

Cultural Attacks on Christianity

Brad Harrub

Dates: Friday, 11/09/12 - Saturday, 11/10/12 : 7:00 PM at

North Side Middle School

**Dates: Sunday, 11/11/12 TIMES: 9:30am, 10:30am, &
1:30pm**

Place: West Side church of Christ

Brad Harrub, Ph.D

Co-founder Focus Press

Brad Harrub holds an earned B.S. degree in biology from Kentucky Wesleyan College, and an earned doctorate degree in anatomy and neurobiology from the College of Medicine at the University of Tennessee in Memphis. He was listed in Who's Who Among Scientists and Researchers. He is the author of *Convicted: A Scientist Examines the Evidence for Christianity*, *Heart of the Matter*, *Dissecting the Truth*, and the coauthor of the books, *The Truth About Human Origins*, *Investigating Christian Evidences*, *Matters of Life and Death*, *Diamonds in the Rough: Nuggets of Truth from God's Word* and has written many tracts and articles for brotherhood journals. He is a popular speaker on Christian evidences at lectureships, youth rallies, etc. in over 47 states and five different continents. He conducts over 40 "Truth About Origins" weekend seminars each year. In addition, he was an invited speaker to the International conference on Creationism, and he has appeared on the television show "Origins."

Dr. Harrub has authored or co-authored numerous scientific publications in science journals and has done mission work in Russia, Ukraine, New Zealand, Ireland, Jamaica, and Nicaragua. Currently, Dr. Harrub serves as the Executive Director and co-founder of Focus Press and as co-editor of *Think* magazine, a monthly magazine on Christian evidences. In addition, he is a co-host on the television show "Think About It." Dr. Harrub also serves as an adjunct faculty member at the Bear Valley Bible Institute in Denver. He and his wife Melinda attend the Southern Hills Church of Christ in Franklin, TN. They have four children: Will (11), Reese (9), Claire (5), and Luke (3).

Join Us

November 30, 2012 & December 1, 2012

David Shannon

at

West Side church of Christ



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UPON THE ROCK is printed quarterly for the purpose of setting forth sound biblical material and evangelism. We strive to print articles that are informative for Christians and non-Christians. Please visit our website for old issues and extra copies of this issue, www.westsidcoc.net
Editor: Michael Gors michaeltgors@yahoo.com

What We Have in Christ is All We Need

Michael Gors

In a world filled with uncertainty, we find ourselves yearning for stability and security. During these hard economic times we find ourselves immersed in concern, wondering if we will have enough. Enough money to pay rent or our mortgage, enough money to provide food and clothing for our families, enough money to retire and live “comfortably”. During these difficult political times we find ourselves concerned with the various and diverse threats both from within and without. Our concern as we watch world events turns to the Middle East and the rise of hostility from the extreme Muslim groups. Our concern is with Iran’s diligent pursuit of nuclear weapons and its harsh tones and stated desire to strike Israel which is one of our closest allies. We wonder what our nation’s response will be and the ramifications of that response. We are concerned with the rise of communist powers in the world. When we turn our attention to look at current events’ affect on our own nation, we are troubled. The constant barrage to remove God from the public square. The desire of the ACLU and other groups to take down all religious symbols, particularly Christian symbols so there will be no reference of God nor His Son Jesus Christ of any kind in our society is terribly troubling and frightening. We continue to watch in astonishment the crumbling of the pillars and foundations that this country was founded upon. In this we can grow weak and weary in our faith. We may become despondent and filled with despair. We may become apathetic and want to surrender ourselves to the inevitable. This is the time that we should stop, turn the noise and distractions of the world off! Let us take a deep breath and consider just what “we have” in Christ.

The book of Hebrews is a book filled with urgency written to those who are wavering in their faith. They had been under intense scrutiny and persecution (Hebrews 10:32,33), and found themselves wondering if they should continue in the Christian faith. The Hebrews

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is clear from this verse that those “which serve the tabernacle” were the Jews still practicing the law of Moses. Obviously, these Jews did not believe in Jesus, and thus only those who believed in Jesus, and demonstrated that belief through the commands He set forth, can access this sacrificial altar (John 6:47). As Christians we both realize and have access to Christ, who was the only sacrifice which could remove the sin of the world (John 1:29).

