

Study Notes For Hebrews (Chapter Four)

Hebrews 4:1 - At the conclusion of the previous chapter, as it is divided up in our Bibles, the writer of this letter was drawing them back to the disbelief of Israel in the wilderness. Those that did not believe were not permitted to enter into the land promised to the children of Israel (Hebrews 3:15-19; cf. Numbers 13:1-14:38). From the points made there, we then read this: *“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it”* (Hebrews 4:1).

As we all should do in our studies of the Scriptures, it was time for the folks addressed in this epistle to learn from things that occurred in the past (Romans 15:4, I Corinthians 10:1-13, II Timothy 3:14-17, and James 5:10-11). Consider that God winked at ignorance in those times (Acts 17:30). If they were not allowed to enter into their reward, what does that mean for those whom have been enlightened through the Gospel (I Peter 4:17-19)?

The Holy Spirit moved the penman of this letter to use clear terminology. He wrote the aforementioned things to bring about fear. We have already studied that God sent Jesus into this world to, in part, deliver the faithful from the bondage of the fear of death (Hebrews 2:9-15). The Hebrew writer is not trying to undo what Jesus did. He is not trying to bring about a fear that is not productive. The writer of this letter is working to bring about the fear that moves one to obedience. Later in this letter we will read this: *“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith”* (Hebrews 11:7).

Think about the purpose of the fear that this text is supposed to bring about. When Moses was giving the beginning of the old law (Exodus 20:1-17), we read this: *“And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was”* (Exodus 20:18-21). Solomon wrote: *“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil... The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death... By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil”* (Proverbs 3:7, Proverbs 14:27, Proverbs 16:6). In the

epistle to the congregation in Philippi, we read this: *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”* (Philippians 2:12).

From the Scriptures we have just read through, we can see clearly that godly fear can be profitable in keeping us from erring from the Lord. Later, in the letter of Hebrews we find this: *“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire”* (Hebrews 12:28-29). Such principles were not foreign to Jews who obeyed the Gospel of Christ (Deuteronomy 6:13, Deuteronomy 10:12, Deuteronomy 13:4, Psalms 2:11, Psalms 89:7, etc.).

One of the problems among Jews in the first century was that they continued in the sinful ways of their fathers (Luke 11:45-48 and Acts 7:51-53). Converting into Christ did not wholly deal with that problem. The goal in this text, and even throughout the whole letter, is to prevent a repeat of the past. They needed to look backwards at the errors of those that came before them and learn from them. For saints, there is the promise of eternal life (I John 2:25). It was terrible that a generation did not enter into the land promised to their fathers. However, we are talking about eternity now. Heaven and Hell hang in the balance (Matthew 25:31-46).

The language of “come short of it” should cause some thought just as much as the instruction concerning fear. The Greek term that phrase comes from is “ὕστερέω”. It means: “to be later, i.e. (by implication) to be inferior; generally, to fall short (be deficient): — come behind (short), be destitute, fail, lack, suffer need, (be in) want, be the worse. Behind; to come late or too tardily; to be left behind in the race and so fail to reach the goal, to fall short of the end; metaph. fail to become a partaker, fall back from to be inferior in power, influence and rank; of the person: to be inferior to; to fail, be wanting; to be in want of, lack; to suffer want, to be devoid of, to lack (be inferior) in excellence, worth” (Strong’s # 5302).

The man commonly known as the “Rich Young Ruler” (Matthew 19:16-30) used this term when he asked Jesus: *“what lack I yet”* (Matthew 19:20)? Later in this Hebrew letter, this term appears in Hebrews 12:15 when the warning was not to *“fail of the grace of God.”* This applies to saints. Specifically, those who are on the way to the finish line, but don’t make it. Paul finished the course (II Timothy 4:6-8) as he was determined to (I Corinthians 9:19-27). With that thought, consider this as our conclusion: *“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall*

live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (Hebrews 10:35-39).

Hebrews 4:2 - As we continue into this fourth chapter, we read this: *“For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it”* (Hebrews 4:2). If you will recall, the context is looking backwards at the time Israel tempted God in the wilderness (Hebrews 3:7-11; 3:15-19; cf. Numbers 13:1-14:38). The contextual lesson is not to repeat their mistakes and instructions on how to accomplish that (Hebrews 3:12-14; 4:1).

The thing that first century Jewish saints had in common with those Jews that lived under the Law of Moses was that the word of God was preached to them both (II Kings 17:13 and Acts 3:25-26). The children of Israel had the word of the Lord spoken to them as far back as when they were in Egypt (Exodus 4:28). The word of the Lord was taught unto them as a guide for them to have good and prolonged days in the land they were going to inherit (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). The Gospel preached to the Jews in the first century was far greater than a promised land. The Gospel that was then and is now preached carries the promise of eternal life (II Timothy 1:8-10 and I John 2:25) for the obedient (Hebrews 5:5-9).

