

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

v92

Hebrews

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Hebrews

1 In the past, God communicated to the Israelite ancestors
through people who proclaimed his message. He did this
throughout the time during which the ancestors lived, and
he used many different means to do so. 2 *However,* when this
final time period *began*, God communicated to us through his
own Son. God made the world together with him, and God
has chosen him to receive everything. 3 In God's Son, we see
how glorious God is. In fact, God's Son perfectly shows what
God is like. By speaking powerfully, he sustains everything
that God has made. After he purified his people from the
wrong things that they did, he ascended into heaven and
began to rule with God *his Father*. 4 *These things about him*
mean that he is much greater than the spiritual beings. In
the same way, the name that God now calls him is greater
than their *names*.

5 *You can tell that God's Son is greater than the spiritual*
beings because God did not at any time say these words to
any spiritual being:

"On this day, I have declared to everyone
that I am your father,
and you are my son!"

He did not say these words about any spiritual being either:

"I will be his father,
and he will be my son."

However, he did say these words to his own Son.

6 More than that, when God raised his Son into the
heavenly world, he commanded:

"All the spiritual beings who serve God must
honor and praise him."

7 God says this about the spiritual beings:

"I have caused the spiritual beings who serve me to be
like the wind and *like* burning fire."

8 On the other hand, *God says this* about his Son:

"You who are God will rule forever,
and you will reign justly over your kingdom.
9 You loved whatever is just, and you hated whatever
breaks God's law. Because of that, I, your
God, have caused you to be more powerful
and joyful than anyone else who is with you."

10 And *God also says this about his Son:*

"You are the Lord, who powerfully created everything
that exists when it all began.
11 All those things will eventually fall apart,
but you keep on living forever.
They are like clothing that becomes old and wears out,
12 and you will *remove them and* roll them up as
if they were old clothes.
In the same way that a person changes clothes, you
will change the things that you created.
In contrast, you are the one who stays the same
and lives at all times!"

13 God did not at any time say these words to any spiritual
being:

"Rule with me
while I defeat all of your enemies!"

However, he did say these words to his own Son.

14 The spiritual beings are all powerful beings who serve
God, and God has sent them to help those whom he will
soon save.

2 Because *God did say those things to his Son*, we need to
focus most of all on *the good news* that we learned. That
way, we do not stop believing it. 2 *This is important* because,
when the spiritual beings gave the law *to the people of Israel*,
what they said was reliable. Further, God justly punished
anyone who did not listen to this law or broke it. 3 *Since that*
is true, God will certainly punish any one of us who ignores
the message about how God has acted powerfully to save
us. It was the Lord *Jesus* who first spoke this message, and
those who listened to him told us the same message reliably.
4 God also has confirmed to us that this message is true by
empowering believers to do powerful and amazing things.
Further, he gave the Holy Spirit to believers, to each as God
chose.

5 Now God has not put the spiritual beings in charge of
the heavenly world that he will bring to earth. It is that
world about which I am talking. 6 Someone confirmed *what*
I have said when he wrote in the Scriptures,

"No humans are worthy enough for you to
think about them*, God*!
No human beings are important enough for
you to take care of them!
7 *Despite that,* you created humans to be only slightly
less powerful than the spiritual beings,
and you have greatly honored and empowered them.
8 You have put them in charge of everything
that you created."

When he wrote, "put them in charge of everything," that
means that there is nothing over which they are not in
charge. However, at this present time, we do not observe
that humans are in charge of everything. 9 However, we do
observe Jesus. He is the one who was less powerful than the
spiritual beings for a short time, and God has *now* greatly
honored and empowered him. God did this because Jesus
died. In this way, God graciously had him die for all people
who believe in him.

10 *Working in that way* was appropriate for God, who
created and directs everything *that exists*. When Jesus began
to make glorious everyone who believes in him, who are *like*
his own siblings, God used how Jesus suffered to make him
able to save them. 11 Jesus, who sets his people apart for
God, and those same people whom he set apart for God, all
come from God himself. So, Jesus does not hesitate to refer

to them as his own siblings. 12 *Jesus calls them his siblings* when he says,

> "I will declare to my siblings what you are like*, God*;
> I will praise you when people gather together
> *to worship you*."

13 *Jesus says* further:

> "I will rely on him."

And *Jesus says* further,

> "Look at me and God's children whom he
> has entrusted to me."

14 So, because God's children are human beings, Jesus also became a human being just like them. *He did that* so that he, by dying, could defeat Satan, who uses the fact that people die to control them. 15 *When he did that,* he got rid of the way that dying makes us afraid while we live. 16 *Jesus became a human being,* because he came to help those who belong to Abraham*, the ancestor of the Israelites*, not to help spiritual beings, as you know. 17 Because that *is why he came*, Jesus needed to be exactly like us, who are his siblings. That way, he can be the ruling priest who serves God in a compassionate and trustworthy way, so that God forgives what his people did wrong. 18 *Jesus can be that kind of priest* because he endured painful things and experienced how doing what is wrong seems to be good. So, he can aid everyone who also experiences how doing what is wrong seems to be good.

3 My fellow believers, God has set you apart for himself, and he has summoned us together from heaven. Since *I have told you what Jesus has done,* you should think about him. God sent him to us, and he is the ruling priest in whom we say we believe. 2 He faithfully served God, who made him *a ruling priest*. *He is* like Moses, who also *faithfully served God* as part of God's people. 3–4 Now each building has a builder who made it, and people rightly praise the builder more than *they praise* the building. Similarly, God is the builder who made everything. Therefore, people should praise Jesus*, who is God,* more than *they praise* Moses*, whom God made*. 5 Moses faithfully served God as one who helped all God's people. In that way, he already proclaimed what God says now *about Jesus*. 6 But the Messiah is God's Son, who *faithfully* rules over God's people. As long as we persist in boldly and proudly expecting *what God will give us*, we belong to those same people.

7 Since *we are God's people*, *we should do* what the Holy Spirit says:

> "This day, when you hear the Father speak *to you*, 8 do
> not stubbornly disobey him. *That is what
> your ancestors did* when they rebelled against
> God and provoked him while they lived in
> the wild places. 9 *While they were* in those
> places, your ancestors provoked God to see
> what he would do. *They did that* even though
> they saw all the amazing things that he did
> *for them* 10 during a period of 40 years.

