

Hebrews

1

Summary: *Hebrews 1 establishes the supremacy of God's revelation through his Son over all prior communication through prophets. The Son is declared the exact representation of God's nature, the sustainer of all things, and the one who accomplished purification for sins before sitting at God's right hand. The chapter then marshals a chain of Old Testament quotations to demonstrate the Son's superiority over angels, establishing a theme that will dominate chapters 1-2.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The opening period (verses 1-4) is one of the most carefully constructed sentences in the New Testament, a single Greek sentence with seven descriptors of the Son. The catena of Old Testament quotations (verses 5-13) draws from Psalms 2, 104, 45, 102, and 110, plus 2 Samuel 7 and Deuteronomy 32, weaving a comprehensive scriptural argument. The author assumes his audience recognizes that angels mediated the Mosaic law (cf. Galatians 3:19, Acts 7:53), making the Son-versus-angels comparison directly relevant to the old covenant versus new covenant argument.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the author is unknown; the letter is anonymous. The Greek style is the most polished in the New Testament. The phrase 'exact representation' (charakteer) in verse 3 carries philosophical weight that must be rendered without importing later Nicene categories. We render the Greek as given, noting theological implications in the study layer.*

Connections: *The opening echoes Genesis 1 (creation through the Son), Proverbs 8 (Wisdom as agent of creation), and Colossians 1:15-20 (the cosmic Christ hymn). The quotation from Psalm 110:1 in verse 13 becomes the most important Old Testament text in Hebrews, returning in chapters 5, 7, 8, 10, and 12. The 'purification for sins' language anticipates the extended priestly argument of chapters 7-10.*

¹In many parts and in many ways, God spoke long ago to our ancestors through the prophets, ²Has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all matters, by whom as well he made the worlds; ³He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴Being appointed so greatly better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. ⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have fathered you"? Or again, "I will be a Father to him, and he will be a Son to me"? ⁶And again, when he brings the

firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." ⁷Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his servants a flame of fire." ⁸But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy beyond your companions." ¹⁰And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ¹¹They will perish, but you remain. They will all wear out like a garment. ¹²You will roll them up like a cloak, and like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end." ¹³But to which of the angels has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? ¹⁴Are they not all serving spirits, sent out to serve those who are about to inherit salvation?

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *polymerōs kai polytropōs* ('in many parts and in many ways') is an alliterative pair that sets the rhetorical tone for the entire letter. The first term suggests fragmentary revelation — given piece by piece — while the second suggests varied modes (visions, dreams, direct speech, enacted parables). Together they characterize Old Testament revelation as genuine but incomplete.
1. We render 'fathers' (*patrasin*) as 'ancestors' since the reference is to the entire covenant community's forebears, not exclusively male figures.
2. The phrase *ep' eschatou tōn hēmerōn toutōn* ('in the last of these days') signals an eschatological framework — the Son's arrival inaugurates the final era. The anarthrous 'a Son' (*en huiō*, without the article) emphasizes the quality of sonship rather than identifying a specific person, though the context makes the identity clear.
2. The Greek *aiōnas* ('ages') is broader than the KJV's 'worlds' — it encompasses both time and the created order. The Son is the agent through whom God structured reality itself.
3. The Greek *apaugasma* can mean either 'radiance' (light emanating from a source) or 'reflection' (light bouncing off a surface). The context favors 'radiance' since the Son is described as active agent, not passive mirror. The term *charaktēr* ('exact expression') denotes the precise imprint made by a stamping tool — what emerges is identical to the original. This is stronger than 'image' (*eikōn*).
3. The participle *poiēsamenos* ('having made') is middle voice, suggesting the Son accomplished purification through his own action. The aorist tense marks this as a completed, once-for-all act — a contrast with the repeated sacrifices of the Levitical system that the author will develop in chapters 9-10.
3. The phrase 'sat down at the right hand' alludes to Psalm 110:1, the most quoted Old Testament verse in the New Testament and the theological backbone of Hebrews.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 110:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The Greek *genomenos* ('having become') does not imply the Son was once inferior to angels. The verb marks his exaltation after the incarnation and cross — his human journey culminated in a publicly demonstrated superiority. The 'name' (*onoma*) is debated: it likely refers to 'Son' (as verses 5-14 will argue), though some scholars see it as the divine name itself. The verb *keklēronomēken* ('has inherited') connects to verse 2's appointment as 'heir of all things.'
5. The first quotation is from Psalm 2:7, a royal enthronement psalm originally spoken at the coronation of Davidic kings. The author of Hebrews applies it to Christ's exaltation. The verb *gegennēka* ('I have begotten/fathered') in the psalm context refers to the king's divine adoption at coronation, not biological generation.
5. The second quotation is from 2 Samuel 7:14, God's promise to David regarding his descendant — the foundational text of messianic hope. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'None' — God never addressed any angel with these words.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 2:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Samuel 7:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The quotation derives from Deuteronomy 32:43 (Septuagint) or Psalm 97:7. The Septuagint reading of Deuteronomy includes 'let all God's angels worship him,' which is absent from the Masoretic Text — the author uses the Greek Old Testament. The term *prōtotokon* ('firstborn') denotes preeminence and inheritance rights, not chronological birth order. The 'world' (*oikoumenē*) is literally 'the inhabited earth,' possibly referring to the incarnation or to the second coming.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 32:43. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 97:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

7. Quoting Psalm 104:4 (Septuagint). The Greek pneumata can mean either 'spirits' or 'winds' — the Hebrew of Psalm 104:4 speaks of God making winds his messengers, which the Septuagint reversed to 'making his messengers/angels winds.' The author's point is that angels are created, mutable servants — they can be transformed into wind or fire — while the Son's throne is eternal (verse 8).
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 104:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Quoting Psalm 45:6-7, originally a royal wedding psalm. The vocative 'O God' (ho theos) addressed to the Son is the most direct divine attribution in the catena. Some scholars read it as 'God is your throne' or 'your throne is God's,' but the author of Hebrews clearly reads it as an address to the Son as God. The Greek euthytētos ('uprightness, straightness') is rendered 'uprightness' rather than 'righteousness' to distinguish it from dikaiosunē.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 45:6-7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The continuation of Psalm 45:6-7. The phrase 'God, your God' (ho theos, ho theos sou) creates a striking paradox — the one addressed as 'God' in verse 8 also has a God. This tension is central to New Testament Christology. The anointing with 'oil of joy' (elaion agalliaseōs) refers to the coronation anointing of kings, connecting to 'Christ' (Christos = 'anointed one'). The Greek anomian ('lawlessness') is rendered as such rather than the KJV's 'iniquity' for precision.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 45:6-7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Quoting Psalm 102:25-27 (Septuagint 101:26-28). In the original psalm, these words are addressed to YHWH. The author of Hebrews applies them to the Son without explanation, implying that the Son shares the divine identity of the Creator. The phrase kat' archas ('in the beginning') echoes Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 102:25-27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 1:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The contrast is between the created order (heavens and earth) that will perish and the Son who endures. The clothing metaphor — creation wearing out like an old garment — is vivid and distinctly Hebrew in character (cf. Isaiah 51:6). The present tense 'you remain' (diameneis) against the future 'they will perish' (apolountai) emphasizes the Son's unchanging nature.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 102:25-27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 51:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The verb helixeis ('you will roll up') pictures the Son folding up the old creation like clothing being put away — a striking image of sovereign authority over the material universe. The declaration 'you are the same' (su de ho autos ei) asserts the Son's immutability, which becomes a key theme in Hebrews (cf. 13:8, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever'). This completes the Psalm 102 quotation.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 102:25-27. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Quoting Psalm 110:1, the most quoted Old Testament text in the New Testament and the theological anchor of Hebrews. The psalm presents a divine invitation to a human king to share God's throne — an honor never extended to any angel. The 'right hand' (dexiōn) is the position of co-regency and highest honor. This verse bookends the catena with verse 5's rhetorical question ('to which of the angels?'), forming an inclusio. Psalm 110 will return in Hebrews 5:6, 7:17, 7:21 regarding the Melchizedek priesthood.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 110:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'Yes.' Angels are leitourgika pneumata ('ministering/serving spirits') — their role is service, not sovereignty. The verb apostellomena ('sent out') is related to 'apostle' (apostolos) — angels are commissioned agents. The phrase 'those about to inherit salvation' (tous mellontas klēronomein sōtērian) echoes the Son's inheritance language from verses 2 and 4, but here applied to believers who share in the Son's inheritance.

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Summary: *Hebrews 2 issues the first of the letter's warning passages (verses 1-4), urging listeners not to drift from the message delivered through the Son. The author then explains why the Son became lower than the angels — not because he was inferior, but because he took on humanity to share in flesh and blood, to die, and thereby to destroy the devil's power over death. Christ's solidarity with humanity is complete: he was made like his brothers in every way so he could serve as a merciful and faithful high priest.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The quotation of Psalm 8:4-6 in verses 6-8 is a masterful reinterpretation. The psalm celebrates humanity's exalted place in creation; the author reads it as a description of Christ, the true human who fulfills humanity's intended role. The phrase 'tasting death for everyone' (verse 9) is startlingly physical. The description of Jesus as 'pioneer' (archēgos) of salvation introduces a term that will recur in 12:2.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'for a little while lower than the angels' (verse 7) could also mean 'a little lower than the angels' — the Greek brachu ti is ambiguous between time and degree, matching the same ambiguity in Psalm 8. We note both readings. The concept of Jesus being 'made perfect through suffering' (verse 10) does not imply moral imperfection but vocational completion.*

Connections: *The warning passage (verses 1-4) anticipates the more severe warnings of 6:1-8 and 10:26-31. The high priest theme introduced in verse 17 becomes the central argument of chapters 3-10. The 'pioneer' (archēgos) language returns in 12:2. Psalm 8 connects to the creation mandate of Genesis 1:26-28.*

¹For this reason, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ²For if the message spoken through angels proved reliable, and every violation and act of disobedience received its just penalty, ³How will we escape, if we neglect so remarkable salvation. Which at the first started to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that listened to him; ⁴God as well bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, in keeping with to his own will? ⁵For it is not to angels that he has subjected the coming world, about which we are speaking. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere, saying, "What is a human being that you remember him, or a son of man that you care for him? ⁷You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸You placed all things under his feet." Now in placing all things under him, God left nothing outside his control. Yet at present, we do not yet see all things subjected to him. ⁹But we do see Jesus — who was made for a little while lower than the angels — now crowned with glory and honor because of his suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰For it was fitting for him, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many sons and daughters to glory, to make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For both the one who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified all come from one origin. For this reason, he is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²Declaring, I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the church will I sing praise to you. ¹³And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here I am, and the children God has given me." ¹⁴Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared in the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — ¹⁵Deliver them who by way of fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. ¹⁶For surely it is not angels he helps, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every way, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For because he himself suffered when he was tested, he is able to help those who are being tested.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek pararuōmen ('drift away') is a nautical metaphor — a ship slipping past its harbor because the crew was inattentive. The danger is not active rebellion but passive neglect. The verb prosechein ('to pay attention, to hold course toward') sustains the nautical image. This is the first of five warning passages in Hebrews (2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:12; 10:26-31; 12:25-29).

2. The 'message spoken through angels' refers to the Mosaic law, which Jewish tradition held was mediated by angels at Sinai (cf. Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19, Deuteronomy 33:2 LXX). The argument is from lesser to greater (a fortiori): if disobeying the angel-mediated law brought punishment, how much more serious is neglecting the Son-delivered message. The terms *parabasis* ('violation, stepping across a boundary') and *parakoē* ('disobedience, failure to hear') pair transgression of act with transgression of attention.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 33:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The rhetorical question expects no answer — there is no escape. The verb *amelēsantes* ('having neglected') continues the theme of passive drift rather than active rejection. The chain of transmission is explicit: the Lord spoke, those who heard him confirmed it to 'us.' This places the author in the second generation of Christians who received the gospel from eyewitnesses, which has implications for dating and authorship.
4. The fourfold attestation — signs (*sēmeiois*), wonders (*terasín*), powerful deeds (*dynamesín*), and Spirit distributions (*pneumatós hagiou merismois*) — parallels the language used in Acts for apostolic authentication. The compound verb *synepimarturoúntos* ('testifying alongside, co-witnessing') means God added his own testimony to the human witnesses. The 'distributions' (*merismois*) of the Spirit suggests diverse gifts apportioned to different believers, echoing 1 Corinthians 12.
5. The phrase *tēn oikoumenēn tēn mellousan* ('the coming world/inhabited earth') introduces an eschatological horizon. The present world may involve angelic powers (cf. Daniel 10:13, 20-21), but the world to come belongs to the Son and, through him, to redeemed humanity. This sets up the Psalm 8 quotation that follows.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 10:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Quoting Psalm 8:4-6 (LXX). The vague citation formula 'someone has testified somewhere' (*pou tis*) is not carelessness — it directs attention to the divine author rather than the human psalmist. The Greek *anthrōpos* and *huios anthrōpou* are rendered 'human being' and 'son of man' respectively. In the original psalm, these are parallel terms for humanity in general; the author of Hebrews will read them christologically.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 8:4-6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The Greek *brachu ti* can mean 'for a little while' (temporal) or 'a little bit' (degree). The Hebrew of Psalm 8 uses *me'at*, which is similarly ambiguous. The author of Hebrews reads it temporally — the Son was lower than angels only during his brief incarnation, not permanently. This temporal reading drives the argument: the lowering was temporary; the crowning is permanent. The SBLGNT omits 'and set him over the works of your hands,' which appears in some manuscripts.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 8:4-6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The author's commentary on Psalm 8 contains a crucial 'not yet' (*oupō*) — the subjection of all things is real but not yet fully realized. This 'already but not yet' tension is characteristic of New Testament eschatology. The word *anypotakton* ('unsubjected, outside of subjection') emphasizes that the divine intention leaves no exceptions, even though current reality shows incomplete fulfillment.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 8:4-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The name 'Jesus' appears here for the first time in Hebrews, and its placement is emphatic — after the description of lowering and before the description of crowning. The phrase *geusētai thanatou* ('taste death') is viscerally physical — death is experienced, not merely encountered. The preposition *hyper* ('for, on behalf of') with *pantos* ('everyone') asserts the universal scope of Christ's death. Some manuscripts read 'apart from God' (*chōris theou*) instead of 'by the grace of God' (*chariti theou*), but the SBLGNT follows the majority reading.
10. The verb *eprepen* ('it was fitting') argues not from necessity but from divine appropriateness — God's character made this the right path. The Greek *archēgon* ('pioneer, founder, leader, captain') denotes one who goes first and opens the way for others to follow. It will recur in 12:2 for Jesus as 'pioneer and perfecter of faith.' The verb *teleiōsai* ('to make perfect, to bring to completion') does not imply moral deficiency but vocational completion — Jesus was made fully fit for his saving role through the experience of suffering.
10. We render 'sons' (*huios*) as 'sons and daughters' since the Greek plural can be inclusive and the theological point — believers being brought to glory — applies to all.
11. The phrase *ex henos* ('from one') is deliberately ambiguous — it could mean 'from one Father,' 'from one source,' or 'of one nature.' The ambiguity serves the author's purpose: whatever the precise reference, the sanctifier and the sanctified share a common origin, which grounds Jesus's willingness to identify with humanity. The present passive participle *hagiazomenoi* ('being sanctified') suggests an ongoing process, while the active *hagiazōn* ('sanctifying') points to Jesus as the agent.
12. Quoting Psalm 22:22. This psalm begins with the cry of dereliction ('My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?') and moves to praise in the midst of the assembly. The author of Hebrews places these words on Jesus's lips — the Son identifies believers as 'my brothers' (*adelphois mou*). The Greek *ekklēsia* ('assembly, congregation') here translates the Hebrew *qahal* of the psalm.

12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 22:22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Two quotations from Isaiah 8:17-18. The first ('I will put my trust in him') shows the Son exercising the same faith that believers exercise — a profound statement of solidarity. The second ('Here I am and the children') originally referred to Isaiah and his children as signs to Israel; the author applies it to Jesus and his spiritual children. Together, these quotations establish that the Son shares humanity's dependence on God.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 8:17-18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The verb *kekoinōnēken* ('have shared, have participated in') is perfect tense — humanity's participation in flesh and blood is an ongoing state. The verb *meteschen* ('he shared in') is aorist — the Son's participation was a decisive, historical act. The difference in tense is theologically significant: we are always flesh and blood; he entered that condition by choice. The verb *katargēsē* ('destroy, render powerless, nullify') does not necessarily mean annihilation but rather the stripping of effective power.
15. The phrase *dia pantos tou zēn* ('throughout all of living') emphasizes that the fear of death pervaded the entirety of human existence, not just its final moments. The word *douleia* ('slavery, bondage') characterizes the human condition under death's shadow as a form of captivity. Christ's death breaks the power of this fear by removing death's finality.
16. The verb *epilambanetai* ('takes hold of, helps, grasps') is debated. The KJV reads it as 'took on the nature of,' but the more natural meaning is 'takes hold of to help' or 'comes to the aid of.' The present tense suggests ongoing action: Christ continually assists Abraham's descendants, not just at the incarnation. The phrase 'seed of Abraham' (*spermatos Abraam*) connects to the covenant promises of Genesis 12, 15, and 17.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. This is the first appearance of *archiereus* ('high priest') in Hebrews — the title that will dominate the letter's central argument. The verb *hilaskesthai* ('to make atonement, to propitiate, to make expiation') corresponds to the Hebrew *kipper* (כִּפֶּר) and the mercy seat (*hilastērion/kapporet*). The requirement that the high priest be both 'merciful' (*eleēmōn*) and 'faithful' (*pistos*) defines the two qualities that chapters 3-5 will develop — faithfulness in chapter 3 (comparison with Moses) and mercy in chapter 5 (sympathy with human weakness).
18. The Greek *peirastheis/peirazomenois* ('tested/being tested') can mean either 'tempted' or 'tested' — the semantic range covers both moral temptation and trial by suffering. In context, the emphasis is on suffering as the mode of testing. The perfect tense *peponthen* ('has suffered') indicates that Jesus's suffering remains a present reality in his experience — it is not something he has left behind but something that equips him to help. The verb *boēthēsai* ('to help, to come to aid') is the same word used for crying out for help in battle.

