

New Testament Lesson # 43  
November 4 – 10  
Jesus Christ: “The Author of Eternal Salvation”  
Hebrews 1-6  
By Lenet Hadley Read

I. This Epistle reveals much that is important to know about the Savior, much of which has been lost to the world due to the apostasy. It shows Jesus was far more than just a good teacher.

A. It verifies Jesus truly **is the Son of God**, the Eternal Father (Hebrews 1:1-2). This means He is Divine. It also means the Father and the Son had to be two distinct personages.

B. Paul adds further witness by saying Jesus is the **Only Begotten [in the flesh] of God the Father (1:5)**. This is not just a metaphor nor just symbolic.

C. It was because Jesus was Divine, that He had the power, working under the Father’s direction, to create this earth and everything pertaining to it.

D. But He also created **other worlds (1:2)**. We know from latter-day revelation this does not mean just the other planets in our solar system (Moses 1:33).

II. Importantly, Jesus is in the **express image** of His Father (Hebrews 1:3), which is why He said “if ye have seen me ye have seen the Father.” He did not mean they were the same person, but that they looked exactly alike.

A. In fact, He also meant that part of His purpose of coming to the earth, was to bear witness of the Father, of what He was like. Thus he was called “The faithful witness” (Revelation 1:4).

B. Even today Jesus “upholds all things by the word of His [priesthood] power” (1:3).

C. Though divine, Jesus came to earth to take upon Himself mortal form (2:14).

D. Jesus did this to deliver his brothers and sisters from the power of Satan (2:14-15).

E. **He was made perfect through the things that He suffered (2:10; 5:8-9)**.

1, And thus He gives us hope that we can also become more perfect, through the things that we suffer, if we do so with patience and love.

III Moses had served as a pattern to bear witness of the life of Jesus the Christ.

A. Paul teaches that **Moses’ leading the Children of Israel into the Promised Land was a prophecy of Jesus’ leading His people into Eternal Life** (Hebrews 3:1-6).

B. So Paul warns the Saints **about failing to “enter into [God’s] rest”** [Eternal Life] as ancient Israel failed to enter into their “rest” in the Promised Land (Heb. 3:7-11; Numbers 14, 26).

C. The Book of Mormon later confirms that Eternal Life is the True Promised Land “For just as surely as this director [the Liahona] did bring our fathers by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better land of promise” (Alma 37:45).

D. Latter-day Saints should also consider the meaning of the temple ceremony and what it is trying to teach us. And then we should consider, if we are unworthy to go, or fail to go as often as possible, or go unworthily, we are failing to be prepared to “enter into His rest” which the Temple Ceremony emulates (See Hebrews 3:12-13).

IV. Jesus served as both the “author” and the “finisher” of our faith.

A. This statement summarizes a major message of Paul’s in “Hebrews.” And indeed we should recognize **Faith itself initially begins because of Christ.**

B. Under the Father’s direction, **Jesus created all things that we might begin to believe in a God. Thus He is the *author* of our faith. Here are just some ways:**

1. He created the world, and **all things in the world bear record or testify of Him**

“All things are created and made to bear record of me” (Moses 6:63).

Thus we can begin to understand His truths through the things He created.

2. Here are just a few of the things of the earth that testify of Christ.

a. The sun testifies of Him as the light of the world without which there could be no life!

b. Those things which appear to die in winter, then come back to life in the spring, teach of His and our subsequent Resurrection.

c. The rising of the sun in the morning, which *causes all men* to arise after a night of sleep, teaches of Christ at His return, *when all the dead* will arise in the glorious morning of the Resurrection.

d. Things which remain “ever green” teach of everlasting life.

e. The Sun, Moon and Stars were set to teach of His three kingdoms of Glory.

f. The very order of the planets in the Heavens teach of His order in His Realm.

g. He set those things in the Heavens to serve as signs by which He accomplishes His great works. (See Lenet Hadley Read, the Ensign, “Symbols of the Harvest,” January, 1975; and “The Golden Plates and the Feast of Trumpets,” January 2000). These show He used the moon to set the times for His Great works.

C. Jesus helped create faith and belief by **sending prophets to teach and prophesy of Him**, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets...” (Hebrews 1:1).

D. **He helped create faith through those prophets who served as patterns and types of Him** (such as Moses and Melchizedek, which Paul teaches were types of Christ).

E. He helped create belief through miracles wrought by His Priesthood, such as prophets raising people from the dead, the healing of Namaan, etc.

V. Finally, **Jesus Himself came to help “Finish” our Faith.**

A. “[God] hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:2).

B. **After all His works are completed, and we have accepted His atonement, repented, partaken of His ordinances, been obedient, and served Him, it is the Savior who will be the finisher of our faith. He will lead us through the barriers which separates us from God the Eternal Father and into His glorious dwelling.**

**C. Thus the beginning and ending of both our salvation and our exaltation come through Jesus the Christ. He truly is The Way!**

VI. Paul **chastises the Saints** because they are slow to hear and to understand the things he is trying to teach.

A. He desires them to grow out of being fed only on milk and to be ready for the meat

which “belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their sense exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14).

- B. Just as with a child, the Lord does not want His people to remain on milk forever. He desires us to grow until we can digest the weightier portions of His Gospel. For in doing so we can be far greater servants in His cause.
- C. Indeed, we are **challenged to grow and go on to perfection** (Hebrews 6:1).
- D. **And we can only do this when we seek to understand all the things of God.**
- E. The Perfection of God is not the same perfection imagined by most of mankind.
  - 1. It is not looking perfect or doing all things perfectly.
  - 2. The key to perfection in the Lord’s view, is to suffer, like Jesus, patiently all things for the Lord.

**“... the captain of their salvation [was made] perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:10).**

- F. This includes, specifically, forgiving our enemies.

Thus much of the Epistle to the Hebrews deals with the suffering of the saints, but telling them they can become, in doing so, perfect like Jesus Christ.

VII. Although Paul has born witness of the divine nature, etc., of Jesus Christ, it was not long after the death of the apostles that these very things were warped as men entered into apostasy.

- A. Christian Jews, who had been taught there was but One God, struggled with the concept that there were actually three: God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In time Groups challenged the separate distinction of the Godhead, and came to believe they were only One, but somehow manifest as three entities.
- B. Others, influenced by Greek Philosophy which saw all material things as evil, began to challenge that Jesus actually had a body, either while on earth or in the Heavens. They claimed He only “appeared” to have a body. And as it is much easier to believe in a Power without a physical body, this has become the apostate opinion of most Christians today.
- C. Today, more and more Christians actually challenge even Jesus’ Divinity, believing He was only a great teacher, but not a God.  
(For a good summary of how these apostate opinions began to arise see, James Barker, *Apostasy from the Divine Church*, pp. 152-161).
- D. In most cases they have used a few scriptures which have been “wrested” to support their conclusions, ignoring the great weight of all the scriptures taken together.