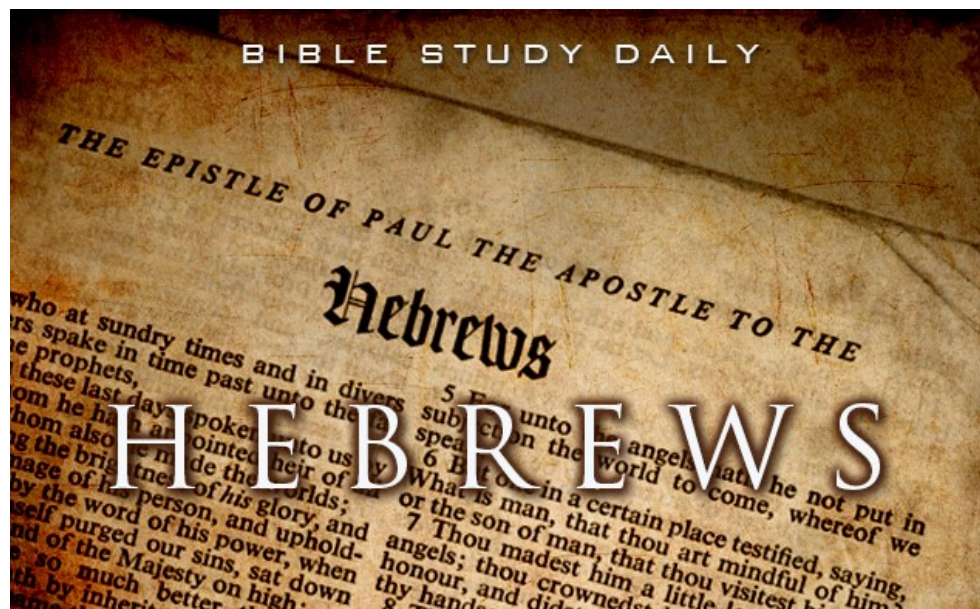




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Hebrews as well as my study notes for the book.



Name

The title “Hebrews ” comes from the intended audience identified generally speaking throughout the letter as "Hebrews," specifically Jewish Christians.

Author

The author of Hebrews is unknown. Much ink has been spilled by scholars trying to settle the issue of authorship. Parts of the letter read like Paul, other parts do not. Certainly Paul is capable of changing his literary style. There are as many internal clues pointing to Pauline authorship as there are clues suggesting someone else wrote the letter.

Even the opinions of the early church fathers are mixed. Dionysius and Clement of Alexandria believed it was Paul and from the time of Athanasius on it was the prevailing view. Neither Martin Luther or Calvin believed Hebrews was written by Paul.

Genre

Epistle with elements of a sermon

Literary Form

The specific literary form of Hebrews is difficult to ascertain. It has an ending like a letter, but it does not open like a typical letter with identification of the author, the recipients, and a greeting. Instead, the letter opens with a sermon of exhortation and instruction.

Time Frame

It is difficult to date the book of Hebrews with precision. It was most likely written prior to A.D. 70 when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, because the author would have likely made some mention of such a historic event.

Scholars who support Pauline authorship of Hebrews date the book near the end of his life, or about A.D. 67-68 assuming Paul was beheaded in May or June of A.D. 68.

Other scholars assume from the fact that the Jewish wars of A.D. 66-70 are not mentioned that the letter was written before then, or between A.D. 63-65.

Emphasis

The author of Hebrews argues the superiority of Jesus Christ from Scripture. The author argues from the Old Testament that Christ is the fulfillment of the new covenant, that He is the Son of God, and that He is superior in every way.

Outline*

Christ is superior to the prophets (1:1-3)

Christ is superior to the angels (1:4-14)

Warning 1. Do not neglect salvation (2:1-4)

Christ secures supremacy for man (2:5-13)

Christ secures triumphant victory for man (2:14-18)

Christ is superior to Moses (3:1-6)

Warning 2. The danger of unbelief (3:7-19)

Do not miss God's rest (4:1-13)

Christ as the supreme high priest (4:14-16)

The qualifications of Christ as supreme high priest (5:1-10)

Warning 3. The danger of falling away (5:11-6:20)

Jesus Christ is the great high priest forever (7:1-24)

Christ is the perfect high priest (7:25-28)

Christ is the exalted priest (8:1-5)

