

Hebrews

God Has Spoken Through His Son

1 In the past God spoke to our people through the prophets.* God spoke to them many times and in many different ways. ²And now in these last days God has spoken to us again. God has spoken to us through his Son. God made the whole world through his Son. And God has chosen his Son to have all things. ³The Son shows the glory of God. He is a perfect copy of God's nature. The Son holds everything together with his powerful command. The Son made people clean from their sins. Then he sat down at the right side* of the Great One (*God*) in heaven. ⁴God gave him a name that is a much greater name than any of the angels have. And he became that much greater than the angels.

⁵God never said these things to any of the angels:

“You are my Son;
Today I have become your Father.”
Psalm 2:7

God also never said to an angel,

“I will be his Father,
and he will be my son.” *2 Samuel 7:14*

⁶And when God brings his firstborn* Son into the world, he says,

“Let all God's angels worship the Son.”*
Deuteronomy 32:43

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

right side The place of honor and authority (*power*).

firstborn This word means that Christ was the first and most important of all God's children.

“Let ... Son” These words are found in Deuteronomy 32:43 in the Septuagint, the Greek Version of the Old Testament, and in a Hebrew copy among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

⁷This is what God said about the angels:

“God makes his angels become like winds.*
And God makes his servants become
like flames of fire.” *Psalm 104:4*

⁸But God said this about his Son:

“Your throne, O God, will continue
forever and ever.
You will rule your kingdom with
right judgments.

⁹ You love the right,
and you hate the wrong.
So God, your God, has given you
a greater joy than he gave the people
with you.” *Psalm 45:6-7*

¹⁰God also says,

“O Lord, in the beginning you made the earth.
And your hands made the sky.

¹¹ These things will disappear, but you
will stay.
All things will become old like clothes.

¹² You will fold them like a coat.
And they will be changed like clothes.
But you never change.
And your life will never end.”

Psalm 102:25-27

¹³And God never said this to an angel:

“Sit at my right side
until I put your enemies
under your power.*” *Psalm 110:1*

winds This can also mean “spirits.”

until I put ... power Literally, “until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

¹⁴All the angels are spirits who serve God and are sent to help those people who will receive salvation.

Our Salvation Is Greater than the Law

2 So we must be more careful to follow the things that we were taught. We must be careful so that we will not be pulled away [from the true way]. ²The teaching (*the law*) that God spoke through angels was shown to be true. And every time the [Jewish] people did something against that teaching they were punished for what they did. They were punished when they did not obey that teaching. ³The salvation [that was given to us] is very great. So surely we also will be punished if we live like this salvation is not important. It was the Lord (*Jesus*) who first told people about this salvation. And the people who heard him proved to us that this salvation is true. ⁴God also proved it by using wonders, great signs, and many kinds of miracles.* And he proved it by giving people gifts through the Holy Spirit.* He gave those gifts the way he wanted.

Christ Became Like People to Save Them

⁵God did not choose angels to be the rulers over the new world that was coming. That future world is the world we have been talking about. ⁶It is written some place [in the Scriptures]*,

“Why are people so important to you?
Why do you care about the son of man*?
Is he so important?”

⁷ For a short time you made him lower than the angels.

You gave him glory and honor to be his crown.

⁸ You put everything under his control.*”

Psalm 8:4-6

miracle(s) Amazing works done by God’s power.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

son of man This can mean any man (person), but the name “Son of Man” is often used to mean Jesus. Jesus showed what God planned for all men (people) to be.

If God put everything under his control, then there was nothing left that he did not rule. But we don’t yet see him ruling over everything. ⁹For a short time Jesus was made lower than the angels, but now we see him wearing a crown of glory and honor because he suffered and died. Because of God’s grace (*kindness*) Jesus died for every person.

¹⁰God is the One who made all things. And all things are for his glory. God wanted to have many people to be his children and share his glory. So God did what he needed to do. He made perfect the One (*Jesus*) who leads those people to salvation. God made Jesus [a] perfect [Savior] through Jesus’ suffering.

¹¹The One (*Jesus*) who makes people holy* and those people who are made holy are from the same family. So he (*Jesus*) is not ashamed to call those people his brothers and sisters.

¹²Jesus says,

“God, I will tell my brothers [and sisters] about you.

Before all your people I will sing your praises.” *Psalm 22:22*

¹³He also says,

“I will trust in God.” *Isaiah 8:17*

And he says,

“I am here.
And with me are the children that God has given me.” *Isaiah 8:18*

¹⁴Those children are people with physical bodies. So Jesus himself became like those people and had the same experiences people have. Jesus did this so that, by dying, he could destroy the one who has the power of death. That one is the devil. ¹⁵Jesus became like those people and died so that he could free them. They were like slaves all their lives because of their fear of death. ¹⁶Clearly, it is not angels that Jesus helps. Jesus helps the people who

control Literally, “feet.”

holy God’s people are holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

are from Abraham.* ¹⁷For this reason Jesus had to be made like us his brothers and sisters in every way. Jesus became like people so that he could be their merciful and faithful high priest* in service to God. Then Jesus could bring forgiveness for the people's sins. ¹⁸And now Jesus can help those people who are tempted. Jesus is able to help because he himself suffered and was tempted.

Jesus Is Greater Than Moses

3 So all of you should think about Jesus. God sent Jesus to us, and he is the high priest* of our faith. I tell you to think about him, my brothers and sisters, because God chose you to be his holy* people. ²God sent Jesus to us and made him our high priest. And Jesus was faithful to God like Moses was. He did everything God wanted him to do in God's house (*family*). ³When a man builds a house, people will honor the man more than the house. It is the same with Jesus. Jesus should have more honor than Moses. ⁴Every house is built by someone, but God built everything. ⁵Moses was faithful as a servant in God's whole house. He told people what God would say in the future. ⁶But Christ is faithful in ruling God's house as the Son. And we are God's house if we remain confident of the great hope we are glad to say we have.

We Must Continue to Follow God

⁷So it is like the Holy Spirit* says:

- ⁸ “If you hear God's voice today,
don't be stubborn like in the past,
when you were against God.
That was the day you tested God
in the desert.
⁹ For 40 years in the desert your people
saw the things I did.
But they tested me and my patience.

