifices for sins"?

[5:3]

The Jewish people offered "gifts and sacrifices for sins" to God (see: 5:1). They did this to atone for sins they committed. That is, they did this so God would forgive their sins and bless them in some way. The high priest made these sacrifices for the people. God told the people how to make these sacrifices in the Law of Moses.

See: Leviticus

See: Atone (Atonement); Sacrifice; Sin; Law of Moses; Bless (Blessing); High Priest

#### Why did the author write “he is called by God, just as Aaron was”?

[5:4]

When the author wrote "he is called by God, just as Aaron was", he wanted people to know that God decided who would be the high priest. God wanted Israel to have a high priest, so he gave them a high priest. He gave permission to someone to be the high priest and God said what the high priest would do.

God "called" Aaron. That is, God chose Aaron to be the high priest. This was when Moses led the Jewish people.

See: High Priest; Call (Calling)

## 5:5-10

#### Why did the author write, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”?

[5:5]

When the author wrote "You are my Son; today I have become your Father," he wanted readers to know that Jesus is God. Jesus is the Son of God and a high priest. He is greater than any other high priests. When Jesus was baptized, God the Father said, "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (see: Matthew 3:17; Luke 3:22). This is very much like the words the author wrote here (see: Psalms 2:7). People who are not Jesus cannot be God's child in this way. This makes Jesus a unique and special high priest.

See: God the Father; Son of God; Trinity; Jesus is God; Baptize (Baptism); High Priest

#### Who was Melchizedek?

[5:6]

The author wrote about Melchizedek. In ancient times, Melchizedek was a king of Salem (see: Genesis 14:18-20). Melchizedek worshipped God. He worshipped God so well that people called him a high priest. His name means "king of righteousness." Abraham knew and respected Melchizedek. So the Jewish people also respected Melchizedek. This is why the author speaks about a priest "after the manner of Melchizedek".

Because of all these things, the author spoke about Melchizedek to tell people that Jesus is an even better high priest. He is righteous like Melchizedek. Melchizedek was human, so he had to die. However, Jesus lives forever. In fact, Jesus became the way that people can be forgiven of their sins. That is, he is the "cause of eternal salvation" (5:9). This is more than Melchizedek could do.

See: Worship; Righteous (Righteousness); High Priest; Priest (Priesthood) ; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

See Map: Salem

#### Why did the author write “During the days of his flesh”?

[5:7]

The author wrote "during the days of his flesh." He was writing about when Jesus was alive on the earth. This is called the incarnation. He wrote it this way so people would think about how Jesus has always existed. This is because he is God. But at a certain time, he was born as a human being. He lived a human life. Then he was crucified and resurrected.

The author wrote in this way to be sure people would understand that Jesus was both fully God and fully human. Some false teachers taught that Jesus was not fully God. Other false teachers taught that Jesus was not fully human. The author wanted people to know that all these people were wrong about Jesus.

See: Incarnation; Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection); Jesus is God)

#### How was God the Son “made perfect”?

[5:8]

Jesus is God the Son. He was "made perfect" because he completed the work God the Father gave him to do on earth. To do this, he completely obeyed everything that God the Father told him to do. This included dying on the cross so God will forgive people of their sins.

The author did not write this to speak about sins. Jesus did not commit any sins. However, some scholars think God the Father made Jesus "perfect" or complete when Jesus obeyed him completely. He did this when he was crucified.

See: Son of God; God the Father; Cross; Atone (Atonement); Sin; Crucify (Crucifixion)

#### How did Jesus become "the cause of eternal salvation"?

[5:9]

Jesus became "the cause of eternal salvation" when he died on the cross. He did this so God the Father would save from their sins anyone who believes in Jesus. That is, Jesus atoned for peoples' sins. This was so that people who believe in him can live forever with God in heaven forever.

See: Cross; God the Father; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Crucify (Crucifixion); Atone (Atonement); Heaven

## 5:11-14

#### Why did the author write "dull in hearing"?

[5:11]

The author wrote "dull in hearing" to speak about people who did not know as much about God and Jesus as they should. He used the metaphor of someone who is not able to hear well. He used this metaphor to remind people they had been taught about Jesus. However, they were not showing they understood. They were not living in the way Christians should live. They were not doing what Jesus and the apostles taught. In fact, they were not even doing the most basic things they were taught. So in this way, it was as if they had not heard the things they were taught.

See: Metaphor; Apostle

#### Why did the author write "You need milk, not solid food!"?

[5:12]

The author wrote "you need milk, not solid food!" This is a metaphor. He wanted people to know that they did not understand as much about God and Jesus as they should. This metaphor spoke about infants who cannot eat solid food. They can eat only milk. The author wrote about food to speak about the things of God and Jesus they were taught. In this way, he told them they needed to be more mature as Christians. That is, they needed to live in a way that honors God.

The author continued to use this metaphor in 5:13-14.

See: Grow in Faith

#### Why did the author write "inexperienced with"?

[5:13]

The author wrote "inexperienced with" to tell people that they behaved wrongly. They heard the gospel. They believed in Jesus. But they did not do the right things. They did not live in a way that honored God.

Gospel

#### Why did the author write “message of righteousness”?

[5:13]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote "message of righteousness." Some scholars think he spoke about the gospel. That is, the message of righteousness was the good news about Jesus. Other scholars think he spoke about people knowing the difference between right and wrong. That is, the message of righteousness was about how a person must live in a way that honors God.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Gospel

### Hebrews 6

## 6:1-3

#### What was the “message of Christ"?

[6:1]

The author wrote about the message of Christ. Some scholars think the “message of Christ” was everything Jesus and the apostles taught when they were alive. Other scholars think it was the gospel.

See: Messiah (Christ); Apostle; Gospel

#### Why did the author speak about "maturity"?

[6:1]

The author spoke about "maturity." He wanted to make readers think they need to know God very well and always do things that honor God. The "maturity" he spoke about is spiritual. That is, he did not speak about physical growth. Nor did he speak about how many years a person has lived.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Grow in Faith

#### What is laying a "foundation"?

[6:1]

When the author wrote about laying a "foundation", he used a metaphor to speak about the most important things a Christian learns about God. A "foundation" is the firm base for a building. Laying a foundation is when a builder creates this base. Sometimes foundations are made of very large stones. These will not move. They can support the rest of the building. This helps keep the building from falling down.

The most important things a Christian learns about God will keep them trusting in Jesus. In verse 2, the author wrote about other important things a Christian needs to know. The Christian who really learns these things will not stop trusting in Jesus. They will not do things that dishonor God.

See: Metaphor; Spirit (Spiritual)

#### Why did the author write "let us not lay again" the foundation?

[6:1]

When the author wrote "let us not lay again" the foundation, he continued to use the metaphor about the important things Christians learn about God. He wanted to tell Christians that they need to always remember these important things. Then they can do things that honor God. This is because they know what those things are.

See: Metaphor

#### What are "dead works”?

[6:1]

When the author wrote about "dead works", he wanted people to think about ways that people who are not Christians try to live in the right way. That is, he wanted Christians to know that these things do not serve God. He wanted them to know it was useless to do these things.

Scholars disagree about what the "dead works" are. Some scholars think the author spoke about Jewish people trying to do righteous things to please God. Perhaps the author was thinking about certain things the Jews did to follow the Law of Moses. Other scholars think the author spoke about people who worship idols. Other scholars think the author spoke about people who do things that cause them to die.

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses; Idolatry (Idol)

#### What is "repentance from" dead works?

[6:1]

When the author wrote about "repentance from" dead works, he wanted people to remember when they believed in Jesus. When they believed in Jesus, they stopped trying to do the right things without serving God. That is, they "repented from" doing things without wanting to honor God. The author wanted people to know that if they keep trusting in Jesus, they do not need to repent this way over and over.

See: Repent (Repentance)

## 6:4-6

#### What was the “heavenly gift”?

[6:4]

When the author wrote about the "heavenly gift", he spoke about when God saves a person from his sins. Some scholars think the author was also thinking about the Holy Spirit. God gave the Holy Spirit to live in Christians. This is a gift.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

#### How can a person "taste" the heavenly gift?

[6:4]

When the author wrote about a person "tasting" the heavenly gift, he used the metaphor of eating food. He did this to speak about God really saving that person. He wanted to say that the person is completely saved from their sins when God does this. That is, he did not want people to think about the "taste" as just a small sample.

See: Metaphor; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

#### What are "sharers of the Holy Spirit"?

[6:4]

Christians are “sharers of the Holy Spirit" are Christians. When a person believes in Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins to live with them. That is to say, the Holy Spirit shares himself with all Christians.

See: Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

#### What was “God’s good word”?

[6:5]

"God's good word" is the gospel about Jesus.

See: Gospel

#### What are “powers of the age to come”?

[6:5]

Scholars disagree about what the "powers of the age to come" are. Some scholars think the author wanted people to know that they will see God's power more completely in the future. Other scholars think the author wanted people to think about angels. Other scholars think the author wrote about people who lead the church.

See: Angel

#### Why did the author write "then fall away"?

[6:6]

See: Fall (Fall Away, Stand)

## 6:7-8

#### What are the "land", "plants", and "thorns and thistles" the author writes about?

[6:7]

When the author wrote about "land", "plants", and "thorns and thistles", he used the metaphor of plants growing. When the author wrote "useful" plants, he wanted people to think of Christians. When the author wrote "thorns and thistles" he spoke about people who are not Christians. Scholars think the "thorns and thistles" are also Christians who fall away. The rain is the gospel. So the author wanted to say that the gospel makes Christians grow in some way like rain makes plants grow.

See: Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

See: Metaphor; Gospel; Grow in Faith

## 6:9-12

#### What is "hope"?

[6:11]

See: Hope

#### How does a Christian "make your hope certain"?

[6:11]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote "make your hope certain." Some scholars think he spoke about the time when God will reward Christians who live in a way that honors him. That is, these scholars think the "certain" hope is because God will certainly do this. Other scholars think the author spoke about Christians having complete assurance that God will end this world and create a new, perfect world (see: Revelation 21). In that world, all people who believe in Jesus will have eternal life with him. That is, these scholars think the "certain" hope is when each Christian keeps on trusting in Jesus (see: Colossians 2:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

See: Hope; Reward; Faith (Believe in); Eternal Life; Heaven

## 6:13-18

#### Why did a person “swear by someone greater than themselves”?

[6:13]

A person would “swear" (ὀμνύω/g3660) by someone more powerful than they were. To swear meant to confirm that something a person said was true. To swear "by someone greater" was to tell people the oath was stronger than even the person making it. In this passage, the author said people swore by God (see: Deuteronomy 6:13). God is the strongest and most powerful. That is, there is nobody stronger by whom God can swear. So, God swore by himself.

See: Swear (Oath)

#### Why did God tell Abraham he would "increase you"?

[6:14]

God told Abraham he would "increase" Abraham to say he would give Abraham many descendants (see: 11:12; Genesis 22:17).

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

#### Why did people speak an “oath”?

[6:17]

People spoke an “oath" (ὅρκος/g3727) to say they would do things exactly as they promised. When this happened, people stopped arguing among themselves.

See: Swear (Oath)

#### Who were the "heirs of the promise"?

[6:17]

The "heirs of the promise" were people who received the benefits of God's promise after Abraham was dead. That is, God blessed other people because of Abraham. Scholars disagree about who these people are. Some scholars think the author spoke about the Jewish people. Christians do not inherit these promises. Other scholars think the author spoke about Christians. Christians inherit God's promise because of what Jesus did. Other scholars think the author spoke about both the Jewish people and Christians.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Bless (Blessing);Covenant with Abraham

#### What was the “unchangeable quality” of God’s purpose?

[6:18]

When the author wrote about the “unchangeable quality” of God’s purpose, he wanted people to know that God will never change his mind. That is, God will never break the promise he made to Abraham. God also meant this promise for Christians through Abraham and Jesus.

See: Covenant with Abraham

#### Why did the author write that people “fled for refuge”?

[6:18]

The author wrote that people "fled for refuge." This was a metaphor to speak about Christians. The author wanted people to think about someone trying to escape danger. When a person believes in Jesus, in some way he escapes from the danger of sin. Some scholars think that the people who “fled for refuge” were people who believed the message about Jesus, and escaped the sinful ways of the world. That is, they stopped living in sinful ways and started living in ways that honor God.

See: Colossians 1:13

See: Metaphor; Sin

#### How does a person have “strong encouragement”?

[6:18]

A person has “strong encouragement” because he trusts that God keeps his promises. That is, he knows that God does what God says he will do.

