

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Approximate date: 64-70 C.E.

Time period: immediately prior to, or during, the Jewish revolt in the Land of Israel

Author: unknown, but often favored to be Barnabas or Apollos (and/or Priscilla)

Location of author: the Jewish Diaspora, probably Corinth or Italy

Target audience and their location: primarily the Jewish Diaspora, probably Rome, Alexandria, Eastern Mediterranean

The overwhelming theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews is the superiority of Yeshua's sacrifice and blood atonement, when compared to the previous order of animal sacrifices of the Levitical priesthood. Yeshua's atoning work for sinful humanity is permanent, contrasted to animal sacrifices that at best could only provide a temporary covering for sin (9:26; 10:2). Yeshua's priesthood, typified by that of Melchizedek, has inaugurated the era of the New Covenant (8:6). All Messiah followers are to take great comfort and encouragement that permanent forgiveness from sins is available in the redeeming work of Yeshua, who intercedes before the Father in Heaven (8:1-2).

The Epistle to the Hebrews was known in early Christianity, actually being quoted as early as 95 C.E., demonstrating that it was written before the end of the First Century.¹ There are various parallels and familiarities detectable between the contents of Hebrews, and the Epistle of *1 Clement*, a late First Century work, and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, a Second Century work:

Noah, being found faithful, preached regeneration to the world through his ministry; and the Lord saved by him the animals which, with one accord, entered into the ark (*1 Clement* 9:4; cf. Hebrews 11:7).²

This is the way, beloved, in which we find our Saviour, even Jesus Christ, the High Priest of all our offerings, the defender and helper of our infirmity. By Him we look up to the

heights of heaven (*1 Clement* 36:1; cf. Hebrews 1:3).³

Stand steadfast, therefore, ye who work righteousness, and doubt not, that your passage may be with the holy angels. Happy ye who endure the great tribulation that is coming on, and happy they who shall not deny their own life (*Hermas Vision* 2.2.7; cf. Hebrews 11:33).⁴

But you are saved, because you did not depart from the living God, and on account of your simplicity and great self-control. These have saved you, if you remain steadfast. And they will save all who act in the same manner, and walk in guilelessness and simplicity (*Hermas Vision* 2.3.2; cf. Hebrews 3:13).⁵

But those which fell into the fire and were burned, are those who have departed for ever from the living God; nor does the thought of repentance ever come into their hearts, on account of their devotion to their lusts and to the crimes which they committed (*Hermas Vision* 3.7.2; Hebrews 3:13).⁶

"Well did you escape from it," says she, "because you cast your care on God, and opened your heart to the Lord, believing that you can be saved by no other than by His great and glorious name. On this account the Lord has sent His angel, who has rule over the beasts, and whose name is Thegri, and has shut up its mouth, so that it cannot tear you. You have escaped from great tribulation on account of your faith, and because you did not doubt in the presence of such a beast" (*Hermas Vision* 4.2.4; Hebrews 11:33).⁷

There is certainly debate over the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as the author of the epistle is not specifically identified in the text.⁸ There

³ Ibid.

⁴ BibleWorks 8.0: Ante-Nicene Fathers.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Cf. W.L. Lane, "Hebrews," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & its Developments*, 456 has provided a list of more ancient references to Hebrews.

⁸ E. Dinkler, "Hebrews, Letter to the," in *IDB*, 2:571; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp 668-670.

¹ Donald Guthrie, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:665; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 669; Harold W. Attridge, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *ABD*, 3:97; Carson and Moo, 605.

² BibleWorks 8.0: Schaff, *Early Church Fathers*.

have been many proposals regarding Hebrews' authorship made by contemporary examiners.⁹ There are various extant traditions from the Christian history of the Second-Fourth Centuries C.E., suggesting different authors for Hebrews.

The Eastern Church held to the tradition that **the Apostle Paul** wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews in Hebrew, and then Luke translated it, based on the testimony of Clement of Alexandria from the late Second Century. The Fourth Century historian Eusebius recorded, "The epistle to the Hebrews he asserted was written by Paul to the Hebrews in the Hebrew tongue, but it was carefully translated by Luke and published among the Greeks since one finds the same character of style and of phraseology in the epistle as in Acts" (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.2).¹⁰ Concurrent with this, one of the reasons, why Paul's name would have remained anonymous throughout Hebrews, was because a widespread audience of Jewish Believers might have treated him with suspicion, given his mainly non-Jewish mission. That Paul was the author of Hebrews was seriously challenged, even very early on, as "This...speculation was probably not based on any genuine tradition but was rather an inference drawn by Clement himself from the title" (Guthrie, *ISBE*).¹¹ "The Muratorian Canon, Irenaeus, and Hippolytus of Rome all agree that Paul was not the author" (Carson and Moo).¹²

The composition style, of the Epistle to the Hebrews, does not easily conform to those of the other Pauline letters. The salutation in Hebrews 13:25, "Grace be with you all," a common salutation in Pauline writing, is sometimes used as a support for Pauline authorship, but this cannot be taken as conclusive evidence. While Paul was an early candidate for Hebrews' authorship, as much of the theology could be viewed as "Pauline," no complete certainty is attached to him. Origin of Alexandria's commonly quoted view, from the Third Century C.E., was, "who it was that really wrote this epistle, God only knows" (*Ecclesiastical History* 6.25.14),¹³ although the claim of Paul being the author of Hebrews did enable many early Christians to accept the epistle as canonical.¹⁴ The Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages generally accepted Pauline authorship, until it was challenged by Luther and Calvin in the Protestant Reformation. Most evangelical Christians today totally discount Pauline authorship of Hebrews.

Tertullian of Carthage suggested **Barnabas** for the authorship of Hebrews, and his is the oldest extant tradition. He communicated in the late

Second Century, "For there is extant withal an Epistle to the Hebrews under the name of Barnabas—a man sufficiently accredited by God, as being one whom Paul has stationed next to himself in the uninterrupted observance of abstinence" (*On Modesty* 20).¹⁵ In support of Barnabas being the author of Hebrews, he is attested to be a Levite (Acts 4:26-37), and he had direct contact with those who heard and saw Yeshua firsthand (2:3). Barnabas would have been familiar with the intricacies of the sacrificial system, a definite theme of Hebrews, and would have been able to testify of Yeshua in a very Pauline-style of manner, yet distinct from Paul.

A third candidate who is widely proposed, being first suggested by Luther and now highly regarded among various theologians and commentators today, for the authorship of Hebrews, is **Apollos**. Apollos was an acquaintance of Paul (1 Corinthians 16:22), and was tutored by Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:26). Apollos was from Alexandria, and the manner of vocabulary in Hebrews shows some significant Alexandrian influence.¹⁶ The Epistle to the Hebrews also strongly relies on the distinct renderings found within the Greek Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Tanach. More than any other text of the Messianic Scriptures, the Epistle to the Hebrews has thirty-two direct quotations from the Tanach, of which only four are not quoted explicitly from the Septuagint.¹⁷ Apollos was attested to "be mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24), and Hebrews demonstrates a unique style of oratorical rhetoric. Its author knew Timothy (13:23), and had influence within various First Century congregations of Believers.¹⁸ The only major challenge to Apollos, being the author of Hebrews, is that there is no extant ancient tradition to substantiate it, only speculation based on internal evidence and Apollos' place within the First Century *ekklesia* as a Hellenistic Jew.

Other candidates for Hebrews' authorship that are often proposed are Luke, Silas, and even Priscilla (sometimes with Aquila).¹⁹ However, no complete certainty is extant favoring these.

Thiselton is one who thinks that the most serious of all the candidates for Hebrews' authorship are Apollos, due to his command of the Tanach Scriptures (Acts 18:24), which would have likely been in their Septuagint form, and/or Priscilla and Aquila, since they would presumably be the ones referenced from Italy (13:24; cf. Acts 18:2).²⁰ If Priscilla had

¹⁵ BibleWorks 8.0: Ante-Nicene Fathers.

¹⁶ A. Berkley Mickleson, "Hebrews, Letter to the," in *NIDB*, 427.

¹⁷ Dinkler, "Hebrews, Letter to the," in *IDB*, 2:572; cf. Attridge, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *ABD*, 3:102-103.

¹⁸ Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 679.

¹⁹ Cf. Dinkler, "Hebrews, Letter to the," in *IDB*, 2:572; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp 674-682; Lane, "Hebrews," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & its Developments*, 444; James W. Thompson, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *EDB*, 569; Carson and Moo, pp 604-604.

²⁰ Thiselton, in *ECB*, 1451.

⁹ Guthrie, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:666-667; Anthony C. Thiselton, "Hebrews," in *ECB*, 1451; Carson and Moo, pp 600-604.

¹⁰ *Ecclesiastical History*, 204.

¹¹ Guthrie, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:665.

¹² Carson and Moo, 601.

¹³ *Ecclesiastical History*, 216.

¹⁴ Attridge, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *ABD*, 3:97.

actually been the author of Hebrews as a female (even with assistance from Apollos), this could explain the anonymity present in the epistle, given common First Century prejudices against females.²¹ Ultimately, as Guthrie directs us, “Since Hebrews was known as early as Clement of Rome, but without mention of author, it seems most probable that the book circulated in the West anonymously....[I]ts own spiritual authority and value made it impossible to exclude it from the canon” (*ISBE*).²²

We can deduce some things based on the style and linguistics of the Epistle to the Hebrews. While many Messianics believe that of all the books of the Apostolic Scriptures, Hebrews would have been written in Hebrew, the fact that there is no extant copy of a “Hebrew Hebrews” speaks for itself.²³ In fact, the Epistle to the Hebrews is widely recognized by scholars as actually having some of the **highest Greek composition of all of the Apostolic Scriptures**. The author of Hebrews “writes Greek with a purity of style and vocabulary to which the writings of Luke alone in the NT can be compared” (Guthrie, *ISBE*).²⁴ “He was capable of writing some of the finest Greek in the NT” (Lane).²⁵ The high level of Greek writing indicates that the “author was probably a Hellenist, a Greek-speaking Jew. He was familiar with the OT Scriptures and with the religious ideas of the Jews” (Guthrie, *ISBE*).²⁶ In the text of Hebrews “There is a constant rhythm between theology and moral appeal, which reminds one somewhat of passages in IV Maccabees and Philo” (*IDB*).²⁷ “The writer’s method of argument generally proceeds in accordance with the rules of Greek rhetoric. He does not digress the way Paul does in most of his letters” (Guthrie, *ISBE*).²⁸

Who was the main, intended audience of the Epistle to the Hebrews? The author testifies that the good news “was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard” (2:3, NASU). This indicates that the author and audience of Hebrews was definitely a second generation of Believers, placing the date of Hebrews certainly within the 60s C.E. A second generation authorship of Hebrews would also exclude Paul from being Hebrews’ author, as he had met the Lord personally on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-18), even though a colleague of Paul could surely have composed it.