The wording translated “gospel preached” in Hebrews 4:2 [εὐαγγελίζω] means: “to announce good news (‘evangelize’) especially the gospel: — declare, bring (declare, show) glad (good) tidings, preach (the gospel). To bring good news, to announce glad tidings. Used in the OT of any kind of good news; of the joyful tidings of God’s kindness, in particular, of the Messianic blessings. In the NT used especially of the glad tidings of the coming kingdom of God, and of the salvation to be obtained in it through Christ, and of what relates to this salvation; glad tidings are brought to one, one has glad tidings proclaimed to him. To proclaim glad tidings; instruct (men) concerning the things that pertain to Christian salvation” (Strong’s # 2097). You can find this Greek word in over fifty verses in the New Testament.

Among those verses wherein we find this Greek term, I want to draw your attention to preaching that was done in Antioch in Pisidia. Notice what preaching the Gospel to the first century Jews was like: *“Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of*

him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers. God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:26-39).

God has always had good news for His people. The problem has been the reception of that good news. The word of God was not profitable to Israel during those ancient days because it was not "mixed with faith in them that heard it." The word of God has to be mixed together, united with faith. What that means is, the hearer of the Gospel has to choose to believe the Gospel (Mark 16:15-16). Notice: "*Likewise when the LORD sent you from Kadeshbarnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice... And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation" (Deuteronomy 9:23 and Psalms 78:18-22). That was not only a problem right out of Egypt, it was also a reoccurring issue throughout the history of Israel (II Chronicles 24:17-22 and II Chronicles 36:14-16). They forgot the things God did for them in rather short order (Psalms 106:21-24). What can you learn from that?*

Whether it was thousands of years ago or today, the word of God is able to save (Psalms 19:7-11 and James 1:21). The question comes down to whether or not the hearer will allow the word of God to bring about that salvation (Romans 1:16). If we do not believe, the truth will remain unchanged (Romans 3:3-4). Our God does not lie (Titus 1:2). His word and works are the truth (Psalms 33:4 and Colossians 1:5). If believed, the truth can effectually work in believers (I Thessalonians 2:13). Later in this Hebrew epistle, we will study about the necessity of faith in the fact that God is the

rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Understand this, we need to retain that word which we have believed (I Corinthians 15:1-4). Remember what happened to those that did not (Jude 1:5)!

Hebrews 4:3-5 - The text we are looking at in this study is this: *“For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest”* (Hebrews 4:3-5). The beginning of the text we are looking at here takes us back to the previous chapter in a statement that is reworded here (Hebrews 3:11-14). Under the New Covenant, those which have believed are those justified by grace being made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7-8). Since we have addressed, in previous studies, the beginning of this statement; we are going to cover the information that is new in these passages.

Let’s start with examining what is meant by: “although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” The Greek word translated “finished” [γίνομαι] is very broad. The definition of that term is: *“To cause to be (“gen”-erate), i.e. (reflexively) to become (come into being), used with great latitude (literal, figurative, intensive, etc.): — arise, be assembled, be(-come, -fall, -have self), be brought (to pass), (be) come (to pass), continue, be divided, draw, be ended, fall, be finished, follow, be found, be fulfilled, + God forbid, grow, happen, have, be kept, be made, be married, be ordained to be, partake, pass, be performed, be published, require, seem, be showed, x soon as it was, sound, be taken, be turned, use, wax, will, would, be wrought. To become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be, receive being; to become, i.e. to come to pass, happen; of events; to arise, appear in history, come upon the stage; of men appearing in public to be made, finished; of miracles, to be performed, wrought to become, be made”* (Strong’s # 1096).

Here it is, plain and simple. “The works” were as good and done since the foundation of the world. By the seventh day, when God rested (Genesis 1:31-2:3), what God had foreordained was as good as done. What we need to center in on is what “the works” means. What was as good as done at the foundation of the world?

Notice these Scriptures wherein we find our answers: *“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of*

faith... Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ... Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord... Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (Romans 16:25-26, Ephesians 1:3-12, Ephesians 3:8-11, and I Peter 1:18-20).

What you have just read is that God’s plan for salvation, through Jesus, was in place at the beginning. The plan existed before the foundation of the world. When the problem in Antioch was being addressed in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-41), this statement was made: “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18). The Lord declares the future and His counsel stands (Isaiah 46:10). If God has purposed something and has spoken it, He will do it (Isaiah 46:11). When God rested He had already determined that He would create a rest for His people too.

