

A PASSAGE THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

Part Nine *“The Hebrew Epistle”*



by J.S. Smith

The Epistle to The Hebrews

Author: Uncertain • 60s A.D.

The Hebrews is the group to whom this epistle is addressed. They were Christians that were ethnically Jewish, but had turned to Christ, unlike so many who rejected Him. They were most likely located in Judea, around Jerusalem and Palestine.

The author is not named in the letter. It has been surmised and accepted from the earliest records that the writer is Paul. Some suggest Barnabas, Apollos, Philip and Priscilla, but internal evidence is so strong for Paul. It was about this time in the early sixties that James the elder of Jerusalem was killed, according to secular history and the persecution of Jewish Christians like him for the backdrop for this letter of warning.

The purpose of this epistle is to steady these Jewish Christians who were being tempted to give up the faith and its persecutions to return to Judaism, which carried no such dangers at the time. As they reeled from horrifying events all around them, the writer also seeks to prepare them for something shocking, the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.

The message throughout the letter, however, is one of comparison between old and new. The new covenant of Jesus Christ is better than the old covenant of Moses. The letter is in some ways a counterpart to the letter to the Romans. The key word to understanding Hebrews is "better." The Hebrew Christians were in danger of reverting to the law of Moses, giving up their faith, and falling away.

The writer of this book shows these Christians that everything about the gospel is better than that of the law.



5. What phrase in verses 8 and 9 solidifies our knowledge that Jesus was and is deity?

6. What tells us of the preexistent nature of Christ?

7. What is the role of angels toward believers?

8. How do they accomplish this work?

Lesson 2: So Great A Salvation

Hebrews 2:1-18

1. (2:1-4) What can we do to prevent ourselves from drifting away?
2. What will happen if we fail as Christians to maintain our loyalty to Christ?
3. How has God borne witness that this word is true?
4. (2:5-9) How and why was Jesus “made lower than the angels”?
5. Was his death foreknown by God before his nativity (2 Peter 1:17-21)?

6. (2:10-13) How was the captain of our salvation made perfect? How is Christ made unashamed to call us his brethren (cf. John 17:17)?

7. (2:14-18) How is man's attitude toward death changed because of the work of Christ?

8. How is he particularly qualified to be the high priest of our faith?

Lesson 3: Better Than Moses

Hebrews 3:1-19

1. (3:1-6) What is the difference between Moses and Jesus?
2. What does the word “apostle” mean? How is Jesus an apostle?
3. How do we remain in Christ’s house?
4. (3:7-15) How does this passage teach that apostasy is possible?
5. What things made the Hebrews fall away during the Exodus (1 Cor. 10:1-12)?
6. (3:16-19) Why did many of the Exodus pilgrims fall short of the promised land? How could this happen to us?

Lesson 4: High Priesthood of Christ

Hebrews 4:1-16

1. (4:1-10) What attitude is necessary lest we fall short of God's promised rest?
2. Why does the gospel not benefit all who hear it?
3. How is a hardened heart expressed today (cf. Eph. 4:17-19)?
4. At what point may the Christian retire from life's good works?
5. (4:11-13) What type of effort is required to enter that rest?
6. How does the writer describe the power of God's word in these verses?
7. (4:14-16) Why can Jesus sympathize with our weaknesses?
8. What opportunity does this afford us in time of need?

Lesson 5: A Superior High Priest

Hebrews 5:1-14

1. (5:1-4) What limitations of character did human high priests have under the law of Moses?
2. Did one make himself a high priest?
3. (5:5-11) According to which order is Christ a priest?
4. Why was Jesus heard?
5. How did he learn obedience?
6. How did Jesus become the author of eternal salvation?
7. Why was the author reluctant to explain the priesthood of Melchizedek to this audience?
8. (5:12-5:14) What was their shortcoming?
9. How does one gain the ability to discern right from wrong?

Lesson 6: Hope

Hebrews 6:1-20

1. (6:1-3) List the elementary principles identified in this passage.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

2. Since they are elementary principles, it should be simple to say a few things about each. Do so.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

3. (6:4-8) What was the danger in falling away?

