

WitnessKit 3

God and Religions

Integrating the Worldviews of the Old and New Testaments,
Guided by the Book

Letter to the Hebrews

Class 15 Hebrews Chapter 2:

In the New Testament

Multiple Witnesses Establish Truth.

I Thessalonians 5:21

But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good.

Long ago, Moses established the Rule of Law

The first five books of the Bible, are sometimes called the The Law, or the Torah or the Pentateuch. These books established the rule of law in ancient Israel. These books establish the moral law that all individuals face before God who is holy and completely just. These books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Establishing the Rule of Law is worthy of honor.

The Law for Israel

The Torah established the basis for all law in ancient Israel. It established the Ten Commandments and the requirement “to love the LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind and all your strength.” These universal principles were the framework for the rest of the law. The rest of the law in the Torah covered many different matters, but all of them were held in reference to **God’s great goodness**. Justice was referenced to His perfect fairness, impartiality, and truth.

Background Information

The Rule of Law, the Rule of Witnesses,
and the Means to Establish Truth.

Laws of Witnesses

- Deuteronomy 19:15-20 ¹⁵ "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. ¹⁶ If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, ¹⁷ then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days.

Laws of Witnesses

- **18** And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, *if* the witness *is* a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, **19** then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. **20** And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. (NKJV)

Laws of Witnesses

- Deuteronomy 17:6-12
- ⁶ Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.
- ⁷ The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among you.

Laws of Witnesses

- Deuteronomy 17:6-12
- ⁸ "If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God chooses. ⁹ And you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and to the judge *there* in those days, and inquire *of them*; they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment.

Laws of Witnesses

- The witnesses of a capital crime had to be the first to begin the actual execution, so they would know they were committing murder if they lied.
- All proceedings were under the moral universals of the 10 commandments: You shall NOT bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall NOT murder.
- The Bible also teaches that everyone will be judged in eternity by their deeds. So the law of witnesses is a serious matter before God.

Laws of Witnesses: Obedience to the outcome of trials

- Deuteronomy 17:6-12
- ¹⁰ You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which the LORD chooses. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you. ¹¹ According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you, according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you.

Laws of Witnesses: Obedience to the outcome of trials

- Deuteronomy 17:6-12
- ¹² Now the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. (NKJV)

Rule of Law

- Deuteronomy 16:18-20 ¹⁸ "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment. ¹⁹ You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. ²⁰ You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you. (NKJV)

The Rule of Law

- Following the Rule of Law is necessary for national survival— “that you may live and inherit the land.” Ignoring the law, or creating contradictory or overwhelming numbers of laws so that some must be ignored, is a recipe for national downfall. Ignoring the judgment of the courts also violates the rule of law, bringing instability.
- The American ideals of governance reflect this idea, because even leaders in the smallest offices must swear to uphold the Constitution of the United States when they receive their jobs by being sworn in.

The Rule of Law was upheld in good administrations later on.

- 2 Chronicles 19:5-11
- ⁵ Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, ⁶ and said to the judges, "Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who *is* with you in the judgment. ⁷ Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do *it*, for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes." ⁸ Moreover in Jerusalem, for the judgment of the LORD and for controversies, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the chief fathers of Israel, when they returned to Jerusalem.

Rule of Law

- 2 Chronicles 19:5-11
- .⁹ And he commanded them, saying, "Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart:
¹⁰ Whatever case comes to you from your brethren who dwell in their cities, whether of bloodshed or offenses against law or commandment, against statutes or ordinances, you shall warn them, lest they trespass against the LORD and wrath come upon you and your brethren. Do this, and you will not be guilty. ¹¹ And take notice: Amariah the chief priest *is* over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters; also the Levites *will be* officials before you. Behave courageously, and the LORD will be with the good." (NKJV)

God approves upholding the rule of law.

“The LORD will be with the good.”

Good laws match the moral goodness of the Ten Commandments and of loving God.

The Rule of Law

Demanded several things.

1. Multiple witnesses were required to establish truth.
2. False witnesses were punished as severely as the penalty they tried to obtain for another.
3. If a false witness succeeded in applying the death penalty to someone, he had to face the fact that he was committing murder.
4. Judges were required to be impartial and to know they would answer to God for their decisions.
5. People must recognize that God is impartial when He judges.