Christ is the minister of a new and superior covenant (8:6-13)

Christ is the minister of the greater and more perfect tabernacle (9:1-14)

Christ is the minister and mediator of the new covenant (9:15-22)

Christ is the minister and mediator of the perfect sacrifice (9:23-10:18)

Christ is the supreme author of faith (10:19-11:40)

Warning 4. The danger of apostasy (10:26-39)

Christ is the supreme example of endurance (12:1-29)

Warning 5. The danger of refusing to hear Christ

The supreme marks of Christian conduct (13:1-25)

*Adapted from Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible

What I Noticed Today (Hebrews 1-4)

Hebrews 1

In verses 1-4 the author jumps right to the heart of the matter; declaring Jesus as the Son of God:

- God revealed Himself in a variety of ways in the past, but now speaks through the Son, Jesus Christ,
 - The Son is heir of all.
 - The Son created all things.
 - The Son is the radiance of God's glory.
 - The Son is an exact expression of God's nature.
 - The Son sustains all things through His powerful Word.
 - The Son made provision for man's sin.
 - The Son sits at the right hand of the Father.
- Because of this, Jesus is higher in rank than the angels, just as His name is superior to theirs.

In verses 5-14 the author describes the divine nature of the Son, and His superiority over the angels:

- God never said to the angels, "You are my son" (Psalm 2:7, 2 Samuel 7:14, 1 Chronicles 17:13).
- God ordered the angels to worship His Son (Deuteronomy 32:43).
- God made the angels servants of the Son (Psalm 104:4).
- The Son's throne is eternal (Psalm 45:6-7)
- In the beginning, You the established the heavens and the earth. They will perish but You will remain and will not change (immutability). (Psalm 102:25-27).
- God never told the angels they would sit at His right hand (Psalm 110:1).
- The angels are ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit eternal life.

Note: In this section the author not only demonstrates the Son is superior to the angels, but also that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah, the only begotten Son of God.

Hebrews 2

In verses 1-4 the author gives the first of five warnings to the readers.

Warning 1. Against Neglect.

- We must pay attention to what we have heard so we do not drift away.
- For if there is punishment for every sin, how will we escape if we neglect salvation?
- It was first spoken by the Lord, but confirmed to us by those who heard Him.
- God also testified to the truth through miracles, signs, and wonders, and the giving of the Holy Spirit.

In verses 5-18 the author describes the humanity of Jesus:

- He is not subject to the angels, but temporarily became lower than the angels. He was crowned with glory and everything was subjected to Him. (Psalm 8)
- We do not see everything subjected to Him, but we do see Him for a short time so that by God's grace, He might taste death for everyone.
- For in bringing many sons to glory, God made the source of their salvation perfect through His suffering.
- For the One who sanctifies, and those who are sanctified, have one Father.
- This is why Jesus calls them brothers (Psalm 22:22).
- Jesus also calls them His own trust in God, and the children God has given me (2 Samuel 22:3, Isaiah 8:18).
- Jesus shared flesh and blood with the children, so that through His death, He would destroy the one holding the power of death (Satan).
- He does not reach out to help angels, but the sons of Abraham (the sons of the promise).
- He had to be like His brothers in every way so that He could become our merciful high priest, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.


Note: "Propitiating" in this sense means to satisfy or turn away the wrath of God through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

- For since He was tested (tempted) and suffered, He is able to help those who are tested (tempted).

Hebrews 3

In verses 1-6 the author issues a call for faithfulness:

- "Therefore" (because of Jesus' humanity), we are brothers and holy



companions in a heavenly calling with Jesus as the apostle and high priest of our confession

- Jesus was faithful to God, just as Moses was.
- Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the builder has more glory than the house.
- The One who built everything is God.
- Moses was a faithful servant in God's household as a testimony to what would come in the future.
- But Jesus was a faithful Son over His household, and we are that household, if we hold onto the courage and confidence of our hope.

Note: In establishing Jesus as higher than Moses, the author is also establishing the Gospel of Jesus over the Law of Moses.

Note: The idea of holding onto our courage and hope is a recurring theme in Hebrews. It is mentioned four times: 3:6b, 3:14, 10:23-25, 10:35-36.

In verses 7-19 the author issues the second of five warnings to the readers.

Warning 2. Against unbelief.

