

Nov 4-10
Hebrews 1-6
Jesus Christ, “the Author of Eternal Salvation”

OVERVIEW:

Recording spiritual impressions helps you recognize what the Holy Ghost wants to teach you. Acting on your impressions demonstrates your faith that those promptings are real.

Record your impressions:

SCRIPTURES:

Hebrews 1

Author and Date: Since about A.D. 400 the book of Hebrews has traditionally been ascribed to Paul. There are, however, some who question Paul’s authorship of this Epistle because its style and language are so different from Paul’s other letters. It is generally agreed that even if the pen was not Paul’s, the ideas were, because the doctrines in Hebrews agree with those found in Paul’s other letters. When the Prophet Joseph Smith made inspired revisions of the Bible he did not question Paul’s authorship. For instance, the Prophet taught: It is said by Paul in his letter to the Hebrew brethren, that Abel obtained witness that he was righteous. TPJS, 59. The dating of this Epistle is also uncertain. But since Hebrews makes no mention of the destruction of the temple, which occurred in A.D. 70, and always refers to the temple in the present tense, it is assumed this letter was written before that time. Also, if Paul was the author, it must have been written before his death in about A.D. 65.

Audience: This Epistle draws heavily on Old Testament themes and practices. Therefore it is likely that the intended audience was Jewish (Hebrew) Christians.

Historical Background: As we have seen in Acts and in the Epistles we have already studied, there was often sharp disagreements between gentile and Jewish Christians over whether or not Saints were subject to the law of Moses. One reason the book of Hebrews was written was to encourage Jewish converts to remain faithful to the gospel and not revert to their Old Testament way of life. As it became clear that Mosaic rituals were done away in Christ’s atoning sacrifice, an interesting pair of questions arose: If we accept the truth that the law of Moses is no longer binding on Christians, what is the true value of the Old Testament? and how should it be interpreted? With a few possible exceptions, the only scriptures available to the Christians at this early date were what we now call the Old Testament. The New Testament was in the process of preparation, and nearly three centuries passed before it was accepted as a standard. Hebrews appears to have been written, at least in part, to answer the question of how Christians were to view the Old Testament and the law of Moses. Christ and His gospel were to have precedence over the old law.

Theme: Paul taught the Colossian Saints that they should give thanks unto the Father who sent His Firstborn Son that in all things he might have the preeminence. The book of Hebrews adds to this theme the fact that Jesus Christ, under the Father, is superior to all things. He is therefore authorized to fulfill

the old covenant of the law and administer the new covenant of the gospel. As one Latter-day Saint educator wrote: Hebrews is to the New Testament what Leviticus is to the Old: Leviticus announces the Mosaic system, while Hebrews explains it. In it, Paul shows how the gospel grew out of the soil of the Levitical order. By the light of the gospel restored in his day, he shows how the Levitical system was intended as a bridge by which those in the wilderness of carnality could cross over to the rest of the Lord.

Jesus Christ is the Only Begotten of the Father. The Melchizedek Priesthood is part of the fullness of the gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the new covenant between God and his children. Those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ will inherit a place in the kingdom of God. God will keep his promises. Whom the Lord loves he chastens. This epistle is Paul's testimony of Jesus Christ. Paul refers to the Old Testament to convince the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. Some scholars believe that Luke may have helped Paul to write this epistle.

Introduction

“Sent from: Paul, in Italy and probably at Rome.

Sent to: ‘The Hebrews,’ possibly those who helped Paul in the Judean imprisonment.

Date: Possibly A. D. 62.

Purpose: To warn Jewish Christians against falling from the faith and to reconvince them that Christ and his gospel are above the law of Moses.

Main themes: Christ's authority and mission; faithfulness and first principles; Melchizedek priesthood; Christ's atonement; faith and endurance.

Background: Reason for Writing

“...Who were these Jews who first read this letter? The answer must come from the letter itself, since no information on the circumstances of writing is in Acts or early Christian sources...Like the Corinthians, the Hebrews had to go back and relearn the ‘first principles’ at a time when their gospel growth should have been advanced (Heb. 5:12-14). They were ‘dull of hearing’ (Heb. 5:11), which shows that Paul had particular information that worried him. What were their problems? One was living the gospel, a problem common to most branches of the Church in the letters. But the long arguments of reconversion center around Jewish ritual. The Hebrews overstressed the Levitical priesthood that operated the temple and the daily sacrifices that were superseded by Christ's great sacrifice. Chapters 7 through 10 are written for Jews who did not believe that Christ's coming outdated temple sacrifice. After the third journey Paul returned to Jerusalem and shared in temple sacrifice to show that he respected his Hebrew heritage (Acts 20). But it was another thing to believe that sacrifices were part of Christ's gospel, the Jewish heresy that this book combats.” (Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Understanding Paul* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1983], 195 - 196.)

Bruce R. McConkie said: “Paul is at his theological best in Hebrews...as an inspired theologian, Paul takes the revelations of the past, the dead letter of the ancient law, and ties it into the living Christianity of the present. He shows how the gospel grew out of the preparatory law which prevailed in Israel and which in fact had as its purpose the preparing of the way before the coming of that Prophet who led Israel of old and was the Author of both covenants...In Hebrews we learn that Jesus was made a little lower than Elohim; that he has precedence over the angels; that he took upon himself mortality to bring salvation to man. In Hebrews our understanding is refreshed with the knowledge that salvation is available through his intercession; that he sacrificed himself for the sins of the world; that by his blood the saints are sanctified. In it we are taught that the Mosaic ordinances prefigured his ministry; that his gospel was offered to ancient Israel; that he is the Mediator of the new covenant. There is no other Biblical source for detailed knowledge of the Holy Priesthood; of Christ's status as the great High Priest

and the Apostle of our profession; of the oath which God swore that his Son would be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. **And nowhere else in the Bible do we find the oath and covenant of the priesthood set forth; or that through this priesthood the gospel is administered; or that it is the power whereby eternal life is gained.**” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 3: 133-135.)

None of the books in the New Testament, the Gospels included, are more Christ centered than Paul’s epistle to the Hebrews. In it, Paul seeks to show Christ as the fulfillment of the Mosaic system. The imagery of the Mosaic system finds its reality in Jesus of Nazareth and his atoning sacrifice...As Christ was a living, moving, breathing revelation of his Father, so all who would be saved must be the same. This principle of similitude, or oneness, is the key that unlocks the book of Hebrews. Joseph F. McConkie, *Studies in Scriptures*, 6:192)

The Son is in the express image of the person of the Father—Christ is the Only Begotten Son and thus above the angels.