3

Summary: *Hebrews 3 compares Jesus to Moses, arguing that while Moses was faithful as a servant in God's house, Jesus is faithful as a Son over God's house. The chapter then transitions into an extended warning passage based on Psalm 95:7-11, urging the audience not to repeat the wilderness generation's rebellion at Meribah. The hardening of hearts, the provocation in the wilderness, and the failure to enter God's rest become a cautionary paradigm for the Christian community.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The comparison with Moses is structurally daring — Moses held unparalleled authority in Judaism, yet the author subordinates him to Christ not by diminishing Moses but by elevating the category: servant versus Son, part of the house versus builder of the house. The Psalm 95 quotation initiates an argument that extends through chapter 4, making it the longest sustained Old Testament exposition in Hebrews.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'apostle and high priest of our confession' (verse 1) is the only place in the New Testament where Jesus is called 'apostle.' The warning language is strong — 'evil, unbelieving heart' (verse 12) — and the question of whether genuine believers can fall away remains debated. We render the text without resolving the theological tension.*

Connections: *The Moses comparison continues themes from Exodus 32-34 and Numbers 14. Psalm 95's 'rest' (*katapausis*) links to Genesis 2:2 (God's Sabbath rest) and will be developed in chapter 4. The 'house' language connects to the temple/tabernacle theology of chapters 8-9. The warning echoes Deuteronomy's exhortations to faithfulness.*

¶Therefore, holy brothers and sisters who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, ¶He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all of God's household. ¶For Jesus

has been considered worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. ⁴F or every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. ⁵Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, as a testimony to the things that would be spoken later. ⁶But Christ was faithful as a Son over God's house — and we are his house, if we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope we boast in. ⁷Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸Indeed, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the desert: ⁹Indeed, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and noticed my works forty years. ¹⁰For this reason I was grieved with that generation, and stated, They do always err in their heart. Then they have not known my ways. ¹¹So I swore in my anger, 'They will never enter my rest.'" ¹²Watch out, brothers and sisters, so that none of you has an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³Instead, encourage one another every day, as long as it is still called 'today,' so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we have become partners with Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm until the end. ¹⁵As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." ¹⁶For who were the ones who heard and rebelled? Was it not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if not to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This is the only verse in the New Testament that calls Jesus 'apostle' (apostolon, 'sent one'). The title pairs with 'high priest' to define Jesus's dual role: sent from God to humanity (apostle) and representing humanity before God (high priest). The word 'confession' (homologias) refers to the community's shared profession of faith. The verb katanoēsate ('consider, fix your mind on, examine carefully') demands sustained intellectual attention, not casual thought.
2. The verb poiēsanti ('the one who made/appointed him') could mean 'created' or 'appointed.' In context, 'appointed' is more suitable since the comparison is about role and function, not ontology. The phrase 'in all his house' (en holō tō oikō autou) alludes to Numbers 12:7 (LXX), where God vindicates Moses: 'He is faithful in all my house.' The author affirms Moses's faithfulness before surpassing it.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 12:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The argument is an analogy: as builder exceeds building, so Christ exceeds Moses. The verb kataskeuusas ('the one who built, prepared, established') implies not just construction but design and purpose. Moses is part of the house (the people of God); Jesus built the house. The passive ēxiōtai ('has been considered worthy') is a divine passive — God has conferred this greater glory on Jesus.
4. This verse serves as a bridge in the argument. If every house requires a builder, and God is the ultimate builder of all things, then the one who built God's house (verse 3) operates with divine authority. The implication — that Jesus as builder shares in the creative work of God — is left for the reader to infer.
5. The Greek therapōn ('servant, attendant') is a more honorable term than doulos ('slave'). It denotes a trusted household attendant — Moses's role was noble but subordinate. The phrase eis martyrion tōn lalēthēsomenōn ('as a testimony to things that would be spoken later') casts Moses's entire ministry as preparatory and prophetic — pointing forward to Christ's fuller revelation.
6. The contrast is complete: Moses was faithful in (en) the house as servant; Christ is faithful over (epi) the house as Son. The conditional 'if' (ean) introduces the first of several conditional statements in the warning passages — membership in God's house is genuine but contingent on perseverance. The Greek parrēsian ('confidence, boldness, openness of speech') and kauchēma ('boast, ground of boasting') describe an outward, expressive faith. Some manuscripts add 'firm to the end' (mechri telous bebaian), but the SBLGNT omits it.
7. The quotation of Psalm 95:7-11 begins here and continues through verse 11. The attribution to the Holy Spirit (to pneuma to hagion) rather than to David reflects the author's view that Scripture's ultimate author is God himself. The word 'today' (sēmeron) becomes a key term — the author will apply this 'today' to the present moment of his audience in verses 13 and 15.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 95:7-11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Greek parapikrasmo ('rebellion, provocation, embitterment') translates the Hebrew Meribah ('strife, contention') from Psalm 95:8, which refers to the events at Meribah and Massah (Exodus 17:1-7). The Septuagint translates the place name as a description of the act. The verb sklērūnēte ('harden') echoes the Pharaoh narrative in Exodus — the same word group describes Pharaoh's hardened heart. The author warns against repeating the pattern.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 95:7-11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 17:1-7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The shift from 'do not harden your hearts' to God speaking in first person ('me,' 'my works') is dramatic — God himself recounts the offense. The Greek dokimasia ('testing, trial, proving') suggests they put God on trial, demanding proof. Despite seeing God's works (erga mou), they still refused to trust — a failure of will, not evidence.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 95:7-11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The author separates 'forty years' from the preceding verse and attaches it to God's anger rather than to the works — a subtle interpretive move that emphasizes the duration of God's displeasure. The verb prosōchthisa ('was angry, was disgusted, was grieved') is stronger than mere sadness — it carries overtones of revulsion. The Greek planōntai ('go astray, wander') pictures a people who have lost their way, a deliberate irony for a generation literally wandering in the wilderness.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 95:7-11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The Greek ei eiseleusontai ('if they will enter') reproduces a Hebrew oath formula — 'if they enter' means 'they certainly will not enter.' The concept of God's 'rest' (katapausin mou) is multivalent: it refers to the promised land (which that generation forfeited), to God's Sabbath rest (Genesis 2:2), and potentially to an eschatological rest that chapter 4 will develop. The divine oath seals the exclusion with ultimate finality.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 95:7-11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The verb blepete ('watch out, be on guard') shifts from psalm quotation to direct application. The phrase kardia ponēra apistias ('evil heart of unbelief') is shocking in its directness — unbelief is not a minor failing but an evil disposition. The infinitive apostēnai ('to turn away, to stand away from') is the root of 'apostasy.' The title 'living God' (theou zōntos) heightens the gravity: the one they would be turning from is not an abstraction but the living, active God.
13. The imperative parakaleite ('encourage, exhort') is plural and reciprocal — perseverance is a community project, not an individual achievement. The phrase achris hou to sēmeron kaleitai ('as long as it is still called today') turns the psalm's 'today' into a limited window of opportunity. The personification of sin as deceptive (apatē tēs hamartias) suggests that the hardening process is gradual and disguised — people do not recognize their own drift until the heart is already hardened.
14. The term metochoi ('partners, sharers, participants') is stronger than casual association — it implies shared ownership and joint participation. The phrase tēn archēn tēs hypostaseōs ('the beginning of our confidence/substance') is debated: hypostasis can mean 'confidence' (subjective) or 'reality/substance' (objective). In context, 'confidence' fits — the initial assurance that marked their conversion must be maintained to the end. The conditional eanper ('if indeed') is more emphatic than simple ean ('if').
15. The psalm quotation from verse 7-8 is repeated, but now 'today' carries the full weight of the intervening argument — it is no longer just a word in an ancient psalm but a present-tense demand on the audience. The repetition functions as a literary hinge between the exposition of the psalm (verses 7-11) and its application (verses 16-19).
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 95:7-8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The rhetorical questions in verses 16-18 form a devastating catechism. The answer to each is obvious and condemning. The word parepikranan ('rebelled, provoked') echoes parapikrasmos from verse 8. The shocking point: it was not some fringe group but 'all' (pantes) who came out of Egypt — the very people who witnessed the greatest deliverance in Israel's history. Privilege of experience did not guarantee faithfulness.
17. The Greek kōla ('limbs, bodies, corpses') is more graphic than 'carcasses' — it evokes bodies literally falling and lying scattered across the desert landscape. The image is drawn from Numbers 14:29, 32 where God declares that the bodies of the rebellious generation would fall in the wilderness. The forty years of anger corresponds to the forty years of wandering.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 14:29. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The Greek apeithēsasīn ('those who were disobedient') can also mean 'those who were unbelieving' — the semantic overlap between disobedience and unbelief is significant. In Hebrew thought, to disbelieve God is to disobey him, and to disobey is to disbelieve. The author will make this connection explicit in verse 19.
19. The chapter's conclusion is stark: the wilderness generation's failure was ultimately a failure of faith (apistian, 'unbelief'). The verb ēdunēthēsan ('they were able') is negated — their unbelief made entry impossible, not merely unlikely. The verse links disobedience (verse 18) with unbelief (verse 19), establishing that the two are inseparable. The 'rest' that was forfeited through unbelief will be explored further in chapter 4 as still available to the present audience.

4

Summary: *Hebrews 4 continues the argument about God's rest, demonstrating that the promise of entering God's rest still stands because neither Joshua nor the wilderness generation fully realized it. The rest is not merely the promised land but a Sabbath-rest that God has enjoyed since creation — a rest believers can enter through faithful obedience. The chapter then pivots with two powerful declarations: the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword (verse 12), and Jesus the Son of God is a great high priest who sympathizes with human weakness, inviting believers to approach the throne of grace with confidence (verses 14-16).*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The argument about rest is subtle and layered: the rest God offered was not exhausted by Joshua's conquest because David, centuries later in Psalm 95, still speaks of 'today' — implying the rest remains available. The word-of-God passage (verses 12-13) is among the most memorized in the New Testament. The high priest transition (verses 14-16) forms a literary bridge from the warning section (chapters 3-4) to the priestly exposition (chapters 5-10).*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'rest' (katapausis/sabbatismos) is debated — eschatological, spiritual, or eternal. We render the terms without forcing a single interpretation. The Greek Iēsous in verse 8 refers to Joshua (the same name in Greek), not Jesus of Nazareth, which English translations must clarify. The relationship between verses 12-13 (word of God) and the surrounding argument is debated; it may function as a warning about divine judgment or as motivation for perseverance.*

Connections: *The rest theme connects to Genesis 2:2 (God's Sabbath), Psalm 95 (continued from chapter 3), and Joshua's conquest. The word-of-God imagery echoes Isaiah 49:2 and Revelation 1:16. The high priest declaration (verse 14) formally introduces the topic that will dominate chapters 5-10. The invitation to the 'throne of grace' (verse 16) anticipates the access through the curtain described in 10:19-22.*

¹Therefore, let us fear, since a promise of entering his rest still stands, that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ²For we also have had good news proclaimed to us, just as they did. But the message they heard did not benefit them, since it was not combined with faith in those who heard it. ³For we who have believed are entering that rest, just as he has said, "As I swore in my anger, "They will never enter my rest" — even though his works have been finished since the foundation of the world. ⁴For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." ⁵And again in this passage: "They will never enter my rest." ⁶Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, ⁷Again, he limiteth a certain day and stated in David, To day, following so long a time. As it is stated, To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. ⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. ⁹So then, a Sabbath rest remains for the people of God. ¹⁰For the one who has entered God's rest has also rested from his own works, just as God rested from his. ¹¹Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by following the same pattern of disobedience. ¹²For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating to the point of dividing soul from spirit, joints from marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and exposed before the eyes of the one to whom we must give account. ¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens — Jesus the Son of God — let us hold firmly to our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the right time.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The subjunctive phobēthōmen ('let us fear') is startling — the author includes himself. The participle kataleipomenēs ('being left, remaining') emphasizes that the promise is still active and unclaimed. The verb hysterēkenai ('to have fallen short, to have come too late') suggests missing a deadline or arriving after the door has closed. The fear is not servile terror but reverent urgency.

2. The verb *euēngelismenoi* ('having received good news') is the same root as 'gospel' — the wilderness generation received a form of good news (the promise of rest), just as Christians have. The textual variant is significant: some manuscripts read 'not united by faith with those who heard' (referring to Joshua and Caleb who did believe), while others read 'not combined with faith in those who heard.' The SBLGNT reading emphasizes that hearing without faith is useless.
3. The present tense *eiserchometha* ('we are entering') describes an ongoing experience — believers are in the process of entering the rest, not merely hoping for it in the future. The parenthetical about God's works being finished since creation introduces the next argument: God's rest has existed since Genesis 2, which means the 'rest' offered to Israel was participation in God's own eternal rest, not merely settlement in Canaan.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 95:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Quoting Genesis 2:2 (LXX). The casual citation formula 'somewhere' (*pou*) again directs attention to the divine author rather than to the specific text location. The author's argument: God's rest began at creation and has continued ever since — it is an existing reality, not a future creation. The verb *katepausen* ('rested, ceased') does not imply exhaustion but completion and satisfaction.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 2:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The author juxtaposes Genesis 2:2 (God rested) with Psalm 95:11 (they will not enter my rest). The logic: the rest God enjoys since creation is the same rest the wilderness generation forfeited. Since that rest predates and outlasts the promised land, it must still be available.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 95:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The word *apeitheian* ('disobedience') here replaces *apistian* ('unbelief') from 3:19, reinforcing the interchangeability of the two concepts. The logic is compact: the rest exists (Genesis 2:2), the first recipients forfeited it (Psalm 95), therefore it must remain available for others.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 95. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The crucial argument: David wrote Psalm 95 centuries after Joshua led Israel into Canaan. If Joshua's conquest had fulfilled the promise of rest, David would not still be warning about it and offering a 'today.' The very existence of Psalm 95 proves the rest was not exhausted by the conquest. The verb *horizei* ('appoints, designates, defines') suggests God deliberately set a new day of opportunity.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 95:7-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Greek *Iēsous* here refers to Joshua, not Jesus of Nazareth — both names are the same in Greek (from Hebrew *Yehoshua*). Context makes the reference clear since the subject is the conquest of Canaan. The conditional is contrary-to-fact: Joshua did not give the ultimate rest, therefore the rest still awaits. The author's logic reaches its conclusion in verse 9.
9. The author introduces a new term: *sabbatismos* ('Sabbath rest'), found only here in the New Testament and rare in Greek literature. This is not the generic *katapausis* ('rest') used throughout the argument but a specifically Sabbath-quality rest — a rest modeled on God's own cessation on the seventh day. The term is the climax of the argument: what remains is not merely a promised land or a cessation of labor but a participation in God's own eternal rest.
10. The parallel is precise: as God ceased from the work of creation on the seventh day, so the believer who enters God's rest ceases from their own works. The meaning of 'works' (*ergōn*) here is debated — it could mean laborious self-effort for salvation, or it could mean the completion of one's life mission. The Genesis 2:2 echo suggests satisfaction and completion rather than exhaustion or relief.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The verb *spoudasōmen* ('let us be diligent, make every effort, be eager') is not contradictory to 'rest' — the effort is to enter the rest, not to earn it. The word *hypodeigmati* ('pattern, example, model') turns the wilderness generation's failure into a cautionary template. The verb *pesē* ('fall') echoes the 'falling bodies' of 3:17 — the same fate awaits those who follow the same path.
12. The phrase *logos tou theou* ('word of God') likely refers to God's spoken declaration (as in the psalm quotations and the gospel message) rather than to Scripture as a written text or to Christ as the living Word, though all three layers may be present. The four adjectives — living (*zōn*), active (*energēs*), sharp (*tomōteros*), penetrating (*diiknoumenos*) — build in intensity. The division of 'soul and spirit' does not establish a trichotomist anthropology but uses *merismus* (a literary device listing extremes to indicate totality) — the word penetrates everything, even the most intimate interior spaces. The term *kritikos* ('able to judge, discerning') is the root of 'critic' — God's word is the ultimate judge of inner reality.

13. The shift from 'word of God' (verse 12) to 'his sight' and 'his eyes' personalizes the logos — the word that judges is inseparable from the God who sees. The Greek tetrachēlismena ('laid bare, exposed') literally means 'bent back the neck' — a term from wrestling (an opponent pinned with neck exposed) or from sacrifice (an animal's throat bared for slaughter). The final phrase pros hon hēmin ho logos ('to whom our account/word is due') is a wordplay — our logos must answer to the divine logos.
14. This verse marks a major transition, formally introducing the high priest theme that will dominate chapters 5-10. The phrase 'passed through the heavens' (dielēluthota tous ouranous) pictures Jesus traversing the celestial realms as the high priest passed through the outer courts to enter the Holy of Holies. The full title 'Jesus the Son of God' combines his human name with his divine status. The exhortation kratōmen tēs homologias ('let us hold firmly to our confession') echoes 3:1 and 3:6, framing the warning section.
15. The double negative (ou ... mē dynamenon, 'not unable') is a rhetorical understatement (litotes) that emphatically affirms: our high priest can and does sympathize. The Greek sympathēsai ('to sympathize, to suffer with') means not just intellectual understanding but shared experience of suffering. The phrase kata panta kath' homoiotēta ('in every respect in the same way') asserts the completeness of Jesus's testing. The qualifier chōris hamartias ('without sin') does not diminish the reality of the testing but affirms its outcome — he was genuinely tested and genuinely victorious.
16. The verb proserchōmetha ('let us approach') is a priestly term — the same word used for priests approaching the altar. Because of this high priest, all believers have priestly access. The 'throne of grace' (thronō tēs charitos) transforms a throne of judgment into a throne of generosity — the same throne that terrifies in verse 13 invites in verse 16. The two gifts — mercy (eleos) for past failure and grace (charin) for future need — together cover the full scope of human need. The phrase eis eukairon boētheian ('for timely help') literally means 'for well-timed assistance' — grace arrives at precisely the right moment.

5

Summary: *Hebrews 5 begins the Melchizedek priesthood argument by establishing the qualifications of any high priest: he must be taken from among humans, he must be able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward because of his own weakness, and he must be called by God. The author then shows how Christ meets these qualifications — particularly through his anguished prayers during his earthly life and his learning obedience through suffering. God designated him a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. The chapter ends with a rebuke: the audience should be teachers by now but still need elementary instruction.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verse 7 contains a vivid and emotionally raw depiction of Jesus's prayer life — 'loud cries and tears' — likely alluding to Gethsemane. The statement that Jesus 'learned obedience through what he suffered' (verse 8) is among the most theologically daring in the New Testament. The introduction of Melchizedek via Psalm 110:4 opens an argument the author will not complete until chapter 7, creating intentional suspense.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'he was heard because of his reverent submission' (verse 7) is debated — Jesus prayed to be saved from death, and he did die. In what sense was he 'heard'? Options include: heard in the sense of being rescued from death through resurrection, or heard in the sense that his prayer was received. We note both readings. The rebuke in verses 11-14 is sharp and raises questions about the audience's spiritual state.*

Connections: *Psalm 2:7 (verse 5) was already quoted in 1:5. Psalm 110:4 (verse 6) introduces the Melchizedek theme from Genesis 14:18-20 that dominates chapter 7. The Gethsemane allusion connects to the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 14:32-42 and parallels). The 'milk versus solid food' metaphor (verses 12-14) parallels 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.*

1For every high priest chosen from among humans is appointed to represent them before God, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is also subject to weakness. 3Because of this, he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins not only for the people but also for himself. 4And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. 5So also Christ did not glorify himself to become high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son; today I have fathered you." 6As he also says in another passage, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." 7During the days of his life in the flesh, he offered up prayers and pleas with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9And having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, 10Called of God an high priest following the order of Melchisedec. 11We have much to say about this, and it is difficult to explain since you have become slow to

understand. ¹²For by this time you ought to be teachers, yet you need someone to teach you again the basic elements of God's oracles. You have come to need milk, not solid food. ¹³For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since such a person is an infant. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature — for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *ex anthrōpōn lambanomenos* ('taken from among humans') establishes the first qualification: solidarity with humanity. The high priest must share the condition of those he represents. The verb *kathistatai* ('is appointed') indicates divine appointment, not self-selection. The twin offerings — gifts (*dōra*, voluntary offerings) and sacrifices (*thysias*, sin-related offerings) — cover the full range of priestly service.
2. The Greek *metriopathein* ('to deal gently, to moderate one's feelings') is a rare term — it describes a measured emotional response, neither indifferent nor overwhelmed. It was a term from Stoic philosophy for the moderation of passion. The Levitical high priest could be gentle because he knew his own frailty. This is both the strength and limitation of the old system — a weakness Christ transcends (he sympathizes without sharing the weakness of sin, 4:15).
3. This obligation to sacrifice for himself distinguishes the Levitical high priest from Christ. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest first offered a bull for his own sins before offering for the people (Leviticus 16:6, 11). Christ, being without sin (4:15), has no such need — a superiority the author will develop in 7:27.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 16:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The second qualification: divine calling. The high priesthood is not an office one can seize — it requires God's appointment. The reference to Aaron (Exodus 28:1) grounds this in the Levitical system. The author will immediately show that Christ too was divinely called (verses 5-6), satisfying this requirement through a different but equally valid divine appointment.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 28:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Psalm 2:7 returns from 1:5, now applied not to Christ's superiority over angels but to his priestly appointment. The logic: the same God who declared Jesus 'Son' also appointed him priest. The verb *edoxasen* ('glorified') indicates that the high priesthood is an honor (*doxa*/glory), not a position Christ arrogated to himself.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 2:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Quoting Psalm 110:4, which the author will expound at length in chapter 7. This is the key text for the entire priestly argument of Hebrews. The phrase *kata tēn taxin Melchisedek* ('according to the order of Melchizedek') establishes a priesthood that is neither Aaronic nor Levitical but of a different and prior order — the order of the priest-king who blessed Abraham in Genesis 14:18-20. The word *taxin* ('order, arrangement, succession') means a category or type of priesthood, not a sequential organization.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 110:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 14:18-20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The phrase *en tais hēmerais tēs sarkos autou* ('in the days of his flesh') refers to Jesus's entire earthly life, though the 'loud cries and tears' (*kraugēs ischyras kai dakryōn*) likely allude specifically to Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42). The word *hiketērias* ('pleas, supplications') originally referred to olive branches held by those seeking mercy — it denotes urgent, desperate petition. The phrase *eisakoustheis apo tēs eulabeias* ('heard because of his reverent submission') is much debated. The preposition *apo* could mean 'because of' or 'out of.' His prayer to be saved from death was 'heard' — but he still died. Most scholars understand this as being heard through resurrection: God saved him not from dying but from remaining dead.
7. The Greek *eulabeia* ('reverent submission, godly fear, devotion') describes not terror but reverent awe before God's will.
8. The Greek *emathēn ... epathēn* ('he learned ... he suffered') is a deliberate wordplay — learning and suffering are paired by sound and by theology. The statement does not imply that Jesus was previously disobedient, but that obedience became experientially his through the process of suffering. As Son, he was always obedient; through suffering, he experienced what obedience costs in a fallen world. This is the 'perfecting' of verse 9 — vocational completion, not moral correction.
9. The passive *teleiōtheis* ('having been made perfect/complete') is the same verb used in 2:10. It describes vocational completion through suffering — Jesus was fully equipped as high priest through the full experience of human obedience under pressure. The word *aitios* ('source, cause, author') identifies Jesus not merely as an example of salvation but as its origin. The phrase 'all who obey him' (*pasin tois hypakouousin autō*) makes obedience the correlate of faith — those who are saved are those who respond with obedient trust.
10. The verb *prosaagoreutheis* ('designated, addressed as, named') is a formal term — it denotes an official declaration or title conferral. God did not merely allow Jesus to function as priest; he formally proclaimed him one. This returns to Psalm 110:4 from verse 6 and completes the christological argument: Jesus meets both qualifications (solidarity with humanity, divine appointment) and exceeds them (his priesthood is of a superior order).