So, he was angry with those people, and he said about them, 'They want to do what is wrong all the time. They do not understand how I want them to behave.'

11 So then, because he was angry with them, he solemnly declared, 'They will never participate in how I rest!'"

12 Fellow believers, pay attention! Make sure that none of you think in evil and unbelieving ways that would lead you to become disloyal to the only real God. 13 Rather, you should encourage each other *to be loyal to God* daily, during every day that we call "this day." That way, none of you sin and thus deceive yourselves, which would make you unable to obey God. 14 *You should encourage each other,* because we share *in everything* with the Messiah. *That is true* as long as we persist in trusting him, from when we began to do so until we die. 15 *You should encourage each other* while the Holy Spirit says,

> "This day, when you hear God speak *to you*,
> do not stubbornly disobey him. *That
> is what your ancestors did* when they
> rebelled against God."

16 Now you know that it was all God's people, whom Moses led out of the land of Egypt, who listened to God speak and still rebelled against him. 17 You know that it was God's people, who did what was wrong, with whom God was angry for a period of 40 years. They died in the wild places. 18 You know that it was God's people, who did not obey him, to whom he solemnly declared that they would never participate in how he rests. 19 So, we can tell that they could not participate *in how God rests* because they did not trust *in him*.

4 So, *we can tell that* God still promises that his people will participate in how he rests. Because of that, we need to make sure that every one of you really receives *what God has promised*. 2 *We need to make sure of this,* because we heard the good news just like they did. However, because they were not among those people who believed in what they heard, what they heard did not help them. 3 *That is* because *only* we who believe *in the good news* participate in how God rests, *but those who do not believe do not participate in it*. As the Holy Spirit says, "So then, because he was angry with them, he solemnly declared, 'They will never participate in how I rest!'"

God said this even though he stopped working *and rested* after he created the world. 4 *You know that God rested* because of what the Holy Spirit says elsewhere about the seventh *day of the week*. *He says,*

> "Then, when *it was* the seventh day *of the
> week*, God finished working *to create
> everything*, and he rested."

5 But *note* again *what God says about the Israelite ancestors* in the words that I already quoted:

> "They will never participate in how I rest!"

6 So then, the Israelite ancestors who heard the good news in the past did not obey God, and so they did not participate in how God rests. However, God still wants some people to participate in how he rests. 7 *Because of that,* the Holy Spirit once more picked a time *when we can participate in how God*

rests. *That time is* what we call "this day." *He did this* when he spoke through David a long time after *the Israelite ancestors disobeyed*. He said, as I have already quoted,

"This day, when you hear God speak *to you*, do
not stubbornly disobey him."

8 So, the Holy Spirit refers to a different day *when God's people can participate in how God rests* that comes after the day *when Joshua led the Israelite ancestors into the land that God had promised them*. This means that *when Joshua did that,* he did not help them participate in how God rests.
9 So, as you can see, God's people can still participate in how God rests, *just as people rest on* the Jewish day of rest.
10 In fact, the people who participate in how God rests also finish what they are doing and rest. *They do this* just like God finished *creating everything* and rested. 11 Because of all that, we should focus on participating in how God rests. That way, none *of us* disobeys *God* like the Israelite ancestors did.
12 *You need to pay attention to these things,* because what God speaks *is like a person who* lives and does things, including discerning what people think and plan. *It does that as if it were* a sword with two very sharp edges that could cut apart people's bones from their tendons and that could divide up people's inner lives. 13 God knows everything about every person and thing. Nothing that he created can stay secret when he wishes to examine it. He is the one about whom we are talking.
14 So, a powerful ruling priest works for us, one who ascended through the heavens. He is Jesus, God's Son. Because of that, we need to persist in believing what we say we believe. 15 Now the ruling priest who works for us can very well understand how weak we are. In fact, he experienced many times how doing what is wrong seems to be good, just like we do. However, he never sinned. 16 So then, we should boldly go closer to God, who rules graciously. That way, he will act mercifully and kindly toward us when we need him to help us.

5 When God appoints a person to be a ruling priest, he selects that person from a group of people in order to serve God for that group. The ruling priest then presents *to God* what people give or sacrifice to take away sins. 2 *Every ruling priest* is weak. Because of that, he can act patiently toward those who do not know much about God and toward those who believe and do what is wrong. 3 Further, because *each ruling priest is weak*, God requires him to present a sacrifice to take away his own sins, just like *he presents sacrifices* to take away *the sins of* the rest of the people *of Israel*. 4 Now people cannot decide to become honorable ruling priests on their own. Rather, God chooses *each person who will be a ruling priest*, just like *he chose* Aaron*, the first ruling priest*.
5 Similarly, the Messiah too did not decide to become a glorious ruling priest on his own. Rather, God the Father *chose him to be a ruling priest* when he said to him,

"On this day, I have declared to everyone that
I am your father, and you are my son!"
6 Similarly, *as you can read* in another Psalm,
God the Father said *to the Messiah*:
"You will never stop being a priest in the same way
that Melchizedek was a priest."

7 When the Messiah lived with us before he died and came back to life, he often prayed powerfully and sorrowfully to God. He did this because God could rescue him when he died. Because he honored God, God listened to him *and made him alive again*. 8 Although he is God's Son, he learned what it means to obey God when bad things happened to him.
9 Then, when God finished making him able to do so, the Son became the one who saves forever every person who does what he requires. 10 *He did that* after God appointed him to be a ruling priest in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest.
11 We have many things to talk about with regard to Melchizedek. However, since you do not listen *and understand* well, these things will be difficult to explain *to you*. 12 *You have believed in the Messiah* for long enough that you should be teaching others *about God*. Instead, though, someone still has to teach you simple things about what God says. You are like babies who have to drink milk rather than being like adults who eat food. 13 All people who know very little about what is right *and what is wrong* are like people who drink only milk. In fact, they are like babies. 14 On the other hand, people who know much about God are *like adults who eat* food. These people have consistently practiced how to recognize and then distinguish between what is right and what is wrong.