The author of Hebrews is believed by some to have been writing from Italy, indicated by his salutation “those from Italy²⁹ greet you” (13:24, NASU). But, this could also be taken as an indication of Hebrews being written to Italy.³⁰ The NEB notably paraphrases 13:24 with “Italian friends.” Those from Italy may be considered various persons in the author’s close circle of associates (i.e., Priscilla and Aquila per Acts 18:2). Many interpreters believe that the target audience of Hebrews was the community of Jewish Believers in Rome, but possibly also Corinth, Alexandria, and across the Diaspora.³¹ The references and allusions, made to the Epistle to the Hebrews appearing in *1 Clement*, have sometimes been taken as a support for a main Roman audience of Hebrews.³² Assuming that a composition of 64-70 C.E. is accurate, as the author of Hebrews speaks in the present tense of the sacrificial system still functioning (9:6, 8-9), the likely audience would primarily be Jewish Believers outside the Land of Israel in the Mediterranean Diaspora.³³ The author and audience of Hebrews were both acquainted with Timothy, who is said to have been arrested (13:23). Timothy was bidden by Paul to go to Rome (2 Timothy 4:9, 13, 21), and if he was really able to make it to Rome to see Paul, he could have surely been arrested while there.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is labeled by its author to be “a word of exhortation” (13:22, NASU), which is also seen in Acts 13:15 regarding the synagogue oration of Paul and Barnabas in Pisidian Antioch. Hebrews may be justly thought to be a kind of “synagogue sermon” (*EDB*),³⁴ common to the Diaspora Jewish community. The Epistle to the Hebrews was likely intended to be delivered as some kind of a sermon, oration, lecture, or homily to those who originally received it.³⁵ Guthrie summarizes,

“[Hebrews] possess the oratorical character of a sermon. It contains hortatory asides, which might well suggest a preacher pausing in the course of his argument to address direct appeals to his audience (cf. 2:1; 3:1-12; 4:1, 14; 5:11; 6:9; 10:9; 13:7). Moreover, the carefully thought-out argument would fit in well with the idea of a preacher who before he begins has his conclusion clearly in his mind. The digressions are carefully controlled and the drift of the main theme is never lost. This latter

²¹ Cf. *Ibid.*

²² Guthrie, “Hebrews, Epistle to the,” in *ISBE*, 2:665.

²³ Concurrent with this, it is probably true that David H. Stern’s Jewish New Testament/Complete Jewish Bible may be said to have made a faux pax when labeling the Epistle to the Hebrews as “Messianic Jews,” when modern Hebrew New Testaments tend to have *Ivrim* (עִבְרִיִּים), Hebrew for “Hebrews,” instead (for the Greek title ΗΠΟΣ ΕΒΡΑΙΟΥΣ, *Pros Hebraiōus*).

²⁴ Guthrie, “Hebrews, Epistle to the,” in *ISBE*, 2:666.

²⁵ Lane, “Hebrews,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & its Developments*, 444; cf. Carson and Moo, 608.

²⁶ Guthrie, “Hebrews, Epistle to the,” in *ISBE*, 2:665.

²⁷ Dinkler, “Hebrews, Letter to the,” in *IDB*, 2:571.

²⁸ Guthrie, “Hebrews, Epistle to the,” in *ISBE*, 2:664.

²⁹ Grk. *hoi apo tēs Italias* (οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας).

³⁰ Carson and Moo, pp 405-605.

³¹ Guthrie, “Hebrews, Epistle to the,” in *ISBE*, 2:667; Attridge, “Hebrews, Epistle to the,” in *ABD*, 3:98.

³² Thompson, “Hebrews, Epistle to the,” in *EDB*, 569; cf. Lane, “Hebrews,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & its Developments*, pp 445, 446-447; cf. Carson and Moo, pp 608-609.

³³ Cf. Dinkler, “Hebrews, Letter to the,” in *IDB*, 2:572-573; Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp 697-701.

³⁴ Thompson, “Hebrews, Epistle to the,” in *EDB*, 568.

³⁵ Dinkler, “Hebrews, Letter to the,” in *IDB*, 2:572; Attridge, “Hebrews, Epistle to the,” in *ABD*, 3:98; Lane, “Hebrews,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & its Developments*, pp 450-451; Carson and Moo, pp 596.

consideration does not necessarily point to a sermon but would be well explained by such a hypothesis" (*ISBE*).³⁶

One of the legitimate questions to be asked, about the audience, is whether it was entirely composed of First Century Jewish Believers. Given some of the theological themes of the epistle, deeply rooted in the Tanach, one might be inclined to think that its contents really only concerned Jews. Yet, there are interpreters who think that Greeks and Romans, being among the readership of Hebrews, can by no means be excluded. "It has been maintained that Gentiles as well as Jews would be acquainted with the OT, since this was the Scripture of the early Church. Admittedly, the development of the argument in Hebrews would not be easy for Gentiles, but the same might be said for parts of the Epistle to the Romans, and Rome is generally assumed to have been a predominantly gentile church" (Guthrie, *ISBE*).³⁷ A mixed readership for Hebrews, while primarily being directed to First Century Jewish Believers, but *also* non-Jewish Believers, seems very likely.

All readers and examiners of Hebrews are generally agreed that the author is concerned with preventing apostasy from the Messiah.³⁸ That the Messiah has inaugurated some changes via His sacrifice and priestly work in Heaven (7:12), also cannot be avoided. A typical Christian approach to the Epistle to the Hebrews is seen in Guthrie's remark, "it may be said that Hebrews is a Christian assessment of the OT cultus. It is as if the author is attempting to answer the problem of the place of OT cultic thought in Christian theology. He finds that a good deal of the imagery points to Christ as its perfect fulfillment. Christianity is a 'better way' than the old" (*ISBE*).³⁹ This evaluation of Hebrews is actually *much fairer* than that witnessed by some other theologians, because too many have thought that the author's comparison and contrast, between the Messiah and the Tabernacle service, means that the latter is to be significantly devaluated and degraded. In actuality, though, while much of the argumentation style of the Epistle to the Hebrews has sometimes been taken as being anti-Judaism and anti-Temple, the author employs a common Rabbinic *qal v'chomer* or classical *a fortiori* approach, demonstrating great respect for the institutions and historical figures of Ancient Israel in order to

precisely show **how much greater and grand the Messiah actually is**.⁴⁰

In the mid-to-late 60s C.E., the bulk of the Jewish Believers in Yeshua were living in the Diaspora, and things in Judea were becoming increasingly violent per the actions of the Zealot movement and impending Jewish revolt. The author of Hebrews, seeing that the fall of the Temple was imminent, writes to reassure those whose faith was centered around the Temple—that the sacrifice of Yeshua is superior to the animal sacrifices. He writes, "there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness" (7:18, NASU), presumably until the restoration of the Temple in the Millennium (cf. Ezekiel chs. 40-44). The Levitical priesthood could only minister to the people of Israel in the Tabernacle and Temple. With the Temple soon to be gone, all of the Believers needed to definitely see themselves as being served by Yeshua's priesthood in Heaven, something first prefigured by Melchizedek (ch. 7). There would be no more "safety net," as it were, in the minds of various Believers, who may have thought that the animal sacrifices occurring in Jerusalem could provide them with some level of restitution for their sins. *Only the final sacrifice of Yeshua could bring them permanent atonement and forgiveness* (cf. 10:2).

Do the necessary changes to the Tabernacle/Temple service and Levitical priesthood, resultant of Yeshua's final sacrifice, mean a complete denial of the code of conduct in the Torah or Law of Moses? Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) is, without a doubt, **the major theme** of the Epistle to the Hebrews.⁴¹ The text opens up in ch. 1 with a lauded praise of the Messiah, emphasizing that all things have been given to Him and that all things are to worship Him. The author of Hebrews affirms the Divinity of Yeshua, and the fact that Yeshua is the Son of God, whereas Moses was only a servant. The author certainly does not demean Moses, indeed attesting that Moses was "faithful" (3:5); but Moses as only a mortal could never do what the Messiah has done as the Son of God. Faith is a theme of Hebrews, as the author describes prominent Tanach figures as those "of whom the world was not worthy" (11:38, NASU).

One of the key thrusts of Hebrews is the manifestation of the New Covenant in the lives of Believers, with the author offering extensive quotes from Jeremiah 31, the longest Tanach quotes found in the Apostolic Scriptures. While most Christian theologians have interpreted these New Covenant passages as somehow annulling the Torah, the author of Hebrews himself plainly states, "FOR THIS IS

³⁶ Guthrie, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:664.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:667.

Thompson, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *EDB*, 569 actually proposes an almost entirely non-Jewish audience for "Hebrews."

³⁸ Guthrie, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:668; cf. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, pp 694-695 suggests that similar errors as those addressed by Paul in his letter to the Colossians, were possibly present among Hebrews' audience.

³⁹ Guthrie, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *ISBE*, 2:669.

⁴⁰ David A. deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp 4-5, 41.

⁴¹ Attridge, "Hebrews, Epistle to the," in *ABD*, 3:99.

THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: **I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE**" (8:10, NASU; cf. 10:16). Hebrews is frequently read as sometimes opposing the commandments of the Torah of Moses, yet the author of Hebrews is quite insistent that the Law has not been abolished, *twice* quoting the critical New Covenant promise of Jeremiah 31:31-34 that Moses' Teaching is to be written on the hearts and minds of God's people (8:8-12; 10:16-17)—something the Messiah has inaugurated by His priesthood.⁴²

The Epistle to the Hebrews may be the second most difficult book of the Bible for today's Messianics to read and interpret (after Galatians). Why is this the case? It can often relate to various persons giving the Torah or Pentateuch *too high* a position in their spirituality, with the Messiah Himself and His teachings placed at a distant second. While it may be difficult to fathom, we do have people within our broad faith community, who in various ways tend to *de-emphasize* the final atonement of Yeshua, and who thus have difficulty understanding the Epistle to the Hebrews. Anything that is thought to demean Moses, the Tabernacle/Temple, the Levitical priesthood, and/or the Torah in general, is treated with (great) suspicion. Apparently, this includes the Messiah Himself.

Not all Messianic people have these kinds of difficulties with the Epistle to the Hebrews, recognizing this as a valued book of the Bible to be heeded by Believers. Their challenges with Hebrews tend to be more in terms of its transmission into English from the Greek in various modern versions (i.e., places where "covenant" appears in English and not in the source text: 8:7, 13; 9:1, 17, 24; 10:1), and the author's usage of many unique renderings found in the Septuagint, which they are unfamiliar with. This also regards various First Century issues, which requires readers of Hebrews to carefully engage with contemporary scholarship. Lane properly directs us how, "Patient interaction with the text and with the discussion it has prompted, especially during recent decades, supports the opinion that Hebrews is a sermon in response to circumstances in the life of the audience."⁴³ Performing such patient interaction well, for the Epistle to the Hebrews, is something doubtlessly required of all of today's Messianic Believers. In the future, as the Messianic movement grows and expands—given our common belief that the Torah of Moses is relevant instruction for all Messiah followers—there are likely going to be many

criticisms offered of it by Christian outsiders, using the Epistle to the Hebrews as a base.⁴⁴ Much more work and refinement, for us understanding the unique perspective and contribution of Hebrews—and avoiding the problems it addresses—are well-needed for the emerging Messianic movement.⁴⁵

Consult the commentary *Hebrews for the Practical Messianic* by J.K. McKee for a more detailed examination of Hebrews.

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⁴² For a more detailed examination, consult the article "What is the New Covenant?" by J.K. McKee, appearing in his book *The New Testament Validates Torah*.

⁴³ Lane, "Hebrews," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & its Developments*, 443.

⁴⁴ Cf. Carson and Moo, pp 611-612 where they claim that the audience of Hebrews will not be committing apostasy by denying faith in the Messiah, but instead not following a form of faith that gives a high degree of significance to the Law and its commandments.

⁴⁵ There have been a number of Messianic commentaries written on the Epistle to the Hebrews, including: Tim Hegg, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Author, n.d.); Stuart Sacks, *Hebrews Through a Hebrew's Eyes* (Baltimore: Lederer, 1995); Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Ariel's Bible Commentary: The Messianic Jewish Epistles—Hebrews, James, 1&11 Peter, Jude* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2005).

1

God Has Spoken by His Son

¹ In many and various ways long ago, God spoke to *our* ancestors by the prophets,
² has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the ages.

³ And He, being the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His being, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high^a;

⁴ having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

The Son Superior to Angels

⁵ For to which of the angels did He ever say, "YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU [Psalm 2:7]^b?" And again, "I WILL BE A FATHER TO HIM, AND HE SHALL BE A SON TO ME [2 Samuel 7:14^c; 1 Chronicles 17:13^d]"

⁶ And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM [Deuteronomy 32:43, LXX^e; Psalm 97:7]."

⁷ And of the angels He says, "WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE [Psalm 104:4]^f."

⁸ But of the Son *He* says, "YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER, AND THE SCEPTER OF UPRIGHTNESS IS THE SCEPTER OF YOUR KINGDOM.

⁹ "YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED LAWLESSNESS; THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS [Psalm 45:6-7]^h."

¹⁰ And, "YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;

¹¹ "THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN; AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD AS A GARMENT;

¹² "AND AS A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP; AS A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED. BUT YOU ARE THE SAME, AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END [Psalm 102:25-27]ⁱ."

¹³ But to which of the angels has He ever said, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET [Psalm 110:1]^j?"

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

^a The CJB has bolded "sat down at the right hand" noting a possible allusion to Psalm 110:1: "A psalm of David: *ADONAI* says to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool'" (CJB).

^b "I will surely tell of the decree of YHWH: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You'" (Psalm 2:7, PME).

^c "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the children of humanity" (2 Samuel 7:14, PME).

^d "I will be his father and he shall be My son; and I will not take My lovingkindness away from him, as I took it from him who was before you" (1 Chronicles 17:13, PME).

^e "Rejoice, ye heavens, with him, and let all the angels of God worship him; rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people, and let all the sons of God strengthen themselves in him; for he will avenge the blood of his sons, and he will render vengeance, and recompense justice to his enemies, and will reward them that hate him; and the Lord shall purge the land of his people" (Deuteronomy 32:43, LXE).

^f "Let all that worship graven images be ashamed, who boast of their idols; worship him, all ye his angels" (Psalm 97:7, LXE).

^g "He makes the winds His messengers, flaming fire His ministers" (Psalm 104:4, PME).

^h "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness, and hated wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of joy above Your fellows" (Psalm 45:6-7, PME).

ⁱ "Of old You founded the Earth; and the Heavens are the work of Your hands. Even they will perish, but You endure; and all of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing You will change them, and they will be changed" (Psalm 102:25-27, PME).

^j "A Psalm of David. YHWH says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'" (Psalm 110:1, PME).

2

The Great Salvation

¹ Therefore we must pay much greater attention to the things that were heard, lest we drift away *from them*.

² For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,

³ how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,

⁴ God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

The Pioneer of Salvation

⁵ For He did not subject to angels the world to come, of which we are speaking.

⁶ But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU CARE FOR HIM?"^a

⁷ "YOU SET HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER^b THAN THE ANGELS; YOU CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS";

⁸ "YOU PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET" [Psalm 8:5-7, LXX]^d. For in that He subjected all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.

⁹ But we see Him who has been set^e for a little while lower than the angels, *namely* Yeshua, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste of death for everyone.

¹⁰ For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many children^f to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

¹¹ For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters,

¹² saying, "I WILL DECLARE YOUR NAME TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, IN THE MIDST OF THE ASSEMBLY I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE" [Psalm 22:22]^g.

^a An inclusive language rendering for *anthrōpos* (ἄνθρωπος) and *huios anthrōpou* (υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου) in 2:6, is seen in versions like the NRSV, "What are human beings that you are mindful of them, or mortals, that you care for them?" Or the TNIV, "What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" The Kingdom New Testament has the carefully chosen, "What are humans that you should remember them? What is the son of man, that you should take thought for him?" For the sake of familiarity, 2:6 has been left in a more customary form, although the inclusive language translations present cannot be excluded from one's exegesis of 2:9-11.

While Yeshua's identification with humanity is in view (2:9-11), and there are a few likely echoes of the Son of Man titular references to Yeshua seen in the Gospels—here the reference to man/humanity and son of man/mortals is provided to emphasize more the calling that the Creator God had upon the people, men and women, specially made in His image. For many in Hebrews' audience, to possibly give up on Yeshua the Messiah, would mean giving up on God's good intention for His human creations. It is only in knowing Yeshua as Savior, that the redeemed in Him can fulfill the vocation of ruling over the world to come or New Creation, second only to God Himself (2:7-8).

^b Grk. *ēlattōsas auton brachu* (ἠλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ); most often rendered as something like, "You made him a little lower" (HNV), perhaps implying just some kind of creation activity in view. What is more to the point is that the verb *elattoō* (ἐλαττώω) means "to cause to be lower in status" (BDAG, 313), indicating that the status of human beings is more in view here. The Moffat New Testament rendering is better than some of the others one will encounter: "For a little while thou hast put him lower than the angels." Even The Amplified Bible has, "ranked him lower."

^c Not all Greek manuscripts include the latter clause, "AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS" (cf. Nestle and Aland, GNT, 565; Aland, GNT, 744). The NASB/NASU is a modern English version that leaves this clause intact, as it does appear in the Septuagint reading of Psalm 8:6.

^d "What is man that you are mindful of him or son of man that you attend to him? You diminished him a little in comparison with angels; with glory and honor you crowned him. And you set him over the works of your hands; you subjected all under his feet" (Psalm 8:5-7, NETS).

^e Grk. verb *elattoō* (ἐλαττώω); "put lower" (Moffat New Testament).

^f Grk. *hious* (υἱοὺς); "sons and daughters" (TNIV).

^g "I will tell of Your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You" (Psalm 22:22, PME).

¹³ And again, “I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM” [Isaiah 8:17, LXX^a; cf. 2 Samuel 22:3, LXX^b; Isaiah 12:2^c]. And again, “BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME” [Isaiah 8:18]^d.

¹⁴ Since then the children share in blood and flesh, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless^e he who had the power of death, that is, the Devil;

¹⁵ and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

¹⁶ For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the seed of Abraham^f.

¹⁷ Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers and sisters in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

¹⁸ For since He Himself had suffered, having been tested, He is able to help those who are tested.

3

Yeshua Superior to Moses

¹ Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, partakers of a Heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Yeshua,

² who was faithful to Him who appointed him, as Moses also was in all His house^g.

³ For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house.

⁴ For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

⁵ And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later;

⁶ but Messiah *is faithful* as a Son over His house, whose house are we, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end^h.

A Rest for the People of God

⁷ Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,

⁸ “DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS IN THE PROVOCATION, LIKE IN THE DAY OF THE TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESSⁱ,

^a “Here am I and the children whom God has given me, and they shall become signs and portents in Israel from the Lord Sabaoth, who dwells on Mount Zion” (Isaiah 8:17[18], NETS).

^b “my God; he shall be to me my guard, I will trust in him: *he is my protector, and the horn of my salvation, my helper, and my sure refuge; thou shalt save me from the unjust man*” (2 Samuel 22:3, LXE).

^c “Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for Yah YHWH is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation” (Isaiah 12:2, PME).

^d “Behold, I and the children whom YHWH has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from YHWH of Hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion” (Isaiah 8:18, PME).

