

The Book of Hebrews

Overview

1:1-3	God now speaks through Jesus Christ through whom He created all things and who is the radiance of the Father's glory.
1:4-14	Jesus is superior to the angels
2:1-2	Jesus's message is superior to the angels' message. We ignore it to our eternal peril.
2:3-4	God and others attest to Jesus's preeminence
2:4-18	The Father made everything subject to Jesus who is the founder of our salvation.
3:1-6	Jesus is utterly faithful to God in all things and is superior to Moses
3:7-19	Ancient Hebrews provoked God by their unbelief and did not enter into His rest
4:1-10	Unbelief and disobedience prevented ancient Hebrews from entering into God's rest.
4:11-13	We must strive to enter into God's rest.
4:14-16	Because we have a High Priest who identifies with us, we must be steadfast in our faith
5:1-10	Jesus is the superior High Priest
5:11-14	Rebuke of believers who remain babies in the faith instead of mature.
6:1-3	Grow out of elementary doctrine into spiritual maturity.

6:4-10	There is no other message of salvation for those who have tasted and then renounced Jesus's salvation.
6:11-12	Imitate those who mature and persist in their faith
6:13-18	God keeps all His promises.
6:19- 7:3	Jesus, our Great High Priest, intercedes for us and is in the order of Melchizedek.
7:4-10	Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham
7:11-25	Jesus is High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek
7:26-28	Jesus is the superior high priest because He is sinless and did not have to make sacrifices for Himself
8:1-13	Jesus, as our heavenly High Priest, is the Guarantor of a superior covenant, replacing the imperfect Mosaic covenant.
9:1-10	The first covenant and the tabernacle were earthly and symbolic, pointing to spiritual things.
9:11-28	Jesus, having died once for all, is the mediator of the superior, spiritual covenant.
10:1-10	Old covenant required yearly sacrifices which did not take away sin, but Jesus died <i>once for all</i> .
10:11-18	Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father and in Him our sins are forgiven, dispensing with the necessity of animal sacrifices

10:19-25	Because Jesus is our High Priest, we can approach God without fear in full assurance of faith because God is faithful
10:26-31	Having been saved we must cease sinning and not profane the blood the blood of the covenant. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
10:32-39	Therefore, we must persist in our faith in all circumstances and not throw away our confidence in God's ability and willingness to keep His promises
11:1	Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
11:2-3	By faith we will receive God's commendation
11:4-40	Examples of faithful men and women
12:1-2	Cloud of witnesses; run race; Jesus the author and finisher of our faith
12:3-4	Jesus endured hostility and opposition
12:5-6	God chastens sons
12:7-11	chastening is part of being a son
12:12-17	Therefore, be strong; avoid bitterness, which caused Esau to lose the blessing
12:18-21	You have not come to the terrifying Mt. Sinai
12:22-24	You have come to Mt. Zion and Jesus our Mediator
12:25-29	God will shake and remove and replace with a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Therefore, have reverent fear.
13:1-6	Rules for dealing with others
13:7-9	Rules to obey church leadership and sound doctrine

13:10-13	Jesus replaces the altar and sacrifices
13:14-15	Seek the city to come and offer the sacrifice of praise
13:16-17	Share and obey the elders
13:18-19	Pray for us
13:20-25	Author's closing prayer

DIVISIONS: Jesus, Pre-Eminent Above All, Is the Object and Reason For Our Faith.

1. Jesus is pre-eminent over everyone and everything. 1:1- 3:6
2. Jesus is the true Great High Priest. 3:7 - 7:28
3. Jesus is the Mediator of a superior covenant. 8:1- 10:25
4. We must persevere in faith and obedience. 10:26 - 12:29
5. Rules for living together as Christians. 13:1-17
6. Request for prayer and closing prayer. 13:18-25

1. The first thing you must know is that *Hebrews* is written as an exhortation.

I want to start off by discussing a scene from the Lord of the Rings trilogy by J.R.R.Tolkien. The valiant men of the West are standing before Mordor. They are surrounded by the orcs and soldiers of Sauron. As you can imagine the surrounded men are frightened. The task is enormous. They are outnumbered. They are outflanked. And Aragorn atop his steed rides before them and shouts these stirring words:

"Men of Gondor! Of Rohan! My brothers.

