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What's the Point....of Hebrews?

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From beginning to end, the epistle to the Hebrews continually discusses the unique nature of Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God. It tells us how the radiance of God's glory can be seen in Jesus, about the unshakable kingdom of heaven that he has brought us to, and also about the new covenant he makes with those who follow him - a better covenant founded on better promises.

Main Themes Of Hebrews

Although much of the historical background to Hebrews is uncertain, its essential themes and its key teachings do not depend on this. The human author's name (early Christian writers express uncertainty), the destination city (there are a number of possibilities), and the exact date (possibly between AD 60-69) are not known with any certainty. Yet its themes and teachings are timeless, and are applicable in any era. The book's title in the early church was "To The Hebrews", and the content shows that it had been written to an audience that included many Jewish believers in Jesus.

The epistle repeatedly reminds us that faith in Jesus is central to our relationship with God. Then, from numerous remarks in the course of the epistle, we see that the writer is largely addressing discouraged believers who have begun to drift away from Jesus, perhaps some considering a return to the old covenant. Hebrews teaches us that whatever the circumstances and appearances are, Jesus is the same forever, he is the one who saves us, and he alone gives us lasting hope and peace.

The Radiance Of God's Glory - Overview Of Hebrews

The epistle first describes how Jesus has replaced the previous ways God once spoke to his people, and it describes how God's glory can be seen in Jesus (Hebrews 1). These concepts also remind us of the transcendent nature of Jesus. Because of Jesus, we can be joined with him in a family relationship (Hebrews 2). These verses also remind us that it took Jesus' suffering to bring this about, and we thus obtain, entirely by grace, this special and priceless relationship.

Our heavenly calling now comes from Jesus, so the writer encourages us to fix our thoughts on him, to acknowledge him, and to put our faith, trust, and hope in Jesus. So God simply asks us not to harden our hearts, for God's Word is alive Today, and we have a perfect high priest who understands us completely, and who gives us an anchor for our souls (Hebrews 3-6).

Using parallels from Genesis, the writer explains that Jesus has brought a much better and lasting covenant that promises God's constant nearness and spiritual care, as we face this world's many troubles and dilemmas (Hebrews 7-10). Then, using examples from the Old Testament, the writer helps us understand what faith means (Hebrews 11). It is not meant to give us just a dictionary definition of faith; rather, it helps us think about the numerous aspects of faith. The many different examples of faith reassure us that God will be with each of us, and he himself will be our guide.

So the writer encourages us to fix our eyes on Jesus, tells us about the eternal hope Jesus brings us, and then calls us to worship God in humility and reverence (Hebrews 12-13). Then, the closing thoughts particularly remind us that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

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What's the Point....of Hebrews? **Caleb Dillinger**

Hebrews is unique in the New Testament literature in the sense that it categorically functions more as a sermon (homily) than it does as a letter to a church. The author is unknown, and while many have speculated Paul over the years, the writing style does not match, and specifically the Hebrew author includes themselves in the "us" who received the gospel from the apostles (Hebrews 2:3), whereas Paul claims direct revelation (road to Damascus, see Galatians 1:11-12). Theories abound about who wrote Hebrews, with Barnabas, Apollos, and Luke as the main three, but even Priscilla, Silas, and Clement of Rome have been offered as possibilities. In the words of one of my undergrad professors, "Only God knows." However, the authorship question does not take away from the rich theology that the author provides.

If you are looking to read a book of the Bible that explains why Jesus is better than _____, then look no further than this book. Better than angels, better than Moses, better than Melchizedek, better than high priests - Jesus is better than anything you can think of as a substitute. Specifically written to address the Hebrews (hence the name), the author makes a compelling argument for why they should choose Jesus over Judaism. It's not that Judaism is evil or bad or dumb - it's that Jesus is better than anything Jewish history or practice can offer. Further, the author makes the case how Judaism was the PAST that POINTED to Jesus. He calls these things "shadows" (Hebrews 8:5). Christ is better than shadows, but shadows were OF Christ and pointed to Him.

Central to the book of Hebrews is the case for the rest and salvation followers of Jesus obtain. Jews have sought rest for ages - I think many of us today would say we, too, seek rest. Well, the author argues rest is found in Jesus. As a source of comfort as we strive to enter that rest, the author reminds us that Jesus sympathizes with us over the temptations and hardships of life because Jesus himself lived on earth and experienced temptations and hardships, which is why we can be confident that Jesus is the right advocate for us (see Hebrews 4:14-16).

So, why read Hebrews in the 21st century? You will read a compelling argument for why following Jesus makes more sense than following Judaism. You will read of the hope found in Jesus, as well as the comfort and security. You will learn of the past (Old Testament) that points to the future (Jesus and eternity with Jesus). You will be encouraged to hold onto the faith despite hardship, for God is powerful indeed. That is the point of reading Hebrews today.