Truth and the Rule of Law

- Truth involves correspondence between words and reality. Truth is **not** a subjective interpretation of events, but rather **is** an accurate description of events.
- The rule of law demands a definition of truth that recognizes **correspondence with reality**.
- The Bible presents faith as a proper human response to God who is totally good. The Bible presents faith as **belief in truth**. God is as much concerned about our being able to discern truth and righteousness as by our religious activities—see the first chapter of Isaiah and John 3:21. He wants us to believe the truth. His concern to make truth available to us is clear in the *Letter to the Hebrews*.

God loves truth. God loves establishing truth.

In establishing the truth about the identity of
Jesus as Messiah,
God documented testimony
from multiple witnesses.

- We know that the *Gospels* (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) give detailed testimony from **4** different witnesses to the life of Jesus.
- We will look at Hebrews chapter 2 to see some **other witnesses God provided** before the Gospels were even written. The chapter lists seven kinds of witness, in addition to the Scriptures.

We can see the truth of the message of salvation by

Evidences for the truth of salvation, listed in Hebrews 2

considering evidences from God to convince us.

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6. The deliverance from fear of death.
7. Christ's help for overcoming temptation.

Hebrews 2:1

“For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.”

Traditions drift.

Truth does not drift.

It is more important to stick with truth than with tradition. The Scriptures are Truth. We saw in the first WitnessKit course that we have 99% confidence in the original exact words and letters of each word of the New Testament, and the remainder which are questionable do not change any major theme of the Bible. The Old Testament has about 95% certainty as to exact letters—not surprising due to its greater age.

Hebrews 2:1

“For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.”

The Hebrew Scriptures stand. Because they are God’s word, they require our attention. It is wrong to drift away from them.

We must pay much closer attention to them after Christ came, *to make sure* we are understanding them correctly.

The prophecies about the Suffering Messiah and the Kingly Messiah become clear, once Christ’s identity as both Suffering and Kingly Messiah, but with two different times, is established.

Jesus Christ Himself emphasized the importance of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Luke 16:31—Jesus reported Abraham’s speaking to the rich man who failed to help Lazarus. The rich man was suffering in Hades—the place of the dead. (Because Jesus really is God-with-us, Immanuel—He was able to describe events beyond this earth.) The rich man called for help—calling to Abraham across a chasm. He asked Abraham to send someone back to earth from the dead to talk to his brothers so that they would avoid his same fate. Abraham answered his request this way,

“But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’”

How important is Moses' writing,

According to Jesus Christ, in this description of the rich man and Lazarus? Why do you think He said Moses and the Prophets, meaning the prophetic books of the Old Testament?

Moses and the Prophets

The books of Moses establish the rule of law and the overarching moral law, and the fact that the “Seed of the Woman will crush the Serpent’s head” in Genesis chapter 3—the Messiah will be victorious over evil.

The Prophetic Books give many more clues about Messiah, making it possible to recognize Him from the convergence of clues. If that evidence is rejected, the ones who reject it will also reject the miracle of resurrection from the dead. That convergence of clues is a miracle, and a way to know truth.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ

Implies that eternal salvation is available, purchased at a terribly painful cost, the cost of death in our place. Such a costly salvation must not be neglected.

If we fail to study the Bible carefully enough, or if we neglect personal Bible study, we may miss the message of salvation.

The message of salvation is perfectly consistent with Moses and the Prophets. That is one theme of the Letter to the Hebrews. Jesus validated that idea in the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

In Hebrews chapter 2

The author continues explaining how the picture of Messiah in the Psalms matches the life of Jesus Christ. The focus will be on Psalm 8.

This is also a chapter about evidence for faith. It covers **objective** evidence and **subjective, experiential** evidence.

We are encouraged to believe the message of salvation, based upon evidence from God. This is not a leap in the dark.

At this point, read Hebrews chapter 2.

Read it 3 times to fix its verses in mind for the discussion. The sentences in this chapter are complicated, so take time to listen to what it says as a whole before going to the next slides.

The next slide is a visual representation of important themes in Hebrews 2.

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Modern Christian Traditions

- Many modern churches have drifted away from the idea of evidence for faith. They are simply wrong about that. The Bible gives MANY evidences for the faith it demands. We need to notice the evidence it gives. Noticing will build our confidence.

