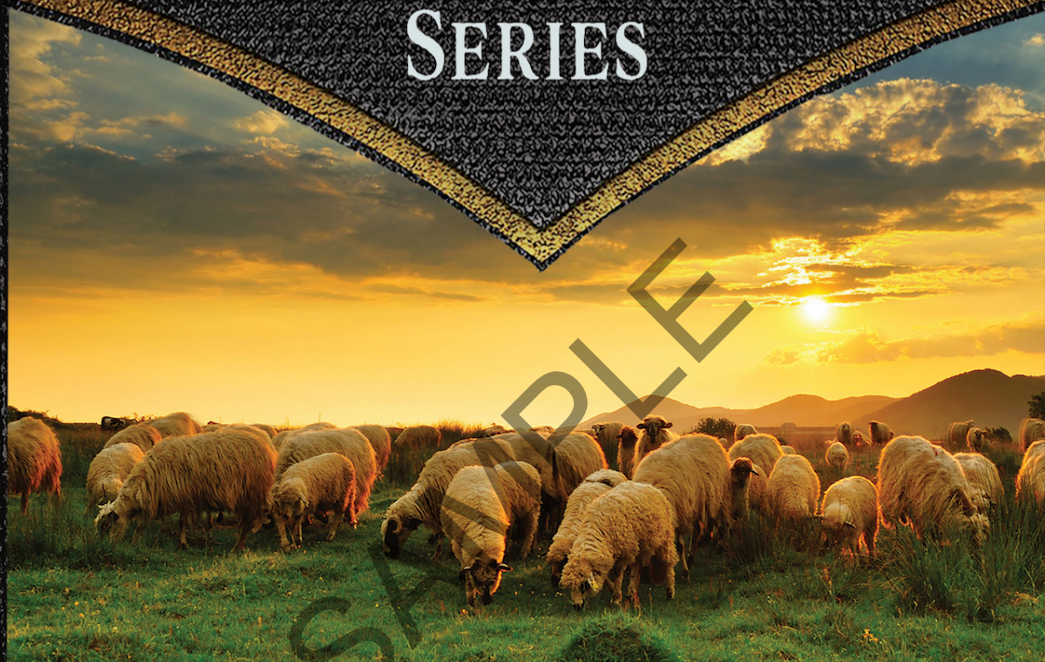


WAY OF LIFE
COMMENTARY
SERIES



HEBREWS
DAVID W. CLOUD

Hebrews

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ISBN 978-1-58318-280-2

This commentary began as an

Advanced Bible Studies Series course, 2005



Published by Way of Life Literature
PO Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061
866-295-4143 (toll free) - fbns@wayoflife.org
www.wayoflife.org

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Bethel Baptist Church
4212 Campbell St. N., London Ont. N6P 1A6
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Printed in Canada by
Bethel Baptist Print Ministry

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"David Cloud has rung the bell squarely again with these newly published commentary books on Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets. These commentaries are chock full of vital informative truths, Biblically sound doctrine and prophetic insights that are written in easy-to-understand language. The Fundamentalist Digest editor highly commends these books.

Introduction

Hebrews' Human Author

We are convinced that the apostle Paul is the author of Hebrews, though it is equally true that “the value of no New Testament writing depends on who wrote it” (W. Graham Scroggie).

1. Following are some of the reasons why we believe that Paul wrote the epistle to Hebrews:

The book was attributed to Paul by many ancient writers, beginning only a few decades after the apostles died. “By about AD 150 Pantaenus, the then leading teacher at Alexandria, was referring to it as a generally accredited epistle of Paul--which means that in only seventy years after Paul's death it was generally accepted as his! The point is not merely that Pantaenus himself believed it to be Pauline, but that at so early a date it was *generally* viewed as such” (J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*, p. 275). Adam Clarke lists roughly 80 men, councils, and groups between the 2nd and the 11th century that believed Paul wrote the book of Hebrews. These include Clement of Alexandria (AD 194), Dionysius (AD 247), Theognostus (AD 282), Methodius (AD 292 AD), Pamphilus (AD 294 AD), Archelaus of Mesopotamia (c. AD 301), Hierax (AD 302), Eusebius of Caesarea (AD 315), Athanasius (4th century), Adamantius (AD 380), Cyril of Jerusalem (AD 347), Titus of Bostria in Arabia (AD 362), the council of Laodicea (AD 363), Epiphanius (AD 368), Basil (AD 370), Gregory Nazianzen (AD 370), Ephrem the Syrian and the churches of Syria (AD 370), Ambrose of Milan (AD 374), Diodorus of Tarsus (AD 378), Jerome (AD 392), Theodore of Mopsuestia in Cilicia (AD 394), Rufinus (AD 397), Chrysostom (AD 398), Augustine (AD 399), Severian of Gabala in Syria (AD 401), and Victor of Antioch (AD 401).