1 **GOD, who^a at sundry times (in many locations and various ways) and in divers manners spake in time past unto the^b fathers by the^c prophets,** (Elder William Grant Bangerter said at General Conference: **“One of the principal purposes of this general conference of the Church is to announce again that God has raised up a prophet by whom he declares his will to the peoples of this world.** This means that not only is the prophet sent to those who accept his words, such as the members of the Church, but also he is speaking in the name of God to all the inhabitants of the earth. He says, as did an ancient prophet, ‘Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken’ (Isa. 1:2). He has been sent especially to you who do not believe in God or in prophets. Wouldn’t you like to know what he is saying? He says that in these last days God has restored the ancient gospel in its fulness and wishes to make a new covenant with all people. He says that Jesus Christ will shortly come again to the earth to save and judge the world and that we should all get ready. Now whether you believe it or not, this is earthshaking news.” (“The Voice of the Lord Is unto All People,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 9))

2 **Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his^a Son, whom he hath^b appointed^c heir of all things, by whom also he^d made the^e worlds;** (Christ is the God of the Old Testament. Christ is better than the prophets of old. Bruce R. McConkie said: **“We are blessed with the knowledge that ours is not the only inhabited earth. Rather, Christ acting under the direction of the Father is the Creator of worlds without number.** Moses was permitted to see many of these earths, to learn that they are inhabited by the spirit children of the Father, and to receive the revelation that it is the Lord's work and glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of the inhabitants of all these earths. (Moses 1:27-41; D. & C. 76:22-24; John 1:1-5; Heb. 1:1-4; *Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, pp. 72-74.)” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 212.))

3 **Who being the brightness of his^a glory, and the express image of his^b person,** (Joseph Smith wrote in the John Wentworth letter written in 1842: **I was enwrapped in a heavenly vision and saw two glorious personages who exactly resembled each other in features, and likeness, surrounded with a brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noon-day.** Christ, who is the image of man, is also the express image of his Father’s person. So says Paul. For in him, Christ, dwell “the fullness of the Godhead bodily” [Col 2:9]. Why? Because he was “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” What person? God’s person. Joseph Smith’s *Commentary on the Bible*, p. 186. The First Presidency wrote: “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is ‘the express image’ of His Father's person (Hebrews 1:3). He walked the earth as a human being, as a perfect man, and said, in answer to a question put to Him: ‘He that hath seen me hath seen the Father’ (John 14:9). This alone ought to solve the problem to the satisfaction of every thoughtful, reverent mind. The conclusion is irresistible, that if the Son of God be the express image (that is, likeness) of His Father's person, then His Father is in the form of man; for

that was the form of the Son of God, not only during His mortal life, but before His mortal birth, and after His resurrection. It was in this form that the Father and the Son, as two personages, appeared to Joseph Smith, when, as a boy of fourteen years, he received his first vision. Then if God made man—the first man—in His own image and likeness, he must have made him like unto Christ, and consequently like unto men of Christ's time and of the present day. That man was made in the image of Christ, is positively stated in the Book of Moses: 'And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and it was so...And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him, male and female created I them' (2:26, 27). "The Father of Jesus is our Father also. Jesus Himself taught this truth, when He instructed His disciples how to pray: 'Our Father which art in heaven,' etc. Jesus, however, is the firstborn among all the sons of God the first begotten in the spirit, and the only begotten in the flesh. He is our elder brother, and we, like Him, are in the image of God. All men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother, and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity." (JOSEPH F. SMITH, JOHN R. WINDER, ANTHON H. LUND, from James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 4: 206.) **and upholding all things by the word of his ^cpower,** ("The Father had given [Jehovah] all power and all authority in the universe. Jesus was 'the brightness of [the Father's] glory, and the express image of his person,' who upholds 'all things by the word of his power.' (Heb. 1:3.) Such divine acts as the creation of worlds without number, the governing of the earth and millions of others like it, the revelation to the prophets, and the atonement for all of God's children were entrusted into the hands of Jesus Christ, Jehovah, the Lord God of the universe, the Father of heaven and earth. Jesus was, as Paul taught, 'in the form of God' and 'thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' (Philip. 2:6.) How mighty this man was as a spirit son of God in premortality that the Father would endow him with all of the attributes of deity save only those that pertain to the possession of a physical body. How we, his spirit siblings but spiritual underlings, must have stood in awe of him as we followed him in the course that the Father laid out for his children. How we must have admired the indescribable wisdom with which, even then, he administered the Father's plan. How we must have marveled at the unutterable courage with which he stepped forward to accept the burden of the holy atonement. **If the present sensitivities that we feel for him, his sacred eternal work, and his gospel plan are any indication of the admiration that we had at that time in his presence, then heaven is a glorious place indeed. And if it is glorious because of the presence of the Son there, how glorious it must be because of the presence of the Father, the source of all glory in eternity.**" (Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet, eds., *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 5: The Gospels* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986], 1 - 2.)) **when he had by himself ^dpurged (made purification, expiation for) our sins, sat down on the ^eright hand of the ^fMajesty on high;**

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent ^aname than they. (B. H. Roberts said: "In this passage the superiority of Jesus over the angels is manifested in four ways: first, by the direct affirmation of God, that he was made 'better' than the angels; second, that by inheritance he obtained a more exalted name; third, that the angels are commanded to worship him; fourth, God, the Father, addressing Jesus, said, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' In this passage the Father directly addresses Jesus by the title 'God.' And as God is exalted above all angels, Jesus must be superior to angels, for he is 'God.'" (*The Mormon Doctrine of Deity* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1903], 73 - 75.))

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my ^aSon, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a ^bFather, and he shall be to me a Son?

6 And again, when he bringeth in the ^afirstbegotten into the world, he saith, ^bAnd let all the angels of God ^cworship him (, who maketh his ministers as a flame of fire).

7 And of the angels he saith, ~~Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.~~ (Angels are ministering spirits.)

8 But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy ^athrone, O God, (The Father is saying that Christ is God) *is* for ^bever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. (Psalms 104) (John Taylor said: “Paul, when speaking of Jesus Christ, gives us to understand that he is the Firstborn of every creature, for by him were all things made that were made, and to him pertains all things; he is the head of all things; he created all things, whether visible or invisible, whether they be principalities, powers, thrones, or dominions; all things were created by him and for him, and without him was not anything made that was made. (Col. 1:13–19; Heb. 1:1–3; John 1:1–3; D&C 76:24). If all things were created by him and for him, this world on which we stand must have been created by him and for him; if so, he is its legitimate, its rightful owner and proprietor, its lawful sovereign and ruler ...” (“My Friend, My Savior, My Lord, My God’: Latter-day Prophets Bear Testimony of Jesus Christ,” *New Era*, Dec. 1979, 8))

9 Thou hast loved ^arighteousness, and hated iniquity; **therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness** (Psalms 45:6-7) above thy fellows. (To king David it was revealed that the Father would anoint the Son with ‘the oil of gladness’ (see Ps. 45:6-7). This answers an important question. The title of *Christ* means “the Anointed One.” That is an important and well-known concept, but equally important is to know who anointed him and with what he was anointed. **Paul tells us that Elohim anointed Jehovah ‘with the oil of gladness.’ Just as with all other priesthood ordinations, the anointing is performed with holy oil, in this case, ‘the oil of gladness,’ a term which is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Hence, Christ was anointed by the Father with the Holy Ghost according to the scripture, ‘God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power’** (Acts 10:38).)