6 Therefore, we need to learn more so that we become mature. We should not continue to focus on only the most basic things about the Messiah. *In other words,* we do not need to learn again about how to stop doing useless things or about how to trust in God. 2 *We should not* learn *again* about different ways to baptize people, about putting our hands on others *to help them*, about how those who have died will live again, or about how God will finally decide whether people are guilty or innocent. 3 At this time, as long as God wants *us to do so*, we will indeed *learn more so that we become mature*.
4 *Let me tell you about something* that cannot happen. *Think about* people who learned about the good news at one time. They experienced what God gives *to his people* from heaven, and they received God's Spirit. 5 They experienced how good are the things God says, and *they have already begun to experience* the powerful things that God will do when he renews the world. 6 *Think about what would happen* were these people to stop believing the good news. *In that case,* they cannot repent and believe again. *That is because what they did* is like selfishly crucifying and humiliating God's Son. 7 *Here is an example:* God blesses any field where, once rain falls on it, crops grow that people use. 8 However, when a field produces plants that are useless, it helps nobody, and God will soon curse it. In the end, someone will set fire to it *to burn up all the useless plants*.
9 Even though I have warned you in this way, fellow believers whom I love, I am sure that you are believing more firmly *than I have implied*. *In fact, I am sure that* God has saved you. 10 Indeed, since God always acts justly, he will not overlook how you act and how you love *others*. You have proved that you do these things to honor God, particularly when you have helped and continue to help God's people.
11 I greatly desire that you all, until you die, continue to focus diligently on fully trusting *that God will give to you* what you confidently expect. 12 That way, you will not be lazy. Instead, you will do what other believers have done:

they have received what God promised them, because they trusted in him and waited patiently.

13 When God said that he would do something for Abraham,
he guaranteed it himself. *He did that* because every other
person who could guarantee it is less powerful *than God*.
14 *Here is what* he promised *to Abraham*: "I will definitely
bless you, and I will definitely give you many descendants."
15 Because *God guaranteed what he promised*, and because
Abraham persevered in expecting it, God gave him what he
had promised, *a son*.

16 Now, people have someone who is more powerful
than they are guarantee *what they promise*. In fact, when
someone guarantees what he or she promises in this way, it
definitively concludes whatever people are arguing about.
17 In a similar way, God wanted to demonstrate very clearly
to those who would receive what he promised that he would
not change what he intended to do. So, he guaranteed what
he promised, *just like humans do*. 18 So, God both promised
and swore an oath, and he will not lie about or change
either of these things. *He did that* for us, who have trusted
in him to save us. In this way, he encourages us to persist in
confidently expecting what he is ready to give us. 19 When
we confidently expect *what God will give us*, it is as if an
anchor holds us very securely *so that we do not waver from
trusting God*. Further, *when we confidently expect what God
will give us*, it is as if we had gone into the inner part of the
heavenly sanctuary, behind the cloth hanging*, and already
received it*. 20 *That is the same place* where Jesus went *to serve
God* for us and to open the way for us. *He went there* after
he became a ruling priest who will always *serve God*, in the
same way that Melchizedek was a priest.

7 *Now I will say more about* Melchizedek. He ruled *the city
of* Salem, and he served the greatest God as a priest.
When Abraham was going home after defeating some of his
enemies, Melchizedek met with him and blessed him. 2 Then
Abraham gave to him one tenth of everything *that he took
when he defeated his enemies*. *The name "Melchizedek"* means
"just king" *in Hebrew*. *The title* "ruler of *the city of* Salem"
means "peaceful ruler," *since "Salem" sounds like the Hebrew
word for "peaceful"*. 3 *When Moses wrote about Melchizedek,
he did not say anything about* his father, his mother, his other
ancestors, when he was born, or when he died. So, *Moses*
described him as if he were similar to God's Son and as if he
always served as a priest.

4 You can tell how important Melchizedek was from how
Abraham, the ancestor of all the Israelites, offered him
one tenth of the most valuable things *that he took when he
defeated his enemies*. 5 In Moses' law, *God spoke to* the men
who are part of the clan of Levi and who serve as priests.
He commanded them to receive one tenth of what the rest
of the Israelites, who are their relatives, *earned or grew*.
God commanded this despite the fact that all the Israelites
are descendants of Abraham. 6 Now Melchizedek is not part
of the clan of Levi. Despite that, he received one tenth of
what Abraham *took when he defeated his enemies*. Further, he
blessed Abraham, the man to whom God had promised *that
he would give him many descendants*. 7 Now everyone agrees
that more important people bless less important people. *So,
because he blessed Abraham, Melchizedek is more important
than Abraham.* 8 In Moses' law, we learn about how priests
receive one tenth *of what the rest of the Israelites earn or grow*,
but these priests all die. In the story about Melchizedek,
we learn that he *also received one tenth of what Abraham
took from his enemies*, but he continues to live. 9 In fact, in
a way, Levi *and the priests from his clan* gave one tenth *of
what they had to Melchizedek* when Abraham *gave him one
tenth*. *This is true even though* they are the ones who receive
one tenth *from what the Israelites have*. 10 *What I have said
makes sense* because Levi *had not yet been born* and was*, in
a way,* still inside Abraham, his great-grandfather, when he
and Melchizedek met together.

11 Now God made the law that he gave to the Israelites
depend on having the descendants of Levi serve as priests.
So, suppose that people could become what God wanted
them to be through what these priests did to serve God. *In
that case,* God would never have appointed another priest
to serve in the way that Melchizedek was a priest instead
of in the way that Aaron was a priest. *However, God did
appoint this kind of priest.* 12 *You can tell that God made the
law depend on having the descendants of Levi serve as priests,*
because the law must change whenever the way that people
serve as priests changes. 13 *You can tell that God has changed
how people serve as priests,* because Jesus, whom God has
called *a priest*, is not one of the descendants of Levi but is
a descendant of one of Levi's brothers. No descendant of
this man has served as a priest. 14 In fact, we all know that
our Lord *Jesus* is a descendant of *Levi's brother* Judah, and
Moses did not write down anything about descendants of
Judah serving as priests. 15 Further, *you can tell* even more
clearly *that God has changed how people serve as priests,* since
God has appointed a different kind of priest*, Jesus,* who
serves God like Melchizedek did. 16 He serves as a priest
because nothing can keep him from living, which makes him
a powerful *priest*. *As this kind of priest,* he does not depend
on what God commanded in Moses' law about how human
priests *are descendants of Levi*. 17 *You can tell that this is true
about him*, because God the Father said *to him*:

> "You will never stop being a priest in the same way
> that Melchizedek was a priest."