## 6:19-20

#### What is a “secure and reliable anchor for the soul”?

[6:19]

When the writer said that Christians have a "secure and reliable anchor (ἄγκυρα/g0045) for the soul," he wanted Christians to know God strongly supports Christians. He used the metaphor of an anchor that holds a boat in place. When a person believes in Jesus, God begins to help him. God makes him braver. God makes him able to resist temptation. The author wanted people to think that this is like a ship's anchor. It is something that will never go away.

See: Metaphor; Tempt (Temptation)

#### What was the “inner place behind the curtain”?

[6:19]

The “inner place behind the curtain” was the most special place in the tabernacle and temple. For the ancient Jewish people, it is where God dwelled on earth. It is called the "Holy of Holies" in the Old Testament.

See: Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Temple; Temple; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

#### How did Jesus enter “behind the curtain?”

[6:20]

When the writer to the Hebrews said that Jesus entered "behind the curtain", this was a metaphor. The high priest in the days of Israel entered behind the curtain of the holy of holies once a year to carry the blood of the atoning sacrifice for the sins of Israel. The author wanted to say that in some way, when Jesus was crucified, it was as if he did what the high priest did.

However, when Jesus shed his blood on the cross, he atoned for the sins of every person who believes in him. That is, he himself was the sacrifice. Jesus’ sacrifice was made once and it atoned for sins for all time (see: 10:11-14). So it did not have to be repeated. This is why the author wrote that Jesus is a high priest "forever".

See: Metaphor; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Crucify (Crucifixion); High Priest; Atone (Atonement); Sin; Sacrifice

#### What was a high priest?

[6:20]

See: High Priest

#### Why did the author write "after the order of Melchizedek"?

[6:20]

Long after Melchizedek lived, God declared that all priests would be descendants of Levi. God did this starting with Aaron. So people called them priests after the "order of Aaron".

Jesus did not come from the tribe of Levi, so he was not of the order of Aaron. He was a descendant of Judah. Because of this, Jesus could be the king of Israel and the messiah. Jesus was the high priest of God, in the same way that Melchizedek was the priest of God.

See: Hebrews 5:6

See: High Priest; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Messiah (Christ); Messiah (Christ)

### Hebrews 7

## 7:1-3

#### Who was Melchizedek?

[7:1]

See: Hebrews 5:6; 6:20

#### Why did the author write that Melchizedek was the “king of Salem”?

[7:1]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that Melchizedek was the "king of Salem." Some scholars think Melchizedek was the king of Jerusalem. Salem was an older name for Jerusalem. Other scholars think he was the king of the city of Salem that John wrote about (see: John 3:23). Still other scholars think the author wanted readers to think that Melchizedek was the king of peace. This is because Salem can be translated “peace.”

#### Why did the author write that Melchizedek was “without father, without mother, without ancestors”?

[7:3]

The author wrote that Melchizedek was “without father, without mother, without ancestors.” Some scholars think he did not want to say that Melchizedek did not have physical parents or ancestors. They think that no one knows who his parents or ancestors are. Moses wrote about Melchizedek but he did not write about these things. Fewer scholars think Melchizedek may have been a kind of angel. He was not human. So he did not have parents. These scholars think this because the author wrote that Melchizedek had "neither beginning of days nor end of life". They think the author wanted to say that Melchizedek was not born and did not die.

See: Genesis 14:18-20

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Angel

## 7:4-10

#### Why did the author call Abraham a “patriarch”?

[7:4]

The author called Abraham a “patriarch” because he started a nation, that is Israel. That is to say, the author used the metaphor of being a father to speak about this. However, the Bible also says that Abraham is the father of all people who believe in Jesus (see: Romans 4:11-17).

See: Metaphor; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

#### Why did Abraham give Melchizedek a “tenth” of the things he took from battle?

[7:4]

Abraham gave to Melchizedek a tenth of the things he took from battle. He did this because he thought Melchizedek was greater than he was. In ancient times, when people defeated another group of people when they fought in a war, they took things from the people they defeated.

#### Why did the Law of Moses command the people to give a tithe to the sons of Levi?

[7:5]

The Law of Moses commanded the people to give a tithe to the tribe of Levi. The tribe of Levi served as priests for the nation of Israel. God said they did not have the right to own land. They needed to devote their time to helping people worship God. Therefore God provided for the priests. He did this by commanding the other eleven tribes to contribute tithes to the tribe of Levi.

See: Law of Moses; Tithe; Worship; Priest (Priesthood)

#### How was Melchizedek greater than Abraham?

[7:7]

The author wrote that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham because he was a priest of God. So, he was able to give Abraham a blessing from God. That is why the author wrote “the lesser person is blessed by the greater person.” The author did not want to say that Melchizedek obeyed God more than Abraham.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Bless (Blessing)

#### How did Levi "pay tithes through Abraham"?

[7:9]

Scholars disagree about how Levi could "pay tithes through Abraham." Some scholars think that when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, he did it for all his future family. This included Levi. Other scholars think Abraham subjected himself to the priesthood of Melchizedek. Therefore Abraham’s ancestors were also subject to Melchizedek.

See: Tithe; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

## 7:11-21

#### Why did the author write the word “perfection”?

[7:11]

The author wrote the word “perfection" (τελείωσις/g5050) to get people to think of doing no sin and living in a right way. This can happen only when the person is reconciled to God, that is when God saves them from their sins. This happens only when the person believes in Jesus. So the author told people that these priests could not save anyone (see: 7:11).

See: Priest (Priesthood); Reconcile (Reconciliation); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sin

#### What was the “manner of Melchizedek”?

[7:11]

See: Hebrews 6:20

#### Why did the author write “the law must also be changed”?

[7:12]

The author wrote "the law must also be changed" so people know that God does not save people because of the Law of Moses. God changed things and people did not need to try to obey the Law of Moses (see: Galatians 2:16-21, Galatians 3:19-26)

The priesthood of Aaron was established by the Law of Moses. The priests offered sacrifices to atone for peoples' sins. That is to say, so God would forgive their sins. But when Jesus came to earth, this changed. Jesus atoned for all sins when he died on the cross. Now, God forgives sins when someone believes in Jesus.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Law of Moses; Priest (Priesthood); Atone (Atonement); Sin; Cross

#### Who was the one who belonged “to another tribe”?

[7:13]

Jesus was the one who belonged "to another tribe." Jesus belonged to the tribe of Judah. He did not belong to the tribe of Levi. There was never a priest before who was from the tribe of Judah. So the author wrote this to say that Jesus did not come under the priesthood of Aaron.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Tribes of Israel

#### Why did the author write "served at the altar"?

[7:13]

The author wrote "served at the altar" to speak about when the priests led the people of Israel in worship. When they did this, they made sacrifices and offerings to God at the altar.

See: Altar; Priest (Priesthood); Worship; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

#### Why did the author write that Jesus was a priest “based on the power of an everlasting life”?

[7:16]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that Jesus was a priest "based on the power of an everlasting life.” Some scholars think that the priesthood of Aaron was based only on the Law of Moses. However, the priesthood of Jesus was based on the promise of God. Jesus demonstrated the “power of an everlasting life” when he rose from the dead. Other scholars simply say that the priesthood of Aaron was limited. It came to an end because the priests died. However, Jesus lives forever, so his priesthood will never end.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Law of Moses; Eternal Life; Resurrect (Resurrection)

#### What was the "former regulation"?

[7:18]

The "former regulation" was the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses

#### How was the former regulation “weak and useless”?

[7:18]

The former regulation, that is to say the Law of Moses, is "weak and useless." This is because it could not save a person from their sins. It could not change a person and give them new life. It could not make someone part of God's family. It could not make a person righteous. Only when a person believes in Jesus can these things happen to them.

See: Law of Moses; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sin; Spirit (Spiritual); Righteous (Righteousness); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Family of God

#### What was the “better hope”?

[7:19]

The “better hope” was Jesus. The author wrote that Jesus established a different priesthood (see: 7:4-17). This new priesthood allowed people to truly draw near to God. Some scholars think the “better hope” accomplished what the Law of Moses could not. That is, the new hope lets everyone who believes in Jesus talk to God without needing a priest.

See: Hope; Priest (Priesthood)

#### What is to “come near to God”?

[7:19]

To “come near" (ἐγγίζω/g1448) meant to approach God. Jesus made it possible for everyone who believes in him to do this. The priesthood of Jesus allows all Christians to “come near to God”. This is because the sacrifice of Jesus was perfect. It completely atoned for peoples' sins. So, it gave Christians direct access to God.

This is different than the old way. The priesthood of Aaron was designed to keep people at a distance from God. Only the high priest, once a year, could come close to God.

See: Atone (Atonement); Priest (Priesthood); High Priest

## 7:22-28

#### What is the “guarantee of a better covenant”?

[7:22]

The "guarantee of a better covenant" is Jesus. The "guarantee of a covenant" is a way of making certain that people fulfill the covenant. That is, another person may promise to fulfill the covenant if one of the people fails to fulfill it. Jesus, who is the Son of God, guaranteed a "better" covenant. He did this when he died. This new covenant if "better" because it lasts forever. It is also "better" because it will never be broken. God will never break his promise. Also, Christians now have Jesus as their "guarantee." That is, when they sin, God accepts Jesus' sacrifice to fulfill the new covenant. So, God forgives them of their sins. He does not think that a Christian ends the covenant by sinning.

See: Covenant; Son of God; Crucify (Crucifixion); Fulfill (Fulfillment); Atone (Atonement); New Covenant; Sin; Sacrifice

#### How was Jesus “able to save completely” those who came to God through him?

[7:25]

Jesus was able to "save completely" everyone who believes in him. This is because he fulfilled all of God’s requirements for people to be saved from their sins. He did this when he died. Scholars think that Jesus was the perfect sacrifice. So, there was nothing else needed for people to be saved from their sins.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Crucify (Crucifixion); Fulfill (Fulfillment); Sin; Atone (Atonement)

#### Why did the author write that Jesus “lives to intercede” for his people?

[7:25]

The author wrote that Jesus "lives to intercede" for his people. To intercede is to defend a person when they do something wrong. So the author wanted to say that when Christians sin, Jesus defends them from God's judgement. Because Jesus lives forever, he is always able to do this for Christians.

See: Judge (Judgment); Sin

#### How was Jesus “sinless" and "blameless”?

[7:26]

The author wrote that Jesus was "sinless" and "blameless" because Jesus never committed a sin.

See: Sin; Blameless

#### How was Jesus “pure”?

[7:26]

See: Purify (Pure)

#### How was Jesus “separated from sinners”?

[7:26]

Jesus was "separated from sinners" because he never committed a sin. That is, God the Father never had a reason to say that Jesus was a sinner. So Jesus is "separated" or different than every other person.

See: Sin; God the Father

#### How is Jesus “higher than the heavens”?

[7:26]

The author wrote that Jesus is "higher than the heavens" to say that he is in some way not in the world any longer. Some scholars think that Jesus now exists "higher," that is, he is somewhere outside of everything he created. He is the Son of God. He talks to God the Father directly. Other scholars think the words “higher than the heavens” mean that Jesus is now at the right hand of God (see: Philippians 2:11). He is in the most honored place next to God.

See: Heaven; Son of God

#### How was the sacrifice of Jesus a “once for all” sacrifice?

[7:27]

The sacrifice of Jesus was "once for all" because it never needs to be repeated. That is to say, Jesus died once. When he died, he atoned for the sins of all people (see: John 3:16). He does not need to do this over and over.

In ancient Israel, priests made sacrifices for the people. However, the priests also committed sins. They needed to offer sacrifices for their own sins as well as for the sins of the people. Jesus is different. He never sinned and is the Son of God. So he did not have to offer a sacrifice for himself. Instead, he offered himself as the sacrifice for everyone else. It was the final, perfect sacrifice which atoned for the sins of everyone who believes in Jesus.

See: Sacrifice; Atone (Atonement); Sin; Priest (Priesthood); Son of God

#### How was Jesus “made perfect forever”?

[7:28]

See: Hebrews 5:9

### Hebrews 8

## 8:1-6

#### Who is the "high priest" the author writes about?

[8:1]

The author wrote about a "high priest." He was writing about Jesus.

See: Hebrews 7

#### Why did the author write that Jesus “sat down at the right hand” of the Majesty?

[8:1]

The author wrote that Jesus "sat down at the right hand" of the majesty to say that in some way, God the Father gave Jesus the highest possible honor. In ancient times, rulers invited someone to sit "at their right hand", that is to say their right side. They did this when they wanted to greatly honor that person. So the author used this as a metaphor for how God honored Jesus.