^e This is sometimes rendered as “destroy” (RSV/NRSV/NIV/ESV/HCSB), but the verb *katargeō* (καταργέω) more ably means “to make of none effect” (LS, 413) or “to cause someth. to lose its power or effectiveness, invalidate, make powerless” (BDAG, 425). A Messianic version like TLV has “break the power”; the Moffat New Testament has, “he might crush him.”

^f The CJB has bolded “He takes hold of the seed of Avraham” noting a possible allusion to Isaiah 41:8-9: “But you, Isra’el, my servant; Ya’akov, whom I have chosen, descendants of Avraham my friend, I have taken you from the ends of the earth, summoned you from its most distant parts and said to you, ‘You are my servant’—I have chosen you, not rejected you” (CJB).

^g The CJB has bolded “Moshe was faithful in all God’s house” noting a possible allusion to Numbers 12:7: “But it isn’t that way with my servant Moshe. He is the only one who is faithful in my entire household” (CJB).

^h Not all ancient Greek manuscripts include the clause *mechri telous bebaiān* (μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν) or “until the end” (Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 665).

ⁱ The author of Hebrews employs the terms “rebellion” and “testing” (3:8, RSV), whereas the Hebrew texts of Exodus and Psalms use *Masah* (מַסָּה) and *Merivah* (מֵרִיבָה). These respective place names mean “proving and strife” (M.A. MacLeod, “Massah and Meribah,” in *ISBE*, 3:277). The Septuagint renders these proper names as the improper *paratikrasmos* (παραπικρασμός) and *peirasmos* (πειρασμός), reflecting the interpretation of them meaning “rebellion” and “trial” (Psalm 95:8, Apostle’s Bible). The author of Hebrews, primarily working from the LXX, follows suit.

⁹ “WHERE YOUR ANCESTORS TRIED *Me* BY PROVING *Me*, AND SAW *My* WORKS FORTY YEARS.

¹⁰ “THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, “THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW *My* WAYS’;

¹¹ “AS I SWORE IN *My* WRATH, ‘THEY SHALL NOT ENTER INTO *My* REST’ [Psalm 95:7-11]^a.”

¹² Take heed, brothers and sisters, lest there should be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God.

¹³ But exhort one another day after day, so long as it is called “Today,” lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Messiah, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm until the end,

¹⁵ while it is said, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS IN THE PROVOCATION [Psalm 95:7-8].”

¹⁶ For who, when they heard, provoked *Him*? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt *led* by Moses?

¹⁷ And with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸ And to whom did He swear that they would not enter into His rest, but to those who were disobedient?

¹⁹ And so we see that they were not able to enter in because of unbelief.

4

¹ Let us fear, therefore, lest a promise is left open of entering into His rest, *that* any one of you should seem to have come short of it.

² For indeed we have had good news proclaimed to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

³ For we who have believed enter into that rest, just as He has said, “AS I SWORE IN *My* WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER INTO *My* REST” [Psalm 95:11], although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

⁴ For He has thus said somewhere of the seventh *day*, “AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS” [Genesis 2:2]^b;

⁵ and again in this *passage*, “THEY SHALL NOT ENTER INTO *My* REST” [Psalm 95:11].

⁶ Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had the good news proclaimed *to them* failed to enter in because of disobedience,

⁷ He again sets a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward just as has been said before, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS” [Psalm 95:7-8].^c

⁸ For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken afterward of another day.

⁹ There remains therefore a Sabbath rest^d for the people of God.

¹⁰ For the one who has entered into His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

^a “For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness; when your ancestors tempted Me, they tried Me, though they had seen My work. For forty years I loathed *that* generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart, and they do not know *My* ways. Therefore I swore in My anger, truly they shall not enter into My rest” (Psalm 95:7-11, PME).

^b “And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done” (Genesis 2:2, PME).

^c Psalm 95 in the Hebrew MT is strictly anonymous, but in the Greek LXX is “A laudation. Of an Ode. Pertaining to David” (Psalm 95:1, NETS; cf. Ralphs, *Septuaginta*, 2:104).

^d Grk. *sabbatismos* (σαββατισμός), which is to be notably distinguished from the normal word for “rest,” *katapausis* (κατάπαυσις). The term *sabbatismos* is derived from the verb *sabbatizō* (σαββατίζω), used in the LXX meaning, “to keep the Sabbath” (LS, 722). This is why it is rendered in the CJB as “*Shabbat*-keeping,” perhaps followed by William L. Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary: Hebrews 1-8*, Vol. 47a (Nashville: Nelson Reference and Electronic, 1991), 93 with “Sabbath celebration.”. The TLV has a more standard Messianic rendering in “*Shabbat* rest.”

¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter into that rest, so that no one will fall by the same example of disobedience.

¹² For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Yeshua the Great High Priest

¹⁴ Having then, a great High Priest, who has passed through the Heavens, Yeshua the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.

¹⁶ Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.

5

¹ For every high priest, being taken from among mortals, is appointed on behalf of mortals in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins;

² he can bear gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself also is beset with weakness;

³ and because of it he is indebted—as for the people, so also for himself—to offer *sacrifices* for sins.

⁴ And no one takes the honor to himself, but *receives it* when he is called by God, even as Aaron was.

⁵ So also Messiah did not glorify Himself to become a High Priest, but He who said to Him, “YOU ARE MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN YOU” [Psalm 2:7]^a;

⁶ as He says also in another *passage*, “YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK” [Psalm 110:4]^b.

⁷ In the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications, with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and having been heard because of His piety,

⁸ though being a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

⁹ And having been perfected, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,

¹⁰ being designated by God a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Warning against Apostasy

¹¹ About him we have many things to say, and *it is* hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again that someone teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk, and not solid food.

¹³ For everyone who partakes of milk is not experienced^c in the word of righteousness, for he is an infant.

^a “I will surely tell of the decree of YHWH: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You’ (Psalm 2:7, PME).”

^b “YHWH has sworn and will not change His mind, ‘You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek’” (Psalm 110:4, PME).

^c Grk. *apeiros* (ἄπειρος); “pert. to lack of knowledge or capacity to do someth., unacquainted with, unaccustomed to” (BDAG, 100); “without experience” (ASV); “unskilled” (RSV/NRSV/ESV); “not accustomed” (NASU); “not acquainted” (NIV).

¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses exercised^a to discern good and evil.

6

¹ Therefore leaving the elementary doctrine^b of Messiah, let us press on to perfection^c, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

² of teaching about immersions, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

³ And this we will do, if God permits.

⁴ For it is impossible, for those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the Heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

⁶ and *then* having fallen away, to renew them again to repentance, since they again execute to themselves the Son of God on a wooden scaffold, and put Him to open shame.

⁷ For the land which has drunk the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God;

⁸ but if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed^d; its end is to be burned.

⁹ But, beloved, we are persuaded of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.

¹⁰ For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you showed toward His name, in that having ministered to the holy ones, and still do minister.

¹¹ And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope until to the end,

¹² that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

God's Sure Promise

¹³ For when God made a promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself^e,

¹⁴ saying, "SURELY BLESSING I WILL BLESS YOU, AND MULTIPLYING I WILL MULTIPLY YOU" [Genesis 22:17]^f.

¹⁵ And thus, having patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

¹⁶ For human beings^g swear by one greater *than themselves*, and in every dispute of theirs the oath *given* is final for confirmation.

¹⁷ So when God, desiring to show more abundantly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath,

^a Grk. *gumnazō* (γυμνάζω); often rendered as "trained."

^b Grk. *tēs archēs tou Christou logon* (τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον); perhaps more literally "the doctrine of the first principles of Christ" (ASV).

^c Grk. *epi tēn teleiōtēta* (ἐπὶ τὴν τελειότητα); more often rendered as "to maturity" (RSV/NASU/NIV/ESV).

^d The CJB has bolded "if it keeps producing thorns and thistles...cursed" noting a possible allusion to Genesis 3:17-18: "To Adam he said, 'Because you listened to what your wife said and ate from the tree about which I gave you the order, 'You are not to eat from it,' the ground is cursed on your account; you will work hard to eat from it as long as you live. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat field plants'" (CJB).

^e The CJB has bolded "he swore by himself" noting a possible allusion to Genesis 22:16: "He said, 'I have sworn by myself—says *ADONAI*—that because you have done this, because you haven't withheld your son, your only son'" (CJB).

^f "indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the Heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies" (Genesis 22:17, PME).

^g Grk. *anthrōpoi* (ἄνθρωποι); "people" (ESV).

¹⁸ so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before us.

¹⁹ We have this hope as an anchor of the soul, *a hope* both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,

²⁰ where as a forerunner Yeshua entered for us, having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek^a.

7

The Priestly Order of Melchizedek

¹ For this MELCHIZEDEK, KING OF SALEM, PRIEST OF GOD MOST HIGH, WHO MET ABRAHAM RETURNING FROM THE SLAUGHTER OF THE KINGS AND BLESSED HIM,

² to whom also Abraham APPORTIONED A TENTH PART OF ALL *the spoils*, was first of all, by the translation of *his name*, king of righteousness, and then also KING OF SALEM, which is King of peace [Genesis 14:17-20]^b.

³ Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually.

⁴ Now consider how great this one was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.

⁵ And indeed those descendants of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment to collect a tenth from the people, according to the Torah, that is, from their kindred, although these have come out of the loins of Abraham.

⁶ But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them has collected a tenth from Abraham, and has blessed him who has the promises^c.

⁷ But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.

⁸ And in this case mortals who die receive tithes, but in that case one *receives them*, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on.

⁹ And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes,

¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

¹¹ Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for upon it the people were legislated)^d, what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?

^a The CJB has bolded "a *cohen gadol* forever, to be compared with Malki-Tzedek" noting a possible allusion to Psalm 110:4: "ADONAI has sworn it, and he will never retract—"You are a *cohen* forever, to be compared with Malki-Tzedek" (CJB).

^b "Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of Heaven and Earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand.' And he gave him a tenth of all" (Genesis 14:17-20, PME).