18 What this means is that God withdrew what he had
first commanded *about priests*. *He did this because* that way
of doing things was ineffective. 19 *That way was ineffective*
because people could not become what God wanted them
to be by doing what God previously commanded. Now what
this also means is that God provided something better for us
to confidently expect. When we confidently expect this, we
go closer to God.

20–21 Now God did not guarantee what he said when he
made some of the descendants of Levi to be priests. However,
he did guarantee what he said *when he made* the Messiah *to
be a priest*. Here is what God said to him:

> "The Lord has guaranteed what he says,
> and he will not do something else:
> 'You will never stop being a priest!'" So, just as
> *Jesus serves as a greater priest because*
> God guaranteed what he said *when*
> *he made him a priest*,

22 so also there is a better agreement, which Jesus
guarantees.

23 Further, each one *of the descendants of Levi* died and
so could not continue *to serve as a priest*. Because of that,
there have been many *descendants of Levi* who have served
as priests. 24 However, Jesus will never die. Because of that,

he will always serve as a priest. 25 Because *he always serves as a priest*, he can fully rescue anyone who, because of what he has done, goes closer to God. *He can do that because* he will never die and thus can always ask God to help them.

26 Jesus is exactly the kind of ruling priest that we need. He honors God, he does not think about what is evil, and he does not do what would defile him. He is not one of the people who sin, and he now lives in the highest heaven. 27 Now each *descendant of Levi who serves as a* ruling priest has to present sacrifices *to God* every day. First, he presents a sacrifice to take away his own sins, and after that he presents a sacrifice to take away the sins of the rest of the Israelites. However, Jesus *took away everyone's sins* when he presented himself *as a sacrifice* one time, so he does not need *to present many sacrifices*. 28 In the end, God commanded through Moses that some people should serve as priests, but these priests are weak *and die*. In contrast, when God guaranteed what he said, which he did after he had commanded *those things through Moses*, he enabled his Son *to serve* always as the most effective *priest*.

8 Here is the main idea that I am writing about: a ruling priest like the one I have described is serving for us. He has gone to be with God *the Father* in the heavenly places, and he has begun to rule. 2 He serves in the Most Holy Place and in the most real sacred tent. The Lord *God*, not any human, made *this sanctuary*.

3 Now God makes people ruling priests so that they can present sacrifices. Because *that is what ruling priests do*, Jesus too needed to present a sacrifice. 4 So, because the priests *who are descendants of Levi already* present sacrifices *on earth* as God commanded, Jesus would not be serving as a priest were he on earth *right now*. 5 Those priests do what God requires *in a sanctuary that* models the heavenly *sanctuary*. *You can tell that this is true,* because God revealed it to Moses when Moses was going to have the Israelites construct the sacred tent. *At that time,* God spoke to him, "Make sure that everything *about the sacred tent* matches the original *sanctuary* that I revealed to you *when you were with me* on Mount Sinai!" 6 But here is what is true *about Jesus*: he serves in a much better way *than the descendants of Levi do*. In the same way, the agreement that God has made with his people through Jesus is greater *than the agreement that God made with the Israelites*. That is because God promised greater things when he made this new agreement.

7 Now *you can tell that* the agreement that God made with the Israelites was not perfect, because God chose to make another agreement. 8 *You can tell that the first agreement was not perfect,* because God declared that the Israelites did not perfectly keep that agreement when he said,

> "Here is what I say to you: Pay attention!
> Soon I will make a new agreement
> with all my people from both the kingdom of Israel
> and the kingdom of Judah.
> 9 *That agreement will* not be like the agreement
> that I made with their ancestors
> when I lovingly delivered them
> from the land of Egypt.
> Here is what I say:
> *It will not be like that agreement,* because
> they did not keep it,
> so I abandoned them.
> 10 This is the kind of agreement
> that I will make with my people, the Israelites,
> very soon.
> Here is what I say:
> I will enable them to understand and obey my laws.
> I will be the God whom they worship,
> and they will be the people whom I care for.
> 11 No one will ever have to instruct another Israelite,
> 'Trust and worship the Lord God.'
> *That is* because all my people will trust and worship me,
> no matter how important or unimportant they are.
> 12 *That will happen* because I will mercifully forgive them
> for the wrong things that they have done.
> I will never again punish them for the sins that
> they have committed."

13 When God uses the word "new," he means that the earlier *agreement with the Israelites* is now old. Further, what is old will soon cease to exist.

9 As for the earlier *agreement that God made with Israel*, it required people to worship God in a specific way in a sanctuary on earth. 2 The sanctuary that the Israelites set up was a sacred tent *that had two sections*. They called the outer section the Holy Place. In it, *they put* a stand for lamps and a table on which they laid out *special* bread. 3 The inner section was on the other side of an inner cloth hanging. They called this *inner section* the Most Holy Place. 4 In it, they put the altar for incense and the sacred chest, both of which they completely coated with gold. In the sacred chest, *they put* a gold container with manna inside*, the food that God gave the Israelites while they lived in the desert*. *They also put in it* Aaron's staff that God caused to produce leaves. *They also put in it* the stone slabs *on which Moses wrote the most important parts* of the agreement with God. 5 On top of the sacred chest, *they put two statues of* glorious spiritual beings with wings. *These statues* cast shadows on the lid for the sacred chest. *However,* now is not the right time to carefully discuss each of these objects.

