

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE CHRISTIAN WAY
(Hebrews)

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. God Had Spoken To His People In The Past Upon Many Occasions And In Different Ways. (Heb. 1:1) But, Never Before Had Such An Honored Messenger As His Son Appeared, Nor Had The Message Been So Vitally Important. John The Baptist Was "A Man Sent From God" (John 1:6) And His Message Cannot Be Set Aside By The Legislative Branch. (Luke 7:29-31) When, However, The Messenger Is God's Own Son The Punishment For Rejecting His August Message Will Be Proportionate. (Heb. 2:1-4; 10:26-31) However, Proportionately Better Promises Are Offered To Those Who Obey Him. (Heb. 7:19, 22; 8:6; 9:23)
- B. The Outline Of The Book. The Superiority Of Christianity.
1. The superiority of Christ as the founder of Christianity. (1:1 - 4:13)
 2. The superiority of Christ as High Priest. (4:14 - 10:37)
 - a. Christ's high priesthood. (4:14 - 5:10)
 - b. A warning against falling away. (5:11 - 6:20)
 - c. Seven proofs of the superiority of Christ's priesthood. (7:1 - 10:39)
 - 1) He is a priest after a higher order than Aaron. (7:1-19)
 - 2) He is a priest made with a divine oath. (7:20-22)
 - 3) He is an eternal priest. (7:23-25)
 - 4) He is a priest without sin. (7:26-28)

- 5) He is a priest of a better covenant.
(8:1-13)
 - 6) He is a priest in a better tabernacle.
(9:1-28)
 - 7) He is a priest of a better sacrifice.
(10:1-37)
3. The superiority of faith. (10:38 - 12:29)
 4. Conclusion. (13:1-25) The practice of faith.

II. AIM.

- A. To Learn The Scope And Analysis Of The Book Of *Hebrews* That We May Better Understand And More Fully Appreciate The "New And Better Way."
- B. To Appreciate More Fully The Superiority Of The Christian Priesthood to That of Judaism.

III. OUTLINE.

- A. THE ANALYSIS OF THE WRITING.
 1. The date: Prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 - approximately 64 - 67 A.D.
 2. The author: Unknown.
 3. To whom written: To Hebrew Christians who were in danger of falling back into Judaism.
 4. The purpose of the writing:
 - a. The letter is an appeal to those in danger of apostasy; those in danger of falling away from Christ. (2:1-3; 3:6,12; 4:14; 6:3-6; 10:24-26, 29, 35; 12:12, 13, 25; 13:9)
 - b. The letter is an exhortation (13:22) to prevent the Hebrew/Jewish Christians from completely abandoning Christianity and returning to Judaism.
 - c. The writer is demanding a complete "cutting off" of the old system of Judaism.

5. The key word is "better."
 - a. Better than the angels. (1:4)
 - b. Better things of you. (6:9)
 - c. Better hope and covenant. (7:7, 19, 22)
 - d. Better covenant and promises. (8:6)
 - e. Better sacrifices. (9:23)
 - f. Better possessions. (10:34)
 - g. Better country, resurrection and thing. (11:16, 35, 40)

6. The perils that lead to apostasy.
 - a. The peril of neglect. (2:1-3)
 - b. The peril of unbelief. (3:7-19)
 - c. The peril of disobedience. (4:11-13)
 - d. The peril of immaturity. (5:11 - 6:12)
 - e. The peril of rejection. (10:19-31)
 - f. The peril of refusal. (12:25-29)

7. The "let us" exhortations to mature spiritually, which lead to that heavenly city. (Cf. 13:21)
 - a. Let us fear. (4:1)
 - b. Let us give diligence to enter. (4:11)
 - c. Let us hold fast our confession. (4:14)
 - d. Let us draw near to the throne of grace. (4:16)
 - e. Let us press on unto perfection. (6:1)
 - f. Let us draw near with a true heart. (10:22)
 - g. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope. (10:23)
 - h. Let us consider one another. (10:24)

- i. Let us lay aside every weight. (12:1)
- j. Let us run the race. (12:1)
- k. Let us have grace. (12:28)
- l. Let us go forth unto Him. (13:13)
(This is the final test and the badge of discipleship.)
- m. Let us offer up sacrifices of praise.
(13:15)

