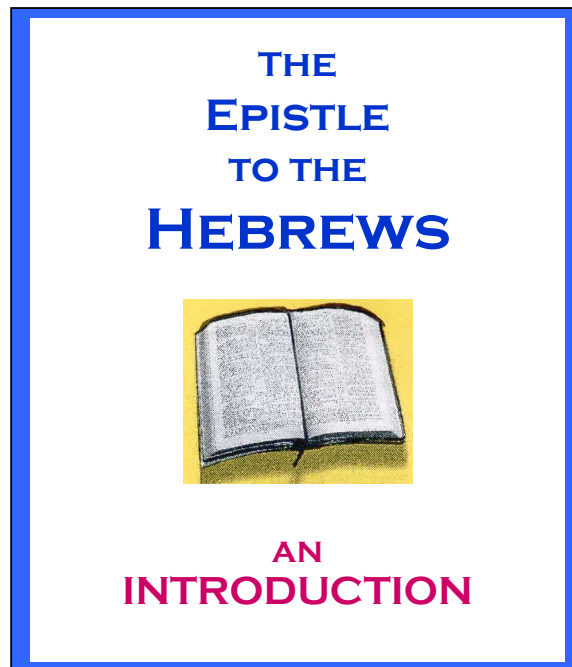


THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS - AN INTRODUCTION - MM#90



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THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

A letter written originally in **Greek**,
to **HEBREW** believers living in the Roman Empire,
concerning **Y'SHUA the MESSIAH**.

It was written evidently, sometime between
AD 64 and AD 68 - before the destruction of Jerusalem in **AD 70**.

The human author is unknown,
but the internal evidence of the letter leaves us in no doubt that
the book was written by the inspiration of **the Holy Spirit**,
and that its message is essential to a mature understanding of
the true Messianic (Christian) faith.

The main theme of the letter is:

**Y'SHUA, the MEDIATOR, GUARANTOR
and HIGH PRIEST of the NEW COVENANT**

Because of the **superiority** of the Messiah's Person and His Work; because of what He Himself experienced; and because of His **continuous** High Priestly ministry, His people have every encouragement to press on to enter **the rest of God**, and to **receive the reward** of the promised Heavenly City. Believers are exhorted to take their stand with **Y'shua the Messiah** and to **share His reproach**; and they are assured that He, the Anointed One, is their Great High Priest and that He is totally adequate to meet all their needs.

As we analyse the teachings of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we can trace a number of main themes running throughout the book. A number of sub themes can also be discerned. These themes are **interwoven** into a brilliant, divinely-inspired tapestry. And these truths should be woven into our mental and spiritual experience. They form a **manifesto** that every believer should study and clearly grasp.

This introduction does not give a verse-by-verse commentary, but rather, an analysis of the main contents of the books. A scan of the following ten subjects is intended to help you understand what Hebrews is all about.

- 1 The Superiority of Y'shua, the Son of God - the Great High Priest.
- 2 The Superiority of the Malkitzedekian Priesthood.
- 3 The Inadequacy of the Old Covenant.
- 4 The Superiority of the New Covenant Inaugurated by Y'shua.
- 5 Full Salvation Based on the Perfect work of the Perfect Messiah.
- 6 The Way of Faith in Receiving the Promise of God.
- 7 Warnings Against Drawing Back.
- 8 Strong Encouragement to the Believer to Press on.
- 9 Exhortations.
- 10 The Law, and the New Covenant.

Let's press on, and scan these subjects.

1.

THE SUPERIORITY OF Y'SHUA, THE SON OF GOD - THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST

The Epistle begins with a powerful statement as to what this message is all about. It is about the superiority of God's Son - His Eternal Deity and His perfect High Priestly ministry.

1 In Hebrews 1:1-2, we see **Y'shua the Son of God, and the Heir of all things**, being much superior to the prophets.

“In the past, God, *YHWH El Shaddai*, spoke in many and various ways to *our* forefathers through the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things...” (1:1-2)

2 The Son being the Radiance of God, is **superior to angels**, who are servants and ministering spirits.

“*The Son* being the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His very being and nature, upholds all things by His powerful word. And after He had, *by offering Himself*, purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become as much superior to the angels as the Name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs.” (1:3-4)

For a short time, the Son was made a little lower than the angels.

But He is now glorified, above all.

“But we do see Y’shua, who was made for a little while lower than the angels, *now* crowned with glory and honour because He suffered death ...” (2:9)

3 In this opening chapter, **the Eternal Majesty declares that the Son is unique**, and that He is “God who will reign forever.”

“For to which of the angels did He ever say, ‘YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU - *that is, I have established You in unique relationship to Me, declaring that You are My Anointed Son*’? And again, ‘I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM, AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME’? Moreover, when He brings ‘the firstborn’ (*the Origin, Model, Head and Heir*) into the world, He says, ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’ But of the Son, *He says*, ‘YOUR THRONE, GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE SCEPTER OF YOUR KINGDOM IS A SCEPTER OF *ABSOLUTE* RIGHTEOUSNESS’.” (1:5,6,8)

Please note the meaning of those two words - “**begotten**” and “**firstborn**” which you see in italics. And don’t let Jehovah’s Witnesses or anyone else try to convince you that Y’shua was the first created being!

Yes, His physical body was prepared at a certain point of time, but He Himself is nothing less than the eternal God. And in the body, He was the manifestation and the fullness of YHWH, the Eternal I AM. The apostle John declared the same truth:

“In the beginning was the Logos (Word), and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. He was with God in the beginning *before all time*. All things came into being through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” (John 1:1-3)

4 In chapter 3 we see **the Messiah as superior to Moses** who was a servant in God’s household. The Messiah is the unique Son, the Heir of all things - the One for whom all things were created! (Colossians 1:16)

“For *Y’shua* has been counted worthy of greater honour and glory than Moses, inasmuch as the builder of the house has greater honour than the house *itself* ... Now Moses was faithful in all His household as a servant, *and this was* a testimony to the things which were to be spoken *in the future*. But Christ - *the Messiah* - was faithful as a Son over His *Father’s* house.” (3:3,5,6)

5 In chapter 4, **He is the superior High Priest** and as such He is well able to sympathize with God’s people, for He was tempted in every way as we are.

“For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to *understand and* sympathize with our weaknesses, but *we have One who has been* tempted in

every way, just as we are - yet was without sin.” (4:15)

6 **Y’shua is superior because His priesthood is of a higher order than that of Aaron.** He is High Priest forever.

“So the Messiah also did take upon Himself the glory of becoming a High Priest, *but was appointed by God* who said to Him . . . YOU ARE A PRIEST FOR EVER, ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MALKITZEDEK.” (5:5-6)

7 **He is superior for He was perfected (in experience), and thus became the Author and Source of eternal salvation for His people.** The old order, on the other hand, could not perfect anyone.

“Although *He was* a Son, He learned obedience from what He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became the Author and Source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him - being designated by God, High Priest, in the order of Malkitzedek.” (5:8-10)

“For the Law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the word of the oath which came after the Law, *appoints* the Son, who has been made perfect for ever.” (7:28)

8 **Y’shua is superior because of the oath God made concerning His priesthood.**

“And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without an oath *being taken by God*, but He, *Y’shua*, became a Priest with an oath when *God* said to Him, ‘YHWH HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MALKITZEDEK’). Because of this oath, *Y’shua* has become the Guarantee of a better covenant.

“Now, *of necessity*, there have been many *Aaronic* priests, because each one of them has been prevented by death from continuing *in office*; but because *Y’shua* lives and continues for ever, He has a permanent *and unchangeable* priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save completely and forever those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them.” (7:20-25)

9 **Y’shua is superior because He is a Minister in the true and higher tabernacle - the heavenly.**

“... we have such a High Priest who has sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. *There He is* a minister in the *inner* sanctuary of the **true tabernacle** which was set up by *YHWH*, the LORD, not by man.” (8:1-2)

“But now He, *Y’shua*, has received a ministry *which is much* more superior *and* excellent, just as the covenant of which He is Mediator *is superior to the old one*, and which has been founded on better promises.” (8:6)

10 **Y’shua entered a superior tabernacle.**

“But when Christ, *the Messiah* appeared as High Priest of the better things to come, *and that are now here*, He *entered* into the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with *human* hands, that is to say, not of this *material* creation.” (9:11)

11 **He entered because of the superior blood.**

“He entered once and for all into the *Holy of Holies in Heaven. And He entered*, not by virtue of the blood of goats and calves, but by virtue of His own blood, having secured eternal redemption *for us*. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a *burnt* heifer sprinkled on those who have been defiled, *is sufficient to sanctify* for the purification of the flesh *so that they become ceremonially clean*, how much more will the blood of the Messiah, *the Anointed*, who by virtue of *His* eternal Spirit (*His eternal divine personality*) offered Himself as an unblemished *sacrifice* to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works, so that *we may serve the living God!*” (9:12-14)

12 His Sacrifice is superior because it is “once for all,” and perfects forever.

“Nor did He *enter heaven* to offer Himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Holy of Holies every year with blood of other *creatures*; for then He would have needed to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. But *as it now is*, He has appeared **once for all** at the end of the ages to do away with sin by His sacrifice of Himself.” (9:25-26)

“For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” (10:14)

2.