- ¹⁰ So I was angry with those people.
I said, ‘Those people's thoughts are
always wrong.
Those people have never understood
my ways.’
¹¹ So I was angry and made a promise:
‘Those people will never enter
and have my rest.*’” *Psalm 95:7-11*

¹²So, brothers and sisters, be careful that none of you is sinful, and refuses to believe, and stops following the living God. ¹³But encourage each other every day. Do this while it is “today.*” Help each other so that none of you will become hardened because of sin and the way sin fools people. ¹⁴We all share together with Christ. This is true if we continue until the end to have the sure faith we had in the beginning. ¹⁵This is what that Scripture* said:

“If you hear God's voice today,
don't be stubborn like in the past
when you were against God.”

Psalm 95:7-8

¹⁶Who were those people who heard God's voice and were against him? It was all those people that Moses led out of Egypt. ¹⁷And who was God angry with for 40 years? God was angry with those people who sinned. Those people died in the desert. ¹⁸And what people was God talking to when he promised that they would never enter and have his rest*? God was talking about those people who did not obey him. ¹⁹So we see that those people were not allowed to enter and have God's rest. Why? Because they did not believe.

4 And we still have that promise God gave those people. That promise is that we can enter and have God's rest.* So we should be very careful, so that none of you fail to get that promise. ²The way to be saved* was told to us the same as to those people. But the teaching those people heard did not help them. They heard that teaching but did not accept it with

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.

high priest Most important priest for God's people.

holy God's people are holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

rest A place of rest God promised to give his people.

today This word is taken from verse 7. It means that it is important to do these things now, while we still have the opportunity.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

way to be saved Literally, “Good News.” See Rom. 1:16.

faith. ³Only we people who believe are able to enter and have God's rest. Like God said,

“I was angry and made a promise:
‘Those people will never enter
and have my rest.’” *Psalm 95:11*

God said this. But God's work was finished from the time he made the world. ⁴Some place [in the Scriptures*] God talked about the seventh day of the week: “So on the seventh day God rested from all his work.”* ⁵And in that other Scripture God also said, “Those people will never enter and have my rest.*”

⁶It is still true that some people will enter and have God's rest.* But those people who first heard the way to be saved* did not enter. They did not enter because they did not obey. ⁷So God planned another special day. It is called “today.” God spoke about that day through David a long time later. It is the same Scripture* we used before:

“If you hear God's voice today,
don't be stubborn like in the past.”
Psalm 95:7–8

⁸We know that Joshua* did not lead the people into the rest* [God promised]. We know this because God spoke later about another day [for rest] (“today”). ⁹This shows that the seventh-day rest* for God's people is still coming. ¹⁰God rested after he finished his work. So the person who enters and has God's rest is the person who has finished his work like God did. ¹¹So let us try as hard as we can to enter God's rest. We must try hard so that none of us will be lost by following the example of those people who refused to obey God.

¹²God's word* (*message*) is alive and working. His word is sharper than the

sharpest sword. God's word cuts all the way into us [like a sword]. It cuts deep to the place where the soul and the spirit are joined. God's word cuts to the center of our joints and our bones. It judges the thoughts and feelings in our hearts. ¹³Nothing in all the world can be hidden from God. He can clearly see all things. Everything is open before him. And to him we must explain the way we have lived.

Jesus Is the High Priest who Helps Us

¹⁴We have a great high priest* who has gone to live with God in heaven. He is Jesus the Son of God. So let us continue strongly in the faith we have. ¹⁵Jesus, the high priest that we have, is able to understand our weaknesses. When Jesus lived on earth, he was tempted in every way. He was tempted in the same ways that we are tempted, but he never sinned. ¹⁶With Jesus as our high priest we can feel free to come before God's throne where there is grace (*forgiveness*). There we receive mercy and kindness to help us when we need it.

5 Every Jewish high priest* is chosen from among men. That priest is given the work of helping people with the things they must do for God. That priest must offer to God gifts and sacrifices* for sins. ²The high priest himself is weak [like all people]. So he is able to be gentle with those people who don't understand and who are doing wrong things. ³The high priest offers sacrifices for the sins of the people. But the high priest has weaknesses himself. So he also must offer sacrifices for his own sins.

⁴To be a high priest* is an honor. But no person chooses himself for this work. That person must be called by God like Aaron* was. ⁵It is the same with Christ. He did not choose himself to have the glory of becoming a high priest. But God chose him. God said to Christ,

“You are my Son;
today I have become your Father.”

Psalm 2:7

rest A place of rest God promised to give his people.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

“So ... his work” Quote from Gen. 2:2.

way to be saved Literally, “Good News.” See Rom. 1:16.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Joshua After Moses died, Joshua became leader of the Jewish people. Joshua led them into the land that God promised to give them.

seventh-day rest Literally, “sabbath rest,” meaning a sharing in the rest God began after he created the world.

God's word God's teachings and commands.

high priest Most important priest for God's people.

sacrifice(s) A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people's sins.

Aaron The first Jewish high priest. He was Moses' brother.

⁶And in another part [of the Scriptures*] God says,

“You will be a priest forever,
the same as Melchizedek.*”

Psalm 110:4

⁷While Christ lived on earth he prayed to God and asked God for help. God is the One who could save him from death, and Jesus prayed to God with loud cries and tears. And God answered Jesus’ prayers because Jesus was humble and did everything God wanted. ⁸Jesus was the Son of God. But Jesus suffered and learned to obey by the things that he suffered. ⁹Then Jesus was perfect. And Jesus is the reason that all those people who obey him can have salvation forever. ¹⁰And God made Jesus the high priest,* the same as Melchizedek.*

Warning Against Falling Away

¹¹We have many things to tell you about this. But it is hard to explain because you have stopped trying to understand. ¹²You have had enough time that by now you should be teachers. But you need some person to teach you again the first lessons of God’s teaching. You still need the teaching that is like milk. You are not ready for solid food. ¹³Any person who lives on milk is still a baby. That person knows nothing about right teaching. ¹⁴But solid food is for people who have stopped being like babies. It is for people who are grown-up in their spirits. Those people have practiced and taught themselves to know the difference between good and evil.

