

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 1998 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with
the restrictions stated in the B4Ucopy.txt file on this CD.

* * * * *

HOLINESS IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
R. E. Carroll

A paper presented at the
1980 SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS
at God's Bible School, Cincinnati, Ohio.

(No Printed Book Copyright)

Digitized by God's Acres Inc.

* * * * *

Digital Edition 06/05/98
With Permission from God's Acres

* * * * *

It is always easy to see one's favorite doctrines all through the Bible. It is also very common for people to be unable to see a doctrine in which they do not believe. They are like the Jews who could not see Christ in the Old Testament because they had a veil over their hearts. Some are like that with the doctrine of holiness. They have a veil over their hearts and can not see the many plain teachings of holiness in the Scriptures. It does not strengthen a doctrine nor honor the Lord to try to teach a favorite doctrine from Scriptures where it is not really taught. That is true even with such a beautiful doctrine as holiness. It is probably true though, that holiness is taught in many places in the Scriptures where many fail to see it even though they fully believe in the doctrine. Such people might find it a blessing to read over Bishop Foster's beautiful eulogy on holiness. He closes it with a sentence that well introduces us to our subject: Holiness In The Book of Hebrews. "It is the truth glowing all over and voicing all through revelation; singing and shouting in all its history, and biography, and poetry, and prophecy, and precept, and promise, and prayer; the great central truth of the system."

This wonderful doctrine can be found all through the Scriptures and it specially shines forth in the book of Hebrews. Let us look at the doctrine as it is set forth in this wonderful epistle.

When a New Testament book describes those to whom it is addressed, it is reasonable to assume that those descriptions are a correct evaluation of their spiritual condition. The Epistle to

the Hebrews was addressed to Christians. It is exhorting Christians to go on --- to go on to holiness, on to perfection.

Here are some of the descriptions of the Hebrew readers:

Holy brethren -- 3:21
Partakers of the heavenly calling -- 3:11
They have an High Priest -- 4:15; 8:1

They are exhorted to:

Go on to perfection -- 6:1
Have boldness to enter the holiest -- 10:19
Draw near with a true heart in full assurance -- 10:22
Hold fast their profession -- 10:23
Maintain their confidence -- 10:35
Accept chastening as God's children -- 12:6-11
Follow holiness -- 12:14

These exhortations are to men already regenerated. They are to go on to holiness. They are to "have boldness to enter the holiest" and they are encouraged to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." They are to maintain confidence for what God has already wrought for them but then they are to "go on to (the experience of) perfection" (6:1) and then ever "follow ... holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (12:14).

Holiness is taught in many ways in Hebrews. It is taught by the deep meanings of words that are used. It is taught by exhortation. It is specially taught by the figures of possessing Canaan and the Tabernacle worship, it is also taught as a preparation for pressing on to Christian maturity.

Holiness is taught in Hebrews by words of deep meaning.

Some of these words emphasize the crisis experience and some the mature life after the experience. There are eleven New Testament words or expressions that are used to convey the idea of "sanctify wholly" or Christian maturity. Nine of these words are used in Hebrews.

The meaning of New Testament words can only be discovered by considering these four things: 1) The etymology and basic meaning of the word. 2) Its meaning in use, and specially how an author uses that same word elsewhere. 3) Its grammatical forms tense, mood, voice, case etc. 4) The context --- most important of all.

The nine holiness words in Hebrews are: hagiadzo, hagiastos, hagiotees, katharidzo, katharos, teleios, teleiotees, teleioo and the expression sodzein eis to panteles (to save to the uttermost 7:25).

Hagiadzo means to set aside, to hallow, to separate, to make holy. It is used of both persons and things. In 9:13 it means ceremonial cleansing: "...the blood of bulls and of goats ...

sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh...." In all other places in Hebrews it means to make holy. It refers to the sanctifying work of Christ and to those whom He sanctifies (2:11). It is used to speak of that sanctifying work which is: 1) Wrought by the will of God, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (10:10, 14). 2) It is a work with eternity stamped upon its "...He hath perfected forever" "... we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (10:10, 14). 3) It is wrought by the blood of Christ (10:29). 4) To despise this work is to grievously insult the "Spirit of grace" 10:29. 5) In 13:12 this work of sanctifying is said to be the very purpose for which Christ shed His blood and suffered without the gate, "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. (13:12).