10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the ^afoundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine ^bhands:

11 They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall ^awax old (grow old, become worn) as doth a garment;

12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my ^aright hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

14 Are they not all ^aministering ^bspirits, sent forth ^cto minister (for service) for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (These angels are under the direction of Michael or Adam, who acts under the direction of Christ. Joseph Smith’s *Commentary on the Bible*, p. 186. Parley P. Pratt said: “Angels are of the same race as men. They are, in fact, men who have passed from the rudimental state to the higher spheres of progressive being. Some have died and risen again to life, and are consequently possessed of a divine, human body of flesh and bones, immortal and eternal. They eat, drink, sing and converse like other men. Some of them hold the keys of Apostleship and Priesthood, by which they teach, instruct, bless, and perform miracles and many mighty works. Translated men, like Enoch, Elijah, John the Apostle, and three of the Apostles of the Western Hemisphere, are also like angels. Angels are ministers, both to men upon the earth, and to the world of spirits. They pass from one world to another with more ease, and in less time than we pass from one city to another. They have not a single attribute which man has not. But their attributes are more matured, or more developed, than the attributes of men in this present sphere of existence. Whenever the keys of Priesthood...are enjoyed by man on the earth, the people thus privileged, are entitled to the ministering of angels.” (*Key to the Science of Theology/A Voice of Warning* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1965], 113.))

Hebrews 2

Jesus came to suffer death and save men—He came to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

1 THEREFORE (Because Christ is better than the prophets, better than the angels, is God...) we ought to give the more ^aearnest ^bheed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip. (lost through neglect)

2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and ^adisobedience received a ^bjust recompense of reward;

3 How shall we ^aescape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

4 God also bearing *them* witness, both with ^asigns and ^bwonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own ^cwill?

5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. (Bruce R. McConkie said: “Now, if our fathers were condemned for transgressing and disobeying the law which came from angels through Moses, how much greater shall be our condemnation if we fail to live that gospel which came from the Lord himself through apostles and prophets.” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 3: 143.)

6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is ^aman, that thou art mindful of him? (We are children of God.) or the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Psalms 8:4)

7 Thou madest him a little lower than the ^aangels (Heb-gods, GR- angels); thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: (because of Jesus’ mortality)

8 **Thou hast put all things in subjection under his ^afeet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.**

(Paul understands the meaning of the psalm. He understands that Adam was made lord over all the earth, that man was given dominion over the animals and all earthly things. Hence, God ‘hast put all things in subjection under his feet.’ But Paul sees a deeper meaning. He understands that the psalmists’ question ‘what is...the son of man, that thou visitest him?’ has reference to the Son of Man, another name for the Son of God. He understands that while man may have dominion over earthly things, it is Christ who has dominion over heavenly things. Hence, ‘we see not yet all things put under [man’s feet],’ for man has no dominion over death or sin, but lives in fear and bondage to both (v. 15). But the Son of Man hath been made a little lower than the angels being born as a mortal and suffering death that he may put all things—both earthly and heavenly—under his feet. Since Adam was given dominion over the earth, he must turn that dominion over to Christ at the meeting at Adam Ondi-Ahman.)

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little ^alower than the ^bangels (only during his mortality) ^cfor (through) the suffering of ^ddeath, ^ecrowned with glory and honour; that he by the ^fgrace of God should taste ^gdeath for every man.

10 For ^ait became him (it was fitting, suitable, proper for him), for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all ^bthings, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the ^ccaptain of their salvation ^dperfect through sufferings. (Spencer W. Kimball said: “Perfection is a long, hard journey with many pitfalls. It’s not attainable overnight. Eternal vigilance is the price of victory. Eternal vigilance is required in the subduing of enemies and in becoming the master of our lives. It cannot be accomplished in little spurts and disconnected efforts. There must be constant and valiant, purposeful living—righteous living. Do we have the power to attain this kind of abundance? The psalmist was inspired to write: ‘What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.’ (Ps. 8:4–6.) There are those today who say that man is the result of his environment and cannot rise above it. Those who justify mediocrity, failure, immorality of all kinds, and even weakness and criminality are certainly

misguided. Surely the environmental conditions found in childhood and youth are an influence of power. But the fact remains that every normal soul has its free agency and the power to row against the current and to lift itself to new planes of activity and thought and development. Man can transform himself. Man must transform himself.” (“The Abundant Life,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1985, 5))

11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are ^asanctified *are* all of ^bone: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them ^cbrethren, (“Paul cited Old Testament texts to sustain his argument that we and Christ are children of the same Father. It was prophesied, Paul noted, that the Christ would not be ashamed to declare the name of God unto his ‘brethren’ of the ‘church’ (Heb. 2:12; Ps. 22:22), and that Christ would be called upon to ‘trust’ as with all of God’s ‘children’ (Heb. 2:13; Ps. 18:2; Isa. 8:18). Though he is God’s son, Christ did not take upon himself the ‘nature of angels.’ (Heb. 2:16.) It was for him to work out his salvation with fear and trembling like the rest of God’s children, ‘in all things.’ **Paul said, ‘it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren.’ (Heb. 2:17.) Were this not the case, Christ’s life would be of little value to us as an example. We could not be expected to pattern our lives after someone whose nature was so very different from our own that following in his footsteps would be impossible.** It is our kinship with Christ, our descent from the same Father, that gives meaning to the divine plan for the salvation of men. We too are in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26; Mosiah 7:27; D&C 20:18); we too are heirs, even joint-heirs with Christ; we too may receive of his fullness (D&C 93:19), sit upon thrones (D&C 132:19), and become equal with him ‘in power, and in might, and in dominion’ (D&C 76:95). Thus, salvation comes to us as it did to Christ, by becoming one with the Father. The whole system of salvation centers in the doctrine of oneness and unity. As Christ is the revelation and manifestation of the Father, so we too are to be manifestations of the Father. As Christ was a living, moving, breathing revelation of his Father, so all who would be saved must be the same. This principle of similitude, or oneness, is the key that unlocks the book of Hebrews.” (Joseph F. McConkie, *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 6: Acts to Revelation*, ed. by Robert L. Millet [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987], 195.)

12 Saying, I will declare thy ^aname unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

13 And again, I will put my ^atrust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

14 ^aForasmuch (Since) then as the children are partakers of ^bflesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might ^cdestroy him that had the power of ^ddeath, that is, the ^edevil; (Jesus is our personal Savior. He lived, he died, he knows us. John Taylor said: “Jesus descended below all things, that he might be raised above all things.’ He took upon him a body, that he might die as a man, and ‘that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil.’ Hebrews 2:14. Having conquered Death, then, in his own dominions, burst the barriers of the tomb, and ascended with his body triumphant to the right hand of God, he has accomplished a purpose which God had decreed from before the foundation of the world, ‘and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.’ Hence man, through obedience to the Gospel, is placed in a position to be an adopted son of God, and have a legitimate right to his Father’s blessings, and to possess the gift of the Holy Ghost. And the Apostle says, that ‘If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.’ Romans 8:11 Thus, as Jesus vanquished death, so may we; as he overcame, so may we; and, if faithful, sit with him upon his throne, as he has overcome, and sat down upon his Father’s throne. Revelation 3:21 Thus, man will not only be raised from degradation, but will also be exalted to a seat among the intelligences which surround the throne of God. This is one great object of our coming here and taking bodies.” (*The Government of God* [Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1852], 33 - 34.))

