

## Hebrews: 'Jesus is Better' A Brief Survey

### Historical Situation of the Book

1. Title 'to the Hebrews' – may not be original, but it is accurate.
  - a. Called 'brothers' by Author (who displays deep OT knowledge), 3.1, 10.19
  - b. Author plans to visit – 13.19,23 – they are probably in Rome.?
2. Believers made a good beginning in their discipleship – 6.10
  - a. But gradually they became "slow to learn" and "lazy" – 5.11, 6.12
  - b. They are urged to "go on to maturity" – 6.1
3. Believers were in danger of 'drifting away' from Christian faith – 2.1
  - a. This was partly because of persecution – 10.32-39
  - b. Also, they struggled to understand the relation between Jesus and OT

3.1 "fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess"

4.14 "let us hold firmly to the faith we profess"

10.23 "let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess"
4. Author is Unknown – No specific person is mentioned in the Book
  - a. Paul? – It seems doubtful because of 2.3 "those who heard him" (Galat 1.12) "I can adduce no reason to show that Paul was its author." - John Calvin
  - b. Other Suggested Authors – Luke, Clement, Barnabas, or Apollos
  - c. We do not know the human author, but it bears the clear evidence of inspiration by the Divine Author, the Holy Spirit of God.
  - d. Author had extensive understanding and knowledge of the OT.
    1. Quotes from all five books of the Pentateuch.
    2. Clear understanding of the Historical Books of OT
    3. Numerous OT characters, ceremonies, and institutions mentioned.
  - e. Extensive and accurate knowledge of the Life of Jesus
    1. Incarnation – 2.14
    2. Temptation – 2.18, 4.15
    3. Preaching – 2.3
    4. Miracles – 2.4
    5. Obedience – 3.1-6, 10.5-7

- 6. Prayer – 5.7,8
- 7. Sacrifice – 7.27
- 8. Death on Cross – 2.9, 6.6, 13.12
- 9. New Covenant – 8.8, 9.15, 10.18,29
- 10. Resurrection – 13.20
- 11. Ascension – 4.14
- 12. Heavenly Session – 1.3, 10.12
- 13. Sending Holy Spirit – 2.4, 6.4
- 14. Return – 9.28
- 15. Judge - 10.27

5. A Sermon to a Church – This is perhaps the best example of a “sermon” to a New Testament church in Scripture. Exegeting and applying key OT texts, the author gives them this “brief word of exhortation” (13.22). A good reminder that “biblical” sermons should be full of Scripture and full of the Savior!

## The Superiority of Jesus

### 1. Superior to the Prophets – 1.1-3

- a. OT alone cannot attain perfection – 1.1, 7.11
- b. Prophets spoke for God, Jesus is God – 1.3
- c. Jesus is God’s Final Message – “he has spoken by his Son” 1.2
- d. Message ratified by miracles of the Spirit – 2.4
- e. There is no other place to find God’s Truth – 2.1-3
- f. Word is “living and active” – 4.12 and “unchanging” – 6.17,18
- g. Jesus fulfills the OT and is the Final Messenger of God

1.2 “in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son”

5.9 “eternal salvation”

9.26 “the end of the ages”

9.28 “final salvation and judgment”

12.22-24 “Jesus the mediator of a new covenant”

### 2. Superior to the Angels – 1.4-14

- a. Jesus is the Son, angels are servants – 1.4-7, 14
- b. Jesus is the Creator, angels are creatures – 1.8-13
- c. This Jesus went ‘lower than the angels’ – to a Cross! – 2.5-7a
- d. Thus, He is now crowned with glory and honor – 2.7b-9

3. Superior to Moses – 3.1 - 4.13

- a. Moses was a faithful servant, Jesus is a faithful Son – 3.1,2
- b. Moses served in God’s house, Jesus built the house – 3.3,4
- c. Moses pointed beyond himself to Jesus: “in the future” 3.5

