

Hebrews: A Bridge from the Old to the New

Hebrews – Introduction

Author: unknown Date Written: prior to Temple destruction, probably around A.D. 68

Theme: The Book of Hebrews is a study in contrast between the incomplete, law-based Old Covenant and the perfect, grace-based New Covenant

Outline: Superiority of... Jesus (prophets, angels, Moses, priesthood) ^{Hebrews 1-10}
 Christian Faith ^{Hebrews 11-12}
 Christian Behavior (toward others, self, God) ^{Hebrews 13}

Hebrews – Chapter 1

Jesus Christ: The Superior Prophet (Verses 1-3)

- 1** In His incredible patience, God spoke to the patriarchs and prophets ^{Luke 1:67-69} over thousands of years. During that time, the 39 books of the O.T. were written in different historical times, locations and cultures. The Lord spoke face-to-face ^{Numbers 12:4-8, John 9:29}, and by using visions ^{Hosea 12:9-10} and parables ^{Psalms 78:1-3}, as He revealed His plan of redemption ^{1 Peter 1:10-12}, endurance, encouragement and hope ^{Romans 15:4}.
- 2** The words “these last days” remind the reader the Messiah (Jesus Christ) ^{Micah 5:2, Zechariah 9:9, 1 Peter 1:18-21} had already come. Jesus is the “heir” of all things ^{Psalms 2:7-9}, which is an indication that everything is under His control ^{Daniel 7:13-14, Matthew 28:18}. Jesus was also confirmed as the Creator of all things ^{John 1:3, Colossians 1:16}.
- 3** Jesus is not a reflector of God’s glory, but a source ^{John 8:12, 2 Corinthians 4:4,6}: Father & Son are One ^{John 10:30}. Jesus is The Word ^{John 1:1,14} and His Word makes everything in the universe function properly ^{Colossians 1:17}. Following His purifying sacrifice ^{Titus 2:11-14}, Jesus went to the Father’s right hand ^{Mark 16:19, Romans 8:33-34}, the ultimate place of authority ^{1 Peter 3:21b-22}, but also a position “subject” to the Father ^{1 Corinthians 15:27-28}.

The O.T. prophets spoke about God’s plan of redemption, but Jesus lived out and completed the plan.

In verses 2 and 3, there are seven characteristics of Jesus listed. Jesus is:

- 1** Heir of all things (v.2)
- 2** Creator (v.2)
- 3** Radiates the same glory as the Father (v.3)
- 4** Is a perfect duplication of the character of the Father (v.3)
- 5** Sustainer of all things (v.3)
- 6** Savior (v.3)
- 7** Exalted LORD (v.3)

Jesus Christ: Superior to the Angels (Verses 4-14)

Through the book of Hebrews, the author used many O.T. Scriptures to prove the superiority of Jesus. For example, there are seven quotes from the O.T. contained in just this section of eleven verses.

- 4** The Greek word for “became” indicates a change in state (from spirit to flesh), not a change in essence. As a man, Jesus was “made a little lower than the angels”^{Psalm 8:5, Hebrews 2:9}; however, following the cross, His resurrection and His ascension, the name Jesus was placed above all except the Father’s^{Philippians 2:9-11}.
- 5** The author used two O.T. quotes^{Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14} to emphasize the intimate relationship between God the Father and God the Son^{Proverbs 30:4, Matthew 3:16-17}, that does not exist between the Father and His angels.
- 6** The Bible applies the term “firstborn” to Jesus in two ways: to the preeminence of Jesus— the only one who is the rightful heir of the Father^{Genesis 43:33, Psalm 89:27, Colossians 1:15} and to the first ‘person’ to be ‘born’ following death (i.e., resurrected)^{1 Corinthians 15:20, Colossians 1:18, Revelation 1:5}. The O.T. quote^{Deuteronomy 32:43} in this verse is not in the NIV, but does appear in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew O.T. from the third century B.C.), and gives a straight-forward command for the angels to worship Jesus.
- 7** The O.T. verse^{Psalm 104:4} defined the purpose of angels: to serve God^{Psalm 103:20-21}, by being God’s “wind” (*aggelos*: messenger) & “fire” (agents of judgement)^{Revelation 14:17-20} (and by ministering to believers^{v.14}).
- 8-9** The author continued his exalted description of Jesus with an O.T. quote^{Psalm 45:6-7} that spoke of the deity of Christ (“your throne, O God”) and His lordship (“scepter of justice” and “scepter of your kingdom”). The “companions” of Jesus refer to the temporary prophets, priests and kings of the O.T.; whereas, Jesus is the ultimate prophet^{v.1-2}, priest^{v.3} and king^{v.3,8} through the Father “anointing [Him] with the oil of joy”. The titles Messiah [Hebrew: *māshîyach*] and Christ [Greek: *christos*] both mean ‘anointed one’^{Luke 4:16-21}.
- 10-12** These verses quote an O.T. passage^{Psalm 102:25-27} that concerns the everlasting nature^{Revelation 1:17-18} of Jesus, the Creator of the universe^{v.2, Zechariah 12:1}, but the temporary nature of the first creation^{Isaiah 34:4, 51:6}.
- 13** The last of the seven O.T. quotes^{Psalm 110:1} in this section emphasizes God’s declaration of the lordship of the Son (not angels). The destiny of Jesus is to reign over all people^{Philippians 2:9-11}. The psalm^{Psalm 110:1} is also quoted five other times in the N.T.^{Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42-43, Acts 2:34-35, Hebrews 10:13}.
- 14** Along with God the Father, the angels are always prepared to serve God’s concerns for the welfare of the followers of Jesus^{Matthew 18:10}. Disciples of Jesus are taught to “practice hospitality”^{Romans 12:13}, in part because they never know when they might be in the presence of ministering angels^{Hebrews 13:1-2}.