

Hebrews Introduction and Chapter 1: 1-4

Overview:

Warren Wiersbe points out 5 elements that we can expect to find as we go through the book of Hebrews.

1. Evaluate—we will evaluate the difference of the Old Testament system of law with that of the New Testament ministry of grace.
2. Encouraged—we will be encouraged to believe and obey God's word.
3. Examine—we will examine ourselves by asking pointed questions that will reveal the authenticity and sincerity of our faith.
4. Expect—we will look with expectancy of the future when we will reign with Christ for all of eternity.
5. Exalt—we will exalt the person and the work of Christ, seeing His superiority over all and His sufficiency as Creator and Sustainer over all.

Hebrews is one of the longest epistles in the New Testament.

There have been many suggestions as to who the author is, including Luke, Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and Phillip. The author had a personal connection and an active interest in the lives of the people he was writing to, and was very knowledgeable of the Greek Old Testament and was an associate of Timothy.

The letter of Hebrews is believed to be written to Jewish Christians living in Rome, struggling to stay strong in their commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

These believers are second generation believers. Their faith came by hearing the word of God through those before them that actually sat under the teachings of Christ, Himself.

The purpose of this letter was to remind them of their why and to encourage them to stay strong in their faith and not go back to the old ways of the Jewish religion of their forefathers.

This letter was written about 65 AD when Nero ruled Rome. Life for these Jews, who put their faith in Jesus Christ, was very difficult. A commentary pointed out, they were snubbed by Gentiles, shunned by Jews and often found themselves without homes, without families, jobs, or support from friends. Their very lives were at stake.

No matter the opposition or obstacles we face, or what things in this life we may have to give up or lesson our grip of, Jesus Christ is what makes this life exciting and worth living. He alone is worthy of all that we do and face in this world.

Verses 1-4

“Long Ago” and “And now” signal a contrast between the way God spoke and when He spoke.

Resources: The Epistle to the Hebrews by F. F. Bruce; Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Hebrews by Charles Swindoll; The Wiersbe Bible Commentary; NLT Parallel Study Bible; Hebrews by Matthew Z. Capps; Hebrews Life Change Series; www.biblegateway.com, www.biblehub.com, www.ministry127.com; www.youtube.com; www.decorarconarte.com;

“Long ago” refers to the time before Christ’s coming, when God spoke in different ways and at different times to his people. All throughout the Old Testament we see the various ways and times God spoke.

The prophets became God’s own representative and spokesperson. They boldly stood, often alone, proclaiming exactly what God wanted said, carried out, and written down.

Now that Christ has come we have entered into a new era, the final days, in which the prophecies of the Old Testament are and will be fulfilled.

Adam and Eve were the first to rightfully rule over the earth of God’s creation. But, when sin entered their lives, this right was taken from them. What Adam lost became restored to Christ, when He came to this world in human flesh, becoming the last Adam.

Point # 1. Christ, the Son reigns as heir over all things.

Nothing is excluded from Christ’s authority and rule.

Adam’s rule was limited to just the earth, whereas Christ’s rule extends to encompass the whole universe, and particularly the world to come.

Point # 2. Christ, the Son created the universe of space and time.

This truth points us back to John 1: 1-3 and Colossians 1: 16.

The One with power to create the entire universe, is the One with the power to rule over it all.

Nothing comes into existence without Him and everything is subject under Him.

He is the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” He is the God of the universe and the God of the ages.

Point # 3. Christ, the Son brightly radiates God’s glory.

Just as the radiance of the burning sun in the sky continually provides light and power, the Son of God continually shines forth the glory, majesty and power of God from the beginning of time to all of eternity.

Just as the rays of the sun are able to light up the earth, so the light of Christ is able to light up the hearts of men.

The word radiance means shining forth from a light source. Jesus Christ is the light. He is the source from where our light comes from.

Also included in this word “radiates”, found only here in the New Testament is an intense brightness.