In the familiar holiness texts "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (12:14) the word 'holiness' is the translation of hagiastos. This word is found ten times in the New Testament but only this once in Hebrews. It refers to the life which follows the experience of entire sanctification. Sanctification is an experience that takes place in a moment of time. Holiness here (hagiastos) is something to keep on following after. "The word is from an action noun, meaning the state resulting from an action, a being-made-holy, or a becoming holy ... and is a word peculiar to biblical and Christian literature" (BBC).

The common New Testament word for cleanse is katharidzo which is used thirty times in the New Testament but only three times in Hebrews. It means ceremonial cleansing in two places: "And almost all things are by the law purged (katharidzo) with blood" (9:22). "It was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified (katharidzo) with these...." (9:23). In 9:14 the reference is to heart cleansing. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge (katharidzo) your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" This purging is from "dead works" and the purging enables men to serve and worship the living God.

The beautiful expression, "save to the uttermost," in 7:25 refers to full salvation. The meaning of "sanctify wholly" is not found in the word "save" but in the whole expression, "Save to the uttermost" and also in the context. The writer is contrasting the Levitical priests who cannot have a continuing priesthood (7:23) and Christ who does have an unchangeable priesthood (7:24). This promise is for those who keep on coming (Gr.) to God, and who come through Him. The saving is not from --- but unto the uttermost. For this He is able "seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Three of the words for perfection have the idea of maturity as well as the idea of the work of entire sanctification. These words are teleios and the related words teleios and teleiotes.

These words are used to speak of a perfection that the law could not accomplish (7:9; 9:9; 10:1). They are also used of the perfection to which Christians are to "be borne on" (pherometha) (6:1) by God's grace. The word "perfect" in 11:40 refers to the privileges of grace under the new covenant which Old Testament saints could not enjoy in their lifetime.

Three times (2:10; 5:9; 7:28) the reference is to the perfection of Christ. This usage indicates that the word "perfection" has a content of meaning more than cleansing from sin.

Three times we have one of these words used to speak of spiritual grace in the hearts of men. "For by one offering he hath perfected (pf. tense) forever them that are sanctified" (pres. ptcp.) (10:14). This is a perfection wrought for men. It is wrought by the one offering of Christ and it perfects forever. The use of the present participle (the ones being sanctified) speaks of men continually being sanctified from one generation to another. The myriads of angels and the great festal assembly identifies the perfect men of 12:23 as in heaven.

Fletcher makes an apt comment on 12:23: "They are the spirits of just men made perfect, and not the perfected spirits of just men. It denotes a perfection which they attained...before death."

In 5:14 we have the word teleios. Teleios means: finished, brought to its end, wanting nothing necessary to completeness. It is used to describe men as: full-grown, adult, of full age, mature. In this verse it is translated: full age --- AV, mature---NIV, mature men --- Nestle-Marshall, the perfect --- Godbey. The context here also indicates that this is a maturity that is more than the experience of entire sanctification.

God uses figurative language to teach us divine truths. Figures of speech, symbols and parables are frequently used to make great truths clearly understood. They attract and hold attention and aid us much to remember. This figurative language and the types and symbols that are used are divinely inspired and chosen to make the truth more vivid. Terry (Biblical Hermeneutics) says that this part of the inspired Scriptures has a "harmony which it is the noblest mental exercise to discover and unfold."

The New Testament uses illustrations from the Old Testament which teach experiential religion without necessarily saying that the people in the examples actually experienced the religious grace of which they are illustrations.

Examples:

The mighty deliverance from Egypt, taking shelter under the blood, escaping from Egypt and crossing the Red Sea is an illustration of being saved by trusting in the blood and in an Omnipotent God. Still, this is not teaching that every one who came out of Egypt that night was in a saving-grace relationship with God.

The miraculous crossing of Jordan and entering Canaan is a type and illustration of entering into the experience of entire sanctification. Yet this surely does not teach that all who crossed Jordan on that day were perfect in their hearts toward God.

The forms of Tabernacle worship are also typical. While it was typical yet it is very likely that the Tabernacle worship came closer to actual worship of God. The washings, the offerings, the burning of incense were all types but the participating worshippers no doubt often partook of the reality of what their worship signified.

Let us look at these two outstanding types of holiness in the book of Hebrews: the possessing of Canaan and the Tabernacle worship.

Holiness is taught in Hebrews by the illustration of the promised Canaan land.