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

1. HEAR THE WORD OF GOD
Romans 10:17; Matthew 7:24-27
2. BELIEVE THE WORD OF GOD
Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:15-16
3. REPENT OF YOUR SINS
Acts 2:38; 17:30; Luke 13:3
4. CONFESS THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD
Matthew 10:32,33; Acts 8:36
5. BE BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF YOUR SINS
Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4
6. LIVE FAITHFULLY UNTO DEATH
Revelation 2:10

writer wrote with passion to plead with them to remain faithful to Christ. To consider that in Christ, Christians have a better hope, better covenant and better promises. Some thirteen times in this book of Hebrews we can find the phrase “We Have”. Each writer for this issue of Upon The Rock is to search out and consider just what it is that “We Have” in Christ. To consider the things we must lay hold of to obtain eternal life that is only in Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior of all humanity. It is Jesus who came, who died, who has risen again. And it is Christ who has ascended on High once and for all to reign as King of Kings over His Kingdom! Jesus is the Lord, that is to say the Sovereign ruler of all in Heaven and in earth, Matthew 28:18-20.

Here are just a few of the things that “we have” in Christ: **We Have** heard from God and His Son, Hebrews 2:1; **We Have** an anchor of hope to keep us grounded and focused, Hebrews 6:18; **We Have** received adequate information to know God’s will in Christ, Hebrews 10:26, and **We Have** an altar to bring ourselves as “living sacrifices” to the Lord, Hebrews 13:10.

Jesus has come that we might have life and life more abundantly, John 10:10. And what a life he has granted us. An abundant life in Christ while we dwell in this low land of sin and sorrow and make our way to the true promised land. The Lord is our shepherd and therefore “We Have” in Christ everything we need. To those who may be wavering in their faith we encourage you to consider what you have in Christ and not let it go but rather recommit your life to Him. To those who have never come to Christ we encourage you to consider the abundant life that is in Christ. Put on your Lord in Baptism, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, Romans 6:3 & 4, First Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26 & 27, 1 Peter 3:21. Then walk in the newness of life as a new creature in Christ enjoying what you have in Christ.

Pay Attention to what we have

HEBREWS 2:1

Charles Blair

The throne of God is for ever (Hebrews 1:8). The very means of the rule of God is righteousness in the heart of those who choose to follow God. God anointed His Son, Jesus the Christ (verse 9). The foundation of the earth is the result of the creative power of God by speaking things into existence (Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16). This world is winding down and will one day come to an end (Hebrews 1:11). God, Himself does not change (verse 12; Malachi 3:6). Christ will sit on the right hand of God until all enemies are destroyed (verse 13; I Corinthians 15:24,25).

This knowledge about God, our understanding of what these words mean are things which we are to never let slip (Hebrews 2:1). How can we avoid letting such knowledge get away from us? Jesus spoke of those in His day whose heart was far from Him (Matthew 15:8). He likewise spoke about those whose love for the Lord would in time grow cold because of the growth of sin in their hearts (Matthew 24:12). How then do we as Christians conduct ourselves to keep this from happening to us?

We begin, according to verse 1 by giving the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard. The use of “hear” implies coming in contact with the truth and understanding what we have heard. Faith, necessary to salvation, comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). It is not just hearing with our ears because if such were the case we could just broadcast the truth and people would come to faith. It is not therefore hearing with the “ear” but rather with the heart. A person comprehends what the truth is saying and therefore what they have heard.