Truth and Traditions

- The Letter to the Hebrews was written before the New Testament was widely available, and while it was still being written. Everyone needed the Old Testament plus the kinds of evidence listed in Hebrews 2.
- As the New Testament was completed, it established multiple witnesses for its statements in the form of letters plus history written as it happened in the book of Acts. Because the Roman Empire was a literate era encompassing vast territories, with many monuments and inscriptions, we also have corresponding evidence from outside sources.

The spoken word through angels: Hebrews 2:2-4

“For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it (the message of salvation) was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, **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 English sentences are a bit complicated in these verses. We will expand them.

Angels were messengers of God in the Hebrew Scriptures. God *rarely* sent angels to speak to people. God required people to pay attention to **what the angels said**. Their messages could not safely be ignored.

Messiah's message must be taken even more seriously. Messiah is above the angels.

The English sentences are a bit complicated in these verses. We will expand them.

The message of salvation was reported by Jesus, the Lord. So we should pay attention to it.

The message was confirmed **by the witnesses** who reported hearing *the message of salvation from Jesus' voice*. Over 500 witnesses saw Jesus alive after the resurrection. Many early witnesses were scattered due to persecution, and they went everywhere talking about what they had seen and heard.

Witnesses reported hearing *the message of salvation from Jesus' voice*.

Jesus' best friends gave us 3 of the 4 Gospels in the New Testament. Matthew and John were eyewitnesses of events. Mark wrote from the Apostle Peter's remembrance of events. Luke wrote after collecting eyewitness accounts.

God confirmed the message by miracles, and by giving the disciples special gifts from the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 2:5-8/ Psalm 8

- For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. But one has testified somewhere saying, *“What is man, that You remember him? Or the Son of Man that You are concerned about Him? You have made Him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and have appointed Him over the works of Your hands; You have put all things in subjection under His feet.”*

Hebrews 2:8-9

For in subjecting 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.

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

Hebrews 2:8-9

Jesus tasted death for us so that we would not have to.

God is GOOD. God wants us to avoid death. God paid a HUGE price to make that possible. The Bible talks about 2 kinds of death: The separation of the soul from the body, and the separation of the soul from God. Of the two, the separation of the soul from the body is the trivial one. The one that matters forever is the second kind.

God wants us to be in His family.

He wants to adopt us so that our souls will NOT be separated from Him in eternity. He adopts us because He loves us and wants us to be with Him forever.

When Psalm 8 talks about the **Son of Man**,

the writer of Hebrews explains that the Psalm means Messiah. This matches Daniel 7:13-14—where ***Son of Man*** means Messiah.

- (The Son of Man, Messiah, had to be made lower than the angels, implying **humanity**, but we remember that all the angels are told to worship Him in Psalm 97, as reported in Hebrews 1, implying **Deity**.)

When Psalm 8 talks about the **Son of Man**,

- Ordinary humans are not the “Son of Man” the Psalm is talking about, because we do not see **all things** subjected to humans now.
- The Psalm describes the gift of human dominion over animals, as God described in the early chapters of Genesis, but the Psalm goes much farther—to ALL things being subject to the **Son of Man**.
- We do not NOW see all things subject to Messiah, either, but the promise of that is for the future.

We do not yet **SEE** *all things* subjected to Messiah.

We do see the BIGGEST thing subjected to Him through the power of His resurrection—DEATH is subject to Him!

We most need Death to be subject to Jesus, our Messiah. That is our most difficult need. All of us are helpless before death. But NOT JESUS! Jesus is Victor over death!

In bringing death under subjection, Jesus Christ was crowned with glory and honor, and so fulfilled Psalm 8 for us. Eventually, we will see **all things** subject to Him—when He begins His Millennial Reign.

This makes the message

Spoken by Jesus Christ even more important than the message spoken by angels.

He was sent to earth, lower than the angels temporarily, so that His glory and power and victory over death and sin and hell could be revealed to us. Thus, we need to believe in His resurrection, as a promise of the eternal good to come.

Eventually we will see all things subjected to Him. All the Messiah-passages of the Hebrew Scriptures will eventually come true.

- Several kinds of evidence support the truth of His message.

Several kinds of evidence appear in these verses, some **objective**, and some **experiential**.

The witness of angels and those who heard them:

This witness includes the angels who spoke to the people of the Old Testament. Their message was always received with fear.