Point # 4. Christ, the Son embodies God’s nature.

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To behold Christ is to behold the Father.

Though God and His Son are two distinct beings, what is found in God is also found in Christ. They share the same striking characteristics that set them apart from anyone or anything. There is no mistaking the One true living God of the universe.

Point # 5. Christ, the Son upholds all things by His Word.

Christ not only upholds the world, He upholds the entire universe from the planets, the stars, and galaxies, to the things that can't be seen even with a microscope.

The universe is not a dead weight He struggles to carry on His shoulders. He doesn't even hold anything in His hands. He's got the whole universe in His voice.

He speaks and it's done. It's His voice, His word that keeps the universe moving according to His will since the beginning of time, until the very end of time. There is nothing that happens without Him allowing it or commanding it.

The One with the power to create the universe is the same One with the power and authority to sustain, and reign over it all.

Point # 6. Christ, the Son made perfect purification for our sins.

Christ is not only powerful, He's personal.

Because of His love for us, He willingly gave up everything, including His own life on our behalf. His death on a cross, forever cleansed us of our sins and has given us eternal life.

Christ that descended to our lowly world, is the same one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that He might fill the entire universe with Himself.

Point # 7. Christ, the Son sat down on the right hand of majesty.

There is no one greater than Christ. He is the only One worthy to sit in this exalted position. The work He finished on the cross was not something we, nor anybody, even the angels could do. He was given the name above all other names.

Jesus is superior in His person and in His work over all things and is worthy of all honor praise, and worship.

The 5 admonishing passages in Hebrews to believe and obey God's word.

Drifting from the Word—2: 1-4

Doubting the Word—3:7 -4: 13

Dullness toward the Word—5:11- 6:20

Despising the Word—10: 26- 39

Defying the Word—12: 14- 29

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Homework Questions

1. Why is it important to be reminded of the “why” when remaining faithful to a goal?
2. What comes to mind when you’re reminded that Jesus is your “why”?
3. In the lesson I mentioned several ways God spoke to His people. Example: Moses through a burning bush. This week take time to seek out other examples in the Old Testament of how and when God spoke to His people and answer the following questions. A. Who did God speak to? B. How did He speak? C. What was His message? D. Did the person obey/believe God? E. What did you learn from this example? Share at least one of these examples and your findings with the group.
4. Though God does not speak in an audible voice, He does speak to His children today. (John 10:27) How does God often speak to you, and how do you know that’s His voice?
5. What are some things we can do in our lives to better hear God’s voice?
6. Why is God’s Word final in Christ?
7. Why has Christ been made “heir over all things”? And how does knowing this impact your life?
8. Read Exodus 33: 17-23. How was Moses able to see the glorious presence of God? Why was Moses unable to look God directly in the face?
9. Read John 1: 4-5 and 8: 12. What is meant by Jesus being the “light of the world”?
10. In what ways have you allowed the light of Christ to shine in your life?

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11. Why does the author go to such lengths to show Christ's deity to these Hebrew Christians?
12. In the lesson, we learned that Christ bears the very stamp of God, what is found in God is also found in Christ. What are some characteristics that you find striking that sets them apart from anyone or anything? Take time this week in prayer and worship to praise them for these attributes.
13. In your own words, why is knowing Christ better than anything this world has to offer?
14. Describe what it means to you to know that Christ upholds and works all things by the power of His voice.
15. List a passage in the New Testament when Christ did an amazing, powerful thing just by the sound of His voice. In your own words, describe what He did and the lesson He was teaching through it.
16. What point is the author conveying when he says that Christ "sat down at the right hand of God"?

Personal reflection

What are some things in your life that you need to lessen your grip of or completely give up, to gain a greater hold of Christ?

Do you truly believe Christ is better than anything and worthy of all that you endure in this world? If so, what proof in your life reflects this belief?

Do you have trouble hearing the voice of God in your life? Why or why not?

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