Canaan, as a type of holiness, has its background in the Old Testament. The land was promised to Abraham as an inheritance (Gen. 13:15). That promise was to find its real fulfillment not in possessing the land but in soul rest (Heb.4:7-9). The failure of Israel when they came up to Kadesh and God's anger with them (Numbers 13 & 14) is likened by the Hebrews writer to turning back from the soul rest of heart holiness and God's anger with that sin (Heb. 3:7-11). The promise and its deeper meaning was referred to by the Psalmist many years later: "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest" (Ps. 95:10, 11). "He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations Saying, unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance" (Ps. 105:8-11).

Here are some reasons for considering earthly Canaan as a type of holiness 1) God's promise of the land was of long standing to Israel just as the promise of heart holiness for His people was of long standing -- from the foundation of the world. 2) Canaan was the goal toward which they were to march just as soon as they escaped Egyptian bondage. Just so it is normal, even if not usual, for those who are saved to start at once on the journey to spiritual Canaan. 3) The promised land had an attractiveness that was specially appealing to those who had known Egypt's bondage and the weary marches through the wilderness. It was a land of springs and fountains; they need no longer want for water. It was a land of bountiful crops; they could now forget the diet of Egypt and the monotony of manna. It had riches all prepared for them; houses they had not built and vineyards they had not planted.

Other comparisons of earthly Canaan with spiritual rest in holiness are found in the circumstances of entrance. Israel failed to enter because of unbelief; that is why people fail to enter spiritual Canaan. When it came time for the entrance into the land there was a barrier, the Jordan at flood-tide that made it seem impossible for them to cross. So it often is when a seeking soul comes to the border of spiritual Canaan. It seems impossible to enter the rest. But the miracle-working God can take His people through. Israel followed the Ark of God. By faith they stepped into the waters. Then it was the mighty miracle of the parting of the waters took place.

The actual possessing of the land was also typical. They had a strong city (Jericho) to conquer as soon as they were in the land. The victory was given by God after the detailed obedience of the people. Jericho was not the last battle. There were many battles fought in order to possess the land but there was never a defeat as long as they were walking in careful obedience to the Lord.

The figure of the Canaan rest is the theme of 3:7 - 4:11. In these verses the word "rest" occurs twelve times and the word "enter" eleven times. The theme of the passage is in these two words: rest and enter.

The word 'rest' is so meaningful in this connection. The land was the rest God had promised to Israel. It was to be a rest from the bondage of Egypt, from the wandering nomad life of their forefathers, and rest from the forty years of wilderness wandering. Canaan was but a type of promised soul rest. It is beautifully called 'God's rest' (4:3,5) and is likened to God's creation day

rest (4:3,4). Some would see the Canaan rest as only a type of heaven. It is that but it is also the soul rest into which the believer enters (4:3) and to which this book so strongly invites us all.

Each time in this passage the word "rest" is a translation of katapausis except in 4:9 where it is from sabbatismos. Katapausis means: rest, calm, a place of tranquil abode. Sabbatismos appears only this once in the New Testament. It may be a word coined by the writer. It is a word picture of a beautiful and lasting sabbath day in the soul.

The entrance as well as the rest has typical meaning. They could have entered the promised land soon after their deliverance from Egypt. It was only eleven days' journey from Horeb to Kadesh (Dt. 11:2). Neither does God intend that there should be a weary wilderness experience between being saved from sin and being sanctified wholly.

Their failure to enter was because of unbelief (apistia). In 3:12 unbelief is identified as from an evil heart and that unbelief is manifested in "departing from the living God." In 3:19 their inability to enter is identified again: it was due to unbelief. It was not the opposition of enemies nor the inexperience of Israel. It was unbelief.

Unbelief (apistia) is closely associated with a refusal to be persuaded (apeitheia, apeitheo). Unbelief and disobedience, or refusal to be persuaded are not little things. It was the cause of Israel's failure to enter Canaan and wander in the wilderness for forty years. It was the cause for the destruction of the inhabitants of Jericho (11:31). It is the reason why people still today fail to press on and get sanctified wholly.

The tense of the verb "enter" in 4:1,6,11 has a significance in teaching concerning entering the experience of holiness. The verb "ente" in these three verses is in the aorist tense. The aorist denotes punctiliar (point action). Taylor, in commenting on these verses, notes the significance of the aorist: "There is no hint of a gradual or partial entry into God's rest" (BBC).

Charles Wesley's hymn "The Glorious Hope" recognizes Canaan and the entrance into it as a type of the experience of holiness.

O that I might at once go up;
No more on this side Jordan stop,
But now the land possess.

Now, O my Joshua, bring me in!
Cast out thy foes; the inbred sin,
The carnal mind remove.