Angels also spoke to people at the time of Jesus' birth—to shepherds and to Zechariah and to Joseph and Mary—letting them know that **Jesus was the Savior who would save His people from their sins.**

The Message Spoken by Angels Regarding Jesus

- Matthew 1:20-21 “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”
- Luke 2:10-11 to the shepherds: “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for today, in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord.”

The Message Spoken by Jesus Christ

The name *Jesus* means Savior. The message of salvation was the theme of Jesus' teaching. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus taught toward the goal of giving eternal life to all who would trust in Him.

In **John 5:30-39**, Jesus listed several witnesses that support His claims, including His own words, the words of the Father, the witness of John the Baptist, the witness of Jesus' works, and the witness of the Scriptures. He said, ***"I say these things that you may be saved."***

Even after the resurrection and ascension to heaven,

- Jesus Christ spoke again—
to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus.
The bystanders heard the sound but did not understand the words—possibly because they were in Hebrew.
- From that meeting with Jesus Christ, Saul of Tarsus became a transformed man.
 - What was Jesus' purpose in speaking to Saul? To save Saul from his sins.

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The word spoken directly by God

was reported several times in the Gospels:

- ▣ at Jesus' baptism,
- ▣ at His transfiguration,
- ▣ and again in John 12:23-29 when Jesus spoke of His desire to be saved from the hour of suffering, and yet even more to fulfill His purpose. The bystanders heard God's voice from heaven and said it had thundered or an angel had spoken to Him.

The word spoken directly by God

- Moses reported in Deuteronomy and in Exodus that God spoke directly to him when God gave the Ten Commandments. The people heard the sound of God's voice. Deuteronomy chapter 4 and Exodus chapters 19 and 20 give the details.
- When God speaks directly to human beings, the events and words are of greatest importance.
- God said, regarding Jesus, **“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”** – Matthew 3:17.
- And again, **“This is My Son, My Chosen One. Listen to Him.”** Luke 9:35

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The witness of the signs and miracles

Throughout the Bible, miracles and signs are used as indicators of a message from God. Visibly miraculous answers to prayer are a sign that the individual is right with God, because *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me.”* Psalm 66:18.

When John the Baptist experienced doubts about Jesus' identity because John was left in prison unjustly, Jesus sent him the message, *“The blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them, and blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.”*--Luke 7:22-23, Isaiah 42:7, Psalm 146:8 The miracles were messages of Jesus' identity.

The witness of the signs and miracles

John 5:36 Jesus said, *“But the witness I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father has give Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me that the Father has sent Me.”*

Miracles are rare, even in the Bible.

- Miracles in the Bible have an over-arching purpose—to validate the message and allow us to recognize the Source of the message. They never occur capriciously.
- The miracles reported for Jesus Christ's earthly ministry are always GOOD. Jesus went about doing GOOD. He healed people. He raised people from the dead. He fed crowds because He was compassionate toward each person. The goodness of the miracles affirm that God is GOOD.

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The witness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

These gifts are listed in Romans chapter 12 and in 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14.

They are talents that go beyond ordinary human ability, given by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of church growth and for overcoming evil with good. This is a form of experiential evidence.

These gifts are current evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit. People still receive them.

The witness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Here is a brief list of those gifts from Romans 12.

Prophecy, or **proclaiming truth**.

Serving,

Teaching,

Exhorting or **encouraging**, counseling

Giving,

Leading,

Showing mercy.

A purpose for the gifts listed in that same chapter is **to overcome evil with good.**

The witness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

- When we see someone who seems to have talents in one of those areas far beyond ordinary human ability, they may be revealing a gift from the Holy Spirit.

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The adoption into God's family for those who believe.

Hebrews 2:10-13 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the Author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them **brothers**, (Psalm 22:22) saying "I will proclaim Thy name to **My brothers**, in the midst of the congregation I will sing Thy praise." And again, "**Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me.**" (Isaiah 8:18)

Important Definition

- **“Perfect”** in the meaning of the Greek word is “to bring to maturity” or **“bring to completion of purpose”** rather than speaking of moral perfection, which Jesus Christ already had. Jesus Christ’s humanity involved the frailties of living life from birth until death. The **purposes of His life** were made complete through His suffering, and His triumph over death and hell on our behalf.
- The author of Hebrews sees the adoption into God’s family by Messiah in more than one passage in the Old Testament. We can call God ***Our Father*** on this basis.
- Last lesson we saw that the Kinsman Redeemer adopted orphans out of slavery to be His sons, and that God adopted Israel out of Egyptian slavery to be His son.