I see in your eyes the same fear that would take the heart of me.

A day may come when the courage of Men fails, when we forsake our friends and break all bonds of fellowship, but it is not this day.

An hour of wolves and shattered shields when the Age of Men comes crashing down, but it is not this day!

This day we fight!

By all that you hold dear on this good earth, I bid you stand, Men of the West!"

2. Aragorn's speech mirrors the inspired and inspiring invocation of the writer of Hebrews to the beleaguered Hebrew Christians who faced persecution from all sides. They were outnumbered, outflanked. Their courage is failing. In the same way that Aragorn bravely shouted to the soldiers of the West, the writer of Hebrews writes to the Hebrew Christians of his day.
3. **KEY:** Hebrews 10:23 (ESV)--"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful."
4. **SUMMARY:** Jesus is God. In his mediatorial capacity, He is superior to the angels, the prophets, Moses, the temple, all the sacrifices, and the high priest. He is superior to all created beings and things. He is superior to and has replaced Judaism. He is the mediator of a superior covenant. There is no salvation apart from him. Therefore, we must hold fast to our faith in Him and obey Him.
5. **Who was the author?** No one really knows who wrote the epistle. Theories abound, but no one knows. The chief nominees are the apostle Paul, Barnabas, Apollos or Luke. We won't know who wrote the epistle until we get to heaven. The author had a strong Greek background because the epistle is written in flawless Greek. He also had a Hebrew background because he is extremely knowledgeable in the Hebrew scriptures. **Origen** famously said:

"Who wrote the letter to the Hebrews only God knows for certain."¹
One esteemed scholar has said: "To us, the author must remain a voice and nothing more; but we can be thankful to God for the work of this great nameless one who wrote with incomparable skill and beauty about the Jesus who is the way to reality and the way to God."²

- a. However, we do know this about the author:
- b. He was a leader in the Christian community, especially among Hebrew Christians.
- c. He was steeped in the Hebrew scriptures.
- d. He was very well educated.
- e. He was a brilliant theologian.
- f. His audience knew him, respected him, and loved him.
- g. He probably had not met Jesus personally, but he knew many who knew Jesus personally, heard His teaching and witnessed His life.
- h. He was a contemporary of Timothy, which means he probably knew some of the apostles well. *See 13:23*

¹ "Origen of Alexandria, also known as Origen Adamantius, was an early Christian scholar, ascetic, and theologian who was born and spent the first half of his career in Alexandria. He was a prolific writer who wrote roughly 2,000 treatises in multiple branches of theology, including textual criticism and biblical exegesis." *Wikipedia*

² William Barclay, *Letter to the Hebrews*

- i. He served and loved God's church.
 - j. He was itinerant.
6. **To whom was it written?** The book was clearly written to Hebrew Christians who were probably of a Hellenist background.
- a. The book was written to **second-generation Christians**. That is, Christians who did not know or meet Jesus personally. For example, chapter 2 verses 3-4 say: "It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was **attested to us by those who heard**, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will." *Hebrews 2:3-4 (ESV)*
 - b. The writer strongly believes that his audience are believers, but he is keenly aware that those who once profess Christ are around and influential. Such people are like the soil on which the word of God falls but does not produce real fruit. Persecution or the cares of the world come and choke the growth the seed tries to bring as in the parable of the four soils. He is boldly encouraging them to stand fast in the faith and not to turn back to dead Judaism or any other religion, but to press forward in Christ regardless of the persecution that may attend true faith. The author is not telling them that in the temporal world everything will be OK. He is telling them that from the vantage point of eternity everything will be wonderful so long as they stand fast.
 - c. They are facing terrible persecution. They had thought that things would get better in Christ, but things are getting worse.

- d. They had thought that Jesus would have returned again by now and He hadn't.
- e. They were discouraged and confused.