- “Therefore” because the Gospel of Jesus is superior to the law of Moses, the Holy Spirit says (Psalm 95:7-11):
- If you hear His voice do not harden your hearts, as in the wilderness when you tested Me for 40 years.
- Therefore, I was provoked with that generation, they always go astray in their hearts, and they have not known My ways.
- Watch out brothers so you won't have an evil, unbelieving heart that departs from God.
- But encourage one another so you are not deceived by sin.
- For we are companions of the Messiah if we hold firmly to the end.
- For who heard and rebelled? Those who came out of Egypt under Moses. Who provoked God for 40 years, but the generation that came out of Egypt.
- God swore they would not enter His rest because they disobeyed, and they were unable to enter the Promised Land because of their disbelief.

Hebrews 4

In verses 1-13 the author draws a parallel between those who came out of Egypt who did not enter into His rest, with a warning for current believers.

- The promise of God's rest remains.

- We have heard the Good News just as they did, but the message they heard did not benefit them because of their lack of faith.
- God rested on the seventh day when His work was finished.
- They will not enter His rest while their work is unfinished. They (Moses' generation) did not receive the Good News because of their disobedience. But God renewed the promise during the time of David.
- God's rest was not the time of Joshua's day (when they entered and conquered the Promised Land). If it was, He would not have said later there would be another day of rest, a Sabbath rest for God's people.
- For the person who has entered His rest has rested from his own works, just as God rested from His.
- Make every effort to enter into God's rest, and not fall into the pattern of disobedience of previous generations.
- For the Word of God is living and effective, and sharper than a two-edged sword able to penetrate deep between the soul and spirit. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart.
- All things are exposed to Him, and everyone must give an account to God for their lives.

In verses 14-16 the author describes our great high priest:

- "Therefore" because every act and motive is known by God, everyone must give an account for their lives.
- Since our high priest is Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold onto our confession of faith.
- Our high priest is able to sympathize with our weaknesses as One who was tested in every way, but was without sin.
- Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, that we might find mercy and grace in our time of need.

Note: Because Jesus is our mediator and great high priest we can approach the throne of God with confidence. No other mediator is needed.

Some other thoughts for consideration:

- *God has spoken to His people in many ways throughout time. Many hardened their hearts and refused Him. Others listened and believed.*
- *Today, we have God's Word and the Holy Spirit to guide us. We must guard against a hardened heart. We must listen and obey.*
- *God knows our innermost thoughts and motives. Nothing is hidden from Him. We will all give an account for our lives in the day of judgement and our only hope to enter into God's rest is faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.*

What I Noticed Today (Hebrews 5-7)

Hebrews 5-6

Having described the superiority of the Son of God (chapters 1-2) and the superiority of the Son's faithfulness (chapters 3-4), in chapters 5-6 the author describes the superiority of the Son's work.

Hebrews 5

In verses 1-10 the author describes the qualifications of the high priest based on Old Testament standards, using Aaron as an example:

- The high priest is selected from among men, and appointed to service.
- The high priest is man's representative before God in matters of offerings of gifts and sacrifices for sin.
- The high priest must be a man of compassion able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and going astray.
- Because of their weakness and his own he must make sin offerings.
- The high priest is called by God, just as Aaron was.
- The Messiah did not exalt himself to become high priest but was called (Psalm 2:7, Genesis 14:18-20).
- During His earthly life Messiah offered prayers and appeals to God and was heard because of His reverence.
- Though He was God's Son he learned obedience through His sufferings.
- Messiah was perfected by His sufferings, and became the source of salvation for all who would obey Him.
- He was declared a high priest by God in the order of Melchizedek.

Note: Aaron's sin offering was temporary, the salvation of Christ's offering for sin is eternal.

Warning 3. The danger of falling away (5:11-6:20)

In verses 11-14 the author describes the problem of immaturity:

- We have a great deal to say about this (the superiority of Christ as high priest).
- But, you are spiritually immature.
- By now you should be teachers, but you need someone to teach you the basics of God's revelation.

- Using a metaphor of a baby the author says, “You need milk, not solid food.”
- Everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced in their understanding of the message of righteousness. Solid food is for the mature who have been trained to distinguish between good and evil.

Note: The author is expressing concern that the Hebrews are so spiritually immature they will not be able to distinguish between the truth of the Gospel, and false gospel teaching.