10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 110:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The Greek *dysermēneutos* ('difficult to explain, hard to interpret') is a rare word indicating the complexity of the Melchizedek argument. But the difficulty is not in the subject matter alone — it is in the audience. The word *nōthroi* ('slow, sluggish, dull') suggests a regression, not an original state. They have 'become' (*gegonate*) sluggish — they were once more receptive. This sharp transition from christological exposition to pastoral rebuke is characteristic of Hebrews.
12. The phrase *dia ton chronon* ('because of the time') indicates they have been believers long enough to be mature. The 'basic elements' (*ta stoicheia tēs archēs*) literally means 'the ABC's of the beginning' — the elementary principles. The word *logia* ('oracles') refers to God's authoritative utterances. The milk/solid food metaphor parallels Paul's use in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 and reflects a common ancient educational analogy. The regression from solid food back to milk represents spiritual decline.
13. The phrase *apeiros logou dikaiosynēs* ('unskilled in the word/message of righteousness') could mean 'inexperienced in the teaching about righteousness' or 'unfamiliar with the righteous word/message.' The metaphor is straightforward: infants cannot digest solid food, and immature believers cannot process advanced theological teaching — specifically, the Melchizedek argument the author wants to make.
14. The Greek *teleiōn* ('the mature, the complete') contrasts with *nēpios* ('infant') in verse 13. The word *aisthētēria* ('faculties, senses, organs of perception') refers to the spiritual equivalent of the physical senses — the capacity to perceive and evaluate theological truth. The verb *gegymnasmena* ('trained, exercised') is from the gymnasium — spiritual maturity requires regular, disciplined exercise, not merely accumulated time. The phrase *diakrisin kalou te kai kakou* ('distinguishing good from evil') echoes the tree of knowledge in Genesis 2:17 — maturity involves the capacity for moral and theological discernment.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 2:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

6

Summary: *Hebrews 6 contains the letter's most severe warning (verses 4-8), declaring that those who have experienced the full blessings of the new covenant and then fall away cannot be renewed to repentance. This alarming passage is immediately balanced by pastoral encouragement (verses 9-12): the author is confident of better things for his audience. The chapter concludes with a meditation on the unshakeable nature of God's promise to Abraham, confirmed by divine oath, which serves as an anchor for the soul — a hope that enters behind the curtain where Jesus has gone as forerunner and eternal high priest.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The warning of verses 4-8 is the most debated passage in Hebrews and one of the most contested in the entire New Testament. The five participial phrases describing the spiritual experience of those who fall away (enlightened, tasted, shared, tasted, participated) are maximally strong — these are not superficial inquirers. The agricultural metaphor (verses 7-8) grounds the abstract warning in vivid imagery. The shift to Abraham's oath (verses 13-20) provides the positive counterweight: God's promise is doubly guaranteed.*

Translation Friction: *The impossibility of restoration (verse 4) has generated centuries of debate. Does it describe a hypothetical impossibility, a practical impossibility, or an absolute theological impossibility? We render the text as written without resolving the debate. The phrase 'crucifying the Son of God again' (verse 6) is particularly strong. The connection between the warning section and the Abraham/oath section is debated but likely functions as comfort: God's promises are more reliable than human failure.*

Connections: *The warning echoes Numbers 14 (the wilderness generation's irreversible forfeiture of the land). The Abraham oath recalls Genesis 22:16-17. The 'anchor of the soul' (verse 19) draws on ancient navigation imagery. The 'forerunner' (*prodromos*, verse 20) introduces a term unique in the NT applied to Christ. The Melchizedek reference (verse 20) resumes the argument interrupted in 5:10.*

¶Therefore, leaving behind the elementary teaching about Christ, let us press on toward maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ²Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of care, and of resurrection of the no longer alive, and of eternal the time of reckoning. ³And this we will do, if God permits. ⁴For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵Have tasted the good message of God, and the powers of the world to come, ⁶and then fall away — it is impossible to restore them to repentance. By their rejection they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and exposing him to public disgrace. ⁷For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it and produces a crop useful to those for whom it

is cultivated receives a blessing from God. ⁸But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and its end is burning. ⁹But in your case, dear friends, we are convinced of better things — things that accompany salvation — even though we speak this way. ¹⁰For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name by serving the saints — as you still do. ¹¹And we want each one of you to show the same diligence toward the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹²That you be not slothful, but followers of them who by way of faith and patience inherit the promises. ¹³For when God made his promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself, ¹⁴Declaring, Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you. ¹⁵And so Abraham, having waited patiently, obtained the promise. ¹⁶For people swear by something greater than themselves, and the oath serves as a confirmation that ends every dispute. ¹⁷In the same way, when God wanted to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable nature of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, ¹⁸That by a pair of immutable matters, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we may possess a strong consolation, who possess fled for refuge to lay hold upon the confident expectation set prior to us: ¹⁹We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure, which enters the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰Indeed, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever following the order of Melchisedec.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *pherōmetha* ('let us press on, let us be carried along') suggests both active effort and divine momentum — like a ship under full sail. The 'elementary teaching' (*ton tēs archēs tou Christou logon*) is literally 'the word of the beginning of Christ' — the foundational instruction. The author does not reject these basics but insists on moving beyond them. The six foundational elements listed in verses 1-2 appear to constitute an early catechetical curriculum.
2. The six foundation stones are grouped in three pairs: repentance and faith (verse 1), washings and laying on of hands (verse 2a), resurrection and judgment (verse 2b). The plural *baptismōn* ('washings') rather than the singular *baptisma* ('baptism') is noteworthy — it may include instruction distinguishing Christian baptism from Jewish ritual washings and John's baptism (cf. Acts 19:1-5). These elements appear to reflect a basic catechism for new believers.
3. The conditional 'if God permits' (*eanper epitrepē ho theos*) is not mere piety — in light of what follows (verses 4-6), it carries a solemn undertone. Whether the audience can indeed advance to maturity depends partly on their own response and partly on God's enabling. The subjunctive *epitrepē* leaves the outcome genuinely open.
4. The word *adynaton* ('impossible') stands emphatically at the head of the sentence. The five participial phrases (verses 4-5) describe the richest possible spiritual experience: enlightenment (*photisthentas* — possibly referring to baptism, which early Christians called 'illumination'), tasting the heavenly gift, sharing in the Holy Spirit, tasting God's good word, and experiencing the powers of the coming age. Each term is stronger than casual or superficial contact.
5. The 'good word of God' (*kalon theou rhēma*) echoes the promised land scouts' report: the land was 'good' (Numbers 14:7). Those who tasted the land's fruit still refused to enter. The 'powers of the coming age' (*dynameis mellontos aiōnos*) refers to eschatological realities — healings, spiritual gifts, transformed life — already experienced in the present. These people have sampled the age to come and found it real.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 14:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The participle *parapesontas* ('having fallen away') describes a decisive act of apostasy, not merely stumbling. The two present participles — *anastaurountas* ('crucifying again') and *paradeigmatizontas* ('exposing to public shame') — describe the ongoing significance of the fall: apostasy reenacts the crucifixion and makes a public spectacle of Christ. The impossibility is not that God's grace is insufficient but that the apostate has exhausted the only remedy — there is no sacrifice beyond Christ to which one can appeal.
7. The agricultural metaphor illustrates the warning by analogy. Land that receives rain (divine blessing) and produces good crops (faithful response) receives further blessing. The imagery draws on Isaiah 5:1-7 (the vineyard song) and Deuteronomy 11:10-17 (rain contingent on obedience). The verb *pioussa* ('having drunk') personalizes the land — it has received God's provision.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 5:1-7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 11:10-17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The thorns and thistles (*akanthas kai tribolous*) echo Genesis 3:18 — the curse on the ground after Adam's fall. Land that produces only cursed vegetation despite receiving rain is *adokimos* ('worthless, rejected, failing the test'). The burning (*kausin*) refers to the ancient agricultural practice of burning unproductive fields, but here carries eschatological overtones. Note that the text says 'close to cursing' (*kataras engys*), not 'cursed' — even in this severe warning, there remains a space before final judgment.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 3:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The address 'dear friends' (agapētoi, 'beloved') is the only time in Hebrews the author uses this endearment — it signals a deliberate pastoral shift from the severe warning to confident encouragement. The perfect tense pepeismetha ('we are convinced, we have been persuaded') indicates a settled confidence, not a tentative hope. The phrase ta kreissona ('the better things') uses the comparative that runs throughout Hebrews — the audience belongs to the 'better' category.
10. The litotes 'not unjust' (ou adikos) affirms God's absolute justice and faithfulness — he cannot overlook genuine service. The evidence of their salvation is practical: they served (diakonēsantes, aorist — past action) and continue serving (diakonountes, present — ongoing action) the saints. Their love is demonstrated in deed, not merely profession. This verse grounds the author's confidence from verse 9.
11. The phrase hekaston hymōn ('each one of you') individualizes the exhortation — corporate encouragement is not enough; each person must persevere. The word plērophorian ('full assurance, complete confidence') describes a hope that has reached its maximum capacity — not wishful thinking but settled certainty. The phrase achri telous ('until the end') repeats the perseverance theme from 3:6 and 3:14.
12. The word nōthroi ('sluggish') returns from 5:11, forming an inclusio around the warning section. The antidote to sluggishness is imitation (mimētai) of the faithful — a concept the author will develop extensively in chapter 11's catalogue of faith. The pair 'faith and patience' (pisteōs kai makrothymias) represents the active and enduring dimensions of perseverance. The verb klēronountōn ('inheriting') echoes the inheritance language of 1:2 and 1:14.
13. The Abraham narrative now provides positive support for perseverance. The logic of God's oath is elegant: human oaths invoke a higher authority as guarantor, but God has no superior — so he swore by himself, making his own nature the guarantee. This draws on Genesis 22:16-17, where God's oath follows Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 22:16-17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Quoting Genesis 22:17. The Hebrew construction behind the Greek (infinitive absolute + finite verb) expresses emphasis through repetition: 'blessing I will bless' means 'I will absolutely, without question, bless.' We render this emphatic construction with 'surely' and 'certainly' rather than preserving the repetitive form that sounds unnatural in English.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 22:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb makrothymēsas ('having waited patiently, having been long-suffering') picks up the 'patience' (makrothymia) of verse 12 — Abraham is the model of the patience the author recommends. The word epetychen ('obtained, attained') indicates successful arrival at the goal. Abraham waited twenty-five years for Isaac — the patience was not passive but active trust sustained over decades.
16. The author explains the universal logic of oath-taking: people invoke a higher authority to settle disputes. An oath brings finality (peras, 'end, limit, boundary') and confirmation (bebaiōsin, 'ratification, guarantee'). This human practice establishes the framework for understanding God's oath — if human oaths settle matters, how much more does a divine oath?
17. The word ametatheton ('unchangeable, irrevocable, immutable') is emphatic — God's purpose cannot be altered, reversed, or modified. The verb emeseiteusen ('guaranteed, mediated, interposed') means God inserted an oath between his promise and its fulfillment as a mediating guarantee. The 'heirs of the promise' (klēronomoi tēs epangelias) extends beyond Abraham to include all who inherit the Abrahamic blessing — including the Christian audience.
18. The 'two unchangeable things' (duo pragmatōn ametaethetōn) are God's promise and God's oath — either alone would suffice, but together they provide double assurance. The phrase 'impossible for God to lie' (adynaton pseusasthai ton theon) asserts a divine impossibility — not a limitation but a perfection. The image of 'fleeing for refuge' (kataphygontes) evokes the Old Testament cities of refuge (Numbers 35:9-15), where those who fled found legal protection.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 35:9-15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The anchor metaphor is unique in the New Testament, though common in Greco-Roman literature as a symbol of stability. What is remarkable is where this anchor is fixed — not in the ocean floor but behind the curtain (katapetasmatos) of the heavenly sanctuary. The imagery combines nautical and temple language: the soul is anchored in the Holy of Holies. The adjectives asphalē ('firm, safe, unfailing') and bebaian ('secure, reliable, confirmed') double the assurance.
20. The term prodromos ('forerunner') is used only here of Christ in the New Testament. A forerunner goes ahead to prepare the way for others to follow — unlike the Levitical high priest who entered the Holy of Holies alone, Jesus enters on behalf of others who will follow him in. The phrase 'forever according to the order of Melchizedek' returns the argument to Psalm 110:4 from 5:6, resuming the Melchizedek discussion that the warning passage (5:11-6:12) interrupted. Chapter 7 will now expound this priesthood in full.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 110:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

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Summary: *Hebrews 7 develops the Melchizedek priesthood argument at full length. The chapter moves in three stages: first, an exposition of Genesis 14:18-20 showing Melchizedek's superiority to Abraham and therefore to Levi (verses 1-10); second, an argument that the change from Levitical to Melchizedek priesthood implies a change of law (verses 11-19); third, the superiority of Christ's permanent, oath-guaranteed priesthood over the temporary, death-limited Levitical priesthood (verses 20-28). The chapter culminates in a description of Jesus as the perfect high priest — holy, innocent, undefiled, exalted above the heavens.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Melchizedek argument is the most sophisticated typological exegesis in the New Testament. The author uses the silence of Genesis (no recorded parents, birth, or death) as positive evidence — what the text does not say about Melchizedek becomes a type of Christ's eternal priesthood. The tithing argument (verses 4-10) is brilliantly constructed: Levi, though unborn, paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham's body, proving Melchizedek's superiority to the entire Levitical system.*

Translation Friction: *The argument from silence about Melchizedek's genealogy (verse 3) is a hermeneutical method unfamiliar to modern readers. The claim that the Levitical system is 'set aside' (verse 18) raises significant questions about continuity and discontinuity between the covenants. We render the text as the author presents it without adjudicating between dispensational and covenantal frameworks.*

Connections: *Genesis 14:18-20 (Melchizedek's appearance) and Psalm 110:4 (the divine oath) are the two pillars. The argument about a change of law (verse 12) anticipates the new covenant argument of chapter 8. The 'indestructible life' (verse 16) connects to the resurrection. The oath without repentance (verse 21) echoes the oath certainty of 6:13-20.*

¹For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, met Abraham as he was returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, ²To whom as well Abraham offered a tenth part of all. First being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that as well King of Salem, which is, King of peace. ³Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever. ⁴Now consider how great this man was — even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the finest spoils. ⁵Now the descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment under the law to collect tithes from the people — that is, from their own brothers and sisters — even though they too are descended from Abraham. ⁶But this man, who does not trace his descent from them, received tithes from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. ⁷And beyond all dispute, the lesser is blessed by the greater. ⁸In the one case, mortal men receive tithes; but in the other case, one receives them of whom it is testified that he lives. ⁹And, so to speak, even Levi, who collects tithes, paid tithes through Abraham. ¹⁰For he was still in the body of his ancestor when Melchizedek met Abraham. ¹¹Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood — for on the basis of it the people received the law — what further need would there have been for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, rather than being designated according to the order of Aaron? ¹²For when the priesthood is changed, there must also be a change of law. ¹³For the one about whom these things are said belongs to a different tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. ¹⁴For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. ¹⁵And this becomes even more clear when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, ¹⁶Who is made, not following the law of a carnal commandment, but following the authority of an endless life. ¹⁷For it is testified of him, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." ¹⁸For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness — ¹⁹For the instruction of Moses fashioned nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better confident expectation did. By the which we draw nigh to God. ²⁰And this was not without an oath. For others became priests without an oath, ²¹For those priests were made without an oath. But this with an oath by him that stated to him, The Lord sware and will not turn back, you are a priest for ever following the order of Melchisedec.). ²²Accordingly, Jesus has also become the guarantee of a better covenant. ²³The former priests were

many in number because death prevented them from continuing in office. ²⁴But because he remains forever, he holds a permanent priesthood. ²⁵Therefore he is able to save completely those who approach God through him, since he always lives to intercede for them. ²⁶For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest: holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. ²⁸For the law appoints as high priests men who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The author begins expounding Genesis 14:18-20 verse by verse. Melchizedek holds two offices simultaneously — king and priest — a combination forbidden under the Mosaic law (kings came from Judah, priests from Levi). Only Christ unites both offices. 'Salem' (Salēm) is traditionally identified with Jerusalem (cf. Psalm 76:2). The Greek *kopēs* ('defeat, slaughter, cutting down') refers to Abraham's military victory over the four kings who had captured Lot.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 14:18-20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 76:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The author interprets both the name and the title etymologically. Melchizedek (Hebrew *malki-tsedeq*) means 'king of righteousness.' Salem (Hebrew *shalem*) means 'peace.' The combination — righteousness and peace — echoes Psalm 85:10 ('righteousness and peace have kissed') and Isaiah 32:17 ('the fruit of righteousness will be peace'). The order matters: righteousness first, then peace — reflecting the biblical principle that true peace is founded on justice. Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek is the key datum for the argument in verses 4-10.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 14:18-20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 85:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 32:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The three alpha-privative adjectives — *apatōr* ('without father'), *amētōr* ('without mother'), *agenealogētos* ('without genealogy') — describe what Genesis does not record about Melchizedek, not necessarily what was historically true. The argument is typological: because the text records no beginning or end for Melchizedek, his literary portrait resembles the eternal Son. The crucial verb is *aphōmoiōmenos* ('made to resemble, being likened to') — Melchizedek resembles the Son, not the reverse. The type points to the reality, not the reality to the type. He 'remains' (*menei*) a priest *eis to diēnekes* ('in perpetuity, forever').
4. The imperative *theōreite* ('consider, observe') calls for careful thought. The word *pēlikos* ('how great') asks the audience to measure Melchizedek's stature. The word *akrothinion* ('finest spoils, choicest portion of plunder') indicates Abraham gave not a random tenth but the best of the best. The title 'patriarch' (*patriarchēs*) — the highest dignity in Jewish memory — is deliberately used to heighten the contrast: even the great Abraham paid tribute to this figure.
5. The argument builds: Levitical priests collect tithes from fellow descendants of Abraham. They tithe equals. But Melchizedek collected tithes from Abraham himself — the superior tithing the inferior. The phrase *exelēluthotas ek tēs osphyos Abraam* ('having come from the loins of Abraham') uses vivid physical language to emphasize shared ancestry.
6. Melchizedek stands outside the Levitical genealogical system entirely (*mē genealogoumenos ex autōn*) — his authority derives from a different source. Two actions demonstrate his superiority: he received tithes from Abraham, and he blessed Abraham. Verse 7 will explain why the second action proves superiority.
7. This is stated as an axiom: *chōris pasēs antilogias* ('beyond all dispute, without any contradiction'). Blessing flows downward — from the greater to the lesser. Since Melchizedek blessed Abraham, Melchizedek was the greater party. This inverts the expected hierarchy: Abraham, the father of the nation, the recipient of divine promises, was the lesser in this encounter.
8. The contrast is between Levitical priests who die (*apothnēskontes anthrōpoi*, 'dying humans') and Melchizedek of whom Scripture testifies 'he lives' (*hoti zē*). Since Genesis records no death for Melchizedek, the silence of the text functions as testimony to ongoing life. This argument from silence is characteristic of the author's exegetical method.
9. The cautious phrase *hōs epos eipein* ('so to speak, one might even say') shows the author is aware this is a bold claim. Levi, the ancestor of all priests, himself paid tithes to Melchizedek — not directly, but through his ancestor Abraham. The argument depends on the concept of corporate solidarity: descendants are present in their ancestors' actions.

