

# Hebrews 1

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## I) Background

- 1) When was the book written?
- 2) Who wrote it?
- 3) To whom was this letter written?
- 4) Briefly, what was the author's purpose in writing this book?

## II) Hermeneutics

- 1) The author uses several Old Testament verses to contrast Jesus and the angels. Consider 2 Sam 7:14.
  - a) Who is speaking? To whom?
  - b) In the context of the passage, who is being described?
  - c) Who does the author of Hebrews say is being described in 2 Sam?
- 2) When is it appropriate to assign a second meaning to an Old Testament passage? How can you and I know if a passage has more than one meaning?

## III) Jesus

- 1) What attributes are given, in vv. 1-4, as evidence of Christ's divinity?
- 2) When you make a representation of a tree you copy such attributes as color, shape, texture, etc. What attributes do you copy when you make a representation of God?
- 3) Based on vv. 5-14, list three attributes and three roles of Jesus.

## IV) Angels

- 1) Based on vv. 5-14, list three attributes and three roles of angels.

## V) Applications

- 1) You meet Howard, an agnostic, at a cocktail party. Being an evangelical Christian, you find yourself wanting, like the author of Hebrews, to tell Howard about who Christ is, and why you think so. What techniques and approaches would (or have) you used to share your faith?
- 2) What does v. 12 imply about the garments we wear? In what way can you apply this in your own life or the lives of those dear to you, during the coming week?

# Hebrews 3

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Vv 1-6:

- 1) What is the heavenly calling in which we share?
- 2) We have progressed from showing that Jesus is superior to the prophets, to showing that he is greater than the angels, to showing that he is greater than Moses. Is this an upward or downward progression in significance (or neither)? For reference, look at Numbers, Chapter 12 (v. 3 is quite incredible).
- 3) What are the differences stated between Moses and Jesus?
- 4) What is the “house” being referred to in vv. 3-6? How is Jesus’ and Moses’ role different “in the house?”
- 5) (A la last week’s sheet): Does v. 6 imply that if our courage fails and we lose our hope that we lose our salvation? Or if we do not persevere, is the implication that we were never the genuine article to begin with (see also v. 14)?

Vv. 7-15 (Refer to Ps 95:7-11):

- 6) (Also from last week): What concrete advice is given to avoid a hardened heart?
- 7) What is the time period meant by “Today?”

Vv. 16-19:

- 8) What is the “rest” that is referred to
  - a) originally
  - b) now
  - c) ultimately
- 9) The writer indicates that unbelief and disobedience prevent us from entering God’s “rest.” Do you observe this to be true in daily living? If yes, how, and if no, why not?

# Hebrews 4:1-13 (i.e., not 14-16)

An Old Testament story is used here in analogy. Let's go find it!

Ps 95:7ff refers to it (and is quoted in Heb 4)

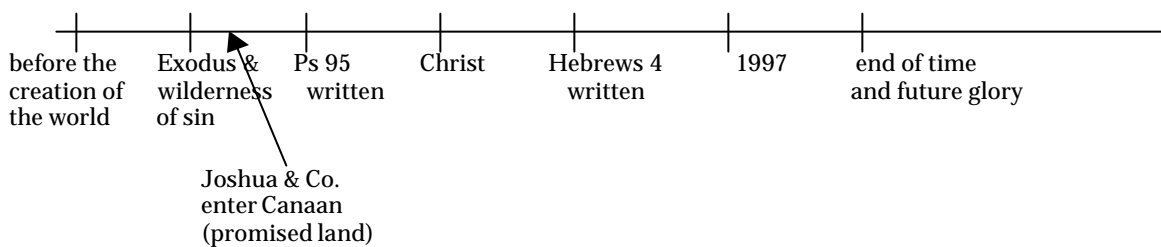
Ex 17:2-7 tells it.

Deut 6:16 judges is.

Now go back to Hebrews 4

- 1) Who are the "we" and "they" of v. 2?
- 2) Unravel the time references in v. 7 so as to explain the statement in v. 8 about Joshua's accomplishment (or lack thereof).
- 3) O.K., time to define "rest." I see multiple uses/analogies/references:
  - vv. 4, 9 talk about one kind of rest
  - the Israelites had one "rest" as their end goal
  - v. 11 says something more currently applicable
  - v. 6 may be a different rest than that of v. 11The point is, what should we take away from this as our "rest," and what should we do about getting/taking/entering that rest?
- 4) Is there any hint about a broader meaning for "work" and a "resting" from it in v. 10 as it pertains to us today? Is it merely a Sabbath reference? Or, can I take the lesson of Rom 3:28 and apply it here to get an answer to question 5a?  
Rom 3:28 – "For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from *works* of law." (Emphasis added.)
- 5) How do vv. 12-13 fit into this discussion of "rest?" What is the role(s) of the Word of God? Can you give examples of the Word's "activity" in your life?
- 6) EXTRA CREDIT (Anthony Perez-Miller Memorial question (well, memorial isn't the word)):  
Is there a difference between *soul* and *spirit*? Discussion is limited to three minutes on this question.