Hebrews 6

In verses 1-20 the author describes the solution for the problem of falling immaturity and falling away:


- “Therefore” (because you are spiritually immature) let’s move to spiritual maturity, and not cover the foundational material of repentance from dead works (acts that lead to death), faith in God, teaching about ritual washings (baptism), laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement.

Note: The author lists six teachings which are essential elements of the Gospel. They may be placed in three groups of two: 1) repentance and faith in God, 2) the baptism of new believers and the commissioning of leaders (though laying on of hands), and 3) the resurrection and eternal judgement.

- It is impossible to renew to repentance those who have tasted the heavenly gift, become companions of the Holy Spirit, tasted God’s good word, and have fallen away because they are recrucifying the Son and holding Him in contempt.
- For ground that has had rain and produced useful vegetation is a blessing to its owners. But ground that produces thorns and thistles is useless to its owner. It will be cursed and in the end will be burned.

Note: Verses 4-8 have four common interpretations as to who the believers are that have fallen away: 1) are they Christians who are in danger of losing their salvation, 2) are they people who heard the Gospel but not become true believers, 3) that if a Christians could lose his salvation there was no way for repentance, and 4) a warning to Christians from falling away and being disqualified for further service to the Kingdom. There are problems with each of the first three interpretations. The fourth interpretation is best because it fits the context of the preceding portion of the letter as well as what follows.

- I am confident there are better things ahead for you (an encouragement given the sternness of the previous warning against apostasy).
- God is not unjust, He will not forget you work and your love for His name when you served the saints.

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- Now demonstrate the same diligence you showed before so that you won't become lazy. Rather, be imitators of those who inherit the promise of eternal life through faith and perseverance.
 - The author uses the example of Abraham as someone who demonstrated faith and perseverance: 1) God promised to bless Abraham (Genesis 22:17), 2) Abraham waited patiently for the promise and received it.
 - God guaranteed His promise to Abraham with an oath and God cannot lie, so His promise is unchangeable. Because of this they had hope.
 - We have the same hope in our lives, because Jesus has entered the inner sanctuary on our behalf, and become our high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

Note: The curtain of the inner sanctuary separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the sanctuary. Only the high priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies. This curtain was torn from top to bottom when Christ was crucified, thus eliminating the barrier between God and man.

Hebrews 7

The author has mentioned the priesthood of Melchizedek, but has not explained it. Beginning in chapter 7 through chapter 10 he explains the relevance of the Melchizedek priesthood.

In verses 1-10 the author describes the Melchizedek priesthood:

- King of Salem (Jerusalem), priest of the Most High God.
- He met Abraham and blessed him.
- Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.
- His name means king of righteousness, king of Salem means king of peace.
- He has no father or mother, or genealogy.
- Having no beginning and no end, he resembles the Son of God.
- He remains a priest forever.
- The Levites were to collect a tenth according to the Law because they were descendants of Abraham.
- But Melchizedek collected a tenth from Abraham even though he was not of this lineage.
- The inferior is blessed by the superior (Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek).
- The priesthood of Melchizedek was therefore superior to the Levitical priesthood.

In verses 11-19 the author explains the new priesthood replaces the old:

- The author asks a rhetorical question, “If perfection came through the Levitical priesthood why was there another priest in the order of Melchizedek, and not in the order of Aaron?”
- He argues because the priesthood of Aaron changes (whenever a new high priest is appointed) then the Law also changes.
- Our Lord was a descendent of Judah, and not of the tribe of the Levites. Moses never said anything about a priest coming from the tribe of Judah.
- Melchizedek also was a priest who did not come from the tribe of Levi, but became priest based on the power of an indestructible life (Psalm 110:4).
- The previous law is annulled because it is weak and unprofitable (because it perfected nothing), but the better hope is through those who approach God through faith.

In verses 20-28 the author describes the superiority of the new priest:

- Others became priest without an oath.
- But He became a priest with an oath made by God (Psalm 110:4).
- Through this oath Jesus became the guarantee of the better covenant.
- Many have been Levitical priests because they replace one another when they die.
- But this high priest remains forever, He holds His priesthood permanently.
- Therefore, He is always able to save those who come to God through Him, because He lives to intercede for us.
- This is the kind of High Priest we need. One who is holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sin, and exalted above the heavens.
- He does not need to make sacrifices for his own sins first and then for the sins of the people. He did this once for all when he sacrificed Himself on the cross.
- For the Law appointed priests who were weak, but the promise of the oath which came after the Law, appoints a Son who has been perfected forever.

