

The Book of Hebrews

1. Review: Introduction to the Book of Hebrews.

- a) *Reasons for the Neglect of the Study of Hebrews.*
 - i) *Its argument seems unfamiliar and difficult to understand* (=we don't know the OT).
 - ii) *Its form is unusual* (=not a typical letter).
 - iii) *Its authorship is uncertain.* Who wrote Hebrews? An inspired author by the Spirit.
- b) *Other Questions of Introduction.*
 - i) *When was the book written?* We know its readers had been Christians for some time (5:12) and that they had experienced a lot of persecution (10:32-34). Also, we know that some of the early Christian leaders have passed off the scene (13:7). But Timothy was still alive (13:23). So, we know that at least, that a number of decades had passed since the Lord's death and resurrection. We also know that the book was referred to by Clement of Rome, an early Christian writer, which dates around 96 AD. However most believe that Hebrews was written before 70 AD. Why?
 - ii) *Who was the book written to and why?* Most believe that it was written to Jewish Christians living in Rome in the mid-60's, whose world was literally falling apart. Why Jewish Christians? Why Rome? See Heb 13:24 (=greetings to Italian Christians)
 - a) How do we know their world was falling apart? See 10:32-34. Probably under Emperor Claudius (49). But now it is 15 years later. See Hebrews 12:4 (Nero, 64).
 - b) Also, internal problems. They were not meeting together. Danger of going back to their Jewish roots and drifting from the gospel. Unwilling to progress in their Christian lives. In danger of losing out on the promises of God for them.
 - iii) *What is the message of the book?*
- c) *Outline of the Book.*
 - i) *Introduction: God's Final Word* (1:1-4)
 - ii) *The Son and the Angels* (1:5-2:18)
 - a) The Son's Superiority to the Angels (1:4-14)
 - b) 1st Warning: A Call to Not Drift from the Gospel (2:1-4)
 - c) Why Did God Become Man? (2:5-18)
 - iii) *Jesus as a Merciful and Faithful High Priest* (3:1-5:10)
 - a) The Faithfulness of Christ (3:1-6)
 - b) 2nd Warning: A Call to Faithfulness (3:7-4:13)
 - c) The Compassion of Christ (4:14-5:10)
 - iv) *Jesus the Perfected High Priest in the Order of Melchizedek and Source of Eternal Salvation* (5:11-10:39)
 - a) 3rd Warning: A Call to Learn and Progress (5:11-6:20)
 - b) The Eternal High Priesthood of Christ (7:1-28)
 - c) The Mediator of the New Covenant (8:1-13)
 - d) The Limitations of the Old Covenant (9:1-10)
 - e) The Achievement of Christ in His Death and Exaltation (9:11-28)
 - f) The Benefits of the New Covenant (10:1-18)
 - g) 4th Warning: A Call to Hold on to the Benefits of the New Covenant (10:19-39)

- v) *Faith and Endurance* (11:1-12:13)
 - a) A Celebration of Faith (11:1-40)
 - b) A Call to Endurance (12:1-13)
- vi) *Appeals for a God-honoring Life-Style* (12:14-13:25)
 - a) 5th Warning: A Warning Against Failure (12:14-17)
 - b) Responding to the Call of God (12:18-29)
 - c) Worship and Everyday Life (13:1-17)
 - d) Personal Messages and Final Blessing (13:18-25)

2. **Hebrews 1:1-4: The Thesis of the Book (The Glory and Supremacy of Christ).**

- a) *Thesis.*
 - i) Christ is greater.
 - ii) He is the fulfillment of God's promises/covenants.
 - iii) He is in a category all by himself because of *who* he is and *what* he does.
 - iv) *Assumption:* We must place Christ within the covenantal story of the OT.
- b) *Continuity from Old to New: God's speech/revelation.*
 - i) Foundational: God who is there and the God who speaks.
 - ii) Application.
- c) *Discontinuity/Contrast from Old to New: Christ, who is the Divine Son incarnate.*
 - i) In the past... in these last days (=concept of the last days [Acts 2, 2 Tim 3, etc]).
 - ii) Many times, various ways... finality, sufficiency (=application to Christ and canon).
 - iii) Prophets... Christ (Prophet but more than a Prophet, he is the Son).
- d) *Why is the Son Better/Greater than the Prophets (and everyone else from the OT).*
 - i) Because of *who* he is and *what* he does.
 - ii) *Chiasm.*
 - a) The Son, whom the Father appointed heir of all things.
 - (1) The Son, through whom the Father created the universe.
 - (a) The Son is the radiance of God's glory (=Father).
 - (b) The Son is the exact correspondence of his being (=Father).
 - (2) The Son, through whom the Father sustains all things by his powerful word.
 - b) The Son, provided purification for sin and sat down at the Father's side.
 - iii) *Conclusion:* So the Son became much superior to angels... (now we have contrasts).

3. **Concluding Reflections/Application.**

- a) Christ's exclusivity and sufficiency.
- b) How we understand the Bible's story.
- c) The canon of Scripture.
- d) Two foundations for theology and all knowledge, etc: God and his word.