

Bible Reading Notes
Hebrews

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Hebrews 1

The author of this letter does not identify himself, but he is clearly familiar with the Old Testament. The book is full of Old Testament quotations.

1:2 – **his Son** – The theme of Hebrews is the superiority of Christ. The author begins with Christ's superiority over the angels.

1:14 – We see here a summary statement on the role of angels to serve the needs of the saints. There are other roles disclosed elsewhere in Scripture.

Hebrews 2

2:1-4 – There were some Jewish Christians who were being tempted to revert to Judaism. Here and elsewhere they will be encouraged to persevere and not neglect the great salvation Christ has purchased.

2:9 – **made lower** – This occurred in the incarnation when Christ took on a human body and nature.

2:18 – Christ is able to fully support us when we suffer from temptation because he too was tempted in his earthly life and so is experientially able to provide help.

Hebrews 3

3:2 – Both Jesus and Moses were faithful, but just as Christ was superior to the angels, he is also superior to Israel's greatest prophet, Moses.

3:7-11 – This is a quotation from Psalm 95:7-11. Portions of this quotation will be repeated in v. 15 and 4:3, 7.

3:11 – **rest** – In Psalm 95 this reference to rest has to do with entering Canaan, but the term is used in today's reading in a fuller sense of entering into eternal salvation.

3:14 – This warning is made in the context of some Jewish believers considering returning to Judaism.

Hebrews 4

4:9-10 – God’s rest – We enter God’s rest when we entrust ourselves to Christ. We are then able to rest from our work because Christ has done all the work necessary.

4:14-16 – We have great hope as believers because of Christ’s past and continuing work as our High Priest.

Hebrews 5

Hebrews 5 continues the theme of Christ’s high priestly ministry.

5:5-6 – These quotations are found in Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:4.

5:9 – being made perfect – Jesus has always been morally perfect. Perfect here is a reference to Jesus fully experiencing the obedience and suffering that was necessary for him to be our high priest (v. 8).

Hebrews 6

6:4-8 – This is a hotly debated passage. It cannot refer to a true believer falling away from salvation. I believe it describes a covenant member of the church who has heard the gospel over and over again and identified themselves with the church but never acted in faith to receive Christ. When they fall away it is evidence of a hardened heart and rejection of the gospel message (v. 6).

6:18 – two unchangeable things – God’s promise and his oath serve to guarantee for believers the promises God has made about our salvation. The principle of a double witness comes from the Old Testament law requiring two witnesses for charges to be brought against a person.

Hebrews 7

5:10 and 6:20 have both introduced the idea that Christ was from the priestly order of Melchizedek. Hebrews now gives more detail on this priestly order.

7:1 – This account is found in Genesis 14:17-20.

7:3 – Some believe that Melchizedek was Christ, based on this description. The point of the description is that we have no record of these things. Melchizedek appeared out of nowhere in Scripture with no information about him. He resembled Christ but was not Christ.

7:9-10 – Abraham's paying of tithes to Melchizedek shows the superiority of the Melchizedek priesthood over the Levitical priesthood.

7:17, 21 – This quote comes from Psalm 110:4.

7:22-28 – Jesus has ushered in a better covenant than the old covenant and his priesthood is superior to the old covenant priesthood.

Hebrews 8

8:7 – The old covenant was never designed to be permanent. It was meant to be temporary until the new covenant would be ushered in by Christ.

8:8-12 – The temporary nature of the old covenant was made clear in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

8:13 – obsolete – The old covenant became obsolete with the coming of Christ because he fulfilled what the old covenant pointed to. The author's point to Jewish Christians thinking of returning to Judaism is asking why would you return to something that is now obsolete.

Hebrews 9

The author continues with his emphasis on Christ's superior priesthood by focusing on the once for all nature of Christ's work.

9:10 – time of reformation – This refers to the time of Christ's coming and particularly his death.

9:11-14 – Christ is a better priest as he has entered into the heavenly temple once for all with his own blood (v. 12) securing the salvation of his people.

9:22 – without the shedding of blood - This is the principle that required the death of Christ.

Hebrews 10

10:4 – The Old Testament sacrifices could not take away sin. Their value was in pointing ahead to Christ and his sufficient work which would decisively deal with sin.

10:17 – The new covenant dealt definitively with sin.

10:19 – Therefore – Now the author begins to apply the implications of Christ's great priesthood.

10:25 – Spiritual growth takes place within the Christian community of a local congregation.

10:26-31 – This is a warning to people who have been part of the church but have not experienced true salvation. Their ongoing rejection will result in their falling into the hands of the living God for judgment.

10:32-39 – This is a call on the Hebrews to continue in their perseverance so they will receive the promised full salvation.

Hebrews 11

Chapter 10 ended with a call to persevere in their faith.

Chapter 11 will give examples of those who did just that.

11:4 – The reason Abel’s sacrifice was accepted was due to his faith. Cain exercised no faith and his sacrifice was rejected.

11:7-12 – Note that both Noah and Abraham exercised faith based only on God’s Word; there was nothing visible for them to base their faith on.

11:19 – Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice believing that God would raise Isaac up again since Isaac was the child of promise (v. 18).

11:32-40 – This concluding list of those who suffered and yet persevered is meant to strengthen the Hebrews to do the same and persevere in their faith to the end.

Hebrews 12

12:1 – cloud of witnesses – Those referred to in chapter 11 who persevered to the end.

12:1 – endurance – This is the key idea of the first part of the chapter. Note vv. 3 and 7.

12:3 – Consider him – Now the author moves beyond human examples to the greatest example of perseverance, Christ.

12:5-6 – This quotation comes from Proverbs 3:11-12.

12:18-21 – This language reflects Exodus 19-20 and the account of Israel at Mt. Sinai.

12:22-24 – As new covenant believers we come to something far greater than Moses and Israel ever experienced.

12:25-29 – But the blessings of the new covenant are only for those who do not reject the message of God, or we will be judged as Old Testament Israel was.

Hebrews 13

Chapter 13 gives examples of what the life of faith looks like.

13:7 – leaders – This refers to their former leaders who are now dead. **Verse 17** refers to their current leaders. Christians honor former leaders and obey and submit to their current leadership.

13:15-16 – These are the new covenant sacrifices that we bring to the Lord.