

Introduction: 5 Lesson Overview

Lesson 1 – Introduction to Hebrews

Lesson 2 – God Speaks

Lesson 3 – Drifters...Neglectors...Diseased babies...Fakers...Loafers...Unable to find repentance

Lesson 4 – The hall of faith...what is the real point?

Lesson 5 – The Greatest death of all...death of the wealthiest Testator ever to live

Lesson 1 – Introduction to Hebrews

Why Study Hebrews?

Historical figures thoughts on Hebrews:

pen of R. C. Sproul:

I have often said that if I were thrown in prison and in solitary confinement, and was allowed to have only one book, the book I would want to have would be the Bible. But if my options were even further restricted, and I was permitted to have only one book of the Bible, the book that I would choose would be the book of Hebrews.

Now that usually surprises people who know me because they assume the book I would want to have would be Romans. But the reason Hebrews is the book I would choose is because it so richly and comprehensively integrates all of the teaching of the Old Testament with the material that is found in the New Testament, serving as the best connecting link between the two. It is also one of the finest books of the New Testament – indeed, of the entire Bible – in terms of its literary quality. The book of Hebrews also gives us a very high Christology since the central theme is the supremacy of Christ. In Hebrews, Christ is compared to various people and things and shown to be superior to them all.

Famous quoted verses:

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 9:27

And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment

Hebrews 12:6

FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

Hebrews 11:6

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

Hebrews 4:16

Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need

Hebrews 1:3

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Hebrews 12:1-2, 11:1, 10:25; 4:15; 3:12-13; 13:17; 11:3; 10:1; 13:2; 9:28; 8:6; 4:9; 6:18; 12:11; 2:18

Author's In depth Knowledge of the OT

Example = Melchizedek

- Mentioned 2 times in OT. Gen 14:8 and Psalms 110:4 ...a total of 4 verses.
- No google search engine...no concordance...no commentary.
- Yet Author creates a whole chapter on the priesthood of Jesus in the order of Melchizedek.

DO WE KNOW OUR OLD TESTAMENT THIS WAY?