6 After they had set up all those things, the priests went into the outer section of the sacred tent every day to serve God. 7 On the other hand, on only one day a year does the *current* ruling priest go into the inner section *of the sacred tent*. He has to take blood *from an animal with him*, which he presents *to God* to take away his own *sins* and the sins that the rest of the Israelites committed by accident. 8 The Holy Spirit shows *through what the priests do in the sacred tent* that God did not reveal how to enter the *heavenly* Most Holy Place during the time when he required people to use the first section of the *earthly* sacred tent. 9 This *first section of the earthly sacred tent* figuratively describes the time in which those Israelites lived. In that time, priests presented offerings that could not enable the people who brought the offerings to distinguish properly between what is right and what is wrong. 10 They also followed rules that were only about bodily things, *including rules* about what to eat and drink and how to wash with water often. God gave them these rules to follow until he made a new agreement with his people.

11 In contrast, when the Messiah began to serve as a ruling priest, *he gave us* the good things that we now have. He passed through the *heavenly* sacred tent that functions better *than the earthly one*. God, not humans, made this sacred tent, and it does not belong on the earth. 12 Then, when he went into the *heavenly* Most Holy Place only one time, he did not

present blood from animals that someone sacrificed*, like the priests who are descendants of Levi do*. Instead, he presented his own blood and freed *his people* from their sins forever.
13 Now *those priests present* blood from animals that someone sacrificed, and they scatter ashes from a female cow, which they have burned, on unclean people. *When the priests do these things,* they really do cleanse the outside of a person.
14 *Since that is true,* what the Messiah does with his blood cleanses people much more! He presented himself as a perfect sacrifice to God, and the Spirit who lives forever enabled him to do so. He cleanses the inside of you all, removing what you do that accomplishes nothing and enabling you to do what the only real God requires.

15 Because *the Messiah cleanses the inside of people*, God has made a new agreement through him. That way, God gives to those whom he chose what he promised that they would receive forever. *That can happen because Jesus* died to free *his people* from what they did wrong when they disobeyed the agreement that God made with Israel.

16 Now when someone sets up a will, *which is a type of agreement,* that person needs to die before the will becomes effective. 17 In fact, every will is valid only because of a dead person. *That is* because a will is not effective while the person who set it up is alive. 18 Much like that, God definitely required *the Israelites to use* blood when he made the agreement with them. 19 Indeed, after Moses declared everything that God commanded in his law to the Israelites, he picked up *a bowl containing* blood from animals that someone had sacrificed. Then, also using water, red cloth, and parts of a hyssop plant, he scattered the blood on the book *in which he wrote what God commanded* and on all the Israelites. 20 *When he scattered the blood,* he said to them, "This blood signifies *that* the agreement that God made with you *is now effective*." 21 Moses likewise scattered blood on the sacred tent and on every tool *that the priests used* to serve God.
22 Further, God commanded in Moses' law that the priests should use blood almost every time they cleansed *people or things*. In fact, God does not forgive anyone unless a priest presents blood *from an animal that someone has sacrificed*.

23 So then, the priests had to sacrifice animals to purify the *earthly* copy of the heavenly *Most Holy Place*. Much like that, *Jesus had to* present an even greater offering *to purify* the heavenly *Most Holy Place* itself. 24 *When he presented that offering,* the Messiah went into the highest heaven, where he reveals himself right now before God to help us. He did not go into a Most Holy Place that humans have made, which is a model of the most real Most Holy Place. 25 Further, he *went into the highest heaven* to present himself as an offering only once. That is not what the *earthly* ruling priests do. They go into the Most Holy Place every year *and present* blood from an animal *that someone has sacrificed*. 26 *If Jesus had actually needed to present himself as an offering more than once,* then he would have needed to die very often since the time when God created everything. But here is what is true *about Jesus*: during this final time period, he presented himself one time only as an offering to make sin powerless. 27 Humans will each die one time only, and then God will decide whether they are guilty or innocent. 28 Much like that, the Messiah presented himself one time only as an offering to take away many people's sins. Then, he will come again *to earth*, not *to take away* sins, but to rescue his people, who are persistently expecting him.

10 The law *that God gave through Moses* is not itself one of the wonderful things that God will give to his people. Rather, it only points to those wonderful things. So, even though the people who go closer to God always present offerings year after year, doing so never enables them to be what God wants them to be. 2 Suppose that *those offerings* actually purified the people who worship God. *In that case,* they would never feel guilty about their sins, and they would stop presenting offerings. 3 But *here is what is true about those offerings*: they remind people year after year of their sins.
4 *Those offerings can only do that,* because blood from animals that someone sacrificed cannot remove people's sins.

5 That is why, when the Messiah came to earth, he spoke *to his Father*,

"You did not want *people to present* offerings.
Instead, you made a human body ready for me.
6 You did not enjoy the sacrifices
that people present to take away their sins.
7 So, I spoke *these words*: 'Here I am!
Someone wrote about me in the Scriptures.
I will do what you want *me to do*, my God.'"

8 Here is what the Messiah said *to God* first: "You did not want or enjoy the offerings *that people present* or the sacrifices that people present to take away their sins." Those offerings and sacrifices are the ones that the Israelites present *to God* as he required in the laws *that he gave through Moses*. 9 Then, the Messiah said this second: "Here I am! I will do what you want *me to do*." He abolishes *what he spoke about* first in order to set up *what he spoke about* second. 10 Here is what God wanted: Jesus the Messiah presented his body as an offering one time only, and by that *offering*, God set us apart for himself.

11 Now all *earthly* priests have to stand up day after day while they worship God and present many offerings of the same kind. These offerings cannot remove *people's* sins. 12 In contrast, the Messiah presented a single offering that is always effective in taking away sins. Then, he went to be with God *the Father*, where he sits *on the throne* and rules.
13 Right now, he remains *there* until God defeats all of his enemies. 14 *The Messiah remains there,* because he presented a single offering, by which he always makes the people whom God is setting apart for himself to be what God wants them to be.

15 God's Spirit too confirms to us *that this is true*. Here is what he said first *in the words that I have already quoted*:

16 "This is the kind of agreement that I will
make with them,
very soon. Here is what I say:
I will enable them to obey
and understand my laws."

17 Then*, God's Spirit said this second in the words I have already quoted*:

"I will never again punish them
for the sinful and disobedient things that
they have done."