See: God the Father; Son of God; Metaphor

#### Who is “the Majesty in the heavens?”

[8:1]

The “Majesty in the heavens” is God. It was a name that told people that God has great honor. That is, there is no one greater than God. Why did the author write that Jesus “is a servant in the holy place?”

When the author wrote that Jesus “is a servant in the holy place”. He wrote that Jesus is a "servant" so people would know that Jesus still does things to help people. He does this to serve God the Father. The author wrote that Jesus is a servant "in the holy place" to speak about where God is. That is to say, heaven.

The author did not write "the holy place" to speak about the Holy of Holies in the temple or tabernacle.

See: God the Father; Heaven; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Temple; Tabernacle

#### What is the “true tabernacle”?

[8:2]

The “true tabernacle” (8:2) is the original, or real tabernacle. The “true tabernacle” is eternal and was created in some way by God. It is in heaven. The Israelites built a tabernacle on earth. God gave them instructions on how to build this temple. In some way, it was a copy of the tabernacle in heaven.

The author did not write "true" tabernacle to say that the earthly tabernacle of the Old Testament was false. Instead, he wanted people to know that it was temporary. He wrote that it was a "copy and shadow" of the real one (see: Hebrews 8:5). But there is another tabernacle that lasts forever.

See: Tabernacle; Heaven

#### What were the “gifts and sacrifices” about which the writer spoke?

[8:3]

See: Hebrews 5:1

If Jesus was here on earth, why would he “not be a priest at all”?

The author wrote that if Jesus was still on earth, he would "not be a priest at all." He wrote this to say again that Jesus is greater than human priests. Some scholars think that Jesus could not be a priest on the earth because he was not a descendant of Levi (see: Hebrews 7:13-14). He could not be a priest according to the Law of Moses. Other scholars think that Jesus is a priest in heaven. That is to say, he does not replace priests on earth. Instead, he is a different kind of priest. He is a priest in heaven. Heaven has no other priests.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Law of Moses; Heaven

#### Why did the author write that the earthly tabernacle was a “copy and shadow of the heavenly things”?

[8:5]

The author wrote that the earthly tabernacle was a "copy and shadow of the heavenly things." He wrote this so people would think only about God and where God is. That is, he wanted them to stop worshipping things on earth. God designed the earthly tabernacle to be only a copy of the real tabernacle (see: Hebrews 8:2). That is, it was a pattern of what God showed Moses (see: Exodus 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8). When the author wrote that it was a “shadow”(σκιά/g4639), he used a metaphor. He wanted people to know that the earthly tabernacle was much less than the true tabernacle in heaven. A shadow is a thing people can see. But it is not the real thing, that is, the thing which casts the shadow. In the same way, the earthly tabernacle was a thing people can see, but it was not the real tabernacle.

See: Tabernacle; Heaven; Metaphor

#### What did a “mediator” do?

[8:6]

A “mediator”(μεσίτης/g3316) was a person who helped other people to solve a disagreement. The author used this metaphor to speak about how Jesus helps people with God. He speaks to God for people. When people disobey God, Jesus helps them to reconcile with God.

See: Mediator; Metaphor; Reconcile (Reconciliation)

#### What is the “better covenant, which is based on better promises”?

[8:6]

When the author wrote about the "better covenant, which is based on better promises," he wanted people to think about Jesus. He wanted people to know that Jesus started a new covenant between God and people. Under this new covenant, God blesses everyone who believes in Jesus. This is not like the old covenant God made with Moses. The old covenant required people to follow the Law of Moses. Only if a person kept the Law of Moses perfectly would God bless him. However, nobody could do this. So, the new covenant is better because people can be blessed if they believe in Jesus. God "writes it on the hearts of his people" (see: 8:10). This is a metaphor to say that God fulfills the covenant for Christians. This promise is better because people’s sins are completely forgiven.

See: New Covenant; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Law of Moses; Metaphor

## 8:7-13

#### How did God put his laws into the “minds” of Christians?

[8:10]

The author wrote that God promised to put his laws into the “minds” of Christians. That is, he used a metaphor to say that people would understand what God wanted them to do. The Law of Moses was written on stones. People could not perfectly obey the Law of Moses. This is because of sin. However, now God helps his people to know what he wants. He helps them do this using the Holy Spirit. He helps them do this when they read the Bible. He also gives them the ability to live in a way that honors God.

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses; Holy Spirit

#### How did God write his laws on the “hearts” of Christians?

[8:10]

The author wrote that God promised to write his laws on the "hearts" of Christians. That is, he used a metaphor to say that people would want to obey God. That is, Christians want to live in a way that honors God. They want this because God changes them. He changes them when they believe in Jesus.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

#### Why did the author write that the old covenant would “soon disappear”?

[8:13]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that the old covenant would "soon disappear." Some scholars think the author wanted people to think that the old covenant was fading. That is, it had not disappeared yet but would soon disappear. The old covenant would stop. These scholars think this because God spoke about a new covenant to the prophet Jeremiah (see: Jeremiah 31:31-34). They think that ever since Jeremiah lived, the old covenant had been fading and would soon disappear. Other scholars think that when God established the new covenant, it made the old covenant of no value. That is, the promises and conditions of the old covenant disappeared when Jesus came to earth.

See: Covenant; Prophet; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant)

### Hebrews 9

#### 9:1-5

#### What was the “earthly sanctuary”?

[9:1]

The “earthly sanctuary” was the tabernacle that the people of Israel built. The earthly sanctuary was a place where people worshipped God. This was the temple in Jerusalem. It was destroyed about 40 years after Jesus died.

See: Tabernacle; Temple

#### What was the “lampstand”?

[9:2]

The “lampstand” was something in the temple. It was made of gold. It had six branches connected to the main stem. The main stem and each branch had a candle holder. Therefore, it held seven candles in all.

See: Exodus 25:31-39

See: Temple

#### What was the “bread of the presence”?

[9:2]

The "bread of the presence" was special bread that in some way was dedicated to God. It was used in the temple in Jerusalem. Some scholars think the “bread of the presence” was bread that in some way was offered to God. Other scholars think the bread was twelve loaves, baked with very fine flour. The loaves were placed on the table each Sabbath day. The loaves were for the priests to eat. The priests had to eat the loaves in the temple.

See: Exodus 24:5-9

See: Temple; Sabbath; Holy Place; Offer (Offering); Sacrifice; Priest (Priesthood)

#### What was the “second curtain”?

[9:3]

There were two curtains in the tabernacle. The first curtain was a linen screen. This first curtain was the entrance into the holy place. The second curtain was made of very fine linen. The high priest, once a year, entered through the second curtain to offer a special sacrifice.

See: Tabernacle; Temple; Holy Place; High Priest; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

#### What was the “most holy place”?

[9:3]

The “most holy place” was the place where the glory of the Lord dwelled. It was located behind the second curtain in the temple. Only the high priest entered into the most holy place, and he only did this only once every year.

See: Glory (Glorify); Temple; Presence of God; High Priest

#### What was the “golden altar for incense”?

[9:4]

Scholars think the “golden altar for incense” was an altar that held burning coals. The priest took coals from the altar and placed the coals in a pan, called a censer. He sprinkled incense into the pan. He did this so that the coals would burn the incense. This produced an aroma. Scholars think the “golden altar for incense” was in the holy place, just outside the entrance to the “most holy place” (see: Leviticus 16:12).

See: Altar; Priest (Priesthood); Holy Place; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies)

#### What was the “ark of the covenant”?

[9:4]

See: Ark of the Covenant

#### Why was there a “golden jar" inside the ark of the covenant?

[9:4]

There was a golden jar inside the ark of the covenant to hold special things. This was to remind the Israelites how God took care of them when they traveled in the wilderness (see: Exodus).

See: Ark of the Covenant

#### What was the "manna" inside the golden jar?

[9:4]

The "manna" inside the golden jar was special food that God gave the Israelites when they traveled in the wilderness.The author wanted them to remember how God took care of them. So, Moses instructed Aaron to place some manna into a jar and place it in the ark. It was to remain in the ark for years to come (see: Exodus 16:33).

See: Ark of the Covenant; Manna

#### What was “Aaron’s rod that budded”?

[9:4]

When Moses lived, God told Moses to get twelve “rods”(ῥάβδος/g4464), one rod from each leader of the twelve tribes of Israel. God told Moses that the man who owned the “rod that budded” would be the man to stop the complaining of the people of Israel. The rod of Aaron is the rod that budded (See: Numbers 17:1-11.)

See: Tribes of Israel

#### What were the “tablets of the covenant”?

[9:4]

The “tablets of the covenant” were the stone tablets upon which were written the ten commandments. These were the commandments that God engraved on tablets for Moses. (See: Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5:1-22.)

See: Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Ten Commandments)

#### What were “cherubim”?

[9:5]

The "cherubim" (Χερούβ/g5502) were carvings on top of the ark of the covenant. A cherub was a two-winged creature that people thought were with God. The carvings of these creatures were placed on the Ark of the covenant (see: Exodus 25:18-22).

See: Ark of the Covenant

#### What was the “atonement lid”?

[9:5]

The “atonement lid” was a gold lid covering the ark. People also called this the mercy seat. On the day of atonement, once a year, God appeared in a cloud over the atonement lid (see: Leviticus 16:2). When the high priest offered the blood of the sacrifice, once a year, he would sprinkle the blood onto the atonement lid. This was a sign a covering of sin (see: Leviticus 16:14).

See: Atone (Atonement); Ark of the Covenant; High Priest; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering); Sign; Sin

#### Why did the author say there were things “which we cannot now talk about in detail”?

[9:5]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that there were things "which we cannot now talk about in detail". Some scholars think that the people who read this book already knew about the furnishings and the practices within the temple. Therefore, the writer did not take time to write about everything in detail. Other scholars think the writer did not think he needed to write about every part of the temple and the things the priests did in the temple.

See: Temple

## 9:6-10

#### Why did the author write “not without blood”?

[9:7]

The author wrote, “not without blood.” It was against the Law of Moses for the high priest to pass through the second curtain, into the most holy place, without taking the blood of animals for a sacrifice. The blood of the sacrifice was offered for the sins of the high priest and the sins of the people.

See: Law of Moses; High Priest; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Sacrifice; Offer (Offering); Sin

#### What were “unintentional sins”?

[9:7]

Scholars disagree about what "unintentional sins" were. Some scholars think that “unintentional sins” were the kind of sins that were committed in ignorance. That is, the people did not know that they had sinned. Other scholars think that the writer used the words “unintentional sins” to speak about all sins that were committed by the people.

#### Who is the "Holy Spirit"?

[9:8]

See: Holy Spirit

#### Why were the gifts and sacrifices “not able to perfect the worshipper’s conscience”?

[9:9]

The gifts and sacrifices made under the Law of Moses were "not able to perfect the worshipper's conscience." That is, they did not make a person clean. Therefore, the person who worshipped was always reminded of his sin. The sacrifices only served to cover over sins.

See: Law of Moses; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering); Clean and Unclean; Worship; Sin; Atone (Atonement)

#### Why were sacrifices offered concerning “food and drink”?

[9:10]

The Law of Moses included laws about what kinds of "food and drink" were clean and unclean (See: Leviticus 11:1-47). Sometimes a person ate or touched food that he was not permitted to eat. When he did this, he became unclean. So, he had to make sacrifices for breaking the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses; Clean and Unclean; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

#### What were “ceremonial washings”?

[9:10]

A "ceremonial washing" was when a person washed themselves in a special way so they could worship God. In ancient times, if a person touched a dead animal, he became unclean. Therefore, he had to wash in a certain way in order to be made clean again. Until he did this, he could not worship with the rest of the people. The high priest, before and after making the atoning, once a year sacrifice, also bathed in water as a “ceremonial washing”. That is, it showed his obedience to God, by following the Law of Moses.

See: Worship; Clean and Unclean; High Priest; Atone (Atonement); Sacrifice

#### Why did the author write “the time of the new order”?

[9:10]

The author wrote “the time of the new order” to speak about the ending of the old covenant and the beginning of the new covenant. That is, he wanted people to think about when God will end the world and create a new world. The new world will be perfect. It is the "new order", that is a perfect place for people to live.

See: Covenant; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); New Covenant

## 9:11-14

#### What were the “good things that have come”?

[9:11]

Scholars disagree about the "good things that have come." Some scholars think the writer spoke about Christians knowing they will live together with God in heaven forever. Other scholars think writer was speaking about how God ended the old "order." That is, God changed the world and now Jesus is the high priest.