^c Grk. *echonta tas epangelias* (ἔχοντα τὰς ἐπαγγελίας); *echonta* is a present active participle, more literally, "having," but this clause is unfortunately frequently rendered as "had the promises" (RSV/NASU/NIV/ESV); among Messianic versions the TLV has the much appreciated, "holding the promises."

^d Grk. *ho laos gar ep' autēs nenomothetētai* (ὁ λαὸς γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῆς νενομοθέτηται); be aware of poor renderings of *ep' autēs* such as "for under it" (RSV/ESV/HCSB). Notably absent from this clause is the preposition *hupo* (ὑπὸ) or "under."

While most contemporary English translations communicate something to the extent that "for on the basis of it the people received the Law" (NASU), it is necessary to probe the significance of the verb *nomotheteō* (νομοθετέω), "to make law" (LS, 535). Among interpreters, F.F. Bruce *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 164 fn#36 says that *nomotheteō* means "legislate." The verb *nomotheteō* does appear in the Septuagint to describe the giving of the Torah by God to Moses: "the commandments that I wrote to legislate [*nomotheteō*] for them" (Exodus 24:12, NETS; cf. Psalm 84:6; 4 Maccabees 5:25), but is this what is in view in 7:11?

Deuteronomy 17:10 notably says, concerning the Levitical priests, "And you shall do according to the word whatever they report to you from the place that the Lord your God may choose for his name to be called there, and you shall guard very much to do according to all things whatever is legislated [*nomotheteō*] for you" (NETS). The Levitical priesthood definitely had a Torah-prescribed responsibility to teach Ancient Israel God's commandments (Deuteronomy 33:10), to in other words "legislate" the people. That the

¹² For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there takes place a change of the Torah^a also.

¹³ For the one of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.

¹⁴ For it is evident that our Lord has sprung forth^b from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

¹⁵ And this is yet more abundantly evident, if according to the likeness of Melchizedek there arises another priest,

¹⁶ who has become a *priest* not according to a law of a fleshly command^c, but according to the power of an indestructible life.

¹⁷ For it is witnessed of *Him*, “YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK” [Psalm 110:4]^d.

¹⁸ For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and ineffectiveness

¹⁹ (for the Torah made nothing perfect)^e, and on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

²⁰ And inasmuch as *it was* not without an oath

²¹ (for they indeed became priests without an oath, but He with an oath through the One saying to Him, “THE LORD HAS SWORN AND WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND, ‘YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER’” [Psalm 110:4]);

²² so much the more also has Yeshua become the guarantee of a better covenant.

²³ And indeed, they are many *who* are made priests, because by death they are prevented from continuing,

²⁴ but He, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.

²⁵ Therefore, also, He is able to save completely those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶ For such a high priest was fitting for us: holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the Heavens;

²⁷ who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the *sins* of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.

²⁸ For the Torah appoints mortals as high priests who are weak, but the word of the oath, which came after the Torah, *appoints* a Son, made perfect forever.

verb *nomotheteō* can regard God’s people being taught His Law and commandments, is something witnessed throughout the Septuagint version of Psalms, where *nomotheteō* translated the Hebrew verb *yara* (יָרָא); [BibleWorks 8.0: LEH Lexicon](#) [Lust-Eynikel-Hauspie] notes how *nomotheteō* [νομοθετέω] “always transl. of יָרָא,” and can mean both “to give laws to” and “to instruct, to teach, to ordain”), in passages such as: Psalm 24:8, 12; 27:11; 119:33, 102.

The rendering offered for 7:11 here concurs with the conclusion that upon the basis of the priesthood, the people of Ancient Israel were to be “legislated,” i.e., taught the Torah. That the First Century Jewish community was not properly “legislated,” meaning taught God’s Torah from the Temple priesthood, is easily witnessed. The Saddusaical priesthood was decisively impotent to instruct people in perfection—precisely because “the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit” (Acts 23:8a, NASU)—and a new priesthood, that of Yeshua the Messiah, needed to be established!

^a Grk. *nomou metathesis* (νόμου μετάθεσις); “a transformation of Torah” (CJB); “an alteration of law” (TLV).

^b Grk. verb *anateō* (ἀνατέλλω); “to make to rise up or to grow up” (LS, 63); more commonly rendered as “descended from” (RSV/NASU/NIV).

^c Grk. *kata nomon entolēs sarkinēs* (κατὰ νόμον ἐντολῆς σαρκίνης); lit. “law of a fleshly~command” (Brown and Comfort, 771); other versions have something like “a law of physical requirement” (NASU); “a legal requirement concerning bodily descent” (RSV); “a regulation as to his ancestry” (NIV).

Messianic versions vary, including the renderings: “a rule in the Torah concerning physical descent” (CJB); “a Torah requirement of physical descent” (TLV); “a law of a commandment concerning the flesh” (The Messianic Writings).

^d “YHWH has sworn and will not change His mind, You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:4, PME).

^e Grk. *ouden gar eteleiōsen ho nomos* (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐτελείωσεν ὁ νόμος); “for the Torah did not bring anything to the goal” (CJB); “Because the Law did not bring anything to completion” (The Messianic Writings); what is in view here is the Torah’s inability to provide a permanent solution for the human sin problem, the perfection referenced being complete reconciliation with the Creator God.

8

The High Priest of a New and Better Covenant

¹ Now the main point of the things being said is *this*: we have such a High Priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty^a in the Heavens,

² a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not a human being.

³ For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; therefore it is necessary that this *High Priest* also have something to offer.

⁴ Now if He were on Earth, He would not be a priest at all, since there are those who offer the gifts according to the Torah;

⁵ who serve a copy and shadow of the Heavenly things, just as Moses, being warned by God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, “SEE,” He says, “THAT YOU MAKE ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN TO YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN” [Exodus 25:40]^b.

⁶ But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been legislated upon better promises^c.

⁷ For if that first *service*^d had been flawless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second.

⁸ For finding fault with them, He says, “BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS THE LORD, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH;

⁹ “NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR ANCESTORS IN THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS THE LORD.

¹⁰ “FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY TORAH {more lit. ‘MY LAWS’}^e INTO THEIR MIND, AND ON THEIR HEART ALSO WILL I WRITE IT^f. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

¹¹ “AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, ‘KNOW THE LORD,’ FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM.

^a The CJB has bolded “sit at the right hand” noting a possible allusion to Psalm 110:1: “ADONAI has sworn it, and he will never retract—‘You are a *cohen* forever, to be compared with Malki-Tzedek” (CJB).

^b “And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain” (Exodus 25:40, PME).

^c Grk. *hētis epi kreittosin epangeliais nenomothētētai* (ἥτις ἐπὶ κρείττοσιν ἐπαγγελίαις νενομοθέτηται).

^d Grk. *Ei gar hē prōtē ekeinē ēn amemptos* (Ἐὶ γὰρ ἡ πρώτη ἐκεῖνη ἦν ἄμemptος); “For if that first was flawless” (LITV); “For if that first one had been flawless” (TLV); this clause notably lacks the the term *diathēkē* (διαθήκη) or “covenant,” even though most English versions provide it. (The NASB/NASU is most appreciable in that “covenant” is marked by *italics*, unlike most others.)

While the New Covenant is something that features within the author’s discussion for sure, what is *hē prōtē* really connected to? Is adding “covenant” an inappropriate value judgment, as made by most Bible translators? Grammatically speaking, given the surrounding context, there are four possible feminine nouns that can be legitimately associated with *hē prōtē*. *Diathēkē* or “covenant” is certainly one of them (7:22; 8:6, 9, 10; 9:4, 16, 17, 20), but so are *skēnē* (σκηνή) or “tabernacle” (7:22; 8:6, 9, 10; 9:4, 16, 17, 20), *hierōsunē* (ἱερωσύνη) or “priesthood” (7:11, 12, 24), or even *leitourgia* (λεϊτουργία) or “ministry/service” (8:6; 9:21). The latter three would be used as referents to the Levitical sacrificial system, which the author of Hebrews has affirmed previously in ch. 8, is surpassed in effectiveness by the Melchizedekian priesthood of Yeshua (8:1-4).

It was largely the first “priesthood” that was actually discovered by God to not be “flawless,” because its human occupiers (“them,” 8:8) cannot perform the same type of work that Yeshua the Son performs before the Father in Heaven. If, for the statement *Ei gar hē prōtē ekeinē*, translators provided “first *priesthood*,” “first *tabernacle*,” “first *ministry*”—or perhaps the most encompassing of these three, “first *service*”—the reference would be placed upon the Levitical priesthood and Tabernacle service. Not enough realize, that it is upon the basis of Yeshua’s priesthood, that the New Covenant has been inaugurated forth (8:6). The problem was not with any previous covenant God had made with His people, but it was with the actual people—especially the priests—that definitely required salvation history to progress forward (1:1-2), and for a new arrangement to be made via the sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah, providing permanent atonement and forgiveness.

^e Grk. *nomous mou* (νόμους μου); lit. “My laws” (NASU) in the plural; The Messianic Writings follows suit with “My laws”; the rendering provided here conforms to the TLV, “My Torah.”

^f Grk. *autous* (αὐτούς); lit. “them,” conforming to *nomous mou* or “My laws.”

¹² “FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE” [Jeremiah 31:31-34, LXX]^a.

¹³ In His saying, “A new *service*,”^b he has made the first old. But that which is becoming old and ageing is close to vanish away.

9

The Earthly and Heavenly Sanctuaries

¹ Now even the first *service*^c had regulations of Divine worship and the Earthly sanctuary.

² For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one^d, in which *were* the lampstand^e and the table and the bread of the Presence^f; this is called the holy place.

³ And behind the second veil *was* a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies,

⁴ having a golden censer of incense^g and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which *was* a golden jar holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant.

⁵ And above it *were* cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

⁶ Now these things having thus been prepared, the priests go continually into the outer^h tabernacle, performing the services,

⁷ but into the second only the high priest *enters*, once a year, not without *taking* blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignoranceⁱ.

⁸ The Holy Spirit *is* signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed, while the first tabernacle^j still has a standing^k,

⁹ which *is* a symbol for the present time. Accordingly both gifts and sacrifices are being offered which cannot make the worshipper perfect in conscience,

¹⁰ *relating* only to foods and drinks and various washings, regulations for the body^l imposed until a time of setting things straight.