6 So we should be finished with the beginning lessons about Christ. We should not go back to the things we started with. We began [our life in Christ] by turning away from the evil things we did before and by believing in God. ²At that time we were taught about baptisms,* and about the special act of a person putting his hands on people.* We were

taught about people rising from death and about the judgment that will continue forever. But now we need to go forward to more mature (*advanced*) teaching.* ³And we will do this if God allows.

⁴⁻⁶After people have left [the way of Christ], can you make them change their life again? I am talking about people who have learned the truth. They received God’s gift and also shared in the Holy Spirit.* Those people heard the things God said, and they saw the great powers of God’s new world. And they saw for themselves that those things are very good. But then those people left [the way of Christ]. It is not possible to make those people change their lives [and come to Christ] again. Why? Because those people [that leave Christ’s way] are really nailing Christ to the cross again. Those people bring shame to Christ before all people.

⁷[Those people are like] land that gets plenty of rain. A farmer plants and cares for that land so that it will give food for people. If that land grows plants that help people, then that land has the blessing of God. ⁸But if that land grows thorns and weeds, it is worthless. That land is in danger that it will be cursed by God. And that land will be destroyed by fire.

⁹Dear friends, we are saying these hard things, but we really we expect better things from you. We feel sure that you will do the things that are a part of salvation. ¹⁰God is fair. God will remember all the work you have done. And God will remember that you showed your love to him by helping his people. And God will remember that you continue to help his people. ¹¹We want each of you to continue with the same hard work all your lives. Then you will surely get that great thing you hope for. ¹²We don’t want you to become lazy. We want you to be like those people who get the things that God promised. Those people get God’s promises because they have faith and patience.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Melchizedek A priest and king who lived in the time of Abraham. Read Gen. 14:17–24.

high priest Most important priest for God’s people.

baptisms The word here may mean Christian baptism (a brief burial in water), or it may mean the Jewish ceremonial washings.

putting his hands on people This was done to show that the people were given a special work or blessing.

now we need ... teaching In the Greek text these words are in verse 1.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

¹³God made a promise to Abraham.* And there is no one greater than God, so God used himself to vow (*promise*) that he would do what he said. ¹⁴God said, “I will truly bless you. I will give you many, many descendants.”**
¹⁵Abraham waited patiently for this to happen. And later Abraham received what God promised.

¹⁶People always use the name of someone greater than themselves to make a vow (*promise*). The vow proves that what they say is true. And this ends all arguing about what they say. ¹⁷God wanted to prove that his promise was true. God wanted to prove this to those people who would get what he promised. God wanted those people to understand clearly that his purposes (*plans*) never change. So God said something would happen, and he proved what he said by also making a vow (*promise*). ¹⁸Those two things cannot change. God cannot lie when he says something and he cannot lie when he makes a vow. So those things give great comfort to us who came to God for safety. Those two things give us comfort and strength to continue in the hope that God gives us. ¹⁹We have this hope. And it is like an anchor. It is strong and sure and keeps us safe. It goes behind the curtain* [in the heavenly temple]. ²⁰Jesus has already entered there and opened the way for us. Jesus has become the high priest* forever, the same as Melchizedek.*

The Priest Melchizedek

7 Melchizedek* was the king of Salem and a priest for God the Most High. Melchizedek met Abraham* when Abraham was coming back after defeating the kings. That day Melchizedek blessed Abraham. ²And Abraham gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything he had. (The name Melchizedek, king of Salem, has two meanings. First, Melchizedek means

“king of goodness.” Also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.”) ³No person knows who Melchizedek’s father or mother was or where he came from.* And no person knows when he was born or when he died. Melchizedek is like the Son of God and he continues being a priest forever.

⁴You can see that Melchizedek* was very great. Abraham,* our great father,* gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything that Abraham won in battle. ⁵Now the law says that people in the family group* of Levi who become priests must get one-tenth from the people. The priests collect it from their own people (*the Jews*), even though the priests and their people are both from the family of Abraham. ⁶Melchizedek was not from the family group of Levi. But he got one-tenth from Abraham. And he blessed Abraham—the man who had God’s promises. ⁷And all people know that the more important person blesses the less important person. ⁸Those priests get one-tenth, but they are only men who live and then die. But Melchizedek, who got one-tenth [from Abraham], continues living, like the Scriptures* say. ⁹It is Levi who gets one-tenth [from the people]. But we can say that when Abraham paid Melchizedek one-tenth, then Levi also paid it. ¹⁰Levi was not yet born. But Levi was in the body of his ancestor Abraham when Melchizedek met Abraham.

¹¹People were given the law* under the system of priests from the Levi family group.* But people could not be made spiritually perfect through that system of priests. So there was a need for another priest to come. I mean a priest that is like Melchizedek,* not Aaron.* ¹²And when a different kind of priest comes, then the law must be changed too. ¹³We are saying these things about Christ. He belonged to a different family group. No person from

Abraham The most respected ancestor of the Jews.

descendants A person’s children and all their future families.

I will ... descendants Quote from Gen. 22:17.

curtain A curtain divided the “Most Holy Place” from the other part of the Jewish temple. When Jesus died, the curtain was torn open, meaning the way was opened into God’s presence. Read Mt. 27:51.

high priest Most important priest for God’s people.

Melchizedek A priest and king who lived in the time of Abraham. Read Gen. 14:17–24.

No person ... came from Literally, “Melchizedek was without father, without mother, without genealogy.”

father(s) Important ancestors of the Jews, especially the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups.

family group One of the twelve “tribes” of the Jewish people, named after Jacob’s twelve sons.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

law The law of Moses.

Aaron The first Jewish high priest. He was Moses’ brother.

that family group ever served [as a priest] at the altar.* ¹⁴It is clear that our Lord (*Christ*) came from the family group of Judah. And Moses* said nothing about priests belonging to that family group.

Jesus Is a Priest like Melchizedek

¹⁵And these things become even more clear. We see that another priest (*Jesus*) comes who is like Melchizedek.* ¹⁶He was made a priest not by any law or rules about his human family. He became a priest through the power of his life which continues forever. ¹⁷[The Scriptures*] say this about him: “You are a priest forever—the kind of priest Melchizedek was.”*

¹⁸The old rule (*law*) is now ended because it was weak and worthless. ¹⁹The law [of Moses] could not make anything perfect. And now a better hope has been given to us. And with that hope we can come near to God.