See: Eternal Life; High Priest

#### What was the “greater and more perfect tabernacle”?

[9:11]

See: Hebrews 8:2

#### Why did the author write “once for all”?

[9:12]

The author wrote "once for all" to tell people that they can stop offering sacrifices. The priests under the old covenant had to offer the atoning sacrifice every year. They offered the blood of goats and bulls for that sacrifice. When Jesus, as the high priest, offered his own blood on the cross, he did it “once for all”. That is, by one sacrifice Jesus atoned for the sins of people and no other sacrifice is needed.

See: Atone (Atonement); Covenant; High Priest; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering); Priest (Priesthood); Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Law of Moses; Cross

#### What were the “heifer’s ashes”?

[9:13]

The "heifer's ashes" were used to cleanse a person who had sinned or become unclean in some way. In the time when Moses lived, God commanded that the priest slaughter a red heifer outside of the camp. Some of the blood was sprinkled toward the tabernacle. Afterward, the heifer was burned completely. Its ashes were mixed with water and used to cleanse someone who had become unclean (See: Numbers 19:1-22).

**Advice to translators**: A heifer is a young female cow.

See: Clean and Unclean; Sin; Law of Moses; Priest (Priesthood); Tabernacle

#### How did the ashes provide for the “cleansing of their flesh”?

[9:13]

The author wrote that the ashes provided for the "cleansing of their flesh" so people would think about God forgiving them. When a person became unclean, he needed to be separated from other people. When the unclean person was sprinkled with the mixture of ashes and water, God saw him as being clean once again. That is, God would forgive him. He did not need to be separated from the rest of the Israelites.

See: Clean and Unclean; Flesh

#### Why did the author write “how much more”?

[9:14]

The author wrote “how much more” to speak about much greater Jesus’ sacrifice was then the sacrifices under the old covenant.

See: Covenant; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

#### How was Jesus “without blemish”?

[9:14]

Jesus was "without blemish" because he never disobeyed God. The author did not speak about Jesus' body. Instead, he said that Jesus never sinned. Therefore he was “without blemish”, that is, without any imperfection. According to the Law of Moses, every sacrifice needed to be an animal without blemish. If it had a blemish it could not be sacrificed to God.

See: Isaiah 53:9

See: Sin; Law of Moses; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

#### What are “dead works”?

[9:14]

“Dead works” are the things people do and think that disobey or dishonor God. They lead to spiritual death, that is, to the person being separated from God forever. Dead works are things that do not serve God. They only separated people from God.

See: Spirit (Spiritual)

#### Who is "the living God"?

[9:14]

The "living God" is the real God. The author says God is "living" so people will not think he is an idol that is not real.

See: Idolatry (Idol)

## 9:15-22

#### What was a “mediator”?

[9:15]

See: Hebrews 8:6

#### Who are those who are “called”?

[9:15]

See: Call (Calling)

#### What is “the promise of an eternal inheritance”?

[9:15]

“The promise of an eternal inheritance” is a way of speaking about eternal life. God first gave it to the people living in the days of the Old Testament. The prophet Jeremiah spoke about this promise as being a new covenant that God was to make with people (see: Jeremiah 31:31-34).

See: Eternal Life; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Prophet; New Covenant

#### What is a “will”?

[9:16]

A “will" (διαθήκη/g1242) is a written document that tells people who should inherit a dead person's property. The author used this as a metaphor to speak about the promise God made to his people. That is, the promise of an eternal inheritance. This promise was put into effect after the death and resurrection of Jesus. So, it was like a "will" for people who believe in Jesus to inherit eternal life from him.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Metaphor; People of God; Eternal Life; Resurrect (Resurrection)

#### Why did the author write, “not even the first covenant was established without blood”?

[9:18]

The author wrote "not even the first covenant was established without blood" so people would think about the Old Testament sacrifices. The first covenant, that is, the covenant with Moses, required sacrifices (see: Exodus 24:3-8).

See: Covenant; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Sacrifice

#### Why did the author write about the blood, water, red wool, and hyssop?

[9:19]

The author wrote about the blood, water, red wool, and hyssop so people would think about the ceremony Moses performed when God gave him the Law. Scholars think the water was mixed with the blood as a symbol of cleansing. Then red wool and hyssop were wrapped around a stick. The wool absorbed the mixture of water and blood. The hyssop helped to brush or sprinkle the blood.

See: Symbol; Law of Moses; Clean and Unclean; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

#### Why did Moses sprinkle both the scroll and the people with the water and blood mixture?

[9:19]

Scholars think that Moses sprinkled all things that had to do with the covenant God made with Moses. The writer to the Hebrews mentioned two things that were sprinkled, that is the scroll and the people. The sprinkling of blood represented setting things apart to serve God. The scroll was made clean and set apart by the blood because it contained the words of God’s promise to his people. The people were made clean and set apart by the blood to do everything God said in the scroll.

See: Covenant; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Clean and Unclean; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); People of God; Blood

#### What was “the blood of the covenant”?

[9:20]

The “blood of the covenant” represented the sacrifices of animals. The blood was then offered to God. Lastly it was sprinkled on the people who received the covenant. This was to show the power and the purpose of God. It showed how serious God was about the covenant with his people.

See: Blood; Covenant; Sacrifice

#### What were the “containers used in the service”?

[9:21]

The “containers used in the service” were the altar, the laver, the incense censers, dishes, bowls, and utensils. These were things used in the temple to worship God. Anything that the people of Israel used to sacrifice animals and atone for sin was sprinkled with blood to make it clean. The "containers" were used to do this.

See: Atone (Atonement); Israel; Altar; Temple; Sin; Clean and Unclean

#### Why did the author write that “almost everything is cleansed with blood”?

[9:22]

The author wrote that "almost everything is cleansed with blood." This is because in the Old Testament, God gave ways for people to be forgiven without sacrificing an animal. Often, an atonement was made with the shedding of blood. However, if a person was very poor, he was allowed to bring flour to the priest as an offering (see: Leviticus 5:11). Some things were even purified with fire or water (see: Numbers 31:22-24).

See: Atone (Atonement); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Purify (Pure); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Sacrifice; Priest (Priesthood)

#### Why did the author write “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”?

[9:22]

Scholars think that God did not forgive any sins without the shedding of blood, that is sacrificing an animal. They think that the shedding of blood actually made atonement for the souls of the people (see: Leviticus 17:11). When people used other things to sacrifice to God, they represented the blood sacrifice in some way.

See: Atone (Atonement); Sin; Sacrifice; Soul

## 9:23-28

#### What were the “copies of the things in heaven”?

[9:23]

See: Hebrews 8:5

#### What were “much better sacrifices”?

[9:23]

The author wrote "much better sacrifices" to speak about Jesus. He really wanted people to think about Jesus being crucified and resurrected. In the temple, the priests made sacrifices using the blood of animals. The temple was only a copy of the tabernacle in heaven (see: Hebrews 8:5-6). The heavenly tabernacle required a “much better sacrifice” than the blood of animals. It required Jesus to die. This is because only the blood of Jesus cleanses a person’s conscience. The blood of Jesus cleanses a person from all uncleanness.

See: Clean and Unclean; Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Temple; Priest (Priesthood); Sacrifice; Tabernacle; Heaven; Conscience

#### Why did the author write that Jesus entered heaven “to appear now in God’s presence for us”?

[9:24]

The author wrote that Jesus entered heaven "to appear now in God's presence for us". He wrote this so people would know that Jesus continually speaks to God the Father for Christians (see: Hebrews 7:25). When the high priest served in the Temple, he only entered into the most holy place once every year. This was to take the blood of the atoning sacrifice into the most holy place. It was to sprinkle the blood there to atone for the sins of the people. He carried with him a censer filled with coals and incense. This was like a veil to hide the priest’s face from God's presence. Jesus, however, entered into the heavenly tabernacle after he was resurrected. He is in the very presence of God the Father, face to face. So, Jesus continually speaks to God for Christians.

See: Messiah (Christ); Heaven; [Intercede (Intercession)] (../articles/intercede.md); High Priest; Tabernacle; Atone (Atonement); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Temple; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Sacrifice; Sin; Presence of God; God the Father

#### Why did the author write “since the beginning of the world”?

[9:26]

The author wrote "since the beginning of the world" to speak about all of history. Some scholars think he spoke about all time since God created the world. Other scholars think he spoke about the time that there have been people on the earth. The author wrote this so people would know that Jesus completely atoned for all the sins of all people who believe in him. That is, he only needed to be sacrificed once.

See: Atone (Atonement); Sin; Sacrifice

#### Why did the author write “the end of the ages”?

[9:26]

The author wrote "the end of the ages" to in some way speak about the last things God is doing before the end of the world. Some scholars think the “end of the ages” spoke about the last events of Jesus’ life. That is, his crucifixion. They think Jesus’ resurrection began a new age. Other scholars add that the “end of the ages” was when earthly sacrifices stopped. This is because the sacrifice of Jesus’ was the last sacrifice necessary for the forgiveness of sins. They think this was what Paul wanted to say when he spoke about the "fullness of time" (see: Galatians 4:4-5).

**Advice to translators**: "Ages" is a word that speaks about periods of time. "Ages" are usually long times, but they don't have to be. So, when the author of Hebrews talks about "the ages", he is speaking about all of history. If your language has a word or phrase to say "all of history", you can use that instead of "ages".

When the author wrote "end of the ages,” he did not want to say that history is finished. He wanted to talk about living in the last time before God will end the world. So translate this phrase in a way that tells readers that, even if it takes several words in your language.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Ascend (Ascension); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Last Days; Sacrifice

#### Why did the author write that “man is appointed to die once”?

[9:27]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that "man is appointed to die once". Some scholars think the author was simply saying that every person dies. People die and God judges them. Other scholars think that death is “appointed" (ἀπόκειμαι/g0606) for each person. That is, death does not happen by chance. Instead, God has decided when each person will die. Some scholars think the author was saying both of these things.

The author used "man" as a metaphor for all people. That is to say, what he wrote is true for all men and women.

See: Judge (Judgment)

#### What is the "judgment" that comes after death?

[9:27]

See: Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment

#### How did Jesus “take away the sins of many”?

[9:28]

Jesus "took away the sins of many" when he was crucified. That is, God will forgive the sins of anyone who believes in Jesus (see: John 3:16).

See: Messiah (Christ); Crucify (Crucifixion); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

#### How will Christ “appear a second time”?

[9:28]

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

#### Why did the author say that when Christ returns, it is “not to deal with sin”?

[9:28]

The author wrote that when Christ returns it will not be to “deal with sin.” This is because Christ atoned for peoples' sins. He did this when he was crucified. His return will be to bless the people who have believed in him, and to punish the people who rejected him.

See: Messiah (Christ)); Crucify (Crucifixion); Bless (Blessing); Jesus' Return to Earth; Atone (Atonement); Punish (Punishment)

### Hebrews 10

## 10:1-10

#### How was the Law only a “shadow”?

[10:1]

When the author wrote that the law was only a "shadow" (σκιά/g4639), he used a metaphor. He wanted people to think that the Law of Moses was only partly like something that was to come. That is, the things in the Law of Moses were like something that was perfect and eternal.

See: Law of Moses

#### What are “the good things to come”?

[10:1]

See: Hebrews 9:11

#### Why did the author write about people being “made perfect”?

[10:1]

The author wrote about people being "made perfect" to say that in some way God will remove all that is evil from people who believe in Jesus. This is different than in the Old Testament. The Law of Moses spoke about people atoning for their sins by offering sacrifices. However, nobody was ever "made perfect" because they offered a sacrifice. But the author said that now, God will in some way "make perfect" people who believe in Jesus.

Scholars disagree about how God "makes perfect" people who believe in Jesus. Some scholars think the author wanted to say that God perfectly and completely forgives a person for sins the person commits. Other scholars think the author wanted to speak about God helping people to resist temptation. That is, God helps them not to sin.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Law of Moses; Atone (Atonement); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sacrifice

#### Why did the author write “consciousness of sins”?

[10:2]

The author wrote "consciousness of sins" to speak about a person knowing they sinned. This is even after God forgives them. Some scholars think the words, “consciousness of sins” spoke about a person's conscience not being satisfied after an offering was made. That is, the person could obey the Law of Moses, but they still felt guilty.

See: Sin; Conscience; Law of Moses; Guilty; Sacrifice

#### What was the “reminder” about which the author spoke?

[10:3]

The author wrote about a reminder. This was something that made people think about their sins over and over. In the Law of Moses, there was a yearly event called the Day of Atonement. This reminded people of their sins every year. Each year everyone in Israel had to repent. They had to make offerings for sin. This was so that God would cover over their sins for another year.