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE MALKITZEDEKIAN PRIESTHOOD

Malkitzedek was the king of Salem, a small city of Canaan during the time of Abraham. It is believed it was the city that many years later became the city of Jerusalem.

Little is known of Malkitzedek apart from what the Scriptures record of him - that he was the king of Salem and a priest of *El Elyon*, the Most High God; and that he received Abraham, and accepted tithes from him. This evident superiority of Malkitzedek over Abraham, and the fact that there is no recorded history of this man - no birth, death, ancestry or whatever, is used powerfully in the Book of Hebrews to teach the superiority of the priesthood of which Y’shua is the Great High Priest. The Aaronic priests of Israel were all from the tribe of **Levi**. The anointed Davidic kings on the other hand were of the tribe of **Judah**. A Hebrew could be either king or priest, but not both. But Malkitzedek - a non-Israelite, was **both priest and king**. And Y’shua is of this superior two-fold order - a King-Priest like Malkitzedek.

“This Malkitzedek, King of Salem and priest of *El Elyon*, the Most High God, met Abraham *as he was* returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him; and Abraham gave to him a tenth part of all *the spoil*. *He was* first of all, King of Righteousness, as the translation *of his name indicates*, and then also King of Salem, which means King of Peace. *He appears* without a record of father, mother, genealogy, or beginning of days or end of life, but like the Son of God, he continues as a priest for ever.” (7:1-3)

“And the point becomes even more clear when another priest arises in the likeness of Malkitzedek, who has become *a priest*, not on the basis of a law concerning physical descent, but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. For it is declared *of Him*, ‘YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MALKITZEDEK’.” (7:15-17)

The point is made that **Malkitzedek was definitely superior to Abraham.**

“But this man who does not have their *Levitical* ancestry received tithes from Abraham, and blessed him who had the promises. Now beyond dispute, *it is the lesser person who is blessed by a greater person.* And in the case of the *Levitical priesthood*, dying men receive tithes, but in the case of *Malkitzedek*, the tithes are received by one of whom it is declared that he lives on. We could even say that Levi - *the father of the priestly tribe* who received tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the body of his ancestor Abraham when Malkitzedek met him.” (7:6-10)

The Aaronic priesthood would eventually pass away forever, but the Malkitzedekian order of the perfect King-Priest would never end. And all believers who have been brought into the New Covenant, are called to be trained in, and to share in, this same King-Priest order. As the apostle Peter says, “You are a **royal** priesthood.” (1 Peter 2:9)

The believer is being trained here and now, to reign with the Messiah throughout eternity. And he is also called to a ministry of **intercession**, and of offering up **praise and worship** to the Almighty. To do this we must come into the **inner sanctuary**; and Hebrews tells us that we have the invitation to do so:

“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the *Most Holy Place* by the blood of Y’shua - by a new and living way which He consecrated *and opened* for us - *a way* through the curtain, that is, *through His flesh - His torn body*, and *since we have such a great priest ministering* over the household of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *with His blood and cleansed* from a guilty conscience, *even as* our bodies have been washed with pure water.” (10:19-22)

3.

THE INADEQUACY OF THE OLD COVENANT

1 The inadequacy of the Aaronic priesthood was firstly because **the priests themselves were sinners.**

“For every high priest selected from among men is appointed to represent the people in matters relating to God, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. *He* is able to deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is subject to *moral* weakness; and because of this he is required to offer *sacrifices* for his own sins, as well as for *the sins* of the people.” (5:1-3)

“He (*Y’shua*) does not have the daily necessity that the *Aaronic* high priests had, of offering up sacrifices, first for their own sins and then for the people’s *sins*, because *Y’shua sacrificed for the sins of mankind* once and

for all, when He offered Himself. For the Law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the word of the oath which came after the Law, *appoints* the Son, who has been made perfect for ever.” (7:27-28)

2 The Levitical Priesthood could not bring anyone to Perfection

“Now if perfection was *attainable* through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the Law), what further need was *there* for another priest to arise after the order of Malkitzedek and not be designated after the order of Aaron? “ (7:11)

“For there is a setting aside of the former commandment because of its weakness and inefficacy (for the Law made nothing perfect).” (7:18-19)

3 The Aaronic Priests were all Temporary

“Now, *of necessity*, there have been many *Aaronic* priests, because each one of them has been prevented by death from continuing in *office*.” (7:23)

4 The Gifts and Sacrifices of the Old Order are not able to Cleanse the Conscience.

“But only the high priest *entered* the second *section*, and he but once a year, and never without *taking* blood which he offered for himself and for the sins the people *had committed unintentionally*, in ignorance - *by sprinkling the blood on the Mercy Seat*. By this the Holy Spirit was showing that while the first *section of the* tabernacle was still having standing *as a recognized Institution*, the way into the Holy of Holies had not yet been thrown open. This is a symbolic illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered are not able to cleanse the conscience of the worshipper.” (9:7-9)

5 The Old Covenant was Faulty.

“For if that first covenant had been faultless, no occasion would have been sought for another. But finding fault with them, He, *YHWH El Shaddai*, said, ‘BEHOLD, THE DAYS ARE COMING, DECLARES YHWH, WHEN I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT’.” (8:7-8)

“When He speaks of ‘a new *covenant*,’ He has made the first *covenant* obsolete; and whatever is becoming obsolete and ageing is ready to disappear - *to be dispensed with altogether*.” (8:13)

6 Blood of Animals cannot take away sin.

“For since the Law has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the realities themselves, it can never, by the same sacrifices which they repeat endlessly year after year, make perfect those who approach *its altars*. Otherwise, wouldn’t the offering of those *sacrifices* have ceased? For the worshippers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have *guilt and* consciousness of sins? But as *it is*, those *sacrifices* are an annual reminder of sins, for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. “ (10:1-4)

“*After saying the above* - ‘Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You did not desire, nor were You pleased *with them*’ - *although* they are offered according to the Law - ... Day after day every priest performs his duty, again and again offering the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.” (10:8,11)

Hebrews thus emphasizes the truths the apostle Paul also taught - the Law is good, but it cannot give life. It can, and does, condemn the sinner, but it cannot cleanse. It can lead a person to the Saviour, but the Law itself cannot save.

Because of the inadequacies of the Old, a New, superior Covenant was necessary.

4.

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE NEW COVENANT INAUGURATED BY Y'SHUA

The New Covenant that Y'shua inaugurated is declared to be superior to the Old Covenant in every way. The superiority of the New Covenant is based on several realities:

1 It was Established by God's Oath.

“Others became priests without an oath *being taken by God*, but He, *Y'shua*, became a Priest with an oath when *God* said to Him, ‘*YHWH HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MALKITZEDEK*’. [Ps 110:4]. Because of this oath, Y'shua has become the Guarantee of a better covenant . . . For the Law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the word of the oath which came after the Law, *appoints* the Son, who has been made perfect for ever.” (7:21,22,28)

2 It is Founded on Better Promises.

“But now He, *Y'shua*, has received a ministry *which is much* more superior and excellent, just as the covenant of which He is Mediator is *superior to the old one*, and which has been founded on better promises.” (8:6)

3 The New Covenant Supersedes the Old Covenant.

“When He speaks of ‘a new *covenant*,’ He has made the first *covenant* obsolete; and whatever is becoming obsolete and ageing is ready to disappear - *to be dispensed with altogether*.” (8:13)

“For the Law made nothing perfect - and instead, a better hope is introduced through which we *now* draw near to God.” (7:19)

4 Its Priesthood is of a Higher Order to the Levitical.

The priests of the Old Covenant were Levites - a tribe set apart to be *cohanim* - priests. *Cohen* is singular - a priest. Many Jews today are named Cohen.

The Great High Priest of the New Covenant is Y'shua the Messiah, who is priest of the superior Order of Malkitzedek, as we have seen already.

5 It was Ratified by Divine Blood.

“For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a *burnt* heifer sprinkled on those who have been defiled, *is sufficient* to sanctify for the purification of the flesh so *that they become ceremonially clean*, how much more will the blood of the Messiah, *the Anointed* - who by virtue of *His* eternal Spirit (*His eternal divine personality*) offered Himself as an unblemished *sacrifice* to God - cleanse your

conscience from dead works, so that *we may* serve the living God!

“For this reason - *His sacrifice* - He is the Mediator of a new covenant. Because a death has taken place which redeems people from the transgressions *committed* under the first covenant, those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.

“Where there is a covenant, *such as a 'last will and testament,'* of necessity, *evidence* of the death of the one who made the will must be produced. For a *'last will and testament'* is valid *only* when someone has died; it is never in force while the one who made it is living.