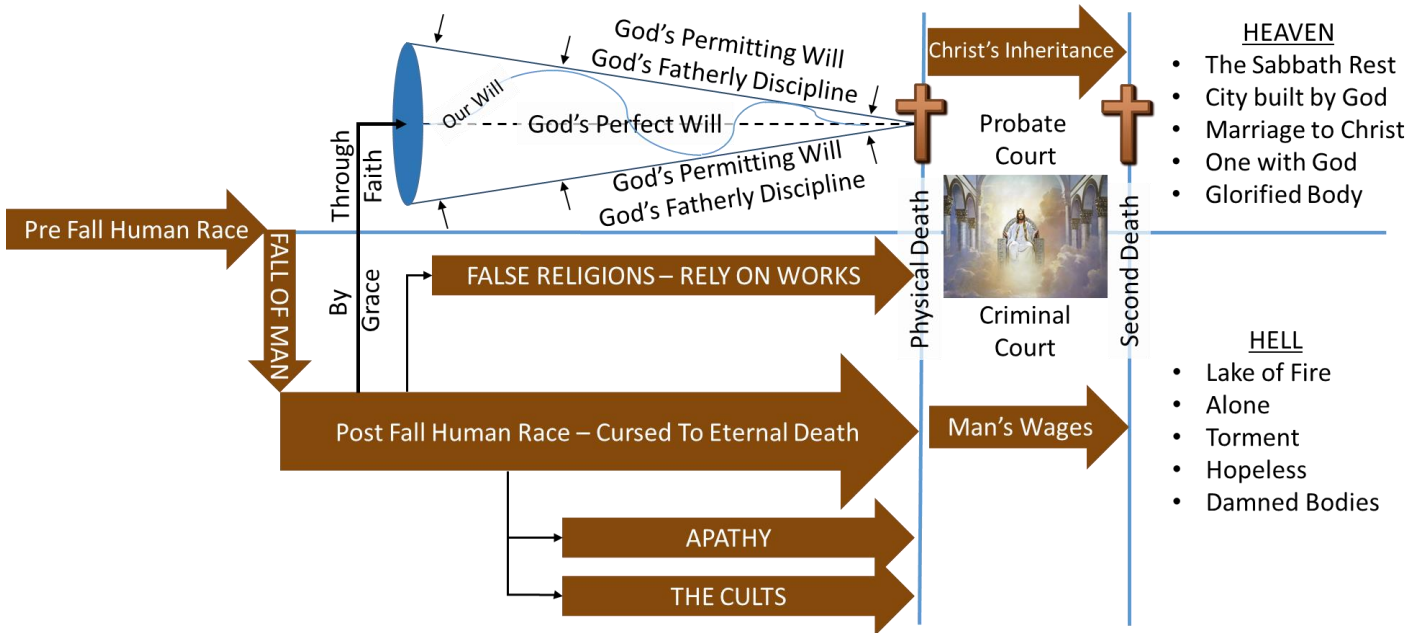
Depth of theology

- Topics addressed
 - The priesthood of Jesus in the order of Melchizedek is not addressed anywhere else in the NT.
 - Major topics of Christology...Deity of Christ, Humanity of Christ, Efficacy of His death, His temptations, the atonement by His death, Mediator of the New Covenant ...etc.
 - Other topics such as the Sabbath Rest, Angels, Prophecy, Faith, Church community engagement.
 - The list could go on.

Relevance to us today

- Have you been a Christian for some time but now find you are lacking interest in doctrinal topics?
- Have you been coming to church for some time but never really made a personal and public confession of faith in Jesus Christ?
- Has an addiction to a particular sin hardened your heart almost to a point of spiritual numbness and ambivalence?
- Do you feel apathy gaining a grip on your soul?
Or
- Are you growing in your faith and now hunger for deeper truths?
- Either way, this is the journey for you. It promises to test your theology...your faith...your deepest desires...what you hope for...where you are spending your time...how you view authority...and what awaits us after death!

HEBREWS VIEW OF DISCIPLESHIP:



CONTEXT: For Hebrews

- **Genre: Sermon / Letter or Epistle**
 - Literary work of art
- **Author & Recipient**
 - Author Unknown
 - Controversial over the years. Origen, the successor to Clement, who uttered his now-famous agnostic confession: "Whoever wrote the epistle, God only knows for sure."
 - Paul, Stephen, Luke, Clement, Barnabas, Apollos, Paul /Luke combo, and many others.
 - It was accepted as canon by the early church.
 - Comment on implied Author ...even though we don't know their name. Jewish based on knowledge of Judaism...yet very well educated in Greek Rhetorical styles.
 - Recipients
 - A local believing church. Believed to be primarily Jewish due to its content and the assumption about their understanding of the intensely Jewish rituals.
 - Somewhere in Palestine and Rome are the most popular suggestions. But others have been made: Alexandria, Colossae, Ephesus, somewhere in Asia Minor, Cyrene, Antioch, Syria in general, Corinth, and Cyprus.
- **General time of writing.**
 - Shortly before 70AD as there was no notice of the fall of the temple...and it would surely have been noted if that were in recent history.

○ **Implied Authors purpose for writing**

- Also clearly stated in Ch 13:22... as a word of exhortation...Literally in Greek “I Have exhorted you”.
 - Acts 13:15
- What kind of exhortations do we see?
 - 45 imperatives, prohibitions and pure exhortations
 - Imperatives: Strengthen...make every effort to...live a new and living way...etc.
 - Prohibitions: Do not...
 - Pure exhortations...in Greek...Hortatory Subjunctives: Let us...
- Exhortations appear to center around 5 basic warning passages
 1. 2:1-4 Pay careful attention.... so that we do not drift away
 2. 3:1-4:16 Do not harden....no unbelieving heart among you... enter the Sabbath rest.
 3. 5:11 – 6:12 Leave elementary teaching...Go on to maturity...
 4. 10:19 – 39 Let us draw near...hold...consider...remember...don’t throw away confidence...
 5. 12:1-29 Let us run...don’t grow weary or lose heart when disciplined...make level paths...etc.
- ***The purpose for his writing is clearly to get everyone from a state of unbelief to a state of spiritual maturity...i.e. to heaven. “We call this discipleship!”***