- 10.** The Greek *osphyi* ('loins, body') refers to the procreative capacity of the ancestor. Levi was 'in' Abraham seminally — his existence was contained within Abraham's future line. This concept of ancestral representation was common in ancient thought and appears in the rabbinic principle that what the fathers do affects the children. The argument is complete: if Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham, then the Melchizedek priesthood is superior to the Levitical.
- 11.** The argument shifts from Melchizedek's superiority (verses 1-10) to the insufficiency of the Levitical system (verses 11-19). The word *teleiōsis* ('perfection, completion, accomplishment') refers to the ability to bring worshipers into full, permanent relationship with God. If the Levitical system could do this, Psalm 110:4 would be unnecessary. The parenthetical note — the people received the law on the basis of the Levitical priesthood — shows how deeply intertwined priesthood and law were. To change one is to change the other (verse 12).
- 11.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 110:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 12.** The verb *metatithemenēs* ('being changed, being transferred') and the noun *metathesis* ('change, transfer, alteration') share the same root, creating emphasis through repetition. The logic is compact and revolutionary: priesthood and law are an integrated system. If the priesthood changes from Levitical to Melchizedek, the entire legal framework built on the Levitical priesthood must also change. This is the author's most direct statement about the obsolescence of the Mosaic law.
- 13.** The practical proof: Jesus belongs to the tribe of Judah, not Levi. Under Mosaic law, no Judahite could serve as priest. The very fact that a non-Levite is declared priest confirms that the legal framework has changed. The phrase *proseschēken tō thysiasērō* ('attended to/served at the altar') refers to the priestly ministry of sacrifice.
- 14.** The verb *anatetalken* ('has risen, has sprung up') is used for the rising of a star or the sprouting of a plant — both messianic images (Numbers 24:17, Isaiah 11:1). The phrase 'our Lord' (*ho kyrios hēmōn*) is one of the few times Hebrews uses 'Lord' for Jesus (cf. 2:3, 13:20). Moses's silence about Judahite priests is decisive: the Mosaic law made no provision for what God accomplished in Christ.
- 14.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 24:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 14.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 11:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 15.** The phrase *katadēlon estin* ('it is thoroughly clear, it is abundantly evident') intensifies the argument. The word *homoiotēta* ('likeness, resemblance, similarity') echoes verse 3's *aphōmoiōmenos* — the resemblance between Melchizedek and Christ is the hinge of the entire argument.
- 16.** The contrast is between two foundations for priesthood: *nomou entolēs sarkinēs* ('a law of fleshly/physical commandment') — meaning the genealogical requirement that priests descend from Aaron — and *dynameōs zōēs akatalytou* ('power of indestructible life'). The word *sarkinēs* ('fleshly, physical') is not pejorative but describes a system based on physical lineage. The word *akatalytou* ('indestructible, unable to be dissolved') is powerful — Christ's life cannot be terminated, making his priesthood permanent.
- 17.** Psalm 110:4 is quoted again (cf. 5:6), now as scriptural testimony supporting the claim of verse 16. The 'forever' (*eis ton aiōna*) is the key word — it is the permanence of Christ's priesthood, grounded in his indestructible life, that distinguishes it from the temporary Levitical priesthood.
- 17.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 110:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 18.** The word *athetēsis* ('setting aside, annulment, abrogation') is a legal term for the cancellation of a regulation. The 'former commandment' (*proagousēs entolēs*) refers to the Levitical priesthood system and its associated laws. The two reasons for annulment — weakness (*asthenes*, 'inability to accomplish its purpose') and uselessness (*anōpheles*, 'unprofitableness, inability to help') — are not moral judgments on the law itself but assessments of its capacity to bring perfection (verse 11).
- 19.** The stark declaration 'the law made nothing perfect' (*ouden eteleiōsen ho nomos*) is the hinge of the argument. What the law could not do — bring people into full, permanent access to God — the 'better hope' (*kreittōn elpis*) accomplishes. The verb *engizomen* ('we draw near') is a priestly term for approaching God's presence, now democratized — all believers draw near, not just the high priest once a year. The word 'better' (*kreittonos*) is the signature adjective of Hebrews, appearing thirteen times.
- 20.** The argument shifts to the oath guarantee. Levitical priests were appointed by genealogical qualification, not by divine oath. Christ's priesthood, by contrast, was established by God's sworn oath in Psalm 110:4. An oath-backed appointment is inherently more authoritative and permanent than one based on birth.
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 110:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** Quoting Psalm 110:4 with a new element emphasized: the oath includes the clause 'will not change his mind' (*ou metamelēthēsetai*). The Greek *metamelēthēsetai* ('will not repent, will not regret, will not change his mind') asserts the irrevocability of God's decision. Unlike human appointments that can be reversed, God's oath-backed priesthood stands permanently. Some manuscripts add 'according to the order of Melchizedek,' but the SBLGNT omits it here.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 110:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

22. The word *engyos* ('guarantee, surety, bondsman') appears only here in the New Testament. A guarantor personally stakes themselves that an agreement will be honored. Jesus is not merely the mediator of the new covenant but its personal guarantee — his very person ensures its fulfillment. The word *diathēkēs* ('covenant') introduces the covenant theme that will dominate chapter 8. This is the first time in Hebrews that the new covenant is called 'better' (*kreittōn*).
23. The argument is simple but devastating: the Levitical system required a succession of priests because each one died. The accumulation of priests (*pleiones*, 'many, numerous') is itself evidence of the system's impermanence. Each death was a disruption, requiring a new priest to be installed.
24. The Greek *aparabaton* ('permanent, untransferable, inviolable') describes a priesthood that cannot be passed to another. The word literally means 'not passing to another' — Christ's priesthood has no successor because he never vacates the office. This is the practical implication of the 'indestructible life' of verse 16.
25. The phrase *sōzein eis panteles* ('to save completely/to the uttermost') can mean both 'completely' (in scope — every dimension of salvation) and 'forever' (in duration — to the final end). Both meanings are likely intended. The present participle *proserchomenous* ('those who are approaching') describes an ongoing habit, not a one-time act. The word *entynchanein* ('to intercede, to appeal on behalf of') describes Christ's perpetual priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary — his saving work did not end at the cross but continues through intercession.
26. Five attributes describe the ideal high priest, moving from moral character to cosmic status: *hosios* ('holy, devout, pious' — holy in personal character, distinct from *hagios* which emphasizes consecration), *akakos* ('innocent, without evil, guileless'), *amiantos* ('unstained, undefiled, pure'), *kechōrismenos apo tōn hamartōlōn* ('separated from sinners' — not in the sense of avoiding them, since he was 'made like his brothers in every way' in 2:17, but in the sense of being untouched by sin), and *hypsēloteros tōn ouranōn genomenos* ('having become higher than the heavens' — his exaltation to cosmic supremacy).
27. Three contrasts with the Levitical system: frequency (daily versus once for all), sequence (first for himself, then for the people — Christ has no sins requiring atonement), and substance (animal sacrifices versus himself). The adverb *ephapax* ('once for all') is the most important word — it asserts the unrepeatable, completely sufficient nature of Christ's self-offering. This word will recur in 9:12 and 10:10 as the defining characteristic of the new covenant sacrifice.
28. The chapter's concluding summary compresses the entire argument into one sentence with two contrasts: the law versus the oath, and weak men versus the perfected Son. The phrase *meta ton nomon* ('after the law') is chronologically significant — Psalm 110 was written after the Mosaic legislation, meaning God's oath supersedes the earlier arrangement. The perfect participle *teteleōmenon* ('having been made perfect') describes a completed state — the Son's perfection through suffering (2:10, 5:8-9) is permanent and irreversible.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 110 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

8

Summary: *Hebrews 8 is the theological summit of the letter's central argument. Christ is a high priest who serves in the true heavenly sanctuary, not the earthly copy. The earthly tabernacle and its priesthood were a shadow of the heavenly reality. The chapter then quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 in its entirety — the longest Old Testament quotation in the New Testament — to demonstrate that God himself declared the first covenant would be replaced by a new and better covenant. The chapter concludes with a devastating inference: by calling the covenant 'new,' God made the first one old, and what is old and aging is about to disappear.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Jeremiah 31 quotation is the longest continuous Old Testament quotation in the New Testament (verses 8-12). The author lets the prophet's words carry the full weight of the argument — the new covenant is not a Christian invention but a divine promise through Israel's own prophet. The four promises of the new covenant (law written on hearts, direct knowledge of God, universal knowledge, forgiveness of sins) define the essence of the Christian experience.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between the 'shadow' (*skia*) and the 'true' (*alēthinos*) sanctuary reflects a Platonic-sounding framework that the author may draw from Hellenistic Judaism (particularly Philo). Whether this indicates direct Platonic influence or independent theological reasoning is debated. The final verse's statement that the first covenant 'is about to disappear' may reflect a pre-70 AD date (before the temple's destruction) or may be theological rather than historical language.*

Connections: *Jeremiah 31:31-34 is the foundational new covenant text, echoed in the Last Supper narratives (Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25). The shadow/reality framework draws on Exodus 25:40 (the heavenly pattern shown to Moses). The obsolescence of the first covenant connects to 7:12 (change of priesthood requires change of law). The new covenant promises will be applied practically in 10:15-18.*

¹Now the main point of what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ²He serves in the true sanctuary, the genuine tabernacle set up by the Lord and not by any human being. ³For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore it was necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. ⁴Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are already those who offer gifts according to the law. ⁵They serve in a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of the heavenly one, just as Moses was warned when he was about to construct the tent: "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain." ⁶But now Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. ⁷For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. ⁸For he finds fault with them when he says: "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — ⁹Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I picked up them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. Because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, says the Lord. ¹⁰For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they will be my people. ¹¹And they will not teach each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹²For I will be merciful toward their wrongdoing, and I will remember their sins no more." ¹³By calling it 'new,' he has made the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *kephalaion* ('main point, summary, chief matter') signals that what follows is the central thesis of the entire letter. The phrase 'seated at the right hand' (*ekathisen en dexia*) returns to Psalm 110:1 from 1:3, 13 — the Son's session at God's right hand frames the entire argument. The title 'Majesty' (*megalōsynēs*) avoids the divine name while conveying supreme authority.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 110:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The word *leitourgos* ('minister, servant, one who performs public service') is a cultic term for priestly service. The phrase *tēs skēnēs tēs alēthinēs* ('the true tent/tabernacle') introduces the shadow/reality distinction. The 'true' (*alēthinos*) tabernacle is not 'true' as opposed to 'false' but 'true' as opposed to 'copy' — the heavenly original versus the earthly reproduction. The Lord (*kyrios*) pitched this tent, distinguishing it from the human-made tabernacle of Exodus.
3. The logic is simple: a priesthood requires an offering. Since Christ is a high priest, he must have an offering. The author does not specify the offering here — that revelation comes in 9:12-14 (his own blood) and 9:26 (himself). The verb *prosenegkē* (aorist subjunctive of *prospherō*) points to a definitive, singular offering rather than repeated acts.
4. The conditional is contrary-to-fact: Christ is not on earth but in the heavenly sanctuary. On earth, only Levitical priests could serve, and Christ is from Judah (7:14). His priesthood operates in a different sphere — the heavenly sanctuary. The present tense 'there are' (*ontōn*) those who offer according to the law suggests the earthly temple is still functioning when this letter was written, possibly indicating a pre-70 AD date.
5. Quoting Exodus 25:40. The terms *hypodeigmati* ('copy, imitation') and *skia* ('shadow') describe the earthly tabernacle's relationship to the heavenly reality. A shadow proves the existence of the object casting it but is not the object itself. The word *typon* ('pattern, model') shown to Moses on Sinai was the heavenly original — Moses built a replica. This framework is central to the author's argument: the earthly system was always derivative, pointing to the true reality where Christ now serves.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 25:40 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verse establishes a proportion: ministry excellence corresponds to covenant excellence. Three uses of 'better' (*diaphorōteras, kreittōn, kreittosin*) drive the comparison. The word *mesitēs* ('mediator') describes one who stands between two parties to guarantee an agreement. The phrase *epi kreittosin epageliais nenomōthetai* ('enacted on better promises') introduces the Jeremiah 31 quotation — the new covenant's superiority lies in its promises.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 31. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The logic parallels 4:8 (if Joshua had given rest, no second day would be appointed) and 7:11 (if perfection came through the Levitical priesthood, no Melchizedek priest would be needed). The word *amemptos* ('faultless, blameless, without defect') does not mean the first covenant was sinful but that it was unable to accomplish its ultimate purpose — permanent access to God. The very existence of Jeremiah 31's 'new covenant' prophecy proves the first was insufficient.

7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 31. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Jeremiah 31:31-34 quotation begins here — the longest continuous Old Testament quotation in the New Testament. The Greek *memphomenos* ('finding fault with') could be directed at the people (*autous*, 'them') or at the covenant. The author reads Jeremiah's prophecy as God's own critique of the first covenant's inadequacy. The verb *syntelesō* ('I will establish, I will bring to completion') suggests not mere replacement but fulfillment. The specification of 'Israel and Judah' encompasses the entire covenant people — both kingdoms.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 31:31-34 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The image of God taking Israel 'by the hand' (*epilabomenou mou tēs cheiros autōn*) is tender — like a parent leading a child. The contrast with their subsequent unfaithfulness is poignant. The Greek *ēmelēsa autōn* ('I showed no concern for them, I neglected them') translates a difficult Hebrew phrase in Jeremiah. The Septuagint rendering differs from the Masoretic Text's 'though I was a husband to them.' The author follows the Septuagint, which emphasizes God's withdrawal rather than his continued commitment.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 31:31-34. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The first two promises of the new covenant: internalized law and restored relationship. The move from external stone tablets to internal inscription (*dianoian*, 'mind'; *kardias*, 'hearts') transforms obedience from external compliance to internal disposition. The covenant formula 'I will be their God and they will be my people' (*esomai autois eis theon*) is the most ancient covenant declaration, running from Exodus 6:7 through Revelation 21:3. In the new covenant, this relationship is fully realized.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 6:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The third promise: universal, direct knowledge of God. The double negative *ou mē* ('they will never, they will not at all') is emphatic. The knowledge promised is not intellectual information about God but relational knowing (*gnōthi*, from *ginōskō*) — the personal, experiential knowledge of covenant intimacy. The phrase 'from the least to the greatest' (*apo mikrou heōs megalou*) asserts that this knowledge crosses all social and spiritual hierarchies.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The fourth promise and the foundation of all the others: complete forgiveness. The word *hileōs* ('merciful, gracious, propitious') is related to *hilaskomai* ('to atone,' cf. 2:17) — God's mercy toward sin is rooted in atonement. The phrase *ou mē mnēsthō eti* ('I will never again remember') does not mean God literally forgets but that he will not hold sins against his people — they will never be counted in the record. This promise is what makes the new covenant 'better': the sin problem is definitively resolved. The author will return to this verse in 10:17 as the clinching argument.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 31:31-34. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The author's commentary on the Jeremiah quotation is surgically precise: the single word 'new' (*kainēn*) in Jeremiah 31:31 logically renders the first covenant 'old' (*pepalaiōken*, 'has made old/obsolete'). The two participles — *palaioumenon* ('becoming obsolete') and *gēraskon* ('growing old, aging') — describe a process rather than a sudden event. The phrase *engys aphanismou* ('near disappearance') is debated: is this a pre-70 AD prediction of the temple's destruction, or a theological statement about the first covenant's status regardless of the temple's physical fate? The text does not specify, and we leave it unresolved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 31:31 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

9

Summary: Hebrews 9 provides a detailed comparison between the earthly tabernacle and the heavenly sanctuary. The chapter describes the furniture and rituals of the old covenant tabernacle (verses 1-10), then declares that Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary once for all through his own blood, obtaining eternal redemption (verses 11-14). Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, and his death is both sacrifice and testament-inauguration (verses 15-22). The chapter climaxes with the declaration that Christ appeared once at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and will appear a second time not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him (verses 23-28).

What Makes This Remarkable: The tabernacle typology is the most sustained in the New Testament. The author describes the outer and inner sanctuaries, their furnishings, and the annual Day of Atonement ritual, all as shadows of Christ's work. The phrase 'once for all' (ephapax, verse 12) is the theological center of gravity. The double-entendre of diathēkē as both 'covenant' and 'testament/will' (verses 16-17) is a unique wordplay that works because a will requires the testator's death.

Translation Friction: The author's description of the tabernacle furniture (verses 2-5) contains some details that differ from the Old Testament layout (e.g., the golden altar of incense placed inside the Holy of Holies rather than outside). Scholars debate whether this reflects a different tradition, a theological point about the altar's function, or the Day of Atonement ritual when incense entered the inner chamber. We render the text as written and note the discrepancy.

Connections: The tabernacle description draws on Exodus 25-30. The Day of Atonement ritual follows Leviticus 16. The blood-of-the-covenant language echoes Exodus 24:8 and Jesus's words at the Last Supper (Mark 14:24). The 'once for all' theme connects to 7:27 and 10:10. Christ's second appearing (verse 28) connects to the eschatological hope throughout the New Testament.