There is no “rest” to come for faithful saints past, present, or future without what Jesus did in bringing salvation into this world (Romans 5:6-21). This text is leading into the fact that the rest is still ahead for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9). Then, the tie to Christ will be made going forward from there (Hebrews 4:14-5:10). The hope they and we have through Christ Jesus is not just in Jesus. Our hope is in the rest, the resurrection, that is promised in Christ (John 5:28-29, John 11:25, I Corinthians 15:1-58,

and I Peter 1:3-12). First century Jewish Christians needed to understand that the rest wasn't in the past, it was still to come through Christ. Think about how that hope goes back to before the world began (Titus 1:1-3).

Hebrews 4:6-9 - The key to what we are going to study today is that there is still a future rest for the people of God. The land promised to Israel was not the ultimate rest. Furthermore, Israel were not the only ones God intended to have prepared a rest for. Here is the text we will study: *“Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God”* (Hebrews 4:6-9).

The word translated “rest” [katapausis] in this context (Hebrews 3:11, Hebrews 3:18, Hebrews 4:1, Hebrews 4:3, Hebrews 4:5, Hebrews 4:10, and Hebrews 4:11) means: “reposing down, i.e. (by Hebraism) abode: — rest. A putting to rest; calming of the winds; a resting place. Metaph. the heavenly blessedness in which God dwells, and of which he has promised to make persevering believers in Christ partakers after the toils and trials of life on earth are ended” (Strong’s # 2663). We know that no one has inherited Heaven, the place that is being prepared (John 14:1-3), as of right now. Among the reasons we know that is the world still stands and the final judgment has not yet occurred (Matthew 25:31-46, John 5:28-29, I Corinthians 15:1-26, I Thessalonians 4:13-18, and II Peter 3:9-14).

Jesus came into this world to save the children of Israel (Acts 13:16-23). Yet, Jesus spoke of having other sheep when He was teaching the Jews (John 10:1-18). Unwittingly, Caiaphas the high priest also prophesied of Jesus saving more sheep than just the Israelites (John 11:49-52). We know those other people were [are] the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:1-17). Salvation was to the Jew first, but also then offered to us Gentiles (Romans 2:10). The Jews had previously enjoyed being God’s people apart from all others (Exodus 19:5-6, Deuteronomy 7:1-8, Deuteronomy 10:12-15, and Amos 3:1-2). They then needed to concede and realize that the rest of God was no longer only something for them.

As part of their moments of realization, they needed to account for the fact that they rejected what was once theirs for the taking. Their fathers did not enter into the rest God had for them because of their unbelief. This has been repeated in this context (Hebrews 3:7ff.). It doesn’t end with what happened in the wilderness of old either. In the first century the Jews had the Gospel of Christ preached first unto them (Matthew

9:35-10:6, Matthew 15:21-28, Acts 3:25-26, and Romans 1:16). The Jews in the first century continued to have the problem of hardened hearts and rejected the promises of God as a result of their continued disbelief (John 12:36-43, Acts 7:51-52, Acts 13:44-52, Romans 10:1-21, and I Thessalonians 2:14-16). The Jews' disbelief became a benefit to Gentiles. That benefit came with a caution (Romans 11:11-28). The fact that there remains hope for the rest to come doesn't mean that hope should be taken for granted. The Jews of old are the example to learn from in that regard. Without faith, a person or group of people cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6).

The Hebrew writer, through inspiration of God, then comes back to the contextual reminder of "to day". God has spoken. They [we] can read it. Don't harden your heart as the children of Israel did in times past. Urgently obey! That is echoing the Psalm of David (Psalms 95:1-11). The person with the hard, impenitent heart has only set himself or herself up for the wrath to come on the Day of Judgment (Romans 2:5). Jude wrote: *"I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not"* (Jude 1:5). The reward or the end punishment hasn't been rendered to anyone yet. Don't blow it.

In the beginning God gave man a paradise on earth (Genesis 1-2). Adam and Eve blew it (Genesis 3:1-24). God later told Israel to go into a land He would give them that was self-contained, another form of a paradise on earth (Leviticus 20:24). They blew it, as this context we are studying continues to point out, before they even entered into that land (Numbers 13:1-14:38). Once the next generation came about, they could have had that land, rest from their enemies, etc. (Deuteronomy 12:10); they too blew it over and over again as is shown from the book of Joshua forward. Concerning Israel, it was written: *"Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you"* (Deuteronomy 9:24). We would do well to understand that God's patience has run thin (Acts 17:30). What will be is in our hands.

Be thankful that God has not become tired of the failures of humanity. Be thankful that God hasn't given place to frustration. Therefore, as we consider that there remains a rest to the people of God we have to learn not to repeat the mistakes of God's people of old. We have and still look forward to further exceeding great and precious promises (II Peter 1:4). We [faithful saints] are now called the children of God (II Corinthians 6:14-18 and I John 3:1). We have an inheritance with Christ to look forward to (Romans 8:17). Let's not blow it!

When we get later in this letter we will read this about the great people of faith of old: *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them*

afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth... And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:13; 11:39-40). In our next study we will be talking about how the rest ahead is a reason for us to keep working.