The depth of our faith resides in those words of “...the more earnest heed”. It takes effort to open one’s heart to the truth of God. A person who exposes their heart to the truth will find that the

Christians have a great High Priest in Christ. The first time the title “High Priest” is used in sin Lev 21:10 for Aaron and his successors. It is important to realize the similarities in Aaron and Christ in regard to this title. Neither Aaron, nor Christ was self-appointed (Heb 5:4-5). Both Aaron and Christ were to offer sacrifice as the High Priest (Heb 5:1; 5:7). However, even though there are similarities, Christ was the “Great High Priest” after the order of Melchisedec, which was superior to the levitical priesthood (Heb 6:20 – 7:7). Christ was also superior, in that being fully God, he also was an understanding High Priest to our physical earthly struggles, and tempted in all points as we are (Heb 4:15) yet was without sin (2 Cor 5:21). What a comfort to know we have a Savior who honestly knows what we go through on a daily basis.

Hebrews 6:18 That by two immutable things, in which *it* was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

Christians have consolation (comfort) in Christ if we “lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb 6:18). We, because of the promises of God and Christ, can have comfort in knowing that if we remain faithful to the end, we will receive a crown of righteousness (2 Tim 4:8).

Hebrews 6:19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

Christians have hope in Christ. An anchor makes a boat unmovable in even the most severe storm. The hope which Christian’s have is much like that anchor. Our hope makes us unmovable when the storms of life hit us. As long as our hope is “sure and stedfast” we will remain secure in Christ, yet if hope is lost we will surely be pushed in all directions. One can only travel in two directions in regards to their salvation. Either we are traveling towards and with Christ, or we are traveling apart and away from Christ.

Hebrews 13:10 We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

Christians have an “altar”, which is only open to those who have been obedient to the faith. The “altar” in which the Hebrews writer mentions, is Christ himself. Christ died for all men, but is only accessible to those who partake of this sacrifice according to the conditions He has given. It

us today. If we have left worldliness or denominationalism and come to Christ and then turn back to worldliness or denominationalism, after we have received the knowledge of truth, then there remains nothing God can do for us. We will have made the choice to be lost. Once we have received the knowledge of truth we must stay with it all the way to eternity.

We Have an Altar

Hebrews 13:10

Shawn Bogemann

As Christians we are different from those of the world in that we have specific promises of blessings in Christ. I will address a few of those blessings which if we keep in our remembrance, will help us to stay strong in our faith, as we are surrounded by those who reject both the Gospel and those promised blessings.

Hebrews 4:3 (KJV) For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

Christians have rest in Christ. "For we which have believed do enter into rest..." As Christians we have the assurance of entering into God's promised rest. In the first verse of chapter 4 of Hebrews, the author speaks of a promise being left to believers. However, this promise of rest which was preached in Heb 4:2 is entered into by the conditions given in that "Gospel" which was preached. Notice also, that in Hebrews 4:3 that this rest is given only to those who believe, as opposed to those who do not believe, keeping in mind that "belief" is always a combination of trust and obedience. Therefore, those who trust and obey will enter into God's promised rest.

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession.

truth is a discerner of thoughts and intents (Hebrews 4:12). The ruler in Matthew 19 understood what Jesus said but he went away sorrowful (Matthew 19:22). Why did he go away in such condition? Because he heard clearly what Jesus said about his wealth and it was to him, too great a price to pay. As Christians whatever we do for the Lord is to be done, heartily (Colossians 3:23). Our study of God's Word is to be done in such a manner as to please God (II Timothy 2:15).

WE put a lot of effort in to keeping in our mind what we have been taught about Jesus the Christ. Paul reminded the brethren in Ephesus about how evil people conduct their lives (Ephesians 4:17-19). He then states in verse 20, that they had not learned that kind of living from Jesus. Jesus elevates individuals to a higher form of living (John 10:10). How does He accomplish this? The growth of faith is revealed to take place when we build on that faith, day by day (II Peter 1:5). One thing cited in verse 5 is the idea of knowledge. We obtain knowledge and then we build on that knowledge to grow to a fuller understanding of God. There is no new truth to be found but rather us making the effort to increase or build upon the existing truth.

What does it mean to let it slip in verse 1 of chapter two? We are to strive toward perfection (Hebrews 6:1). This striving for perfection means that we keep in our hearts what we know as we add to our knowledge (II Peter 3:1; I Corinthians 15:2). Strong meat of the Word of God belongs to those who through "exercise" are able to discern between good and evil (Hebrews 5:14). The exercise here concerns a continual habit of applying the Word of God to the circumstances of our hearts.

