

The Letters to the Churches- It's Still by the Blood.... Hebrews

Hebrews has been called one of the most important books in the New Testament because it bridges the gap between the law and grace. These early believers were living in the time of transition between the law of Moses with its ceremonies and the liberty of grace.

The book was written primarily to the Hebrew believer. The time of the writing was before the destruction of the temple in AD 70 by Titus because the sacrificial sacrifices were still being offered. (See **8:3-5; 13:11-12**).

The Hebrew Christians faced a twofold danger. On one hand they were being persecuted by their own brethren who thought Christianity was a cult. They were also being seduced to return to the Judaism and the law by the Judaizers.

The writer of this book has been much debated and will not be settled here. Some think Paul wrote the book, some say it was Barnabas. Many simply say we do not know and cannot know but we know it was of God.

The key word in this book is "**Better**" which occurs 13 times. Blood is used 22 times in this book. Hebrews shows the reader the New Testament is linked to the Old Testament by the blood of the sacrifice. **9:22** The sacrifice however is now the finished work of Christ on the cross. It is still and always has been and always will be a blood covenant that God has made for salvation.

Hebrews was written to be a source of encouragement to the Jewish believers. The book shows that Judaism and the law had come to an end and to confirm the Hebrews in their Christian faith.

The epistle can be divided into two parts. The doctrinal part of **1:1-10:18** and the application part from **10:19-13:25**.

We will attempt to look at this book by understanding the things that are better under grace compared to the law. Many of these are comparisons of Christ with the law.

I- Christ is Better than the Prophets.

1:1-3

Christ was the ultimate fulfillment of the revelation of God to mankind. He was greater than the prophets. He was the Son of God.

II- Christ is Better than the Angels.

1:4-2:18

The superiority of Christ over the angels is clearly developed here. The angels were never an object of worship because they were simply created beings. Christ was an object of worship and created them.

III- Christ is Better than Moses

3:1-4:13

Moses was looked upon by the Jewish nation as a great leader and they followed the law revealed to Moses the great lawgiver. **Deut 18:15-19** taught the Jews that there was one to come that was a prophet like Moses. Christ was that promised one. Moses is said to have been, "**a servant**" while Christ was, "**a son over his own house...**" The failure of Israel under Moses had been a failure to believe God.

IV- Better Priesthood: The Priesthood of Christ is Superior **4:14ff.**

The priests of Israel were originally to be the head of the house of each tribe. They were to be a nation of priest to God. Because of sin the tribe of Levi was set aside to be the tribe of priest under the law. Christ however was not from the tribe of Levi but was from the tribe of Judah. He could never be a priest under the Levitical system. The author shows that the priesthood of Christ predated the law.

He is after the order of Melchizedek who was the priest that Abraham gave tithes too. (see **Gen 14:18-20; Ps 110:4**)

The sons of Levi were said to have paid a tithe to Melchizedek in Abraham. (**7:9-10**)

Another reason that the priesthood of Christ is superior is because He did not have to offer a sacrifice for His own sin **7:26-27**.

V- Better Covenant: 8:6ff

Christ is a, "**mediator of a better covenant.**" **6:6** The reason it is better is because it is based on "**better promises.**"

This new covenant had been promised in the Old Testament. (**Jeremiah 3:1**).

The tabernacle of the new covenant is superior to the old one. **8:2-5, 9:1ff**. I personally believe that the tabernacle of Moses was only a copy of the true one in heaven. When Moses was going to make the tabernacle he was instructed to copy the pattern. **8:5 (Exodus 25:40) 9:23-24**.

VI- The Sacrifice of Christ was Better: 9:12-14

Under the law blood was offered for sin. This blood could never satisfy the law's judgment against the sins of those who offered it. The sacrifice only reminded them they were sinners.

Christ however entered into the Holy Place in Heaven and placed His blood sacrifice upon the heavenly altar, **9:22-28**. It is still by the blood beloved that sin is forgiven.

VII- We Now Have Better Access to God: 10:19ff

We no longer must go through the priest on this earth to offer sacrifice. We have access to the presence of God because of what Christ has done. We should come boldly and expectantly but not demanding and irreverent.

We can therefore also run the race set before us. **12:1-2** The latter chapters of Hebrews give us some advice about serving God and each other.

STEP 47

Application to Life's Steps

- 1- We are under a far superior system under grace than the law was. This should motivate us to live our lives for Him.
- 2- Christ is far superior than those who came before Him which were only a shadow of things to come.
- 3- We have access to God and with this access come the stewardship of privilege.
- 4- We must come to God through the blood or we have no access.

Retracing Our Steps

- 1- Who is said to have wrote the book of Hebrews? _____
- 2- Who was the servant and who was the son? _____

- 3- What priesthood order was Christ after? _____
- 4- Why could He not be a priest of the Leviticus order? _____

- 5- Study the scripture here and see if you find there is a true tabernacle in heaven.