¹¹ But Messiah, having arrived *as* a high priest of the good things to come, *entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;

^a “Behold, days are coming, quoth the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Iouda. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not abide in my covenant, and I was unconcerned for them, quoth the Lord. Giving I will give my laws in their mind, and I will write them on their hearts, and I will become a god to them, and they shall become a people to me. And they shall not teach, each his fellow citizen and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they shall all know me, from their small even to their great, because I will be gracious regarding their injustices, and remember their sins no more” (Jeremiah 31:31-34, NETS).

^b Grk. *en tō legein kainēn* (ἐν τῷ λέγειν καινὴν); “in the saying ‘new’” (YLT).

^c Grk. *Eiche men oun [kai] hē prōtē* (Ἔιχε μὲν οὖν [καί] ἡ πρώτη); almost all versions insert “covenant,” in spite of the fact that *diathēkē* (διαθήκη) does not appear in the Greek source text. While this rendering has chosen “*service*,” as this would be an encapsulating term for the first *priesthood/tabernacle/ministry* (Levitical) to be compared and contrasted to the Messiah's priestly service (Melchizedekian), it is notable that the 2011 Kingdom New Testament by N.T. Wright actually has “The first Tabernacle had...” for 9:1.

^d Grk. *hē prōtē* (ἡ πρώτη); lit. “the first” (ASV).

^e Grk. noun *luchnia* (λυχνία); “the Septuagint for מְנוּרָה [menorah]; a (candlestick) lampstand, candelabrum” (Thayer, 384).

^f Grk. *hē prothesis tōn artōn* (ἡ πρόθεσις τῶν ἄρτων); “setting out of the bread” (Brown and Comfort, 775).

^g Grk. noun *thumiaterion* (θυμιατήριον); most often rendered in modern versions as “golden altar of incense” (NASU, et. al.), but properly defined as “a vessel for burning incense, a censer” (LS, 371); “golden censer” (KJV/NKJV).

^h Grk. *tēn prōtēn* (τὴν πρώτην); lit. “the first” (ASV).

ⁱ Grk. *tou laou agnoēmātōn* (τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων); some versions just have something like “the errors of the people” (RSV), but the specific term employed is *agnoēma* (ἀγνόημα), “*sin committed in ignorance/unintentionally*” (BDAG, 13).

^j Grk. *tēs prōtēs skēnēs* (τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς); sometimes rendered as “the outer tabernacle” (NASU).

^k Grk. *echousēs stasin* (ἐχούσης στάσιν); “having standing” (Marshall, 657).

^l Grk. *dikaiōmata sarkos* (δικαιώματα σαρκός); “carnal ordinances” (ASV); “fleshly ordinances” (HNV); “physical requirements” (The Messianic Writings).

¹² neither through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.

¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing^a of the flesh,

¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

¹⁵ And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant^b, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were *committed* on the basis of the first covenant^c, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

¹⁶ For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it.

¹⁷ For a covenant is secure on the basis of dead bodies^d, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives.

¹⁸ Therefore even the first *covenant* was not inaugurated without blood.

¹⁹ For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Torah, he took the blood of the calves^e, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the scroll itself and all the people,

²⁰ saying, "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU" [Exodus 24:8]^f.

²¹ And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood.

²² And according to the Torah^a, *one may* almost *say*, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

^a Grk. *katharotēs* (καθαρότης); also rendered as "purification" (RSV/NRSV/ESV/HCSB).

^b The CJB has bolded "new covenant" noting a possible allusion to Jeremiah 31:31: "'Here, the days are coming,' says ADONAI, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra'el and with the house of Y'hudah'" (CJB).

^c Grk. *thanatou genomenou eis apolutrōsin tōn epi tē prōtē diathēkē parabasōn* (θανάτου γενομένου εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ πρώτῃ διαθήκῃ παραβάσεων); the clause of interest for readers is *epi tē prōtē diathēkē* (ἐπὶ τῇ πρώτῃ διαθήκῃ), most often rendered as "under the first covenant." Yet, the common preposition legitimately rendered as "under" is *hupo* (ὑπό), and what appears here is *epi* (ἐπί). Lane, 47b:229 offers the more appropriate translation in his *WBC* volume, "a death having occurred for redemption from transgressions committed on the basis of the former covenant," with *epi* rendered as "on the basis of." In a dative clause (indicating indirect object), the preposition *epi* can be used as a "marker of basis for a state of being, action, or result" (*BDAG*, 364). Yeshua came to die because of sins committed by people, who obviously violated the Mosaic covenant.

^d Grk. *diathēkē gar epi nekrois bebaia* (διαθήκῃ γὰρ ἐπὶ νεκροῖς βεβαία); commonly and poorly translated with something like, "For a covenant is valid *only* when men are dead" (NASU). A somewhat rough rendering might be "for a covenant over dead bodies [is] ratified" (Brown and Comfort, 777), with a smoother translation seen in YLT, "for a covenant over dead victims is steadfast." Lane, 47b:229 similarly has, "For a covenant is made legally secure on the basis of sacrificial victims."

The term in the NASU rendered "men are dead" is the plural *nekrois* (νεκροῖς). There is no term relating to "men" (Grk. sing. *anēr*, ἀνὴρ) or "humans" (Grk. sing. *anthrōpos*, ἄνθρωπος) appearing here. A rendering like "dead ones" or "those dead" (LITV) is much better. The emphasis is upon Ancient Near Eastern covenant procedures, where animals would be sacrificed, and those who would make the covenant would agree to be like the dead animals, should the agreement ever be violated.

The rendering chosen for 9:17a follows that of the TLV, "For a covenant is secured on upon the basis of dead bodies." The Messianic Writings has the similar, "because a covenant is confirmed over dead bodies."

^e Grk. *tōn moschōn [kai tōn tragōn]* (τῶν μόσχων [καὶ τῶν τράγων]); most versions will have "the blood of the calves and the goats." This may be inaccurate when viewed in light of Exodus 24:5, which only says that "young bulls" (NASU) were sacrificed as a part this event.

While we cannot exclude the possibility for 9:19 that the author of Hebrews is reflecting upon an ancient Jewish tradition of the blood of goats also being offered, it is also quite true how the reading *tōn moschōn [kai tōn tragōn]*, does not appear in all ancient Greek sources of Hebrews. "[A]nd the goats" notably appears in brackets, in critical editions such as the *Novum Testamentum Graecae* 27th Edition (1993; p 576) and *GNT Fourth Revised Edition* (1998; p 758). Metzger indicates that the UBS committee "decided to enclose the words within square brackets in order to indicate a certain doubt that they belong there" (*Textual Commentary*, 669). It may be speculated that copyists over time added "and the goats" to conform to the earlier reading of 9:12. In spite of this, though, most English Bibles read with "the calves and the goats." The NIV/TNIV is the only major Bible version that follows the correct form "he took the blood of calves," also followed by Lane's rendering in *WBC*, "taking the blood of calves" (47b:229). The CJB also has, "After Moshe had proclaimed every command of the *Torah* to all the people, he took the blood of the calves," followed by the 2011 *The Messianic Writings*, "he took the blood of the calves."

^f "So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which YHWH has made with you in accordance with all these words" (Exodus 24:8, PME).

Sin Put Away by Messiah's Sacrifice

²³ Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the Heavens to be cleansed with these, but the Heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

²⁴ For Messiah did not enter into a holy place made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;

²⁵ nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters into the holy place year by year with blood not his own.

²⁶ Otherwise, it would have been necessary for Him to have suffered often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

²⁷ And inasmuch as it is appointed for mortals to die once and after this *comes* judgment;

²⁸ so Messiah also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many^b, will appear a second time for salvation, without *reference* to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

10

¹ For the Torah, having a shadow of the good *things* to come *and* not the very image of the things, can never by the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near.

² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?

³ But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins year by year.

⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵ Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME;

⁶ "IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE.

⁷ "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD'" [Psalm 40:6-8]^c.

⁸ After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*" [Psalm 40:6] (which are offered according to the Torah),

⁹ then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL" [Psalm 40:7]. He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

¹⁰ By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Yeshua the Messiah once for all.

¹¹ And every priest indeed stands daily ministering and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD [Psalm 110:1]^d;

¹³ then waiting UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET [Psalm 110:1].

¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

^a Grk. *kata ton nomon* (κατὰ τὸν νόμον); correctly rendered as "according to the Law" (NASU) or "according to the *Torah*" (CJB/TLV), incorrectly rendered as "under the law" (RSV/NRSV/ESV).

^b The CJB has bolded "bear the sins of many" noting a possible allusion to Isaiah 53:12: "Therefore I will assign him a share with the great, he will divide the spoil with the mighty, for having exposed himself to death and being counted among the sinners, while actually bearing the sin of many and interceding for the offenders" (CJB).

^c "Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have opened; burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. Then I said, 'Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me; I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Torah is within my heart'" (Psalm 40:6-8, PME).

^d "A Psalm of David. YHWH says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'" (Psalm 110:1, PME).

¹⁵ And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

¹⁶ "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY TORAH [more lit. 'MY LAWS']^a UPON THEIR HEART, AND UPON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE IT^b"; *He then says,*

¹⁷ "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE" [Jeremiah 31:34]^c.

¹⁸ Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin.

Exhortation and Warning

¹⁹ Having therefore, brothers and sisters, confidence to enter into the holy place by the blood of Yeshua,

²⁰ by the way which He inaugurated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is, His flesh,

²¹ and *having* a great priest over the house of God,

²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our body washed with pure water^d.

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

²⁴ and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works,

²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the custom of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

²⁶ For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and A FURY OF FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES [Isaiah 26:11]^e.

²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the Torah of Moses dies without mercy *on the testimony* of two or three witnesses^f.

²⁹ How much severer punishment, do you think, will be deemed worthy, *of one* who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded the blood of the covenant^g by which he was sanctified a common thing, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

³⁰ For we know He who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY" [Deuteronomy 32:35]^h. And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE" [Deuteronomy 32:36; Psalm 135:14].