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to ^abondage.

16 For verily he took not on *him the nature* (likeness) of ^aangels; but he took on *him the* ^bseed of Abraham. (a little lower than the angels. “Note Paul’s words: ‘For verily he took not on him the nature of

angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.' **That means that he did not come into this world with a wall around him that would shield him from pain and sorrow and temptation; rather, he came with the feeling, warmth, concern, and sensitivity common to other human beings.**

'Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' (Heb. 2:16-18.) Paul also wrote that Jesus 'was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' (Heb. 4:15-16.) ... The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that Jesus 'descended in suffering below that which man can suffer; or, in other words, suffered greater sufferings, and was exposed to more powerful contradictions than any man can be' (*Lectures on Faith* 5:2). **Because Jesus knew more he felt more; he understood more; he suffered more; and he could be tempted more than any other person. It seems that the number and severity of the temptations that one experiences are in proportion to one's knowledge and perception.** A person with greater capacity may be called on to endure greater temptations. On the other hand, the joys and the rewards for that same person are also greater... The foregoing passages of scripture show that Jesus denied himself of things that his mortal nature may have desired and yet were wrong for him; and he became spiritually strong as a result of that denial." (Robert J. Matthews, *Behold the Messiah* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994], 254-255.)

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make ^areconciliation for the sins of the people. (Bruce R. McConkie said: "Paul's epistle to the Hebrews takes on a whole new meaning when it is read and studied with an understanding of the sacrificial system and the temple rites that prevailed in the day of Jesus. Our apostolic friend begins his epistle—as it is the nature and disposition of a true apostle to do—by announcing that the Great Elohim, the God to whom the Hebrews prayed in times past, sent his Son into the world; that the Son was in the express image of the Father's person; and that he came as promised in the holy scriptures. The Son is identified by name as the Man Jesus—the Captain of their salvation, who came to destroy death—who 'took on him the seed of Abraham,' so that 'in all things' being 'made like unto his brethren, . . . he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' (Heb. 2:16-18.) As we have seen, the high priests in Israel, on the Day of Atonement and at other times, through their sacrificial offerings made 'reconciliation for the sins of the people.' That is, by the shedding and sprinkling of the blood of bullocks and goats an atonement was wrought and the sins of the people were forgiven. It is this same prerogative that Paul is now claiming for another of Abraham's seed." (*The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979-1981], 1: 142.))

18 **For in that he himself hath suffered being ^atempted (tried, subjected to trial), he is able to ^bsuccour them that are tempted. (He knows more about temptation than all of the rest of us, because he never gave in to them. Jesus suffered more contradiction and temptation than anyone else on earth.** "Stated simply, Jesus Christ's empathy for us in our suffering does not come only through revelation ('the Spirit knoweth all things') but from actual experience ('according to the flesh'). Because of his own experience with pain and sorrow—his descent 'below all things' (D&C 88:6)—he knows 'how to succor his people in their infirmities.' To succor is to bring help or relief to someone in distress. Truly, the Savior does understand our pain and undoubtedly weeps with us in our extremities. He will bring peace, the healing of the soul, to those who trust in him." (Larry E. Dahl, "The Morning Breaks, the Shadows Flee," *Ensign*, Apr. 1997, 18–19) "While the Savior knew all things in the Spirit (Alma 7:13), he also knew the pains, infirmities, and temptations of man as experienced in the flesh. He never allowed godly power to insulate pain and affliction and weakness of man traverse and engulf his physical frame. Paul observed that he became 'like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest' (Hebrews 2:17). The refiner's fire of human experience confirmed in his godly

nature the tenderness of heart, the softness of soul, that made the Savior not only just but merciful, not only omnipotent but compassionate. Elder Neal A. Maxwell gave this insight into the relationship between the Atonement and the Savior's succoring powers: 'His empathy and capacity to succor us—in our own sickness, temptations, or sins—were demonstrated and perfected in the process of the great atonement.' He also said, 'The marvelous atonement brought about not only immortality but also the final perfection of Jesus' empathetic and helping capacity.' "...No mortal can cry out, 'he does not understand my plight for my trials are unique.' There is nothing outside the scope of the Savior's experience. As Elder Maxwell observed, 'None of us can tell Christ anything about depression.' As a result of his mortal experience, culminating in the Atonement, the Savior knows, understands, and feels every human condition, every human woe, and every human loss. He can comfort as no other. He can lift burdens as no other. He can listen as no other." (Tad Callister, *Infinite Atonement*, pp. 207-9))

Hebrews 3

*Christ is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession—Jesus, being the Son is more than a servant—
Now is the time and the day of our salvation.*

1 WHEREFORE, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, ^aconsider the ^bApostle and ^cHigh Priest of our profession (testimony), Christ Jesus; (James E. Talmage said: "The word 'apostle' is an Anglicized form derived from the Greek *apostolos*, meaning literally 'one who is sent,' and connoting an envoy or official messenger, who speaks and acts by the authority of one superior to himself. In this sense Paul afterward applied the title to Christ as one specially sent and commissioned of the Father." (*Jesus the Christ*, 212) Orson Pratt "The first officers placed in the kingdom of God are apostles... Paul informs us that Jesus Himself was an apostle. Holding the office Himself, He had the most perfect right to confer the same calling upon others; hence He first *chose* them, and then *ordained* them; after this He sent them forth to preach (Matthew 10)." (*Orson Pratt's Works* [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1945], 41 - 42.))

2 Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses *was faithful* in all his house.