The adoption into God's family for those who believe is seen in both Testaments.

John 1:12 As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe on His name.

Isaiah 53:10 "But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong *His* days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand."

Adoption into God's family

- Isaiah Chapter 53 is a key passage about the suffering Messiah. It matches New Testament events precisely.
- The suffering Messiah did not marry, so He had no children biologically. The Isaiah passage indicates that Messiah has children by adoption—those of us who trust in Him. **“He will see His offspring”** after His resurrection from the dead. Prolonging His days refers to His being raised from the dead to live forever. Note that the resulting **great big family** pleases God.

Adoption into God's Family

- When we receive His Holy Spirit into our lives, we are sealed as family members with an eternal inheritance, according to Ephesians 1:13-14, (and also in Psalm 37:18 we see promise of an eternal inheritance.) We have a sense of His abiding Presence in our lives, and a freedom to communicate with Him in prayer. We can come to Him as Our Father in Heaven, and we can KNOW that He loves us. This is something we experience subjectively, and it IS real.
- Jeremiah 3:19 reveals that God WANTS us to call Him Our Father, and never turn away from Him.

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Hebrews 2:14: Deliverance from the fear of death

Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

The deliverance from fear of death.

This is an **experiential evidence** of faith in Christ's resurrection.

During times of persecution, this freedom from fear of death is a **visible evidence** to others. Our freedom from fear of death sets us free even in the circumstance of being persecuted.

Jesus sets us free from slavery in this life—as well as eternity.

In the Book *The Hiding Place*

- Corrie Ten Boom of the Netherlands, and her extended family, worked in the Dutch underground to rescue Jews from the Nazis in World War 2. Many of her family members were killed as a result, and she survived because of a clerical error that accomplished her release from a concentration camp. Her family's freedom from the fear of death is profound evidence of God's work in their lives.

The deliverance from fear of death.

We are to love life. We are to fear nothing but offending God. We are not even to fear death. Nothing can separate us from God's love—
Romans chapter 8.

We have an inborn fear of death because we are human. The early Christians were persecuted, and their courage revealed that Jesus took away their fear.

The deliverance from fear of death.

We can trust Him for the time of our own deaths. He promises to come back for us when we die, and already He is preparing a place for us for eternity—John chapter 14, and John 11:25.

He promises that we who trust in Him will never die—that physical death will simply be moving from the physical realm into His visible Presence. 2 Corinthians 5:6-9, 1 John 3:1-3.

The deliverance from fear of death.

- ¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Romans 8:18 (NKJV)
- ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: *"For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*

The deliverance from fear of death.

- **37** Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.
- **38** For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, **39** nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35-39 (NKJV)

As persecution of Christians increases...

- We may have the terrible privilege of seeing this evidence for faith in our own generation. We should pray and never lose heart. Even now, Christians in some of the worst places in the world are under sentence of death for their faith. Pray for them.
- Corrie Ten Boom's father talked to her when she was a small child, regarding fear of death. He asked her "When do I give you the ticket for the train?" She answered, "Just before we get on the train." He told her that when her time for death came, God would give her the thing she needed just beforehand.

We can see the truth of the message of salvation by

Evidences for the truth of salvation, listed in Hebrews 2

considering evidences from God to convince us.

1. The spoken word from God through angels, and the people who reported it.
2. The spoken word directly from God.
3. God's witness through the signs and miracles.
4. The witness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
5. The adoption into God's family for those who believe.
6. The deliverance from fear of death.
7. **Christ's help for overcoming temptation.**

Christ's help for overcoming temptation.

Hebrews 2:16-18 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren 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.

For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Christ's Victory=Help NOW

Christ's victory over sin and death extends to individuals *who seek His help when they are tempted*. He understands what they are going through, and He comes to their aid.

This is an **experiential evidence** of His work in human lives.

Since death came into creation as a judgment against sin, Jesus' perfect life was the antidote. He gives us His righteousness when we repent of our sins and ask for His death on the cross to count for us.

Because His help is readily available, we do not have to fear

Being overcome by temptation,
so long as we are walking in fellowship with Him
and seeking His help.

We don't have to become monks or nuns out in
the desert to maintain a righteous life. He
GIVES us His power to do what is right. We
can trust Him to help us.