²⁰Also, it is important that God made a vow (*promise*) when he made Jesus high priest.* When those other men became priests, there was no vow. ²¹But Christ became a priest with God’s vow. God said to him:

“The Lord has made a vow (*promise*)
and will not change his mind:
‘You are a priest forever.’” *Psalms 110:4*

²²So this means that Jesus is the guarantee of a better agreement* [from God to his people].

²³Also, when one of those other priests died, he could not continue being a priest. So there were many of those priests. ²⁴But Jesus lives forever. He will never stop serving as priest. ²⁵So Christ can save those people who come to God through him. Christ can do this forever, because he always lives, ready to help people when they come before God.

²⁶So Jesus is the kind of high priest* that we need. He is holy.* He has no sin in him. He is pure and not influenced by sinners. And he is raised above the heavens. ²⁷He is not like those other priests. Those other priests had to offer (*give*) sacrifices* every day. They had to offer sacrifices first for their own sins and then for the sins of the people. But Christ doesn’t need to do that. Christ offered only one sacrifice for all time. Christ offered himself. ²⁸The law chooses high priests who are people and have the same weaknesses as people. But God made a promise that came after the law. God spoke those words with a vow (*promise*), and those words made the Son of God to be the high priest. And that Son has been made perfect forever.

Jesus Our High Priest

8 Here is the point of what we are saying: We have a high priest* like we have been telling you about. That high priest now sits on the right side* of God’s throne in heaven. ²Our high priest serves in the Most Holy Place.* He serves in the true place of worship* that was made by God, not by people.

³Every high priest* has the work of offering gifts and sacrifices* to God. So our high priest must also offer something to God. ⁴If our high priest were now living on earth, then he would not be a priest. I say this because there are already priests here who follow the law by offering gifts to God. ⁵The work that these priests do is really only a copy and a shadow of the things that are in heaven. That is why God warned Moses* when Moses was ready to build the Holy Tent*: “Be sure to make everything exactly like the pattern I showed you on the mountain.”* ⁶But the work that has been

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered to God.

Moses One of the most important leaders of the Jewish people during the time of the Old Testament.

Melchizedek A priest and king who lived in the time of Abraham. Read Gen. 14:17–24.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

“You ... Melchizedek was” Quote from Ps. 110:4.

high priest Most important priest for God’s people.

agreement God gives a contract or agreement to his people. For the Jews, the agreement was the law of Moses. Now God has given a better agreement to his people through Christ.

holy Living in a way that pleases God.

sacrifice(s) A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people’s sins.

right side The place of honor and authority (*power*).

Most Holy Place Literally, “holies,” for “holy of holies,” the spiritual place where God lives and is worshipped.

place of worship Literally, “tabernacle” or “tent.”

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle.” The special tent where God lived among his people and where the Jewish priests worshipped.

“Be sure ... mountain” Quote from Exodus 25:40.

given to Jesus is much greater than the work that was given to those priests. In the same way, the new agreement* that Jesus brought from God to his people is much greater than the old one. And the new agreement is based on promises of better things.

⁷If there was nothing wrong with the first agreement,* then there would be no need for a second agreement. ⁸But God found something wrong with the people. God said:

- “The time is coming, says the Lord,
when I will give a new agreement
to the people of Israel*
and to the people of Judah.*
⁹ It will not be like the agreement
that I gave to their fathers.
That is the agreement I gave
when I took them by the hand
and led them out of Egypt.
They did not continue following the
agreement I gave them,
and I turned away from them,
says the Lord.
¹⁰ This is the new agreement I will give the
people of Israel.*
I will give this agreement in the future,
says the Lord:
I will put my laws in their minds,
and I will write my laws on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.
¹¹ Never again will a person have to teach his
brother or God’s other people.
He will not need to tell them
to know the Lord.
Why? Because all people—the greatest
people and the least important people—
will know me.
¹² And I will forgive the wrong things they
do against me,
and I will not remember their sins.”

Jeremiah 31:31–34

new agreement This is the “better agreement” that God has given to his people through Jesus.

Israel First, Israel was the Jewish nation (people), but the name is also used to mean all of God’s people.

Judah The southern part of the Jewish nation.

first agreement The contract God gave to the Jewish people when he gave them the law of Moses.

¹³God called this a new agreement,* so God has made the first agreement* old. And anything that is old and useless is ready to disappear.

Worship Under the Old Agreement

9The first agreement* had rules for worship. And it had a man-made place for worship. ²This place was inside a tent. The first area in the tent was called the Holy Place. In the Holy Place were the lamp and the table with the special bread offered to God. ³Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place.* ⁴In the Most Holy Place was a golden altar* for burning incense.* And also there was the Holy Box of the Agreement.* The box was covered with gold. Inside this box was a golden jar of manna* and Aaron’s rod (*stick*)—the rod that once grew leaves. Also in the box were the flat rocks ₁with the Ten Commandments₁ of the old agreement ₁written on them₁. ⁵Above the box were the Cherub angels* that showed God’s glory. These Cherub angels were over the mercy seat.* But we cannot say everything about these things now.

⁶Everything in the tent was made ready in the way I have explained. Then the priests went into the first room every day to do their worship. ⁷But only the high priest* could go into the second room. And the high priest went into that room only once a year. And the high priest could never enter that room without taking blood with him. The priest offered that blood to God for himself and for the people’s sins. Those sins were the sins the people did without knowing that they were sinning. ⁸The

Most Holy Place Literally, “holy of holies,” the place in the Jewish tabernacle or temple where God met the high priest.

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered to God.

incense Special dried tree sap used for a sacrifice. It was burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke.

Box of the Agreement Wooden box covered with gold that had in it God’s law on two flat stones.

manna The food God gave to the Jewish people in the desert.

Cherub angels Two images or statues of angels.

mercy seat A place on top of “the Holy Box of the Agreement,” where the high priest put the blood of an animal once a year to pay for the sins of the people.

high priest Most important priest for God’s people.