18 When God forgives people for the *sinful and disobedient* things that they have done, no one again presents sacrifices to take away sins.

19 So then, fellow believers, we can be totally sure that there
is a way into the heavenly Most Holy Place *for us*, because of
Jesus' blood. 20 Jesus established that new and effective way
for us, which passes through the cloth hanging *into the Most
Holy Place*. This *cloth hanging figuratively* represents Jesus
while he lived on earth. 21 Further, *the Messiah is* a ruling
priest *who* works for us, God's people. 22 *Because those things
are true,* we should go closer *to God*, completely serving him
and fully believing in him now that he has purified us on
the inside and on the outside so that we no longer feel guilty
about evil things *that we have done*. 23 *God,* who promised
these things to us, will do what he has said. So, we need to
persist in fully believing what we say we confidently expect.
24 Further, we need to think about each other, particularly
how to encourage each other to love others and to do what
is right. 25 *We can do that by* always continuing to gather
together *to worship God* and encouraging each other, even
though some people often do not *do this*. Since we know that
Jesus is coming back soon, we should be very eager to do
those things.

26 *We should do all those things,* because whenever we
intentionally and habitually sin once we have completely
understood the true *message about Christ*, no one can present
any offering that will take away our sins. 27 *If we did go on
sinning*, all we could do is fearfully wait for God to declare
us guilty and, soon after, forcefully punish us as his enemies,
which would be like flames burning us up. 28 The Israelites
would kill any person who completely stopped obeying the
laws that God gave through Moses, as long as at least two or
three people confirmed that the person had done that. They
would not be merciful to that person. 29 But now consider
people who shame God's Son. They treat his blood as if it
were ordinary, even though God used that blood to make
his covenant and set them apart for himself. They make fun
of God's Spirit, who acts graciously. God will rightly punish
those people more than *he punished anyone who completely
stopped obeying the laws that God gave through Moses*. 30 *We
know that is true,* because we have encountered God, who
spoke, "I am the one who will punish people when they act
against me. I will do so in a way that they deserve." Further,
he also *spoke*, "I, the Lord, will decide whether my people
are guilty or innocent." 31 Those who deserve the only real
God to punish them should be afraid!

32 On the other hand, I want you to think about what
it was like when you first learned about the good news.
During that time, you continued *to trust God* while you
firmly withstood what you suffered. 33 In some cases, people
publicly insulted and hurt you. In other cases, you helped
other people who experienced those same things. 34 More
specifically, you acted compassionately toward those in jail.
Also, you rejoiced even when people took away what you
owned. *You did that* because you recognized that God has
something greater and more lasting for you. 35 Therefore,
continue to be confident *that God will do what he has promised*.
God greatly rewards those who are confident in this way.

36 As you can see, you need to continue *to trust God*. That
way, once you have done what God desires, you will receive
what he has promised *to give to you*. 37 Here is what a prophet
wrote:

> "Very soon, the person who is going to
> arrive will arrive.
> He will not wait a long time.
>
> 38 Further, those who serve me righteously will trust
> *in me* while they are alive.
> But suppose they stop *trusting in me*.
> Then, they will not please me."

39 However, we are not those who stop *trusting in God*,
whom he will destroy. Rather, we are those who trust *in
God*, so he saves us.

11 When people trust God, it makes them sure that they
will receive what they confidently expect. *When
people trust God,* it makes them certain about things that
they do not see. 2 In fact, because the Israelite ancestors
trusted God, he approved of them. 3 Because we trust God,
we recognize that, by speaking, God set up everything that
exists. So then, the things we see did not come from other
things we can see.

4 Because he trusted God, Adam's son Abel presented a
more acceptable offering to God than did his older brother
Cain. Because he trusted God, God approved of him for
what he presented and declared that he did what was right.
Although Abel died, we can still learn from how he trusted
God.

5 Because Enoch trusted God, God took him *to heaven*,
and so he never died. As *Moses wrote,* "No one could find
him. That is because God took him *to heaven*." Now before
God took *Enoch to heaven*, he declared that Enoch pleased
him. 6 In fact, people can only please God when they trust
him. *That is* because people who go closer to God have to
believe that he is real and that he will reward people who
want to serve and worship him.

7 Because he trusted God, Noah honored God *by believing
him* when God revealed to him what he could not yet
experience. So, Noah built the ark to rescue his family *from
the flood that God would send*. Since Noah trusted God *in
this way*, he proved that everyone else was guilty. Further,
Noah became a person whom God made right with himself
because Noah trusted him.

8 Because he trusted God, Abraham did what God said
when God spoke to him. He left *his home* to travel to a
location that God would soon make to be his new home.
When he left *his home*, he did not even know exactly where
this new home would be. 9 Because he trusted God, Abraham
stayed in the country that God had promised *to give him*, but
it was not yet his country. He lived with Isaac his son and
Jacob his grandson in temporary shelters, *even though* God
promised to all three of them *that he would give them this
country*. 10 *Abraham lived like that* because he was looking
forward to *living in* the secure and permanent *heavenly* city
that God created. 11 Because he believed, Abraham was able
to have a son with *his wife* Sarah even though he was old
enough that he could not normally have had a child. *That
happened* because he reckoned that God would certainly
do what he said. 12 So then, even though he was very old,
Abraham had many descendants, *the Israelites*. *Just as God
promised,* there are as many *Israelites* as there are many stars
in the sky and as there are many grains of sand on a beach
by the ocean.

13 All those people trusted God until they died. *While they
lived,* they did not experience what God had promised *to give
them*, but they knew that God would soon do what he had
promised. They showed everyone that they did not really
belong in this world. 14 Indeed, all people who speak what
they spoke *about not belonging in this world* show clearly that

they desire *to live in* their own country. 15 But suppose these *faithful people* considered the country they had left *to be their own country*. In that case, they could have gone back there, *but they did not*. 16 But here is what is true *about them*: they longed for a greater country that is in heaven. Because of that, it honors God when other people describe him as the God of these people *who trusted him*. *You can tell that this is true,* because God has made a city for them *to live in*.