3 For ~~this man~~ (he) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honoꝛ than the house. ("The epistle to the Hebrews was probably written to Jewish Christians who were struggling with the issue of the Law of Moses and its fulfillment in the gospel of Christ. This epistle is an extended essay on the superiority of Christ and the gospel to Moses and the institutions of the Mosaic Law. The author emphasizes the superiority of Christ to angels (Heb. 1–2) and to Moses (Heb. 3), his superiority as a high priest to the Jewish high priests (Heb. 4–5), the superiority of his Melchizedek Priesthood to the priesthood of Aaron (Heb. 7), and the superiority of his sacrifice and covenant to those of the Mosaic Law (Heb. 8–9)." (Stephen E. Robinson, "The Law after Christ," *Ensign*, Sept. 1983, 72)

4 For every house is builded by some *man*; but he that built all things *is* God.

5 And Moses verily *was faithful* in all his house, as a ^aservant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

6 But Christ as a son over his own ^ahouse; whose ^bhouse are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. ("Now Paul is saying that the Meridian Saints are the Lord's house, among whom is Christ the Lord who excels even Moses in glory and greatness. Moses was the servant in the house for his day and age, but Christ is the Son who made the house and whose it is." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:147))

7 Wherefore (as the ^aHoly Ghost saith, ^bTo day if ye will hear his voice,

8 ^aHarden not your hearts, as in the ^bprovocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: (See verse 15)

9 When your fathers tempted me, ^aproved me, and saw my works forty years.

10 Wherefore I was grieved with that ^ageneration, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.

11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not ^aenter into my ^brest.) (If you don't meet the requirements of a goal, should be given the reward anyway? Tell story of passing CPA exam. Israel wandering in the wilderness. 'Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also' (D&C 84:23-25).)

12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil ^aheart of ^bunbelief, in ^cdeparting (apostatizing, withdrawing from) from the living God.

13 But ^aexhort one another daily, while it is called ^bTo day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence ^astedfast unto the end;

15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, ^aharden not your hearts, as in the ^bprovocation. ("Camped in the hot, waterless wilderness of southern Palestine, the Israelites challenged Moses, saying, 'Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?' (Exodus 17:3). This complaint might have been understandable had these people never seen the hand of God in their lives, but this incident occurred after the miraculous Passover, after their passage through the Red Sea dry shod, and after the outpouring of manna and quail from heaven. In response to the Israelites' faithlessness, an exasperated Moses cried out to the Lord, 'What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me' (Exodus 17:4). The Lord answered: 'Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah' Psalm 95 provides the linguistic link that identifies this incident as the Provocation: Psalm 95:7-11: 7 For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the ^asheep of his hand. ^bTo day if ye will ^chear his ^dvoice, 8 ^aHarden not your heart, as ^bin the ^cprovocation, *and as in* the day of ^dtemptation in the wilderness: 9 When your fathers tempted me, ^aproved me, and saw my work. 10 ^aForty years long was I ^bgrieved with *this* ^cgeneration, and said, *It is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: 11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not ^aenter into my ^brest.). **The event at Meribah is the Provocation mentioned throughout the Bible. In that incident, the Lord tested the faith of the children of Israel and their willingness to accept his love and grace.** Grace is the Lord's divine enabling power, given to humankind to help them with all the challenges of their lives; grace ultimately empowers them to lay hold on heaven itself. But the Israelites' response to the Lord's abundant generosity illustrates a religious paradox: God offers his children grace, but the children will not seek it; God offers his children heaven, but the children will not enter in." (M. Catherine Thomas, *Thy People Shall Be My People and Thy God My God: The 22d Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1994], 167.)

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose ^acarcasses fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of ^aunbelief.

Hebrews 4

The gospel was offered to ancient Israel—Saints enter into the rest of the Lord—Though tempted in all points, Jesus was without sin.

1 LET us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his ^arest, any of you should seem to come short of it. (Joseph Fielding Smith said: **“No man can obtain that exaltation without receiving the covenants that belong to the priesthood. No woman can obtain this great honor and glory without receiving the blessings of faith, repentance and baptism, confirmation, and obedience to the covenants that are promised her and her husband in the temple of the Lord.** Otherwise, there would be no progress, that is, to the fulness. No man who is not willing to continue, even though he be a member of the Church, in receiving these covenants, and taking upon him these blessings and powers which the Lord has offered unto him by covenant, will ever reach the fulness. All such will be barred. There will come a certain place which they cannot pass. The fulness of knowledge, and understanding, and wisdom, by which men may become perfect even as God is perfect, can only be gained by a strict adherence to those eternal laws upon which this great blessing is based. **We fall short through lack of faithfulness if we refuse to receive covenants and take upon ourselves obligations that pertain to the exaltation. There will be a bar that will prevent us from continuing to that fullness.”** (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954-1956], 2: 45.))

2 For unto us was the ^agospel (rest) preached, as well as unto them: (Joseph Smith said: “We find also, that when the Israelites came out of Egypt they had the Gospel preached to them, according to Paul in his letter to the Hebrews, which says: ‘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’. It is said again, in , that the law (of Moses, or the Levitical law) was ‘added’ because of transgression. What, we ask, was this law added to, if it was not added to the Gospel? It must be plain that it was added to the Gospel, since we learn that they had the Gospel preached to them. From these few facts, we conclude that whenever the Lord revealed Himself to men in ancient days, and commanded them to offer sacrifice to Him, that it was done that they might look forward in faith to the time of His coming, and rely upon the power of that atonement for a remission of their sins.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], 59.)) but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with ^bfaith in them that heard *it*. (Today we still need to have faith in the gospel.)

3 ^aFor we ~~which~~ (who) have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, If they (harden their hearts they shall not enter into my rest; also, I have sworn, If they will not harden their hearts, they) shall enter into my ^brest: (‘The rest here referred to is not physical rest, for there is no such thing as physical rest in the Church of Jesus Christ. Reference is made to the spiritual rest and peace which are born from a settled conviction of the truth in the minds of men. We may thus enter into the rest of the Lord today, by coming to an understanding of the truths of the gospel.’ (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 126. The ancient prophets speak of “entering into God’s rest”; what does it mean? To my mind, it means entering into the knowledge and love of God, having faith in his purpose and in his plan, to such an extent that we know we are right, and that we are not hunting for something else, we are not disturbed by every word of doctrine, or by the cunning and craftiness of men who lie in wait to deceive... The man who has reached that degree of faith in God that all doubt and fear have been cast from him, he has entered into God’s rest, rest from doubt, from fear, from apprehension of danger, rest from the religious turmoil of the world. *Gospel Doctrine*, 58.) “As a further extension, ‘The rest of the Lord, in eternity, is to inherit eternal life, to gain the fulness of the Lord’s glory. (D&C 84:24.)’ (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., p. 633.)” (J. Lewis Taylor, “New Testament Backgrounds: Hebrews,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1976, 59)) although the works (of God) were (prepared, (or finished,)) from the foundation of the world.

4 For he spake in a certain place of the ^aseventh *day* on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

5 ^aAnd in this *place* again, If (they harden not their hearts) they shall enter into my rest.

6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and ^athey (those who formerly were taught the gospel) to whom it was first preached entered not in because of ^bunbelief: (disobedience, unbelief,

obstinacy)

7 Again, he ^alimiteth (appoints, decrees, constitutes) a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will ^bhear his voice, ^charden not your hearts.

8 For if ^aJesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. (There is a better rest. God's rest. Rest from doubt, religious turmoil in the world. Secure in our testimony.)

