

The Book of Hebrews—an overview

Jesus—God’s Son—Greater, Better, Above and Beyond

Introduction to studying the book of Hebrews

The book of Hebrews is a valuable guide to understand the New Covenant (Testament) as a fulfillment and replacement of the Old Covenant (Testament), often referred to as the Law of Moses. The New Covenant opened up a new relationship with God for all people.

The focus of the book's instruction is the superiority and sufficiency of Jesus the Messiah (Christ). Jesus' supremacy is made clear in a progressive series of comparisons to the Old Testament (OT) prophets, angels, Moses, and others. His reconciling work on the cross, and as the ultimate High Priest, provides great assurance He is the Savior for all humanity.

Hebrews was originally written to encourage, exhort, and warn Christian believers with Jewish origins to continue trusting in Jesus rather than reverting back to their religious heritage, the Law of Moses.

Today it provides clear insight to remind us why no one can rely upon their own efforts to be *good enough* for God. A trusting faith in Jesus—who He is and what He did and continues to do—is more than sufficient to bring us into the very presence of God.

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- **The first 4 verses give us the foundation of the focus and theme of Hebrews**
 - Vs 1 reveals how God spoke to His people in the past through the OT prophets—*His spokespersons*—at various times and ways
 - Vs 2 declares how God spoke more directly and personally through His Son—*in these last days*—the last days begin with the Lord’s death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead to establish the New Covenant
 - Vss 2-3 reveal the essence—*nature*—of who Jesus is (refs— John 1:1, 14; Col 1:15-20) and the Essential Gospel— *He Came, He Died, He Rose* (see Acts 2:22-24; 1 Cor 15:1-8)
 - Vs 4 establishes the superiority of Jesus and the New Covenant He established through His life, death, and resurrection.
 - Vss 1-4 declare the first 2 ways that Jesus is *Greater, Better, Above, and Beyond*—that is, His supremacy
 - Jesus is greater than the OT prophets
 - Jesus is greater, better, higher than the angels
 - From these first 4 verses, a progressive theological argument—like a lawyer’s case or philosophic thought—is made throughout the first 10 chapters of the supremacy of the Lord Jesus’ person and work as the Son, Messiah, our High Priest and Atonement.
 - **The progressive argument for the supremacy of Christ is also connected to 5 warnings found in the following chapters—**

- **2:1-4– Warning #1**– pay attention / don’t drift away or neglect the Gospel message to return to the Law
- **3:7–4:13– Warning #2**– don’t let anything keep you from entering the Lord’s rest (grace versus works)
- **5:11–6:12– Warning #3**– don’t fall away but move forward by faith
- **10:19-39– Warning #4**– no other sacrifice for sin(s) beyond Christ’s atonement, so endure and continue in your confidence in Christ
- **12:25-29– Warning #5**– don’t refuse Christ who personally speaks to us (1:1-2)
- **2 important theological studies can be traced throughout Hebrews**
 - **Christology**– the nature and person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God
 - Look for references to the Lord’s humanity and divinity
 - **Soteriology**– our redemption / salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus
 - The New Covenant relationship with God in Christ

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8 GW)

- Hebrews is like a NT commentary (or explanation) of the OT and uses considerable figurative language including Typology.
- **Here are some guidelines for understanding the use and purpose of Typology—**
 - Types are representative symbols with a historical base or point of reference (usually in the OT) and related to represented by some—*act, event, thing, or person*
 - Types are a *pattern, copy, or shadow* of the True (called the anti-type) it represents or pre-figures
 - Types are like a concrete / tangible illustration (something known) of a spiritual truth or reality
 - There may be many parts or details of one Type, so take one of the details or parts of a Type as a separate type of its own because they don’t have their own symbolic meaning separately
 - Types often deal with eschatological elements since the “last days” begin from Christ / Messiah’s first appearance
 - Types are prophetic and have a future fulfillment in the True (anti-type)
 - EX– Gal 3:16– Abraham’s Seed) \simeq Gal 4:24-25– 2 Covenants
 - EX– Heb 7:12-17– Melchizedek \simeq Christ as High Priest
 - EX– Heb 9:11-15; 10:1– OT sacrifices \simeq Christ’s atoning blood