B. THE APPLICATION OF THE WRITING.

- 1. The superiority of Christ as the founder of Christianity. (1:1 - 4:13)
 - a. Jesus Christ is presented as being superior to the prophets. (1:1-3) He is superior to the Old Testament prophets because all revelation is summed up in Him. (John 12:48-50) Revelation progressed up to Christ and His spostles, but not beyond them. (Cf. John 14 - 16)
 - 1) Superior because of who He is. (ver. 3) God!
 - 2) Superior because of what He has done and is doing. (ver. 3) He made purification for sins.
 - b. Jesus Christ is presented as being superior to angels. (1:4 - 2:18) Because He is God and man.
 - 1) As God.
 - a) Angels are created beings who render service to God and man and in their order they are greater than mankind. (1:14; 2:7)
 - b) Jesus was made lower than the angels when He gave up His throne of glory and became incarnate.
 - (1) "Having become" indicates His position had been lower than the angels. (1:4 cf. 2:9)

(2) At His exaltation, when He ascended back to heaven to resume His preincarnate dignity and glory, He became so much higher than the angels. (Cf. *Phil.* 2:9-11)

c) The writer, in *Chapter 1*, calls upon seven Old Testament verses to support his claims of Jesus being God's Son and His superiority as Mediator, over all mediators, even angels.

(1) *Ver. 5a - Psa. 2:7.*

(2) *Ver. 5b - 2 Sam. 7:14.*

(3) *Ver. 6 - Psa. 97:7.*

(4) *Ver. 8 - Psa. 104:4.*

(5) *Vs. 8-9 - Psa. 45:8-9.*

(6) *Vs. 10-12 - Psa. 102:25-27.*

(7) *Ver. 13 - Psa. 110:1.*

2) As man.

a) Jesus is the true representative of man and as such, is superior to angels. (2:5-18)

b) Jesus is the perfect man. (2:9-10 cf. 5:7-9) He was made perfect when He subjected His will (as man) to that of God (*Luke 22:42*) and lived the sinless life. (Cf. *2 Cor.* 5:21)

3) He was made lower than the angels in His humiliation (crucifixion), but the results were a crown of glory and honor. (2:9)

4) Through His death He defeated Satan and delivered His enslaved brethren to freedom (2:10-16), which shows Him to be superior to angels.

c. Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, is presented to be superior to Moses and Joshua. (3:1 - 4:13)

1) Superior to Moses. (3:1-6)

2) An exhortation is given to encourage belief and obedience to Christ and to teach how unbelief will prevent one from entering into God's promised rest. (3:7-19)

3) The true rest of God remains, but can be forfeited. An example, Israel's failure to be led into their rest by Joshua. (4:1-10 *cf.* Num. 26:63-65)

4) An exhortation is given for them to make the proper preparation to enter into God's true rest. Israel had come to the border of Canaan's land (their rest - a land flowing with milk and honey, *cf.* Num. 13 - 14, *esp.* 14:8-9) and rejected it in unbelief. (4:11-13)

2. The superiority of Christ as High Priest. (4:14 - 10:37)

a. The high priesthood of Christ is presented as an encouragement to His people because of His greatness and His human experiences. (4:14 - 16)

b. The qualifications of the priesthood. (5:1-4)

c. Christ certainly qualifies to serve in the capacity of high priest, for he was divinely appointed and sympathetic toward humanity. (5:5-10)

NOTE: Hebrews 5:11 - 6:20 is an exhortation and warning against falling away which is an interlude in the discussion of Christ as High Priest. (*Cf.* 5:10 w/ 7:1) This section should be digested by each Christian and a personal examination taken to determine one's own spiritual growth.

d. Seven proofs are presented to support the superior nature of Christ's priesthood. (7:1 - 10:37)

- 1) First of all, Christ is a priest according to a superior order which is higher than that of the Aaronic priesthood. (7:1-19)
 - a) Jesus' priesthood is the antitype of the priesthood of Melchizedek. Melchizedek, as a type of the Son of God (7:3), was not made a priest because of his genealogy. Just like the priesthood of Christ was not dependent upon genealogy, you cannot trace the genealogy of God.