10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

(One of the goals of discipleship is to submit our will to the will of the Father. This means, in part, that we bury our own agenda and adopt the Lord's. It means that our personal desires are replaced with divine desires. It means that the carnal mind is replaced with the mind of Christ. Paul also explains that it means that we stop doing our own work and start doing the work of the Lord. Once we cease from always being concerned about our 'own works,' we can focus on that work which ironically brings us rest. Hence the invitation, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden [with your own works], and I will give you rest. Take my yoke [the work of the Lord] upon you...and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.' (Matt. 11:28-30))

11 Let us ^alabour (hasten, be eager) therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of ^bunbelief. (obstinacy, disobedience)

12 For the ^aword of God is ^bquick, (living) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged ^csword, ^dpiercing even to the dividing asunder ^eof soul (body) and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a ^fdiscerner of the ^gthoughts and ^hintents of the heart. (Dallin H. Oaks said: "Paul warned the Hebrews that God 'is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,' and 'all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him.' In other words, **God judges us not only for our acts, but also for the desires of our hearts.** He has said so again and again. This is a challenging reality, but it is not surprising. Agency and accountability are eternal principles. We exercise our free agency not only by what we do, but also by what we decide, or will, or desire. Restrictions on freedom can deprive us of the power to do, but no one can deprive us of the power to will or desire. Accountability must therefore reach and attach consequences to the desires of our hearts. This principle applies both in a negative way—making us guilty of sin for evil thoughts and desires—and in a positive way—promising us blessings for righteous desires." ("The Desires of Our Hearts," *Ensign*, June 1986, 64–65))

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the ^aeyes of him with whom we have to do.

14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the ^aheavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession (testimony).

15 For we have not an high priest ^awhich cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; (unable to sympathize with our frailties, imperfections) ("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.' Because he 'was in all points tempted like as we are,' **our Savior understands our situation, knows from his own personal experience what we struggle against, and can sympathize with us and have compassion on us.** Thus, when I am tempted, I don't have to appeal to some distant entity who has never been in my shoes. I can take my problems to a high priest, Jesus, who *can* 'be touched with the feeling of [my] infirmities'—because he has been where I am. I can share my problems with a compassionate God who knows from experience what I am talking about and understands from experience what I am going through. There may be certain aspects of his nature that the rest of us do not fully share, but there is no aspect of our human nature that he does not share. And that is good news." (Stephen E. Robinson, *Believing Christ: The Parable of the Bicycle and Other Good News* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992], 115.)) but was in all points ^btempted like as *we are*, yet without ^csin. (Howard W. Hunter "It is important to remember that Jesus was capable of sinning, that he could have succumbed, that the plan of life and salvation could have been foiled, but that he remained true. Had there been no possibility of his yielding to the enticement of Satan, there would have

been no real test, no genuine victory in the result. If he had been stripped of the faculty to sin, he would have been stripped of his very agency. It was he who had come to safeguard and ensure the agency of man. He had to retain the capacity and ability to sin had he willed so to do. As Paul wrote, 'Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered'; and he 'was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin'. He was perfect and sinless, not because he had to be, but rather because he clearly and determinedly wanted to be. As the Doctrine and Covenants records, 'He suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them' (D&C 20:22)." (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 4.) Harold B. Lee said: "As we read the story of the life of the Savior we are impressed by the fact that he was stirred by human emotions, just as we are. I wonder if he was not angered when he saw the money-changers making his Father's house a den of thieves. When the hypocritical Pharisees challenged him because he healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath day, the gospel writer records that he looked on them 'with anger being grieved because of their hardness of heart.'... Yes, Jesus was 'tempted as we are in all things' yet he was without sin. Although he was moved by human emotions throughout his life, there was an essential difference between his expression of them and ours. His emotions were always under control. Frequently ours are uncontrolled and end in bitterness that endangers our own souls. He could hate sin yet have compassion on the sinner. He was angered at the narrowness and bigotry that closed men's minds to truth, yet he was patient in his teachings. He loved all mankind and jealously shepherded them against the evils of the day." (*Decisions for Successful Living* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973], 42 - 43.))

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of ^agrace, (Bruce R. McConkie said: "It is pleasing to that God whose we are when we fast and pray and seek his blessings; when we plead with all the energy of our souls for those things we so much desire; when, as Paul says, we 'come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' (Heb. 4:16.)" ("Patterns of Prayer," *Ensign*, May 1984, 32)) that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Confidently. Harold B. Lee said: "[Speaking of Heb. 4:16] Now, that is the invitation to come to Him when we are faced with problems too much for human skill or for human wisdom, and we will thereby find the answer more divine than human intelligence can understand... Those timeless words should be written upon the tablets of our hearts: to likewise give us courage to withstand in our time of need." (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 129, 190.))

Mercy is the spirit of compassion, tenderness, and forgiveness. It is one of the attributes of God.

Hebrews 5

Ministers must be called of God as was Aaron—Christ was a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek—Jesus Christ is the author of eternal salvation.

1 FOR every high priest (...though they were not high priests as we know them today, rather, they were presiding priests of the Aaronic order. They are similar to our Presiding Bishop.) taken from among men is ^aordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and ^bsacrifices for sins: (Paul is not speaking of the office of high priest in the Melchizedek priesthood. There was one man who held the office of high priest as the presiding authority of the Levitical priesthood. The Bible Dictionary explains: "Under the law of Moses the presiding officer of the Aaronic Priesthood was called the high priest. The office was hereditary and came through the firstborn among the family of Aaron, Aaron himself being the first high priest of the Aaronic order... The high priest's main duties, in addition to the duties of a regular priest, were to perform the service of the Day of Atonement; to inquire God's will by the Urim and Thummim in the breastplate of his office; and to offer sacrifices

on Sabbaths, new moons, and yearly festivals. He also had to offer a meat offering twice daily for himself (Lev. 6:19-23).” (Bible Dictionary: High Priest))

2 Who can have ^acompassion on the ignorant, and on them that are ^bout of the way (straying, wandering); for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for ^asins. (Yom Kippor, the Day of Atonement. The high priest goes into the holy of holies once a year.)