Hebrews 4:10-11 - The writer of this epistle had just made the point that there was still a rest for the people of God to look forward to (Hebrews 4:6-9). Then he wrote this: *"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief"* (Hebrews 4:10-11). In this context the rest God took on the seventh day of creation was already mentioned (Hebrews 4:4). Now the reference is made again.

If you take the day God took for a rest as an example to learn from, there are some relevant points to consider that fit the contextual lessons. On the sixth day of creation God saw every thing that He had made, and behold, it was very good (Genesis 1:31). Before we think about our rest, we need to be able to look at the things we have done in our life and see that things we have done are very good. Think about the Judgment Day. Jesus said this: *"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"* (John 5:28-29). Later in this epistle we read this: *"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased"* (Hebrews 13:14-16). Those of us in Christ were delivered from our sins and created in Christ unto good works (Ephesians 2:1-10). The Scriptures furnish us unto all good works (II Timothy 3:14-17). So, before we think about a rest, let's be sure we are able to look at our lives and see good works.

In continuing to look back at the time God created the heaven and the earth, we are going to consider another point. Before God rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3), we read this: *"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them"* (Genesis 2:1). God didn't rest until He was finished. Notice what Jesus said while living on this earth: *"Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work"* (John 4:34). Jesus did not consider His work for the Father finished until it was (John 17:4 and John 19:30). Jesus was a finisher. We should realize that rest comes after the work is done. Even regarding physical labor,

the sleep of a laboring man is sweet (Ecclesiastes 5:12). The reward for our faithful, good works does not come until the end (Romans 6:22, Philippians 3:3-21, Hebrews 9:27-28, and I Peter 1:3-9).

The point thereafter is clear. Since it's not time for the rest, that means it is still time to work. We know this is the truth. Here in El Paso we sing songs that say: "I want to be a worker for the Lord..." (page 13), "We'll work till Jesus comes..." (page 34), and "Work, for the night is coming..." (page 40). At the conclusion of teaching about the resurrection to come at the end (I Corinthians 15:1-54), Paul penned these words: *"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord"* (I Corinthians 15:55-58).

If you want the reward, you have to work to get it. The laborer is worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7 and I Timothy 5:18). If you want the reward, finish the work (Matthew 20:1-16 and Mark 13:34-37). That's simple enough. However, some people struggle with that. Many of us have seen people get to a point in life wherein they think they've done enough. We can never do enough. Even when we have done all the Lord requires of us we are still unprofitable servants (Luke 17:7-10). That being said, how can a person think that way? Well, sometimes, laziness comes into play. We should all know that regardless of how difficult things get in this world, God expects faithfulness until the day of one's death (Revelation 2:10). Who is considered faithful? In part, as it applies in this study, here is the answer: *"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing"* (Matthew 24:44-46).

So, the point of laboring so that one can enter into the rest promised by God should not be lost on a faithful Christian. Yet, it was taught in this context for a reason. Some first century saints just weren't focused on being finishers. Later in this Hebrew letter we read this: *"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises"* (Hebrews 6:9-12).

For us, we should learn from those things written here to these Jewish saints. Think about this: *“And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, **Strive** to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able”* (Luke 13:22-24). What fight do you have in yourself (I Corinthians 9:24-27 and I Timothy 6:12)? Will you enter the end of your physical life with the confidence Paul had (II Timothy 4:6-8)? Brethren, keep working (Titus 2:7-14)!

Hebrews 4:12 - Now we begin to see a change in the direction of the lessons in this epistle. We have been reading about how the failures of Israel of old prevented them from entering into the land God prepared for them (Hebrews 3:7-19). Then, the application for the saints this epistle was written to was not to have hardened hearts to fail in a similar way as their forefathers (Hebrews 4:1). As the word of God was mixed with faith in these saints, they needed to be reminded that the rest for the people of God is still to come after the work is done (Hebrews 4:2-11). Then this was written: *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Hebrews 4:12).

As we begin to break down this passage for closer examination, consider what the word translated quick means. Here is the definition: “to live (literally or figuratively): — life(-time), (a-)live(-ly), quick. To live, breathe, be among the living (not lifeless, not dead); to enjoy real life; to have true life and worthy of the name; active, blessed, endless in the kingdom of God. To live i.e. pass life, in the manner of the living and acting; of mortals or character; living water, having vital power in itself and exerting the same upon the soul. Metaph. to be in full vigor; to be fresh, strong, efficient. As adj. active, powerful, efficacious” (Strong’s # 2198). The most frequent translation of this Greek term in the KJV is “live” (117 times).