Holy Spirit* uses those two separate rooms to teach us this: that the way into the Most Holy Place* was not open while that first room was still there. ⁹This is an example for us today. This shows that the gifts and sacrifices* that were offered to God were not able to fully cleanse the person who was worshiping God. Those sacrifices could not make that person perfect in his heart. ¹⁰Those gifts and sacrifices were only about food and drink and special washings. Those things were only rules about the body—not about things inside people’s hearts. God gave those rules [for his people to follow] until the time of God’s new way.

Worship Under the New Agreement

¹¹But Christ has already come to be the high priest.* He is the high priest of the good things we now have. But Christ does not serve in a place like the tent that those other priests served in. Christ serves in a place that is better than that tent. It is more perfect. And that place is not made by men. It does not belong to this world. ¹²Christ entered the Most Holy Place* only one time—enough for all time. Christ entered the Most Holy Place by using his own blood (*death*), not the blood of goats or young bulls. Christ entered there and got for us freedom forever. ¹³The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a cow were sprinkled on those people who were no longer pure [enough to enter that place of worship]. That blood and those ashes made those people pure again—but only their bodies. ¹⁴So surely the blood of Christ can do much, much more. Christ offered himself through the eternal Spirit* as a perfect sacrifice* to God. His blood will make us fully clean from the evil things we have done. His blood will make us pure even in our

hearts. We are made pure so that we can worship (*serve*) the living God.

¹⁵So Christ brings a new agreement* from God to his people. Christ brings this new agreement so that those people that are called by God can have the things that God promised. God’s people can have those things forever. They can have those things because Christ died to pay for the sins that people did under the first agreement.* Christ died to make people free from those sins.

¹⁶When a man dies, he leaves a will* (*agreement*). But people must prove that the man who wrote that will is dead. ¹⁷A will means nothing while the man who wrote it is still living. The will can be used only after the man dies. ¹⁸It is the same with the first agreement [between God and his people]. There had to be blood (*death*) before the agreement could be made good. ¹⁹First, Moses* told all the people every commandment in the law. Then Moses took the blood of calves and mixed it with water. Then he used red wool and a branch of hyssop* to sprinkle the blood and water on the book of the law and on all the people. ²⁰Then Moses said, “This is the blood that makes the agreement good—the agreement that God commanded you to follow.”* ²¹In the same way, Moses sprinkled the blood on the Holy Tent.* He sprinkled the blood over all the things used in worship. ²²The law says that almost everything must be made clean by blood. And sins cannot be forgiven without blood (*death*).

Christ’s Sacrifice Takes Away Sins

²³These things are copies of the real things that are in heaven. These copies had to be made clean by animal sacrifices.* But the real things in heaven must have much better

new agreement This is the “better agreement” that God has given to his people through Jesus.

first agreement The contract God gave to the Jewish people when he gave them the law of Moses.

will The paper a person signs to show which people he wants to have his things after he dies.

Moses One of the most important leaders of the Jewish people during the time of the Old Testament.

hyssop A plant used like a brush for sprinkling liquid.

“This is the blood ... follow” Quote from Ex. 24:8.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle.” The special tent where God lived among his people and where the Jewish priests worshiped.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

Most Holy Place Literally, “holies,” for “holy of holies,” the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

sacrifice(s) A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people’s sins.

high priest Most important priest for God’s people.

Spirit Probably the Holy Spirit. See note on Spirit, Holy Spirit.

sacrifices. ²⁴Christ went into the Most Holy Place.* But Christ did not go into the Most Holy Place that was made by people. That Most Holy Place is only a copy of the real one. Christ went into heaven. Christ is there now before God to help us. ²⁵The high priest* enters the Most Holy Place once every year. He takes with him blood to offer. But he does not offer his own blood [like Christ did]. Christ went into heaven, but not to offer himself many times like the high priest [offers blood again and again]. ²⁶If Christ had offered himself many times, then he would have needed to suffer many times since the time the world was made. But Christ came [and offered himself] only once. And that once is enough for all time. Christ came at a time when the world is nearing an end. Christ came to take away all sin by offering himself as a sacrifice.* ²⁷Every person must die once. After a person dies, he is judged. ²⁸So Christ was offered as a sacrifice one time to take away the sins of many people. And Christ will come a second time, but not for people's sin. Christ will come the second time to bring salvation to those people who are waiting for him.

Christ's Sacrifice Makes Us Perfect

10 The law* gave us only an unclear picture of the good things coming in the future. The law is not a perfect picture of the real things. The law tells people to offer the same sacrifices* every year. The people who come to worship God continue to offer those sacrifices. But the law can never make those people perfect. ²If the law could make people perfect, then those sacrifices would have already stopped. Those people would already be clean [from their sins]. And they would not still feel guilty for their sins. [But the law cannot do that.] ³Those people's sacrifices make them remember their sins

Most Holy Place Literally, “holies,” for “holy of holies,” the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

high priest Most important priest for God's people.

sacrifice(s) A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people's sins.

law The law of Moses.

every year, ⁴because it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵So when Christ came into the world he said:

“You (*God*) don't want sacrifices* and offerings,

but you have prepared a body for me.

⁶ You are not pleased with the sacrifices* of animals killed and burned.

And you are not pleased with sacrifices to take away sins.

⁷ Then I said, ‘Here I am, God.

It is written about me in the book of the law.

I have come to do the things you want.”

Psalm 40:6–8

⁸In this Scripture*] he (*Christ*) first said, “You don't want sacrifices* and offerings. You are not pleased with animals killed and burned or with sacrifices to take away sin.” (These are all sacrifices that the law* commands.) ⁹Then he (*Christ*) said, “Here I am, God. I have come to do the things you want.” So God ends that first system of sacrifices and starts his new way. ¹⁰Jesus Christ did the things God wanted him to do. And because of that, we are made holy through the sacrifice* of Christ's body. Christ made that sacrifice one time—enough for all time.