“This is why even the first *covenant* was not put into effect without blood. For after Moses had proclaimed every commandment to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and *a bunch of hyssop*, and sprinkled both the scroll *of the Law* itself and all the people, saying, ‘THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD ORDAINED FOR YOU.’

“In the same way, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels *used* in the service *of God*. In fact, under the Law, almost everything is purified by means of blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission - *no release or forgiveness of sins*.

“It was necessary, then, for the *earthly* copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these *sacrifices*, but the *actual* heavenly things themselves *required* better sacrifices than these. For Christ, *the Anointed Messiah*, did not enter a sanctuary made with *human* hands - a mere copy of the true one. He entered heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

“Nor did He *enter heaven* to offer Himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the *Holy of Holies* every year with blood of other *creatures*; for then He would have needed to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. But *as it now is*, He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by *His* sacrifice of Himself.” (9:13-26)

Y'shua Himself earlier explained that the cup of wine used in the *Pesach* (Passover) feast represented His blood - the Blood of the New Covenant.

“And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup is the New Covenant *ratified* by My blood which is *being* poured out for you’.” (Luke 22:20)

6 Its Sacrifice is Totally Adequate to Save and to Sanctify Completely, ALL who come to God through Y'shua.

“And by that will *of God* we have been sanctified - *set apart and made holy*, through the offering once for all of the body of Y'shua the Messiah, *the Anointed One*. Day after day every priest performs his duty, again and again offering the same sacrifices which can never take away sins; but when this *Priest - the Messiah* - had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God . . . For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” (10:10-12.14)

7 Its Precepts are Engraved on the Hearts of its People.

The New Covenant produces an inward conviction and response, and not a legalistic observance of the Law.

“THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HO USE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, DECLARES *YHWH*: I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MINDS AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE. NO LONGER WILL A MAN TEACH HIS NEIGHBOUR, OR A MAN HIS BROTHER, SAYING, ‘KNOW THE LORD,’ FOR THEY ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST OF THEM TO THE GREATEST.” (8:10-11)

This quotation, from Jeremiah 31, promises the New Covenant for Israel. But as we study the New Testament, we learn that God’s plan is that believers of Gentile nations should also come into the same New Covenant. From out of both Jewish and Gentile nations, a New Covenant Body is created - a body of believers united in the Messiah; a “new man” as Paul says. And this New Covenant Body is also a Holy Sanctuary and Dwelling Place of *Ruach Ha Kodesh* - the Holy Spirit of YHWH. (Eph. 2: 15-22)

8 Its High Priest has Entered the Heavenly Sanctuary on Behalf of His People.

Y’shua has made a way of access for His sanctified people to come confidently to the Throne of Grace. We are invited to draw near into the inner sanctuary.

“But when Christ, *the Messiah*, appeared as High Priest of the better things to come, *and that are now here*, He *entered* into the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with *human* hands, that is to say, not of this *material* creation. He entered once and for all into the *Holy of Holies in Heaven*. *And He entered*, not by virtue of the blood of goats and calves, but by virtue of His own blood, having secured eternal redemption *for us*.” (9:11-12)

“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the *Most Holy Place* by the blood of Y’shua - by a new and living way which He consecrated *and opened* for us - *a way* through the curtain, that is, *through* His flesh - *His torn body*, and *since we have such* a great priest *ministering over* the household of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *with His blood and cleansed* from a guilty conscience, *even as* our bodies have been washed with pure water.” (10:19-22)

9. Its High Priest Continues Forever.

“But because *Y’shua* lives and continues for ever, He has a permanent *and unchangeable* priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save completely and forever those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them.

“And such a high priest meets our need *perfectly* - *One who is* holy, innocent, undefiled, set apart from sinners and exalted above the heavens. He does not have the daily necessity that the *Aaronic* high priests had, of offering up sacrifices, first for their own sins and then for the people’s *sins*, because *Y’shua sacrificed for the sins of mankind* once and for all, when He offered Himself. For the Law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the word of the oath which came after the Law *appoints* the Son, who has been made perfect for ever.” (7:24-28)

**See also the last section of this commentary, entitled
THE LAW, and the NEW COVENANT**

5.

FULL SALVATION BASED ON THE PERFECT WORK OF THE PERFECT MESSIAH

Salvation in the book of Hebrews is presented in its three aspects - past, present, and future; Justification, Sanctification and Glorification.

Right at the beginning of the book we have the reference to the **JUSTIFICATION** aspect - the purging of sins which is essential if a sinner is to be saved. The purging of our sins makes us “accepted in the Beloved.” It pronounces us “justified” - cleared of all guilt.

“*The Son* being the radiance of *God’s* glory and the exact representation of His very being and nature, upholds all things by His powerful word. **And after He had, by offering Himself, purged our sins,** He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (1:3)

In the same chapter there is the reference to the angelic assistance available for those who are being saved.

“Are not all *the angels* ministering spirits, sent out to render service *and* to assist those who are to **inherit salvation?**” (1:14)

In chapter two, the Holy Spirit emphasizes that this great salvation came to man, not through angels, but was delivered by the Heavenly Master Himself, and was confirmed by signs.

“For if the message spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every violation and disobedience received an appropriate penalty, how shall we escape if we neglect *or* ignore such a great salvation? For *this salvation*, first declared by the Master, was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*, and *it was* also endorsed by God, by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit *which He* imparted according to His own will.” (2:2-4)

The chapter goes on to show that salvation is a **deliverance** from slavery. Fallen man was subject to this slavery of fear and death since his birth, and there was no way out, unless propitiation was made. And this is what Y’shua did.

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood (*a common physical nature as human beings*), He Himself likewise shared the same *humanity* so that by *His* death He might *render ineffective and ultimately* destroy the one who had the power of death - that is, the devil - and deliver those who through their fear of death, were held in slavery all their lives.

“For certainly He does not take hold of *fallen* angels to *deliver them*, but He does take hold of the *fallen* seed of Abraham. For this reason it was essential that He be made like His brethren in every respect, in order to become a merciful and faithful high priest in things related to God, to **make propitiation** for the sins of the people.” (2:14-17)

The word propitiation needs to be explained, as do even the words atonement and expiation.

(Propitiation = atonement or expiation - to deal with sin, to fulfil the righteous

judgment of God against sin, to acquit sinners and to reconcile them to the holy God. This is all made possible through the sacrifice and shed blood of the spotless “Lamb of God” – Y’shua Himself.)

In chapter 4 we see that salvation produces a rest for the believer - a rest from the endless striving to attain salvation through one’s works. The good news that offers rest, however, is of no benefit to anyone unless **faith** responds to that message.

“Therefore, since the promise concerning entering His rest still stands, let us be afraid *of the possibility* that any one of you should seem to fall short of it. For we also have had good news preached to us, just as those *in the desert had*; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with **faith**. Now it is we who have believed that do enter that rest. But as *for those who hardened their hearts*, He said, SO I MADE AN OATH IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.” (4:1-3)

So the writer here prepares us to acknowledge the vital role of faith in obtaining salvation. **Faith was essential** for those under the Old Covenant, as well as for us in the New Covenant.

“But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God (*YHWH the eternally-existing One*) must believe that He exists, and *that* He is a Rewarder of those who earnestly seek Him out.” (11:6)

In chapter 5 we have this fact: Y’shua is the Author and Source of **eternal salvation** for those who **obey Him**.

“Although *He was* a Son, He learned obedience from what He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became the Author and Source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him.” (5:8-9)

This verse at first seems to present a problem. It suggests that Y’shua was at first less than perfect. But no! The verse does not take away from His eternal Deity, but presents Y’shua as Man - a true Representative of mankind - One who has been perfected **in experience**. He experienced the suffering and was also tempted in every way as we are. He is thus able to sympathize and come to the aid of His people in their trials.

“For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to *understand and* sympathize with our weaknesses, but *we have One who has been* tempted in every way, just as *we are - yet was* without sin.” (4:15)

In the **SANCTIFICATION** aspect of our salvation, we are to learn obedience, even as our Saviour so perfectly demonstrated the way of obedience to the Father.

In chapter seven we are presented with the glorious fact that Y’shua is able to save completely - because of His perfect sacrifice and His endless life.

“... because *Y’shua* lives and continues for ever, He has a permanent *and unchangeable* priesthood. Therefore He is also able to **save completely** and forever those who come to God through Him, since **He always lives to intercede for them**. And such a high priest meets our need *perfectly* – *One who is* holy, innocent, undefiled, set apart from sinners and exalted above the heavens.

“He does not have the daily necessity that the *Aaronic* high priests had, of

offering up sacrifices, first for their own sins and then for the people's sins, because *Y'shua sacrificed for the sins of mankind* once and for all, when He offered Himself. For the Law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the word of the oath which came after the Law, *appoints* the Son, who has been made perfect for ever." (7:24-28)

In chapter nine, we have the **surety of eternal redemption**. Y'shua has secured our salvation by His own blood!