The word of God is very much alive. Peter wrote: *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you”* (I Peter 1:22-25). Peter was not just being figurative either. Jesus taught that the word of God will live even after this physical world comes to an end (Matthew 24:35-36). Jesus also said: *“It is the spirit*

that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

In addition to the word of God being alive, the Holy Spirit also revealed the word of God is powerful. These two points connect. Paul penned this: *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith”* (Romans 1:16-17). The living word of God is powerful enough to produce life. The world and the life that is in this world was spoken into existence (Genesis 1:1-31, Psalms 33:6, and Hebrews 11:3). In a like manner, the things that were made by the word of God are sustained by the word of God (II Peter 3:5-7). Regarding things spiritual in nature, the word of God also brings to life that which would otherwise perish (Psalms 119:50, Psalms 119:93, and James 1:18-21). Even when miracles were being performed, the word of God was enough to calm the seas and raise the dead (Matthew 8:23-27 and John 11:1-44). Faith in the power of the word of God was shown when a centurion knew that all it would take to heal the sick was Jesus to speak the words (Matthew 8:5-13). Therefore, in many ways, the word of God is powerful and can bring to life that which did not exist, is ready to die, and has died.

The word of God is also sharper than any two edged sword. When John has his revelation he sees a vision of Christ with a sharp two edged sword coming out of His mouth (Revelation 1:9-20). The word of God is called the “sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17). So, we have two points in Hebrews 4:12 that draws our minds to the life giving power of the word of God. This language, along with other Scriptures, should also bring about the thoughts of the life taking power of the word of God. The church in Pergamos was warned in such a manner (Revelation 2:12-17). Remember, the word of our Lord is the standard of judgment (John 12:48 and Romans 2:16). That day, for those who are disobedient, will be a day of vengeance (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

The imagery of the two edged sword doesn’t just bring about the destructive power of the word of our Lord. The sharpness also teaches us how the word of God can pierce us deeply. How we react to the penetrating power of the word of God is up to us. It can prick our hearts and bring about a good response (Acts 2:36-41). It can also cut to the heart and cause a terrible, rebellious response (Acts 5:17-33 and Acts 7:51-54).

Since the word of God can penetrate us so deeply, it can reveal our deepest thoughts and intents. Since the word of God is called a “discerner” we need to consider how the word of God is “fit for judging” (Strong’s # 2924) our innermost thoughts and

intents. James wrote of the word of God being likened to a mirror (James 1:21-25). The question we all have to ask ourselves is this: What will the word of God reveal to me about myself? Then, once you come to an honest Scriptural conclusion, you have to decide what to do with that conclusion.

In our next study, we will consider how that God knows everything about us (Hebrews 4:13). If you want to see yourself the way He does, use His word for your own spiritual open heart surgery. Remember, obedience and disobedience are both matters of the heart (Romans 6:17 and Psalms 78:8). In consideration of all we have just read, how important is it that we be pure in heart (Matthew 5:8, I Timothy 1:5, and Hebrews 10:22)?

Hebrews 4:13 - In our previous study we learned about the powerful word of God that is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). From there, the writer of the Hebrew letter then penned these words: *“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do”* (Hebrews 4:13). Think about this in context. There is still a future rest for the people of God. Faithful work needs to be done to enter into that rest. The word of God can be used to reveal what’s going on inside the heart of the believer. What if someone wants to run from what the word of God reveals about him or her? What if someone wants to ignore what the word of God reveals about him or her? What if someone wants to twist the word of God to justify himself or herself? If any of those choices are made, that person is not fooling the Lord. So, whether we come before the Lord now or on the Day of Judgment, we need to consider that He knows us.

There is nothing in creation that is beyond the sight of God. No one is keeping secrets from Him (Psalms 44:21). Jesus knew what was in man (John 2:24-25). David, as he was moved by the Holy Spirit (II Samuel 23:2), said this to Solomon: *“And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever”* (I Chronicles 28:9). Solomon later wrote these words: *“For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings... The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good... Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men”* (Proverbs 5:21; 15:3; 15:11)?

We could fill pages with Scriptures that prove the point that God sees and knows all that is said and done by His creation. As the Psalmist said regarding these truths, such knowledge is too wonderful for me (Psalms 139:1-18). Rather than assembling a

list of passages that prove what we already know, let's take some time to consider the point behind this. The obvious points could be made that God knows everything and that information will be used on the Day of Judgment (John 5:28-29 and II Corinthians 5:10) as was the case in times past (Jeremiah 17:9-10). In the context though, there is more to this than God's judgment.

Think about what it means to be naked and open unto someone's eyes. We understand that nudity is revealing. Within the definition of the term translated "naked", consider some of the meaning in the original Greek term [γυμνός]: "...of the soul, whose garment is the body, stripped of the body, without a body; metaph. naked, i.e. open, lay bare..." (Strong's # 1131). John wrote: *"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God"* (I John 3:20-21). If you honestly (because we know self-deception does occur in some people - I Corinthians 3:18, Galatians 6:3, and James 1:22) look at yourself internally, you know what's going on. Well, so does the Lord. How does that apply beyond the Judgment Day?