4. (6:9-12) What did Paul require of these Christians?

5. (6:13-20) How firm should our faith be?

6. By what two things did God confirm his word?

7. Into what has Jesus gone to minister for us? What promise does this hold for us?

Lesson 7: Melchizedek

Hebrews 7:1-28

1. (7:1-10) List three mysterious things said about Melchizedek which also apply to Jesus.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

2. List three things that show Melchizedek was greater than Abraham.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

3. (7:11-17) What change was necessitated that Christ could become a priest? Why?

4. How does this principle establish the importance of the silence of God regarding authority?

5. (7:18-25) Through what do we draw near to God?

6. What does Christ ever live to do?

7. (7:26-28) How did Jesus make offering for our sins once for all?

Lesson 8: Covenants

Hebrews 8:1-13

1. (8:1-6) What is the main point of this discussion?
2. What is one reason that Christ's new covenant is better than the old covenant of Moses?
3. Of what were the Old Testament things mere shadows and copies?
4. Why are patterns important?
5. (8:7-13) What was wrong with the old covenant?
6. How had Jeremiah described the new covenant according to the quotation of him in verses 10-12 of this chapter?
7. How is it true of the church that no one in it needs to be taught to know God?
8. According to verse 13, what was the status of the old covenant as the writer held his pen?

Lesson 9: Appointed to Die

Hebrews 9:1-28

1. (9:1-5) What were the two main parts of the tabernacle? How were they separated?
2. (9:6-10) What was the Holy Spirit indicating by sending the high priest into the second part alone once a year?
3. (9:11-15) What promise does the work of Christ hold for those who lived before his incarnation?
4. (9:16-22) Did the New Testament take effect before the cross? Why or why not?

5. What four things are specifically mentioned which Moses sprinkled with blood?

a.

b.

c.

d.

6. (9:23-28) Where has Jesus gone now? What does he do there?

7. What happens to men after they die? Reincarnation? What should be the attitude of the living toward Christ's return?

Lesson 10: Let Us

Hebrews 10:1-39

1. (10:1-4) What was the primary shortcoming of the Old Testament sacrifices?

2. (10:5-10) According to verse 5, for whom was the body prepared?

3. (10:11-18) What did the priests of the Old Testament do daily? What did Christ do after offering one sacrifice for sin?

4. (10:19-25) What can we now enter? How?

5. List the three commands that begin “Let us” in this passage.
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

6. What good works are neglected by those who forsake assembling with the saints?

7. (10:26-31) What kind of sin is forsaking the assembling? What loss results from willful sins?

8. What crimes are committed in willful sin according to verse 29?

a.

b.

c.

9. What will become of Christians who fall into this condemnation?

10. (10:32-39) Summarize what these Christians had suffered in their walk with Jesus so far.

11. Why had they suffered these things with endurance?

Lesson 11: Hall of Faith

Hebrews 11:1-12:2

1. (11:1-3) How does the writer describe faith?

2. (11:4-31) Complete the following chart of members of the Hebrews 11 catalog of faith:

VERSES	CHARACTER	COMMENDATION
4	Abel	
5-6	Enoch	
7	Noah	
8-10	Abraham	
11-12	Sarah	
17-19	Abraham	
20	Isaac	
21	Jacob	
22	Joseph	
24-28	Moses	
31	Rahab	

3. (11:32-40) Why did such people not accept deliverance?

4. (12:1-2) What two things are we instructed to lay aside? To whom should we look for encouragement and example?

Lesson 13: Exhortations

Hebrews 13:1-25

1. (13:1-3) How can brotherly love continue?
2. (13:4) How has modern society's acceptance of multiple marriages and free sex changed God's standing?
3. (13:5-6) How can covetousness cause us to distrust God?
4. (13:7-9) Who are the likely objects of this remembrance?
5. (13:10-16) What did it mean for a Jew to go "outside the camp" to be with Jesus?
6. (13:17) Are church rulers (certainly elders are meant) accountable for their service? To whom?
7. What are our responsibilities to them?
8. (13:18-25) What does the writer ask them to do regarding his word of exhortation in this letter? Why?

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