

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 101
Hebrews

Key Concepts: The key concept in Hebrews is that Christianity is preferable to Judaism.

Background: The reason for this sermon is that the church to which it is written is composed of Jews who were being tempted to leave Christianity and return to Judaism.

Brief Summary: Statement of Argument (1:1-1:4) The author states the central premise of the argument which is that God spoke to the world more clearly through the Son (Jesus) than God had spoken through the various Judaic patriarchs and prophets.

Jesus is superior to angels (1:5-2:18) Even though angels serve God, Jesus is superior because he has been given dominion over all of creation, including the angels. Even though Jesus was once lower than the angels (when he was on earth), his being on earth was so that he would “taste” death for everyone in order to pioneer the way through death and to salvation and eternal life.

Jesus is superior to Moses (3:1-3:6) While Moses was faithful to God, in God’s house (tabernacle) Jesus was faithful over the house as a Son who is both an apostle and a high priest.

Warning #1 (3:7-4:13) Having just declared that Jesus is superior to Moses, the writer makes it clear that any of those who fall away will be punished as surely as were those who refused to obey Moses, meaning the lost generation who died in the wilderness and never saw the Promised Land.

Jesus is the new High Priest (4:14-5:14) Jesus is the high priest who has been divinely appointed and who can sympathize with our weaknesses. He was without sin and so did not have to offer sacrifice for his sin, as did the human high priest. Though he was a son he learned obedience through suffering.

Warning #2 (6:1-6:20) The church is warned that it will be impossible to restore to God’s favor those who had experienced the gifts of the Holy Spirit and then ceased following Jesus.

Jesus’ Priesthood and New Covenant is Superior to that of the Levites and the old Covenant (7:1-10:25) The Melchizedek Priesthood (of which Jesus is a priest) is shown to be superior to that of the Levitical Priesthood because the Melchizedek Priesthood is eternal while the Levitical is temporary. In addition, Jesus, through his onetime sacrifice, can save people once and for all. Thus the new covenant with Jesus is better than the old one because it is based not on the sacrifice of animals offered on a recurring basis, but is based on the blood of Jesus, shed, again, once and for all. His sacrifice also changes us from the inside out so that we can be obedient to God, be forgiven and gain eternal life. Because of Jesus’ work we can draw near to God with full confidence because our hearts have been made clean. We are therefore to hold fast to our hope, stir up one another in love and meet together regularly.

Warning #3 (10:26-10:39) Once again the people are warned that by sinning deliberately after coming to know Jesus there can be no sacrifice which will cover them.

List of those who kept the Faith (11:1-12:24) The writer describes the “Cloud of Witnesses” who remained faithful even in tough times. These people should give us courage to run the race as we look to Jesus for support. We should also be encouraged to put up with discipline from God.

Warning #4 (12:25-29) This is a final warning not to refuse Jesus who as spoken to them.

Conclusion (13:1-13:25) The people are to show brotherly love, offer hospitality, remember those in prison, hold marriage in honor, do not love money, be content with what one has, remember their leaders, share what one has and pray for those who wrote the letter.

1. How do Paul’s comments about the Jews and their covenant differ from those in Hebrews?
2. What do you make of the warnings?
3. How does this letter encourage or discourage you?