Scripture Mastery: 4 And no man taketh this ^ahonour (the priesthood) unto himself, (even Jesus had to be ordained) but he that is ^bcalled of God, as was ^cAaron. (Show a diploma. What is required to receive one of these? What is required to issue one? How would you like to be operated on by a doctor who printed his own license without ever going to medical school? The same principle applies to priesthood authority. We must receive proper authority to obtain the priesthood. Boyd K. Packer: The priesthood cannot be conferred like a diploma. It cannot be handed to you as a message or sent to you in a letter. It comes only by proper ordination. An authorized holder of the priesthood has to be there. He must place his hands upon your head and ordain you. CR, Oct 1981, 46-47. We believe that no man can administer salvation through the gospel to the souls of men in the name of Jesus Christ except he is authorized from God by revelation or by being ordained by someone whom God hath sent by revelation...And I would ask, how was Aaron called, but by revelation? Joseph Smith’s Commentary on the Bible, p. 186. David O. McKay said: “This question of divine authority is one of the important factors which distinguish the Church of Jesus Christ from the Protestant creeds of Christendom. In plain, unmistakable terms the Church declares that ‘a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority to preach the gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.’ (Articles of Faith, No. 5.) In this declaration the Church but reiterates the words of one who bore Christ’s authority in the Meridian of Time, and who, in writing upon this very question, said, ‘And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.’ Herein lies one secret of the strength of this great latter-day work. Its origin consists not in the whims, the desires, or the aspirations of men, but in the order and the will of Christ himself, the author of our eternal salvation. If one man could assume the right to speak in the name of the Lord, other men would have the same privilege. These many men, all presuming to say, ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ yet not seeing ‘eye to eye’ on important elements of God’s kingdom, the inevitable result would be confusion, and sincere men and women would be driven from, not attracted to Christ’s Church, yet eventually would be made to suffer for not having obeyed the principles of life and salvation. “Yet the real cause of their failure to accept these eternal principles would be the fact that unauthorized men arrogated to themselves the right to officiate in things pertaining to God. Herein lies the explanation of the discordant condition existing among jarring creeds in the so-called Christian world today. Men who have no right so to do are officiating in the name of Christ. The result, of course, is confusion. Whatever else may be said of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the strength of his position in regard to divine authority must be recognized.” (*Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay* [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953], 166.) Robert E. Wells said: “**Any ordinances performed without that authority are as invalid as a forged signature on a loan. Many baptisms and confirmations and other ordinances are performed by well-meaning people, but if those people lack the proper authority, they have no promise that the ordinance will be validated in this or the next life. Many, we fear, will be disillusioned when they arrive on the other side and find that the ordinances performed for them were invalid and the authority those who performed the ordinances thought they had is nonexistent. Sincerity or faith alone is not enough.**” (*The Mount and the Master* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1991], 201.)

5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; **(But as pertaining to his mortal ministry, Christ our Lord received the Melchizedek Priesthood here on earth, and was ordained to the office of a high priest therein, thus setting an example for others and being in all things the Prototype of salvation. With reference to the mortal receipt of that holy order which is his, and**

which he had afore used to create this and an infinite number of other worlds, and which he had in fact given to Melchizedek in the first instance, the Prophet says: “If a man gets the fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord. TPJS, p. 308. DNTC, 3:157) but he that said unto him, Thou art my ^aSon, to day have I begotten thee. (Bruce R. McConkie said: “True ministers...never call themselves; they do not and cannot endow themselves with divine authority. They must be called of God. **Even Christ ‘glorified not himself to be made an high priest’ (Heb. 5:5); even he was called and given power and sent forth by his Father.** Those who are called of God thus become his servants, his agents, his ambassadors. They are sent forth to do what he wants done and to represent him. Their words are his words and their acts his acts; when they serve within the field and scope of their authorization, it is as though the Lord himself had said or done whatever is involved.” (*The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979-1981], 2: 308.))

6 As he saith also in another *place*, Thou *art* a ^apriest ^bfor ever after the order of ^cMelchisedec.

7 ^aWho in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up ^bprayers and supplications with ^cstrong (mighty, powerful supplication) crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard ^din that he feared; (because of his piety, reverence) (“What kind of a man was this Melchizedek? ... The Joseph Smith Translation provides an additional 16 verses in Genesis 14 (Gen. 14:25–40) ... As a child Melchizedek had such faith as to stop the mouths of lions and quench the violence of fire (see also JST, Heb. 5:7). He was ordained a high priest after the order of the Son of God. He was a prophet like unto Enoch who had power through his faith over the elements, over the nations of the earth, and the power to stand in the presence of God ‘by the will of the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world’ (JST, Gen. 14:31). In addition to his biblical title ‘King of peace’ (Heb. 7:2), in the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis 14:33 [Gen. 14:33] we learn Melchizedek was called by his people ‘the Prince of peace,’ another title identifying him as a type foreshadowing the ministry of Jesus Christ.” (David Rolph Seely, “The Joseph Smith Translation: ‘Plain and Precious Things’ Restored,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1997, 14) JST Hebrews 5:7 Footnote: Does verse 8 refer to Melchizedek or Christ? The footnote states that verses 7 and 8 “are a parenthesis alluding to Melchizedek and not to Christ.” Yet, many prophets and apostles (e.g. *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, 73) have spoken of verse 8 in reference to the Savior. How can we resolve this conflict? Robert J. Matthews explained it as follows: “The reference to Melchizedek was undoubtedly inserted because Melchizedek was a type or a foreshadowing of Christ...Hence, Hebrews 5:7–8, while referring specifically to Melchizedek, has equal, though indirect, application to Jesus Christ because Melchizedek typifies Christ.” (Robert J. Matthews, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1987, 21) In many instances, the Joseph Smith Translation focuses not on Paul’s original intent as much as it protects us against Satan’s distortion of the scriptures. This footnote provides a good example. Satan’s henchmen might argue that if Christ *learned obedience*, then he must have been *disobedient* at some point. Those who would detract from Christ’s perfect sinless life could use this scripture to argue that he was not perfect in mortality. Joseph Smith’s translation anticipates this Satanic ploy and gives us scriptural ammunition to fight it. However, if you understand the verse as Paul intended, it may be correctly applied to Jesus Christ. In this context, what does it mean when Christ *learned obedience* by the things which he suffered? Does it mean he was ever disobedient? Of course not! It means that he grew ‘grace for grace.’ It means that the physical suffering of Christ taught him what it meant to be obedient to the Father not just in the spiritual sense but in the physical sense. Prior to his mortal advent, he knew perfect obedience in the Spirit, but he had not yet experienced it in the flesh. His physical suffering was a learning experience for him just as it can be for us. Correctly understood, Paul never intended to imply that Christ had ever been *disobedient*. Did Jesus ever commit sin? (Heb. 5:8–9.) Because of Hebrews 5:8–9, which says that Jesus ‘learned ... obedience by the things which he suffered’ and was ‘made perfect,’ some have suggested that he was not always sinless in mortality. In response, Elder Bruce R. McConkie has written: ‘Christ always was perfect in that he obeyed the whole

law of the Father at all times and was everlastingly the Sinless One. See Heb. 4:14–16; Heb. 5:1–3. But on the other hand he was made perfect, through the sufferings and experiences of mortality, in the sense that he thereby died and was resurrected in glorious immortality.” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:158.)” (J. Lewis Taylor, “New Testament Backgrounds: Hebrews,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1976, 59))

8 Though he were a Son, yet ^alearned he ^bobedience by the things which he ^csuffered; (endured Neal A. Maxwell said: “**Suffering is a hard way to learn, but perhaps the only way for us to learn certain things, for deep insights do not come to an outsider; they come from being inside certain experiences. Obedience permits us to hear things we would not otherwise be able to listen to, because we would so easily be offended.** In Proverbs we read that a wise reprover is heard only by ‘an obedient ear.’ (Proverbs 25:12.)” (*Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977], 44.) Harold B. Lee said: “So it is in our day. God grant that you and I may learn obedience to God’s will, if necessary by the things which we suffer. One of the things that characterizes us as Saints, as King Benjamin told us, was to be ‘submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.’ (Mosiah 3:19.)” (*Conference Report, October 1965, Afternoon Meeting* 130 - 131.))