See: Sin; Law of Moses: Atone (Atonement); Repent (Repentance); Sacrifice

#### Why was it “impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins”?

[10:4]

It was "impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" because God wants people to obey him instead of sinning. The priests could remove sins. The “blood of bulls and goats”, that is to say sacrificing animals, only covered over sins that people committed.

See: Sin; Priest (Priesthood); Atone (Atonement); Sacrifice

#### Why did the author say that God “did not desire” sacrifices and offerings?

[10:5]

The author wrote that God "did not desire" sacrifices and offerings. This is because the sacrifices and offerings did not give God any honor God unless they were done in the right way. These sacrifices needed to be made by faith in God. The author wanted to say that people needed to believe in Jesus, who is the messiah.

See: Sin; Messiah (Christ); Sacrifice; Faith (Believe in)

#### Why did the author write “a body you have prepared for me”?

[10:5]

The author wrote "a body you have prepared for me" to speak about Jesus, who is the messiah. The author wrote the same thing written in the Psalms where the messiah said to God (see: Psalm 40:6). That is, God allowed himself to be made into a human. He did this in the person of Jesus. It was necessary for Jesus to have a body so that he could offer himself as the perfect sacrifice to God.

See: Messiah (Christ); Incarnation; Sacrifice

#### What was the scroll?

[10:7]

A "scroll" was a way ancient people kept written things. They did this because they did not have printed books. Scholars think the “scroll" (κεφαλίς/g2777) the author wrote about was the first five books of the Bible.

See: Law of Moses; Scroll

#### Why did the author write "to do your will"?

[10:7]

The author wrote "to do your will" so people would think about how Jesus completely did the will of God. God wanted Jesus to never sin and Jesus never sinned. Jesus did everything God wanted him to do. It was also God’s will that Jesus would die for the sins of the world (see: Matthew 26:39,42).

See: Will of God; Law of Moses

#### What was the "first practice" the author spoke about?

[10:9]

The “first practice” was when people sacrificed animals according to the Law of Moses. People had to do many things to follow the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses

#### What is the "second practice" the author spoke about?

[10:9]

The "second practice" the author spoke about is when people believe in Jesus. That is, people who believe in Jesus do not need to follow the sacrifices in the Law of Moses for God to forgive their sins.

See: Law of Moses; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin; Sacrifice

#### How did Jesus take away the first practice to establish the second practice?

[10:9]

Jesus took away the first practice in two ways. First, he lived perfectly according to God’s will. Second, he offered himself to God as the perfect sacrifice for sins. This sacrifice never needs to be done again. He did this when he was crucified. After this, people do not need to make sacrifices and obey the Law of Moses.

See: Will of God; Crucify (Crucifixion); Law of Moses; Sacrifice

#### What is “sanctified”?

[10:10]

See: Sanctify (Sanctification)

#### Why did the author write "once for all"?

[10:10]

The author wrote "once for all" so people would know that Jesus completely atoned for the sins of everyone who will ever live on earth. That is, he died "once" as a sacrifice. No other sacrifice for peoples' sins will ever be needed. Also, he died "for all" people who will ever believe in him.

Under the rules of the Old Covenant, the Jewish people sacrificed animals to obey the Law of Moses. However, with the New Covenant, Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of everyone. His sacrifice was done once, and does not need to be repeated.

See: Atone (Atonement); Sin; Covenant; Law of Moses; Sacrifice; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant)

## 10:11-18

#### Who are the enemies of Jesus?

[10:13]

Scholars think the author spoke about different enemies of Jesus, Satan and the people who rejected Jesus.

#### Why did the author write about a “stool for his feet”?

[10:13]

The author spoke about a time when the enemies of Jesus would be made “a stool for his feet.” This was a metaphor. God will make the enemies of Jesus powerless. They will be completely subject to Jesus. Jesus will rule everything. Jesus will not give anyone else permission to rule.

See: I Corinthians 15:24-28

#### Who are "those who are being sanctified"?

[10:14]

See: Sanctify (Sanctification)

#### Why did the author write that Jesus “perfected forever" those who are being sanctified?

[10:14]

The author wrote that Jesus "perfected forever" those who are being sanctified. He wrote this so people would think that Jesus satisfied the wrath of God against sin. His sacrifice was “perfect" (τελειόω/g5048). That is, he fulfilled all of what God required for the payment of sin. This is, Christians do not do this themselves. Jesus did it for them. He did it "forever." That is, Jesus did this for all people who will ever be Christians.

See: Redeem (Redemption); Sanctify (Sanctification); Wrath; Sacrifice; Fulfill (Fulfillment)

#### Why did the author write “there is no longer any sacrifice for sin”?

[10:18]

The author wrote "there is no longer any sacrifice for sin" (10:18) because Jesus ended the need for any other sacrifices. Jesus' death is the only sacrifice that is needed for people to be at peace with God.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Sacrifice; Sin; Atone (Atonement); Cross

## 10:19-25

#### What is the "most holy place" that Christians have confidence to enter?

[10:19]

The "most holy place" that Christians have confidence to enter is God's presence. That is, Christians can speak directly to God. This is not the same as the "most holy place" in the Tabernacle or Temple.

See: Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Presence of God; Tabernacle; Temple

#### What is the “new and living way”?

[10:20]

The author wrote about a "new and living way" for people to be with God. It is “new” because it did not exist before the sacrifice of Jesus. The author called it a “living way” because Jesus’ sacrifice provided eternal life for people who believe in him. Jesus is the "way" to God the Father (see: John 14:6). That is, when people believe in Jesus, they can serve God and talk to God themselves.

See: Eternal Life; Sacrifice; Atone (Atonement)

#### What was the “curtain” the author spoke of?

[10:20]

When the author spoke about a "curtain," he used a metaphor. He wanted people to think about the curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place. This was in the Tabernacle and the Temple. It was also called the second curtain (see: Hebrews 9:6). This was the curtain which was torn from top to bottom at the moment of Jesus’ died (see: Matthew 27:45-51; Mark 15:33-39). However, the author used this as a metaphor to say that after Jesus, the "curtain" that kept people separate from God no longer exists. People who believe in Jesus can worship God and talk to God themselves.

See: Metaphor; Temple; Holy Place; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Tabernacle; Worship

#### Why did the author write “by means of his flesh”?

[10:20]

The author wrote "by means of his flesh" to speak about the human life of Jesus. That is to say, he wrote about "flesh" as a symbol. It was the human life of Jesus that was presented to God as the sacrifice for sins (see: 1 Peter 3:18).

See: Symbol; Sacrifice; Sin; Atone (Atonement)

#### What was the “house of God”?

[10:21]

The “house of God” is the church, all Christians (see: Hebrews 3:6).

See: Church

#### Why did the author write “approach with true hearts”?

[10:22]

The author wrote "approach" to speak about how Christians must behave toward God. He wrote "true hearts" as a metaphor. He wanted people to know that they need to genuinely believe in God before they pray to him.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

#### What is the “full assurance of faith”?

[10:22]

To have “full assurance of faith” is to trust God completely. It is to completely believe in Jesus.

See: Faith (Believe in)

#### What is an "evil conscience"?

[10:22]

When the author wrote about an "evil conscience," he wanted people to think about sin. That is, he said that when a person sins, it damages their "conscience." They will not be able to know when they sin as easily after they sin.

See: Conscience; Spirit (Spiritual); Sin

#### Why did the author write about people having their “hearts sprinkled clean" from an evil conscience?

[10:22]

When the author wrote about people having their "hearts sprinkled clean", he used two metaphors. He used the metaphor of "heart" to speak about how people think and feel. He used the metaphor of "sprinkled clean" to speak about when God forgives people of their sins.

Scholars think the author wanted Christians to think about the Jewish priests. A priest was sprinkled with blood and bathed in water before they went to serve God (see: Exodus 29:21; Leviticus 8:30). They then could offer sacrifices for God’s people. Jesus, the greatest High Priest, sacrificed himself. So his blood has cleansed the hearts of Christians. This lets Christians approach God and serve him.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Priest (Priesthood); High Priest; Conscience; Clean and Unclean; Sin; Sacrifice; People of God

#### What was the “confession” of hope?

[10:23]

The author wrote about Christians holding tightly to the “confession" (ὁμολογία/g3671) of their hope. He wanted Christians to completely trust what God says he will do. That is, they should believe God's promise to give them eternal life because they believe in Jesus.

**Advice to translators**: The author did not write about "confession" here to speak about when a person confesses sins they have committed. He wrote "confession" to speak about when a person says something that they deeply believe.

See: Confess (Confession); Hope; Eternal Life

## 10:26-39

#### Why did the author write “deliberately go on sinning”?

[10:26]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote "deliberately go on sinning." Some scholars think the author spoke about people who keep rejecting Jesus and the gospel. They choose to do this even though they have heard the gospel. Other scholars think the author spoke about people who believe in certain things Christians teach, but do not trust in Jesus. They think these people have rejected God. Other scholars think the author spoke about a person who says they are a Christian but who keeps on sinning and do not try to stop sinning.

See: Gospel; Sin

#### What was the “knowledge of the truth”?

[10:26]

Some scholars think the “knowledge" (ἐπίγνωσις/g1922) of the truth meant that a person understood true things about God. They knew they sinned and they also knew what they need to do for God to forgive their sins. Some scholars think that the author spoke about people who heard the truth about Jesus, but they never did anything. Other scholars think the author spoke about a person who knows the things Christians teach. This person has the “knowledge of the truth”.

See: Sin; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

#### Why did the author write “a sacrifice for sins no longer exists”?

[10:26]

The author wrote "a sacrifice for sins no longer exists." If a person goes on sinning after they say they believe in Jesus, the author wanted them to know that they cannot expect God to forgive them. Some scholars think that Christians will sin less and less. Other scholars think Christians can choose to stop being at peace with God and will not live forever with God in heaven. Other scholars think the author wanted people to remember that Jesus had to die for their sins.

See: Sin; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

#### Why did the author write “a certain fearful expectation of judgment”?

[10:27]

When the author wrote "a certain fearful expectation of judgment," he wanted people to know that God will judge a person who continually rejects Jesus. That is, the person can only expect that God will judge them with wrath. This judgment will be “fearful" (φοβερός/g5398). This person will live forever in hell. .

See: Judge (Judgment); Messiah (Christ); Wrath; Hell

#### What is the “fury of fire” about which the author spoke?

[10:27]

When the author wrote about the "fury of fire," he used a metaphor. He spoke about God he judges sinners. God is a consuming fire. That is, God completely destroys things. Some scholars think the author was writing about God punishing everyone who rejects Jesus. That is, God's wrath is like a fire when it punishes people

See: Metaphor; Judge (Judgment); Sin; Messiah (Christ); Wrath; Punish (Punishment)

#### Why did the author write about the “testimony of two or three witnesses”?

[10:28]

See: Deuteronomy 17:2-7

#### Why did the author write “trample underfoot the Son of God”?

[10:29]

The author wrote “trample underfoot the Son of God” to speak about thinking about Jesus shamefully. Jesus is the "Son of God." When someone was trampled underfoot, people kept stepping on them until they were badly injured or killed. The author used this as a metaphor to speak about dishonoring someone. He wanted people to think about someone saying that Jesus is unworthy to be the messiah.

See: Son of God; Metaphor; Messiah (Christ)

#### How did someone treat “the blood of the covenant as unholy”?

[10:29]

When someone said the death of Jesus was not different than any other death, then someone treated “the blood of the covenant as unholy” (see: Hebrews 9:14-15). They rejected the new covenant God made with people.

See: Atone (Atonement); Covenant; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

#### Why did the author write about being “sanctified” by blood?

[10:29]

See: Sanctify (Sanctification)

#### What is "the Spirit of grace”?

[10:29]

The "Spirit of grace" is the Holy Spirit. Some scholars think the author wanted people to think about when Jesus spoke about the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (see: Mark 3:29). Other scholars think the author spoke about a person who refused to acknowledge the Holy Spirit. That is, the person disrespected or dishonored the Holy Spirit.

See: Holy Spirit; Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

#### Where was it written that “vengeance” belongs to the Lord, and that he “will judge his people”?

[10:30]

See: Deuteronomy 32:25-26; Romans 12:19

See: Avenge (Vengeance, Revenge)

#### Why did the author write “the living God”?

[10:31]

The author wrote "the living God" to tell people strongly that God is not some dead idol. He is not just an imaginary god. He is real. The "living God" keeps his promises and also judges people.

See: Idolatry (Idol); Judge (Judgment)

#### What were the “former days”?

[10:32]

Scholars think when the author wrote about the “former days,” he was writing about a time before in a Christian’s life.