○ **Themes**

- Major Themes
 - Don’t turn away and Jesus is greater than
- Minor Themes
 - New Covenant compared to Old Covenant...promises in general.
 - The Word of God
 - Faith...the famed Hall of Faith in Heb 11
 - Death
 - Angels
 - Community life in the local church body
 - Suffering...of Christ and the church
 - Dangers of Sin
 - Endurance to the end

○ **General Flow for the book**

- Trying to encourage or exhort them to not fall away from the NT Gospel
 - Numerous exhortations spread throughout letter
- Walks them through the major elements of Old Testament showing at each point how Jesus and the New Covenant is greater than all of them.
- Similar approach to...
 - Jesus with 2 disciples on road to Emmaus LUKE 24:13-35
 - Peter in Acts 2
 - Stephen in Acts 7
 - Paul in Acts 13:15... this also ties into the Greek word used for exhorting in Hebrews.

○ **Outline of the book**

- I. Prologue: Definitive and Final Revelation in the Son (1:1-4)
- II. Don't Abandon the Son Since He is Greater than Angels (1:5-2:18)
 - a. The Son's nature and reign Show He is Greater than Angels (1:5-14)
 - b. Warning: Don't Drift Away (2:1-4)
 - c. The Coming World Subjected to the Son (2:5-18)
 - i. The Son of Man Exalted over Angels by Virtue of His Death (2:5-9)
 - ii. Jesus as the Merciful and Faithful High Priest Shares His Rule with His Brothers and Sisters (2:10-18)
- III. Don't Harden Your Hearts Since You Have a Son and High Priest Greater than Moses and Joshua (3:1-4:13)
 - a. The Faithful Son Greater than the Servant Moses (3:1-6)
 - b. Warning: Continue Believing and Obeying to Enter Rest (3:7-4:13)
 - i. The OT Text: Don't Harden your Hearts as the Wilderness Generation Did (3:7-11)
 - ii. Application of OT: Beware of Unbelief and Disobedience (3:12-19)
 - iii. Fear Lest You Don't Enter His Rest (4:1-5)
 - iv. Be Diligent to Enter His Rest While It Remains (4:6-13)
- IV. Don't Fall Away from Jesus' Melchizedekian Priesthood Since It Is Greater than the Levitical Priesthood (4:14-10:18)
 - a. Exhortation in Light of Jesus' Priestly Status (4:14-5:10)
 - i. Hold Fast Confession and Draw Near Since Jesus Is Son and High Priest (4:14-16)
 - ii. Jesus Appointed by God as Perfect High Priest (5:1-10)
 - b. Warning and Assurance (5:11-6:20)
 - i. Warning Against Falling Away from Jesus the High Priest (5:11-6:8)
 - 1. High Priesthood Hard to Explain Because of Readers' Sluggishness (5:11-14)
 - 2. Call to Maturity (6:1-3)
 - 3. Those Who Fall Away Can't Be Renewed to Repentance (6:4-8)
 - ii. Assurance and Comfort (6:9-20)
 - 1. Confident that Readers Will Be Diligent and Inherit the Promises (6:9-12)
 - 2. Assurance and Hope Through God's Oath (6:13-20)
 - c. Jesus' Greater Priesthood as a Melchizedekian Priest (7:1-28)
 - i. Melchizedek Greater than Levi (7:1-10)
 - ii. Arguments for a Changed Priesthood (7:11-28)
 - 1. Imperfection of Levitical Priesthood (7:11-12)
 - 2. Jesus from Tribe of Judah (7:13-14)
 - 3. Prophecy of Melchizedekian Priesthood (7:15-17)
 - 4. Setting Aside of Levitical Priesthood (7:18-19)
 - 5. Oath Accompanies Melchizedekian Priesthood (7:20-22)
 - 6. Jesus a Permanent Priest (7:23-25)
 - 7. A Sinless Priest and a Once for All Sacrifice (7:26-28)
 - d. New Covenant Better than the Old (8:1-13)