There may be exceptions to this rule but I personally have never encountered it. The person who quits the Lord and goes back into the world is making a horrible journey which will lead to separation from God for all eternity. That journey begins when individuals quit picking up their Bibles and studying. The condition worsens as Christians find more and more excuses to stay from the assembly of the saints on Sunday or Wednesday. Why is that when we have gospel meetings that people will attend on a Sunday or Wednesday night

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but no other time. The answer lies in the fact that individuals fail to understand they need to avail themselves of every opportunity to build on their faith through knowledge.

Let us all build on the things which “we have” heard. In our homes let our children see us sitting down with God’s Word. Let them see the joy we manifest as we head toward the assembling of the saints together for worship (Hebrews 10:25). Taking time to privately look at the mirror of the perfect law of liberty and when necessary make changes which affect our hearts. If we do these things and continue to abound in them, we will never be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ (II Peter 1:8).

WE HAVE A HIGH PRIEST

Hebrews 4:14-15

Ben F. Vick, Jr.

Some Jewish Christians in the first century had turned back to Judaism; others were on the verge of going back. The inspired writer of Hebrews wrote to encourage them to remain steadfast in Christ. One of the great incentives he held out was that we have a great high priest, Jesus Christ, who has passed into the heavens.

Since the writer exhorts the Hebrew Christians to “consider” the apostle and High Priest of our profession, let us take a few moments to do that.

This high priest, Jesus Christ, who has passed into the heavens, can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities (Heb. 4:15). He can sympathize with our weakness. Since he was human, he

understands the trials, tribulations, troubles and struggles we as Christians have. He was tempted in all points (I John 2:15-16) as are we, yet he did not yield. Therefore, let us go boldly before the throne

the past and coming to the present. He essentially says:

We know that the Old Testament helps us understand the truths of the New Testament (Hebrews 10:1-17). *“For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect”*, (Hebrews 10:1) The old testament was a mere shadow while Jesus is the substance. The old law and the old testament animal sacrifices cannot remove sins from the ones who bring the animals nor from those who actually offer those animals. They all pointed to Jesus who was God’s Lamb who was offered once and for all.

We know that it is in Christ and His Blood we must trust to be have the remission of our sins (Hebrews 10:18-25). Many of those who would have read this Hebrews letter before the ink was even dry were under a great deal of pressure to come back to the Jewish faith and await the Messiah’s coming. The urgency of the writer is stating in 10:18 “remission of sins” is in Christ and if you go back to Judaism to “wait” for the “real” Messiah you will remain in your sins because the Messiah has already come. He has lived and died for us. He has shed his blood and has gone to a grave only to rise the third day and offer all of humanity for all time the remission of sins.

We know that if we leave the Christian faith we have no alternative Nor place to Hide, (Hebrews 10:26-31). If we leave the Christian faith and remain outside of Christ and the Christian community we have nothing to look forward to but abject fear of a powerful God who will unleash His wrath upon the ungodly who have rejected Him and His Son!

We know that the answer is to call to remembrance and return to our confident faith that is in Christ, (Hebrews 10:32-39)

God, who according to the riches of His grace had supplied them with everything they need to know about salvation. And that if they abandon Jesus and their Christian faith now, like so many of their friends and family had, then they will be walking away from eternal salvation and complete rest with God. The same stands true for

We Have Knowledge

Hebrews 10:26

Michael Gors

“God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son...” Hebrews 1:1,2. God has spoken in many ways in times past. Sometimes it was dreams and visions. Sometimes by the hearing of His voice. Later, He explicitly wrote down in stone the things He wanted known, Exodus 31:18. The Holy Spirit lead approximately 40 men to write over about 1500 years one uniform book complete with all the things we need to know about life, sin and salvation. True also is the fact that the natural world around us communicates to us that God exists, Psalm 19:1-6. The facts are this, God has spoken and we can know Him and His Son Jesus Christ. Paul wrote “How that by revelation He made know unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, where by **when you read, you may understand** my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.), Ephesians 3:3,4. God has not left us to lean on our own knowledge to try and figure out life and death. God can be clearly seen and heard, Psalm 19:1-14, and we are without excuse.