#### Why did the author write “enlightened”?

[10:32]

The author wrote "enlightened" to speak about a person gaining important knowledge about God. Some scholars think that Christians were “enlightened” when they received instruction about how to live in a way that honors God. Other scholars think a Christian was “enlightened” at the moment he became a Christian. That is, he then saw and understood the gospel and true things about God.

See: Faith (Believe in); Gospel

#### What was to be “exposed to public ridicule”?

[10:33]

Some scholars think Christians were “exposed to public ridicule” because the Jewish religious leaders brought the Christians into the middle of a city. They then got people to insult the Christians. Sometimes these people attacked Christians. Other scholars think the author spoke about the times when the Christians were thrown into an arena and had to fight against wild animals.

#### About whom was the author writing when he wrote about “those who were prisoners”?

[10:34]

Some scholars think that when the author wrote about “those who were prisoners” he spoke about Christians who were thrown into prison because they believed in Jesus. Other scholars think the author spoke about himself. He had been put in prison because he was a Christian.

#### Why did the author write that the Christians “accepted with joy” being robbed of their possessions?

[10:34]

When the author wrote that the Christians “accepted with joy” being robbed of their possessions, he did not mean the Christians were happy about being robbed. He wanted people to think that Christians have something greater than anything you can own. Everything a person owns will be destroyed. However, the promises of God for them last forever. No one can take these promises away from them. This gave the Christians joy. So even if a thief broke in and stole their possessions, the promises of God were secure.

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

#### What is the “great reward” about which the author spoke?

[10:35]

The "great reward" the author spoke about is that God will in some way do good things for people who believe in Jesus. Some scholars think the “great reward” is God’s promise of eternal life. This reward is based on the goodness and faithfulness of God.

See: Luke 6:23

See: Eternal Life; Reward

#### Why did the author write that God’s “righteous one will live by faith”?

[10:38]

A person who is God’s “righteous one” is a person God declares to be righteous. This is because the person believes in Jesus. It had nothing to do with following the Law of Moses (see: Romans 3:21; 4:3-5; 5:18-19).

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Justify (Justification); Law of Moses

#### Why did the author write “turn back to destruction”?

[10:39]

Some scholars think author wrote "turn back to destruction" to speak about people who stop believing in Jesus. He warned people that God will send someone who stops believing in Jesus to hell, that is to "destruction." Other scholars think the author wrote this to speak about Christians who disobey Jesus. They will be punished and may even die because of this. However, they will still live with God in heaven forever. Christians are punished for sinning, but they are promised to go to heaven because Jesus was punished for their sins.

See: Hell; Punish (Punishment); Heaven; Sin; Atone (Atonement)

#### Why did the author write "keeping their souls"?

[10:39]

The author wrote "keeping their souls" to speak about Christians who keep believing in Jesus. These Christians "keep their souls." That is, they will not be punished. Some scholars think the author spoke about Christians who believe in Jesus until they die. They think the author spoke about words that Jesus spoke earlier (see: Mark 8:35). Other scholars think the words “keeping their souls” simply meant they will not go to hell.

See: Soul; Hell; Faith (Believe in); Punish (Punishment)

### Hebrews 11

## 11:1-3

#### What are "the things hoped for"?

[11:1]

When the author wrote about the "things hoped for," he wanted people to think about things God promises to Christians. Eternal life is one of these promises.

See: Hope; Eternal Life

#### Why did the author write “faith is being sure of" something?

[11:1]

The author wrote that "faith is being sure of" something. He wrote this because he wanted people to know that if they believe in Jesus, then they should be confident about what God says. That is, if a person has real faith, they will completely trust God. Christians can be sure that God's promises are true. They will happen. This is true even though Christians may not see the promise come true while they are alive

See: Faith (Believe in)

#### Who were the “ancestors” about whom the author wrote?

[11:2]

The “ancestors” about whom the author wrote are the people he wrote about in 11:4-38. The author did not write this because he thought everyone reading it was actually descended from all these people. He used the word "ancestor" as a metaphor. He wrote this because he wanted people to live in the same way these people lived. That is, he wanted people to trust God in the same way these people trusted God.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Metaphor

#### How were the ancestors “approved for their faith”?

[11:2]

Scholars think God “approved" (μαρτυρέω/g3140) these ancestors. That is, God told the author about the people in chapter 11.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Faith (Believe in)

#### Why did the author write “by faith we understand”?

[11:3]

The author wrote "by faith we understand" to tell Christians that God will help them to understand certain things if they trust him. He wanted them to remember that God gives people faith as a gift (see: Ephesians 2:8-9). Then, after the person believes in Jesus, God can also give him a gift of knowing things about God.

See: Faith (Believe in)

#### Why did the author write that the universe was created "by God’s command”?

[11:3]

The author wrote that the universe was created "by God's command". The author used the Greek word “command" (ῥῆμα/g4487) to say that the universe was created because God spoke. That is, God said, “Let there be light” and there was light. God also said "let there be" when he created all the rest of the world. God commanded all things to be created by the word of his mouth.

See: Genesis 1

See: Create (Creation, Creature)

## 11:4-12

#### Why did the author write that Abel’s sacrifice was a “better sacrifice”?

[11:4]

When the author wrote that Abel's sacrifice was a "better sacrifice," he wanted people to think that God approved it more than Cain's sacrifice. Scholars think that Abel’s sacrifice was “better” because he offered it to God in faith. That is, Abel brought his offering to God out because he wanted to worship God. Abel brought the best of his flock to God as his offering.

See: Genesis 4:3-5

See: Sacrifice; Faith (Believe in)

#### Why did the author say that Abel was “attested to be righteous”?

[11:4]

The author said that Abel was “attested to be righteous” so people would know that God knew that Abel was a righteous man. That is, God said Abel was righteous.

**Advice to translators**: The English word "attest" means to say something formally. Sometimes attesting something may require the person to take an oath that it is true. So, "attest" is much more important than "say".

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

#### Why did the author write “Abel still speaks”?

[11:4]

The author wrote "Abel still speaks" because people can still learn about what he did. Most scholars think that because the story of Abel was recorded in the scriptures, his example still "speaks" to people who believe in God (see: Genesis 4:3-10).

#### Why did the author write that “Enoch was taken up” so that he did not see death?

[11:5]

The author wrote that Enoch was “taken up" (μετατίθημι/g3346), that is to say, he was moved from one place to another. Scholars think Enoch was taken from earth and moved to heaven (see: Genesis 5:21-24). Therefore, he did not die.

See: Heaven

#### What was the “divine message” given to Noah?

[11:7]

The “divine message” given to Noah was in two parts. First, God gave Noah a warning that the earth would be destroyed by a flood. Second, God told Noah to build a very large boat to save his family from the coming flood.

See: Genesis 6:13-22

#### What was “godly reverence”?

[11:7]

"Godly reverence" is when a person deeply honors something God says or does. Some scholars think Noah experienced a sense of deep caution because of what God said to him. Noah obeyed God because of that caution. That is to say, he obeyed because he feared what God might do if he did not obey. Other scholars think Noah simply believed what God said. So, out of respect and honor for God, he built the ark the way God told him.

#### Why did the author write that Noah “condemned the world”?

[11:7]

The author wrote that Noah "condemned the world" to speak about the effect of what Noah did. The author did not want to say that Noah spoke something to condemn the world. That is, by building the ark, Noah showed that he trusted God instead of trusting what other people said. Some scholars think that Noah’s faith in building the ark “condemned the world” because other people in the world did not believe that God was going to destroy the world with a flood. Other scholars think that when Noah and his family entered the ark and it began to rain, it proved that the people in the world were wrong. So, those people were condemned to die in the flood because they rejected God.

See: World; Condemn (Condemnation); Faith (Believe in)

#### How did Noah become an “heir of righteousness”?

[11:7]

Noah became an "heir of righteousness" in some way because he did what God said. That is, because Noah did what God said, God gave righteousness to him. This was in some way like an inheritance for Noah. Scholars think that Noah became an “heir of righteousness” because God declared him to be righteous. This was because Noah trusted and obeyed what God told him to do.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Righteous (Righteousness); Justify (Justification)

#### What was “to receive as an inheritance”?

[1:8]

Scholars think the author wanted to say that Abraham would take possession of the land of Canaan because God said so (see: Genesis 12:1). Then, after Abraham died, his descendants would in some way inherit that land.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

#### What is the “city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God”?

[11:10]

The "city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" was a city that did not exist when Abraham lived. Some scholars think the author spoke about a city in heaven. This is a city with permanent and firm foundations. This is because it is built by God, not by people. They think this is the same city called the “City of God” or the heavenly city of Jerusalem (see: Psalm 46:4; Revelation 21). Fewer scholars think the author spoke about the city of Jerusalem.

See: Heaven

#### Why did the author write that “Abraham received ability to father a child”?

[11:11]

Some scholars think that Abraham received “ability" (δύναμις/g1411) to father a child because God gave him special power to father a child. This had to happen because Abraham was too old to have a child. More scholars think that God gave Sarah the ability to conceive a child (see: Genesis 18:9-14). Sarah was too old to have children.

#### Why did the author write that Abraham was “almost dead”?

[11:12]

When the author wrote that Abraham was “almost dead,'' he wanted people to know that Abraham was so old there was no hope of him starting a family.

#### How were Abraham’s descendants “as many as the stars in the sky”?

[11:12]

When the author said that Abraham’s descendants were “as many as the stars in the sky” he used a metaphor. He wanted people to know that nobody could count Abraham’s descendants.

See: Metaphor; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

## 11:13-16

#### Who were “all these” about which the author spoke?

[11:13]

When the author wrote about “all these” he wrote about the people in 11:4-12.

#### Why did the author write that they were “foreigners and exiles on earth”?

[11:13]

The author wrote that the people he spoke about were "foreigners and exiles on earth" as a metaphor. He wanted people to think that these people trusted God completely. That is, they did not depend on anyone or anything on earth. So, it was as if they did not belong to any place on earth.

The people in 11:4-12 all admitted they were “foreigners and exiles on earth” because they believed God had given them an inheritance. They believed their inheritance was something they would find in heaven and not on earth.

See: Metaphor; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Heaven

#### What was the “city” God prepared for the people of faith?

[11:16]

Scholars think the author spoke about a “city” prepared in heaven. They think this city will be the new Jerusalem.

See: Revelation 21

See: Heaven

## 11:17-28

#### Why did God say to Abraham, “through Isaac your descendants will be named”?

[11:18]

God said to Abraham "through Isaac your descendants will be named." Before this, God promised Abraham that he would be "father of many nations." God spoke about his chosen people, that is Israel. Now, God told Abraham that he would keep this promise "through Isaac." That is, Abraham’s first son, Ishmael, and any other sons of Abraham were not part of God’s promise. Scholars think God was very specific that Abraham’s descendants were to inherit these promises through Isaac. So God promised Abraham that he would have a second son, Isaac, and that God was going to make a covenant with Isaac (see: Genesis 17:15-21).

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Covenant with Abraham; People of God; Covenant

#### Why did the author write “figuratively speaking”?

[11:19]

When the author used the words “figuratively speaking,” he told people he used a metaphor. That is, it was as if Abraham already thought of Isaac as dead. The author wanted people to remember that Abraham had completely given Isaac to be sacrificed. Abraham bound Isaac and placed him on the altar. Abraham took out his knife to slay Isaac. But God stopped Abraham from actually killing Isaac. Instead of Isaac, God provided Abraham with a ram to sacrifice. Scholars think this was a symbol of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

See: Genesis 22:1-18

See: Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Sacrifice; Altar; Atone (Atonement); Symbol

#### Why did the author write “Jacob worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff”?

[11:21]

The author wrote that "Jacob worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff." Scholars think that because of Jacob’s old age, he bowed before God but used his staff to support himself. Bowing before God was a sign of worshipping God and showing him honor.

See: Worship; Sign

#### Why did the author write that Joseph “instructed them about his bones”?

[11:22]

The author wrote that Joseph "instructed them about his bones" to say that Joseph told his family what he wanted them to do with his body after he died.

See: Genesis 50:24-26

#### What were the “pleasures of sin” about which the author wrote?

[11:25]

Scholars disagree about what the "pleasures of sin" were. Some scholars think the author wrote about when Moses was a leader in Egypt. While he was there, he was tempted by many things. Other scholars think Moses knew what God had called him to do. So if he did not obey God, that would be sin.