9 **And being made ^aperfect,** (Spencer W. Kimball said: “...ridiculous is the idea that any of us can rise to the eternal heights without disciplining ourselves and being disciplined by the circumstances of life. The purity and perfection we seek is unattainable without this subjection of unworthy, ungodlike urges and the corresponding encouragement of their opposites. We certainly cannot expect the rules to be easier for us than for the Son of God, of whom it is recorded: ‘Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.’ (Heb. 5:8-9.) ‘Unto all them that obey him’—these are the operative words for us. And obedience always involves self-discipline. So does repentance, which is the way to annul the effects of a previous lack of obedience in one’s life. The dividends from both obedience and repentance amply repay the effort.” (*The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 28)) **he became the ^bauthor of eternal ^csalvation unto all them that obey him;**

10 ^aCalled of God an ^bhigh priest after the order of Melchisedec.

11 Of whom we have many things to say, and ^ahard to be ^buttered (difficult to be explained), seeing ye are dull of ^chearing.

12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers (They were the first ones to have the gospel and have now slipped back.), ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles (revelations) of God; and are become such as have need of ^amilk, and not of strong meat.

13 For every one that useth ^amilk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (James E. Faust said: “There is a defense mechanism to discern between good and evil. It is called conscience. It is our spirit’s natural response to the pain of sin, just like pain in our flesh is our body’s natural response to a wound—even a small sliver.

Conscience strengthens through use. Paul told the Hebrews, ‘But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.’ (Heb. 5:14.) Those who have not exercised their conscience have ‘their conscience seared with a hot iron.’ (1 Tim. 4:2.) A sensitive conscience is a sign of a healthy spirit.” (“A Crown of Thorns, a Crown of Glory,” *Ensign*, May 1991, 68))

Hebrews 6

Let us go on to perfection—Sons of perdition crucify Christ afresh—God swears with an oath that the faithful shall be saved.

1 THEREFORE (not) ^aleaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, (having left behind the beginning of the doctrine) (The doctrine of Christ is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost and enduring in righteousness to the end. See 2 Nephi 31:21) let us go on unto ^bperfection; not laying again the foundation of ^crepentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

2 Of the ^adoctrine of ^bbaptisms, (Baptisms of water and of the Spirit.) “[Joseph Smith] said that the plural term ‘baptisms’ in this passage had reference to baptism for the living, baptism for the dead, and rebaptism. (Hebrews 6:1-2.)” (Hyrum L. Andrus and Helen Mae Andrus, comps., *They Knew the Prophet*, p. 87) and of ^claying on of ^dhands, and of (the) resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. (Joseph Smith said: “The doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead & Eternal Judgment are necessary to preach among the first principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” (*The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, compiled and edited by Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook [Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980], 4.))

3 ^aAnd ~~this will we do~~, (we will go on unto perfection) if God permit.

4 For ~~it is~~ (he hath made it) impossible for those who were once ^aenlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have ^atasted the good word of God, and the powers of the ^bworld to come,

6 If they shall ^afall away, to ~~renew them~~ (be renewed) again unto repentance; seeing they ^bcrucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open ^cshame. (Joseph Fielding Smith said: “These who are to be so severely punished must first have the testimony of the gospel and by the power of the Holy Ghost know that Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God. Afterwards if they sin and openly and wilfully turn against the truth and deny Christ, they assent unto his death, and this is equivalent to crucifying him again and the shedding of innocent blood, and they put him to open shame.” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957-1966], 1: 63.) Joseph Smith said: “...according to the Scripture, if men have received the good word of God, and tasted of the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, it is impossible to renew them again, seeing they have crucified the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame...the power of Elijah cannot seal against this sin, for this is a reserve made in the seals and power of the Priesthood.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], 338.))

7 For the (day cometh that the) earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs ^ameet (suitable, fit, proper) for them (who dwelleth thereon,) by whom it is ^bdressed, (cultivated, tilled) (who now) receiveth blessing(s) from God: (shall be cleansed with fire.)

8 ~~But~~ (For) that which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto ^acursing; whose (therefore they who bring not forth good fruits, shall be cast into the fire, for their) end *is* to be burned. (The herbs and briers analogy is akin to the sheep and the goats. The sheep will be found righteous and inherit a place at the right hand of Christ at the final judgment. The goats will be found unworthy, except to be burned (Matt. 25:31-46). The herbs are the sheep. They will be redeemed and inherit one of three glorious kingdoms. The briers are the sons of perdition, who are ‘the only ones who shall not be redeemed in the due time of the Lord’ (D&C 76:38).)

9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

10 For God *is* not ^aunrighteous ~~to~~ (, therefore he will not) forget your work and ^blabour of ^clove, which ye have she(o)wed toward his ^dname, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same ^adiligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

12 That ye be not ^aslothful, but followers of them who through ^bfaith and ^cpatience inherit the ^dpromises. (Neal A. Maxwell said: “Is it any wonder, then, if, in His plan, our ‘faith and patience’ are regularly tried? (See Mosiah 23:21.) Paul confirms that those who ‘inherit the promises’ are those who have triumphed ‘through faith and patience’ (Hebrews 6:12). Abraham ‘obtained the

promise,' but only 'after he had patiently endured' (Hebrews 6:15). Long-suffering, endurance, and patience are designed to be constant companions, as are faith, hope, and charity. "While a person is thinking his way through his particular hesitations or reservations about faith, he might ask, 'Does God really know what I am passing through?' The answer is 'Yes!' He knows!" (*Lord, Increase Our Faith* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994], 39.)

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could ^aswear (promise, confirm by an oath) by no greater, he ^bswore by himself,

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will ^abless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently ^aendured, he obtained the promise. (Calling and election made sure.)

16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an ^aoath for confirmation *is* to them an end of all ^bstrife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his ^acounsel (design, purpose), ^bconfirmed *it* by an ^coath:

18 That by two immutable things, (God swore a dual oath; that is, twice in the same promise he swore in his own name that Abraham and his seed should be blessed. DNTC, 3:165) in which *it was* impossible for God to ^alie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for ^brefuge to lay hold upon the ^chope set before us:

19 Which *hope* we have as an ^aanchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the ^bveil; (Neal A. Maxwell said: "Having ultimate hope does not mean we will always be rescued from proximate problems, but we will be rescued from everlasting death!" ("Brightness of Hope," *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 35))

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, *even* Jesus, made an ^ahigh priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. (Bruce R. McConkie said: "As the high priest in Israel passed through the veil into the holy of holies on the day of atonement, as part of the cleansing rites which freed Israel from sin (Lev. 16), so Jesus has entered into heaven to prepare the way for those who through obedience to his laws become clean and pure." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 3: 165.))