"He entered once and for all into the *Holy of Holies in Heaven*. And He entered, not by virtue of the blood of goats and calves, but by virtue of His own blood, having secured eternal redemption *for us*.

"For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a *burnt* heifer sprinkled on those who have been defiled, *is sufficient* to sanctify for the purification of the flesh so *that they become ceremonially clean*, how much more will the blood of the Messiah, *the Anointed* - who by virtue of *His eternal Spirit (His eternal divine personality)* offered Himself as an unblemished *sacrifice* to God - cleanse your conscience from dead works, so that *we may* serve the living God!

"For this reason - *His sacrifice* - He is the Mediator of a new covenant. Because a death has taken place which redeems people from the transgressions *committed* under the first covenant, those who are called may receive the **promised eternal inheritance**." (9:12-15)

The last verse of the chapter looks forward to **GLORIFICATION** - the completion of salvation when the body of the believer is glorified in the Father's Presence.

"So the Messiah, *the Anointed One*, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, **will appear a second time**, not *bearing sin again*, but **bringing salvation** to those who are *eagerly* expecting Him." (9:28)

In chapter ten we have the finished redemptive work of the Messiah. His sacrifice was **once for all**, and by that one offering, He perfects for all time. There is no need whatever for repeated "sacrifices" - neither animal sacrifices nor "masses," by Jewish or Christian priests - which are, in fact, no sacrifices at all.

"And by that will of God we have been sanctified - *set apart and made holy*, through the offering once **for all** of the body of Y'shua the Messiah, *the Anointed One*. Day after day every priest performs his duty, again and again offering the same sacrifices which can never take away sins; but when this *Priest - the Messiah* - had offered for all time **one sacrifice for sins**, He sat down at the right hand of God ... Now where there is remission and forgiveness of these things, **an offering for sins is no longer needed**." (10:10-12,18)

One more salvation verse is in chapter 13, which reminds us that Y'shua was despised and "burned" outside the city. Because of that, we who know His salvation are urged to go and stand with Him, and to bear His reproach.

"And so Y'shua also suffered outside the *city* gate in order that He might sanctify the people through His own blood. Let us, then, go to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach - *sharing the contempt, abuse and shame He endured*." (13:12-13)

6.

THE WAY OF FAITH IN RECEIVING THE PROMISE OF GOD

While the main emphasis in the epistle is on what Y'shua the Great High Priest of the New Covenant has done - once and for all - through His sacrifice of Himself; and on what He is doing as our ever-abiding Intercessor and Mediator; there is also the important teaching that **on our part**, there must be **faith**, if we are to appropriate the promises of God, if we are to enter into the rest that He has provided, and if we are to receive the eternal inheritance.

A key verse to this subject is chapter 11:6:

“But without faith *it is impossible to please Him*, for he who comes to God (*YHWH the eternally-existing One*) must believe that He exists, and *that He is a Rewarder of those who earnestly seek Him out.*”

Chapter 4:2 emphasises that the Good News is of no value to us unless we combine it with faith. And faith is not something vague or static. It is something **active** and **persistent**.

“But we want each one of you to show the same diligence to the very end, *in realizing the full assurance of your hope*, so that you may not become sluggish, but *will be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*” (6:11-12)

Chapter eleven is not intended to be an “honour roll” as we are usually inclined to think of it. It is a chapter of **examples** - of people who gained the approval of *YHWH El Shaddai* by faith; people who did mighty exploits by faith; people who endured by faith.

A description of faith is given at the beginning of the chapter.

“Now faith is *having the assurance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things which we do not yet see*. For by *faith* the men of old obtained a good witness *and gained approval*. By faith we understand that the universe was formed by *the spoken word of God*, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.” (11:1-3)

Chapter 12 gives the conclusion of the subject. The men and women of faith in chapter 11 are a “cloud of witnesses,” a great array of encouragement to the believer today. What they did by faith, we also can do by faith!

By faith we can “**throw off every weight**” that hinders our “race.” But it is not faith in ourselves, but faith in Y'shua, the Author of faith. Therefore fix your eyes on Him!

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a *great cloud of witnesses*, let us also throw off every weight, *every encumbrance, every hindrance*, and *particularly the sin that most readily assails, entangles and leeches onto us, robbing us of spiritual strength*; and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Y'shua, the Author of the faith and the One who completes *and perfects our faith*, who, in view of the joy set before Him endured the cross, *ignoring and even despising its shame*, and has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” (12:1-2)

Another reference indicates that the people of God are expected to live by faith:

“THE RIGHTEOUS MAN WILL LIVE BY FAITH; but if he draws back, I will not be pleased with him.” (10:38)

7.

WARNINGS AGAINST DRAWING BACK

Hebrews is not intended to be a comforting book for the careless and for any who want to enjoy a comfortable, easy-believism. Although it brings very strong encouragement for those who pursue the way of faith, it brings strong warnings against drawing back.

DON'T NEGLECT SALVATION!

“We must pay much closer attention *than ever*, therefore, to the things *we have* heard, lest we drift away *from them*. For if the message spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every violation and disobedience received an appropriate penalty, how shall we escape if we neglect *or* ignore such a great salvation? For *this salvation*, first declared by the Master, was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*. “ (2:1-3)

Generally preachers apply these verses to unbelievers. But the writer is primarily presenting the message to believers, for it is possible for “saved believers” to neglect their salvation.

What then is salvation? It is the three-phase work of *YHWH Elohim* (God) in the believer’s life. Salvation can be described as three phases - PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE.

PHASE ONE: THE PAST

This phase is called **JUSTIFICATION**. It is the beginning of our salvation. It is what happens when we believe, confessing that we, individually, are sinners and need God’s mercy, and when we open our “heart’s door” to the Saviour. Justification takes place in a moment - the moment we believe and receive the pardon of our sins. At that moment God counts us as righteous; as though we had never sinned.

We are **justified** in **His** sight. It is not an attempt to prove that we are good enough, or that our sins are small enough to be overlooked. No! We are justified because Y’shua, the Lamb of God, paid the penalty of our sins, and brought us out from under the condemnation of sin. We can thus immediately say, “I am saved by the Blood of the Lamb.”

Justification is the first aspect of our salvation, and it is based on what the Saviour has done at Calvary. When we receive Y’shua as our personal Saviour, we receive the indwelling Holy Spirit - the Spirit of YHWH-Y’SHUA - the Spirit of the Eternal Deity in our spirit, and our salvation is sealed by Him. (Eph.1:13; 4:30. Rom 8:9).

Justification is the essential qualification for us to enter into Heaven.

PHASE TWO: THE PRESENT

The second phase is the process called **SANCTIFICATION**. This big word comes

from the verb “to sanctify” which means “to set apart and to make holy.” From the moment we are justified, the process of sanctifying us begins. We are set apart for God, and the Holy Spirit, who has come to dwell in us, begins the lifelong work of making us holy.

He teaches us, writes the Laws of the Messiah on our hearts, corrects us, disciplines us, and encourages us. He imparts spiritual gifts, and molds us into the ways of our Father. He shows us the principles of the way of life; teaches us the way of faith; the principles of spiritual warfare, and how we are to have victory over the world, the flesh and the devil.

Sanctification is the way to spiritual maturity. It is the PRESENT aspect of salvation. And it is this phase in particular that the Book of Hebrews is referring to when it says, “How shall we escape if we neglect or ignore such a great salvation?”

PHASE THREE: THE FUTURE

The third aspect of salvation is called **GLORIFICATION**. This is the completion of our salvation, and it takes place when our life on earth is over and we are received into glory - into heaven, and receive our new celestial (heavenly) bodies. This is what Paul referred to when he said “this mortal must put on immortality.”

Glorification, then, is the future aspect of salvation, when we enter the eternal realm, and are perfected in the Presence of the Heavenly Father.

We can describe these aspects of salvation like this:

JUSTIFICATION is Salvation from the **PENALTY** of sin.

“I have been saved from sin’s penalty.”

SANCTIFICATION is Salvation from the **POWER** of sin.

“I am being saved from sin’s power.”

GLORIFICATION is Salvation from the **PRESENCE** of sin.

“I will be saved forever, from all influence of sin.”

Now Hebrews 2:1-3 warns us not to neglect our salvation. Of course, we have not neglected our Justification, if we are indeed true heart-believers. And as Glorification is all God’s work, He will not fail to bring His people to glory. (2:10).

But it is the work of **sanctification** that we must “work at.” The apostle Paul said; “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12). This does NOT mean “work FOR your salvation.” It means, yield your life to the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

We can never make ourselves holy; we can never make ourselves perfect. But we can, and must, surrender our lives to God’s grace and control; to His sanctifying ministry in us.

“For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” (10:14)

Yes, the offering of Y’shua, guarantees the **eternal security** of all who are truly His people. But the question is, how can He sanctify us, how can He make us holy, if we stubbornly dig our heels in, and insist on our own ways? Or how can He produce holiness in our lives if we **NEGLECT** the means of sanctification - the Word of

God, communication with Him, worship, fellowship, and obedience?