See: Sin; Tempt (Temptation); Call (Calling)

See Map: Egypt

#### What was the “disgrace of following Christ”?

[11:26]

When the author wrote the "disgrace of following Christ," he wanted people to think that Moses suffered in some way like Jesus did. Moses was persecuted because he believed God. Jesus was also persecuted. So the author used this as a metaphor to speak about Moses.

The author did not intend to say that Jesus lived at the same time as Moses.

See: Messiah (Christ); Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution)

#### Why did the author say that Moses “endured”?

[11:27]

The author wrote that Moses “endured" (καρτερέω/g2594) in faith when he left Egypt. That is, he kept trusting God. He kept obeying God. He saw what God did when he was in Egypt, though he did not see God. Because of God’s mighty power, Moses wanted to obey God.

See: Faith (Believe in)

See Map: Egypt

#### Why did the author write that Moses “kept the Passover”?

[11:28]

To say that Moses “kept the Passover” was to say that Moses established a special celebration for Israel. This was called "Passover." It was so the people would remember how God led Israel out of slavery in Egypt. When it was time for Israel to leave Egypt, God commanded the people to put the blood of a slaughtered lamb on the frames of their doors. This was to show the angel of God which houses to pass over (see: Exodus 12:1-13). That is, it was to tell the angel not to kill the firstborn in those houses.

See: Passover; Angel; Firstborn (Birthright)

## 11:29-40

#### Where was the “Sea of Reeds”?

[11:29]

See Map: Sea of Reeds

#### What happened in Jericho?

[11:30]

See: Joshua 6:1-21

See Map: Jericho

#### Who was Rahab?

[11:31]

See: Joshua 6:22-27

#### Who was Gideon?

[11:32]

See: Judges 6-8

#### Who was Barak?

[11:32]

See: Judges 4:1-16

#### Who was Samson?

[11:32]

See: Judges 13-16

#### Who was Jephthah?

[11:32]

See: Judges 11-12

#### Who was David?

[11:32]

See: 1 Samuel 16

#### Who was Samuel?

[11:32]

See: 1 Samuel 1:19-28; 3:1-21

#### Why did the author write that all those men “worked justice”?

[11:33]

When the author wrote that those men “worked justice” he wanted people to think that they established righteousness. That is, they made things just. They did this in the places where they ruled.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Justice (Just, Unjust)

#### Why did the author write “stopped the mouths of lions”?

[11:33]

The author wrote "stopped the mouths of lions" so people would think about Daniel. Daniel was thrown into a lion’s den. This was because he worshipped God. This angered the king of the country where Daniel was a slave. However, the angels of God prevented the lions from attacking Daniel (see: Daniel 6:16-22).

See: Worship; Angel

#### Why did the author write "extinguished the power of fire"?

[11:34]

When the author wrote "extinguished the power of fire", he wanted people to think about the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These were three men from Israel who refused to fall down and worship the king, Nebuchadnezzar. The king had them thrown into a fiery furnace because of this. However, the angel of the Lord did not allow the fire to harm the three men (see: Daniel 3:14-28).

#### Who “received back their dead”?

[11:35]

Two women in the Old Testament "received back their dead." That is, their sons died, but God brought the sons back to life. A widow from Zarephath had a son who became sick. After some time, he died. Elijah the prophet prayed to God, and God raised the boy back to life (see: 1 Kings 17:8-23). Another woman, who was from Shunem, had a son who became sick. After some time, he also died. Elisha the prophet prayed to God and God raised the boy back to life (see: 2 Kings 4:8-34).

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Prophet; Pray (Prayer)

#### What was to be "stoned"?

[11:37]

In ancient times, a person could be "stoned" because people thought they did a great wrong. That is, people would throw large stones on the person to kill him. Scholars think the author wrote this about Zechariah, a priest and prophet in the Old Testament (see: 2 Chronicles 24:20-21). Some scholars think that the prophet Jeremiah, too, was stoned to death. They think he was stoned by the religious leaders in Jerusalem.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Priest (Priesthood); Prophet

#### Who was “sawn in two”?

[11:37]

Scholars think that Isaiah, the prophet, was killed by being sawn in two. Ancient writings other than the Bible wrote about the death of Isaiah.

See: Prophet; Ancient Writings

#### Who was “killed with the sword”?

[11:37]

Elijah spoke about prophets who “killed with the sword” by the leaders of Israel (see: 1 Kings 19:10).

See: Prophet

#### How was the world “not worthy” of all those who were put to death?

[11:38]

The author wrote that the world was "not worthy" of all those who were put to death. That is, he wanted people to think that the people who were put to death were more noble or righteous than the people who killed them. Scholars think the author meant that people thought those who were put to death for believing God did not deserve to continue living. This was because many people thought God’s prophets were evil.

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

#### Why did the author write "they did not receive the promise"?

[11:39]

The author wrote "they did not receive the promise." He wrote "they" to speak about all the people he wrote about in chapter 11. He wrote "did not receive the promise" to speak about the long time God uses to do what he says. So the people in chapter 11 lived and died before God did all that he said he will do. That is, God intended to reveal part of his promise in the coming of Jesus, who is the messiah. God also holds a part of his promise to be revealed at the second coming of Jesus.

See: Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth; Reveal (Revelation)

#### What is "something better"?

[11:40]

When the author wrote "something better," he spoke about Jesus. That is, now people can believe in Jesus. Then God forgives their sins. Eventually, everyone who believes in Jesus will live with God forever in heaven. This is better than when people had to follow the Law of Moses and make sacrifices.

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Eternal Life; Law of Moses; Sin; Heaven

#### Why did the author write “without us”?

[11:40]

When the author wrote "without us", he wanted people to know that without Christians, God's plan for the world is not complete. Most scholars think that when the author said “without us” he was speaking about all the people who ever believe in Jesus. That includes all people who believe up until the time Jesus returns to earth.

See: Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth

### Hebrews 12

## 12:1-3

#### What is the “large crowd of witnesses” that surround Christians?

[12:1]

Scholars think the “large crowd of witnesses” are all the people about which the author wrote in chapter 11. The author did not want to say that they are watching the things Christians do. Instead, they are "witnesses" because what happened to them shows how God is faithful to his people.

#### Why did the author write “lay aside every weight and easily entangling sin”?

[12:1]

When the author wrote that Christians must “lay aside every weight and easily entangling sin,” he used a metaphor. Athletes raced. Before a race, they would remove extra clothes they did not need to wear. This would help them to run more easily. For the Christian, sin is like a “weight” that can keep the Christian from doing things that please God. Scholars think the author spoke about sins by which individual Christians are easily caught doing.

See: Metaphor; Sin

#### What is the “race that is placed before us”?

[12:1]

Scholars think that when the author wrote about the “race that is placed before us,” he spoke about the life that God designs for each Christian. He wanted Christians to obey God. He wanted them to do this even when it is hard.

#### How was Jesus the “founder and perfecter of the faith”?

[12:2]

Jesus was the “founder" (ἀρχηγός/g0747) of the faith because he started something new. Christians must first believe in Jesus. Jesus was the “perfecter" (τελειωτής/g5051) of the faith because be makes it complete. All of a Christian's faith is about Jesus.

See: Philippians 1:6

See: Faith (Believe in)

#### What was the “joy that was placed before” Jesus?

[12:2]

Scholars think various things about the “joy that was placed before” Jesus.

1. Some scholars think Jesus had joy because he knew his suffering on the cross would redeem people from their sins.
2. Some scholars think Jesus had joy because he knew that he would return to heaven. So he would once again be in the presence of God the Father.
3. Some scholars think Jesus had joy because he knew that his disciples would also have joy themselves (see: John 15:11; 16:20).

See: Redeem (Redemption); Heaven; God the Father; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Cross; Sin; Presence of God; Disciple

#### Why did the author say Jesus “endured the cross, despised its shame”?

[12:2]

When the author wrote that Jesus "endured the cross, despised its shame," he wanted people to know that Jesus thought differently about being crucified. Scholars think that people who were crucified experienced the worst kind of shame. When the author said that Jesus “despised its shame,” he meant that Jesus was not ashamed to be crucified. This is because he was committed to obeying the will of God.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Cross; Shame (Ashamed); Will of God

#### Why did the author write that Jesus “sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”?

[12:2]

See: Hebrews 8:1

#### How did Jesus experience “opposition from sinners against himself”?

[12:3]

Scholars disagree about the meaning of the "opposition from sinners against himself." Some scholars think the author spoke about some Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. They tried to stop Jesus from doing the things he wanted to do. They also insulted him for what he said. Other scholars think the “opposition” was from the crowd of people who brought Jesus to the cross. They mocked him. They spit on him. They insulted him because he claimed to be the messiah.

See: Sin; Messiah (Christ)

## 12:4-11

#### Why did the author write that “Christians have not yet resisted or struggled against sin to the point of blood”?

[12:4]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that "Christians have not yet resisted or struggled against sin to the point of blood.” This was a metaphor. Some scholars think the author wanted to speak about Christians suffering because of sins. That is, they had not yet had to struggle against Satan to the point of shedding blood. Other scholars think the author said that Jesus had to suffer far worse than anything a Christian ever had to suffer.

See: Metaphor; Blood; Sin; Satan (The Devil)

#### Why did the author write that the “Lord disciplines everyone whom he loves”?

[12:6]

When the author wrote that the "Lord disciplines everyone whom he loves," he used a metaphor about a father and his children. He wanted people to know that God has a strong love for all his people. This is like a father loves his children. But even more, he wants his children to live in the right way. That is, he wants people to obey him. God disciplines Christians so they will not sin. God does this because he loves Christians. He wants what is best for them.

See: Metaphor; Righteous (Righteousness); Sin; Family of God

#### Why did the author write “illegitimate”?

[12:8]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote "illegitimate." Some scholars think the author used the word “illegitimate" (νόθος/g3541) to say that the father had no interest in the child. Other scholars think the author wanted to say that people who reject God’s discipline show that they are not true sons of God.

See: Family of God

#### What is God’s “holiness”?

[12:10]

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

#### How is it possible for Christians to share God's holiness?

[12:10]

Some scholars think that God enables Christians to “share in his holiness.” He does this by disciplining them. That is, Christians are made more and more to be like Jesus. They do more of the types of things that Jesus did. Other scholars think that Christians "share in" God’s holiness when they become more and more separated from the things of the world. They begin to want to do things that honor God.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); World

#### What is the “peaceful fruit of righteousness”?

[12:11]

The author wrote about the “peaceful fruit of righteousness” as a metaphor. He wrote about "fruit" to get people to think about the result of the discipline that he wrote about earlier. He wanted to say that discipline helped Christians to live in the right way. Scholars think that this gives Christians peace.

See: Fruit (Metaphor); Metaphor; Righteous (Righteousness)

## 12:12-17

#### What are “hands that hang down”?

[12:12]

When the author wrote "hands that hang down," he used a metaphor. Some scholars think the author spoke about Christians who were exhausted. They were exhausted from trying to live as Jesus lived. They think the author wanted Christians to encourage each other. That is, he wanted them to continue together to do the work to which God called them. Other scholars think the author wanted Christians to not accept defeat. That is, he wanted them to fight sin, that is, work hard to try to not sin.

See: Metaphor; Call (Calling)

#### What are your weak knees?

[12:12]

When the author wrote "your weak knees." he used a metaphor. Scholars think the author spoke about Christians who felt unable to face the trials in their lives. That is to say, they feared things going on around them. To “strengthen...your weak knees” meant to regain your courage. It meant to live in a way that honors God when it is very difficult to live in this way.

See: Metaphor; Trial

#### Why did the author write “make straight paths for your feet”?

[12:13]

When the author wrote "make straight paths for your feet," he used a metaphor. He spoke about how Christians should honor God and obey him. Some scholars think the author encouraged Christians to keep doing the right things. This also helped other Christians to do the right things. Other scholars think there were many opportunities for Christians to do things that led to evil. Because there were opportunities like this, the author encouraged Christians to focus on following the ways of God.

See: Psalm 5:8; Proverbs 3:6; Micah 3:9

See: Metaphor

#### How do people "lack God’s grace"?

[12:15]

Scholars disagree about how people "lack God's grace." Some scholars think the author spoke about a person who was about to believe in Jesus, but for some reason the person did not. They do not believe in Jesus. Other scholars think the author wanted Christians to encourage one another so that no one misses the blessings from God. That is, the author spoke about a person who misses it when God favors them.

See: Grace; Bless (Blessing)

#### What is a “root of bitterness”?

[12:15]

A “root of bitterness” is about a person who is very angry. This makes them do the wrong things. Their anger lasts for a long time. How does a person become “polluted” with bitterness?