17 Because he trusted God, when God tested him, Abraham would have presented *his son* Isaac *as an offering*. Indeed, the man to whom God promised *many descendants* was about to present *as an offering* the only child *he and his wife Sarah had*. 18 *In fact,* God *had already* said to Abraham, "The many descendants *that I promised to give you* will come from *your son* Isaac." 19 *Abraham acted in this way because* he reckoned that God could make dead people alive again. In fact, in a manner of speaking, Abraham did get Isaac back after he had died.

20 Because he trusted God, Isaac blessed *his sons* Jacob and Esau, declaring what would happen *to each of them*.

21 Because he trusted God, when he was about to die, Jacob blessed both sons of *his son* Joseph. He praised God while he leaned on his walking stick.

22 Because he trusted God, when he was about to die, Joseph spoke about how the Israelites would leave *the land of Egypt*. Also, he commanded *them to take* his bones *with them when they left*.

23 Because they trusted God, Moses' father and mother kept Moses hidden for 13 weeks after he was born. They bravely disobeyed what the king *of Egypt* commanded *about killing the sons of the Israelites*. *They did that* because they could tell that Moses was a good child.

24 Because he trusted God, when he grew up, Moses rejected how he was living as the *adopted* son of one *of the daughters* of the king of Egypt. 25 He decided to experience how people mistreated God's people rather than to enjoy sinning for a little while. 26 He reckoned that people insulting him because of the Messiah was more valuable than all the valuable things in *the land of* Egypt. *He thought in this way,* because he focused on how God would reward him. 27 Because he trusted God, Moses departed from *the land of* Egypt. He was not afraid of *what* the king *would do* while he was angry. *He acted in that way,* because he continued *to trust God as completely* as if he could see God, who is invisible. 28 Because he trusted God, Moses led the Israelites in celebrating the *first* Passover festival and spreading blood *from lambs on their doors*. *They did that* so that the spiritual being who killed the eldest children *of the Egyptians* would not kill their *eldest children*.

29 Because they trusted God, the Israelites walked across the Sea of Reeds like *they were walking on* hard ground *when God made a path for them*. Then, when the Egyptians tried to follow, they drowned in the water *when God covered the path*.

30 Because the Israelites trusted God, he broke down the walls *around the city* of Jericho after the Israelites *repeatedly* marched around the city during one week.

31 Because she trusted God, Rahab, who was a prostitute, kept the spies *whom Joshua had sent* safe. *Because she did that,* the Israelites did not kill her when they killed *everyone else who lived in Jericho*, everyone who did not obey *God*.

32 I cannot now say any more about this. Indeed, I do not have the time to tell you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the *other* prophets. 33 Because such people trusted God, some of them defeated foreign armies. Others ruled justly. Others received what God had promised. Others kept lions from eating them. 34 Others stopped fire from burning them. Others survived when someone violently attacked them. Others became powerful when they were weak. Others fought their enemies powerfully. Others completely defeated soldiers from other countries. 35 Some women experienced how God made their *family members* who had died to become alive again. However, other people experienced how others intentionally hurt them *to make them disobey God*. They kept obeying God despite that. That way, God would make them alive again so that they could never die. 36 Further, other people suffered when others made fun of them or struck their backs with ropes. Sometimes, rulers even arrested them and put them in jail. 37 People killed these *faithful people* by throwing rocks at them or by cutting them in half. People tempted them *to disobey God*. People killed them with swords. These *faithful people* wandered around wearing only animal skins. They had nothing, and people persecuted them and treated them badly. 38 *People treated them like that even though* they did not deserve to live in the same place with those who trusted God. *Despite that,* these faithful people had to live in wilderness places, on hills, and in caves in the earth.

39 Although God approved of all these people because they trusted him, he did not *yet* give them what he had promised *to give them*. 40 Rather, God prepared ahead of time to give us something greater *than what those people received while they lived*. That way, only when we and they are all together will we all be what God wants us to be.

12 So then, because all those people who trusted God are watching us, we need to persevere in trusting God too. To do that, we need to stop sinning and avoid anything else that could hinder us. 2 We need to focus on Jesus, the one who enables us to trust God at first and then to do so until we die. He himself persevered when he died on the cross, and he did not care that he died shamefully. *He acted in those ways* because he knew that God would make him joyful afterward. Now, he is with God *the Father*, where he sits on the throne and rules.

3 You need to think about Jesus, who persevered when sinners quarreled with him, *although* they *only* hurt themselves. That way, you can be strong on the inside and persevere. 4 So far, you have not died while you oppose *what is evil* and work hard not to sin. 5 Further, you have failed to remember what *Solomon* encouraged his children to do, which also applies to you. *Here is what Solomon wrote*:

> "My child, learn carefully when the Lord trains you.
> Indeed, persevere when he corrects you.
> 6 *You should do that,* because the Lord *God*
> trains everyone he loves.
> Indeed, he severely corrects every child
> he calls his own."

7 You need to persevere so that God can train you. God acts in these ways toward you because you are his children. *You can tell that this is true,* because parents always train their own children. 8 Suppose God did not train you, even though he trained everybody else. In that case, you would not actually be *God's* children. 9 Moreover, our human parents trained us when we were children, and we respected them. So, we should accept it even more when our spiritual Father,

God, trains us. That way, we will live *forever*. 10 Further, our human parents trained us for a short time in the ways that they thought were right. However, God our Father *trains us* in the ways that are best *for us*. That way, we become those whom he has set apart, just as he sets himself apart. 11 Whenever God trains us, we hurt rather than rejoice while it is happening. However, once we learn from how God is training us, we are able peacefully to do what is right.

12 Because of all that, you need to prepare yourselves to persevere in trusting God, just like runners prepare their tired bodies to continue running. 13 You need to focus on trusting and obeying God, just like a runner focuses on running the straightest path. That way, anyone who is spiritually weak will not stop trusting God but will instead trust him more. 14 You should seek to live peacefully with everybody. Also, *you should seek* to set yourselves apart for God. Only if you do that will you eventually be with the Lord. 15 Make sure that your fellow believers fully receive what God has given you. *Be alert for* anyone who begins to behave resentfully and disturbs *fellow believers*. That may lead many *other believers* to behave that way as well. 16 *Be alert for* people who have improper sex or do not set themselves apart for God. *These people are* like Esau, who allowed *his younger brother Jacob* to act as the firstborn child in order to get some food *from him*. 17 *You should avoid being like Esau,* because you realize what happened to him later. He wanted his father to bless him, but his father refused to do so. As you can see, Esau could not change what he had done, even when he cried while he tried *to change it*.