NOTE: Melchizedek is like the Son of God, not the son of man. (7:3)
 - b) The Aaronic priesthood was according to genealogical descent. (*Ezra* 2:61-63 *cf.* *Neh.* 7:63-65; *Num.* 3:10) The priesthood of Melchizedek was dependent upon personal qualifications.
 - c) The priesthood of Melchizedek, which is like that of Christ, is greater than the Aaronic priesthood because of Melchizedek's superiority to Abraham (7:4-10), Abraham being the father of Judaism.
 - d) Because of the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood (7:11-14), there was a need for a perfect priesthood i.e., the priesthood of Christ. (7:15-19) Note the vivid contrast between the two priesthoods.
- 2) His priesthood is confirmed with a divine oath (7:20-22) and is permanent in nature (7:23-25); established upon the sinlessness of its priest, Christ the Lord. (7:26-28) These are three additional proofs of the superiority of Christ's priesthood.
- 3) The fifth proof is that Christ is a priest of a better covenant. (8:1-13) Concerning the two covenants, consult Lesson 15, Increasing In Knowledge, Book 1, by Larry Deason.

- 4) The sixth proof presents Christ as the priest of a better tabernacle. (9:1-28) The earthly tabernacle was inferior and temporary. (9:1-10) Its services could not cleanse the conscience, but was a type of that greater tabernacle which was to come. Jesus entered into the greater and more perfect tabernacle, heaven itself, and there gave Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of all men. (9:11-28 esp. vs. 11, 24)
- 5) The seventh proof presents Christ as a priest of a better sacrifice. (10:1-37) If the sacrifice consisting of bulls and goats could have made the worshipper perfect, there would have been no need for another sacrifice. (10:1-4) It was impossible because they were only shadows and types of the real. Through Christ and this new order, His sacrifice is effective and final. (10:5-18) Our response to His sacrifice, as well as a departure from wilfull sin, is taught in 10:19-37.

3. The superiority of faith. (10:38 - 12:29)

- a. Faith is not a blind leap into the dark. It is rather a step into the light based upon convictions supported by strong evidences. (10:38 - 11:3)
 - 1) It takes a greater degree of faith to trust in atheistic evolution, which supports the "big bang theory" as the answer to the existence of our universe, which is based upon "incredible evidence," than to believe that God framed them by His word. (11:3)
 - 2) The evidence which supports our faith is overwhelming in comparison to all other theories.
- b. Take a look into faith's "Hall of Fame" and be encouraged that the same God whom they served is also our God and provider. Allow the testimony of these great heroes of faith to strengthen our faith. They are our witnesses to God's providential care. (11:4 - 12:1)

- c. Look to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Be encouraged by His sacrifice. Receive His chastening. Be a true son. For, in Him, you belong to a kingdom which cannot be destroyed nor shaken. (12:2-29)
 - d. Our faith rests upon a resurrected Savior (12:2); the promises of God that we (who are in Christ) are enrolled in heaven (12:23); the grace whereby our service rendered to God, in the right spirit, is acceptable (12:28); which shows faith's superiority to all other inferior systems.
4. Conclusion to the Epistle. (13:1-25) The practice of faith.
- a. The superiority of the Christian way is seen as it pertains to social relationship among brethren. (13:1-6)
 - b. The superiority of the Christian way is seen as it pertains to spiritual relationships. (13:7-17)
 - 1) Relationship to teachers (vs. 7-9) - "imitate."
 - 2) Relationship to the altar as priests of God (vs. 10-16) - "sacrifice."
 - 3) Relationship to the elders (ver. 17) - "obey."
 - c. Final exhortation. (vs. 18-25)

IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. The Letter Of *Hebrews* Is An Argument To Encourage A Group Of People Not To Abandon Their Faith Because Of The Pressure Of Persecution And Because Of Their Strong Attachment To Old Law (God's Revelation Given To Moses).
 - 1. The writer taught them that God, who had delivered the Law of Moses to them by angels, had since spoken historically in His Son, whom He made, temporarily, lower than angels in order for Him to participate in earthly life.
 - 2. Because Christ is both human and divine, He is qualified to serve as High Priest, in which capacity He is superior to the Aaronic priesthood.

Death cannot terminate His priesthood (7:24),
and His sphere of service is in the heavenly
sanctuary, in the very presence of God.
(9:11, 12)

3. The sacrifice of Himself is never to be repeated
and is perfect in the removing of sin and its
guilt from those who, by faith, trust Him.
- B. This Superior Way Of Christianity Applied Will
Bring To All That Believe, Assurance, Endurance And
The Ultimate Entrance Into The Heavenly Kingdom.