This is a direct contrast to the approach Islam
takes to this issue—of requiring women to wear
extremes of covering to keep men from
temptation, for example.

Because God is Good

He wants **to help us** be good. He supplies the help we need when we call on Jesus for help.

Hebrews 2:18 “For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.”

In addition, **it is not a sin to be tempted.** Jesus never sinned, yet He was tempted. It **is** a sin to give way to temptation. Jesus never gave way, and He can help us never to give way.

Jesus' help

Enables us to walk in trust,
Not in fear.

The Roman Empire Era

- Hedonism was common in the Roman Empire. Violence was common. The moral dangers people faced were much like the serious difficulties in today's world.
- One of the evidences of God's work in our lives today should be the freedom to walk through the culture without caving in to it. Because we are human, we **MUST** recognize our need for His help and we must ask for His help, and we should establish reasonable boundaries to protect ourselves morally. But we do not need to be paralyzed by fear of failure, because His help **IS** available.

Why multiple witnesses?

- Hebrews chapter 2 reports multiple witnesses regarding the identity of Messiah.
- Meeting the requirement of multiple witnesses goes back to the requirement of the Torah for evidence in legal matters.
- Numbers 35:30, Deuteronomy 17:6-7

Evaluating Religions for Truth

Many religions have a serious problem that the Biblical faith does not have.

- Either they have only one witness to their founding documents—one person who saw an angel for example—
- Or their founding documents are totally obscure in their origins.

The Bible has multiple witnesses to its most important ideas and events and people, and it is set in history with verifiable events.

God cares about truth. God wants us to believe truth. He made a way for that to be possible in religion.

Why multiple witnesses?

- This is a basic rule of law, that truth must be established by multiple witnesses to prevent one individual's lie from being believed.
- The penalty for perjury or malicious false witness was severe—that the penalty the malicious witness sought for another became his punishment. Deuteronomy 19:15-20 .
- The first 5 books of the Bible establish important concepts for equality and fairness under the rule of law.
- We owe a debt of gratitude to those who preserved Moses' writings and the ideas about the rule of law.

God wants truth to prevail.

- God is GOOD.
- God wants fairness to prevail.
- God is good.
- Biblical Judaism established the goodness of God, through establishing GOOD Law in keeping with God's Good Character.
- Biblical Judaism established the idea of the rule of law.

Isaiah 33:5-6

- ⁵ The LORD is exalted, for He dwells on high; He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness.
- ⁶ Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, *And* the strength of salvation; The fear of the LORD *is* His treasure. (NKJV)
- During uncertain times, the goodness of God and the justice and righteousness and wisdom to understand these matters, which He established, become the stability of those times.

Uncertain Times

- We live in uncertain times.
- The truths we can believe become even more important. We must cling to truth.
- We must cling to the true God.
- The fear of the LORD is our treasure.

Traditions Drift.

The Bible stays true to itself.

God's recommendation for kings is found in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. No greed for power or wealth, no multiple marriages—Instead, the king should read the Bible every day of his life and copy the law on a scroll for himself.

When we become adopted members of God's family, we should follow God's advice for kings. God's family members are sons and daughters of the Great King.

John 8:36

**So if the Son makes you free, you will
be free indeed!**

Homework

In 3 sets

Homework Class 15 Set 1: Review of Concepts

- Read Hebrews chapter 2.
- What is the reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard?
- What are some of the evidences for salvation listed in verses 3 and 4?
- Read one list of the kinds of gifts from the Holy Spirit in Romans chapter 12. Review the meaning of the words *prophecy* and *exhortation* in this context from the slides.

Homework Class 15 Set 1: Review of Concepts

- Read Psalm 22, about Messiah's suffering. The resurrection is in view in verse 22-27, as well as expanding the message of salvation to the whole world. Verse 10 indicates that this Psalm is about Messiah, because only He would be intelligent enough and knowledgeable enough to trust God while still in utero and infancy. (Only a few very special individuals, such as Jeremiah and John the Baptist, had a calling from God or were filled with the Holy Spirit reported *as from the womb*, Jeremiah 1:5 and Luke 1:15.)
- Why does Hebrews 2:14-18 say Messiah became incarnate (taking human-flesh-and-blood form)?