Some thoughts for additional consideration:

- *The danger of falling away is all too real in today’s society. There is much that can capture our attention and interest, that takes us away from becoming spiritually mature. Are we becoming more and more spiritually mature, or are we stuck still drinking in spiritual milk rather than solid food?*
- *Jesus, as our high priest, is our mediator before God. He is always available, and because He is always available we have no need for a flesh and blood intermediary.*

What I Noticed Today (Hebrews 8-10)

Hebrews 8

In chapter 8 the author continues (from 7:20) the discussion on the superiority of the new covenant.

In verses 1-2 the author begins by summarizing and reinforcing what has just been said: this High Priest sat down at the right hand of God in heaven, a minister of the sanctuary and tabernacle established by the Lord not by man.

In verses 3-6 the author describes the priestly service of the new Covenant:

- Every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices.
- If He were on earth He wouldn't be a priest since there are already Levitical priests offering gifts prescribed by Law.
- And the earthly tabernacle built by Moses under God's direction is only a copy of the heavenly tabernacle (Exodus 25:40).
- But Jesus has a superior ministry in that he is mediator of the New Covenant legally enacted on better promises.

Note: The New Covenant was issued by God Himself with Himself. His promises will never be broken.

In verses 7-13 the author describes the superiority of the New Covenant:

- If the Old Covenant had been without fault, there would be no need for a New Covenant. The Old Covenant failed because of the fault (sins) of the people. Quoting from Jeremiah 31:31-34:
 - The time is coming when God will make a New Covenant with Israel.
 - Not like the covenant God made when He brought them out of Israel.
 - God rejected them because they rejected Him.
 - But after those days God will make a New Covenant with Israel and put My laws into their minds and write them into their hearts.
 - I will be their God and they will be My people.
 - From the least to the greatest they will all know the Lord.
 - I will be merciful to them and I will never again remember their sins.
- By saying New Covenant, He has declared the first is old, and what is old

is about to disappear.

Hebrews 9

In chapter 9 the author makes a comparison between the ministries of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant:

- The Old Covenant had regulations for ministry and an earthly sanctuary (verses 1-10).
 - There was a tabernacle with an inner room called the holy place.
 - Behind a curtain was the most holy place with a gold altar, the ark of the covenant, a jar of mana, Aaron's staff, and the tablets of the covenant (The Ten Commandments). The cherubim were above the mercy seat.
 - The priests would enter the first room repeatedly to do their ministry work.
 - The high priest would enter the most holy place only once per year and never without a blood sacrifice for himself and the sins of the people.
 - The Holy Spirit showed the true entrance into God's presence had not yet been disclosed while the first tabernacle was still standing.
 - Gifts and sacrifices cannot perfect a worshipper's conscience; they are only physical regulations imposed until the restoration.
- Regarding the ministry of the New Covenant (verses 11-28):
 - The Messiah, high priest, has come.
 - He came in the tabernacle not made with hands.
 - He entered the most holy place, not based on the blood of goats, but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.
 - The blood of the Messiah, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God to cleanse us.

Note: Notice the trinity at work in verse 14: The Messiah, son of God, through the Holy Spirit, offered Himself to the Father.

- Therefore (because He did this) He is mediator of the New Covenant so that those who are called will receive the promised eternal life.
- Because His death redeemed us from sins committed under the first covenant.
- A will is only valid when a person dies.
- That is why even the first covenant was established through blood (Exodus 24:8).

- According to the Old Covenant Law almost everything is purified by blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
- Therefore (because of the need to purify with blood) it was necessary for the heavenly things to be purified with better sacrifices than the blood of goats.
- The Messiah did not enter a sanctuary made with hands, but into the heavenly sanctuary to present Himself to God for us.
- He did not present himself over and over (like the old high priests did), otherwise he would have had to present himself many times since the foundation of the world.
- But He presented Himself one time for the removal of sin by His own sacrifice.
- Just as it is appointed for people to die once and after this the judgement, so also the Messiah offered once to bear sin will appear a second time to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

Hebrews 10

In verses 1-18 the author concludes the section begun in chapter 7 regarding the superiority of the new priesthood:

- The Law cannot perfect worshippers through sacrifices made every year.
- If it could they would have stopped making sacrifices because worshippers, once purified, would not have continued to sin.
- The sacrifices are a reminder of the sin that is still present, because it is impossible for the blood of goats to take away sin.
- Therefore, as He (Messiah) was coming He said (Psalm 40:6-8) You have prepared a body for Me, You did not delight in sin offerings, I have come to do Your will, God.
- The author restates Psalm 40:6-8 (verses 5-7) in summary form.
- The first covenant was taken away to establish the second covenant.
- By the will of God, we have been sanctified by the body of Christ once for all.
- Every priest offers the same sacrifices day after day, but they can never take away sins.
- But this man (Messiah) offered Himself one time as a sacrifice for sins and sat at the right hand of God.
- He is now waiting until His enemies are made His footstool.
- For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.
- The Holy Spirit testifies to this (Jeremiah 31:33-34).

- Where there is forgiveness of sin there is no longer an offering for sin.

Warning 4. Draw near to God (10:19-31)

In verses 19-25 the author exhorts the Hebrews to draw near to God and be Godly:


- Since we enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus, a new way He opened for us, and since we have a new high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with 1) a true heart, 2) in full assurance of faith, 3) our hearts clean from evil conscience, and 4) our bodies washed in pure water.
- Let us hold on to our confession of hope without wavering, because He who promised it is faithful.
- Let us be concerned for one another in order to promote love and good works, not staying away from fellowship as some do, but encourage each other all the more as the end draws near.

In verses 26-39 the author warns against sinning deliberately and offers encouragement:

- If we sin deliberately after receiving the knowledge of truth (referring to apostasy), then there remains no sacrifice for sins, but only judgement and destruction.
- If anyone disregards Moses' Law he dies based on the testimony of two or three witnesses.
- How much worse do you think the punishment will be for someone who rejects the Son of God and considers His shed blood as profane, the blood of the covenant by which He was sanctified.
- For we know vengeance belongs to the Lord (Deuteronomy 32:35).
- Remember the early days when, after becoming a believer you suffered persecutions. You sympathized with prisoners and accepted confiscation of your possessions with joy, knowing that you have a better possession in Christ.
- So don't throw away your confidence in your great reward.
- You need endurance so that after you have done God's will you may receive His promise (Isaiah 26:20).
- But we are not those who draw back but those who have faith of certain life.

Some additional thoughts for consideration:

- *There are no chairs in the Tabernacle because the priest's work of offering sacrifices was never done. But our new high priest, Jesus Christ, finished the work of redemption through His sacrifice and sits at the right hand of God!*

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- *In the Old Covenant sacrifices were a reminder of sin. In the New Covenant, Christ's sacrifice provides for the remission of sin. We rejoice because we have a righteous standing before God through faith in Christ's finished work on the cross.*

What I Noticed Today (Hebrews 11-13)

Chapters 11-13 are the third and final major section of the letter to the Hebrews. The focus of this section is on the superiority of a response to God by faith.

Hebrews 11

Chapter 11 exhorts believers to live by faith, and provides examples of men and women from the Old Testament who lived by faith.

In verses 1-3 the author describes faith as the reality of what is hoped for, and the proof of what is not seen. The Hebrew's ancestors won God's approval through faith. By faith we understand God created the universe by His command, so what we see is made from things that are not visible.

In verses 4-12 By faith:

- Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain.
- Enoch was taken away so he did not face death.
- Noah responded to God by building the ark. By faith he condemned the world.
- Abraham was prepared to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. By faith he stayed as a foreigner in a foreign land.
- Sarah bore children even though she was past the child bearing age.

In verses 13-16 they all died in faith without receiving the promise, but they saw promise in the future. They refused to return to where they had come from (their old religion). They desired the heavenly place. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

In verses 17-40:

- By faith Abraham was tested. He was prepared to offer up his son Isaac who was promised to build many nations, believing that God could raise him from the dead.
- By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau.
- By faith Jacob blessed each of the sons of Joseph.
- By faith Jacob mentioned the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions regarding his body.
- By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months unafraid of the king.
- By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, preferring to be known as a Hebrew.

