

- Background
  - Author unknown
    - Thought to be written by Paul, but not known for certain
    - There is no introduction, which is very uncommon for Paul
    - Written to the Hebrew people
      - Synonymous with “Israelites”
      - Target audience was largely Jewish
- Hebrews 1
  - Jesus is ultimate
    - Jesus is greater than the Angels (Hebrews 1: 4)
    - Jesus sits at the right hand of God (Hebrews 1: 3)
  - The author uses a lot of old scripture references here
    - Who is his target audience? Jews!
    - Jews don't see Christ as the messiah
      - The author is using evidence to support his claim that Jesus is ultimate
    - Why does this matter?
      - The author is appealing to non-Christians in a way to bring them to Christ
        - The author is using Jewish doctrine to appeal to the Jews
        - As Christians, one of our biggest struggles is to evangelize to people that are already set in their ways
        - The letter is a good example, as we can apply techniques used here when speaking to people of different beliefs about Christ
        - React to other cultures appropriately
        - Don't hold others to a Christian standard
- Hebrews 2
  - The reality of salvation
    - Though salvation is a gift, it is not free
      - We can only achieve salvation by seeking after God, following his commandments to love
      - God has laid out the gift of salvation, and has given us teachings to achieve it
        - We have seen signs of power from God, therefore have no reason to doubt it plausible to give us salvation (Hebrews 2: 4)
        - Salvation is a really big deal, we should not take it lightly (Hebrews 2: 1)
    - Jesus was human, and therefore encountered mortal difficulties
      - We are Jesus's brothers (Hebrews 2: 11)
      - The sacrifice for Jesus was of no benefit to angels or God's servants in heaven, but was a gift of love for us (Hebrews 2: 16)

- We are all children of God, with Jesus (Hebrews 2: 11-12)
  - Jesus fought the same battle as we did, one of temptation
    - This is why Jesus came, so that he was able to conquer death for us
    - Jesus, who is like us, defeated Satan
- Hebrews 3
  - Jesus is immeasurably great
    - The least in heaven is greater than the greatest of the earth (Matthew 11:11)
    - Moses is a pretty big deal
      - God used him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt
      - God used him to speak to the early congregation
      - God used him to lead his people under his commands
    - Even despite Moses's amazing feats, he cannot be greater than the one who made him (Hebrews 3: 4)
      - Also, Moses's accomplishments were not of his own doing, they were of the Lord
    - Jesus resides in us, and through him we can do great things as well (Hebrews 3: 6)
  - God hates sin
    - We must embrace God when fighting temptation and not block him out (Hebrews 3: 12 )
      - God will give us the strength to overcome temptation
      - God's power is made perfect in weakness (2 Corinthians 12: 9)
    - We are called to help one another and hold each other accountable, as to not fall away from God (Hebrews 3: 12)
  - Faith must be persistent to the end
    - Many Israelites did not keep faith when times got hard (Hebrews 3: 16-19)
    - What is the point in having faith when you drop it as soon as it doesn't benefit you?
    - Notice how the author is using examples of Jewish history to appeal to the Jewish audience
- Hebrews 4
  - Spiritual rest
    - Sabbath: A time of rest
    - We often overlook the importance of rest
      - We tend to do things on the Sabbath to some degree
      - Jesus also performed many works on the Sabbath
        - Many people believed that he could not be the son of God because of this
      - Israelite executed for working on the Sabbath (Numbers 15: 32-36)