As we progress in the context, which we will do in our next article, we are going to see that Jesus is a sympathetic high priest to the saints. We will also see that the faithful can come boldly before the throne of grace in time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16). If you take that into consideration when looking at the fact that we are naked before the Lord, you can see that this is not just about judgment. Yes, we must give an account to the Lord (Romans 14:11-12). This is represented in Hebrews 4:13 with the language of "the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Yet, the context isn't just about that. Have you ever felt the need to talk to someone that knows you better than anyone else?

In context, you have God telling us that He knows what's inside of us. Therefore, when you come before Him in prayer don't do so as though you're talking to a stranger. Come before Him with the understanding that He knows you even possibly better than you know yourself. When Jesus was teaching against vain, repetitious prayers He said this: *"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him"* (Matthew 6:5-8). When coming before God, we're not talking to a stranger.

The Psalmist said: *“Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee”* (Psalms 38:9). Hebrews 4:13 is more about not being pretentious than anything else. You’re open and spiritually naked before the Lord. With our Lord, we have no secrets (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Be genuine with our Lord. Don’t put on some front that is not true to who you really are. Yet, some may be ashamed to come before the Lord like that. You should be unashamed before our Lord (Romans 10:11 and II Timothy 2:15). If you cannot be yourself when you approach Him, it’s time to take advantage of the long-suffering of our Lord and repent (II Peter 3:9-14). With all we just discussed, we also need to consider how we can be ourselves in prayer because our mediator Jesus Christ understands what it means to live in this world. That point was already covered in this epistle (Hebrews 2:9-18). There is no need to put on an act. Think on that in preparation for our next study.

Hebrews 4:14 - The Jews were accustomed to having a high priest. The position of a high priest existed under the Law of Moses (Leviticus 21:10, Joshua 20:1-6, II Kings 22:1-8, and Nehemiah 3:1). They continued to have a high priest in the days of Jesus and the Apostles (Matthew 26:3 and Acts 24:1). We know that Jewish Christians struggled with leaving the Law of Moses behind (Acts 15:1-35, Galatians 2:11-3:29, Galatians 5:1-11, Galatians 6:11-18, and Colossians 2:4-23). Jewish Christians needed to understand that there was a change in the priesthood. After writing about how man is exposed before God’s all-seeing eyes (Hebrews 4:13), the writer of this letter moved on to teaching about the new high priest. Thus, the inspired penman of this book wrote these words: *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession”* (Hebrews 4:14).

We have already seen this subject matter in this epistle (Hebrews 2:9-3:1). We will continue studying about the priesthood of Jesus throughout this epistle. The key for them was to understand that they had a high priest. That high priest was not what they were accustomed to. Jesus, as the new high priest, was not an earthly priest. This is a huge difference. His position did not expire at the end of His physical life. Later in this letter, this is written: *“Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec... By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood”* (Hebrews 6:20, Hebrews 7:22-24). Now notice the benefit of the continual priesthood of Jesus: *“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”* (Hebrews 7:25).

Now think about what you've read. The Lord knows everyone. Jesus, as the high priest of our Father, makes intercession for the people of God. The work of the high priest coming before God on behalf of the people was not a foreign thought to the children of Israel (Leviticus 9:1-24). However, what they were accustomed to was flawed. It was flawed in that the priest not only offered up sacrifice for the sins of the people, but also for himself (Hebrews 7:27). The priesthood they were accustomed to was flawed in that death ended the work of that high priest. As we have seen, this is not the case with Jesus (Hebrews 7:28). It was also flawed in that the sacrifices were not able to take away sins. This was not the case with Jesus (Hebrews 10:1-18). On top of all of that, and more that could be stated, our sinless high priest is not limited by earthly knowledge. He knows what is in man (John 2:23-25). He also understands what it means to live in the flesh. (We will discuss that more in our next study.) Therefore, when Jesus stands between us and our Father as our mediator (I Timothy 2:5-6), His actions are not like any high priest that held that office before He did.

For them, and for us, Jesus is our GREAT high priest for the reasons we have discussed and so much more. He is not here on earth doing His work. He is right next to His Father and our Father (Mark 16:14-19 and Hebrews 9:24). He has the ear of our Heavenly Father on a continual basis. He has a relationship with our Father that no high priest before Him ever had. He is the only begotten of our Father (John 1:14, John 1:18, John 3:16-18, and I John 4:9). We should be able to understand how that a son has the ear of his father. Jesus used that relationship of what a father will do for a child in His teachings (Luke 11:9-13). Jesus is able to do much more than any high priest that preceded Him.

Now we need to think about how that information helps Christians hold fast our profession. Earlier in this letter, Jesus was called the "High Priest of our profession" (Hebrews 3:1). Later in this letter, after writing about the remission of sins through the sacrifice of Christ, this was written: *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"* (Hebrews 10:19-25).