¹¹Every day the priests stand and do their religious service. Again and again the priests offer the same sacrifices.* But those sacrifices can never take away sins. ¹²But Christ offered only one sacrifice for sins, and that sacrifice is enough for all time. Then Christ sat down at the right side of God. ¹³And now Christ waits there for his enemies to be put under his power.* ¹⁴With one sacrifice Christ made his people perfect forever. Those people are the ones who are being made holy.*

¹⁵The Holy Spirit* also tells us about this. First he says:

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

to be put under his power Literally, “to be made a footstool for his feet.”

holy God's people are holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

¹⁶ “This is the agreement* I will make with my people in the future, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts. I will write my laws in their minds.”

Jeremiah 31:33

¹⁷Then he says:

“I will forgive their sins and the evil things they do—I will never remember those things again.”

Jeremiah 31:34

¹⁸And after all these things are forgiven, there is no more need for a sacrifice* [to pay] for sins.

Come Near to God

¹⁹And so, brothers and sisters, we are completely free to enter the Most Holy Place.* We can do this without fear because of the blood (*death*) of Jesus. ²⁰We can enter through a new way that Jesus opened for us. It is a living way. This new way leads through the curtain*—Christ’s body. ²¹And we have a great priest who rules the house (*people*) of God. ²²We have been cleansed and made free from feelings of guilt. And our bodies have been washed with pure water. So come near to God with a sincere (*true*) heart, feeling sure because of our faith. ²³We should hold strongly to the hope that we have. And we should never fail to tell people about our hope. We can trust God to do what he promised.

Help Each Other Be Strong

²⁴We should think about each other and see how we can help each other to show love and do good things. ²⁵We should not quit meeting together. That’s what some people are doing. But we should [meet together and] encourage

each other. You should do this more and more as you see the Day* coming.

Don’t Turn Away from Christ

²⁶If we decide to continue sinning after we have learned the truth, then there is no other sacrifice* that will take away sins. ²⁷If we continue sinning, all we have is fear in waiting for the judgment and the angry fire that will destroy all people who live against God. ²⁸Any person who refused to obey the law of Moses was found guilty from the proof given by two or three witnesses. That person was not forgiven. He was killed. ²⁹So what do you think should be done to a person who shows his hate for the Son of God? Surely that person should have a much worse punishment. Yes, that person should have a worse punishment for not showing respect for the blood (*Jesus’ death*) that began the new agreement.* That blood once made that person holy. And that person should have a worse punishment for showing his hate against the Spirit* of God’s grace (*kindness*). ³⁰We know that God said, “I will punish people [for the wrong things they do]; I will repay them.”* And God also said, “The Lord will judge his people.”* ³¹It is a terrible thing [for a sinful person] to fall into the hands of the living God.

Keep the Courage and Patience You Had

³²Remember those days when you first learned the truth. You had a hard struggle with many sufferings, but you continued strong. ³³Sometimes people said hateful things to you and persecuted* you before many people. And sometimes you helped other people who were being treated that same way. ³⁴Yes, you helped those people in prison and shared in their suffering. And you were still happy when all the things you owned were taken away from

agreement The new and better agreement that God has given to his people through Jesus.

sacrifice(s) A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people’s sins.

Most Holy Place Literally, “holies,” for “holy of holies,” the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

curtain A curtain divided the “Most Holy Place” from the other part of the Jewish temple. When Jesus died, the curtain was torn open, meaning the way was opened into God’s presence. Read Mt. 27:51.

Day Probably the time Christ will come again.

new agreement This is the “better agreement” that God has given to his people through Jesus.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God’s work among people in the world.

“I will punish ... repay them” Quote from Deut. 32:35.

“The Lord ... people” Quote from Deut. 32:36.

persecuted To be hurt or bothered by other people.

you. You continued to be happy, because you knew that you had something much better—something that would continue forever.

³⁵So don't lose the courage that you had in the past. Your courage will be rewarded richly. ³⁶You must be patient. After you have done what God wants, then you will get the things that he promised you. ³⁷In a very short time,

“The One who is coming will come.
He will not be late.

³⁸ The person who is right with me (*God*)
will have life because of his faith.
But if that person turns back in fear,
I will not be pleased with him.”*

Habakkuk 2:3–4

³⁹But we are not those people who turn back and are lost. No. We are the people who have faith and are saved.

Faith

11 Faith means being sure of the things we hope for. And faith means knowing that something is real even if we don't see it. ²God was pleased with those people who lived a long time ago, because they had faith like this.

³Faith helps us understand that God created the whole world with his command. This means that the things we see were made by something that cannot be seen.

⁴Cain and Abel both offered sacrifices* to God. But Abel offered a better sacrifice to God because Abel had faith. God said he was pleased with the things Abel offered. And so God called Abel a good man because Abel had faith. Abel died, but through his faith he is still speaking.

⁵Enoch was carried away from this earth. He never died. The Scripture* says that, before Enoch was carried off, he was a man who truly pleased God. Later, people could not find Enoch, because God took Enoch to be with him. This happened to Enoch because he had faith. ⁶Without faith, a person cannot please

God. Any person who comes to God must believe that God is real. And any person who comes to God must believe that God rewards those people who truly want to find him.

⁷Noah was warned by God about things that Noah could not yet see. But Noah had faith and respect for God. So Noah built a large boat to save his family. With his faith, Noah showed that the world was wrong. And Noah became one of those people who are made right with God through faith.

⁸God called Abraham to travel to another place that God promised to give Abraham. Abraham did not know where that other place was. But Abraham obeyed God and started traveling, because Abraham had faith.

⁹Abraham lived in that country that God promised to give him. Abraham lived there like a visitor who did not belong. Abraham did this because he had faith. Abraham lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob. Isaac and Jacob also received that same promise from God. ¹⁰Abraham was waiting for the city* that has real foundations. He was waiting for the city that is planned and built by God.

¹¹Abraham was too old to have children. And Sarah was not able to have children. But Abraham had faith in God, and so God made them able to have children. Abraham trusted God to do the things he promised. ¹²This man was so old that he was almost dead. But from that one man came as many descendants* (*people*) as there are stars in the sky. So many people came from that one man that they are like grains of sand on the seashore.