¹Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. ²For a tent was prepared — the outer section — in which were the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the Presence. This is called the Holy Place. ³Behind the second curtain was a tent called the Most Holy Place. ⁴It had the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which were a golden jar holding the manna, Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. ⁵Above the ark were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. But we cannot speak about these things in detail now. ⁶With these arrangements in place, the priests continually enter the outer tent to carry out their duties of worship, ⁷However, into the second traveled the high priest alone once every year, not apart from blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. ⁸By this the Holy Spirit was showing that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the outer tent still had standing. ⁹This is a symbol for the present time, during which gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰These were outward regulations about food, drink, and various ceremonial washings — rules that applied only until the time when God would set things right. ¹¹But when Christ appeared as high priest of the good things that have come, he entered through the greater and more perfect tent — not made with hands, that is, not of this creation — ¹²Neither by the lifeblood of goats and calves, but by his own lifeblood he went into in once into the sacred location, possessing obtained eternal redemption for us. ¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them for the purification of the body, ¹⁴Purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living god?, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God. ¹⁵For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. ¹⁶For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. ¹⁷For a will takes effect only at death; it has no force while the one who made it is still alive. ¹⁸Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. ¹⁹For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the scroll itself and all the people, ²⁰Indeed, declaring, This is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined to you. ²¹And in the same way he sprinkled the tent and all the vessels used in worship with blood. ²²Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. ²³Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves require better sacrifices than these. ²⁴For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by hands — a mere copy of the true one — but into heaven itself, to appear now in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶Otherwise, 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. ²⁷And just as it is appointed for people to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸So Christ was once offered to bear the wrongdoings of numerous. And to them that pay attention for him will he appear the second moment without sin to salvation.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The adjective *kosmikon* ('earthly, worldly, of this world') does not mean 'cosmetic' or 'ornamental' but 'belonging to this created order' — as opposed to the heavenly sanctuary. The word *dikaiōmata* ('regulations, ordinances') refers to the divinely prescribed rules of worship. The author acknowledges the first covenant had legitimate worship — it was real but provisional.
2. The author describes the tabernacle's two-chamber structure from Exodus 26. The 'first' (*prōtē*) tent is the outer chamber, the Holy Place. Its furnishings are: the lampstand (*lychnia*, the seven-branched menorah of Exodus 25:31-40), the table (*trapeza*, for the showbread, Exodus 25:23-30), and the prothesis *tōn artōn* ('the setting forth of the bread,' the bread of the Presence renewed weekly). We render 'the Holy Place' (*Hagia*) to distinguish it from the inner chamber.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 26. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 25:31-40. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The 'second curtain' (*deuteron katapetasma*) separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (*Hagia Hagiōn*, literally 'Holy of Holies'). Only the high priest could pass this curtain, and only once a year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:2). This curtain is the same one that the author says Jesus has passed through (6:19, 10:20).
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 16:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The word *thymiaterion* can mean either 'censer' (a portable incense burner) or 'altar of incense.' In the Old Testament, the altar of incense stood in the Holy Place, not in the Most Holy Place (Exodus 30:6). The author may be associating it with the inner room because on the Day of Atonement the high priest brought incense inside the curtain (Leviticus 16:12-13), or he may be describing a functional relationship rather than physical location. The three items inside the ark — manna (Exodus 16:33), Aaron's budded staff (Numbers 17:10), and the tablets (Exodus 25:16) — are all covenant tokens.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 30:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 16:12-13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 16:33. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 17:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 25:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The cherubim (*Cheroubin doxēs*, 'cherubim of glory') are the golden figures described in Exodus 25:18-22, their wings forming the space where God's presence was manifest. The word *hilasterion* ('mercy seat, place of atonement') is the same word Paul uses in Romans 3:25 for Christ as the 'place of atonement.' It is the lid of the ark where the high priest sprinkled blood on the Day of Atonement. The author deliberately abbreviates — his purpose is not a tour of the tabernacle but the contrast between the old system and Christ.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 25:18-22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The regular priests entered the Holy Place daily to tend the lampstand, set out the bread, and offer incense. The phrase *dia pantos* ('continually, at all times') emphasizes the repetitive nature of this service. The author's point will become clear in contrast: where the ordinary priests go continually, the high priest goes once a year (verse 7), and Christ goes once for all (verse 12).
7. Three restrictions govern the high priest's access to the Most Holy Place: only the high priest (*monos*), only once a year (*hapax tou eniautou*, on the Day of Atonement), and never without blood (*ou chōris haimatos*). These limitations demonstrate the imperfection of the system — access to God's presence was severely restricted. The word *agnoēmātōn* ('sins of ignorance, unintentional errors') refers to sins committed unknowingly, following Leviticus 4-5. Deliberate, defiant sins had no sacrificial remedy under the old system (Numbers 15:30-31).
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 4-5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 15:30-31. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Holy Spirit is identified as the interpreter of tabernacle symbolism — the physical structure communicated a spiritual lesson. The closed curtain between the two chambers was not merely a liturgical boundary but a divine sign: full access to God's presence was 'not yet disclosed' (*mēpō pēphanerōsthai*). The phrase 'still had standing' (*eti echousēs stasin*) could refer to the physical first chamber of the tabernacle or, figuratively, to the entire old covenant system.
9. The word *parabolē* ('symbol, parable, illustration') identifies the tabernacle as a parabolic structure — it teaches by analogy. The critical phrase is *kata syneidēsīn teleiōsai* ('to perfect with respect to conscience'). The old sacrifices could not cleanse the inner person — they dealt with external ritual purity but left the conscience (*syneidēsis*, the internal moral awareness) unresolved. This is the fundamental deficiency Christ's sacrifice addresses

(verse 14).

10. The phrase *dikaiōmata sarkos* ('regulations for the body/flesh') characterizes the old system as externally focused — food laws, drink laws, and ritual washings (baptismois, cf. 6:2). The word *diorthōseōs* ('new order, reformation, setting right') is used only here in the New Testament. It describes the time when the external, provisional regulations would be replaced by internal, permanent realities. The author identifies that time as the present — Christ's coming is the *diorthōsis*.
11. The Greek shifts dramatically from the old system to Christ. Some manuscripts read 'good things to come' (*mellontōn*) rather than 'good things that have come' (*genomenōn*); the SBLGNT reads *genomenōn*, emphasizing that the good things are already realized in Christ. The heavenly tent is described by three negatives: not made with hands (*ou cheiropoiētou*), not of this creation (*ou tautēs tēs ktiseōs*) — it belongs to an entirely different order of reality.
12. This verse is the theological center of Hebrews. Three contrasts with the Day of Atonement ritual: the medium (animal blood versus his own blood), the frequency (annually versus once for all, *ephapax*), and the result (temporary cleansing versus eternal redemption, *aiōnian lytrōsin*). The word *lytrōsin* ('redemption, ransoming, liberation by payment') evokes the Old Testament *go'el* — the kinsman who pays the price to set family members free. Christ's blood is both the means of entry and the price of redemption.
13. The argument is from lesser to greater (*a fortiori*). The three ritual elements — blood of goats, blood of bulls (Day of Atonement, Leviticus 16), and ashes of a heifer (the red heifer ceremony, Numbers 19) — achieved genuine but limited cleansing: purification of the 'flesh' (*sarkos*), meaning external ritual purity. The author concedes the old system's effectiveness within its domain before arguing for Christ's greater effectiveness.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The phrase *posō mallon* ('how much more') completes the *a fortiori* argument. Three elements make Christ's sacrifice superior: the agent (Christ, not an animal), the means (through the eternal Spirit, not through ritual procedure), and the quality (without blemish, *amōmon* — the sacrificial perfection requirement of Leviticus 1:3 applied to Christ's moral perfection). The result penetrates where the old system could not: it cleanses the conscience (*syneidēsin*), not just the body. The purpose is positive — not merely forgiveness but enablement: 'to serve the living God' (*latreuein theō zōnti*).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 1:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. Christ's death has retroactive power — it atones for sins committed under the first covenant as well as the second. The word *apolytrōsin* ('redemption, ransoming') extends the liberation language of verse 12. The phrase 'those who are called' (*hoi keklēmenoi*) uses the perfect passive — their calling is a completed divine act with ongoing effect. The 'eternal inheritance' (*aiōniou klēnomias*) echoes the inheritance language of 1:2, 14.
16. The author exploits the double meaning of *diathēkē*: in verses 15 and earlier, it means 'covenant'; here and in verse 17, it means 'will/testament.' A will becomes operative only when the testator dies. The wordplay works because the same Greek word serves both legal concepts. This is not a switch in meaning but an exploitation of the semantic overlap — Christ's death activates the new covenant just as a death activates a will.
17. The legal principle is straightforward: a will is valid (*bebaia*, 'secure, in force') only after the testator's death. It has no legal power (*ischyei*, 'is strong, is operative') during the testator's lifetime. Applied to Christ: the new covenant's blessings became operative through his death. This is the author's explanation of why the new covenant required a death — not merely to provide blood for sacrifice but to activate the testamentary provisions.
18. The verb *engekainistai* ('was inaugurated, was dedicated, was put into effect') indicates the formal activation of the covenant. The principle applies universally: both covenants required blood for their inauguration. The first covenant's inauguration with blood (Exodus 24:3-8) foreshadowed the new covenant's inauguration with Christ's blood.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 24:3-8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The author describes the covenant inauguration ceremony of Exodus 24:3-8, adding details not found in the Exodus account (goats, water, scarlet wool, hyssop, and sprinkling of the scroll). These additional elements may come from a tradition that combined the covenant ceremony with the Day of Atonement and red heifer rituals, or from a textual tradition no longer extant. The hyssop and scarlet wool appear in the red heifer ceremony (Numbers 19) and the leper cleansing (Leviticus 14).
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 24:3-8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 19. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Quoting Exodus 24:8 with slight modification. The Hebrew/LXX reads 'which the LORD has made with you'; the author writes 'which God has commanded for you' (*eneteilato pros hymas*). The verb *eneteilato* ('commanded') emphasizes the obligatory nature of the covenant. Jesus's words at the Last Supper — 'This is my blood of the covenant' (Mark 14:24) — deliberately echo this covenant-inauguration language.

- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 24:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** The sprinkling of the tabernacle and its vessels with blood is not directly recorded in Exodus 24 but is attested in Leviticus 8:15, 19 (the consecration of the tabernacle) and in Josephus (*Antiquities* 3.206). Every element of the worship system was consecrated by blood, reinforcing the principle of verse 22.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 8:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** The qualifier 'almost' (*schedon*) is precise — some purification under the law used water (Numbers 31:23), fire (Numbers 31:23), or flour (Leviticus 5:11-13) rather than blood. But the general principle stands: blood is the primary means of purification and atonement. The final clause — *chōris haimatekchysias ou ginetai aphesis* ('without blood-shedding there is no forgiveness/release') — is one of the most foundational statements in biblical theology. The word *haimatekchysias* ('blood-shedding') appears only here in the New Testament.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 31:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 5:11-13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** The argument: if the earthly copies (*hypodeigmata*) required animal blood for purification, the heavenly originals require a better sacrifice — Christ's own blood. The plural 'sacrifices' (*thysiais*) is surprising since Hebrews emphasizes the singularity of Christ's offering; it may be a plural of category ('sacrifices of a better kind') rather than quantity.
- 24.** Three contrasts define Christ's superior priestly ministry: the sanctuary (handmade copy versus heaven itself), the timing (now — presently, continuously), and the purpose (on our behalf — *hyper hēmōn*, his presence before God is for us). The word *antitypa* ('copies, counterparts, representations') identifies the earthly tabernacle as a reproduction, not the original. The verb *emphanisthēnai* ('to appear, to be manifest') describes Christ's visible presence before God's face (*prosōpō*, literally 'face') — he stands before God representing us.
- 25.** The adverb *pollakis* ('repeatedly, often, many times') contrasts with the 'once for all' of verse 12. The phrase *en haimati allotriō* ('with blood belonging to another, with blood not his own') highlights both the distance between the Levitical high priest and his sacrifice (he offers someone else's blood) and between the Levitical system and Christ (who offers his own blood). Christ's self-offering is both more costly and more effective.
- 26.** The *reductio ad absurdum*: if Christ's sacrifice were not once-for-all sufficient, he would have needed to suffer repeatedly throughout all of history. The phrase *epi synteleia tōn aiōnōn* ('at the culmination of the ages') places Christ's sacrifice at the climax of history — all previous ages were leading to this moment. The verb *atheēsīn* ('to put away, to set aside, to annul') uses the same word from 7:18 (the annulment of the old commandment) — here it is sin itself that is annulled.
- 27.** The analogy: human beings die once (*hapax*), not repeatedly. Death is a singular, unrepeatable event followed by judgment. Christ's death follows the same pattern — singular and unrepeatable — but with a different sequel: not judgment but salvation (verse 28). The word *apokeitai* ('is appointed, is laid up, is stored away') suggests a divine decree — death is not random but ordained.
- 28.** The chapter ends with a sweeping christological summary in three acts: Christ's first appearing was to deal with sin (verse 26), his present ministry is intercession before God (verse 24), and his second appearing will bring final salvation (this verse). The phrase *pollōn anenenkein hamartias* ('to bear the sins of many') echoes the Servant Song of Isaiah 53:12. The words *chōris hamartias* ('without sin, apart from sin') mean his second coming will have nothing to do with sin — the sin problem was fully and finally resolved at the cross. The verb *apekdechomenois* ('eagerly waiting, expectantly anticipating') describes an active, longing hope.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

10

Summary: *Hebrews 10 completes the central priestly argument and transitions to exhortation. The chapter first demonstrates that animal sacrifices could never take away sins (verses 1-4), then presents Christ's self-offering as the fulfillment of Psalm 40 — 'a body you have prepared for me' (verses 5-10). Christ's single offering has perfected believers forever (verses 11-18). The author then draws three practical conclusions: approach God with confidence, hold fast to hope, and encourage one another (verses 19-25). A fourth warning passage warns of judgment for deliberate sin after receiving the truth (verses 26-31). The chapter closes by urging the audience to remember their earlier endurance and not throw away their confidence (verses 32-39).*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Psalm 40 quotation (verses 5-7) is theologically decisive — it places on Christ's lips a declaration that God does not desire animal sacrifices but has prepared a body for the purpose of doing God's will. The 'new and living way through the curtain, that is, his flesh' (verse 20) is one of the most profound metaphors in the letter. The warning passage (verses 26-31) is the most severe in the New Testament after the unforgivable sin passages.*

Translation Friction: *The Septuagint reading of Psalm 40:6 ('a body you have prepared for me') differs from the Masoretic Text ('ears you have dug/opened for me'). The author depends on the Septuagint reading for his argument. The warning of verses 26-31 raises the same questions about apostasy as 6:4-8. The phrase 'trampled the Son of God underfoot' (verse 29) is among the harshest in the New Testament.*

Connections: *The Psalm 40 quotation connects to the incarnation theology of chapter 2. The new covenant quotation from Jeremiah 31 returns in verses 16-17, closing the argument begun in chapter 8. The 'new and living way' (verse 20) connects to the 'forerunner' of 6:20. The call to perseverance (verses 32-39) anticipates the faith catalogue of chapter 11. The Habakkuk 2:3-4 quotation (verses 37-38) will be developed in chapter 11.*

¹For since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who draw near. ²Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered, since the worshipers, once cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year after year. ⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ⁵Therefore, when Christ comes into the world, he says, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me. ⁶In burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, 'See, I have come — in the scroll of the book it is written about me — to do your will, O God.'" ⁸When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" — these are offered according to the law — ⁹Then stated he, Lo, I arrive to do your will, O God. He takes off the initially, that he may establish the second. ¹⁰By that will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹And every priest stands day after day ministering and offering the same sacrifices repeatedly, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³Since that time, he waits for his enemies to be made a footstool under his feet. ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. ¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying, ¹⁶"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," ¹⁷Then he adds: "I will never again remember their sins and lawless acts." ¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. ¹⁹Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰He opened a new and living way for us through the curtain — that is, through his body. ²¹After an high priest over the house of God; ²²And our bodies washed with pure water, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. ²³Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for the one who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves as one, as the kind of some is. But exhorting one another — and so much the more, as you see the day approaching. ²⁶For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷However, a certain

fearful looking for of the time of reckoning and fiery indignation, which will devour the adversaries. ²⁸Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified as an ordinary thing, and who has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰For we know the one who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." ³¹It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. ³²But recall the earlier days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings. ³³Sometimes you were publicly exposed to ridicule and affliction, and sometimes you became partners with those who were treated that way. ³⁴For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better and lasting possession. ³⁵Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised. ³⁷For, "In just a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay. ³⁸But my righteous one will live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." ³⁹But we are not among those who shrink back and are destroyed, but among those who have faith and preserve their souls.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The distinction between 'shadow' (skian) and 'true form' (eikona, literally 'image') refines the typology of 8:5. A shadow gives outline but no substance; the 'image' (eikōn) is the thing itself in its true form. The repetition of sacrifices 'year after year' (kat' eniauton) is itself evidence of their inadequacy — if they worked, they would not need repeating. The verb teleiōsai ('make perfect') carries the full weight of Hebrews' perfection concept: to bring into complete, permanent right relationship with God.
2. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'Yes.' If the sacrifices actually cleansed the conscience (syneidēsīn hamartiōn, 'consciousness of sins'), they would be unnecessary after the first offering. The fact that they continue proves they have not accomplished their purpose. The word hapax ('once') here means 'once and for all' — genuine cleansing would be definitive.
3. The word anamnēsis ('reminder, remembrance, memorial') is deeply ironic: the sacrifices meant to deal with sin actually function as an annual reminder that sin has not been dealt with. The same word appears in the Last Supper accounts ('do this in remembrance of me,' Luke 22:19) — but Christ's memorial is of accomplished redemption, not unresolved guilt.
4. The declaration adynaton ('impossible') is categorical — not 'difficult' or 'unlikely' but absolutely impossible. The verb aphairein ('to take away, to remove') describes complete elimination. Animal blood could cover sins ceremonially (Leviticus 17:11) but could not remove them from the conscience or from God's account. This blunt assessment sets up the Psalm 40 quotation as the divine alternative.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 17:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 40. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Quoting Psalm 40:6-8 (LXX 39:7-9). The Greek sōma katērtisō moi ('a body you have prepared for me') differs from the Hebrew 'ears you have dug/opened for me.' The Septuagint translators apparently interpreted the Hebrew idiom (ears opened = readiness to hear and obey) with a broader reference to the whole body given for obedience. The author of Hebrews depends on this Septuagint reading — the 'body prepared' becomes the body Christ offered on the cross. The author places these words on Christ's lips as he enters the world (eiserchamenos eis ton kosmon), making the incarnation itself a priestly act of willing obedience.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 40:6-8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The holokautōmata ('burnt offerings,' where the entire animal is consumed) and peri hamartias ('sin offerings') represent the full range of Levitical sacrifice. God's displeasure is not with the sacrifices themselves but with their inability to accomplish what he desires — the permanent removal of sin and the restoration of relationship.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 40:6-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The phrase en kephalidi bibliou ('in the scroll/heading of the book') likely refers to the Torah, where God's will for the Messiah is recorded. Christ's statement 'I have come to do your will' replaces the entire sacrificial system with personal, willing obedience. The obedience of the incarnate Son — culminating in the cross — is what God always desired, and what animal sacrifice could only symbolize.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 40:6-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The author now interprets the psalm quotation. Four categories of sacrifice are listed comprehensively (sacrifices, offerings, burnt offerings, sin offerings) and all four are rejected. The parenthetical 'these are offered according to the law' (kata nomon prosperontai) is significant: God does not desire the very sacrifices his own law prescribed. This paradox — God commanded what he did not ultimately want — is resolved by understanding

the sacrificial system as preparatory and typological.