A chief evidence that Paul is the author of Hebrews is the reference to Timothy in Heb. 13:23. Timothy was selected by Paul when he was a young man (Ac. 16:1-3) and continued to be his "right hand man" throughout his life. Compare 1 Co. 1:1; Php. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Th. 3:2; Phm. 1:1. "There is no other one of the apostles who would so naturally have used this term respecting Timothy; and this kind mention is made of him here because he was so dear to the heart of the writer, and because he felt that they to whom he wrote would also feel an interest in his circumstances" (Barnes).

Another evidence is the similarity between things in this epistle and those in Paul's known writings.

See, for example, the phrase "God of peace" (Heb. 13:20) and compare Ro. 15:33; 16:20; 1 Th. 5:23; 2 Co. 13:11.

See also the phrase "salute all" (Heb. 13:24) and compare 1 Co. 16:19-21; 2 Co. 13:13; Php. 4:21-22.

See also "grace be with you all" (Heb. 13:25). This was Paul's salutation (2 Th. 3:17-18). Compare Ro. 16:24; 1 Co. 16:23-24; 2 Co. 13:14; Ga. 6:18; Eph. 6:24; Php. 4:23; Col. 4:18; 1 Th. 5:28; 1 Ti. 6:21; 2 Ti. 4:22; Tit. 3:15; Phm. 25.

Another evidence that Paul wrote Hebrews is the location from which the epistle was written (Heb. 13:24). "The writer, therefore, was then in Italy, whither we know Paul was sent a prisoner, and where he resided two years, Acts 28:30; where also he wrote several epistles still remaining" (Adam Clarke).

Another evidence that Paul wrote Hebrews is Peter's statement in 2 Pe. 3:15.

Peter says that Paul had written to the same people he was addressing, which were the Jews who were scattered abroad. Compare 1 Pe. 1:1 and 2 Pe. 3:1.

Peter also mentions the difficult things that Paul had written. It appears that Peter is referring specifically to the

book of Hebrews. "It should be noted that the apostle Peter writes to the Jewish believers scattered abroad, as his first epistle makes evident. Therefore, of course, he writes to the Hebrews. His second epistle was written to the same people. ... Then again in this Hebrew letter to which Peter refers, Paul has written 'some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their own destruction.' How true is this of the Epistle to the Hebrews! How many thousands of unstable souls have been thrown into greatest agony of mind and perturbation of spirit because of misunderstandings and utterly false interpretations of parts of chapters six and ten. It would seem that Peter could not have indicated more definitely than he has done that he referred to this letter" (Ironsides).

Another evidence that Paul wrote Hebrews is its apostolic tone. "One thing which impresses itself on my own mind all the way through Hebrews is the tone of apostolic teaching-authority. ... It does not merely word the thinking of a disciple; it delivers the *firm dicta* of an apostle. ... But if it was written by an apostle, then, as Delitzsch asks: 'Who could have been its author but Paul?'" (J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*, p. 277).

A final evidence that Paul wrote Hebrews is the lack of evidence that someone else wrote it. Of the names that have been put forward, four are most prominent: Luke, Barnabas, Clement of Rome, and Apollos.

Luke was a Gentile rather than a Jew. His name, Loukas, is Greek. Yet the author of Hebrews is clearly a Jew.

Barnabas was not associated with Timothy after he and Paul split up (Ac. 15:36-41), so he would not have written what we have in Hebrews 13:23. The only ancient writer to assert that Barnabas wrote Hebrews was Tertullian (AD 160-230) and he gave no clear evidence.

Apollos was not considered the author of Hebrews by anyone before the 16th century, when Martin Luther theorized that he might be the penman.