- Remember this letter is written to the Jews, spiritual rest is a fundamental concept to them
  - What is spiritual rest?
    - A time to meditate over God's word and our actions
    - A chance to realign our hearts to God
    - Often done through worship, prayer, or scripture
  - God sees all actions, good and bad (Hebrews 4: 13)
    - But Jesus, who will judge us, has been in our position already (Hebrews 4: 15)
      - Christ chose willingly not to sin, overcoming temptation
      - We can draw near to him, as he can relate to our struggles
    - He is rich in mercy to those who ask forgiveness
- Hebrews 5
  - Jesus is a high priest for us
    - What does this mean?
      - He serves as an ambassador to God on our behalf (Hebrews 5: 1)
      - He intercedes for our sin and carries the weight of our shortcomings (Hebrews 5: 3)
      - He serves God for no other purpose other than to glorify him, not for self glorification (Hebrews 5: 4)
        - Think about it, Jesus could have gloated for eternity (haha, literally) for living a perfect life, but instead everything he did on Earth was for the glory of God (Hebrews 5: 7)
      - This is a traditional Jewish position
        - Another example of the author relating Judaism of the old testament to Christianity of the new testament
- Hebrews 6
  - Building upon our faith
    - We must take our basic fundamental faith, and build upon it, drawing nearer to God (Hebrews 6: 1)
    - The author lays out a list of fundamental building blocks of faith (Hebrews 6: 2)
      - These items all serve as common ground between Christianity and Judaism
      - Author's meaning of moving on to a more advanced faith is two-fold
        - Warns against complacency for the Christian
        - Invites the Jew to build onto their faith by exploring Christian principles
  - Salvation is eternal
    - Author claims that if you have received God's grace and mercy, accepting him, but decide to reject him, you cannot accept him again (Hebrews 6: 4-7)

- Could mean multiple things.... This is actually a hot debate in the Christian community
  - Let's say Bob accepted Christ and later renounced Christianity
    - Does this mean that Bob was never saved?
      - This makes sense, if Bob truly felt the gift of salvation, why would he want to give it up?
    - Does this mean God has never and will never allow Bob to be saved?
      - A predestination point of view
  - People can appear Christian to us without really being Christian
    - It is our job to encourage one another, but we shouldn't place judgement onto each other
    - What does this look like? Imagine the Pharisees
  - Matthew 12: 22-32
  - All in all, the author is warning us that our faith is not something to take lightly
    - Hebrews 4-7 sounds really dark and discouraging
    - The author was kind enough to be more encouraging saying that these warnings are probably not necessary and there are higher hopes for the target audience of this letter (Hebrews 6: 9)
  - God's promises are proven to be reliable (Hebrews 6: 13-20)
    - God has fulfilled his promises of the past
    - Jesus provides us hope to enter God's glory (Hebrews 6: 19)
- Hebrews 7
  - Melchizedek
    - "King of righteousness"
    - Abraham gave Melchizedek a tithe of 1/10th of his possessions
      - Symbolically, Abraham accepted Melchizedek as being of higher spiritual ranking
    - Presented in Psalm 110 as a type of Christ similarly to here
    - Melchizedek gave Abraham bread and wine Genesis 14: 17 - 24
    - Used to bridge Jesus to an old testament figure viewed as a messiah
  - Perfection was impossible under the law
    - High priests of olden times were unsustainable, they were responsible for themselves as well as the entire congregation (Hebrews 7: 27)
      - Now, we have Jesus who is the perfect high priest, who can reign forever (Hebrews 7: 23-24)
- Hebrews 8
  - The new covenant of Christ is far better than that of the old testament (Hebrews 8: 6-7)
    - We have a piece of the holy spirit inside of us now to guide us
      - A house made by God, not by man