The Hebrew Christians found in the book of Hebrews were suffering for their faith, Hebrews 10:33,34. Some had already caved under the pressure and had abandoned the faith of Christ, Hebrews 10:25. Some were thinking about going back to their former faith. The Hebrews writer sends this urgent message to them about remaining steadfast in their faith. He writes, “If we sin willfully **after we have received the knowledge of truth**, there remained no more sacrifice for sins”, Hebrews 10:26. That is to say if they leave the Christian faith once and for all and remain outside of Jesus Christ and the Christian community to go back to the Jewish faith to await the “real” messiah, they will in reality lose their soul. Notice the writer appeals to the intellect of the reader “**we have received the knowledge of truth**”. What truth did they receive? He plainly tells them in this chapter starting in

of God that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help us in time of need (Heb. 4:16.) We have a high priest who is after the order of Melchizedek. What background we have on Melchizedek is found in Genesis 14 and Hebrews. He was king of Salem and priest of the most high God, who met Abraham on his return from the slaughter of the kings (Heb. 7:1). He had rescued Lot and was on his way home when Melchizedek met him with bread and water. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek; Melchizedek blessed Abraham.

Since the less are blessed of the better, Melchizedek was superior to Abraham. And since Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, then, in a representative sense, Levi (great grandson of Abraham, the tribe from which the priests came) was inferior to Melchizedek. So the priesthood of Melchizedek is superior to the Aaronic priesthood. Thus, since Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, as prophesied (Psa. 110:4), then why would one want to turn back to an inferior system, the Aaronic priesthood?

Besides, the priesthood having been changed, there was also a change in the law (Heb. 7:12). So, why would one want to follow an invalid, out-of-date law?

Jesus Christ, as our high priest who has passed into the heavens, made such after the order of Melchizedek, is described as being “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb. 7:26). “Holy” indicates being undefiled by sin, free from wickedness. “Harmless” denotes “without guile or fraud...free from guilt.” “Undefiled” carries the idea of being unsoiled. Jesus ate with sinners to convert them, not to be like them. He was separate from them in nature. Since he is at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for us, he is higher than the heavens.

Jesus, being a high priest over the house of God, we should draw near to him and hold fast our profession. The house of God is the church. The writer says, “And having a high priest over the house of God” (Heb. 10:21), and earlier, the writer says we (i.e., the church) are the house (Heb.3:6). See also I Tim. 3:15.

As our high priest, Christ, made one sacrifice once for all.

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Unlike those high priests under the Levitical system, who had to continue to offer sacrifices, Jesus sacrificed himself once. Also, contrary to the priests under the law of Moses, who had to be replaced because of death, Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us.

So, why would Hebrew Christians want to return to Judaism? Why would any Christian turn away from Christ, our high priest?

“We have much too say...” Hindrances to Hearing the Truth Hebrews 5:10-11 Gerald R. Reynolds

“Of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.”(Hebrews 5:11).

The Holy Spirit through the inspired writer directs these words to Jews who had become Christians. It is evident that several years had passed since their conversion. Some Jews had abandoned their walk with Christ and had returned to Judaism (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:21-31). The writer encourages the Hebrew readers to see what they had in Christ Jesus. The superiority and greatness of Christ is emphasized throughout the epistle. The readers of this epistle as Jews were well versed in the Old Testament. They had read of the king-priest Melchizedek, but had failed make the connection to Christ. The Hebrew writer presents Christ as the great high priest after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:6). The writer wanted to present more on this difficult theme, but they had become sluggish in their hearing. The problem was not a physical deficiency, but a spiritual deficiency. They had failed to mature; while they were receptive as newborn babes in desiring the sincere (pure) milk of the word (I Peter 2:2) their growth process had slowed down along the way (Hebrews 5:12-14). They should have matured, but they were still babes in their understanding.

face persecution.