-- Methodist Hymnal 1878 --
Hymn No. 542

In Christian experience the Canaan rest is entire sanctification.

Holiness is taught in Hebrews by the symbolism of the Tabernacle worship.

This symbolic teaching draws much on three points: the Levitical priesthood, the sacrifices of the law, and the deeper meaning of the holy place and the holy of holies.

The typical significance of the Levitical priesthood is first set forth. The priest was appointed by God, he was taken from among his brethren that he might understand their needs, he could feel for their infirmities for himself was compassed about with infirmity, he offered up sacrifices, he ministered daily for the people in the holy place and once a year he ministered for them in the holy of holies.

Neither the priests nor the offerings could take away sins nor make the worshippers perfect. The offerings had to be repeated continually and the priest was unable to have a continual ministry because he was a man subject to death.

The writer seems pleased to recount the beauties of the ministry of the Levitical priests. However, when he writes of the Greater-than-Aaron High Priest you can almost feel his exultant spirit. He draws beautiful comparisons but also powerful contrasts between the Levitical priests and Christ the Great High Priest.

The Levitical priests were appointed according to the law; He was made priest by God's oath, They were taken from among men that they might be able to feel with them; Christ took upon Him the seed of Abraham and was made low for the suffering of death. They offered up the blood of bulls and of goats; Christ offered His own blood. They, because their sacrifices were inadequate and could never take away sin, offered sacrifices continually; Christ offered Himself once for all! They passed daily through the first veil and once a year passed within the inner veil. After they had done all things according to the law, they came back through the veils and began again their continual sacrifices. Christ passed through the veils, not of an earthly Tabernacle but of the true Tabernacle and the veil was His body. He did not come back to repeat His sacrifices but passed once for all past the veil, into heavens, "having obtained eternal redemption for us" and sat down in Majesty at the right hand of the throne of God.

The writer is overwhelmed with the wonder of it all. He cries out exultantly: "The summary of all that we have been saying is this:

WE HAVE SUCH A HIGH PRIEST!"

This Greater-than-Aaron High Priest is the one who satisfies the soul's longing for the fulness of God. He is the One who can take men into the Holy place and then through the second veil into the Holy of Holies. The Levitical priests could not take others with them within the veils; our High Priest can.

In Christian experience the holy of holies is entire sanctification.

Holiness And Maturity

There is another aspect of Christian life that is set forth very strongly in the book of Hebrews. This is something beyond regeneration and entire sanctification, The word "perfection" may be used to describe it but 'perfection' is closely identified with the experience of entire sanctification. "Maturity" is perhaps the best word to use to describe this phase of Christian life. "Maturity" is not a biblical word but the idea of Christian maturity appears in many places in the Scriptures. The Apostle John may be referring to it when he speaks of children, young men and fathers in Christ. Paul may be writing of it when he uses such strong expressions as: "Rooted and grounded in love." "Filled with all the fulness of God." "A perfect man ... the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Regeneration is the impartation of divine life and the forgiveness of sins; entire sanctification is the cleansing of the heart as a second work of grace. Maturity, on the other hand, is not an experience to be received instantaneously by an act of faith. Maturity comes by diligence in spiritual exercises -- by study of the Scriptures and prayer. Spiritual manhood is attained by growth, and purity perfects the conditions of that growth. The cleansed Christian is pure but not mature. However, the great hindrance to growth toward maturity is removed by entire sanctification.

"Millions of Christians die in immaturity, yet are saved. Maturity is nowhere made a condition of entrance into heaven, while purity is" (J.A.Wood -- Purity And Maturity).

This maturity ought to be the goal of every entirely sanctified person just as full salvation ought to be the goal of every truly born-again soul. Earnest preaching on Christian maturity and earnest seeking after it is the solution needed for many individuals in our churches.

The importance of this Christian maturity is a strong message in Hebrews. The foundation of the message is a concern that Christians enter into His rest. There is no going on to possess the land until the land is first entered. There is no enjoying of the fruitfulness of Canaan until one is in the land. There is no going on to maturity until after the experience of heart purity. The writer, in chapter four, gives his readers strong exhortations to press on into the experience of entire sanctification.

The exhortations of chapter four are: 'Let us fear.' 'Let us labour.' 'Let us come boldly.'

"Let us fear" lest with all the encouragement of the promise and all the warning of the tragedy of Israel we should "come short of it."

'Let us labour.' The word translated "labour" means: hasten, be zealous, make every effort. Here is the answer to why many do not enter that rest. 'No man crosses Jordan at a common pace' (R.S. Foster -- Christian Purity).