¹³All those great men continued living with faith until they died. Those men did not get the things that God promised his people. The men only saw those things coming far in the future and were glad. Those men accepted the fact that they were like visitors and strangers on earth. ¹⁴When people accept something like that, then those people show that they are waiting for a country that will be their own country. ¹⁵If those men were thinking about that country they had left, then they could have

“The One ... him” This quote of Habakkuk 2:3–4 is from the Septuagint, the Greek Version of the Old Testament.

sacrifice(s) A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people's sins.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

city The spiritual “city” where God's people live with him. Also called “the heavenly Jerusalem.” See Heb. 12:22.

descendants A person's children and all their future families.

gone back. ¹⁶But those men were waiting for a better country—a heavenly country. So God is not ashamed to be called their God. And God has prepared a city for those men.

^{17–18}God tested Abraham’s faith. God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.* Abraham obeyed because he had faith. Abraham already had the promises from God. And God had already said to Abraham, “It is through Isaac that your descendants* will come.”* But Abraham was ready to offer his only son (*Isaac*). Abraham did this because he had faith. ¹⁹Abraham believed that God could raise people from death. And really, [when God stopped Abraham from killing Isaac,] it was like Abraham got Isaac back from death.

²⁰Isaac blessed the future of Jacob and Esau. Isaac did that because he had faith. ²¹And Jacob blessed each one of Joseph’s sons. Jacob did this while he was dying. He was leaning on his rod and worshiping God. Jacob did those things because he had faith.

²²And when Joseph was almost dead, he spoke about the Israelites* (*the Jews*) leaving Egypt. And Joseph told the people what they should do with his body. Joseph said those things because he had faith.

²³And the mother and father of Moses hid Moses for three months after he was born. They did this because they had faith. They saw that Moses was a beautiful baby. And they were not afraid to disobey the king’s (*Pharaoh’s*) order.

²⁴Moses grew up and became a man. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. ²⁵Moses chose not to enjoy the pleasures of sin. Those pleasures end quickly. Instead, Moses chose to suffer bad things with God’s people. Moses did this because he had faith. ²⁶Moses thought that it was better to suffer for the Christ* than to have all the treasures of Egypt. Moses was waiting for the

reward [that God would give him,]. ²⁷Moses left Egypt. He left because he had faith. Moses was not afraid of the king’s (*Pharaoh’s*) anger. Moses continued strong like he could see the God that no person can see. ²⁸Moses prepared the Passover* and spread the blood [on the doors,]. This blood was spread [on the doors,] so that the Angel of Death* would not kill the firstborn* sons [of the Jewish people,]. Moses did this because he had faith.

²⁹And the people [that Moses led,] all walked through the Red Sea like it was dry land. They were able to do this because they had faith. The Egyptians also tried to walk through the Red Sea, but they were all drowned.

³⁰And the walls of Jericho fell because of the faith of God’s people. The people marched around the walls of Jericho for seven days, and then the walls fell.

³¹And Rahab, the prostitute,* welcomed the [Israelite,] spies and helped them like friends. And because of her faith she was not killed with those other people who refused to obey.

³²Do I need to give you more examples? I don’t have enough time to tell you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets.* ³³All those people had great faith. And with that faith they defeated kingdoms. They did the things that are right, and they got the things that God promised. With their faith some people closed the mouths of lions. ³⁴Some people stopped great fires, and other people were saved from being killed with swords. They did those things because they had faith. Weak people were made strong because of their faith. They became powerful in battle and defeated other armies. ³⁵People that had died were raised from death, and they were given back to the women in their family. Other people were

sacrifice(s) A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people’s sins.

descendants A person’s children and all their future families.

“It is through Isaac ... come” Quote from Gen. 21:12.

Israelites The Jewish people. They were from the twelve sons of Jacob, who is also called “Israel.”

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses’ time.

Angel of Death Literally, “the destroyer.” To punish the Egyptian people, God sent an angel to kill the oldest son in each home. Read Ex. 12:29–32.

firstborn The first child born into a family.

prostitute(s) Women paid by men for sexual sin.

prophets People that spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are part of the Old Testament.

tortured* and refused to accept their freedom. They did this so that they could be raised from death to a better life. ³⁶Some people were laughed at and beaten. Other people were tied and put into prison. ³⁷They were killed with stones and they were cut in half. They were killed with swords. The only clothes some of these people had were sheep skins or goat skins. They were poor, persecuted,* and treated badly by other people. ³⁸The world was not good enough for these great people. These people wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹All these people are known for their faith. But none of these people got God's great promise. ⁴⁰God planned to give us something better. Then those people could be made perfect, but only together with us.

We Should Also Follow Jesus' Example

12 We have those many people [of faith] around us. Their lives tell us what faith means. So we should be like them. We too should run the race that is before us and never stop trying. We should take away [from our lives] anything that would stop us. And we should take away the sin that so easily catches us. ²We should always follow the example of Jesus. Jesus is the leader in our faith. And he makes our faith perfect. He suffered death on the cross. But Jesus accepted the shame of the cross like it was nothing. He did this because of the joy that God put before him. And now he is sitting at the right side of God's throne. ³Think about Jesus. He was patient while sinful men were doing bad things against him. Think about him, so that you also will be patient and not stop trying.

God Is Like a Father

⁴You are struggling against sin, but your struggles have not yet caused you to be killed. ⁵You are children of God, and he speaks words of comfort to you. You have forgotten those words:

“My child, don't think it is worth nothing when the Lord punishes you, and don't stop trying when the Lord corrects you.

- ⁶ The Lord punishes every person he loves, and he punishes every person he accepts as a child.”

Proverbs 3:11–12

⁷So accept sufferings like those sufferings are a father's punishment. God does these things to you like a father punishing his children. All children are punished by their fathers. ⁸Every child must be punished. So, if you are never punished, then you are not true children and don't really belong to God. ⁹We have all had fathers here on earth who punished us. And we respected our fathers. So it is even more important that we accept punishment from the Father of our spirits. If we do this we will have life. ¹⁰Our fathers on earth punished us for a short time. They punished us the way they thought was best. But God punishes us to help us, so that we can become holy* like him. ¹¹We don't enjoy punishment when we get it. Being punished is painful. But later, after we have learned from being punished, we have peace, because we start living right.

Be Careful How You Live

¹²You have become weak. So make yourselves strong again. ¹³Walk (*live*) in the right way so that you will be saved and your weakness will not cause you to be lost.

