

HEBREW S



Jesus preaching the "Sermon On The Mount"

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A STUDY IN PRACTICAL CHRISTOLOGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The Study prepared by
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GETTING STARTED ON 'HEBREWS'

What do we need to know about this letter to gain the most from it?

Questions: - To Prepare Us For A Study On Hebrews

1. Who is your favourite biblical prophet and why is he / she your favourite? What have you learned from them?
2. Who is the person in the bible, other than Jesus, that you use the most as an example by which to model yourself?
3. Do you believe that Francis of Assisi was a true seeker of the light? What about Mother Theresa? What about John Calvin? What about Martin Luther? { -- All of these are people that have large followings today, using their examples as models for living. Did they have anything correct in their thinking? If so, what was it, do you think? }

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4. Who do "I" personally use as my Christian models, today? (As an person, to whom do you see yourself beholding to from the past? Using as a model in your life?)
Paul said, "...be imitators of me as I am of Christ..."
5. How does the first chapter of Hebrews help us with our ultimate modelling questions?
6. Have "we" finished restoring the New Testament Church? If not, what needs to be worked on, still? What needs to always remain central to our thinking? Why is this so?
7. Does any other 'doctrine' really mean anything today, then? Is there any other doctrines that we must stand for against all alternative ideas and models? If so, what are the top ten in your mind? Why are these the top ten to you?
*"One false turn can take us a long way out of the way, if my primary model and concern is man and how well I can serve Him this week."
 John Gray*
8. How do you go about deciding which ideas to keep as central and which ones to make as secondary, and which ones to possibly allocate to the "doesn't matter" barrel? 2

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WHAT IS AN INTRODUCTION STUDY? An “introduction study” is one that looks at the who, when, where, how, vocabulary, syntax, and audience of a letter. It is a very full on type of study that is not usually needed in a local congregational setting, except in very short form. The interpretation of most New Testament letters and books are not changed by any introduction material found. This type of a study is more needed in canonical work than in congregational work.

Introduction To The Letter To The Hebrews:

The letter to the Hebrews is rather hard to classify in many ways. We do not know the author of the book, other than to say it was probably not Paul. It does not say specifically to whom it was written, and we have trouble even finding a date other than the first century. It does tell us that it was written by one who was not one of those who walked with Christ during His earthly ministry. {In [Hebrews 2:3](#) it says, that “it was confirmed to us by those who heard Jesus.” } Thus all of the other apostles, except Paul would be eliminated as well. All that we do know is that the author knows Timothy and has some connection with those from Italy. ([Hebrews 13:23-24](#))

In [Hebrews 11:32](#), the writer uses a masculine participial form, suggesting that the author was a male. However, Clement of Rome wrote that Paul did write the letter, but that he used a more Hebrew form of writing because of his audience.

This change to a Hebrew vocabulary is possible, however there is a large number of [hapaxlegoumena](#), words that are only found in this text. There are lots of words that are common with Paul's writings found in the text, but even more of these 'one-off' words so this is still seen as insufficient evidence to suggest Paul as the author. Some have suggested that Luke translated a letter by Paul in Hebrew into Greek, but there is no evidence either way for this idea.

When was the letter to the Hebrews written?:

1. **Textual:** Time has passed since the readers of this letter were first converted. Thus...
 - A. **Heb. 3:12** The audience is urged not to forsake their Christian Confession thus time has elapsed
 - B. **Heb. 5:11-12** They are told that they are not progressing in their faith, but are becoming dull of hearing {Progress is a time built idea}
 - C. **Heb. 10:25** They are chided form stopping meeting together {What once characterized them is no longer characterizing them.}
 - D. **Heb. 6:10** The audience has a history of meeting the needs of those of like faith.
 - E. **Heb. 10: 32-34** The audience has suffered a form of persecution for their faith in the past some time
2. **Bracketing:** Timothy is still alive at the time of the writing, therefore it is first century
 - A. **Heb 13:23** "...take note that Timothy has been released..." This is news to the audience.
 - B. **Acta Santa Timothei**, a tract from the fourth century says that Timothy died in 94 ad.
 - C. **The Temple** in Jerusalem is still operating. In the letter of Barnabas, he mentions the fall of the temple to underline the point that the Levitical sacrificial system was no longer functioning. Therefore, the Hebrew letter was probably written before 70 ad and not after 94 ad. *No sign of rebellion against Rome yet, at all.*
 - D. **Heb. 8:13** says that the new covenant has made the old covenant obsolete and that the old covenant will soon disappear.
3. **The Dead Sea Scrolls**, written in the years preceding the advent of Jesus uses phrases suggests that the language of Hebrews was common prior to the coming of Jesus and therefore open to daily considerations, thus defining the vocabulary of the text to the age of Jesus and the 1st Century.

What can Hebrews do to help me in my personal Christian walk?....