18 We have not gone closer to *what the Israelites went closer to when they arrived at Mount Sinai*. *They went closer to a mountain* that they could feel *with their hands*. They saw flames burning, dark clouds, shadows, and a thunderstorm. 19 They heard someone playing a trumpet and God speaking a message. When they heard God speaking, they pleaded for him not to say any more to them. 20 *They did that,* because they were afraid when God commanded them, “You must kill all people and animals that touch this mountain. *You must kill them* by throwing rocks at them.” 21 Further, when Moses saw how frightening everything was, he said, “I am shaking because I am afraid!” 22 In contrast to that, you have gone closer to a heavenly place, Mount Zion. *On this mountain is* the city Jerusalem in heaven that belongs to the only real God. *In the city are* very many spiritual beings who celebrate together. 23 Also *in the city are* those whose *names* God has recorded in heaven. *They are* God’s people, his special children. *There* also *is* God, the one who decides whether all *people* are guilty or innocent. *There* too *are* those who obeyed God. They died, but God has now made them what he wants them to be. 24 Also *in the city is* Jesus, through whom God has made a new agreement. *There* also *is* Jesus’ blood, which purifies us. His blood is more effective than Abel’s blood.

25 Make sure that you obey God, who is speaking to you. Consider how some of the Israelites did not obey what God revealed to them from Mount Sinai. God certainly punished them. Now consider how much more *God will punish any of* us who do not obey what he *reveals to us* from Mount Zion. 26 When God spoke from Mount Sinai, it made the earth quake. However, at this time he promises, “One more time, I will make the earth and also heaven quake.” 27 The words “one more time” mean that God will transform everything that he shakes. *He will do that* just as he created all those things. That way, everything that he does not shake will last forever. 28 So, we will live in a kingdom that God will not quake. *Because of that,* we should thank God. By doing that, we respectfully worship God in a way that pleases him. 29 *We should do so respectfully,* because the God we *worship* is *as powerful and dangerous as* a raging fire.

13 Persist in loving your fellow believers. 2 Make sure that you are welcoming other people. *You should do that* because some people who welcomed others actually welcomed spiritual beings, although they did not know *that they were spiritual beings*. 3 Be sure to help those who are in jail. *You should help them* as *you would want others to help you* were you in jail with them. *Also, do not forget to help* those whom others treat badly. *You should do that* because you too are humans *who can suffer*.

4 All of you should greatly value how God joins people together when they marry. Further, people who marry should have sex only with their spouses. *You should do those things* because God will declare guilty anyone who has sex with a married person or who has improper sex in any way. 5 You should always avoid desiring money. *You can do that* by being happy with whatever you have. *You should behave in this way,* because God has spoken *these words to each of you*:

> “I will definitely not abandon you.
> Yes, I will always be with you.”

6 Because *God says that,* we boldly speak *these words*:

> “The Lord *God* is the one who supports me.
> Because of that, I do not fear anyone.
> No one can do anything to *hurt* me.”

7 Pay attention to the people who were in charge of your group. I mean the ones who told you about *what* God *has done*. Examine *the good things* that happened because of how they lived. You should imitate how they trusted God. 8 Jesus the Messiah has never changed and will never change.

9 Do not let other people mislead you by teaching you many kinds of things that do not fit *with the good news*. *You should reject what they teach,* because only what God gives us rightly makes us strong. The food *that we eat* cannot *do that*. In fact, people who act as if *food could do that* gain nothing. 10 We benefit from *Jesus’* offering, *which is greater than the offerings that* the priests presented in the sacred tent. *In fact, those priests* would be unable to participate in Jesus’ offering.

11 In the Most Holy Place, the ruling priest would present blood from animals *that he had killed*. *He did that* to take away sins. Someone *then* would completely burn the remains of these animals away from where the Israelites were staying. 12 Therefore, Jesus too died away from where people lived *in the city of Jerusalem*. *He did that* to set *God’s* people apart for himself by offering his own blood. 13 So then, we should abandon everything that could separate us from the Messiah. *As we do that,* we should accept it when people insult us like they insulted him. 14 *We should do that* because, here *on earth*, we do not live in any city that will last forever. Rather, we desire *to live in* the city that God will soon give us.

15 With Jesus helping us, we should frequently praise God, as if we were presenting offerings to him. We do that when we say that we believe in Jesus. 16 Further, we need to make sure that we help others by giving some of what we have to them. Doing that is like presenting offerings that please God.

17 Those who are in charge of your group *know that* God
considers them responsible for you, and so they always focus
on taking care of you. Because of that, you should respectfully
do what they require. That way, they can *lead your group*
joyfully instead of sadly. Indeed, *if they led sadly,* that would
not help you at all.
18 Please ask God to help me and those with me. *I ask*
that because we are sure that we are not guilty. Indeed, we
always want to behave properly. 19 I urge you still more to
ask God to send me back to you quickly.
20 God is the one who makes his people peaceful. He made
our Lord Jesus alive again after he had died. Jesus is like
a powerful sheepherder who leads us, his sheep. *God made*
him alive again because Jesus used his own blood to make
the new covenant that will last forever. 21 We pray that God
will provide you with all *his* good *gifts*. That way, you can
do what he wants you to do. In fact, he works through Jesus
the Messiah to enable us to do what pleases him. So, let us
honor God forever! May it be so!
22 I have sent you a short letter. So, I ask you, fellow
believers, to please consider carefully what I have said to
encourage you.
23 I want you to be aware that *the authorities* have released
Timothy, our fellow believer. If he arrives here quickly, we
will visit you together.
24 Say hello to everyone who is in charge of your group.
Also, *say hello to* all God's people. The *believers* who are from
the country of Italy say hello to you.
25 *I pray that God will* be gracious to you all.