Clement of Rome was not directly associated with the apostles and we do not see any possibility that he could have been the author of Hebrews.

2. Why didn't Paul sign his name as he does in other epistles? Following are some possible answers to this:

Since the epistle begins with God, Paul didn't want to include his name.

Since the epistle names Jesus as the great Apostle of our profession, Paul didn't want to include himself as an apostle (Heb. 3:1).

Since Paul was particularly the apostle to the Gentiles, he perhaps didn't want to sign this epistle to the Jews (Ro. 11:13).

We should note that the first epistle of John is also not signed.

3. Isn't the writing style of Hebrews different from that of Paul's known epistles? Answer: Much has been made of this point by some Bible scholars, but the fact is that a man's writing style can change dramatically according to the purpose and subject. There is a vast difference, for example, between the style of the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation, though we know that the same man was the human author of both books.

For an excellent overview of this matter and effective replies to those who deny Paul's authorship see B.H. Carroll's *Interpretation of the English Bible*, which is available in an electronic edition for SwordSearcher and for Ages Software, www.ageslibrary.com.

Its Recipients

The book of Hebrews is written to the Jewish believers in Judea and those that were scattered abroad. In Hebrews 10:32-34, the writer describes the persecution these believers had endured from the beginning. Compare Acts 8:1-3; 11:19.

The Time of Its Writing

We can only be sure that Hebrews was written before the destruction of the temple in AD 70, because the temple was still in operation when Hebrews was written (Heb. 8:4; 13:10).

Its Connection with the Rest of the Bible

The Bible is one Book that contains 66 individual books. It was conceived by God in heaven (Ps. 119:89) before it was delivered to holy prophets (2 Pe. 1:21). The Bible is a complete Revelation and must be studied as a whole. To understand Hebrews, it is necessary to be familiar with Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, the Psalms, the Gospels, and Paul's Epistles. The student of Hebrews must be familiar with Abraham, Melchizedek, Judah, Levi, Moses, the law of Moses, the tabernacle, the Levitical sacrifice and priesthood, angels, the wilderness wandering, the Holy Spirit, Christ's ascension, and many other things.

This is why we say that every believer should get the equivalent of a Bible Institute education, and every church should provide this level of education. A Bible Institute course of study is *the beginning point* to be able to understand the Bible and study it effectively, to be the teacher that God says each believer should be (Heb. 5:12-14) and to find God's will in this present life. Way of Life Literature publishes a Bible Institute curriculum called the *Advanced Bible Studies Series* and many other Bible courses as noted in the beginning

of this commentary. The first course we recommend is *The Effectual Bible Student*.

The Theme

One of the most important factors in understanding any book in the Bible is to identify its theme and purpose. “He who selects a text at random from a given book with little or no regard to the context, failing utterly to grasp the theme and its unfolding, is almost certain to be misled and to mislead his ignorant hearers...” (Ironsides).

Hebrews has a two-fold theme

1. Hebrews is a warning to Jews who had professed faith in Jesus as Christ to continue in that faith and thereby show that they were genuinely saved.

“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. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (Heb. 2:1-3).

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end” (Heb. 3:12-14).

“Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it” (Heb. 4:1).

“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Heb. 4:11).

“And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end” (Heb. 6:11).

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Heb. 10:38).

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God” (Heb. 12:15).

The Jewish professors were in danger of turning back because of persecution (Heb. 10:32-35) and the reproach of their fellow Jews (Heb. 13:13). Other Scriptures warn about the danger of trials and persecution. See Lu. 8:13; Ac. 14:22; 2 Ti. 2:12; Jas. 1:2-8; 1 Pe. 4:12. When the evangelist Hyman Appelman (1902-1983) was converted to faith in Jesus at age 23, his Jewish family put massive pressure upon him. His fiancé broke off their engagement. When he refused his father's pleas to return to his Jewish faith, his father said, “When your sides come together from hunger and you come crawling to my door, I will throw you a crust of bread as I would any other dog.” At one point, Appelman was so oppressed and discouraged that he considered suicide.

2. Toward this end Christ is shown to be superior to all things that unsaved Jews put their faith in: the prophets (Heb. 1:1-3), angels (Heb. 1:4 - 2:18), Moses (Heb. 3:1 - 4:13), and the Mosaic law and the priesthood (Heb. 4:14 - 8:5). Christ is presented as better than all of these things.

Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides or Rambam), who is called the greatest Jewish rabbi, taught that Moses is the greatest man and that none will ever excel him. Following is a summary of Maimonides' teaching: “We should believe that he is father of all the prophets who preceded him and will come after him. All of them are beneath him in rank. He is God's chosen (*safw 'l-Allah*) from the entire human species, who apprehended of the Exalted more than any other human apprehended or will apprehend” (Joel Kraemer, *Maimonides*:

The Life and World of One of Civilization's Greatest Minds). In his *Thirteen Fundamental Principles*, Maimonides taught that "the law of Moses will not be abrogated, and no other law from God will come, nothing will be added to it or detracted from it either in its text or in its interpretation."

Hebrews key verse is 8:6. *"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."*

The word "better" is used 13 times in Hebrews. Christ is better than angels (Heb. 1:4), offers a better hope (Heb. 7:19), has a better testament (Heb. 7:22), a better covenant (Heb. 8:6), better promises (Heb. 8:6), better sacrifices (Heb. 9:23), and blood that speaks better things (Heb. 12:24). The believer has a better substance in heaven (Heb. 10:34), a better country (Heb. 11:16), and a better resurrection (Heb. 11:35). Christ is also said to be "more excellent" (Heb. 1:4, 8:6; 11:4), "more perfect" (Heb. 9:11), and "greater" (Heb. 9:11).

Thus in Hebrews "we see Jesus" (Heb. 2:9) in a special way. It is an expansion on what God said on the Mount of Transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Mt. 17:5; Mr. 9:7; Lu. 9:35). Hebrews opens the veil and invites us to gaze upon the throne in the holy of holies on high more plainly than any other book of the New Testament.

Some of the names and titles of Christ in the book of Hebrews:

Son (1:2)

Heir of all things (1:2)

Firstbegotten (1:6)

God (1:8)

Lord (1:10)

Jesus (2:9)

Captain of our salvation (2:10)

Merciful and faithful High Priest (2:17)

Apostle (3:1)
Christ Jesus (3:1)
Son of God (4:14)
Author of eternal salvation (5:9)
Forerunner (6:20)
Surety of a better covenant (7:22)
Intercessor (7:25)
Mediator of the new covenant (8:6)
Author and Finisher of our faith (12:2)
Great Shepherd of the sheep (13:20)

Hebrews and Eternal Security

What about the passages in Hebrews that have been used to teach that the believer can lose his salvation?

1. We know that the writer of Hebrews is not teaching that true believers can lose their salvation, because he plainly states that continuing in and persevering in faith is the EVIDENCE of one's salvation rather than the WAY OF salvation.

Consider the following verses very carefully:

Hebrews 3:14 -- *“For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”*

This verse says those who hold their confidence to the end ARE made partakers of Christ. The holding is *the evidence* rather than *the means* of one's salvation. Being a partaker of Christ is a present possession rather than a future possibility that must kept through “holding out faithful.”

Hebrews 6:9 -- *“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.”*

This verse teaches that true salvation is accompanied by certain things. True salvation will demonstrate itself in the

believer's life. It produces obedience and perseverance in the faith.

Hebrews 10:38-39 -- *"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."*

These verses teach that those who draw back are not true believers, that those who truly believe in a saving way continue in the faith.

2. In reality, the book of Hebrews clearly and powerfully teaches the doctrine of eternal security:

Hebrews presents salvation as full and rich, eternal and sure.

Hebrews presents Christ in all aspects of His beautiful Person and character: Son, Creator, Saviour, Mediator, Author, High Priest, Captain, Apostle, Shepherd.

Hebrews presents Christ's atonement in its eternal, saving, sanctifying perfection. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (Heb. 10:19-20).

Hebrews presents a confident, know-so salvation. It defines hope as sure and steadfast (Heb. 6:19), faith as substance and evidence (Heb. 11:1), sin as having been put away (Heb. 9:26), sanctification as accomplished forever (Heb. 10:10, 14). The believer is instructed to enter into God's presence boldly (Heb. 5:16; 10:19), to draw near in full assurance of faith (Heb. 10:23).