7. **Why was it written?** The epistle is a kind of call to arms.

- a. Imagine a general who is trying to encourage and embolden his troops who are on the verge of bolting. They are surrounded by a more powerful enemy who hates them. They are vastly outnumbered. All the apparatus of society is against them: the army, the press, the literati, the cultural elite, the powerful, and influential. All arrayed against them. Some of them will certainly die. Some will be imprisoned. But before they can turn their back and flee, this beloved General commands them to take true stock of their situation. He tells them that they are fighting for the true king who has won, is winning, and will continue to win. They may die, but they cannot lose, the victory has already been won by the true king. They must take courage. **They must not only stand their ground, but they must advance. There is too much to lose and far more to gain. If they persevere, they are certain to gain heaven. Nothing less than everything is at stake.**
- b. This was the time of increasing persecution of Jewish Christians. They were faced with the terrible temptation to renounce Christianity and return to Judaism.
- c. The life of Jews was bound up with the Mosaic Law, the Great Temple in Jerusalem and the High Priests.
 - i. Theocratic culture

- ii. All social, economic, and family life was bound up in the mosaic law, the Jerusalem temple and the high priests.
- iii. To be a Jew meant to be devoted to these things.
- iv. The pull to return to Judaism and to renounce Christ was pervasive and almost overwhelming.
- v. To be cast out of the temple was almost an end to Jewish life as they had known it for over 1,000 years.
 - 1. The Oral Torah was given to Moses at Mount Sinai, which, according to the tradition of Orthodox Judaism, occurred in **1312 BC**.
 - 2. Every bad thing that happened to the Jewish people was the result of their disobedience to the mosaic law: Assyria took Israel into captivity. Years later Babylon took Judah into captivity.
 - 3. The Hebrew Bible instructs all Jews to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year:
 - a. In spring for Passover
 - b. In summer for Shavuot (Feast of Weeks aka Pentecost)
 - c. And in the fall for Sukkot (aka Feast of Booths or Tabernacles)

4. The fear of the parents of the man born blind whom Jesus healed.

5. The worst thing that could happen to a Jew. It meant the loss of:

a. identity

b. family

c. community

d. livelihood

d. The author tells them that the Christianity of Jesus Christ is far superior to the mosaic system. Jesus is superior to Moses and to the angels. He is preeminent in the universe, God the father speaking through Him and governing the universe through Him. Christianity is founded on a superior promise. It has a superior mediator in Jesus Christ. It has a superior high priest in Jesus Christ. It has a superior king in Jesus Christ. Therefore, what they gain is far superior to what they have given up.

e. They must believe in Jesus and hold on to their faith in Jesus. Their eternal gain is far superior to what they lose. Faith in Jesus is key. They must not relinquish or turn their backs on their faith.

8. THE EPISTLE CAN BE BROADLY DIVIDED INTO 4 PARTS

a. **PART I: CHAPTER 1: 1-4--THE DOXOLOGY FOR CHRIST**

- b. **PART 2:** CHAPTERS 1:5-10:18--CHRISTOLOGY
 - c. **PART 3:** CHAPTERS 10:19 -12-- BECAUSE JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO EVERYTHING WE LIVE BY FAITH IN HIM ALONE.
 - d. **PART 4:** CHAPTER 13-- BECAUSE JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO EVERYTHING, THE WRITER GIVES SOME PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO LIVE BY FAITH IN CHRIST AND OBEDIENCE TO HIM.
9. HOW DOES THE AUTHOR TRY TO ACHIEVE HIS GOAL?
- a. **PART I:** CHAPTER 1: 1-4--THE DOXOLOGY FOR CHRIST
 - i. He must make sure that his audience understands that the living faith they have through Jesus Christ is far superior to the dead Judaism they have left behind and which served as an enemy of Christ even though Judaism was the soil in which Jesus was raised.
 - ii. He does not start with a greeting or a solicitous introduction. He does not gently ease into his subject. There is no preface or literary handshake.
 - iii. Imagine a beloved visitor to your home. You open the door, and He shouts in your face over and over again: **CHRIST! CHRIST! CHRIST! CHRIST! CHRIST!** That is the book of Hebrews.
 - iv. He starts off by boldly reminding them that Jesus is preeminent over everything in the universe. He does not employ a kind greeting or any greeting at all. He bursts forth at the very beginning with this declaration: "Long

ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, **through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.** After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs."