- It gives assurance when the turmoils of life cause great uncertainty!
- It provides security when we face the fearful storms of life – aging, financial pressures, or job loses!
- It is the Christian’s refuge when terrifying diagnoses like open heart surgery, ALS, or terminal cancer are heard.
- It removes despair as the Christian faces his own death or the death of faithful brethren. I Thess. 4:13
- It fills the Christian’s heart with anticipation of meeting Jesus. Tit. 2:13

Christian must **CHERISH** hope! Our hope must be **GENUINE** and **POWERFUL**! It must not only be a balm when life is stable and secure. It must take us through all of life’s ups and downs and through death. Paul made a poignant observation, “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.” I Cor. 15:19. Hope that exists only in good days is NOT hope at all! Hope is that powerful confidence that says, “NO MATTER WHAT, ‘IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL!’” Thank God for Jesus, our Heavenly Spokesman and High Priest! Thank God that we have hope IN Him and because of Him! May we always tenaciously hold our hope **WITHOUT WAVERING!** Heb. 10:23.

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Even though these Christians are facing intense pressure, Paul is confident that they will remain loyal to Christ. He knows that some will reject Christ as the Messiah; thus it would be impossible for them to be saved! Why? Because if one denies that Christ is the Messiah, He is doomed eternally! Heb. 6:6. There is NO OTHER Savior! Paul expects better of these Hebrew Christians; he expects them to retain their faith in Jesus as long as they live! Heb. 6:9-12. He expects them to imitate the faith Abraham whose hope that was rooted in two immutable [unchangeable, indisputable, absolutely certain] things – God’s nature [He is Truth]; and His Promises [He always keeps them]! Heb. 6:13-18.

These Christian’s hope in Christ is an absolute secure anchor in the midst of the upheaval that they are presently experiencing! Paul is convinced that their faith and hope will keep them loyal to Christ! They know that Christ is the God-ordained High Priest after the order of Melchizedek; there will NEVER be another High Priest; His one-time-for-all-time sacrifice solidifies their faith in Him and their trust in Him. They must allow NOTHING or NOONE to cause them to reject the redeeming High Priest! They know that His sacrifice will enable them to enter the Holy of Holies – HEAVEN! No ordinary Jew could have ever dreamed of such an amazing privilege under the Law of Moses; and yet, EVERY CHRISTIAN knows that his eternal destiny will be in the Heavenly Holy of Holies with the Godhead and the redeemed FOREVER!!!!

Biblical Hope And Its Power For Christians Today

Hope in Christ is the same POWERFUL anchor in the live for the Christian today as it was in the lives of the persecuted First Century Jewish Christians! It is an anchor for LIFE; it is an anchor for DEATH. And here is the power of hope:

- It helps your countenance. Ps. 43:5
- It gives true joy! Ps. 16:9; Pr. 10:28
- It motivates God’s people to adopt purity. I Jn. 3:3
- It strengthens the weak. Ps. 31:24
- It helps Christians to maintain faithfulness when they

Preachers and teachers of God’s word run into the same hindrances today because many have not matured spiritually in their study of God’s word and their walk with Him.

What do you do with people who fail to develop spiritually? The Hebrew writer did not cast them off neither did he give up on them. Instead, he exhorts them to go unto perfection (Hebrews 6:4). He carefully outlines the theme of Christ’s endless priesthood by showing the connection between Melchizedek, Abraham and Christ in chapters six and seven. How often do we still ponder over these scriptures, these are not for those who are “dull of hearing.” Let us consider why some may be hindered in hearing the truth or have become dull of hearing. It may be that some do not have access to the truth and thus are hindered from hearing the truth. The people the Hebrew writer is writing to had learned some truth concerning Jesus Christ, at least enough to become Christians, but until the revelation was completed by the Holy Spirit they did not have the complete will of Christ. Here in America most people own or have access to a Bible, but how many will open God’s word and will diligently study it (II Timothy 2:15)? Many are hindered from the truth because they depend on others for what they believe, never examining the Bible for themselves. Like the days of Hosea, many are destroyed for a lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6), not because it is unavailable, but because they will not study it prayerfully and properly.