Yes, our Father can discipline us, and indeed as a Father, He **must** discipline us. He certainly did not plan that we should remain worldly, carnal-minded children. He must train us, in His holy ways.

“He *disciplines us for our profit and good*, in order that we may *constantly partake of His holiness.*” (12:10)

DON'T HARDEN YOUR HEART!

“Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS YOU DID IN THE REBELLION *of Israel*, DURING THE TIME OF TESTING IN THE DESERT ... Be wary, brethren, lest any of you should have an evil, unbelieving heart, *causing you to turn away from the living God* ... So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief. Therefore, since the promise concerning entering His rest still stands, let us be afraid *of the possibility* that any one of you should seem to fall short of it.” (3:7-8,12,19; 4:1)

The purpose of *YHWH El Shaddai* for Israel in the Sinai was that they should enter the Promised Land, and learn the ways of the LORD. They were to enjoy His rest, peace and blessing. But because of their unbelief, Moses' generation did not enter the land of rest, and were turned back into the desert. The older generation left their bones in the desert, and only the younger generation entered the promised land, some 40 years later.

Everyone knows that story, but the writer of Hebrews is here teaching that there is a Rest into which the people of God can, and should, enter. It's a **life of rest**; one in which the believer ceases working and striving in his own strength, but rests and lives in the LORD. All believers experience that rest in varying degrees, and for varying periods. But our Father wants us to enjoy the constant experience of peace and rest that He alone can give. He wants us to live in the good of the New Covenant.

Moses did not lead Israel into the land of rest. And Y'hoshua (Joshua), even though he led them into the land, did not give them the true rest - the rest that comes from the Almighty - **the rest in fellowship and harmony with Him**. But Y'shua the Messiah does give rest to all who come to Him. He says:

“Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and **I will give you rest**. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and **YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.**” (Matthew 11:28-29)

The warning is against hardening the heart so that, instead of resting in the Almighty Saviour, we keep blundering on, in the power of our own worthless carnality. And that type of life is not the Father's intention for us!

APOSTASY: FALLING AWAY TO DESTRUCTION

“It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the Word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, since they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and subject *Him*

to open shame.” (6:4-6)

These verses are among the most difficult in the whole New Testament. The verses seem to suggest that born again believers will be ultimately lost, if they backslide. But that possibility is contradicted by other Scriptures such as:

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.” (John 10:27-28)

The Hebrews passage (6:4-6) is not dealing with a believer who has miserably failed in some area of his life; or even the backslider who has temporarily lost interest in the things of God. It is not talking about a believer who has fallen into a grievous sin that may warrant disciplinary action by the church. The passage is speaking about APOSTASY - a deliberate defection and rejection of the Saviour by those who once professed Him.

It is tragic that there are cases where people who seemed to be saved, born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, have drawn back beyond the possibility of repentance. They are apostates who once seemed to love the Lord, but who now despise God's gifts and publicly reject the Saviour and His Sacrifice.

The question is, were they born again? If they were, the next question is, how can the Lord's promise in John 10:28 fail?

The Book of Hebrews itself gives this great assurance to true believers:

“For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” (10:12,14)

It is not a question of whether apostasy is a special case that warrants the abrogation of God's promise to save all who truly call upon Him for salvation. Rather, it is tragic fact that people can get so close to the Saviour, and seem to be a genuine disciples, but they fall short of reality in respect to Divine, eternal life.

Y'shua said, “Not every one who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven; but *only* the One who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your Name, and cast out demons in Your Name, and in Your Name perform many wonders?’ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you! Away from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ ”
(Matthew 7:21-23)

These “Lord, Lord” people are professors. They are hearers of the Word, but not doers. They look like sheep, but they're not. They **profess** but they don't **possess**. And it is quite easy for such, instead of making their salvation sure, to fall away, getting worse and worse, until they end up totally rejecting the Master to whom they appeared so close.

And this is the warning in Hebrews. **Make sure your salvation is definite**. Be diligent to the end. Don't be sluggish. Don't drift away. Don't harden your heart, for that could lead to your drawing back, and ultimately to apostasy and damnation - proving that you are a fake.

On the other hand, there are many who profess faith in Christ, who don't have the heart experience - the Divine life - but who have not yet drawn back. Some **know** they don't have the Life, but others, it seems, will wake up to that fact only at the Great White Throne, where Y'shua the Judge will say, “I never knew you!”

But **today** they have the opportunity to check up to see if their faith is genuine, or counterfeit. In Hebrews chapter 3 & 4, we read the quotation, three times: “TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.” But then the writer of Hebrews says:

“Even though we speak like this, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you - things that accompany salvation. For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His Name, in having ministered to His people - just as you are *still* doing.” But we want each one of you to show the same diligence to the very end, *in realizing* the full assurance of *your* hope, so that you may not become sluggish, but *will be* imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (6:9-12)

If there is any doubt in your mind, my reader, that you are a true born again believer, ask yourself these four questions:

- 1 Have I confessed my sins to Yahweh the Almighty God, believing that the blood of Y’shua (Jesus) alone can pay the penalty for my sins, and cleanse my life?
- 2 Am I trusting in Y’shua alone, and experiencing His power in my life, to save me from the bondage of sin?
- 3 Have I given my life to Him, and publicly confessed that Y’shua the Messiah is **my** Saviour and Master?
- 4 Am I in fellowship with, and diligently following Y’shua?

If you can give a definite ‘yes’ to these four questions, it is a good indication that you are on the right way. If you can’t give a ‘yes’, then pray earnestly to God, and don’t stop praying until you can answer all these questions with a definite, YES. But do not let Satan accuse you because of some failure, and the fact that you are not yet perfect. The Saviour does not expect you to be perfected in one day, but He does expect you to give Him your heart, and to follow in His steps.

DON’T PERSIST IN SIN!

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but *let us exhort and encourage one another* - and all the more, as you see the Day of *YHWH* approaching. For if we willfully persist in sin after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but only a terrifying prospect of judgment and the fury of a FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.

“Anyone who violated *and rejected* the Law of Moses died without mercy on *the testimony* of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God *under foot*, who has treated the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified as a common *thing*, and who has insulted the Spirit of Grace?

“THE RIGHTEOUS MAN WILL LIVE BY FAITH; but if he draws back, I will not be pleased with him. But we are not of those who *defect and* draw back to destruction, but *we are* of those who have faith to the saving of the soul.” (10:25-29, 38-39)

Like the warning in Hebrews six, these verses deal with apostates who ultimately trample the holy Lamb of God underfoot, and despise His blood - the blood of the

Everlasting Covenant. Whereas in chapter six the apostates have fallen away, possibly because of unbelief, erroneous doctrines, these in chapter 10 have fallen away through willful, persistent sin.

Persistent, willful sinning is not a sign of the new birth and of one's fellowship with the Messiah. And persistent sinning doesn't have to be debauchery. It may be pride or bitterness, or even gossip.

In chapter 12, believers are told to throw off that persistent, entangling sin that they grapple with.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a *great* cloud of witnesses, let us also **throw off every weight**, *every encumbrance, every hindrance*, and *particularly* the sin that most readily assails, entangles *and* leeches onto us, *robbing us of spiritual strength*; and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Y'shua, the Author of the faith and the One who completes *and* perfects *our faith*.” (12:1-2)

It's not the same sin in every believer's life, but it's our own particular pet sin. This is a **persistent sin** that **assails** us, and **robs** us of spiritual strength, rather than a deliberate, willful sin such as an unsaved person commits without scruples.

But these verses do not give us an alibi, so that we can blame an outward force, and then settle down into co-existence with our pet sin. We are told to throw it off. But how? By faith! Just like all those in chapter eleven overcame and gained the victory and approval. By faith - **by trusting in the One who has made the promises**. Just like Sarah did:

“By faith also Sarah herself received ability to conceive and to give birth to a child, even though *she was well* past the age for it, because she considered *YHWH El Shaddai*, the One who had made the promise, faithful *and* true to His word.” (11:11)

DON'T FALL SHORT!

“Watch diligently *and* take care lest any one *of you* falls short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and through it many become defiled; *and* lest anyone becomes like Esau, an immoral and godless person, who, for a single meal, sold his birthright - *his inheritance rights as the oldest son*.” (12:15)

DON'T REFUSE TO LISTEN TO THE HEAVENLY MASTER!

“See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those who refused *to listen to* the one who warned *them* on earth did not escape, how much less will we *escape* if we turn away from Him who warns *us* from heaven.” (12:25)

8.

STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE BELIEVER TO PRESS ON

Along with the warnings about drawing back, there is very great encouragement for the believer to press on, and to hold fast to the Hope set before him, firm till the end.