- v. **J.I.Packer** says *Ecclesiastes* is his favorite book in the Bible. He says: The book is really a bassoon version, in Old Testament terms, of Paul's trumpets-and-drums declaration in 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (NASB). The notes may be an octave lower, but the tune is the same, and bassoon gravity can strike just as deep as trumpet brilliance. So *Ecclesiastes* helps me hear Paul; and Paul helps me understand *Ecclesiastes*; and with these twin texts echoing in my ears, I go on my way rejoicing. It is like beginning a concert with the deep, loud, powerful sound of the bassoon."
- vi. This opening section is like that **bassoon** whose deep, resounding notes reverberate in the heart, and we tingle all over.
- vii. Alternatively, it is the blowing of hundreds of trumpets!

10. **PART 2: CHAPTERS 1:5-10:18--CHRISTOLOGY**

- a. JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO EVERYTHING, INCLUDING THE ANGELS, MOSES, THE MOSAIC LAW, THE DEUTERONOMIC COVENANT, THE TEMPLE AND ITS ORDAINED SACRIFICES, AND THE PROPHETS.
- b. JESUS IS THE GUARANTOR OF A BETTER COVENANT.
- c. JESUS PROVIDES A BETTER REST, A BETTER SACRIFICE, A BETTER HOLY PLACE, AND A BETTER COUNTRY
- d. The Old Testament was inspired. God spoke through the angels, the prophets and the patriarchs. But now God speaks to us through Jesus Christ.
 - i. The former messages were inspired by God. But Jesus is the living word of God. The angels and prophets brought divine messages. *But Jesus Himself is the message.*
 - ii. **John 1:1–4 (ESV)**--"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men."
 - iii. The NT is full of examples of Jesus's authority as the Living Word of God:
 - 1. **Matthew 5:21–22 (ESV)**--"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and

whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' *But I say* to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire"

2. **Matthew 5:27–28 (ESV)**--"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
 3. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount we read this: **Matthew 7:28–29 (ESV)**--"when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, **for he was teaching them as one who had authority**, and not as their scribes."
 4. **John 7:45–46 (ESV)**--"The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" The officers answered, 'No one ever spoke like this man!'"
- e. This is not a book about whether we can lose our salvation. Rather, this is a book about **Christ as the Founder, Cause, Arbiter, and Object** of our salvation and how we must cling to Him in faith and obedience as mature Christians no matter what.
- f. **After this utterly resounding opening**, the author elaborates on the preeminence of Jesus Christ and the critical role of holy

faith in Jesus despite all odds.

- g. *Hebrews* and *Romans* are the most doctrinally rich books in the bible. *Hebrews* has the most profound, sustained Christology of any book in the Bible.
- h. Depending upon what translation you are using, the phrase "superior to", "greater than", and "better than" are repeated many times in the early chapters.
- i. Jesus is superior to the angels who are subject to Him and inferior to Him.
- j. Jesus is superior to prophets.
- k. Jesus is superior to Moses who pointed to Christ in his life and writings.
- l. Jesus is superior the temple and its sacrifices.
 - i. Remember Jesus's denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees: Matthew 23:17–21 (ESV)--"You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that has made the gold sacred? 18 And you say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gift that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath.' 19 You blind men! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20 So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. 21 And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by him who dwells in it."

m. **Jesus is superior to and has replaced** the priests, the High Priest, and the old system of sacrifices and feasts.