9. The author's conclusion is decisive: the verb *anairei* ('he abolishes, he takes away, he removes') eliminates the first system (animal sacrifice), and the verb *stēsē* ('he may establish, he may set up') installs the second (Christ's willing obedience unto death). The 'first' and 'second' refer to the two systems, not the two covenants directly, though the implication is the same.
10. The phrase *en hō thelēmati* ('by that will') connects directly to Psalm 40:8 — Christ's doing of God's will is the instrument of our sanctification. The perfect passive *hēgiasmenoi esmen* ('we have been sanctified') describes a completed state with ongoing effect — the sanctification accomplished by Christ's offering is permanent. The word *ephapax* ('once for all') appears for the climactic fourth time in Hebrews (7:27, 9:12, 9:26, 10:10), definitively closing the argument about sacrifice.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 40:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The posture of the Levitical priests is significant: they stand (*hestēken*). There was no chair in the tabernacle because their work was never finished. The repetitive language — 'day after day' (*kath' hēmeran*), 'the same' (*tas autas*), 'repeatedly' (*pollakis*), 'never' (*oudepote*) — creates a sense of futile, endless repetition. The verb *perielein* ('take away, remove completely') is stronger than *aphairein* (verse 4) — these sacrifices cannot strip sin away.
12. The contrast with verse 11 is total: where Levitical priests stand (work unfinished), Christ sat down (work completed). Where they offer the same sacrifices repeatedly, Christ offered one sacrifice (*mian thysian*). The phrase *eis to diēnekes* ('for all time, in perpetuity') can modify either the offering ('one sacrifice that is effective for all time') or the sitting ('he sat down permanently'). Both readings are theologically true. The return to Psalm 110:1 ('sat down at the right hand') signals the completion of the priestly argument.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 110:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Quoting Psalm 110:1b. Christ's present activity is described as 'waiting' (*ekdechamenos*) — his sacrificial work is done, and he awaits the consummation when all opposition is subdued. The 'enemies made a footstool' imagery is ancient Near Eastern — a conquered king's enemies were placed under his feet as a sign of total subjection.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 110:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. This verse is the theological summary of the entire priestly argument. The perfect tense *teteleiōken* ('he has perfected') describes a completed act with permanent results. The present passive *hagiazomenous* ('those who are being sanctified') describes an ongoing process. The combination is precise: the sacrifice is complete and unrepeatable (perfect tense), but its application to believers is progressive (present tense). Believers are already perfected in status but still being sanctified in experience.
15. The Holy Spirit is again identified as the author of Scripture (cf. 3:7). The 'testimony' (*martyrei*) is from Jeremiah 31:33-34, returning to the new covenant passage quoted in full in chapter 8. The author now uses only the portions most relevant to his conclusion.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 31:33-34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The Jeremiah 31:33 quotation is repeated from 8:10 with slight variations in word order — hearts before minds rather than minds before hearts. This may reflect citation from memory or a different manuscript tradition. The author extracts the two promises most relevant to his argument: internalized law (verse 16) and forgiveness (verse 17).
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 31:33. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. This is the clinching verse. The double negative *ou mē mnēsthēsomai* ('I will never, ever remember') from Jeremiah 31:34 asserts the absolute finality of new covenant forgiveness. The author has built an elaborate argument about sacrifice, priesthood, and covenant, and it all comes down to this: God will not remember sins.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 31:34. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The conclusion is elegant and final: if sins are forgiven, no further sacrifice is needed. The word *aphesis* ('forgiveness, release, sending away') describes sins fully dismissed. The phrase *ouketi prosthora peri hamartias* ('no longer any offering for sin') closes the priestly argument — the sacrificial system is not merely superseded but rendered unnecessary by accomplished forgiveness. The argument that began in 5:1 reaches its definitive conclusion.
19. The transition from exposition to exhortation is marked by 'therefore' (*oun*). Everything argued in chapters 5-10 now yields practical application. The word *parrēsian* ('confidence, boldness, freedom of speech') describes the access believers now possess — access that was restricted to one person, one day per year under the old system. The Most Holy Place (*tōn hagiōn*) is now open through Jesus's blood.
20. The phrase *hodon prosphaton kai zōsan* ('a new and living way') describes a path that is freshly opened (*prosphaton*, 'newly slaughtered/newly made' — originally a sacrificial term) and living (*zōsan* — this is not a dead ritual path but one animated by resurrection life). The identification of the curtain with Christ's flesh (*toutestin tēs sarkos autou*) is one of the letter's most compressed theological statements: just as the high priest passed through the curtain to reach God's presence, so Christ's death (the tearing of his flesh) opened permanent access to God.

- 21.** The title 'great priest' (hierea megan) echoes the 'great high priest' of 4:14. The phrase 'over the house of God' (epi ton oikon tou theou) returns to the language of 3:6, where Christ was described as 'Son over God's house.' The two grounds for confidence are now stated: we have access (verses 19-20) and we have a priest (verse 21).
- 22.** The first of three exhortations (verses 22, 23, 24-25). Drawing near (proserchōmetha) is the priestly access language of 4:16. The requirements parallel the high priest's preparation for the Day of Atonement: sprinkling of blood (Leviticus 16:14-15, here applied to the heart) and washing with water (Leviticus 16:4, here likely a reference to baptism). The four qualifications — sincere heart, full faith, sprinkled conscience, washed body — unite inner disposition and outward sign.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 16:14-15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** The second exhortation. The word *aklinē* ('without wavering, unbending, firm') describes a confession that does not tilt or lean. The ground for unwavering hope is not human determination but divine faithfulness — *pistos ho epangeilamenos* ('faithful is the one who promised'). This echoes 6:13-20 on the certainty of God's oath.
- 24.** The third exhortation is communal. The verb *katanoōmen* ('let us consider, let us pay careful attention to') demands thoughtful observation of one another's needs. The word *paroxysmon* ('stirring up, provocation, sharp incitement') is usually negative (cf. Acts 15:39, sharp disagreement), but here it is positive — provoking one another to love. Faith is not solitary but mutually dependent.
- 25.** The word *episynagōgēn* ('gathering together, assembling') refers to the Christian community's regular meetings. Some were already abandoning corporate worship — a danger the author treats as serious, since isolation makes apostasy easier (cf. 3:13, mutual daily encouragement). The 'Day' (*tēn hēmeran*) is the day of Christ's return (9:28), which serves as both motivation and deadline.
- 26.** The fourth and most severe warning passage begins. The word *hekousiōs* ('deliberately, willfully, voluntarily') contrasts with the sins of ignorance covered by the Levitical system (9:7). The present participle *hamartanontōn* ('sinning, continuing to sin') suggests a sustained pattern, not a single lapse. The phrase *epignōsin tēs alētheias* ('full knowledge of the truth') describes someone who has understood the gospel completely. The devastating conclusion: for such a person, *ouketi apoleipetai thysia* ('no sacrifice remains') — Christ's sacrifice is the last and only one, and if it is rejected, nothing else can atone.
- 27.** The Greek *phobera tis ekdochē kriseōs* ('a certain fearful expectation of judgment') describes the dread anticipation of divine judgment. The phrase *pyros zēlos* ('fury/jealousy of fire') alludes to Deuteronomy 4:24 and Isaiah 26:11 — God's jealous fire consuming those who oppose him. The word *hupēnantios* ('adversaries, opponents') is strong — those who reject Christ's sacrifice place themselves among God's enemies.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 4:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 26:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** Referring to Deuteronomy 17:2-6, which prescribed death for covenant violators when verified by two or three witnesses. The *a fortiori* argument follows: if rejection of the Mosaic law brought physical death, how much worse is the punishment for rejecting Christ?
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 17:2-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** Three acts of sacrilege are described with escalating severity: trampling the Son of God (*katapatēsas* — treating him as worthless, walking on him), treating the covenant blood as common/profane (*koinon hēgisamenos* — 'common' means 'not holy,' treating the sacred as ordinary), and outraging the Spirit of grace (*enyubrisas* — to insult with arrogant contempt). The phrase 'by which he was sanctified' (*en hō hēgiasthē*) is significant — the apostate was genuinely sanctified by Christ's blood, making the rejection more culpable.
- 30.** Two quotations from Deuteronomy 32:35-36 (the Song of Moses). The first ('vengeance is mine') asserts God's exclusive right to execute justice — vengeance is not human prerogative but divine. The second ('the Lord will judge his people') is ominous in this context: the word 'his people' (*ton laon autou*) means that God's judgment falls on his own covenant community, not just outsiders. Those inside the covenant who violate it face divine judgment.
- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 32:35-36 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 31.** The adjective *phoberon* ('terrifying, fearful, dreadful') describes not irrational fear but appropriate terror before unmediated divine power. The verb *empesein* ('to fall into') suggests helpless collapse — not voluntary approach but involuntary exposure. The title 'living God' (*theou zōntos*) appears for the third time in Hebrews (3:12, 9:14), each time emphasizing God's active, dangerous vitality. This is not a philosophical abstraction but a God who acts.
- 32.** The tone shifts from warning to encouragement. The word *phōtisthentes* ('enlightened') echoes 6:4 and may refer to baptism. The word *athlēsin* ('struggle, contest, fight') is an athletic metaphor — their faith was tested in a grueling competition. The verb *hypemeinate* ('you endured') is the same word used of Jesus in 12:2-3. Their past endurance is evidence that they are capable of continuing.

33. The verb *theatrizomenoi* ('publicly exposed, made a spectacle') comes from *theatron* ('theater') — they were put on public display for mockery. The two dimensions of their suffering: direct persecution (ridicule and affliction) and solidarity with others who suffered (becoming partners/*koinōnoi* with the persecuted). Both are costly: one involves personal pain, the other the risk of guilt by association.
34. The Greek *synepathēsate* ('you sympathized with, you suffered alongside') recalls the sympathy language of 4:15. They visited and supported imprisoned believers at personal risk. Even more remarkably, they accepted the confiscation (*harpagēn*, 'plundering, seizure') of their property with joy (*meta charas*). The reason: they possessed something better (*kreitton* — the signature comparative) and lasting (*menousan*, 'remaining, enduring'). Earthly possessions could be taken; heavenly possession could not.
35. The imperative *mē apobalēte* ('do not throw away') pictures a deliberate discarding of something valuable. Their *parrēsian* ('confidence, boldness') — the same word from verse 19 — is not something to be lightly abandoned. It carries a great reward (*megalēn misthapodosian*, 'great repayment, great recompense'). The word *misthapodosian* connects to 11:6 ('God is a rewarder of those who seek him') and 11:26 (Moses looked to the reward).
36. The word *hypomonēs* ('endurance, patient steadfastness') is the essential virtue for the Hebrews community. It bridges the gap between doing God's will (to *thelēma tou theou poiēsantes* — echoing Christ's words from Psalm 40 in verse 7) and receiving the promise (*tēn epangelian*). The gap requires time, and time requires endurance.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 40. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. Quoting a combination of Isaiah 26:20 (LXX) and Habakkuk 2:3-4 (LXX). The phrase *mikron hoson hoson* ('a very little while, just a bit more') intensifies the brevity of the remaining wait. The Septuagint's 'the one who is coming' (*ho erchomenos*) personalizes Habakkuk's vision — it is not an event but a person who is anticipated. This messianic reading was widely shared in early Christianity.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Habakkuk 2:3-4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 26:20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. The Habakkuk 2:4 quotation is also foundational for Paul (Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11), but the author of Hebrews uses it differently — Paul emphasizes justification by faith; Hebrews emphasizes perseverance in faith. The phrase *ek pisteōs zēsetai* ('will live by/from faith') describes faith as the sustaining principle of the righteous person's life. The warning — 'if he shrinks back' (*ean hyposteilētai*) — describes cowardly retreat, withdrawal from the battle.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Habakkuk 2:3-4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The chapter ends with a confident declaration that echoes 6:9 ('we are convinced of better things'). The two categories are starkly contrasted: *hypostolēs eis apōleian* ('shrinking back leading to destruction') versus *pisteōs eis peripoiēsēn psychēs* ('faith leading to the preservation of the soul'). The word *peripoiēsēn* ('preservation, obtaining, possession') means the soul is kept safe, secured, possessed. This verse serves as the bridge to chapter 11's great catalogue of faith — 'we are people of faith' leads naturally to 'now let me tell you what faith looks like.'

11

Summary: *Hebrews 11 is the celebrated 'Faith Hall of Fame,' a sweeping survey of Old Testament figures who lived and acted by faith. The chapter opens with a definition of faith (verse 1), then moves chronologically from Abel through Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, and a compressed catalogue of judges, kings, and prophets. Each example demonstrates that faith is not passive belief but active trust that shapes decisions, risks everything, and looks beyond present reality to future promise. The chapter concludes with the sobering note that none of these heroes received what was promised — God had planned something better, so that they would not be made perfect apart from the community of faith that includes the present audience.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The definition in verse 1 has shaped Christian theology for two millennia. The chapter functions as a narrative commentary on the entire Old Testament, selecting episodes that demonstrate the faith principle. The faith of women is specifically noted (Sarah, Rahab, the mothers of verse 35). The catalogue of unnamed sufferers in verses 35-38 is among the most harrowing passages in the Bible. The final twist — that these heroes are not complete without the present audience — transforms a historical survey into a pastoral appeal.*

Translation Friction: The attribution of faith to Sarah (verse 11) is textually disputed — some manuscripts make Abraham the subject. The assertion that Moses 'considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt' (verse 26) applies Christian categories to a pre-Christian figure. We render the text as written and note the interpretive framework. The compressed catalogue of verses 32-38 covers centuries in a few sentences.

Connections: The chapter draws on Genesis 4 (Abel), Genesis 5 (Enoch), Genesis 6-9 (Noah), Genesis 12-25 (Abraham and Sarah), Genesis 27 (Isaac), Genesis 48-49 (Jacob), Genesis 50 (Joseph), Exodus 1-14 (Moses), Joshua 2-6 (Rahab and Jericho), and dozens of Judges, Kings, and Prophets passages. The 'cloud of witnesses' in 12:1 refers back to this entire catalogue. The 'something better' of verse 40 echoes the 'better' theme throughout Hebrews.

¹Now faith is the reality of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen. ²For by this the people of old received commendation. ³By faith we understand that the ages were formed by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made from things that are visible. ⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God himself commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. ⁵By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death, and he was not found because God had taken him. For before he was taken up, he was commended as having pleased God. ⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. ⁷By faith Noah, being warned by God about events yet unseen, acted with reverent caution and constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. ⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, and he went out not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he lived as a stranger in the land of promise, as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, co-heirs of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even though she was past the age, since she considered faithful the one who had promised. ¹²Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, there were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as innumerable as the sand on the seashore. ¹³All these died in faith without having received what was promised, but they saw it and greeted it from a distance, and they acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴For people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of the land they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. ¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering his only son, ¹⁸Of whom it was stated, That in Isaac will your seed be called:. ¹⁹He considered that God was able even to raise from the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back from the dead. ²⁰Through faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau regarding what was still to happen. ²¹By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. ²²By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, mentioned the exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions about his bones. ²³By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. ²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵He chose to suffer alongside the people of God rather than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶He considered the reproach suffered for Christ as greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward. ²⁷By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger, for he endured as one who sees the invisible God. ²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch them. ²⁹By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so, they were drowned. ³⁰By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had welcomed the spies in peace. ³²And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets — ³³Indeed, who by way of faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,. ³⁴They quenched raging fires, escaped death by the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became powerful in battle

and routed foreign armies. ³⁵Women received back their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might gain a better resurrection. ³⁶Others endured mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, mistreated — ³⁸(Of whom the present age was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the world. ³⁹And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰God after provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be appointed perfect.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek hypostasis ('reality, substance, assurance, foundation') in this context means not merely subjective confidence but the substantial reality that gives content to hope. Faith is the present reality of what is hoped for, not mere wishful thinking. The word *elegchos* ('proof, conviction, evidence') means the inner conviction that unseen realities are real — faith functions as evidence in the court of the soul. Together, hypostasis and *elegchos* define faith as the capacity to live as though the unseen promises are already substantial and proven.
2. The phrase *hoi presbyteroi* ('the elders, the people of old') refers to the Old Testament figures about to be catalogued. The passive *emartyrēthēsan* ('received testimony, were commended') indicates that God himself bore witness to their faith — the verb *martyreō* ('to testify, to bear witness') runs through the chapter as a refrain.
3. Before cataloguing the faith of specific individuals, the author grounds faith in creation itself. The phrase *tous aiōnas* ('the ages') is the same word from 1:2 — the entire framework of time and space. The declaration that the visible came from the invisible (*eis to mē ek phainomenōn to blepomenon gegonenai*) asserts that the most fundamental reality is unseen — creation itself rests on the invisible word of God. Faith, which trusts the unseen (verse 1), thus aligns with the deepest structure of reality.
4. The catalogue begins with Abel (Genesis 4:1-16). The adjective *pleiona* ('more, greater, better') does not specify what made Abel's sacrifice superior — Genesis does not explain it either. The author attributes the difference to faith. The phrase *apothanōn eti lalei* ('though he died, he still speaks') is a powerful conclusion — Abel's faith outlived his murder. The 'speaking' may refer to his blood crying from the ground (Genesis 4:10) or to the ongoing testimony of his example.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 4:3-10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Enoch's translation (Genesis 5:21-24) is described with the verb *metatethē* ('was transferred, was removed') — the same root used in 7:12 for the 'change' of priesthood. The Septuagint of Genesis 5:24 reads 'Enoch pleased God' (*euarestēkenai tō theō*) where the Hebrew reads 'Enoch walked with God.' The author works from the Septuagint text. The verb 'was not found' (*ouch hēurisketo*) echoes Genesis 5:24 — Enoch simply disappeared.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 5:24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. This verse generalizes from Enoch's example to a universal principle. Two beliefs are necessary: that God exists (*hoti estin*, 'that he is') and that he rewards seekers (*misthapodotēs ginetai*, 'he becomes a rewarder'). The word *ekzētousin* ('earnestly seek, diligently search for') implies more than casual interest — it describes active, sustained pursuit. The word *misthapodotēs* ('rewarder') appears only here in the New Testament and connects to 10:35 (the 'great reward' of confidence) and 11:26 (the 'reward' Moses looked to).
7. Noah's faith (Genesis 6-9) exemplifies the definition of verse 1 — he acted on things 'not yet seen' (*mēdepō blepomenōn*). The word *eulabētheis* ('having acted with reverent caution, having revered') describes motivated obedience rooted in awe, not paralyzing fear. Noah's ark-building was itself an act of judgment — his obedience condemned the disobedient world by contrast. The phrase 'righteousness that comes by faith' (*tēs kata pistin dikaiosynēs*) connects to Habakkuk 2:4 and Paul's language in Romans.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 6:13-22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 6-9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Habakkuk 2:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Abraham's faith (Genesis 12:1-4) is the paradigmatic case in the chapter, receiving the most extended treatment (verses 8-19). The participle *kaloumenos* ('when he was called, while being called') suggests he obeyed during the calling — immediately, without delay. The phrase *mē epistamenos pou erchetai* ('not knowing where he was going') captures the essence of Abrahamic faith: obedience without complete information, trusting the caller rather than the destination.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 12:1-4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The verb *parōkēsen* ('lived as a stranger, sojourned') means Abraham never owned the promised land — he lived in it as a resident alien. The tents (*skēnais*) are concrete symbols of impermanence. The three generations sharing the same condition — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all dwelling in tents — demonstrates that the promise was not fulfilled in their lifetimes. They were *synklēronomōn* ('co-heirs, joint inheritors') of a promise they never

saw completed.