Y'SHUA IS OUR PERFECTED BROTHER

“In bringing many sons to glory, it was most appropriate that *God*, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the Author of their salvation perfect through suffering. For both He who sanctifies (*sets His people apart and makes them holy*), and those who are being sanctified, are all from one *Father*; that is why He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

“For this reason it was essential that He be made like His brethren in every respect, in order to become a merciful and faithful high priest in things related to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people . . . And since He Himself has suffered in being tempted *and* tested, He is *well* able to come to the aid of those who are being tempted.” (2:10-11,17-18)

WE SHARE A HEAVENLY CALLING

“Therefore, holy brethren (*you who are consecrated, sanctified and set apart for God*), you who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Y’shua - *meditate on Him*, the Apostle and High Priest whom we *publicly* confess . . . But Christ - *the Messiah* - was *faithful* as a Son over His Father’s house. And we are His household, if we hold firmly to the end, our confidence and triumphant hope *in Him*.” (3:1, 6)

WE HAVE A HIGH PRIEST WHO FULLY UNDERSTANDS

“For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to *understand and* sympathize with our weaknesses, but *we have One who has been* tempted in every way, just as *we are - yet was* without sin. Let us then approach the Throne of Grace with *full* confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in *our* time of need.” (4:15-16)

Y'SHUA IS THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION

“Although *He was* a Son, He learned obedience from what He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became the Author *and* Source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him - being designated by God, ‘High Priest, in the order of Malkitzedek’.” (5:8-10)

WE HAVE A FIRM AND SECURE HOPE

“Even though we speak like this, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you - things that accompany salvation. For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His Name, in having ministered to His people - just as you are *still* doing.

But we want each one of you to show the same diligence to the very end, *in realizing* the full assurance of *your* hope, so that you may not become sluggish, but *will be* imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

“When God made the promise to Abraham, since there was no-one greater for Him to swear by, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘*When BLESSING you, I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU richly, AND when MULTIPLYING you, I WILL CERTAINLY MULTIPLY YOU greatly.*’ And so, after waiting patiently, *Abraham* received the promise.

“Now men *always* swear by someone greater *than themselves*, and

confirmation by an oath - *a sworn statement* - is final for them in every dispute. Like that, God, desiring to show to the heirs of the promise, the unchanging nature of His purpose *clearly and without a shadow of doubt*, confirmed it by an oath.

He did this so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie - *His promise and His oath*, we who have fled to *Him* for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

And we have this *hope* as **an anchor for the soul, a hope both firm and secure**, and *one which* enters the inner *sanctuary* behind the curtain, where Y'shua, *our* forerunner, has entered on our behalf, having become High Priest forever after the order of Malkitzedek." (6:9-20)

Y'SHUA SAVES COMPLETELY AND FOREVER

"Because *Y'shua* lives and continues for ever, He has a permanent *and unchangeable* priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save completely and forever those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them. And such a high priest meets our need *perfectly* - *One who is* holy, innocent, undefiled, set apart from sinners and exalted above the heavens." (7:24-26)

A LIVING WAY HAS BEEN OPENED FOR US

"Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the *Most Holy Place* by the blood of Y'shua - by a new and living way which He consecrated *and opened* for us - *a way* through the curtain, that is, *through* His flesh - *His torn body*, and *since we have such* a great priest *ministering* over the household of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *with His blood and cleansed* from a guilty conscience, *even as* our bodies have been washed with pure water. Let us hold fast, without wavering, to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful." (10:19-23)

WE WILL RECEIVE THE PROMISED REWARD

"But remember the earlier days when, after being enlightened, you endured a great struggle with sufferings; *for* sometimes *you were* publicly exposed to abuse and persecution, while at other times *you* stood loyally by those who were treated this way. For you sympathized together with those in prison, and cheerfully accepted the seizure of your property, knowing that you yourselves have a better and lasting possession in heaven.

"So do not throw away your confidence which has a great reward; for you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise. For in just a very little while, the *One who is* coming WILL COME, AND *HE* WILL NOT DELAY.

"THE RIGHTEOUS MAN WILL LIVE BY FAITH; but if he draws back, I will not be pleased with him. But we are not of those who *defect and* draw back to destruction, but *we are* of those who have faith to the saving of the soul." (10:32-39)

Y'SHUA WILL COMPLETE OUR FAITH

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a *great* cloud of witnesses, let us also throw off every weight, *every encumbrance, every hindrance*, and *particularly* the sin that most readily assails, entangles *and* leeches onto us, *robbing us of spiritual strength*; and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Y’shua, the Author of the faith and the One who completes *and* perfects *our faith*, who, in view of the joy set before Him endured the cross, *ignoring and even* despising *its* shame, and has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

“Consider *and think much about* Him who endured bitter hostility against Himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.” (12:1-3)

WE ARE SONS OF THE HEAVENLY FATHER

“You have not yet resisted to the point of *shedding* blood, in struggling against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons: MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF *YHWH*, THE LORD, NOR LOSE HEART WHEN *YOU ARE* REBUKED *AND* CORRECTED BY HIM; FOR *YHWH* DISCIPLINES THOSE HE LOVES, and He scourges, that is, punishes everyone He receives as a son.

“So if you *need to* endure discipline, God is treating you as sons; for what son is not disciplined by *his* father? But if you are exempt from *the* discipline in which all *true sons* share, then you are illegitimate children and not *true* sons.

“Furthermore, we have *all* had *human* fathers who corrected us, and we respected them. Shall we not much more willingly submit to the Father of *our* spirits, and live? For they indeed disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* profit *and* good, in order that we may *constantly* partake of His holiness.” (12:4-10)

WE COME TO MOUNT ZION, NOT TO MT SINAI!

“For you have not come *as the Israelites did*, to a *literal* mountain that may be touched and that was blazing with fire; *you have not come* to darkness and gloom, to a tornado, to the blast of a trumpet and to a voice whose words *made* the hearers beg that no further word should be spoken to them.

“For they could not endure the order being given, ‘IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED OR SHOT THROUGH WITH AN ARROW.’ The sight was so terrifying *that* Moses said, ‘I AM FULL OF FEAR AND TREMBLING.’

“But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God; to myriads of angels, to the *Universal* Assembly, to the Ekklesia - *the corporate body* of ‘The Firstborn’ who are enrolled in heaven.

“*You have come* to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect; and *you have come* to Y’shua the Mediator of a New Covenant and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks *of* mercy - a more gracious message than *the blood* of Abel *which cried out for vengeance*.” (12:18-24)

THE GOD OF PEACE WILL EQUIP US

“Now may *YHWH SHALOM*, the God of Peace, who brought Y’shua our Master, the Great Shepherd of the Sheep, back from the dead *in the power of the blood that ratified* the everlasting covenant, equip you in every good thing *you need* to do His will, working in you that which is pleasing to Him, through Y’shua the Messiah; to whom *be* the glory for ever and ever. Amen!” (13:20-21)

9.

EXHORTATIONS

As in other New Testament epistles, there are many exhortations, particularly for believers who are called to be obedient doers of the Word.

It is very useful to highlight such commands and exhortations, for they constitute the Law of Messiah (1 Col 9:21; Gal 6:2; Rom 8:2). These are New Covenant “Laws” being written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit:

“I WILL PUT MY LAWS IN THEIR MINDS AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS.” (Hebrews 8:10)

These instructions must not be ignored or treated lightly, lest we be exposed ultimately as counterfeits. Y’shua said:

“Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your Name, and cast out demons in Your Name, and in Your Name perform many wonders?’ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you! AWAY FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTISE LAWLESSNESS!’ . . . everyone who hears these words of Mine and does **not** put them into practice, will be compared to a foolish man who built his house upon sand...” (Matthew 7:22-23, 26)

Pay Close Attention to Spiritual Truth!

“We must pay much closer attention *than ever*, therefore, to the things *we have* heard, lest we drift away *from them*.” (2:1)

Meditate on Y’SHUA!

“Fix your thoughts on Y’shua - *meditate on Him*, the Apostle and High Priest whom we *publicly* confess.” (3:1)

Encourage Others!

“But encourage one another daily.” (3:13)

Be Diligent to Enter Spiritual Rest!

“Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest.” (4:11)

Hold Firmly to the Faith!

“Therefore, since we have a great High Priest who has passed through *to* the *highest* heaven, Y’shua the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.” (4:14)

Approach the Throne of Grace!

“Let us then approach the Throne of Grace with *full* confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us *in our* time of need.” (4:16)

Press On to Maturity!

“Therefore leaving the *discussion of the* elementary teachings about the Messiah, let us press on to maturity.” (6:1)

Show Diligence!

“But we want each one of you to show the same diligence to the very end, *in realizing* the full assurance *of your* hope.” (6:11)

Draw Near!

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *with His blood and cleansed* from a guilty conscience.” (10:22)

Hold Fast to the Hope!

“Let us hold fast, without wavering, to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.” (10:23)

Stimulate to Good Deeds!

“Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.” (10:24)

Meet Together to Encourage!

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but *let us* exhort *and encourage one another* - and all the more, as you see the Day of YHWH approaching.” (10:25)

Run the Race!