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace." Here is the most comforting of exhortations. The fear of verse one passes into "come boldly," and the labour of verse eleven passes into "obtaining mercy," "and help in time of need."

What are some of the marks of 'full age,' of Christian maturity that the Hebrews writer presents?

A Determined Freedom And Steadfastness

This specially appears in 3:6, 14 and 4:14. There are some strong and beautiful words in these verses: confidence, rejoicing, steadfast and hold fast.

Confidence means: freedom in speaking, fearless confidence, cheerful courage, before the public, in view of all. It speaks of the "undoubting confidence of Christians relative to their fellowship with God."

Rejoicing is the translation of a word that means: a glorying, a boasting, a ground of glorying. Whedon says: "Confidence is the firm, solid assurance; rejoicing is the joyful hope and glorying built on that solid foundation."

Firm (3:6) and steadfast (3:14) are from the same Greek word. It means: stable, fast, firm, valid, inviolable. It is used to speak of the validity and certainty of a legal document.

Hold fast and hold (3:6, 14) are from the same Greek word. The meaning of the word and the grammatical form would allow the idea of get a grip on, seize upon, hold in a firm grasp. Hold fast in 4:14 is from another word and in a different tense. The idea of hold fast is in this word also but here the tense suggests let us keep on holding fast.

This determined confidence, glorying in salvation, steadfastness of grace and determined holding fast is surely something to desire earnestly. It is a mark of those of 'full age.'

Exhorting Others To Spiritual Progress

This ought to mark the life of every Christian but it is certainly one of the marks of spiritual maturity. This mark is noted in 3:13 and 10:24,25.

In 3:13 the command is to "exhort one another daily." The theme of the exhorting is evidently to press on into that rest because of the terrible dangers of unbelief and of having the heart hardened.

In 10:24 we are urged to care for our brethren by encouraging them to love and to good works.

In 10:25 the concern is threefold. 1) Realize the seriousness of absenting oneself from the assembling together for worship. 2) Realize that those who do this are forsaking something that they know they should do. 3) Be aware that this neglect of worship is a mark of the last days and that to assemble with God's people for worship is one aid to being ready for the Lord's return.

Confidence And Persistence In Prayer

This mark belongs to all Christians, to 'babes in Christ' as well as to "fathers. In 4:16 we have this mark so beautifully presented: "Let us keep on coming' (Gr.) and "Let us come boldly."

Accepting Chastening

Chastening is the theme of 12:2-11. We are exhorted by the example of our Lord. We are reminded that we have suffered very little in comparison to many others (12:4). God's chastening is the chastening of a loving Father for the good of His children. Mature Christians accept chastening and profit by it.

Faith, faithfulness and courageous steadfastness are marks of spiritual maturity.

This is the theme of much of Hebrews but very specially of the section 10:32 through 12:2. In this passage the Hebrews are reminded of their first days of walking with God (10:32) and urged to hold fast to the grace they had received (10:35-39). Chapter eleven holds forth the beauties and victories of faith in God and of faithfulness to God. Although these shining examples from the Old Testament are set forth for our profit yet we are reminded that God can manifest His grace yet more strongly under the New Covenant. Christians have a very high goal set before them in this passage of Scripture.

Obligation To Grow To Spiritual Adulthood

There is no thought in these exhortations that those who have not attained to all this are not Christians. Indeed, they are recognized as "holy brethren" who have already attained to much of grace. But those Christians who have been sanctified wholly are then to go on to be mature, to become of full age.

Exhortations to go on to spiritual maturity are found specially in 5:11-14 and 6:11,12. These verses emphasize the importance of having keen spiritual hearing, of developing to the place where one has the ability to teach and not a need to be taught. They are to mature to the place where they relish and can receive the strong meat of deep spiritual truths and where they have their spiritual senses that will enable them to discern between good and evil.

In 6:11 they are urged to manifest with diligence a "full assurance of hope unto the end." In 6:12 they have set before them the examples of the saints of old. They are to be imitators of those "who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

The message of Hebrews is to 'holy brethren,' to partakers of the heavenly calling." The message is: "Be borne on to perfection." "Let the Greater Joshua lead you into that rest that remains for the people of God." "Let the Great High Priest lead you into the Holy of Holies." Then by walking in the light, by prayer and earnest searching of God's word, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, go on to become a 'father' in Christ, until you are one of those who are mature as well as pure, until you "are of full age."

* * * * *

THE END