There is inescapable clarity in the words you just read. All saints should be able to hold fast because of the confidence we have in and through our high priest. We

know that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus serves as our anchor for our hope (Hebrews 6:19-20). Since He is sure and steadfast, the faithful know that our labor will not be in vain (I Corinthians 15:58).

Jewish saints in the first century needed to wrap their minds around the changes in the law and the priesthood. We don't have to learn the same lessons they needed. However, we can certainly be thankful that those lessons needed taught. We can benefit learning from their struggles to come to a greater understanding and appreciation for the priesthood of Christ. These lessons are not recorded in any other epistle. Therefore, take the time to enjoy the lessons taught here that we'd miss if we don't study through this epistle. Such information should make you fall even deeper in love with our God and Savior (cf. I John 4:19).

Hebrews 4:15 - In last week's article we studied about Jesus being our great high priest. In continuation of that study, we shall consider the following passage in this article: *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"* (Hebrews 4:15). This passage of Scripture lays out for us that Jesus is compassionate. He understands what we have to live through in this world as human beings.

The phrase "touched with the feeling" comes from a Greek word that means this: "to feel sympathy with, i.e. (by implication) to commiserate: — have compassion, be touched with a feeling of. To be affected with the same feeling as another, to sympathize with, to feel for, have compassion on" (Strong's # 4834). You will find that Greek term one other time in the New Testament. It is translated "compassion" (Hebrews 10:34). We can see the compassion Christ had when He was in the flesh (Matthew 14:13-21, Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 1:40-45, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 7:11-17, etc.). As Jesus taught about compassion, the subject matter was not just pertaining to things in the flesh. He tied forgiveness to compassion (Matthew 18:15-35 and Luke 15:11-32). He taught about compassion in a manner of helping one's neighbor (Luke 10:25-37). So, we can understand that when we consider the compassion of our high priest Jesus Christ, we are talking about spiritual and physical matters.

The term translated "infirmities" means: "feebleness (of mind or body); by implication, malady; morally, frailty: — disease, infirmity, sickness, weakness. Want of strength, weakness, infirmity; of the body; its native weakness and frailty, feebleness of health or sickness of the soul; want of strength and capacity requisite; to understand a thing; to do things great and glorious; to restrain corrupt desires; to bear trials and troubles" (Strong's # 769). It was prophesied and fulfilled that Jesus took infirmities and bare sicknesses

miraculously (Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:14-17). He healed physical infirmities (Luke 5:15, Luke 8:1-3, Luke 13:10-17, John 5:1-18, etc.). This is a term that applies to things suffered in the flesh. So, He has compassion on the things that mankind suffers in the flesh.

Why is it that Jesus can understand and have compassion for the things mankind suffers through physically and spiritually? He can understand because He was, “tempted like as we are.” The word translated “tempted” in the verse we are studying has a really long definition (Strong’s # 3985). In part, it means: “endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline: — assay, examine, go about, prove, tempt(-er), try.” So, to state it simply, we see that Jesus knows what it means to be tested in the flesh. We see this right from the beginning of His work. He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13). The same Greek word “πειράζω” (Strong’s # 3985) is used in that context. Jesus went through testing times at the hands of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, lawyers, etc. (Matthew 16:1-12, Matthew 19:1-12, Matthew 22:15-46, and John 8:1-11). The word “tempted” doesn’t always mean there is an attempt being made to cause someone to sin. Jesus asked questions to “prove” [same Greek term] His disciples (John 6:1-6). He did not do so to tempt them to sin (James 1:13). This same term is used in teaching saints to spiritually “examine” ourselves (II Corinthians 13:5).

Take some time here to ponder what we have just studied through. Jesus knows what it means to live in the flesh. He knows what it means to be tested. He knows what it means to suffer through physical ailments. Since He, unlike our Father in Heaven or the Holy Spirit, understands life in the flesh; He is the perfect high priest. He knows what it is to be both God and man (Romans 9:1-5). He can reason from both perspectives. This point will be made again as we enter into the next chapter of the Hebrew epistle (Hebrews 5:1-10).

As we proceed in our study, consider how that Jesus “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Later in this letter we will read this: *“For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore”* (Hebrews 7:26-28). Jesus never sinned (Hebrews 9:28, I Peter 2:21-25, and I John 3:1-5). Jesus is able to aid those that are tempted like He was while He was the in flesh (Hebrews 2:16-18).

