



Walking Thru The Bible

HEBREWS

Introduction

The 21 New Testament epistles are generally divided into two groups.

- 1) The Pauline Epistles (13) Romans - Philemon
- 2) The General Epistles (8) Hebrews - Jude

The book of Hebrews is the riddle book of the New Testament. It contains the most perfect Greek of the Bible, yet it stands without telling us who the author is. It is as much a sermon as it is an epistle. In fact in the words of the author it is called a "word of exhortation" (or encouragement) in 13:22, which is what a sermon is called in Acts 13:15 [Barnabas was called "the son of exhortation" or son of encouragement.]

There are those who believe that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews and would classify it with his epistles.

Purpose

Why was the letter written? We see several things the author apparently wanted to accomplish. First, he wanted to encourage faltering Jewish Christians not to drift away from the message which they have heard (2:1; 5:12-14; 12:1-2). Some seemed about to forsake Christ and the Gospel and go back to the Law of Moses.

And second, he wanted to encourage them to grow in their faith and not become stagnant (5:12-6:1).

Third, they should be prepared to endure persecution.

Fourth, the author endeavors to show the absurdity of forsaking Christianity and returning to the Law system (8:6-23; 9:13-15; 10:1-4; Gal. 4:21).

Circumstances

The recipients of this letter were in a situation of extreme danger (10:32-34). Persecution was causing some to "forsake the assembly" (10:25). The recipients were making spiritual progress as they should but were still infants in the Lord (5:12-6:3). They appear vulnerable to "diverse and strange teachings" (13:9) concerning food laws (9:10); and a tendency to view Christ as an angel (ch. 1, 2).

Exhortation

There are five great "exhortation" passages in the book where the writer exhorts them to hold to the Word that God has spoken through His Son (cf. Heb. 1:1-2). In turning away from Christ and the Gospel there were in danger of:

Drifting from the Word -- 2:1-4
Doubting the Word -- 3:7 - 4:13
Dullness toward the Word -- 5:11 - 6:20
Despising the Word -- 10:26-39
Defying the Word -- 12:14-29

Key Word: "Better"

The book of Hebrews can be called the "**BETTER**" Book of the New Testament. The word "**better**" occurs some 13 times and apply describes the New Covenant in relation to the Old. The Dupont company had a slogan, "Building better things through chemistry." The slogan of Hebrews could well be, "*Building better things through the blood of Jesus.*"

rcu ns tance	made so much better than the angels (a more excellent name)	Better Revelation Better Name
rcu ns tance	we are persuaded better things of you	Better End
rcu ns tance	the less is blessed of the better	Better Priesthood
rcu ns tance s	the bringing in of a better hope	Better Hope
rcu ns tance s	made a surety of a better covenant	Better Covenant
rcu ns tance	the mediator of a better covenant	Better Mediator
rcu ns tance	was established upon better promises	Better Promises
rcu ns tance s	with better sacrifices than these	Better Sacrifices
. Heb. 10:3es	in heaven a better and enduring substance	Better Future
10. Heb. 11:16	but now they desire a better country	Better Country
11. Heb. 11:35	they might obtain a better resurrection	Better Resurrection
12. Heb. 11:40	provided some better thing for us	Better Thing
13. Heb. 12:24	blood speaks better things than Abel's (Abel's blood cried vengeance, Gen. 4:10 (Christ's blood speaks redemption)	Better Blood

Superior To The Prophets

The epistle exalts the person and the word of Christ. The first three verses sets forth this high and holy theme which is maintained throughout the entire book. Immediately it is demonstrated that Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets, men who were held in the highest esteem by the Jewish people and who had ministered in giving Israel God's Word.

Christ was superior to the prophets **in his person** because he was the very *son of God*, and the "express image" of the Father (1:3). This carried the idea of "the exact imprint." It means that Jesus Christ is "the exact representation of the very substance of God" (See Colossians 2:9 and John 14:9).

Christ was superior to the prophets **in his work**. To begin with He is the Creator of the universe; for by Him, God "made the worlds" (Heb. 1:2). Not only did Christ create all things by His Word (John 1:1-5), but He also upholds all things by that same powerful Word (1:3). "And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist hold together" (Col. 1:17).

The word "upholding" (1:3) does not mean "holding up," as though the universe is a burden on the back of Jesus like Atlas is pictured holding up the world. But it means He is the God of Creation and providence who guides the universe on its course.

Christ is also the superior Prophet who declares God's Word. The contrast between Christ "The Prophet" the other prophets of the Old Covenant are easy to see:

CHRIST	The Prophets
God the Son One Son A final and complete message	Men called by God Many prophets A fragmentary and incomplete message

Of course, both the Old Testament and the Gospel revelation came from God; but Jesus Christ was God's "last word" as far as revelation is concerned. Christ is the source, center, and the end of everything that God has to say.

Superior To The Angels

Hebrews 1:4-14 affirms that Christ is not only superior to the prophets, but also to the angels of heaven. Jesus wore a name no angel could wear, "son". As God and Creator He was to be worshiped (1:6), but no angel was to be. ("Firstborn" in the Bible does not always mean "born first." It speaks of rank and honor. God made Solomon the firstborn (Ps. 89:27) even though Solomon is listed *tenth* in the official genealogy of David, 1 Chron. 3:1-5.)

Christ's superiority to angels is seen in that he was served by them (1:7), and that He is Creator (1:10-12). Christ stands sovereign with the angels as servants even to us (1:13-14).

Superior Prophet, Priest, and King

Not only does Hebrews present Christ as superior to the Old Testament prophets (with Christ God's Prophet today); but the Lord has a ministry as **Priest**. He "purged our sins" and this aspect of his ministry is detailed in chapters 7-10.

And also Christ reigns as **King**. He has sat down at the place of honor "on the right hand of the majesty on high." This too proves his Deity, for no mere created being could ever sit on God's throne at His right hand!

Drifting With The Tide

Hebrews 2:1

Introduction:

1. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." (Hebrews 2:1)
a. The ASV says: "Lest haply we should drift away from them."

2. Too often Christians and churches ***drift with the tide***.

3. What is some evidence that one may be drifting with the tide?

1. _____
Hebrews 10:25

2. _____
Hebrews 5:12-6:3; 1 Peter 2:2

3. _____
1 Cor. 15:58; Phil. 2:12; Titus 3:1; Eph. 2:10

4. _____
Romans 12:1; 2 Sam. 24:24; Matt. 6:19-21

5. _____
James 5:16b; 1 Thess. 5:17

6. _____
Matt. 5:6

7. _____
Prov. 11:30

8. _____
1 Tim. 6:6-9; Heb. 13:5; Heb. 11:25

9. _____
John 14:1; Rom. 8:28