¹⁴Try to live in peace with all people. And try to live lives free from sin. If a person's life is not holy,* then he will never see the Lord. ¹⁵Be careful that no person fails to get God's grace (*kindness*). Be careful that no person becomes like a bitter weed growing among you. A person like that can ruin your whole group. ¹⁶Be careful that no person does sexual sin. And be careful that no person is like Esau and never thinks about God. Esau was the oldest son and he would have inherited (*received*) everything from his father. But Esau

tortured To be bound or tied and then hurt or punished.

persecuted To be hurt or bothered by other people.

holy To be pure and live only for God.

sold all that for a single meal. ¹⁷You remember that after Esau did this, he wanted to get his father's blessing. Esau wanted that blessing so much that he cried. But his father refused to give him the blessing, because Esau could find no way to change the thing he had done.

¹⁸You have come to a new place. It is not a place like the mountain that the people of Israel* came to. You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire. You have not come to a place with darkness, sadness, and storms. ¹⁹There is no sound of a trumpet or a voice speaking words [like those people heard]. When the people heard the voice, they begged to never hear another word. ²⁰They did not want to hear the command: "If anything, even an animal, touches the mountain, it must be killed with stones."^{*} ²¹The things those people saw were so terrible that Moses said, "I am shaking with fear."^{***}

²²But you have not come to that kind of place. The new place you have come to is Mount Zion.* You have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.* You have come to an excited gathering of thousands of angels. ²³You have come to the meeting of God's firstborn* children. Their names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all people. And you have come to the spirits of good people who have been made perfect. ²⁴You have come to Jesus—the One that brought the new agreement* from God to his people. You have come to the sprinkled blood* that tells us about better things than the blood of Abel.*

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

"If anything ... stones" Quote from Ex. 19:12–13.

"I am shaking with fear" Quote from Deut. 9:19.

Verses 18–21 These verses refer to things that happened to the Jewish people in the time of Moses as described in Exodus 19.

Mount Zion Another name for Jerusalem.

Jerusalem Here, the spiritual city of God's people.

firstborn The first son born in a Jewish family had the most important place in the family and received special blessings. All God's children are like that.

new agreement This is the "better agreement" that God has given to his people through Jesus.

sprinkled blood The blood (death) of Jesus.

Abel The son of Adam and Eve, who was killed by his brother Cain. See Gen. 4:8.

²⁵Be careful and don't refuse to listen when God speaks. Those people (*Israelites*) refused to listen to him when he warned them on earth. And those people did not escape. Now God is speaking from heaven. So now it will be worse for those people who refuse to listen to him. ²⁶When he spoke before, his voice shook the earth. But now he has promised, "Once again I will shake the earth. But I will also shake heaven."^{*} ²⁷The words "once again" clearly show us that everything that was made will be destroyed. Those are the things that can be shaken. And only the things that cannot be shaken will continue.

²⁸So we should be thankful because we have a kingdom that cannot be shaken. We should be thankful and worship God in a way that will please him. We should worship him with respect and fear, ²⁹because our God is like a fire that can destroy.

13 You are brothers and sisters in Christ, so continue loving each other. ²Always remember to help people by accepting them into your home. Some people have done that and have helped angels without knowing it. ³Don't forget those people in prison. Remember them like you are in prison with them. And don't forget those people who are suffering. Remember them like you are suffering with them.

⁴Marriage should be honored by all people. And every marriage should be kept pure between only two people. God will judge guilty those people who do sexual sins and adultery.* ⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money. And be satisfied with the things you have. God has said,

"I will never leave you;
I will never run away from you."

Deuteronomy 31:6

⁶So we can feel sure and say,

"The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
People can do nothing to me."

Psalms 118:6

"Once again ... heaven" Quote from Hag. 2:6.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

⁷Remember your leaders. They taught God's message to you. Remember how they lived and died, and copy their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

⁹Don't let all kinds of strange teachings lead you into the wrong way. Your hearts should be strengthened by God's grace (*kindness*), not by obeying rules about foods. Obeying those rules doesn't help people.

¹⁰We have a sacrifice.* And those priests who serve in the Holy Tent* cannot eat from our sacrifice. ¹¹The high priest* carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place.* He offers that blood for sins. But the bodies of those animals are burned outside the camp. ¹²So Jesus also suffered outside the city. Jesus died to make his people holy* with his own blood (*death*). ¹³So we should go to Jesus outside the camp. We should accept the same shame that Jesus had. ¹⁴Here on earth we don't have a city that continues forever. But we are waiting for the city that we will have in the future. ¹⁵So through Jesus we should never stop offering our sacrifice to God. That sacrifice is our praise, coming from lips that speak his name. ¹⁶And don't forget to do good for other people. And share with other people. These are the sacrifices that please God.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and be under their authority. Those men are responsible for you.

So they are always watching to protect your souls. Obey those men so that they can be happy in this work. It won't help you to make it hard for them.

¹⁸Continue praying for us. We feel right about the things we do, because we always try to do the best thing. ¹⁹And I beg you to pray that God will send me back to you soon. I want this more than anything else.

^{20–21}I pray that the God of peace will give you every good thing you need so that you can do the things he wants. God is the One who raised our Lord Jesus from death. He raised Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep. God raised Jesus because of his blood (*death*). His blood began the new agreement* that continues forever. I pray that God will do the things in us that please him. I ask that he will do those things through Jesus Christ. To Jesus be glory forever. Amen.

²²My brothers and sisters, I beg you to listen patiently to these things I have said. I said these things to strengthen you. And this letter is not very long. ²³I want you to know that our brother Timothy is out of prison. If he comes to me soon, we will both come to see you.

²⁴Say hello to all your leaders and to all God's people. All [God's people] in Italy say hello to you.

²⁵God's grace (*kindness*) be with you all.

sacrifice Here, the sacrifice (offering) of Jesus. He gave his life to pay for people's sins.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." The special tent where God lived among his people and where the Jewish priests worshiped.

high priest Most important priest for God's people.

Most Holy Place Literally, "holy of holies," the place in the Jewish tabernacle or temple where God met the high priest.

holy God's people are holy because they are made pure through Christ and belong only to God.

new agreement This is the "better agreement" that God has given to his people through Jesus.

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