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a *great* cloud of witnesses, let us also throw off every weight, *every encumbrance, every hindrance*, and *particularly* the sin that most readily assails, entangles *and* leeches onto us, *robbing us of spiritual strength*; and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Y’shua ...” (12:1-2)

Do Not Lose Heart!

“Consider *and think much about* Him who endured bitter hostility against Himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.” (12:3)

Endure Discipline!

“So if you *need to* endure discipline, God is treating with you as sons; for what son is not disciplined by *his* father?” (12:7)

Straighten and Strengthen!

“Therefore, straighten and STRENGTHEN THE DROOPING HANDS AND THE FEEBLE KNEES, and make straight *and level* paths for your feet, so that *the* lame *limbs* may not be dislocated, but rather healed.” (12:12-13)

Live in Peace!

“Make every effort to live in peace with all men, and *pursue* holiness without which no one will see *YHWH HA KODESH*, the *Holy LORD*.” (12:14)

Watch Against Bitterness!

“Watch diligently *and take care* lest any one *of you* falls short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and through it many become defiled. “ (12:15)

Do Not Refuse the Voice of the Heavenly Master!

“See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those who refused *to listen* to the one who warned *them* on earth did not escape, how much less will we *escape* if we turn away from Him who warns *us* from heaven.” (12:25)

Abound in Grace!

“Let us have *His abundant* grace by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and awe.” (12:28)

Continue in Love!

“Let brotherly love continue.” (13:1)

Show Hospitality!

“Do not forget *or neglect* to show hospitality *to strangers*, for by doing that *some* people have entertained angels without knowing it.” (13:2)

Remember Prisoners and the Mistreated!

“Remember the prisoners as if *you were* imprisoned with them; and those who are mistreated, since you yourselves are also in the body.” (13:3)

Hold Marriage in Honour!

“*Let* marriage *be held* in honour in every respect, and let the *marriage*, *be* *be* undefiled; for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.” (13:4)

Be Free of the Love of Money!

“Let your way of life be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU¹.’” (13:5)

Imitate Your Spiritual Leaders!

“Remember your leaders who have spoken the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their conduct and imitate their faith.” (13:7)

Be Wary of False Teachings!

“Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings; for *it is* good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, *and* not by *regulations about* foods...” (13:9)

Take Your Stand With Y'SHUA!

“Let us, then, go to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach - *sharing the contempt, abuse and shame He endured.*” (13:13)

Offer Praise Continually!

“Through Him then let us offer to God a sacrifice of praise continually, for this is the fruit of lips that confess His Name.” (13:15)

Share With Others!

“And do not forget *or neglect* to do good and share *with others*; for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” (13:16)

Obey Your Spiritual Leaders!

“Obey your *spiritual* leaders and submit *to their authority*; for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. *Obey them* so that they may do *their work* with joy and not with sighing *and* groaning ...” (13:17)

Pray for the Apostles of the Gospel!

“Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good, *clear* conscience, desiring to walk uprightly, *acting honorably and in complete honesty* in all things. And I urge *you* all the more to do this - *to pray for us*, that I may be restored to you all the earlier.” (13:18-19)

10.

THE LAW, AND THE NEW COVENANT

As we explore the Hebrew roots of the New Covenant - “the faith once for all delivered to the saints” - we must consider the Law and its purpose, and particularly the question of the Sabbath.

Most Christians are quick to insist, “We are no longer under the Law! We are saved by grace!” That is true. But we must also be quick to answer, “But the believer IS under a **NEW** law - not the Law written in stone and handed to Moses; but under the **LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE** in the Messiah.” (Romans 8:1-4). It is also called the Law of Christ. (1 Cor. 9:21. Gal. 6:2). We are not **LAWLESS**. God forbid!

Although they would not say it outright, the idea many believers have is that because we are “under grace,” we are free to do as we like. The supposed absence of any law gives a believer licence, so they think, to act according to his own will (within limits, of course!).

These believers also fail to understand the New Covenant, and its requirements - the way of sanctification.

Sometimes people ask me, “Do we have to keep the Ten Commandments?” I reply, “It is not a legalistic matter of keeping commandments. **We have to live in and under the New Covenant, according to the Law of the Spirit** which is a much higher and superior Law than the Ten Commandments.

Let us further study the New Covenant; and I invite you to pray right now, as I pray also for you, beloved reader, that this study will bring new understanding of the true nature of The Faith into which you have been grafted by the Spirit of the Messiah.

To see the New Covenant in true perspective, let us first recall the features of the Old Covenant.

The Old Covenant was an extensive set of laws, including the **Ten Commandments**, which was given to the nation of Israel, to teach them the holy standards of *Yahweh El Shaddai*. And even as the Law condemned those living under the Law - for all fall short of its requirements - the Law provided a remedy - a provisional covering of the people's sins, through their animal sacrifices.

Sacrifices of sheep, goats, bulls, and doves could not take away sins (Hebrews 10:4,11), but the blood of these animals could, and did, act as a **provisional** sacrifice. The sins of those who brought the prescribed sacrifice would be forgiven by God on the basis of the Sacrifice of Y'shua, the Lamb of God - which, of course, was still future. But repentance and faith were required of the individuals who availed of this provision.

The Old Covenant was intended to be operative for a limited time. Besides providing provisional covering, it was to act as a school-teacher to bring people to the Saviour. (Gal 3:24). The Law brought conviction, and conviction, by the grace of God, led to repentance and to salvation.

The Law awarded the death penalty to all for their breaking of the Law. ALL were condemned. But the Messiah, the only One who never ever broke the Law, died to fulfil the righteous death penalty awarded to mankind. He thus fulfilled the requirements of the Law, both by His life, and by His death. (Matt 5:17). Then, having fulfilled the Law, Y'shua the Messiah arbitrated a New superior Covenant with its new "Law of the Spirit."

Under the New Covenant, the holy requirements of God have not been lessened, but rather, enhanced. A fuller understanding and interpretation of His requirements is found in the New.

The Old Covenant, you might say, is a teacher to bring us to **graduation**; but the New Covenant is a **post-graduation** course that teaches us the thoughts, attitudes and ways of the Heavenly Father, preparing us to reign with the Messiah throughout eternity.

Under the New Covenant, each believer is indwelt by *Ruach Ha Kodesh* - the Holy Spirit. The believer does not go to a temple. He is a temple! But he also becomes a priest after the order of Malkitzedek - the Order of Y'shua the Great High Priest - a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9), and as such, he has the privilege and duty of entering, in spirit, into the inner sanctuary of the true tabernacle in Heaven.

Concerning the Law given to Moses, the Book of Hebrews says:

"For there is a setting aside of the former commandment because it was weak and ineffectual - for the Law made nothing perfect - and instead, a better hope is introduced through which we *now* draw near to God." (Heb 7:18-19)

The apostle Paul also explains:

"But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in the new way *provided by* the Spirit and not in the old way of *outwardly following the letter of the Law.*" (Romans 7:6)

"... our adequacy is from God, who also made us competent to serve as

ministers of a New Covenant, not of the letter *of a written Law*, but of the Spirit; for the letter *of the Law* kills, but the *Holy Spirit* gives life.”
(2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in *union with* the Messiah, Y’shua, who live not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit, because through the Messiah, Y’shua, the law of the Spirit of Life, has set me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man *to be an offering* for sin. And so He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the *righteous* requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the sinful nature, but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1-4)

We are no longer under the old school-teacher. We are now under the new Teacher - the Holy Spirit, who takes us through our post-graduation.

“But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth.” (John 16:13)

The New Covenant requires that its subjects “be filled with the Spirit,” and “walk in the Spirit.” (Eph 5:18. Rom 8:4; Gal 5:16, 25). And this requires that we present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God - a living, holy temple - the dwelling place of the Spirit of God.

In other words, the life God intends for us under the New Covenant is a **Spirit-filled life**; and this requires the total surrender of our lives to the control of the Holy Spirit. We are not commanded to follow the Old Covenant system of tithing, for example - 10%, plus, plus. No! We are to be under the **100%** ownership of the Master. “You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.” (1 Cor 6:20).

The process of SANCTIFICATION being wrought in us, is the effectual working out of the New Covenant in our lives. This is a **continual process**. As the New Covenant operates in us, separating us to God, the life of the Spirit becomes more and more effective and liberating, and we progress in holiness.

Y’shua said, “If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.”
(John 8:31-32)

THE SABBATH

First we must recognise that the 4th commandment, the Law of the Sabbath, was given as a **national sign** to the **nation of Israel**:

“Then YHWH said to Moses, ‘Speak to the sons of Israel; “You must surely observe My Sabbaths; for this will be a sign between Me and you for the generations to come, so that you may know that I am YHWH who sanctifies you.

“Therefore you are to observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people. For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day *there is* a Sabbath of complete rest, holy to YHWH; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day must be put to death.