Another hindrance is resistance to what the Bible says, in favor of what we believe, or because we know that we are wrong and are unwilling to change. God told Isaiah to preach His word to the people even though it would harden their hearts and would cause their ears to become heavy (Isaiah 6:10). In Isaiah 30:9 they are identified as “a rebellious people, lying children, children *that* will not hear the law of the Lord.” Sometimes the truth falls on deaf ears. People are often satisfied with their condition and are unwilling to change. The conscience can, and will with time, become seared (I Timothy 2:1-2). Why then should we continue to preach and teach when it seems to fall on deaf ears? Perhaps some may open their eyes, ears and hearts to the

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truth and be saved. Consider also that in the final judgment they will have had the opportunity to have heard the truth, they will have no excuse (II Thessalonians 2:7-9).

Many will be lost because they are unwilling to hear the truth that is able to set them free (John 8:32). Satan hinders people from hearing the truth in a number of ways in the world today just as he did in times past (II Thessalonians 2:7-12). If people fail to have a love for the truth, they will be lost. Satan is working hard to discourage men, women, boys and girls from obeying the truth. We have family, friends, associates, and various other things that can discourage us from the needed study of God's word. Often secular education is viewed more important than our spiritual education that comes from a diligent study of God's word. Sports and recreation has become our god. Video games, texting, T.V., movies, the internet, etc. have taken over our lives. Many will be lost because they failed to examine God's standard. Many on judgment day will wail because they knew of Jesus Christ but never took the time to investigate His words and to live the truth (Acts 28:25-28). Many never make the necessary changes and are like the forgetful hearer in James 1:22-25.

Finally in looking back to our original text one can see the trouble grew out of their inability to concentrate on complex spiritual truths. Their minds had become bored with the details beyond the elementary teaching of Christ and they had lost their spiritual appetites. Whose fault was it that they were still spiritual babes? The Holy Spirit lays the blame at the feet of the readers, "...Ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again...." They were not always dull of hearing, but they had become that way. They had become apathetic. Dear reader, consider your state. Are you apathetic when it comes to the study of God's precious truths? What is hindering you in your study of God's word?

WE HAVE HOPE!

Hebrews 6:19

Stephen W. Rogers

Man's Secular Definition Of Hope

"Hope," as viewed by people of the world, is a word that can be so empty, trivial, and ambiguous! People express wishful dreams that have NO expectation or certainty – "I sure hope I win that 12 million dollars from Publisher's Clearing House!" or "I hope some rich uncle leaves me a huge estate." Such statements are meaningless wishes.

The Meaning Of Biblical Hope – Its Power For The Persecuted Hebrew Christians

In contrast with the uncertainty above, the Christian's hope is meaningful, vital, and certain! The Christian views hope as huge exclamation marks; he KNOWS that his hope in Christ is rock-solid confidence! Thus, Paul would say to persecuted Christians who were being severely pressured to leave Christianity, "This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence *behind* the veil, ²⁰where the forerunner has entered for us, *even* Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." Heb. 6:19,20.

These verses are in the midst of the Apostle Paul's logical argumentation to Jewish Christians who are being pressured by their family and friends to leave this "new fly-by-night fad" – Christianity. Their loved ones are urging them to return to the old tried, true, and God-given Law of Moses. Paul affirms, "Christ is greater than prophets!" Heb. 1:1-3; "Christ is a greater messenger than angels!" Heb. 1:4-2:18; Christ is a greater spokesman than Moses!" Heb. 3:1-4:13; and "Christ is a greater High Priest than Aaron and the Levitical High Priesthood!" Heb. 4:14-10:18. Paul's message: because Christ IS the Divine Spokesman of the New Covenant, because He Is the Perfect and Eternal High Priest, Christians must preserve their faith in Him with all diligence! NOTHING is more important!