

The only thing that matters is that you are reading God's word regularly. While that is still true with this schedule, the goal with this one is to get a better understanding of the entire story of the bible. There is no substitute for reading God's word. Keep reading! My website is at <http://graceofourlord.wordpress.com>. I encourage you to get the actual reading plan I am currently following. You can get it from the same place I do - at [this link](#). They have some great guidance for the reading plan there as well, and they have it all in both PDF and in Kindle format!

December 2012						
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9 (Week 50)	10 1 Peter 1	11 1 Peter 2	12 Hebrews 3	13 Hebrews 4	14 Hebrews 5	15
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December Week 3 (Week 51) Summary

Hebrews 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 - Click the chapter below to go to the ESV Bible passage for that chapter and read or listen.

[Hebrews 6](#) – The Hebrew writer continues in this chapter after his rebuke to the recipients of the letter in chapter 5, stating that it is time to move from *"the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity..."* This does not mean that the first principles of Christianity to which he refers are unimportant, or that they should be forgotten. Rather, it is time for them to grow into

maturity spiritually; and they will do that (as will we) by diligently studying the Scriptures and "by constant practice to distinguish good from evil" as stated in [5:14](#).

Verses 4-8 do not refer to sin that is unforgivable by God. As [1 John 1:7](#) says "the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from *all sin*." But the text does make it plain that those who have been saved **can** fall away from the Lord, and we must be careful. When he says that it is impossible to bring such a person who once "shared in the Holy Spirit" back to repentance, he means it is impossible for his fellow Christians to bring that person to repentance if his heart has been hardened. Nothing is impossible for God, however, and He has and does bring some who have fallen into apostasy back. But living a life of sin once one has known the truth can result in a condition of heart and spirit from which there is no return.

Verses 13-20 remind us of the promise God made to Abraham and his heirs - that He made it with an oath, and it is impossible for God to lie ([Titus 1:1-2](#)), promising the faithful heirs eternal life. And as Christians, baptized into Christ, we *are* those heirs ([Galatians 3:27-29](#)). As verses 19-20 conclude, we have that hope as a steadfast anchor through Jesus "*having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek*."

[Hebrews 7](#) – The Hebrew writer has already, in previous chapters, made much mention of Jesus being our High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek. But who was this Melchizedek? We know only as much, as always, as God ordained important for us to know. The Old Testament only speaks of him in two places - [Genesis 14:17-20](#), and again in the Messianic royal [Psalm 110 \(110:4\)](#), which is quoted here in this chapter again. After Abraham came back from rescuing his abducted kinsman, Lot, and after what is called here "the slaughter of the kings" (see [Genesis 14:1-16](#)), he was visited by Melchizedek, "king of Salem" and "priest of God Most High," who blessed him. Some believe that the Salem mentioned here is the same historical location as Jerusalem, but we do not know for sure, as another possibility exists. The name is related to the Hebrew word for "peace," and Melchizedek translates to "king of righteousness."

What is of note here, is that the Hebrew writer points out that Melchizedek was superior to Abraham, and blessed him. From Abraham's loins, Levi would come; and it was only the Levitical line that could be priests among the Israelites. But Abraham paid tithes to this "priest of God Most High," and so he was greater than even those priests - though he was both not a Levite, nor even a Jew. Yet he held two distinct positions - that of king and priest, and is exalted as "great" here, and the writer declares that "*it is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior*" (verse 7). It is after this order that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became our High Priest, though He was not from the tribe of Levi either.

What about verse 3? It says of Melchizedek: "*He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever*." Melchizedek is a real historical figure of the Old Testament, and the best way to think of this is that he has no recorded genealogy in Scripture which is intended to validate his priesthood. In addition, unlike the Levitical priests, has no recorded death which transfers his priesthood to another, so he continues as one forever, just as Jesus continues forever as our High Priest and King. The former priests were "*prevented by death from continuing in office*" (verse

23). So the Law requiring the priest to be a Levite ([Numbers 18](#)) has been set aside by Jesus, "*the guarantor of a better covenant*" (verse 22).