This is the opposite of a book that teaches that salvation is something uncertain, something that can be lost.

Christ's **Purging** promises security (Heb. 1:3). Christ purged our sins *by Himself*. What could possibly be left for me to do? To lose one's salvation would mean that it is dependent upon

something I do or fail to do, but that would be a works salvation.

Christ's **Rest** promises security (Heb. 4:3, 10). These verses say those who believe enter into eternal rest. That is a present position and possession of every true believer. Salvation is not something we have to earn or keep; it is a gift that we enjoy forever.

Christ's **Hope** promises security (Heb. 6:17-19). These verses clearly state that biblical salvation is sure. The believer's hope is not a maybe-so hope but a know-so one.

Christ's **High Priesthood** promises security (Heb. 7:25-26). Not only did Christ die to make atonement for the believer's sin, He ever lives to make intercession for him on the basis of that atonement.

Christ's **Covenant** promises security (Heb. 8:10-12; 10:16-19). He writes His laws into the believer's heart and forgives the believer's sin to such an extent that they are remembered no more. It is sin that brings God's judgment, and if God remembers my sin no more, how could I ever be lost?

Christ's **Blood** promises security (Heb. 9:12, 26; 10:14). We have eternal redemption through His blood (Heb. 9:22). Sin is put away through His blood (Heb. 9:26). We are sanctified once-for-all through His blood (Heb. 10:10). We are perfected forever through His blood (Heb. 10:14).

3. The book of Hebrews teaches that it is possible to come near to salvation without experiencing it. Consider the following examples of this from other parts of the Bible:

Consider Balaam (Nu. 24). Balaam "talked a good talk" and even prophesied great things (Nu. 24:14-19), but he was in the business for money (2 Pe. 2:15; Jude 11) and he sold Israel out to her enemies (Nu. 31:16). Balaam perished with Israel's enemies (Nu. 31:8; Jos. 13:22). "Balaam was the man whose

eyes were opened (Nu. 24:3), and yet with his eyes opened he went down to utter darkness” (Matthew Henry).

Consider the Jews in John 2:23. These “believed in his name,” but it is obvious that they weren’t saved, because “Jesus did not commit himself unto them” (Joh. 2:24). This is because they were not believing the right thing. They did not believe in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour from sin but as a worldly Messiah who would deliver them from their earthly enemies and prosper them materially. Compare Joh. 6:14-15, 26, 64, 66.

Consider Judas Iscariot. As an apostle he was certainly enlightened and tasted of the good Word of God. In fact, he lived with the Word of God for three years. He tasted of “the powers of the world to come” (Heb. 6:5), because he was sent out by Christ with the other apostles and apparently even did miracles himself (Mt. 10:1-4). Though Judas was never saved, the other apostles did not doubt him. Even when Jesus told the disciples that one of them would betray Him, they did not suspect Judas (Mt. 26:21-22-25). Yet he went to his own place, meaning that he was never saved (Ac. 1:25). Judas was a hypocrite who lived a secret life as a thief (Joh. 12:6). Like many other Jews, Judas was probably expecting that Jesus would be a worldly Messiah and rescue them from their enemies and establish a kingdom right away and that he would profit personally by being aligned with Jesus, but when Judas understood that this was not going to happen he sold Jesus out for some money.

Consider those described in Matthew 7:21-23. They call upon the Lord, prophesy, cast out devils, and do many wonderful works; but Jesus says, “I never knew you” (Mt. 7:23). He does not say that He knew them at one time but they fell away; He *never* knew them.

Consider Simon (Acts 8:12-24). Simon “believed” (Ac. 8:13) but he was not saved because his “faith” was insincere. He did

not believe to the saving of his soul but for the purpose of gaining miracle-working power (Ac. 8:18-23).

Consider the Jews in Acts 21:20. There were “many thousands of Jews” that believed but they were also “zealous of the law.” They should have known by then that believers were not under the Mosaic law. That had been settled at the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15, but we see that these “believing” Jews were doctrinally confused, to say the least. It is likely that many of them were not truly saved. The book of Hebrews addresses this confusion directly and warns such Jews not to return to the Old Covenant.