When the author said a person becomes "polluted" with bitterness, he used a metaphor to say that this is like the person becoming unclean. A person who allows bitterness to “pollute" (μιαίνω/g3392) them. That is, it makes them think the wrong things and do the wrong things.

See: Metaphor; Clean and Unclean

#### What is “sexually immoral”?

[12:16]

See: Sexual Immorality

#### What is an “ungodly person”?

[12:16]

An "ungodly person" is a person who does not honor and obey God. He says and does wrong things. He may even deny that God exists.

#### How did Esau sell his own birthright?

[12:16]

See: Genesis 25:29-34

#### Why did the author write that Esau “found no opportunity for repentance”?

[12:17]

When the author wrote that Esau “found no opportunity for repentance” he wanted people to think that Esau could not change what he had done. When he sold his birthright, the agreement was final and could never be changed.

See: Repent (Repentance)

## 12:18-24

#### What was “a mountain that can be touched”?

[12:18]

See: Exodus 19:16-19; 20:18-21; Deuteronomy 4:11-12

#### What was the “trumpet blast” about which the author spoke?

[12:19]

See: Exodus 19:18-20

#### Why did the author say “you have not come...to a voice that speaks words”?

[12:19]

The author said, "you have not come ...to a voice that speaks words." He wanted people to think about the time when Israel wandered in the wilderness. When God spoke to the people of Israel, they heard thunder and saw lightning and were afraid of the voice of the Lord. They wanted Moses to speak to the Lord. Then Moses told them what God said.

See: Exodus 20:18-21

#### What was “Mount Zion”?

[12:22]

See: Zion

#### What was the “city of the living God”?

[12:22]

The “city of the living God” was a way people spoke about where God himself lives. There was not a place on earth where people can go. Some people also called this the "heavenly Jerusalem".

See: Heaven

#### What was the “congregation of the firstborn”?

[12:23]

The "congregation of the firstborn" is a way to speak about God's people. Some scholars think this is all people who believe in God. That is, it includes people who believed in God before Jesus lived. The author wrote about some of these people in chapter 11. It also includes everyone who has ever believed in Jesus. Other scholars think the “congregation of the firstborn” are angels. This is because God created angels before he created people. The word “firstborn" (πρωτότοκος/g4416) spoke about a shared inheritance. That is, Christians all will share in one inheritance. This is an inheritance given by God to both men and angels.

See: Angel; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); People of God; Firstborn (Birthright)

#### Why did the author write “registered in heaven”?

[12:23]

When the author wrote "registered in heaven," he wanted people to think about God having a written record of everyone who believes in him. Some people call this the "book of life" (see: Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 21:27). To be “registered in heaven” means a person is one of the people who are at peace with God and will live with God in heaven forever. Their names are written down, and they are considered citizens of heaven (see: Ephesians 2:18-22).

See: Grace; Heaven; Citizen

#### Who are the “spirits of the righteous ones”?

[12:23]

The “spirits of the righteous ones” are all people who are Christians when they die.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Righteous (Righteousness)

#### What is the "new covenant"?

[12:24]

See: New Covenant

#### How was Jesus the “mediator" of the new covenant?

[12:24]

Jesus became the “mediator" (μεσίτης/g3316) of the new covenant between God and man. In some way, Jesus stands between God and sinners. He speaks to God for them. He does this so they can be at peace with God.

See: Mediator; New Covenant; Sin

#### What was the “sprinkled blood”?

[12:24]

When the author wrote about "sprinkled blood," he used a metaphor. All covenants in the Bible were made using blood. That is, animals were killed so their blood could be sprinkled to make the covenant. In the same way, Jesus made the new covenant between God and man effective by shedding his own blood. The blood of Jesus atoned for man’s sin once.

See: Metaphor; Blood; Covenant; Atone (Atonement); Sin; New Covenant

#### What was “Abel’s blood”?

[12:24]

When the author wrote "Abel's blood," he wanted people to think about how Cain murdered his brother Abel (see: Genesis 4:3-10). Abel’s blood cried out from the ground for vengeance (see: Genesis 4:10). That is, "Abel's blood" is a way to speak about when God punishes someone who does wrong. On the other hand, Jesus's blood proclaims forgiveness and salvation.

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Avenge (Vengeance, Revenge); Punish (Punishment)

## 12:25-29

#### Who was the “one who is warning from heaven”?

[12:25]

Scholars disagree about who is the "one who is warning from heaven." Some scholars think the gospel was God’s message to all people. The gospel says there is a blessing for people who believe in Jesus. However, it also warns that God will judge people who do not believe in Jesus. Other scholars think the author spoke specifically about Jesus. Jesus came to earth to teach people about God. Some of what Jesus taught was a warning about God’s judgment.

See: Heaven; Gospel; Judge (Judgment); Bless (Blessing)

#### When did God’s voice shake the earth?

[12:26]

See: Exodus 19:18

#### Why did the author write that God will also shake the heavens?

[12:26]

When the author wrote that God will also shake the heavens, he used the metaphor of an earthquake to speak about God's final judgment. The Old Testament spoke about this (see: Exodus 19:18; Psalm 68:8, 77:18, 114:7; Isaiah 13:1-22; Joel 2:1-11; Haggai 2:6, 2:21, 12:26). He wanted people to think that when that happens, God will remove everything that is evil.

See: Isaiah 2:19-21; 13:13

See: Metaphor; Judge (Judgment); Spirit (Spiritual); Jesus' Return to Earth; Heaven; Day of Judgment; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

#### What are the things “that can be shaken”?

[12:27]

Scholars think that when the author wrote about things “that can be shaken” he was speaking about created things. This meant the world and everything in it will be shaken.

#### What are the things that “cannot be shaken”?

[12:27]

The author wrote about things that “cannot be shaken.” This is a metaphor. God’s blessings and promises that are part of God’s new covenant and the kingdom of God cannot be stopped. They will happen as God promised.

See: New Covenant; Kingdom of God; Righteous (Righteousness)

#### Why did the author write that God is “a consuming fire”?

[12:29]

The author wrote that God is "a consuming fire" so people would think about God's final judgment. Scholars think the author spoke about God burning away all impurities in the life of a Christian (see: Luke 3:17, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15). This makes someone perfectly clean. This will purify them for entrance into heaven.

See: Judge (Judgment); Heaven; Day of Judgment; Clean and Unclean

### Hebrews 13

## 13:1-6

#### How can a person show “hospitality to angels without knowing it”?

[13:2]

When the author wrote that a person can show "hospitality to angels without knowing it," he wanted people to think about how angels sometimes appeared and looked like people.

See: Genesis 18:1-14

See: Hospitable (Hospitality); Angel

#### Why did the author write “bound with them” to speak about Christians remembering prisoners?

[13:3]

To remember prisoners as if a person was “bound with them” was to fully sympathize with the suffering of people in prison. Paul spoke about Christians experiencing the suffering of other Christians (see: 1 Corinthians 12:26).

#### What is “the marriage bed”?

[13:4]

The "marriage bed" is the bed a husband and wife used when they sleep. The author used these words to speak about a husband and wife have sex in a way that did not dishonor God.

See: Marriage; Sexual Immorality

#### Why did the author write that Christians should "let the marriage bed be pure"?

[13:4]

The author wrote the command to “let the marriage bed be pure” as a warning. He wanted Christians to avoid adultery and sexual immorality.

See: Marriage; Adultery; Sexual Immorality

#### Who were the “sexually immoral”?

[13:4]

See: Sexual Immorality

#### What is “the love of money”?

[13:5]

The author wrote "the love of money" as a way to speak about greed. Scholars think the author meant that Christians must keep their lives from being characterized by the love for things you can buy. They think the Christian must keep even his thoughts from being greedy and wanting to buy many things.

See: Greed (Covet)

## 13:7-17

#### What is to “consider the result" of leaders' conduct?

[13:7]

To "consider the result" of Christian leaders' conduct is for Christians to observe what their leaders do. It is then to observe what happens in the church. Christians are to learn from Christian leaders how to live in a way that honors God.

See: Church

#### Why did the author command Christians to “imitate their faith”?

[13:7]

When the author commanded Christian to “imitate" (μιμέομαι/g3401) the faith of their leaders, he meant for Christians to live in the same way that their leaders did. He did not mean for Christians to copy everything done by their leaders, but to watch how they live in a way that honors God.

See: Faith (Believe in); Spirit (Spiritual)

#### How is Jesus “the same yesterday, today, and forever”?

[13:8]

When the author wrote that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, he wanted people to know that Jesus does not change. Jesus has always lived and will always live and nothing changes him. Christian leaders die, but Jesus lives forever.

#### What were the “various strange teachings”?

[13:9]

When the author wrote about "various strange teachings," he spoke about things some people taught in churches. These things were "strange" because they did not teach the same things that Jesus and the apostles taught. That is, some of the things they taught were wrong. During the time in which the book of Hebrews was written, there were still people who taught that people needed to follow the Law of Moses to be at peace with God. They wanted Christians to obey the Law of Moses. This is not what Jesus and the apostle taught.

See: Apostle; Church

#### Why did the author write “we have an altar”?

[13:10]

When the author wrote "we have an altar," he used a metaphor to speak about Jesus. In the Old Testament, the altar was used to sacrifice animals so God would forgive people's sins. Now, Christians “have an altar” which is the cross. It was on the cross that Jesus was sacrificed for the sins of the world.

See: Metaphor; Sin; Symbol; Altar; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Sacrifice; Cross; Atone (Atonement); Priest (Priesthood)

#### Why did the author write “Jesus also suffered outside the city gate”?

[13:12]

The author wrote "Jesus also suffered outside the city gate" so people would think about the crucifixion. He also wanted people to think about sacrifices for sin. That is, the atonement sacrifice of the Old Testament was burned outside the camp. But, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus was also made outside of the city of Jerusalem. Some scholars think that Jesus suffering outside the city gate showed Israel’s complete rejection of Jesus as their messiah. Other scholars think that Jesus suffering outside the city gate was to show that Jesus’ blood was the only acceptable sacrifice to God for sin. That is, nothing offered in the temple in Jerusalem could help people to be forgiven by God.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Atone (Atonement); Messiah (Christ); Blood; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

#### Why did the author write that Christians must “go to him outside the camp”?

[13:13]

Some scholars think that when the author wrote that Christians must “go to him outside the camp,” he wanted people to think about something that happened during Moses' life. Moses went up Mount Sinai to meet with God. While he was on the mountain, the people of Israel grew impatient. They demanded an idol to be made for them. So Aaron made an idol out of gold. Seeing this, Moses pitched his tent outside the camp. Then, people who wanted to seek God went where Moses was, outside the camp (see: Exodus 33:7-11). Because Jesus was rejected and was taken outside of the walls of Jerusalem to be executed, so now Christians must “go to him outside the camp.” That is, someone who followed Jesus did not need to do the things the Jews did in the temple in Jerusalem.

See: Idolatry (Idol)

See Map: Mount Sinai

#### How do Christians “bear his shame”?

[13:13]

The author wrote that Christians "bear his shame" to say that when a person believes in Jesus, he may be treated the same way Jesus was treated. That is, Christians may be rejected, insulted, persecuted, or even killed because they believe in Jesus. So Christians bear shame that is in some way like that of Jesus.

Some scholars think the author spoke about Jewish Christians “bearing his shame” in that they were often driven away from the religious practices of the temple. They were driven outside of Jerusalem. Many of them were persecuted and treated as outsiders.

See: Shame (Ashamed); Persecute (Persecution)

#### Why did the author write that Christians do not have "any permanent city here”?

[13:14]

When the author wrote that “we do not have any permanent city here,” he wanted people to think that a home on earth will not be someone’s home forever. That is, Christians look forward to a city God builds. This heavenly city will last forever (see: Hebrews 10:34-36, 11:10; 12:27).

See: Heaven

#### What are “sacrifices of praise”?

[13:15]

When the author wrote "sacrifices of praise," he wanted Christians to always be thankful to God. This is because Jesus offered himself to God as a sacrifice that never needed to be repeated. Because he did this, God forgives the sins of people who believe in Jesus. So, nothing remains but to give God thanks and praise for what he has done. God accepts our continual thanks and praise as our “sacrifice” to him.

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sacrifice; Praise; Sin; Atone (Atonement)

## 13:18-25

#### How is Jesus the “great shepherd”?

[13:20]

When the author said that Jesus was “the great shepherd,” he used a metaphor. A shepherd cared for his sheep, even to the point of dying for the sheep.Jesus loved and cared for people and died for them.

See: Metaphor; Shepherd

#### What was the “blood of the eternal covenant”?

[13:20]

See: Hebrews 12:24

See: Blood; Covenant