Moses, David, Elijah were the Jewish models, not the 'messiah'.
Notice the events at the mount of transfiguration closely.

I. Primacy: We are all affected in some way by the things that we have read and considered. We may be affected in a positive way and or we may be affected in a negative way, but we will be affected if we read and then stop to think about what we have read. This is the 'premise' upon which we can found our lives. Hebrews gives the premise.

A. The Jewish people saw the Messiah as the coming 'king', the anointed one who would lead them out of their time of subjugation. **They saw this as His role: 'Sonship' was not part of it. The Messiah was their hope, not their model. Moses, was their model**

Paul spoke against this type of modelling in I Corinthians 1, they were "of Moses".

B. They saw the Messiah as the highest of the high, the 'saviour'. It coloured their thinking for all of the days of the prophets and patriarchs. It sustained them as a nation. **This was His 'Saviourship', His 'Sovereign Role', in their eyes.**

C. How we see Jesus will like-wise sustain us today

II. Perception: The second great thing that we get from this book is a deeper understanding of the necessity and way of His sacrifice. This is our perception of Jesus, -as our only hope. There was no other way that the sins of mankind could have been taken away but by the blood of this lamb.

A. This deeper understanding is what redefines our whole concept of ministry. **It takes the 'me' out of every thought and replaces it with the divine "Him".** I will yet have a place, but only at His pleasure.

B. It gives us a deep and over-powering willingness to go and do what ever we can to express our love of God and our gratitude for what He did for us, something that we cannot do for ourselves.

C. Who we perceive Jesus will become the definition of our centre of the entire universe, the very light of all things good, the holiness of holies, the pearl of the greatest possible price, the only hope.

D. I use 'the' primacy to sustain my perception, thus to venerate His absolute Sovereignty in my life.

sybiotic

1. ...FINISH PRE-QUESTIONS FROM LAST SUNDAY...

Additional Private Study:

1. The text of Hebrews says that the worlds were formed by the word of God. Does this mean that 'God just spoke and the world came into being', or does it mean 'God spoke the command and natural law took it from there', or does it mean something in between these two extremes?
2. What could you say about the problem of potential apostasy that the writer is trying to combat? Do we know what that problem would be, specifically? What others could it possibly confront?
3. How should we handle the various winds of doctrine that blows through the church ?

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4. **NOTE:** There are many avenues of study open to us in the book written to the Hebrews. We will be looking at its big-picture, primary message, that of its Christology. In the conservative side of the Church of Christ, this is not the common way in which this book is approached, much to the denigration of the text's first and most significant message.
 5. **NOTE:** Most studies in Hebrews are focused on the sacrificial system and how the new differs from the old, as well as how they are alike. That is a good study. Many other studies are focused on bits and pieces that constitute some practical improvement to our Christian lives, and that too is a good study.

What can the letter to the Hebrews do to help me in my personal Christian walk?:

One of the great questions in biblical study is why does the Hebrews letter start off so different from all of the other letters? “Don’t those first century Christians know that Jesus is the Son of God, and thus much higher than the angels?” Why is this chapter the way that it is and what does it continue to do for us in our day?

I am given the rock solid foundation upon which I build my ‘house’.

- I.
- Premise:** We are all affected in some way by the things that we have read and considered. We may be affected in a positive way and or we may be affected in a negative way, but we will be affected if we read and then stop to think about what we have read. This is the ‘premise’ upon which we can found our lives. Hebrews gives the premise.
- A. The Jewish people saw the Messiah as the coming ‘king’, the anointed one who would lead them out of their time of subjugation. **This is His ‘Sonship’.**
 - B. This was a true interpretation, but it was not to be a physical one, but a spiritual one. Nevertheless, they saw the Messiah as the highest of the high, the ‘saviour’. It coloured their thinking for all of the days of the prophets and patriarchs. It sustained them as a nation. **This is His ‘Saviourship’ – ‘Sovereignty’**

C. How we see Jesus will like-wise sustain us today

- II.
- Perception:** The second great thing that we get from this book is a deeper understanding of the necessity and way of His sacrifice. This is our perception of Jesus as our only hope. There was no other way that the sins of mankind could have been taken away but by the blood of this lamb. This is the starting point for modelling of my heart: [the Lordship Principle.](#)
- A. This deeper understanding is what redefines our whole concept of ministry. **It takes the ‘me’ out of every thought and replaces it with the divine “Him”.** I will yet have a place, but only at His pleasure. **Like in marriage we undergo the ‘pronoun shift’**
 - B. It gives us a deep and over-powering willingness to go and do what ever we can to express our love of God and our gratitude for what He did for us, something that we cannot do for ourselves.

C. Who we perceive Jesus will become the definition of our centre of the entire universe, the very light of all things good, the holiness of holies, the pearl of the greatest possible price, the only hope.

- D. **I use ‘the’ premise to sustain my perception, thus to venerate His absolute Sovereignty in my life.**

Symbiotic