10. Abraham's tent-dwelling was not aimlessness but anticipation. He looked for a permanent city (polin, with foundations — themelious) in contrast to his temporary tents (without foundations). The two titles for God — technitēs ('architect, designer, craftsman') and dēmiourgos ('builder, creator, maker') — distinguish design from construction. God both designed and built the permanent city. This city will be identified in 12:22 and 13:14 as the heavenly Jerusalem.
11. The text is debated: some manuscripts and scholars read Abraham as the subject, with Sarah mentioned parenthetically. The SBLGNT includes 'Sarah herself' (autē Sarra) as the subject, which we follow. Despite her initial laughter (Genesis 18:12-15), Sarah ultimately trusted God's promise. The phrase para kairon hēlikias ('past the time of age') is a euphemism for post-menopausal. The reason for her faith: she considered God 'faithful' (piston) — the same word applied to Christ in 2:17 and 3:2.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 18:11-14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The phrase nenekrōmenou ('as good as dead') describes Abraham's advanced age — his body was effectively dead with respect to reproductive capacity (cf. Romans 4:19). The imagery of stars (Genesis 15:5) and sand (Genesis 22:17) represents the two great covenant promises of innumerable offspring. The contrast between the one dead man and the countless descendants demonstrates the power of God's promise working through faith.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 15:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 22:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. This is the first of two summary statements (the second is verses 39-40). The patriarchs died mē labontes tas epangelias ('not having received the promises') — they died with the promise unfulfilled. Yet they 'saw' (idontes) the fulfillment from afar and 'greeted' (aspasammenoi) it — like travelers who spot their destination on the horizon and wave to it. The self-identification as 'strangers and exiles' (xenoī kai parepidēmoi) quotes Genesis 23:4 and 47:9. Their impermanence on earth testified to the permanence of their heavenly hope.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 23:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The word patria ('homeland, fatherland') is the place of origin, the place where one belongs. By calling themselves strangers on earth, the patriarchs revealed that earth was not their home — they were seeking their true homeland elsewhere.
15. Abraham could have returned to Mesopotamia — it was physically possible. The fact that he did not proves that his 'homeland' was not an earthly place. The verb emnēmoneuon ('were remembering, were thinking of') in the imperfect tense suggests sustained thought — if they had kept thinking of their origin, they could have gone back. Their forward orientation proved their faith was in the unseen future, not the visible past.
16. The word kreittōnos ('better') is the signature adjective of Hebrews for the final time in this chapter. The statement 'God is not ashamed to be called their God' (ouk epaischynetai autous ho theos theos epikaleisthai autōn) echoes Exodus 3:6 ('I am the God of Abraham') — God voluntarily binds his name to these faith-filled sojourners. The 'city' (polin) recalls verse 10 and will be identified in 12:22 as the heavenly Jerusalem.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 3:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The Aqedah, the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22), is the supreme test of faith. The perfect tense prosenēnochen ('has offered') indicates a completed act, while the imperfect prosepheren ('was offering') describes the ongoing process — Abraham was in the act of sacrificing when God intervened. The word monogenē ('only, unique, one and only') emphasizes that Isaac was irreplaceable — the entire promise line depended on him.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 22:1-10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. Quoting Genesis 21:12. The paradox is sharp: God promised descendants through Isaac, then commanded Isaac's sacrifice. Abraham's faith held both realities simultaneously — the promise and the command — trusting that God could reconcile what appeared irreconcilable.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 21:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The verb logisamenos ('having reckoned, having considered') describes rational faith — Abraham calculated that if God promised descendants through Isaac and demanded Isaac's death, then God must be able to raise the dead. The phrase en parabolē ('figuratively, in a parable, as a type') indicates that Abraham's receiving Isaac back was a figure or type of resurrection — Isaac's near-death and restoration prefigured the death and resurrection of Christ.
20. Isaac's faith (Genesis 27) is demonstrated in his blessing, which spoke of future realities he could not see. Even though the blessing was obtained through deception, Isaac recognized it as binding and prophetic (Genesis 27:33). The order 'Jacob and Esau' (rather than Esau and Jacob, the birth order) reflects the reversal that was God's intention from the beginning (Genesis 25:23).

- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 27:27-29 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 25:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** Jacob's faith (Genesis 48) was exercised at death — crossing his hands to give the greater blessing to the younger son Ephraim rather than Manasseh, trusting God's choice over natural order. The detail of worshipping while leaning on his staff comes from Genesis 47:31 (LXX), where the Hebrew 'bed' (mittah) was read as 'staff' (matteh) by the Septuagint translators. The author follows the Septuagint.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 48:15-16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 47:31. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** Joseph's faith (Genesis 50:24-25) looked beyond his own death to the future exodus. His command about his bones — that they be carried out of Egypt — was a concrete expression of faith in God's promise to bring Israel to the promised land. He refused to be permanently buried in Egypt because he believed Israel's future lay elsewhere. The word *exodou* ('exodus, departure') here refers to the departure from Egypt.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 50:24-25. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** Moses's parents (Exodus 2:1-3) acted in faith by defying Pharaoh's decree to kill all Hebrew male infants. The word *asteion* ('beautiful, fine, elegant') is the same word used in the Septuagint of Exodus 2:2 and in Acts 7:20 ('beautiful before God'). They saw something in the child that gave them courage to risk their lives. The phrase *ouk ephobēthēsan* ('they were not afraid') echoes the courage demanded of faith throughout the chapter.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 2:2-3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 24.** Moses's personal faith now takes over from his parents' faith. The verb *ērēsato* ('refused, denied, rejected') describes a deliberate choice — he actively turned away from royal privilege and identity. The phrase *megas genomenos* ('having become great/grown up') marks the transition from childhood to adult decision-making.
- 25.** The verb *synkakoucheisthai* ('to suffer with, to be mistreated alongside') emphasizes solidarity — Moses chose shared suffering over solitary comfort. The phrase *proskairin apolausin hamartias* ('temporary enjoyment of sin') does not deny that sin offers pleasure, but qualifies it as *proskairos* — 'for a season, temporary, fleeting.' The comparison between lasting suffering with God's people and fleeting pleasure through sin mirrors the audience's own choice.
- 26.** The phrase *ton oneidismōn tou Christou* ('the reproach of Christ') is striking: the author reads Moses's suffering as participation in Christ's reproach — a suffering that belongs to the Messiah and is shared by all who follow him across all eras. The verb *apeblepen* ('was looking away toward') describes a focused gaze that looks past the present to fix on the future. The *misthapodosian* ('reward, recompense') is the same word from 10:35 and 11:6.
- 27.** Whether this refers to Moses's flight after killing the Egyptian (Exodus 2:14-15) or the exodus itself is debated. The phrase *mē phobētheis ton thymōn tou basileōs* ('not fearing the king's anger') better fits the exodus, since Exodus 2:14 says Moses 'was afraid.' The concluding phrase *ton aoraton hōs horōn* ('seeing the unseen one') is a paradox that encapsulates the chapter's entire message: faith sees what is invisible. The verb *ekartērēsen* ('he endured, he held firm') appears only here in the New Testament.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 2:14-15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** Moses's faith in instituting the Passover (Exodus 12) meant trusting that lamb's blood on the doorframes would protect against death — an extraordinary act of faith in the invisible. The word *proschysin* ('sprinkling, pouring') refers to the application of blood to the doorposts and lintel. The *olothreūōn* ('the destroyer') is the death-dealing agent of God's judgment, distinct from God himself.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 12:21-23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** The faith here is corporate — the people (implied subject) crossed together. The phrase *hōs dia xēras gēs* ('as through dry ground') from Exodus 14:21-22. The Egyptians' attempt to cross using the same path failed — the distinction between the two groups was faith, not technique. The verb *katepothēsan* ('were swallowed up, were drowned') is vivid — the sea consumed them.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 14:21-29. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 30.** The conquest of Jericho (Joshua 6) required faith expressed through obedience to an absurd military strategy — marching around a city for seven days. The walls fell not by siege engines but by faith and divine power. The passive *kyklōthenta* ('having been encircled') emphasizes the action of faithful obedience.

- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 6:12-20 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 31.** Rahab (Joshua 2) is the second Gentile woman in the faith catalogue (after the implied inclusion of non-Israelite women among the mothers). Her designation as *hē pornē* ('the prostitute') is not sanitized — the text preserves her identity while celebrating her faith. The rest of Jericho is described as *apeithēsasin* ('the disobedient/unbelieving'), connecting disobedience and unbelief as in 3:18-19. Her faith was expressed in action: she welcomed (*dexamenē*) the spies.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Joshua 2:1-21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 32.** The author shifts to a rapid catalogue, acknowledging that the full account of faith would take longer than the letter allows. The names are not in chronological order (Gideon precedes Barak in Judges; Samson follows both; Jephthah precedes Samson). The arrangement may be deliberate, grouping by type or significance rather than timeline. The move from individuals to 'the prophets' (*tōn prophētōn*) signals a transition to categories of faith-action.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Judges 6:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** The compressed catalogue begins with triumphant deeds. 'Conquered kingdoms' may refer to Joshua, David, or the judges. 'Administered justice' (*eirgasanto dikaiosynēn*) applies to all righteous rulers. 'Obtained promises' refers to partial fulfillments (though the ultimate promise remained outstanding, verse 39). 'Shut the mouths of lions' alludes to Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6:22).
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 6:22 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 34.** More triumphant deeds: 'quenched fire' alludes to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3). 'Escaped the sword' may refer to David fleeing Saul or Elijah fleeing Jezebel. 'Made strong out of weakness' (*edynamōthēsan apo astheneias*) is the pattern of divine reversal — Gideon, Samson, Hezekiah's recovery from illness. 'Put foreign armies to flight' summarizes the judges and the Maccabean resistance.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** The tone shifts dramatically at the middle of this verse. 'Women received their dead by resurrection' alludes to the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24) and the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:17-37). Then the catalogue turns dark: 'others were tortured' (*etympanisthēsan*, literally 'beaten on a drum' — stretched on a rack or wheel and beaten to death). They refused release (*apolytrōsin* — the same word used for Christ's 'redemption' in 9:15) because they sought a 'better resurrection' (*kreittōnos anastaseōs*) — not temporary resuscitation but permanent, eschatological resurrection.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Kings 17:17-24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 4:17-37 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The catalogue of suffering continues. Mocking (*empaigmōn*) may allude to the prophets ridiculed for their messages. Flogging (*mastigōn*) recalls Jeremiah's treatment (Jeremiah 20:2). Chains and imprisonment point to Joseph (Genesis 39:20), Micaiah (1 Kings 22:27), and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 37:15-16).
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 20:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 39:20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 22:27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 37:15-16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 37.** The violence escalates: stoning (Zechariah son of Jehoiada, 2 Chronicles 24:21; Naboth, 1 Kings 21), sawing in two (tradition holds Isaiah was sawn in two by Manasseh), death by sword (1 Kings 19:10, Uriah the prophet in Jeremiah 26:23). Then the catalogue shifts to deprivation: sheepskins and goatskins as clothing (Elijah's mantle, 1 Kings 19:13, 2 Kings 1:8), destitution, affliction, mistreatment. Some manuscripts include *epeirasthēsan* ('they were tested/tempted') between 'sawn in two' and 'killed with the sword.'
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Chronicles 24:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 19:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 26:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 1:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. The parenthetical judgment 'of whom the world was not worthy' (hōn ouk ēn axios ho kosmos) is one of the most powerful interjections in the New Testament. The world rejected these people, but the author reverses the judgment: it was the world that was unworthy of them. Their hiding in deserts, mountains, and caves recalls Elijah (1 Kings 19:9), David (1 Samuel 22:1), and the Maccabean resisters (1 Maccabees 2:29-30).
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 19:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Samuel 22:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The second summary statement (cf. verse 13). The martyrethentes ('commended, attested, testified about') returns the chapter to its opening refrain (verse 2). The stunning admission: ouk ekomisanto tēn epangelian ('they did not receive the promise'). Despite all their faith, suffering, and triumph, the ultimate promise remained unfulfilled in their lifetimes. The reason follows in verse 40.
40. The chapter's final verse is its theological climax. God had 'provided something better' (kreitton ti problepsamenou) for the present generation — the fulfillment in Christ that the Old Testament heroes could only anticipate. The phrase 'apart from us they would not be made perfect' (hina mē chōris hēmōn teleiōthōsin) means the old covenant saints and the new covenant community complete each other. The perfection (teleiōsis) that Hebrews has argued for throughout the letter is corporate — it requires the full company of the redeemed across all ages. The 'cloud of witnesses' of 12:1 awaits the arrival of the present audience to complete the assembly.

12

Summary: *Hebrews 12 opens with the famous exhortation to run the race of faith surrounded by the 'great cloud of witnesses' from chapter 11, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith. The chapter then interprets suffering as divine discipline — God trains his children as a father disciplines his sons — and calls for endurance. A warning against Esau's profanity follows. The chapter reaches its climax in a dramatic comparison between Sinai (the old covenant) and Zion (the new covenant): the terrifying mountain of law versus the joyful city of grace. The final warning declares that God's voice now speaks from heaven, and those who refuse him face a shaking that will remove everything except the unshakeable kingdom.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'cloud of witnesses' (12:1) transforms the historical survey of chapter 11 into a present reality — the heroes of faith are spectators watching the present generation run. The Sinai/Zion contrast (verses 18-24) is the most vivid typological comparison in Hebrews, moving from terror to celebration. The phrase 'consuming fire' (verse 29) echoes Deuteronomy 4:24 and closes the letter's theological argument with awe.*

Translation Friction: *The 'spirits of righteous people made perfect' (verse 23) raises questions about the intermediate state. The 'sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than Abel's' (verse 24) compresses enormous theology into a single phrase. The final shaking (verses 26-27) draws on Haggai 2:6 but applies it eschatologically. We render without resolving the many interpretive debates.*

Connections: *The cloud of witnesses connects to chapter 11. The discipline teaching draws on Proverbs 3:11-12. The Esau warning connects to Genesis 25:29-34 and the irreversibility theme of 6:4-8. The Sinai scene draws on Exodus 19-20 and Deuteronomy 4-5. Mount Zion anticipates the heavenly city of 13:14. The Haggai quotation develops the eschatological hope of 1:10-12.*

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²Keep your eyes on Jesus, who began and will complete our faith. For the joy that lay ahead of him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne. ³Consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. ⁴You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood in your struggle against sin. ⁵And

have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons and daughters? "My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor grow weary when you are corrected by him. ⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every child he accepts." ⁷Endure your trials as discipline. God is treating you as his children. For what child is there whom a father does not discipline? ⁸But if you are without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not true sons and daughters. ⁹Besides, we had earthly fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them. Should we not much more submit to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, so that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹All discipline seems painful at the time rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. ¹²Therefore, strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees, ¹³Make straight paths since your ankles, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. But let it rather be healed. ¹⁴Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God, that no 'root of bitterness' springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled, ¹⁶Lest there be any sexually immoral person, or godless individual, as Esau, who for a single meal traded away his inheritance rights. ¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no opportunity to change his father's mind, even though he sought the blessing with tears. ¹⁸For you have not come to something that can be touched — a blazing fire, darkness, gloom, and a storm, ¹⁹The sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words. Which voice they that listened to intreated that the message should not be spoken to them any more:. ²⁰Since they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it will be stoned, or thrust by way of with a dart:. ²¹And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festive assembly, ²³To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are recorded in the heavens above, and to God the pass the time of reckoning on of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,. ²⁴To Jesus the mediator of the new binding agreement, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. ²⁵See to it that you do not refuse the one who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! ²⁶At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also heaven." ²⁷This phrase 'yet once more' indicates the removal of what can be shaken — that is, created things — so that what cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸Therefore, since we are receiving an unshakeable kingdom, let us be thankful, and so offer worship pleasing to God with reverence and awe, ²⁹Our God is indeed a consuming fire.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The athletic metaphor is sustained: *nephos martyron* ('cloud of witnesses') pictures the chapter 11 heroes as spectators in a stadium surrounding the runners. They are 'witnesses' (*martyron*) in a double sense — they testified to their own faith and now witness ours. The word *ogkon* ('weight, bulk, mass') refers to excess weight an athlete would shed before competing. The phrase *euperistaton hamartian* ('the sin that easily entangles/besets') is debated — the word *euperistatos* may mean 'easily encircling,' 'closely clinging,' or 'admired by many.' The athletic image suggests anything that hinders the runner. The race (*agona*) is an endurance event, not a sprint — *hypomonē* ('endurance, perseverance') is the required virtue.
2. The verb *aphorontes* ('looking away to, fixing the gaze on') means looking away from everything else to focus exclusively on Jesus. The two titles — *archegon* ('pioneer,' cf. 2:10) and *teleiōtēn* ('perfecter, completer') — describe Jesus as both the one who began faith and the one who brought it to completion. He is the supreme example of the faith described in chapter 11. The phrase *anti tēs prokeimenēs autō charas* ('for/instead of the joy set before him') is debated: *anti* can mean 'for the sake of' (he endured the cross to obtain the joy) or 'instead of' (he chose the cross rather than the joy he could have had). Both readings work theologically. The phrase *aischynēs kataphronēsas* ('disregarding the shame') treats the cross's disgrace as beneath consideration — not denied but dismissed.
3. The verb *analogisasthe* ('consider, think through, calculate') demands careful comparison — measure your suffering against his. The word *antilogian* ('hostility, opposition, contradiction') describes the opposition Jesus faced from sinners. The two dangers — *kamēte* ('grow weary, become exhausted') and *eklyomenoi* ('lose heart, become faint, go slack') — describe the spiritual fatigue the audience is experiencing. The remedy is sustained contemplation of Jesus's example.
4. The phrase *mechris haimatos* ('to the point of blood') means they have not yet been martyred. This is not dismissive but comparative — their suffering, while real, has not reached the ultimate cost. Jesus resisted to the point of blood (the cross); they have not yet been required to do the same. The athletic metaphor continues with *antagonizomenoi* ('struggling against, competing against') — sin is the opponent in the contest.