- The Israelites made a house exactly as instructed by God, even then was not good enough, as it was not by God
      - Our sacrifices are made through Christ, and his sacrifice is eternal
    - The sacrifice of Christ was planned from the beginning (Hebrews 8: 8-12)
  - Hebrews 9
    - In the old testament, the tabernacle was the dwelling place of God (Hebrews 9: 1-5)
      - This was very traditional and had a very specific set of rules by God for this to work (Hebrews 9: 6-10)
      - Even then, the best of man was not perfect enough to face God regularly (Hebrews 9: 7)
    - Christ serves as a perfect point of interaction with God (Hebrews 9: 11)
    - God provided his promised inheritance (Hebrews 9: 15)
    - Forgiveness of sin requires the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9: 21-22)
      - God cannot stand sin, he hates it
      - Sin is death, but through Christ's sacrifice we may live
    - The role of a high priest is perfected by one that is eternal (Hebrews 9: 24- 28)
      - Christ is with God in heaven now to speak directly on our behalf
  - Hebrews 10
    - Once again, perfection was impossible under the old covenant (Hebrews 10: 1-4)
      - If it was possible, than God's people could have attained perfection and been above sacrifices, but this was not so (Hebrews 10: 2)
      - This is why we needed Christ to come
        - God is 100% pure, and therefore anything less than that is unacceptable
          - What does this mean for those of the old testament? Are they exempt from purity, or are they just separated from God?
            - Jesus is timeless and has been by God's side from the beginning, and thus his sacrifice is eternal, for those before and after him (Ephesians 1: 3-10, Hebrews 10: 12-14)
      - Our sacrifices have been replaced
        - Where we used to have an outward sign for God to hear our pleas for forgiveness, we now have an inwards one through the holy spirit
    - Christ has died for us, so we should draw near to him with every ounce of our heart and soul
      - Through Christ we have the opportunity for purity (Hebrews 10: 22)
      - We can trust in God because he is faithful (Hebrews 10: 23)
        - Reiterating a point made earlier in this letter
      - We should encourage one another to the life we are called (Hebrews 10: 24)

- Since Christ died for our sins, and that is our final sacrifice, we must not let his sacrifice be in vain, as there is no other sacrifice that can be superior to his (Hebrews 10: 26)
  - To not appreciate Christ's sacrifice and not turn away from sin is to reject the cross (Hebrews 10: 28)
  - We are called to keep our faith, not shrinking back, and persevere through any trials with Christ (Hebrews 10: 39)
  - God had a man executed for collecting sticks on the Sabbath, how much worse us betraying God's son
    - Numbers 15: 32 - 36
- Hebrews 11
  - What is faith?
    - "Assurance of all things hoped for, the conviction of all things seen" (Hebrews 11: 1)
    - Even though we have not seen God, we can be certain through our hope in him
  - Figures of faith throughout the old testament to be an example for us
    - Abel (Genesis 4 / Hebrews 11: 4)
      - Had faith in God's power and existence to make a great sacrifice, not keeping it for himself
      - From his faith lived on after death
    - Enoch (Genesis 5: 21-24 / Hebrews 11: 5-6)
      - Barely mentioned in scripture but was said to have "walked with God"
      - Went missing, but was taken up by God because doing so pleased God
    - Noah (Genesis 6-9 / Hebrews 11: 7)
      - When all of man was seen as corrupt, Noah was the only one able to find favor in God's eyes
      - Followed God's commands exactly throughout the construction of the ark
        - Kept faith in God's warnings even though they seemed entirely implausible
    - Abraham/Sarah (Genes 12-24 / Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19)
      - Kept faith of God's covenant, obeying his words in hope of future prosperity even when it didn't seem possible
        - Left his home by the will of God, keeping faith he would provide
      - Kept faith that God would allow their lineage to continue even though they were past their prime
        - Trusted God enough to offer up his only heir, whom he loved, with faith that God would find mercy on the situation somehow

- Isaac (Genesis 25-27 / Hebrews 11: 20)
  - Found it necessary to bestow blessings on his children through his dying breaths
- Jacob (Genesis 28-35, 49 / Hebrews 11: 21)
  - Similarly to his father, Jacob also blessed his children with his dying breaths, looking towards the future of God's promise
- Joseph (Genesis 39-50 / Hebrews 11: 22)
  - Joseph was looking towards the future on his deathbed
    - Gifted with visions from God
      - Did not doubt these visions as being truth at any point in his life
    - Told of the Exodus years in advance, had faith for the future of God's people
- Moses (Exodus - Deuteronomy / Hebrews 11: 23 -28)
  - His parents hid him at birth, keeping faith that God would protect him
    - Also kept faith God would protect them from Pharaoh's wrath
  - Chose the path of righteousness rather than the path of earthly power, knowing God would watch over him
    - Could have lived as the pharaoh's daughter in royalty
    - Earthly trials were of no concern because he knew they were temporary
  - Trusted God to deliver him throughout the trials of the Israelites
    - Many times in their travels, God's people begin to lose hope, but Moses holds fast
  - Never doubted God's power as surpassing that of pharaoh, chose to mark himself as being from God
- Israelites (Old testament / Hebrews 11: 29-30)
  - Kept faith in God while doing things that seemed completely ridiculous, but knew that there was purpose as God had commanded it
- Rahab (Joshua 2 / Hebrews 11: 31)
  - Gave shelter to God's people, and in return was given mercy while the rest of Jericho perished
- Many more examples throughout scripture (Old testament / Hebrews 11: 32-37)
  - The many kings of the Israelites who kept faith and lived Godly lives
  - Many suffered for God's name
- All of God's servants kept faith even when they did not see their promises from God (Hebrews 11: 13-16, 39-40)