^a Grk. *nomous mou* (νόμους μου); lit. "My laws" (NASU) in the plural; The Messianic Writings follows suit with "My laws"; the rendering provided here conforms to the TLV, "My Torah."

^b Grk. *autous* (αὐτούς); lit. "them," conforming to *nomous mou* or "My laws."

^c "And they shall not at all teach every one his fellow citizen, and every one his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them: for I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:34, LXE).

^d The CJB has bolded "sprinkled clean" and "pure water," noting a possible allusion to Ezekiel 36:25: "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols" (CJB).

^e "O YHWH, Your hand is lifted up yet they do not see it. They see Your zeal for the people and are put to shame; indeed, fire will devour Your enemies" (Isaiah 26:11, PME).

^f The CJB has bolded "put to death" and "on the word of two or three witnesses," noting a possible allusion to Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15:

"The death sentence is to be carried out only if there was testimony from two or three witnesses; he may not be sentenced to death on the testimony of only one witness" (Deuteronomy 17:6, CJB).

"One witness alone will not be sufficient to convict a person of any offense or sin of any kind; the matter will be established only if there are two or three witnesses testifying against him" (Deuteronomy 19:15, CJB).

^g The CJB has bolded "blood of the covenant" noting a possible allusion to Exodus 24:8: "Moshe took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant which ADONAI has made with you in accordance with all these words'" (CJB).

^h "Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, in due time their foot will slip; for the day of their calamity is near, and the impending things are hastening upon them" (Deuteronomy 32:35, PME).

ⁱ "For YHWH will vindicate His people, and will have compassion on His servants; when He sees that their strength is gone, and there is none remaining, bond or free" (Deuteronomy 32:36, PME).

^j "For YHWH will judge His people, and will have compassion on His servants" (Psalm 135:14, PME).

³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

³² But remember the former days, in which, after you were enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

³³ partly, being made a public spectacle, both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming partakers with those who were so treated.

³⁴ For you both had compassion on the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one.

³⁵ Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

³⁶ For you have need of perseverance, so that having done the will of God, you may receive the promise.

³⁷ FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

³⁸ BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM [Habakkuk 2:3-4, LXX^a; cf. Isaiah 26:20, LXX^b].

³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back to perdition; but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

11

Faith

¹ Now faith is assurance of *things* hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.

² For by it the elders received approval.

³ By faith we understand that the ages were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he received approval that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith^c *though* he is dead yet he speaks.

⁵ By faith Enoch was translated so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND, BECAUSE GOD TRANSLATED HIM [Genesis 5:24]^d; for he obtained the witness that before his translation he was pleasing to God.

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

⁷ By faith Noah, being warned *by God* about things not yet seen, having been reverent, prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

⁸ By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out^e to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

⁹ By faith he lived as a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a *land* not his own, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs with him of the same promise;

¹⁰ for he was looking for the city which has the foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

¹¹ By faith he received the ability to deposit seed, even though Sarah herself was past the proper age, since he counted Him faithful who had promised;^a

^a "For there is still a vision for an appointed time, and it will rise up at the end and not in vain. If it should tarry, wait for it, for when it comes it will come and not delay. If it draws back, my soul is not pleased in it. But the just shall live by my faith" (Habakkuk, 2:3-4, NETS).

^b "Go, my people, enter your chambers; shut your door; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath of God has passed" (Isaiah 26:20, NETS).

^c Grk. *kai di' autēs* (καὶ δι' αὐτῆς); lit. "and through it" (ASV).

^d "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him" (Genesis 5:24, PME); "And Henoch was well pleasing to God, and he was not found, because God transferred him" (Genesis 5:24, NETS).

^e The CJB has bolded "go out" noting a possible allusion to Genesis 12:1: "Now *ADONAI* said to Avram, 'Get yourself out of your country, away from your kinsmen and away from your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you'" (CJB).

¹² therefore, also, there was born of one, and him as good as dead, *so many* AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND AS THE SAND, WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE, INNUMERABLE [Genesis 15:5-6^b; 22:17^c; 32:12^d; Exodus 32:13^e; Deuteronomy 1:10^f; 10:22^g; Daniel 3:36, LXX^h].

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the Earthⁱ.

¹⁴ For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.

¹⁵ And indeed if they had been thinking of that *country* from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.

¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better *country*, that is, a Heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷ By faith Abraham, being tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten *son*;

¹⁸ *it was he* to whom it was said, “IN ISAAC SHALL YOUR SEED BE CALLED” [Genesis 21:12]^j].

¹⁹ He considered that God *is* able to raise *people* even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.

²⁰ By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come.

²¹ By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph; and WORSHIPPED, *leaning* UPON THE TOP OF HIS STAFF^a [Genesis 48:15-16, LXX]^b.

^a Grk. *Pistei kai autē Sarra steira dunamin eis katabolēn spermatis elaben kai para kairon hēlikias, epei piston hēgēsato ton epangeilamenon* (Πίστει καὶ αὐτῇ Σάρρα στείρα δύναμιν εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος ἔλαβεν καὶ παρὰ καιρὸν ἡλικίας, ἐπεὶ πιστὸν ἠγγήσατο τὸν ἐπαγγειλάμενον); more commonly rendered as “By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised” (NASU).

There is some controversy over how to translate 11:11, and whether or not Sarah or Abraham is the subject. The Greek offers us a challenge, reading with *eis katabolēn spermatis* (εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος). Bruce, *NICNT*, 296 points out how “the phrase traditionally rendered as ‘to conceive seed’ just does not mean that; it refers to the father’s part in the generative process, not the mother’s. A literal translation would be, ‘for the deposition of seed.’” Bruce has in his author’s translation, “he received power to beget a child” (Ibid., 289).

Most versions will render 11:11 with something like “By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive” (RSV), as *Sarra* (Σάρρα) appears in the nominative case (indicating subject) in most critical versions. However, Metzger suggests that it is best to view v. 11 “to be a Hebraic circumstantial clause, thus allowing Ἰαβραάμ [Abraam] (ver. 8) to serve as subject of ἐλαβεν [elaben] (‘by faith, even though Sarah was barren, he [Abraham] received power to beget...’)” (*Textual Commentary*, 672), thus reading *Sarra* in the dative case (indicating indirect object). This is why the NIV reads as “By faith Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.” Lane in his *WBC* volume renders 11:11 as, “By faith Abraham was enabled to become a father, even though Sarah herself was sterile and past the normal age of child-bearing, because he considered the one who had made the promise faithful” (47b:343).

The rendering provided hopefully offers a fair synthesis of what is seen in the ASV, NASB, and *WBC*.

^b “**And He took him outside and said, ‘Now look toward the Heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ Then he believed in YHWH; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness**” (Genesis 15:5-6, PME).

^c “**indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the Heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies**” (Genesis 22:17, PME).

^d “**For You said, ‘I will surely prosper you, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude’**” (Genesis 32:12, PME).

^e “**Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You sword by Yourself, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the Heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever’**” (Exodus 32:13, PME).

^f “**YHWH your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day as the stars of Heaven for multitude**” (Deuteronomy 1:10, PME).

^g “**Your ancestors went down to Egypt seventy persons in all, and now YHWH your God has made you as numerous as the stars of Heaven**” (Deuteronomy 10:22, PME).

^h “**and you spoke to them saying that their offspring would be multiplied like the stars in heaven in multitude and like the stand on the shore of the sea**” (Daniel 3:36, NETS).

ⁱ The CJB has bolded “aliens and temporary residents on the earth” noting a possible allusion to 1 Chronicles 29:15: “For in your presence we are temporary residents, just passing through, as all our ancestors were—our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope” (CJB).

^j “**But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not be distressed because of the lad and your slave woman; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named’**” (Genesis 21:12, PME).

²² By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the children of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.

²³ By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child^e; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

²⁴ By faith Moses, when he had grown up^d, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

²⁵ choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin;

²⁶ considering the reproach of Messiah greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

²⁸ By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch them.

²⁹ By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though *they were passing* through dry land, on which the Egyptians, having made an attempt to *pass*, were *then* swallowed up.

³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days.

³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, having received the spies in peace.

³² And what more shall I say? For the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,

³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, worked righteousness^e, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions^f,

³⁴ quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

³⁵ Women received *back* their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

³⁶ and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, even chains and imprisonment.

³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

³⁸ (*people* of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

^a Readers need to note the differences presented by the MT and LXX of Genesis 47:31. The Hebrew MT reads with *rosh ha'mittah* (רֹאשׁ הַמִּטָּה) or "head of the bed," whereas the Greek LXX has *epi to akron tes hrabdou autou* (ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ), "on the top of his staff." These differences may come from the fact that the vowel markings for the Hebrew MT are Medieval in origin, and without them the Hebrew word for "staff," *matteh* (מַטֵּה), is spelled with exactly the same consonants, *mem* (מ), *tet* (ט), and *heh* (ה), as *mittah* (מִטָּה) or "bed." The LXX follows the point of view that Jacob was leaning on his staff as he blessed his sons, and the NIV follows this reading in its rendering of Genesis 47:31:

"Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff" (Genesis 47:31, NIV).

^b "And he blessed them and said, 'The God whom my fathers Abraam and Isaak were well pleasing before, the God who sustains me from my youth to this day, the angel who rescues me from all evils, bless these youngsters, and in them my name will be invoked, and the name of my fathers Abraam and Isaak, and may they be multiplied into a great multitude upon the earth'" (Genesis 48:15-16, NETS).

^c The CJB has bolded "hid him for three months" and "because they saw that he was a beautiful child," noting a possible allusion to Exodus 2:2: "When she conceived and had a son, upon seeing what a fine child he was, she hid him for three months" (CJB).

^d The CJB has bolded "after he had grown up" noting a possible allusion to Exodus 2:11: "One day, when Moshe was a grown man, he went out to visit his kinsmen; and he watched them struggling at forced labor. He saw an Egyptian strike a Hebrew, one of his kinsmen" (CJB).