## HEBREWS 4 TIMELINE (not to scale)



# Hebrews 6

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- 1) In v. 2, why does “laying on of hands” appear in the list of fundamentals? What was the role of laying on of hands in the early church? Discuss.
- 2) What, in v. 5, are the “powers of the coming age?” Discuss.
- 3) Regarding v. 6, don’t we re-crucify Christ every time we sin? Why is the sin of apostasy worse than any others? Why, in our own words (no copying), does apostasy drive such a wedge in that repentance is impossible? Discuss, if you will.
- 4) Regarding v. 7, what does the produce of the land represent in the life of a believer? Is this a simple or a deep question? Discuss.
- 5) In v. 12, how does being patient correspond to not being lazy? (Discuss.)
- 6) Why should WE (who have fled, by the way) be encouraged by God’s oath and promise to Abraham?
- 7) Based on the argument that God’s actions are normative, does this passage condone oaths? How can we reconcile this with some passage somewhere in James about how oaths are bad? Discuss.
- 8) Ok, what the heck is going on in v. 20? Is TAOH<sup>2</sup> just toying with us? Discuss at length, ending with a short but meaningful segment on how you will apply all of this (especially the Melchizedek reference) in your life during the following week.

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<sup>1</sup> Discuss.

<sup>2</sup> The author of Hebrews

# Hebrews 8

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Which aspect of the new covenant brings you great joy now, and why? (Having God's Law on your heart? Being one of God's people? Knowing God? Having our sins forgiven by grace?)

1. Which aspect of the new covenant do you wish to experience more, and why?
2. The old covenant ended up focusing on the people's ability (inability) to measure up to God's commandments/standards. How do you still try to come to God on that basis? What happens? What does it mean to our that the new covenant is based on God's actions, not on yours?

# Hebrews 11

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## OUTLINE

### **Faith Is:**

- the core attitude of the righteousness
- the only way to be pleasing to God
- being sure of what we hope for
- trusting God & his nature

### **Faith Operates on Two Levels:**

- current → trusting God to establish his kingdom today
- eschatological → trusting God to fulfill his kingdom ultimately

## QUESTIONS

1. How do you respond to the complaint that all the examples are of people who are given a direct, clear, often dramatic revelation of God's will? I.e., to what degree is this *mission impossible* faith normative?
2. Name a time in your life, important to you, when have had to have faith & step out in trust?
3. Is faith active or passive? Is it a response or a motivator?
4. (v. 6) Why does faith please God?

# Hebrews 12

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V. 1

- a) What was “everything that hinders” for the Jews of the Dispersion?
- b) What is “everything that hinders” for us?
- 2) Are vv. 1-3 useful advice or do they fall under the category of “do better!”
- 3) Vv. 7-11
  - a) Is it reasonable to assert that all hardship comes from one of the following:
    - i) Satan
    - ii) the discipline of God
    - iii) the vicissitudes of life?
  - b) How can you tell these apart?
  - c) How should you respond differently to each one?
- 4) Vv. 18-24: This passage presents two different ways to see our relationship with God, one “old covenant” in style, the other “new.” How does this alter your reading of the old testament? How can we take the examples in the O.T. as guiding examples if our relationship with God is so different?

# Hebrews 13

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**Vv. 1-6:** In these verses, the writer outlines five essential qualities of the Christian life: brotherly love, hospitality, sympathy for those in trouble, purity, and contentment.

- 1) What advice does the author give in order to help us remain steadfast in these areas?
- 2) Who exemplifies these qualities to you?
- 3) In what way can these examples help us to improve in these principles of Christian living?
- 4) **BONUS:** Do angels walk the earth today as they did in the days of Abraham and Manoah? Who in the Bible Study would you vote for as “most likely to be an angel in disguise” (you may not vote for yourself)?
- 5) **Vv. 7-8:** Who are the “leaders” to whom the author refers?
- 6) How does v. 8 follow from v. 7?

**Vv. 9-16:** It appears that the author is correcting some false teaching that was circulating in the church regarding eating practices. It has been speculated that this may have been (i) reversion to the strict formalisms of the law, (ii) adoption of the gnostic idea that anything not entirely spiritual was inferior and to be avoided, and that therefore food consumption should be minimized and meat avoided altogether, or (iii) adoption of the idea of transubstantiation during the sacrament of communion. To refute the teaching, Jesus’ sacrifice is compared/contrasted to the sacrifices offered on the Day of Atonement (my Bible references Lev 4:12 and 16:27).

- 7) In what way(s) is Jesus’ sacrifice like/unlike those described in Leviticus for the Day of Atonement?
- 8) What did “let us go to Him outside the camp” (v. 13) mean to the original audience? To us today?
- 9) Good works and sharing with others are called “sacrifices” along with praise to God. Do we view these as offering to God as much as we view our praises?
- 10) **V. 17:** That should be more than enough, but if you want to get into the “obey your leaders and submit to their authority” question, feel free to do so!!