

Bible Snapshots



Hebrews – Don't Go Back **Author** – Most likely Paul, about 66 A.D., definitely before 70 A.D.

- The book is not written to a church, but Jewish Christians or Hebrews. Judaism still exerted a powerful influence over the world and converts to Christianity would have faced many problems like overcoming previous rituals, setting aside Jewish traditions, the pull toward temple worship, breaking family ties that were strong among Jews, and the great enmity that still existed between the Jew and Gentile worlds. Staunch Jewish supporters would have gone out of their way to try to win these Christians back, even to the point of persecution.
- Paul, realizing the discouragement that would come to the Jewish converts in this unique situation, he writes this book to encourage them to continue steadfast in the faith and empowers them to do so by reminding them that Christ is superior over Judaism, all the forefathers, angels and is a better high priest who made a better sacrifice for them. They were to watch for apostasy (3:6-14); encourage faith (6:1-12); remember the law was abolished (9:11-10:39); and learn to stop being Hebrews, but fully embrace Christ.
- The book is a miniature Bible (much like Isaiah) beginning in Genesis with God and ending with the New Jerusalem. It walks us through each of the biblical periods claiming Christ superior to all and the fulfillment of all that went before.
- Hebrews is a book of faith (11); warnings (2:1; 3:12, 13; 4:1, 11; 12:1-3, 13, 15); encouragement, by use of the word "let" or phrase "let us" (4:1, 11, 14, 16; 6:1; 10:22-24; 12:1, 28; 13:1, 5, 13, 15).

Themes

- Christ is better – better than anyone else or any sacrifice; better covenant based on better promises administered by a better high priest. The message is designed to draw men closer to Him out of mere formality and profession.

Key verse – 1:3; 11:1, 40

Key words / phrase – Better (13X), Heaven or heavenly (15X), once or once for all (9X), let us

Outline

- I. Doctrinal section (1:1-10:18)
 - a. Christ superior to prophets (1:1-4)
 - b. Christ superior to angels (1:5-2:18)
 - c. Christ superior to Moses (3:1-6)
 - d. Christ superior to Levitical priesthood (4:14-10:18)
- II. Practical section (10:19-13:25)
 - a. Heroes of faith (11)
 - b. Exhortations to follow these heroes (12)
 - c. Various exhortations (13:1-21)
 - d. Conclusion (13:22-25)

Unique names of Christ – Creator and preserver of all (1:2, 3, 10); the Brightness of God's glory (1:3); The express image of God (1:3); Captain of salvation (2:10); Housebuilder (3:3, 4); Author of eternal salvation (5:9); High Priest after the order of Melchizedek (5:10); Author and finisher of faith (12:2).

Types of faith (11) – Abel's justifying faith (4); Enoch's sacrificing faith (5); Noah's separating faith (7); Abraham's obedient faith (8); Sarah's strengthening faith (11); Isaac's patient faith (20); Jacob's suffering faith (21); Joseph's hopeful faith (22); Moses' enduring faith (23-27); Israel's victorious faith (29); Israel's working faith (30); Rahab's saving faith (31); and the saint's living faith (32-40).

The sin that besets us is (12:1) ...sin that goes unrepented, that we are ready to defend, for which we find excuse, is often dismissed as a character trait, causes no remorse, seeks to destroy godliness, makes you doubt, blinds you, tells you 'it's just everyone else,' and is never willing to be exposed to truth. It is the sin that takes us farther than we want to go, to places we would never choose, to pay more than we ever thought we would.