- By faith Moses left Egypt, not afraid of the king's anger.
- By faith Moses instituted the Passover.
- By faith Moses led the people across the Red Sea.
- By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.
- By faith Rahab hid the spies in peace.
- By faith Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fires, escaped the sword, regained strength, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight.
- By faith women received their dead, raised to life (a reference to Elijah restoring the widow's son (1 Kings 17:17-24)).
- By faith some men were tortured and refused to be released.
- By faith others endured mocking, scourging, and imprisonment.
- By faith they were stoned, sawn in two, and died by the sword.
- By faith they wandered in sheepskins, goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated.
- By faith they wandered in deserts, and on mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

All these were approved in their faith, even though they did not receive what was promised, since God was providing something better for us (the Messiah and the perfecting of our faith).

Hebrews 12

In chapter 12 the author changes from teaching to exhorting the Hebrews to endure and be disciplined in their faith.

In verses 1-2 therefore (because of the list of faithful men and women from the past) let us lay aside the weights and sin that ensnares us, and run with endurance (perseverance) the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher (perfecter) of our faith, who endured the cross on our behalf, and sits at the right hand of God.

In verses 3-13 the author exhorts the Hebrews to endure suffering and consider it as discipline from a father.

- Jesus endured hostility from sinners, so you will not grow weary and lose heart.
- In your struggle against sin you have not yet shed your blood.
- Do not forget that the Lord disciplines those He loves (Proverbs 3:11-12).
- When you endure suffering as discipline, God is treating you like a son.

For what father does not discipline his children?

- But if you are without discipline then you are illegitimate (without a father).
- Since we submitted to our natural father's discipline, should we submit to God's discipline even more? God disciplines us for our benefit so we can share His holiness (leading to eternal life).
- No discipline is enjoyable at the time, but it yields the fruit of peace and righteousness to those who have received it.
- Therefore, strengthen yourself, and make straight your paths.

Warning 5. Against Rejecting God's Grace (12:14-29)

In verses 14-17 the author exhorts the Hebrews to:


- Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness. Without it no one will see the Lord.
- Do not fall short of the grace of God and see that no root of bitterness springs up defiling many (Deuteronomy 29:18).
- Do not be like Esau who sold his birthright for a meal.

In verses 18-29 the author issues his final warning:

- Using an image of the Law being delivered on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:9-23) the author describes the fear and trembling of the people who received this Law.
- But, you have not received this Law. Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God (heavenly Jerusalem), to where the angels gather.
- You have come to the city of firstborn, to where God who is the judge of all, to where the righteous people's spirits are perfected, to Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant whose shed blood is an atonement for our sin.
- Make sure you do not reject the One who speaks. The people who refused the Old Covenant did not escape, and those who reject the New Covenant will certainly not escape judgement.
- God will once more shake the earth with His voice, but also the heavens (Haggai 2:6) in which the created things will be destroyed (a reference to the remaking of heaven and earth after Christ's millennial reign).
- Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, let us hold onto God's grace, so we can serve God with reverence and awe.

Hebrews 13

Chapter 13 includes the author's final exhortations to the Hebrews, and his benediction and farewell.



In verses 1-6 the author begins with six exhortations regarding personal moral direction:

- Let brotherly love continue.
- Do not neglect to show hospitality.
- Remember the prisoners as though you were in prison suffering with them.
- Respect your marriage and keep it pure.
- Be free from the love of money (greed).
- Be satisfied with what you have (Psalm 118:6).

In verses 7-19 the author provides seven ways in which the Hebrews should revere their church leaders:

- Remember your leaders who have spoken God's word to you and imitate their faith.
- Christ is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Judge every teaching according to His truth.
- Realize that you may not be accepted by the world because the world despises Christ.
- Regardless, continually offer up your own praise, the fruit of our lips that confess His name.
- Do not neglect to do what is good and too share.
- Obey your leaders and submit to them for they keep watch over you souls.
- Pray for their leaders to have a clear conscience in everything they do.

In verses 20-25 the author offers a benediction and farewell to the Hebrews. He asks for the God of peace, who resurrected the Lord Jesus the great shepherd with blood of the everlasting covenant to equip you with all that is good to do His will, through Jesus Christ. To Him belongs the glory.

The author exhorts them to receive the message in this brief letter.

Some additional thoughts for consideration:

- *The "hall of faith" as chapter 11 is often referred to gives us affirmation that we must live by faith. These men and women who never received the promise, lived their lives in faith looking forward to the promise. We have the promise in the New Covenant.*
- *There is never a time when we should consider dropping out of the race God has put before us. We must find the courage to persevere through any trials or persecution that comes before us.*