Don't forget that Jesus lived in this world. He knows what sin does to people not only through His knowledge as God, but also through His experiences in the flesh. Through His compassion and ability to relate, He set forth clear instructions for those that choose to be His people to cease from sin (John 5:1-15, John 8:1-11, Romans 6:1-23, I Corinthians 15:34, II Corinthians 6:14-7:1, Galatians 2:17, Ephesians 4:17-5:11, Philippians 2:14-16, II Timothy 2:19, Titus 2:2-14, I Peter 1:13-16, and II Peter 3:10-14). His instructions are not burdensome (I John 5:1-3). He is not trying to take pleasure away from us. In fact, His instructions are set forth to bring peace and well-being into our lives (Romans 8:6, Philippians 4:6-9, and Colossians 3:1-15). Sin doesn't do good for anyone. He faced the same things that we face. To argue otherwise is to deny the inspired Scriptures that we have read. Jesus knows that carnal desires prevent a godly, productive life (Galatians 5:17). He also knows that those desires war against the soul (I Peter 2:11). He serves as the example of how to live in this world and not give in to sinful desires (I Peter 4:1-2). Be thankful for Jesus, our high priest.

Hebrews 4:16 - In the context of the passage we are about to study in this article we have read about our great high priest Jesus Christ. We discussed how we are exposed before the eyes of our Lord (Hebrews 4:13). We studied about Jesus being our great high priest in Heaven (Hebrews 4:14). We learned of Jesus' ability to have compassion because He knows what it means to live in this physical world (Hebrews 4:15). From those points we then read this: *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"* (Hebrews 4:16).

The English phrase "let us" is used multiple times in this letter (Hebrews 4:1, Hebrews 4:11, Hebrews 4:14, Hebrews 6:1, Hebrews 10:22, Hebrews 10:23, Hebrews 10:24, Hebrews 12:1, Hebrews 12:28, Hebrews 13:13, and Hebrews 13:15). So, it would appear that this is a common phrase used by the penman of this epistle. However, a word study proves otherwise. The phrase "let us" does not best represent what was originally written in Hebrews 4:16. In this passage, it is best translated "come therefore come." The Greek term "προσέρχομαι" that is translated "let us" and "come" is the same Greek word (Strong's # 4334). So, the focus is not so much on the "let" or the "us", but the approach itself to the throne of grace.

With Jesus being the high priest that stands before our Father in Heaven, faithful Christians can come boldly before our Father. Consider what is written later in this epistle: *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil*

conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:19-22). When Jesus was talking to His disciples He said: *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14:6). He died that He might bring us unto the Father (I Peter 3:18). Faithful saints have access and confidence by faith in Christ (Ephesians 3:11-12).

As Gentiles, we understand what it means to need Jesus to be able to come to our Father in Heaven (Ephesians 2:1-17). The Jews, to whom this epistle was written, needed to learn that their relationship with God was no longer a physical birthright. Through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; they were the blessed seed of man upon this earth (Exodus 32:13, Psalms 105:1-45, and Isaiah 41:8-10). Under the Law of Moses, they were the chosen people of God (Deuteronomy 7:1-14 and Deuteronomy 14:2). They grew comfortable with this. They were so comfortable with this, that when Jesus came they thought that being of the seed of Abraham was enough (John 8:13-59).

The throne of the majesty in Heaven (Hebrews 8:1) is referred to in the passage we are studying as “the throne of grace.” The continued thought is that this is where mercy and grace are found in time of need. This is about spiritual needs. How do you feel if you err? If you err, you should have a sense of godly sorrow that leads to repentance (II Corinthians 7:9-10). If you err, you should abhor yourself (Job 42:1-6). If you err, you should be ashamed (Genesis 3:1-10). If you err, you should desire to weep bitterly (Luke 22:54-62). In these moments, it is easy to feel unable to come before God. After all, we know that God does not hear the prayers of sinners (Proverbs 15:8, Proverbs 15:29, Proverbs 28:9, Isaiah 1:10-18, Isaiah 59:1-3, Micah 3:4, John 9:31, and I Peter 3:12). This is where the points of Hebrews 4:13-16 come into play. It is of great importance that we understand that in times of the most vilest offenses (as it might seem to us), Jesus makes it possible for us to come before the throne of our Father to obtain mercy and grace.

We know that God expects us NOT to sin (John 8:1-11, Romans 6:1-2, I Corinthians 15:34, II Timothy 2:19, and James 1:13-16). We also have to consider that God has made it possible for us, if we err, to be reconciled to Him through Christ. Notice: *“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us... For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:*

But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them... My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:19-25, and I John 2:1-2).

John said this: *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”* (John 1:17). Whether it was the Jews in the first century or us today, we need to keep that at the forefront of our minds. We can find grace and mercy because of Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:21 and Jude 1:21). We can come before our Heavenly Father because Jesus is our mediator (I Timothy 2:5-6). Isaiah prophesied about Jesus saying some great things about Him (Isaiah 9:1-7). Among those things you find the word “Wonderful” (Isaiah 9:6). That is a fitting term. We have a WONDERFUL savior in Jesus Christ.