Consider the Parable of the Sower (Lu. 8:11-15). Hebrews 6:7-8 points directly to this parable. The Word of God falls upon four kinds of hearts. The rocky heart “*receives the word with joy*” and “*for a while believes*” (Lu. 8:13), but such a person is not saved because the Word of God is not received truly and deeply and therefore falls away in time of temptation. That is what we see in Hebrews 6:8. It is the “*honest and good heart*” that receives the Word and patiently bears good fruit (Lu. 8:15), and this is described in Hebrews 6:7, 9.

Key Words in the Book of Hebrews

“Repetition means emphasis, and so, words which occur often in any New Testament book are of special importance (W. Graham Scroggie).

FAITH and BELIEVE (36 times) -- Heb. 3:18; 4:2, 3; 6:1, 12; 10:22, 23, 38, 39; 11:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 39; 12:2, 7

BLOOD (20 times) -- Heb. 2:14; 9:7, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 10:4, 19, 29; 11:28; 12:4, 24; 13:11, 12, 20

ETERNAL, EVERLASTING, FOREVER (16 times) -- Heb. 1:8; 5:6, 9; 6:2, 20; 7:17, 21; 9:12, 14, 15; 10:12, 14; 13:8, 20, 21

BETTER (13 times) -- Heb. 1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24

ONCE (11 times) -- Heb. 6:4; 7:27; 9:7, 12, 26, 27, 28; 10:2, 10; 12:26, 27

HOPE, CONFIDENCE, ASSURANCE (11 times) -- Heb. 3:6, 14; 6:11, 18, 19; 7:19; 10:22, 36; 11:1

PERFECT (10 times) -- Heb. 2:10; 5:9, 14; 7:19; 9:9, 11; 10:1; 11:40; 12:23; 13:21

LEST (10 times) -- Heb. 2:1; 3:12, 13; 4:1, 11; 11:28; 12:3, 13, 15, 16. The word “lest” is usually used in Hebrews in the context of exhortation and warning.

What Hebrews Can Do

The following breakdown of some of the things that the book of Hebrews can do strengthens our conviction that this is an extremely important book. Hebrews can help any believer and any church in any culture.

1. Hebrews can help professing Christians resist the temptation to go back to the world or back to some false religion and can challenge them to make certain of their salvation. Examples are those with a background in Roman Catholicism, Greek Orthodoxy, Hinduism, Animism, Voodoo, or Islam.

Hebrews is for all people who entertain the gospel and the claims of Jesus and make professions of faith in Him as Saviour. Through the decades of our church planting ministry, we have seen hundreds of Hindus and Buddhists come *close to* salvation, profess to believe in Jesus as Saviour, even seeming to possess salvation in some cases, then turn away because of persecution or some other reason.

Hebrews is for children who grow up in Bible-believing homes and churches. Most children in this context profess Christ and are baptized, but these professions are often

A Better Deliverer

(Hebrews 1:1 - 5:10)

This opening section of Hebrews shows, in the most dramatic manner, that Jesus is greater than the angels, Moses, and Aaron. These were the things that the Hebrews gloried in, and it was to these that professing Jews were tempted to return through the pressures of tribulation.

Jesus is greater than the angels because He is very God. He is greater than Moses inasmuch that He who built and owns the house is greater than he who merely served in it. He is greater than Aaron because He is the reality of which Aaron was merely the type.

This section is interspersed with powerful exhortations and warnings about apostasy.

Introduction (Heb. 1:1-4)

These first four verses form an introduction to the book of Hebrews. It is one long sentence. The three major themes are God, God's speaking or God's revelation, and God's Son. The Son is the major theme of the entire book and we will consider Him separately. Here we will consider lessons on God and on God's revelation.

1. The first thing we see in Hebrews is God (Heb. 1:1).

God is mentioned 72 times in Hebrews, more than in any other New Testament epistle.

God is seen in His eternal power and wisdom, controlling the times and the seasons by His great power and for His purposes.

Note the great lessons about God in this brief passage:

God exists

The Bible never tries to prove the existence of God. He is introduced in the first verse of the Bible, and throughout the Bible His existence is taken for granted. "There are courses in seminaries today that try to build up some philosophic system by which the existence of God can be proven. I have been through courses like that, and I know what I'm talking about when I say it is a great waste of time. There is something wrong with you if you can't walk out and look up at the mountains, or go down to the seashore and look at the sea, or look up into the heavens, and recognize that there is a Creator. 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork' (Ps. 19:1). It is the fool who has said in his heart that there is no God (see Ps. 14:1)" (J. Vernon McGee).