“So the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbath, keeping the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It will be a [sign between Me and the Israelites](#) for ever; for in six days YHWH made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He abstained from work, and was refreshed”.’“ (Exodus 31:12-17)

“Also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am YHWH who sanctifies them.” . . . “Sanctify My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am YHWH your God.” (Ezekiel 20:12, 20)

That is the national sign for Israel and for all true Jews. In Israel today, Jewish (Messianic) believers keep Shabbat - the Sabbath - as indeed they ought; not as an observance of the Old Covenant, but as a perpetual national sign.

Gentile believers have never been commanded to keep the Jewish Sabbath.

Some will argue that the Sabbath was instituted in Genesis 2:2-3 where it says:

“By the seventh day God completed His work which He had been doing; and He rested from all His work on the seventh day. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He rested from all His creative works that He had done.”

In this passage God is demonstrating the principle of one rest day after six days of work. And it indicates that the rest day is to be a sanctified day - not merely a holiday but a holy day - a day for the LORD. That principle is for the whole world, and particularly for the believers under the New Covenant. How could we think of giving less than one of the days of our week entirely to the LORD?

Actually, if we are 100% disciples, we are to have the attitude that our entire time - all our seven days belong to the Master. Of course, we have to work to maintain ourselves and families. Yes, He expects us to do so (1 Thes 3:10). But let us observe the principle - one day belongs to Yahweh, our Father. This principle has not been annulled, just as the principles of all the Ten Commandments have not been annulled. They have been superseded, they have been enhanced, expanded, not annulled!

“You shall not murder”, Y’shua said, means also “You shall not hate.” “You shall not commit adultery,” also means “You shall not look with lust. You shall not fantasize” - meditate on and picture sexual matters!

In the disciples’ epistles and instructions there is nothing to instruct Gentile believers that they have to observe the Jewish Sabbath. The Meeting of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15), gave the following instructions to Gentile believers:

Abstain from things sacrificed to idols,
from blood,
from things strangled, and
from fornication.

Many other instructions are given in the epistles, but nothing about Gentiles first becoming Jews, and then Christian. And there’s nothing about obligatory keeping of the Jewish Sabbath. In the Book of Hebrews the “Sabbath rest” is presented as the believers’ **life of rest** - something much greater than a weekly Shabbat or “Lord’s Day” of physical rest.

“There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for he who has entered *God’s* rest has also ceased from his own works, just as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, so that no-one will fall *short* by *following* the same kind of unbelief and disobedience.” (Hebrews 4:9-11)

As far as our weekly “Lord’s Day” is concerned, there is no instruction that it **must** be Sunday. For many believers, to devote either Saturday or Sunday totally to the Lord is not possible, for in their countries, these are not off-days. In all the Arab countries, for example, the believers’ “Lord’s Day” has to be on Friday, as that is the day they are permitted to have off.

Even in India and Western countries where the weekly holiday is Sunday, there are many believers such as doctors, nurses, and shift workers who have to work on that day. They may be able to get to a meeting on Sunday evening, but a couple of hours in “church” is not exactly what is meant by “Lord’s Day.” But that’s what a lot of Christians think - as long as we put in an appearance at a church service, then that constitutes our “keeping the Sabbath.” A couple of hours for the Lord! The rest of the Lord’s Day is for my recreation and private works!

Then there’s the case of pastors who work a frantic round of Sunday services. They can hardly call that their Sabbath **rest**, can they? Yes, the day may be devoted entirely to God, but where is the rest when they sit quietly at the Father’s feet? Of course many take Monday off, to rest physically. But in most cases, I believe, it would hardly be called the “Lord’s Day.”

A suggestion for pastors: Why not make Saturday your own personal “Lord’s Day”? And not merely to prepare your messages, but to spend worshipping your Father. That could be a great preparation for your ministry on Sunday. Or you could at least start your “Lord’s Day” in the Biblical way - at sunset the evening before.

If all believers started their “Lord’s Day” at sunset on Saturday, they would be far more spiritually prepared for the worship services and ministry the next morning.

Under the New Covenant there is freedom, but it is not a freedom to be abused. We should devote one day entirely to the Father. But the Father has left it open for us, I believe, to devote to Him whichever day is possible! And this I believe is the teaching of the apostle Paul in this regard. He was very opposed to the Judaizing of the Gentiles. He says;

“Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day - these are a mere shadow of the things that were to come; the substance (*of what is foreshadowed*), however, belongs to the Messiah.” (Colossians 2:16-17)

“One man regards one day as more sacred than others; another man regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes one day as special, does so to the Lord.” (Romans 14:5-6)

AN INVITATION AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO ENTER THE INNERMOST SANCTUARY IN HEAVEN

“... since we have **confidence to enter the Most Holy Place** by the blood of Y’shua . . . and *since we have such* a great priest *ministering* over the household of God, **let us draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *with His blood and cleansed* from a guilty conscience...” (10:19-22)

One of the most thrilling exhortations of the book of Hebrews is this strong encouragement to enter the Heavenly Sanctuary - into the very **Crystal Throne Room** of *YHWH El Shaddai*.

This is the Highest Place in Heaven, where the seraphim cry out:

“Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh (holy, holy, holy), YHWH of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.” (Isaiah 6:2-3)

This is where the four living creatures call out continually:

“Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh, *YHWH El Shaddai*, who was, and is, and who is to come.” (Revelation 4:8)

Before the throne, there is, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal (Rev 4:6). Here the Radiance and Glory of *YHWH Ha Kodesh* fills the Most Holy Place (Rev 21:23). Here the twenty-four elders fall down and worship the Eternal One, saying:

“You are worthy, our Master and Elohim (God), to receive glory and honour and power, for You created all things.” (Rev 4:10-11)

This is the innermost sanctuary into which sanctified believers are invited to come with confidence and faith, to participate in the heavenly worship, and also to intercede for others, and to receive grace for their own needs.

We are invited to come, not just in the future life, but RIGHT NOW! We come, not physically, but in spirit. The way of access has been opened to us by Y’shua, our Beloved Master, who is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (1:3)

But my saved reader, we need to **practice** coming into the Holy Place! This is not a mere theoretical or imaginative idea. And it is much deeper than our usual “prayer life” of voicing a number of words, and “telephoning” to heaven.

We do most of our praying from earth, don’t we? Some people think they have to shout a lot in prayer, as if it were necessary to make God hear - He being “way up there.” What we have to learn to do is to **pray in the Throne Room** itself. If we come into the inner sanctuary, we can even whisper. He’ll hear! And in that Holy Place we won’t carry on with any antics, trying to impress God - or others.

DRAWING NEAR

To draw near, I find it very important, myself, to hush my voice, heart and mind, before attempting to pray. Instead of immediately rushing into the Presence of God, I stop and concentrate, reminding myself that in spirit I am about to enter the Crystal Throne Room. I try to forget my body and surroundings, and focus my attention on the Majesty on High. I remind myself of the features of the Inner Sanctuary - the angels and the twenty-four elders around the throne, the glorious music as they sing, *“Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh, YHWH El Shaddai.”*

From that position, my spirit joins in the worship that is ascending from all sides, to Him who sits on the throne. I lift up my voice along with the innumerable company of the redeemed. Then, very much aware that I stand there because of the sprinkled

Blood of Y'shua, I step forward to fulfil my duty as an intercessor, and also to present my petitions, seeking wisdom, direction and power to do the will of the Almighty.

And as my Beloved Master, Y'shua, is seated there, I spend some time at His feet - just to express love for Him. Then I whisper, Master, I have to go now." And He whispers back, "Don't forget, I'm with you." And then "my spirit lands back in my body," and I slowly open my eyes, and go about my work as an ambassador for Heaven on earth.

Throughout the day I continue in conversation with the Master, for He is with me all the time. But I keep on practising this exercise of ascending in spirit, to the Throne Room. My spirit is becoming something of a yo-yo, no doubt. But it's not a game! It's my privilege and duty.

I encourage you also, dear reader, to keep on **practicing** the reality of "drawing near" to El Shaddai, in the Heavenly Sanctuary.

*"For you have not come as the Israelites did,
to a literal mountain that may be touched
and that was blazing with fire;
you have not come to darkness and gloom ...
but you have come to **Mount Zion**,
to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God;
to myriads of angels,
to the *Universal* Assembly, to the Ekklesia –
the corporate body of 'The Firstborn'
who are enrolled in heaven.
You have come to God, the Judge of all,
to the spirits of righteous men made perfect;
and you have come to Y'shua
the Mediator of a New Covenant
and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of *mercy*."
(Hebrews 12:18-24)*

*"Now may **YHWH SHALOM**,
the God of Peace, who brought
Y'shua our Master,
the Great Shepherd of the Sheep,
back from the dead in the power of the blood
that ratified the everlasting covenant,
equip you in every good thing you need to do His will,
working in you that which is pleasing to Him,
through
Y'shua Ha Mashiach;
to whom be the glory for ever and ever.*

Amen!”

(Hebrews 13:20-21)