- For example, notice how of all the feats of Jacob, the one mentioned was his blessings of the future (an example of his faith)
    - This shows how important our faith is in the eyes of God, that above all our accomplishments, he remembers our faith the most
  - The people of Israel never got to see the fulfillment of God's promises on earth, that wasn't until the New Testament when Jesus was sent down
    - We have the chance to see God's promise fulfilled, so why should our faith be less than those whom could never lived to see the new covenant
  - Possibly the strongest test of faith for the Jewish people was to trust in God that Jesus truly was the messiah
    - Remember, Christianity is a continuation of the Jewish faith, they aren't dropping everything they knew before, but instead building on it
    - Often we are called to take a leap of faith but have to trust in God to deliver us through it
- Hebrews 12
  - We can find endurance through Christ (Hebrews 12: 1-2)
    - Christ despised the burden he had to carry, but he did so out of love (Hebrews 12: 2b)
    - Christ's burden was so much greater than our own (Hebrews 12: 4)
    - We are disciplined through our endurance (Hebrews 12: 7)
      - What is this endurance?
        - The ability to persevere through trials
        - Important because though we may not have endurance when less mature, as we develop in our faith we are capable of repenting from evil
      - God is a father figure, but so much more than our earthly fathers (Hebrews 12: 9-10)
        - Easier to respect and admire our earthly fathers' discipline, because we can physically see it
        - Necessary to have faith that God's discipline shines through our trials
        - God doesn't want us to endure pain and suffering like how a father doesn't want to spank us
          - This world is temporary, our spirit and its strength is eternal
      - With spiritual discipline, we are able to be holy (Hebrews 12: 12-17)
        - We need to take advantage of God's discipline now as the offer of repentance does not last forever (Hebrews 12:16-17)
    - The Christian Church is remarkably different than the Jewish Church (Hebrews 12: 18-29)



- Before Christ, the church was very closed off and in fear, unable to live up to its calling (Hebrews 12: 20-21)
  - With Christ came access to holiness, a personal relationship with God, and the mediator that is Christ (Hebrews 12: 22-24)
  - We have been blessed with an opportunity of entrance into the kingdom of heaven, we must not take this lightly
    - God deserves every ounce of our love, respect, and service
- Hebrews 13
  - We are called to live a Christian Life
    - Love one another (Hebrews 13: 1-3)
    - Refrain from sexual immorality (Hebrews 12: 4)
    - Do not be greedy (Hebrews 12: 5)
    - Do not follow false teachings (Hebrews 12: 9)
  - Our sacrifices to God come from our service and worship (Hebrews 13: 15-16)
- Summary (A super brief overview that cannot replace the full word of God)
  - Through Christ, we have been given a chance at true purity
    - The law of the old covenant never was meant to be permanent
    - We always fell short of perfecting the law
    - It took Jesus (the literal son of God) to achieve perfection through the old covenant, and only through him may we purify ourselves before God
  - Salvation is a gift from God
    - We do not deserve salvation, but he has offered it to us anyways
    - To accept this gift of salvation, we need to turn away from the former lives we lived, and take on the new life we are called to, one without sin
  - Faith is the full assurance of our hope
    - Many figures of faith throughout the old testament
    - God values faith immensely
    - With a true faith, we can learn to trust in God, that he may grow us and we may draw nearer to him c