God speaks (Heb. 1:1-2).

God wants to reveal Himself to His creation, and He *has* revealed Himself. God has spoken!

God is knowable. He can be known because He has revealed Himself and He has made man in His image so that man can understand God's revelation.

God is knowable by human language. God made man's language, and the first purpose of human language is that man might know God. Before Adam had a wife, he heard God's Word and spoke to God. The Scripture is written in human language and it is capable of communicating "the deep things of God" (1 Co. 2:10-13).

God can only be known by His own revelation. Man cannot know the invisible, infinite God by his own powers of intellect and observation. To attempt to do so is the height of arrogance and folly.

God speaks fully. He has not shown a mere few things about Himself. He has given a full revelation in the Scripture and in His Son. The Bible is a revelation of “the mind of the Lord” (1 Co. 2:16). In Christ, God has revealed “the express image of his person.”

God has a Son (Heb. 1:2).

We will deal with this further in the study on Christ is better than the angels.

God is the Creator of all things (Heb. 1:2).

The word “worlds” is the Greek *aion* or *eon*, which refers both to the physical world and to the age or time in which God is working out His purposes in the world. *Aion* is often translated “world,” but it is also translated “age” (Eph. 2:7; Col. 1:26) and “forever” (most often referring to God and Christ) (Mt. 6:13; Joh. 12:34; 14:16; Ro. 9:5; 11:36; 16:27; 2 Co. 11:31; Ga. 1:5; Php. 4:20; 1 Ti. 1:17; 2 Ti. 4:18; Heb. 1:8; 5:6; 7:24; 13:8; 1 Pe. 5:11; 2 Pe. 3:18; Jude 1:25; Re. 1:6, 18; 4:9, 10; 5:14; 7:12; 10:6; 15:7). The eternal *aions* also refer to the Word of God. In 1 Pe. 1:23, 25, we are told that the Word of God “liveth and abideth for ever” and “endureth for ever. This is *eis aion*, or into the ages. The eternal torment of the unsaved is also said to be *eis aion aion* (Re. 14:11; 20:10), a most fearful concept. In the following verses, *aion* seems to have the dual meaning of world (physical) and of age (Lu. 1:70; 16:8; 20:34; Ac. 15:18; 1 Co. 2:7-8; 3:18; Eph. 4:4; Ga. 1:4; Eph. 1:21; 3:9; 1 Ti. 6:17; 2 Ti. 4:12; Tit. 2:12). The ultimate goal of the *aions* is described in Ephesians 1:10, “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him.” The word “time” here is the same concept as “age.” Note in Ephesians 1:10 that there are “times,” plural. There are past *aions* (Col. 1:26), the present *aion*, and *aions* to come

(Eph. 1:21; 2:7; Heb. 6:5). In Eph. 3:21, “world without end” is *aion aion*. In brief, *aion* refers both to the physical universe and to the time universe. *Aion* refers to worlds of matter and to the worlds of time. The physical universe is the realm or sphere in which God’s plan for the *aions* take place. The present heaven and earth is the sphere of the past and present ages, while the new heaven and new earth will be the sphere of the ages to come. Christ is maker of the worlds. He is the Creator of all things visible and invisible, present and future. **Christ is also called King of the *aions*** (1 Ti. 1:17). The “King eternal” is the King *aion*. And the verse ends with honor and glory to this King “forever and ever,” which is *eis aion aion*, literally “into ages ages.” This describes *aions* and *aions* of God’s eternal purposes and activities, with Christ as King over them.

This means that God is in control of all things and can be explicitly trusted with everything in our lives. When David said, “My times are in thy hand” (Ps. 31:15), he was saying that everything pertaining to himself is in God’s hand. All times are in God’s hand. Every era of time and every day and every tiny detail of every era is under God’s watchcare and control.

God appoints (Heb. 1:2).

God has an eternal plan (Eph. 3:11) and every detail of that plan is carried out under His appointment. He “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph. 1:11).

He appoints all authority. He “changes the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings” (Da. 2:21). “For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another” (Ps. 75:6-7).