5. Quoting Proverbs 3:11-12 (LXX). The verb eklelēsthe ('have you forgotten?') suggests their suffering has caused them to lose sight of this foundational teaching. The word paideias ('discipline, training, education') is the key term for the passage — it means not punishment for punishment's sake but training for maturity. The two errors to avoid: oligōrei ('regard lightly, make little of') — dismissing discipline as meaningless — and eklyou ('grow weary, lose heart') — collapsing under it.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Proverbs 3:11-12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The paradox: discipline is evidence of love (agapa), not rejection. The verb mastigoi ('chastises, scourges') is strong — divine training can be painful. The word paradechetai ('accepts, receives, welcomes') means the child who is disciplined is a child who belongs. The logic reverses the audience's interpretation of their suffering: instead of evidence that God has abandoned them, their trials prove they are his children.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 3:11-12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The imperative hypomenete ('endure') can also be read as indicative ('you are enduring'). The rhetorical question expects the answer 'None' — every father disciplines his children. The analogy assumes that good parenting involves correction, not permissiveness.
8. The argument from reverse: the absence of discipline would be worse than its presence, indicating that one is not a genuine child (nothoi, 'illegitimate children, born outside the family'). The word metochoi ('participants, sharers') from 3:1 and 3:14 — all genuine children share in the discipline.
9. The a fortiori argument: if we respected human fathers who disciplined us, how much more should we submit to God? The title 'Father of spirits' (patri tōn pneumatōn) distinguishes divine fatherhood from human ('fathers of our flesh'). The verb zēsomen ('and live') connects obedience to the discipline with life itself — submission to God's training leads to spiritual vitality.
10. Two contrasts: duration (short time versus permanent benefit) and quality (as seemed best to imperfect humans versus for genuine benefit from a perfect Father). The goal of divine discipline is metalabein tēs hagiōtētos autou ('to share in his holiness') — participation in God's own character. This is not legal status but transformative reality.
11. The author concedes the reality of pain — discipline does not 'seem' (dokei) joyful because it is not joyful in the moment. But the metaphor shifts from athletics to agriculture: discipline produces 'fruit' (karpon). The compound phrase karpon eirēnikon dikaiosynēs ('peaceful fruit of righteousness') describes the harvest — a life characterized by both peace and righteousness. The verb gegymnasmēnois ('trained') returns the athletic metaphor from 5:14 — discipline is training that produces capacity.
12. Alluding to Isaiah 35:3. The imagery is physical — hands hanging limp from exhaustion, knees buckling from fatigue. The verb anorthōsate ('straighten up, strengthen, restore') calls for physical and spiritual renewal. The athletic and military imagery continues — a runner or soldier whose hands and knees give out cannot finish the course.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 35:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Quoting Proverbs 4:26 (LXX). The 'straight paths' (trochias orthas) are both literal (running paths) and moral (right conduct). The concern for 'what is lame' (to chōlon) suggests the weaker members of the community — if the path is straight, even the injured can follow it. The verb ektrapē ('be turned aside, be dislocated, be put out of joint') continues the physical metaphor. The community's responsibility is to create conditions where the weak can be healed rather than lost.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 4:26 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Two pursuits are commanded: peace (eirēnēn) with all people and holiness (hagiasmon). The verb diōkete ('pursue, chase, run after') is intense — these are not passive states but active goals. The warning — 'without which no one will see the Lord' (hou chōris oudeis opsetai ton kyrion) — is absolute. Holiness is not optional but essential for the vision of God. This connects to 10:14 (perfected for holiness) and 12:10 (sharing God's holiness).
15. The verb episkopountes ('watching over, overseeing') makes perseverance a communal responsibility. The phrase riza pikrias ('root of bitterness') quotes Deuteronomy 29:18 (LXX), which warns against a person whose apostasy infects the community. The danger is not isolated failure but contagion — one bitter person can defile many (mianthōsin polloi). This is why the author urges communal vigilance.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 29:18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. Esau (Genesis 25:29-34) serves as the negative example to counter the positive examples of chapter 11. The word bebēlos ('godless, profane, irreverent') describes someone who treats sacred things as common — precisely the danger warned against in 10:29. Esau traded eternal blessing for immediate gratification. Whether pornos ('sexually immoral') applies to Esau specifically or is a separate warning is debated; the terms may form a hendiadys: 'immoral or irreverent.'
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 25:29-34. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

17. The phrase *metanoias topon ouch heuren* ('he found no place/opportunity for repentance/change of mind') is debated: does it mean Esau could not repent, or that Isaac could not reverse the blessing, or that God would not grant Esau a reversal? The grammar allows 'he found no opportunity to change [his father's] mind' (the feminine *autēn* referring to the blessing or to *metanoia*). The connection to 6:4-6 (impossibility of restoration for apostates) is clear — some choices are irreversible. The tears (*meta dakryōn*) make the scene devastating.
18. The Sinai/Zion contrast begins. The description of Sinai (Exodus 19-20, Deuteronomy 4-5) emphasizes its terrifying sensory impact: fire, darkness (*gnophō*), deep gloom (*zophō*), and storm (*thyellē*). The word *psēlaphōmenō* ('something that can be touched') emphasizes the physical, earthly nature of the Sinai revelation — it was tangible but terrifying. The 'not' (*ou*) sets up the contrast with what they have come to in verse 22.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 19-20 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 4-5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The trumpet blast (Exodus 19:16, 19) and the divine voice (Exodus 20:1, 18-19) were so overwhelming that the people begged Moses to mediate. They could not endure hearing God directly. The verb *parētēsanto* ('begged off, refused, asked to be excused') indicates their request that no more words be added — they had reached the limit of what they could bear.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 19:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 20:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Quoting Exodus 19:12-13. The severity of the Sinai holiness — even an animal trespassing the boundary around the mountain must die — illustrates the unapproachable nature of God under the old covenant. Access was forbidden, contact was fatal. This is the opposite of the 'draw near' language of 4:16 and 10:22.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 19:12-13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Even Moses — the greatest figure of the old covenant — was terrified. The phrase *ekphobos eimi kai entromos* ('I am full of fear and trembling') is not directly quoted from the Sinai narrative in Exodus but may draw from Deuteronomy 9:19 (where Moses feared God's anger after the golden calf) or from an extracanonical tradition. The point is that the old covenant experience terrified even its greatest leader.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 9:19. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The contrast with Sinai is total. Instead of a mountain that could not be touched, they come to Mount Zion — the mountain of grace. Instead of terror, there is celebration (*panēgyrei*, 'festive assembly, joyful gathering'). The city is identified three ways: Mount Zion (the traditional name), the city of the living God (echoing 3:12 and 10:31), and the heavenly Jerusalem (the eternal city of 11:10, 16). The 'innumerable angels' (*myriasin angelōn*) are the hosts of heaven in celebration.
23. The list continues: the *ekklēsia* ('assembly, church') of the firstborn (*prōtotokōn*, plural — all believers share in Christ's firstborn status) whose names are registered (*apogegrammōn*) in heaven. Then God himself as judge (*kritē*) of all — not a terrifying judge as at Sinai but the judge who is present in the celebration. The 'spirits of the righteous made perfect' (*pneumasin dikaiōn teteleiōmenōn*) refers to the chapter 11 heroes who have now been 'made perfect' (*teleiōsis*, the goal of the entire letter) through Christ's work.
24. The climax of the list: Jesus himself, identified as *mesitē* ('mediator') of the new (*neas*) covenant. The sprinkled blood (*haimati rhantismou*) is the blood of Christ applied in the heavenly sanctuary. This blood 'speaks' (*lalounti*) — it has a voice, and that voice says something better (*kreitton*) than Abel's blood. Abel's blood cried out for vengeance (Genesis 4:10); Christ's blood speaks forgiveness and reconciliation. The comparative *kreitton* makes its final appearance.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 4:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The fifth and final warning passage. The *a fortiori* argument returns: if Israel could not escape judgment for rejecting the earthly Sinai revelation (*ton epi gēs chrēmatisationata*), how much more inescapable is judgment for rejecting the heavenly revelation (*ton ap' ouranōn*). The verb *apostrophomenoi* ('turning away from, rejecting') is stronger than *paraiteēsamenoi* ('refused') — it implies a deliberate turning of the back.
26. Quoting Haggai 2:6. At Sinai, God's voice shook the earth (Exodus 19:18). But a greater shaking is promised — one that will affect not only the earth but heaven itself. The phrase *eti hapax* ('yet once more') indicates a final, definitive event. The author interprets this eschatologically in verse 27.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Haggai 2:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 19:18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The author interprets Haggai: the 'once more' shaking will remove (*metathesis*, 'removal, change, transfer') everything that is shakable — the entire created order (*hōs pepoiēmenōn*, 'as things that have been made'). What remains is the unshakeable (*ta mē saleuomena*) — the kingdom of God. This is the ultimate expression of the permanent/temporary distinction that runs throughout Hebrews.

28. The present participle *paralambanontes* ('receiving') describes an ongoing reception — the kingdom is being received now, not merely in the future. The phrase *echōmen charin* can mean 'let us have grace' or 'let us be thankful' — both meanings are likely intended. The worship response to receiving an unshakeable kingdom is not casualness but *eulabeias kai deous* ('reverence and awe') — the same *eulabeia* from 5:7 and 11:7.
29. Quoting Deuteronomy 4:24. The chapter ends where Deuteronomy ends its Sinai account — with the declaration that God is *pyr katanaliskon* ('consuming fire'). This is not a contradiction of the grace celebrated in verses 22-24 but its complement: the same God who welcomes in grace judges in fire. The fire consumes everything that is shakeable, leaving only the unshakeable kingdom. The word 'our' (*hēmōn*) is significant — this consuming fire is not a distant, alien deity but our God.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 4:24. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

13

Summary: *Hebrews 13 is the letter's practical conclusion, moving from theological argument to community ethics. The chapter covers hospitality, marriage, contentment, leadership, the unchanging Christ, and sacrificial living. Theologically, it declares that Jesus suffered outside the city gate to sanctify the people with his own blood, and calls believers to go to him 'outside the camp,' bearing his reproach. The chapter concludes with a benediction, personal notes, and greetings — the only section of Hebrews that reads like a typical first-century letter.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The declaration 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' (verse 8) is one of the most memorized verses in the Bible. The 'outside the camp' theology (verses 11-14) connects Jesus's crucifixion site to the old covenant practice of burning sin offerings outside the camp (Leviticus 16:27). The benediction (verses 20-21) is one of the most complete in the New Testament, containing resurrection, covenant, shepherd, and sanctification themes. The mention of Timothy (verse 23) provides the only personal connection to the Pauline circle.*

Translation Friction: *The final chapter's style differs from the rest of the letter — more practical, less theological, with personal notes. Some scholars view chapter 13 as a later addition, though this is a minority view. The 'outside the camp' language was used by various early Christian groups to justify separation from Judaism or from established religious institutions. We render the text without endorsing any particular ecclesiological application.*

Connections: *The hospitality command (verse 2) connects to Genesis 18 (Abraham's angelic visitors). 'Jesus Christ is the same' (verse 8) echoes 1:12 (Psalm 102). The 'outside the camp' imagery draws on Leviticus 16:27 and Numbers 19:3. The heavenly city (verse 14) completes the promise of 11:10, 16 and 12:22. The shepherd imagery (verse 20) echoes Psalm 23, Isaiah 40:11, and John 10. The 'great shepherd' title connects to 1 Peter 5:4.*

1Let mutual love continue. 2Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it. 3Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. 4Let marriage be honored by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers. 5Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for he himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" 7Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. 8And for ever, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day. 9Do not be carried away by various and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those who have been occupied with them. 10We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. 11For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the Most Holy Place by the high priest as a sin offering are burned outside the camp. 12Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. 13Therefore let us go out to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach. 14For here we have no lasting city, but we are seeking the city that is to come. 15Through him, then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. 16And do not neglect doing good and sharing with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. 17Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to

you. ¹⁸Pray for us, for we are confident that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. ¹⁹I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you sooner. ²⁰Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, by way of Jesus Christ. To him be glory by way of every one of the ages. Amen. ²²I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you only briefly. ²³You should know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he comes soon enough, I will see you with him. ²⁴Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy send you greetings. ²⁵Grace be with all of you.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word philadelphia ('brotherly love, mutual love, love for fellow believers') describes the distinctive affection of the Christian community. The verb *menetō* ('let it continue, let it remain') assumes this love already exists — the command is not to start it but to sustain it. The brevity of the command is striking after twelve chapters of theological argument.
2. The word *philoxenias* ('hospitality, love of strangers') is the practical outworking of philadelphia. The reference to 'entertaining angels unawares' (*elathon tines xenisantes angelous*) alludes to Abraham and Sarah's hospitality to the three visitors at Mamre (Genesis 18:1-15), who turned out to be divine messengers. The implication: any stranger could be an angel, so treat all strangers with generous welcome.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 18:1-15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The command recalls 10:34 (showing sympathy to prisoners) and 10:33 (becoming partners with those who suffered). The phrase *hōs syndedemenoi* ('as though bound together with them') demands imaginative solidarity — placing oneself mentally and emotionally in their condition. The reminder 'you also are in the body' (*hōs kai autoi ontes en sōmati*) means either 'you also have physical bodies subject to the same treatment' or 'you are members of the same body (of Christ).'
4. The adjective *timios* ('honored, precious, valuable') elevates marriage as a respected institution. The phrase *hē koitē amiantos* ('the bed undefiled') uses *koitē* (literally 'bed,' euphemistic for sexual relations) to affirm marital sexuality as pure. The two categories of violators — pornous ('sexually immoral,' any sexual activity outside marriage) and *moichous* ('adulterers,' those who violate existing marriages) — face divine judgment (*krinei ho theos*). The statement is declarative, not conditional — God will judge.
5. The word *aphilargyros* ('free from love of money, not greedy') contrasts with the contentment (*arkoumenoi*, 'being satisfied') that trusts God's provision. The quotation combines Deuteronomy 31:6, 8 and Joshua 1:5. The Greek contains five negatives (*ou mē se anō oud' ou mē se enkatalipō*) — an emphatic accumulation: 'I will never, never, never, never leave or abandon you.' In context, freedom from greed is grounded not in asceticism but in God's promise of presence.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 31:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 1:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Quoting Psalm 118:6 (LXX 117:6). The confidence (*tharrountas*, 'being bold, being of good courage') is not self-generated but flows from God's promise in verse 5. The rhetorical question 'What can anyone do to me?' does not deny that people can inflict suffering (the audience has already experienced it, 10:32-34) but asserts that no human action can separate the believer from God's help.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 118:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The word *hēgoumenōn* ('leaders, those who lead') appears three times in this chapter (verses 7, 17, 24), framing the community's relationship to its leadership. These particular leaders are past tense — they 'spoke' (*elalēsan*, aorist) the word of God, and their 'way of life' (*anastrophēs*) has a visible 'outcome' (*ekbasin*), suggesting they have died, possibly as martyrs. The command is to imitate (*mimeisthe*) their faith — echoing the imitation theme of 6:12.
8. This verse stands as an independent declaration, functioning as both a conclusion to verse 7 (your leaders change; Christ does not) and an introduction to verse 9 (therefore do not be carried away by strange teachings). The three temporal markers — *echthes* ('yesterday,' the past), *sēmeron* ('today,' the present), and *eis tous aiōnas* ('forever,' the endless future) — assert Christ's absolute immutability. This echoes 1:12 ('you are the same, and your years will never end') and is the practical application of the Christology developed throughout the letter.
9. The verb *parapheresthe* ('be carried away, be swept along') pictures being blown off course. The 'various and strange teachings' (*didachais poikilais kai xenais*) likely refer to Jewish food regulations or cultic meals that some were promoting as necessary. The contrast is between grace (*chariti*) and foods (*brōmasin*) as the foundation for spiritual stability. The author dismisses food regulations as having provided no benefit (*ouk ōphelēthēsan*) to those who followed them.

10. The 'altar' (thysia σ tērion) is likely a reference to the cross or to Christ's sacrifice itself — not a physical altar but the sacrifice from which Christians 'feed' (in the Eucharist or spiritually). Those who serve the old covenant tent (tē skēnē latreuontes) have no access to what this altar provides. The statement asserts a Christian exclusive — the benefits of Christ's sacrifice are available only to those who embrace the new covenant.
11. The author draws on Leviticus 16:27, which prescribes that the bodies of the Day of Atonement sin offerings be burned outside the camp. The blood goes inside (into the Most Holy Place); the bodies go outside (beyond the camp). This creates the typological framework for what follows: Jesus's blood enters the heavenly sanctuary, but his body suffered outside the city.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 16:27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The typological connection: as the sin offering was burned outside the camp, so Jesus suffered exō tēs pylēs ('outside the gate') — outside the walls of Jerusalem. The crucifixion site was deliberately outside the city, fulfilling the sin-offering typology. The purpose clause 'in order to sanctify' (hina hagiāsē) identifies Christ's death as the definitive act of consecration — his blood does what animal blood could not (9:13-14).
13. The practical application: since Jesus suffered outside, believers must go to him there — outside the familiar, respectable structures. The phrase exō tēs parembolēs ('outside the camp') symbolizes departure from the security of established religious systems. The word oneidismōn ('reproach, disgrace') echoes 11:26 (Moses's choosing 'the reproach of Christ'). Following Jesus means accepting social disgrace.
14. This verse completes the 'city' theme that runs from 11:10 (Abraham looked for the city with foundations), through 11:16 (God prepared a city), 12:22 (the heavenly Jerusalem), to this final statement. The present city (whatever earthly security the audience clings to) is not lasting (menousan, 'remaining, permanent'). The future city (tēn mellousan) is the heavenly Jerusalem. The verb epizētoumen ('we are seeking') echoes 11:14 — believers are still seeking the homeland.
15. The old animal sacrifices have been replaced by a new kind of sacrifice: thysian aineseōs ('sacrifice of praise'), echoing Hosea 14:2 (LXX) and Psalm 50:14, 23. The phrase karpon cheileōn ('fruit of lips') from Hosea 14:3 (LXX) identifies praise as the produce of the mouth. The word homologountōn ('confessing, acknowledging') connects to the 'confession' (homologia) theme of 3:1, 4:14, and 10:23. Praise is offered 'through him' (di' autou) — Christ is the mediator even of worship.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 14:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 50:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. Two more sacrifices replace the old system: eupoiias ('doing good, beneficence') and koinōnias ('sharing, fellowship, generosity'). Together with praise (verse 15), these constitute the new covenant sacrificial system. The verb euaresteitai ('is pleased, is well pleased') echoes Enoch's commendation (11:5, 6) — what pleases God is not ritual but faith expressed in praise, goodness, and generosity.
17. The second reference to leaders (hēgoumenoi, cf. verse 7). The verb peithesthe ('obey, be persuaded by, trust') implies willing submission based on trust rather than coerced compliance. The leaders agrypnousin ('keep watch, stay awake') — a word used for sleepless vigilance. They will give an account (logon apodōsontes) to God for their care of souls. The practical concern: difficult members who cause leaders to groan (stenazein) rather than rejoice create a situation that is alysiteles ('unprofitable, harmful') for everyone.
18. The request for prayer reveals the author's pastoral relationship with the audience. The claim of a 'clear conscience' (kalēn syneidēsin) may respond to suspicion or criticism. The verb anastrephesthai ('to conduct oneself, to live') describes the whole pattern of life. The plural 'us' (hēmōn) may refer to the author and his associates.
19. The switch to first person singular (parakalō, 'I urge') is one of the few personal moments in Hebrews. The verb apokatastatō ('be restored, be returned') implies the author has been separated from the community, possibly by imprisonment or travel. The urgency suggests a genuine desire for reunion.
20. The benediction is one of the richest in the New Testament. 'God of peace' (theos tēs eirēnēs) is a common Pauline title (Romans 15:33, 16:20). This is the only explicit reference to the resurrection in Hebrews (anagōn ek nekrōn, 'having brought up from the dead'). The title 'great shepherd' (poimena ton probatōn ton megan) echoes Isaiah 63:11 (LXX) and Ezekiel 34:23 (the Davidic shepherd). The phrase en haimati diathēkēs aiōniou ('by the blood of the eternal covenant') may modify the resurrection ('God raised Jesus on the basis of the eternal covenant blood') or the shepherding ('Jesus shepherds by virtue of covenant blood').
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 63:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 34:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The verb katartisai ('equip, make complete, put in order, restore') is the same root as 'prepared' in 10:5 ('a body you have prepared for me') — God who prepared Christ's body now equips believers for service. The phrase poiōn en hēmin to euareston ('working in us what is pleasing') asserts that good works are ultimately God's work in the believer, mediated through Christ (dia Iēsou Christou). The doxology — 'to whom be glory forever' — may refer to Christ or to God; the grammar allows either.
22. The phrase logou tēs paraklēseōs ('word of exhortation') is the same phrase used in Acts 13:15 for a synagogue sermon. The author characterizes the entire letter as an exhortation. The claim to have written 'briefly' (dia bracheōn) is either self-deprecating humor (the letter is not short) or relative — compared to what could be said, he has been concise.

23. This is the only personal name in Hebrews besides Jesus and the Old Testament figures. Timothy is identified as 'our brother' (ton adelphon hēmōn), linking the author to the Pauline circle. The word apolelumenon ('released, set free') implies Timothy was imprisoned, though no other New Testament text records this. The conditional 'if he comes soon' (ean tachion erchētai) suggests uncertain travel plans.
24. The third reference to leaders (hēgoumenoi) alongside 'all the saints' (pantas tous hagiou) — the greeting encompasses the entire community. The phrase hoi apo tēs Italias ('those from Italy') is ambiguous: it could mean 'those who are in Italy' (the letter is being sent from Italy) or 'those who are from Italy' (Italian Christians now living elsewhere, sending greetings back home). If the latter, the letter may be addressed to a Roman church.
25. The closing benediction is simple and universal: hē charis meta pantōn hymōn ('grace with all of you'). After thirteen chapters of complex theological argument, the letter ends with the single word that summarizes everything the new covenant provides: grace (charis). Some manuscripts add 'Amen,' but the SBLGNT omits it.