- i. Indeed, Jesus is the True Great High Priest who is superior to any other high priest in Jewish history.
- ii. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek who was not of the tribe of Levi. The greater blesses the lesser. Melchizedek was greater than Abraham and therefore greater than all Israel which was yet in his loins.
- iii. Jesus is greater than Abraham and greater than Melchizedek.
- iv. Jesus is *the* Great High Priest in the order of Melchizedek, chosen not by physical descent from Aaron but by spiritual descent from God the Father.
 1. Jesus alone is the Great High Priest who died once for all and reigns in heaven at the right hand of God the Father.
 2. His death and resurrection cover all sins, not just unintentional sins, but *all* sins
 - a. unintentional sins
 - b. intentional sins
 - c. sins of which we were ignorant
 - d. the consequences of all our sins

3. Jesus is the perfect in sinless high priest who entered into the heavenly holy of holies on our behalf. No one before Him and no one after Him has entered the holy of holies. He has entered on our behalf further, he is torn down the veil of separation between the holy place and the most holy place. Through Him, we now have direct access to the Father.

4. Jesus has forever solved the sin problem!--7:25-27

a. Jesus died "once for all". [7:27]

b. The writer emphasizes this in Ch. 10 and so, realizing this great truth, they must grow in maturity.

n. Jesus is the Mediator of a better covenant, the fulfillment of better promises.

i. Jesus is the Great High Priest who alone is able to make propitiation for our sins by his sinless and matchless perfection.

ii. He is the Mediator of a better covenant and has purchased our salvation for us by His perfect, sinless life.

iii. There is no salvation other than through Jesus Christ and no other message of salvation except Jesus Christ Himself.

iv. **His role** was to live the perfect life, die for us, and then be raised from the grave on the third day. **Our role** is simply

to believe Him and to cling to Him in faith and obedience.

- v. The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin, nor establish our relationship with the Father, nor provide for our resurrection. Jesus is the sinless high priest who takes away *all* our sins for *eternity*.
- vi. The old system could not take away sin, could not regenerate the sinner, could not give the sinner access to the Father or eternal life. Jesus provides all those things through His Divine Person.
- vii. Jesus alone gives us direct access to the Father through His perfect life. He has lived a life of perfect obedience *for us* and *on our behalf*. Therefore, we are beholden to Him for all things and must live in faith and obedience to Him.
- viii. We must persist in our faith in all circumstances and not throw away our confidence in God's ability and willingness to keep all His promises to us.
- ix. Disobedience and unbelief prevented their forefathers from entering into God's rest. That must not be their fate. They enter into God's rest by believing Jesus and persevering in obedience and faith.
- x. Until people grow in maturity by realizing the full, completed work of Jesus Christ and the full and forever forgiveness of sin which Jesus purchased by His death and resurrection, they cannot live in the reality of the new covenant which Jesus brought into effect by his life,

death, and resurrection.

- xi. *Hebrews 9:24-28 (ESV)*--For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, **but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.** Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, **he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.** And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, **so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**
- xii. The forgiveness of sin is not salvation. The forgiveness of sin makes salvation possible. The forgiveness of sin must lead to our restoration into the new life of Christ where we desire to live for him and through Him. The Holy Spirit must work in us the life of Christ.
- xiii. The new covenant goes into effect because God will not remember our sins anymore. Salvation is the Holy Spirit entering into us in permanent residence, transforming us into the children of God who love Jesus and seek to obey Him.`
- o. **All the prior things were visual aids so that we would recognize and believe the reality which Jesus Christ ushered in**

which is invisible except through the eyes of faith.

p. Hallelujah!!!!