“For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God” (Ro. 13:1).

God appoints individuals. He forms every man in the womb (Ps. 139). This means that God is in control of my appearance, my abilities; He is in control of the family into which I was born, in what order I was born, etc.

He appoints the nations, their times, and their boundaries (Ac. 17:26).

He appoints every gift and calling in the church. “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will” (1 Co. 12:11).

God has glory; God is glorious (Heb. 1:3).

God’s glory is His character: His omnipotence, omniscience, holiness, righteousness, justice, love, mercy, grace, kindness, gentleness, patience. “Brightness” is the shining out, like the brightness of the sun. All of God’s glorious character is made bright or revealed in Christ. “God is no longer hidden nor at a distance. He has come down into His own world seeking those who have wandered from Him, manifesting Himself in all His infinite holiness and righteousness. In Christ, God is fully told out” (Ironsides).

God is a Person (“express image of his person,” Heb. 1:3).

God is not an impersonal intelligence or power. God thinks, wills, speaks, acts. Man is a person with an individual personality because he is made in God’s image.

God upholds all things (Heb. 1:3).

Not only did God create all things, but He also upholds all things. He has not abandoned creation like a Deist God. He is not the creation as in pantheism, and He is not *in* the creation as in panentheism, but He upholds and sustains the creation. He is intimately involved in the creation.

We will deal with this in the section “Christ is better than the angels because He is the Sustainer of the universe.”

God has purged sins (Heb. 1:3).

God planned to purge sins before man was made. Christ is the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world (Re. 13:8), meaning that this was an accomplished fact in God’s mind. Christ as an atoning lamb was “foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Pe. 1:19-20).

God’s plan and act of purging the sins of wicked sinners who have willfully broken His holy laws, tells us great things about His character. Here we see *God’s great holiness and justice* (sin cannot be overlooked but requires a proper purging, a proper atonement). We also see *God’s great love*, mercy, grace, kindness. We further see *God’s great wisdom* in determining a way that “he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Ro. 3:26). By making His Son the atonement for man’s sin, God retains the power of His holy law while also providing the way of forgiveness for sinners who have broken that law. The law stands, because the demand of the law has been fulfilled in Christ in the sinner’s place.

God is the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:3)

God is the Ruler over all who sits on the throne of the universe. He is Most High. “Majesty” is the Greek *megalosúne*, meaning “magnificence, splendor, greatness.” The Greek “mega” is still used today in common English for great, the biggest. Majesty is one of the four words that are used by Jude to describe God’s almighty magnificence. “To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever” (Jude 1:25).

2. In the opening verses of Hebrews we see God’s speaking, God’s revelation, the divine inspiration of Scripture (Heb. 1:1-2).

Hebrews begins by saying that God has spoken. God has spoken! What a wonderful thing! Man has rebelled against God and plunged the world into sin and darkness, but God has not left us alone. He has spoken. He has revealed Himself for those who will hear. He has spoken through Scripture, and He has spoken through Christ. The wise will take heed to God's Word and find light in the darkness.

Hebrew's opening statement on biblical inspiration is amazing both in its brevity and its depth. These 30 words in English (18 in Greek) encompass the entire doctrine of biblical inspiration. Both Old and New Testaments are encompassed, and there is no hint of questioning the divine inspiration of any portion of Scripture. Christ and the Apostles exalted the Scripture as the infallible Word of God whose human authors are the historical men known in the Scriptures themselves. The events described in Scripture are stated to be historical events with no hint of mythology. This is the only sound doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. Anything less is vile heresy, whether it is taught by a Catholic, a Protestant, an Evangelical, a Baptist, a Fundamentalist, or anyone else.

Consider some of the lessons on the divine inspiration of Scripture from Hebrews 1:1-3:

The Scripture was infallibly given so that the product is the words of God rather than the words of man ("*God ... spake,*" Heb. 1:1).

The emphasis here is not that man wrote but that God spoke. The "human element" in the giving of Scripture is not emphasized. We know that men wrote the books of the Bible, but the emphasis must be on the fact that the product is the infallible Word of God. In contrast, modern biblical scholarship focuses on the "human element," exploring endless "documentary" theories, vainly attempting to discover what "sources" the Gospel