Homework Class 15 Set 2: New Concepts

- Read Chapter 3 in Hebrews.
- How does chapter 3 verses 1-4 describe Jesus Christ?
- In verses 5 and 6, what criteria define His household?
- What example is used to reinforce the idea of holding fast to Christ, in verses 7 - 12?
- What adjective describes a characteristic of sin in verse 13, and what are we supposed to do about that?
- What connection does this imply between unbelief and sin?

Homework Class 15 Set 3

- Read Chapter 4 in Hebrews.
- What comparison to rest is being made in chapter 4?
- When the Israelites entered Canaan, did they fight their own battles by themselves?
- In what way could life in the promised land be considered **rest**, as opposed to the time wandering in the wilderness?

Homework Class 15 Set 3

- Two major ideas about human goodness exist. One idea is securing one's own righteousness by doing good works and keeping the letter of the law. The alternative called **grace** is to receive God's righteousness through the atoning work of Jesus Christ, as we repent of our sins and receive His Holy Spirit into our lives. He empowers us to keep the spirit of the Law, and to accomplish what is good in His sight.
- The Holy Spirit is willing and able to empower us to do what is right. In fact, He will not let us be comfortable doing anything else. In Hebrews 4:11, that is the kind of rest we are to be diligent to enter.

Homework Class 15 Set 3

- In Hebrews 4:12-13, we see that we are still responsible to obey God's moral law. The difference in the two approaches is the Source of the power to obey, just as the difference in the two walks, the one in the wilderness for 40 years, and the one in the Promised Land, were in the Source of power to accomplish the goals.
- **Trying to obey the letter of the law in our own strength** can be a kind of slavery. Perfection is elusive. The harder we try, the more we see areas where we fall short.

Homework Class 15 Set 3

- If we manage to do all the external things correctly, then we have to face our own negative thoughts.
- Because we are human and cannot achieve perfection by trying harder, freedom comes through the second approach—becoming empowered by the Holy Spirit for doing right. That freedom is eternal.

Homework Class 15 Set 3

- ❑ Religions often try to get around this problem of perfectionism one of two ways. Either they substitute a simple set of external actions that define goodness, or they **reset the definition of wrong** to eliminate what is difficult.
- ❑ The Bible does not allow these approaches, and when Christians use these approaches, they have misunderstood the religion.
- ❑ **The Bible is a *perfectionist about right and wrong***, revealing the **impossibility** of our own perfection. Then it is full of astounding grace, giving us God's goodness instead of our own.

Homework Class 15 Set 3

- The Bible goes so far as to say that any person who denies that he does wrong is lying to himself. 1 John chapter 1 goes into this in great detail.
- We are equal before God not only because we are all human, but because we all do things wrong. Nobody is exempt but Jesus, who is God-with-us, Immanuel.
- We all need a solution to this difficulty, because **NO EVIL DWELLS WITH GOD**. If we want eternal life, we need to have this problem solved.

Homework Lesson 15 Day 3

- In Hebrews 4:14-16, we are given another reason to hold fast to our confession of faith in Christ. What is that reason?
- In the Bible, in Romans 5: 1-11, did God love us before we became believers?
- In Matthew 5:43-48, what is the basis for requiring us to love our enemies, and what is the basis for the command to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect?

Homework Class 15 Set 3

- In II Chronicles 19: 2-3, King Jehoshaphat was rebuked by God's prophet for loving God's enemies. Is this a contradiction to the principle above?
- How do you explain this difference between God's direction for King Jehoshaphat and His direction in Matthew 5?

Homework Class 15 Set 3

- The balance is in what the Bible means about loving one's enemies, and yet not enabling them to do wrong. **Love does not facilitate wrongdoing.**
- That balance is absolutely critical. Jehoshaphat was facilitating the power of an evil ruler. The nation paid a terrible price for Jehoshaphat's failure to discern the right thing to do. Forming an alliance with evil is not proper love for enemies.

Homework Class 15 Set 3

- ❑ In Psalm 5, what does God say about those He hates?
- ❑ Does this description explain Jehoshaphat's problem? Why or why not?
- ❑ Can evil dwell with God?
- ❑ Does this have eternal implications?
- ❑ Do these verses support the idea of "loving the person and hating the sin?"
- ❑ Does real repentance hate sin? Is this a test for real repentance?
- ❑ What does Psalm 97:10 tell people to do who love God?