^e Grk. *eirgasanto dikaiosunen* (εἰργάσαντο δικαιοσύνην); rendered as either "performed *acts of righteousness*" (NASU) or "enforced/administered justice" (RSV/NIV/NRSV/ESV/HCSB). The ASV has "wrought righteousness," followed by the LITV and HNV with, "worked out righteousness." What is offered here is "worked righteousness" (Brown and Comfort, 787).

^f The CJB has bolded "shut the mouths of lions" noting a possible allusion to Daniel 6:23: "My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths, so they haven't hurt me. This is because before him I was found innocent; and also I have done no harm to you, your majesty" (CJB).

³⁹ And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

⁴⁰ God having provided something better for us, that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

12

The Discipline of the Lord

¹ Therefore let us also, seeing that we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,

² looking to Yeshua, the author and perfecter of faith^a, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the wooden scaffold,^b despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand^c of the throne of God.

³ For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary, fainting in your souls.

⁴ You have not yet returned to the point of shedding blood, striving against sin;

⁵ and you have forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as children, "MY CHILD, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;

⁶ "FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY CHILD WHO HE RECEIVES" [Proverbs 3:11-12]^d.

⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with children; for what child is there whom *his* father does not discipline?

⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have been become partakers, then you are bastards and not children.

⁹ Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh^e to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

¹⁰ For they indeed, for a few days, disciplined *us* as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* benefit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness.

¹¹ All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet afterward it yields peaceable fruit to those who have been trained by it, *the fruit* of righteousness.

¹² Therefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees^a,

^a The CJB has bolded "trusting" noting a possible allusion to Habakkuk 2:4: "Look at the proud: he is inwardly not upright; but the righteous will attain life through trusting faithfulness" (CJB).

^b Grk. noun *stauros* (σταυρός) or verb equiv. *stauroō* (σταυρόω); "to fasten to a cross, crucify" (BDAG, 941). History fully attests that criminals in the Roman Empire were crucified upon some kind of a cross. It was an extremely brutal, humiliating, and painful way to suffer and die. It was intended to serve as a public warning to others not to infuriate the Roman state:

"Under the Roman Empire, crucifixion normally included a flogging beforehand. At times the cross was only one vertical stake. Frequently, however, there was a cross-piece attached either at the top to give the shape of a 'T' (*crux commissa*) or just below the top, as in the form most familiar in Christian symbolism (*crux immissa*). The victims carried the cross or at least a transverse beam (*patibulum*) to the place of the execution, where they were stripped and bound or nailed to the beam, raised up, and seated on a *sedile* or small wooden peg in the upright beam. Ropes bound the shoulders or torso to the cross. The feet or heels of the victims were bound or nailed to the upright stake. As crucifixion damaged no vital organs, death could come slowly, sometimes after several days of atrocious pain" (Gerald G. O'Collins, "Crucifixion," in *ABD*, 1:1208-1209).

A Messianic version the CJB often uses an alternative like "execution-stake," instead of the more traditional "cross" for *stauros*, some of which is intended to counter traditional Jewish hostility to the sign of the cross. A Messianic version like the TLV, however, will frequently use the traditional "cross" for *stauros*, although it may also use "execution-stake" as well. The PME uses the new alternative, "wooden scaffold."

^c The CJB has bolded "at the right hand" noting a possible allusion to Psalm 110:1: "A psalm of David: *ADONAI* says to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool'" (CJB).

^d "My child, do not reject the discipline of YHWH, or loathe His reproof, for whom YHWH loves He reproves, even as a father, the son in whom he delights" (Proverbs 3:11-12, PME).

^e Grk. *tēs sarkos hēmōn pateras* (τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν πατέρας); other versions render it as "earthly fathers" (RSV/NASU/ESV); "human parents" (NRSV); "natural fathers" (HCSB).

¹³ and make straight paths for your feet^b, so that what is lame not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

Warning against Rejecting God's Grace

¹⁴ Pursue peace with everyone, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.

¹⁵ See to it that *there be* no one who falls short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness^c springing up trouble *you*, and by it many be defiled,

¹⁶ and that *there be* no fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one meal sold his own birthright.

¹⁷ For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

¹⁸ For you have not come to *a mountain* that may be touched, and that burned with fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind,

¹⁹ and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, which *voice was such that* those who heard entreated that no further word should be spoken to them.

²⁰ For they could not bear that which was ordered, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED" [Exodus 19:12-13]^d.

²¹ And so fearful was the sight, *that* Moses said, "I AM EXCEEDINGLY FEARFUL and trembling" [Deuteronomy 9:19]^e.

²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,

²³ to the festal gathering and assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect,

²⁴ and to Yeshua, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than *the blood of* Abel.

²⁵ See that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned *them* on Earth, much more *will we not escape* who turn away from Him who *warns* from Heaven,

²⁶ whose voice shook the Earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN" [Haggai 2:6]^f.

²⁷ And this *phrase*, "Yet once more," signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

²⁸ Therefore, receiving a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have gratitude^g, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire^h.

^a The CJB has bolded "strengthen your drooping arms, and steady your tottering knees" noting a possible allusion to Isaiah 35:3: "Strengthen your drooping arms, and steady your tottering knees" (CJB).

^b The CJB has bolded "make a level path for your feet" noting a possible allusion to Proverbs 4:26: "Level the path for your feet, let all your ways be properly prepared" (CJB).

^c The CJB has bolded "root of bitterness" noting a possible allusion to Deuteronomy 29:17: "So let there not be among you a man, woman, family or tribe whose heart turns away today from *ADONAI* our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Let there not be among you a root bearing such bitter poison and wormwood" (CJB).

^d "And you shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Beware that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the ram's horn sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain" (Exodus 19:12-13, PME).

^e "For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which YHWH was wrathful against you in order to destroy you, but YHWH listened to me that time also" (Deuteronomy 9:19, PME).

^f "For thus says YHWH of Hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the Heavens and the Earth, the sea also and the dry land'" (Haggai 2:6, PME).

^g Grk. *echōmen charin* (ἐχωμεν χάριν); more lit. "have grace" (ASV); the NASU has "show gratitude."

^h The CJB has bolded "God is a consuming fire" noting a possible allusion to Deuteronomy 4:24; 9:3; Isaiah 33:14:

13

Service Well-Pleasing to God

¹ Let mutual love^a continue.

² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels, unaware of it.

³ Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, *and* those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

⁴ Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

⁵ Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with the things you have; for He has said, "I WILL NEVER FAIL YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU" [Deuteronomy 31:6]^b,

⁶ so that we can confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MORTALS DO TO ME? [Psalm 118:6]"^c

⁷ Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct^d, imitate their faith.

⁸ Yeshua the Messiah *is* the same yesterday and today, *yes* and forever.

⁹ Do not be carried away by various and strange teachings; for it is good that the heart be established by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

¹⁰ We have an altar, from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

¹¹ For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest *as an offering* for sin, are burned outside the camp^e.

¹² Therefore Yeshua also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

¹³ So, let us go forth to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

¹⁴ For we do not have a lasting city *here*, but we are seeking *the city* which is to come.

¹⁵ Through Him then, let us offer up a sacrifice of praise^f to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name.

^aFor *ADONAI* your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God" (Deuteronomy 4:24, CJB).

^bTherefore understand today that *ADONAI* your God will himself cross ahead of you as a devouring fire; he will destroy them and bring them down before you. Thus will you drive them out and cause them to perish quickly, as *ADONAI* has said to you" (Deuteronomy 9:3, CJB).

^cThe sinners in Tziyon are frightened; trembling has seized the ungodly. "Who of us can live with the devouring fire? Who of us can live with eternal burning?" (Isaiah 33:14, CJB).

^dGrk. *philadelphia* (φιλαδέλφια); "love of the brethren (NASU); "Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters" (TNIV).

^e"Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for **YHWH your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you**" (Deuteronomy 31:6,PME).

^f"**YHWH is for me; I will not fear; what can mortals do to me?**" (Psalm 118:6, PME).

^gGrk. *tēn ekbasin tēs anastrophēs* (τὴν ἐκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς); "the outcome of their {way of} life" (RSV/NIV/NRSV/ESV).

^hThe CJB has bolded "burned outside the camp" noting a possible allusion to Leviticus 16:27: "The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, is to be carried outside the camp; there they are to burn up completely their hides, meat and dung" (CJB).

ⁱThe CJB has bolded "let us offer God a sacrifice of praise" noting a possible allusion to Leviticus 7:12; 22:9; Psalms 50:14, 23; 107:22; 116:17; 2 Chronicles 29:31:

"If a person offers it for giving thanks, he is to offer it with the thanksgiving sacrifice of unleavened cakes mixed with olive oil, *matzah* spread with olive oil, and cakes made of fine flour mixed with olive oil and fried" (Leviticus 7:12, CJB).

"The *cohanim* must observe this charge of mine; otherwise, if they profane it, they will bear the consequences of their sin for doing so and die in it; I am *ADONAI*, who makes them holy" (Leviticus 22:9, CJB).

"Offer thanksgiving as your sacrifice to God, pay your vows to the Most High" (Psalm 50:14, CJB).

¹⁶ And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

¹⁷ Obey your leaders and submit *to them*; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. *Obey them* in order that they may do this with joy, and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

¹⁸ Pray for us, for we are persuaded that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.

¹⁹ And I urge *you* all the more to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Benediction and Final Greetings

²⁰ Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant, our Lord Yeshua,

²¹ make you complete in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Yeshua the Messiah, to whom *be* the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

²² But I urge you, brothers and sisters, bear with this word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.

²³ Know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes soon, I will see you.

²⁴ Greet all of your leaders and all the holy ones. Those from Italy greet you.

²⁵ Grace be with you all. Amen.

"Whoever offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice honors me; and to him who goes the right way I will show the salvation of God" (Psalm 50:23, CJB).

"Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and proclaim his great deeds with songs of joy" (Psalm 107:22, CJB).

"I will offer a sacrifice of thanks to you and will call on the name of *ADONAI*" (Psalm 116:17, CJB).

"Hizkiyahu responded by saying, 'Now that you have consecrated yourselves to *ADONAI*, come close, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of *ADONAI*. So the community brought in sacrifices and thank offerings, and as many as were willing volunteered burnt offerings'" (2 Chronicles 29:31, CJB).