- i. Jesus' Heavenly Priesthood Shows He Is Mediator of a Better Covenant (8:1-6)
 - ii. Prophecy of New Covenant Shows Weakness of Old (8:7-13)
 - e. A Better Sacrifice Under the New Covenant (9:1-10:18)
 - i. Free Access to God Not Granted Under Old Covenant (9:1-10)
 - ii. Jesus Entered Heaven Itself with His Blood (9:11-14)
 - iii. Jesus as Mediator of New Covenant Bestows an Eternal Inheritance (9:15-22)
 - iv. Jesus' Sacrifice: Better than OT Sacrifices (9:23-10:18)
 - 1. Jesus' Heavenly and Once-for-All Sacrifice (9:23-28)
 - 2. Repetition of OT Sacrifices Shows Their Inadequacy (10:1-4)
 - 3. Jesus' Once-For-All Sacrifice Canceled Old System (10:5-10)
 - 4. Jesus' Completed Sacrifice (10:11-14)
 - 5. Final Forgiveness Promised in New Covenant Realized (10:15-18)
- V. Concluding Exhortations and Warnings (10:19-12:29)
 - a. Exhortation to Draw Near, Hold Fast, and Help Others (10:19-25)
 - b. Warning: No Hope of Forgiveness for Those Who Turn from Christ (10:26-31)
 - c. Call to Persevere in Faith (10:32-12:3)
 - i. Don't Abandon Confidence but Endure in Faith (10:32-39)
 - ii. Description and Examples of Persevering Faith (11:1-12:3)
 - 1. Nature of Faith (11:1-2)
 - 2. Creation through Noah (11:3-7)
 - 3. The Faith of Abraham and His Heirs (11:8-22)
 - 4. The faith of Moses and Those Entering the Land (11:23-31)
 - 5. A Closing Catalog of Faith (11:32-40)
 - 6. Run the Race Looking to Jesus as Supreme Exemplar of Faith (12:1-3)
 - d. Exhortations to Readers to Endure (12:4-29)
 - i. Endure Discipline for Holiness (12:4-13)
 - ii. Pursue Peace and Holiness for the Final Blessing (12:14-17)
 - iii. You Have Come to Mount Zion Instead of Mount Sinai (12:18-24)
 - iv. Final Warning: Don't Refuse the One Speaking (12:25-29)
- VI. Epilogue: Final Exhortations (13:1-25)
 - a. Practical Expressions of Love in the Church (13:1-6)
 - b. Remember your Leaders and Suffer with Jesus Outside the Camp (13:7-17)
 - c. Final Words (13:18-25)

Source: Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation; Commentary on Hebrews – by Thomas R. Schreiner

THEOLOGICAL PREPARATION

- **OT Knowledge**
 - **Ps. 2; 8; 95; 110; Jer. 31; Ps. 40; Hab. 2**
- **Systematic Theological Threads Woven Into Text**
 - Promise Fulfillment
 - Already but not Yet
 - Escalatory Typology

○ **Cautions**

- Experienced theologians can be needed to see the flowers and avoid ruts
Example: Hebrews 1:1...alliteration in Greek with 5 different words starting with “ρ” or π in Greek.

πολυμερως και πολυτροπως παλαι ο θεος λαλησας τοις πατρασιν εν τοις προφηταις επ εσχατωντων ημερων τουτων ελαλησεν ημιν εν υιω
 - At different times ...in different ways...long ago...fathers...and prophets
- Some have erroneously jumped to unbiblical conclusions on whether you can lose your salvation.
 - Careful interpretation of its own theology can prove this author doesn’t believe you can lose your salvation
 - Let clear scripture interpret blurry scripture.
 - Let the Bible interpret the Bible...but also let book of Hebrews shed light on Hebrews.
- You may need help from commentaries or GCBC pastors.

PERSONAL PREPARATIONS FOR YOUR STUDY OF HEBREWS

1. Personal Faith Decision to Follow Jesus Christ is Mandatory.
 - Without it, Hebrews will not draw you nor be compelling to you.
2. Steps prior to verse by verse study.
 - a. Confess any sin which is unrepentant.
 - b. Pray that the Holy Spirit would lead you to maturity.
 - c. Read Hebrews all the way through in one sitting as many times as you are able...3..4..10 times.
 - d. If you run into a story you don’t know in the Old Testament...Stop and Read the story.
 - e. OPTIONAL – Take a friend with you.
3. Begin a section / verse by verse study.
4. Upon completion, start again. You will see more the 2nd time through.

IF THIS IS WHAT JESUS DID FOR THE DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS RIGHT BEFORE ASCENDING TO HEAVEN...WOULDN’T YOU LIKE TO EXPERIENCE IT AS WELL?