Our High Priest has no need to offer sacrifices like the Aaronic priests, because "*he did this once for all when he offered up himself*" (verse 27). He is unstained by sin, this perfect Son of God, who was made priest with an oath of the Lord (verses 17, 21, 28, [Psalm 110:4](#)).

[Hebrews 8](#) – The Hebrew writer gets to the meat of Jesus as our High Priest, affirming that He sits at the right hand of God in the "true tent" (or tabernacle). The earthly tabernacle serves as a shadow of the entrance into God's presence, whereas heaven is where Jesus is in true presence and intercession for us. Jesus "*has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises*" (verse 6). On that new covenant, verses 8-12 quote [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#), which foreshadows the covenant we now have with the Lord, through the blood of Jesus Christ. Verse 13 says that the old covenant is made obsolete, as we now have full forgiveness freely available through Him.

[Hebrews 9](#) – When considering this chapter's beginning, as it speaks of the tabernacle prepared by Moses instead of the Herodian temple, it is because the theme of the writer is that of the covenant being "inaugurated" (verse 18), or "sealed." Moses did so with the blood of animals, as verses 19-21 remind us. As verse 22 says, "*Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*" Jesus Christ sealed the new covenant with His own blood.

The tabernacle and the items inside (the lampstand, table, the Bread of the Presence, etc) described in the first few verses, are detailed for the most part in [Exodus 25, 30](#) and [37](#). As the text says, only the high priest could enter the section that was the "Most Holy Place," and even he could only do so once a year - to offer blood for himself and for the unintentional sins of others (verse 7) - which had to be repeated each year. All these things, it says, were mere copies of the heavenly things (verse 23). Jesus entered the true "Most Holy Place" which is heaven, by offering His own blood - "once for all" and "thus securing an eternal redemption" for us all. Verse 28 concludes with the glorious promise for us: "*so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*"

As an aside, Coffman offers some interesting facts regarding the Holy things of the temple:

"History, through the overruling providence of God, has preserved a likeness of the golden candlestick that was in the Herodian temple destroyed by Vespasian and Titus in 70 A.D. The candlestick, along with other treasures, was looted and carried in the triumphal procession in Rome; and, when the Arch of Titus was constructed to memorialize the victory, both the table of showbread and the candlestick were detailed in the carvings decorating the arch and may still be seen there in the excavated ruins of ancient Rome. Plaster casts of those carvings are exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum, New York; and from these is evident the immense weight of those golden treasures, several men being necessary to bear each of them."

[Hebrews 10](#) - In the previous chapters of this letter, the writer has been driving home the superiority of the new covenant, and of Jesus as our high priest. He continues in verse one, stating that the law was just "*a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities.*" The sacrifices of old, year after year, were just a temporary forgiveness of sins because "*it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.*" But Jesus Christ came to do God's will (verses 5-7 quote [Psalm 40:6-8](#)), and offered Himself up as a single sacrifice for all time (verses 10-12).

Verses 19-23 bring it all home. Whereas before we as servants of God could not enter the holy place, Jesus has torn the curtain- the veil - open for all time (an allusion to the literal event of [Matthew 27:51-52](#) when Jesus was crucified). And because we have "*a great priest over the house of God,*" we can draw near with confidence, clean from evil conscience, and with a true heart - full of the assurance of faith that our sins are forgiven. We can now hold fast to our hope without wavering because "*he who promised is faithful.*"

Verses 24-25 are quoted often to remind us that we need to be faithful in attendance of worship, as it says:

"...let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another..."

Those who claim they can serve the Lord themselves without being part of a worship service ignore this passage at their own peril. How can we "stir up one another" or "encourage one another" if we do not meet together, as the writer, inspired by the Holy Spirit, says? Verse 26, and following, warn of the danger of trying to "go it alone." It is far too easy to slip away from the path, and back into sin. As verse 31 says, "*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*"

We need each other because that encouragement, those things that "stir up one another" help give us endurance. And we "*have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.*"