11. **PART 3: CHAPTERS 10:19 -12** BECAUSE JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO EVERYTHING WE LIVE BY FAITH IN HIM ALONE.
 - a. WE MUST TURN AWAY FROM THE FORMER THINGS WHICH WERE BUT TYPES AND SHADOWS OF THE REALITY THAT JESUS HIMSELF REPRESENTS. WE MUST TURN TO CHRIST WITH OUR WHOLE HEARTS. WE MUST LIVE BY FAITH.
 - b. THESE EARTHLY THINGS WERE IMPERFECT SHADOWS OR TYPES OF HEAVENLY THINGS AND MUST GIVE WAY TO THE HEAVENLY THINGS.
 - c. WE LOSE NOTHING BY FOLLOWING HIM, BUT GAIN EVERYTHING WORTH HAVING.
 - d. IF WE TURN AWAY FROM HIM, WE LOSE EVERYTHING.
 - e. JUDAISM IS DEAD, HAVING BEEN SUPERSEDED BY CHRIST.
 - f. THIS EXHORTATION IS REMINISCENT OF THE SCENE AT THE MOUNT OF THE TRANSFIGURATION RECORDED IN LUKE 9:33–36 (ESV)--"PETER SAID TO JESUS, 'MASTER, IT IS GOOD THAT WE ARE HERE. LET US MAKE THREE TENTS, ONE FOR YOU AND ONE FOR MOSES AND ONE FOR ELIJAH'—NOT KNOWING WHAT HE SAID.

AS HE WAS SAYING THESE THINGS, A CLOUD CAME AND OVERSHADOWED THEM, AND THEY WERE AFRAID AS THEY ENTERED THE CLOUD. 35 AND A VOICE CAME OUT OF THE CLOUD, SAYING, "THIS IS MY SON, MY CHOSEN ONE; LISTEN TO HIM!" 36 AND WHEN THE VOICE HAD SPOKEN, JESUS WAS FOUND ALONE."

- g. JESUS STANDS ALONE. IS THE CENTER AND THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE UNIVERSE.
- h. JESUS IS GOD, THE ARCHITECT OF OUR FAITH. ELIJAH AND MOSES DISAPPEARED AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS. EVERYTHING MUST DISAPPEAR IN LIGHT OF HIS GLORY AND GRACE. **WE MUST LOOK TO JESUS ALONE.**
- i. IN THIS PART THE AUTHOR GIVES US NUMEROUS EXAMPLES OF HEBREWS WHO LIVED BY FAITH IN CHRIST.
- j. We are saved by his grace, and our faith evidences and secures our salvation in Him. **Faith in Christ and His finished work on our behalf** identifies us as Christians and partakers of His salvation.
 - i. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen."
 - ii. **All Christians must live by faith.** The author gives numerous examples from the old testament of those who trusted Christ by faith even though it may have cost them their lives or their citizenship in their country of

origin.

- iii. Faith requires obedience. We will be shaken and tested, but we must stand fast as did our brothers and sisters before us. God does not ask anything of us that we cannot do in His strength.

12. **PART 4:** CHAPTER 13 BECAUSE JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO EVERYTHING, THE WRITER GIVES SOME PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO LIVE BY FAITH IN CHRIST AND OBEDIENCE TO HIM.
- a. The author closes with practical instructions for believers. For example, we must obey church leadership and obey sound doctrine.
 - b. We must share with others
 - c. We must obey the elders.
 - d. We must pray.
 - e. We must seek the city eternal in the heaven not made with hands.

CONCLUSION

Brothers, how do we stand fast in difficult times of persecution? We keep our faith. We live by faith. We continually bathe ourselves in the word of God. We practice fellowship. We pray without ceasing because the army of God marches on its knees. We live daily for Christ with our eyes fixed on heaven while we live here on earth. We must be like our spiritual father Abraham who "was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God."³

There is now in our generation, growing organized and cultural opposition to the Church of Jesus Christ. There is a great movement to re-interpret the Bible or to cast away is being against women against the gay community. It is still unlikely that I have faith will cause us to be cast into prisons, but it is increasingly likely that our faith put us in conflict with society. We may be ridiculed, shunned, mocked, and decried as bigoted, anti-women, and anti-gay. This is not a call to become politically involved.

³ Hebrews 11:10

This is a call to trust Jesus and to lean on Him completely. We are to look for a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Hebrews has the spirit of Paul's exhortation in Ephesians

Ephesians 6:10–18 (ESV)

"[B]e strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication."

The writer of *Hebrews* ends his letter with these words:

"I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation...."⁴

Amen and amen!

⁴ Hebrews 13:22