4. Superior to Aaron – 4.14 – 10.39

- a. Like Aaron, Jesus was “God-appointed” not self appointed – 5.1-6
- b. Order of Melchizedek is a Superior Priestly Order

1) Perfection could not be obtained through Levi – 7.11

2) Melchizedek was a Priest and King – 7.1

3) M. symbolizes ‘indestructible life’ – no beginning or end – 7.3,16

4) Aaron (in Abraham’s loins) pays tithe to M. – 7.4-10

5) M. belonged to ‘another tribe’ – not Levi – symbolic of David the King from ‘another tribe’ of Judah – 7.13,14

6) M. was appointed by divine oath ‘the Lord has sworn’ – 7.21-25

5. Superior to the Old Testament Heroes of Faith

- a. Chapter 11 lists great men and women of faith from the OT.
- b. ‘none of them received what was promised’ 11.39
- c. ‘Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith’ 12.2

6. Mt. Zion is Superior to Mt. Sinai

- a. Sinai portrays death and fear – 12.18-21
- b. Zion portrays life and joy – 12.22-28
- c. Coming to Jesus is to come to Zion – 12.24

The Sacrifice of Jesus

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>8.1-6 [A] The place of Jesus’ ministry<br/>8.7-13 [B] The new covenant promised<br/>9.1-10 [C] The old Day of Atonement<br/>9.11-14 [C] The new Day of Atonement<br/>9.15-22 [B] The new covenant in Christ’s blood<br/>9.23-28 [A] The place of Christ’s ministry</p> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Three Contrasts:

1. The PLACE of Ministry: Earthly and Heavenly ‘Sanctuary’
2. The BASIS of Ministry: Old Covenant and New Covenant
3. The FUNCTION of Ministry: Old and New Sacrifices

OT Image Explained and Elaborated in Christ: Leviticus 16 / Day of Atonement

Four Ways Jesus is Better than the Old Covenant –

1. The SPHERE of His Sacrifice

- a. Jesus sacrifice was not ceremonial, but moral – legal requirement.
- b. Old covenant sacrifices “for the cleansing of the flesh” 9.13  
“external regulation applying until the new order” 9.10
- c. What is needed is sacrifice which can “cleanse the conscience” 9.9
- d. Old Covenant sacrifices needed to be continuously repeated 10.2
- e. Jesus blood can “cleanse our conscience from acts of death” 9.14

2. The NATURE of the Sacrifice

- a. It is not earthly, but heavenly.
- b. Jesus offered Himself “through the eternal Spirit” 9.14
  - 1) It was perfect - qualified to take away sins – 10.4, 9.26
  - 2) It was spiritual – through Him we draw near to God – 9.14,23
  - 3) It was substitutionary – “takes away the sins of many” 9.28

i. OT Idea of Substitution for the Sinner

- Day of Atonement – Scapegoat: “carry on itself all their sins” Leviticus 16.22
- Servant of the Lord – “he will bear their iniquities” Isaiah 53.11

ii. NT Fulfillment in Jesus

- 5.9 – “he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him”  
9.28 – “Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people”

### 3. The UNIQUENESS of the Sacrifice

- a. Constant repetition of OT Sacrifices shows their ineffectiveness, 10.1-4.
- b. Jesus sacrifice is “once for all” – unrepeatable: 9.12,26,28, 10.10,12,14
- c. Confirms its effectiveness and the certainty of our salvation, “by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy” 10.14

### 4. The ACHIEVEMENT of the Sacrifice

- a. It is permanent, not passing: 6.20 “Jesus...has entered on our behalf”
- b. In Him we too confidently enter God’s presence: 10.19-22
- c. Through Jesus we are qualified to appear before God, like the High Priest of the OT who was:
  - 1) Sanctified by Blood: Exodus 29.21 > Hebrews 9.14, 10.20
  - 2) Cleansed with Water: Leviticus 16.4 > Hebrews 10.22

## The New Covenant in Jesus

### 1. Heart of the New Covenant

Quotation of Jeremiah 31.31-34 in Hebrews 8.8-12 is the longest single OT quote found in the NT. This text shows the heart of our relationship with God:

- a. Inward Holiness: “I will put my laws in their minds and will write them on their hearts” – 8.10a
- b. Knowledge of God: “I will be their God, & they will be my people” 8.10,11
- c. Full Forgiveness: “I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” 8.12

### 2. Why a New Covenant?

- a. Human Sin and Weakness: “God found fault with the people” 8.7,8
- b. Old Covenant: “obsolete...aging...disappearing” 8.13
- c. New Covenant is Permanent
  - 1) “eternal salvation” 5.9
  - 2) “eternal redemption” 9.12

- 3) “eternal inheritance” 9.15
- 4) “eternal covenant” 13.20

### 3. Jesus brings the New Covenant

- a. “a change of priesthood, there must be a change of law” 7.12
- b. “superior ministry...mediator....covenant....promises” 8.6
- c. “mediator of a new covenant...promised eternal inheritance” 9.15

### 4. How Jesus achieves the New Covenant

- a. By His Death: “a will is in force only when somebody has died” 9.15-17
  - 1) Greek & Hebrew word for Covenant = Will, Testament
  - 2) Jesus death put the promises of the Covenant into effect.
- b. Through His Blood: Covenant “a bond in blood sovereignly administered”
  - 1) OT Type: “the first covenant was not put into effect without blood” 9.18-23, Exodus 24.8
  - 2) NT Fulfillment: Jesus is Better Reality
    - a) Reality: Law is only a ‘copy’ and ‘shadow’ – 9.23, 10.1
    - b) Heaven: Tabernacle is only ‘man made’ – 9.24
    - c) Final: High Priest in went ‘again and again’ – 9.25
    - d) Sacrificial: HP took ‘blood that was not his own’ – 9.25
    - e) Global: ‘took the sins of many people’ – 9.28
    - f) Returning: ‘he will appear a second time’ – 9.28

### 5. Living in the New Covenant

- a. Certainty: “God of peace...through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus...equip you with everything” 13.20
- b. Confidence: “we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place” 10.19
- c. Celebration: “let us continually offer to God a celebration of praise” 13.15,16
- d. Caution: “how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?” 2.3

## The Discipline of Jesus

### 1. Example of Jesus

#### a. Sympathetic Elder Brother

2.11 “of the same family...not ashamed to call them brothers”

2.18 Knows our Struggles > Able to Sympathize and Strengthen Us

#### b. Sinless High Priest

4.15 “tempted in every way, just as we are – yet without sin”

4.16 Able to bestow grace and mercy in our time of need

#### c. Submissive Son

5.7 “he offered prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears”

5.8 “he learned obedience from what he suffered”

5.9,10 Qualified to be Source of Eternal Salvation

### 2. Exhortation of Jesus

#### a. Purpose of Hebrews: 13.22 “my word of exhortation...a short letter”

##### 1) Exhortation – Word of Encouragement and Warning

Encouragement – 10.19-25, 32-39

Warning – 6.4-12, 10.26-31

2) High Priest – 8.1 “The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest....

#### b. Faith (10.22), Hope (10.23), Love (10.24)

##### 1) Faith – Chapter 11

10.38 “my righteous one will live by faith”

11. 1 “being sure of what we hope for & certain of what we do not see”

11.6 “without faith it is impossible to please God”

11.39 “these were all commended for their faith”

## 2) Hope – Chapter 12

12.1,2 “let us run with perseverance...fix our eyes on Jesus”

12.7 “God is treating you as sons”

12.12 “strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees”

12.22 “you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem”

12.28 “we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken...  
be thankful...worship God “

## 3) Love – Chapter 13

13.1 “keep on loving each other as brothers”

13.2 “entertain strangers”

13.3 “remember prisoners”

13.4 “honor marriage”

13.5 “prefer contentment to covetousness”

13.7-9,17,24 “respect your leaders”

13.11-14 “bear the reproach and rejection of Jesus”

13.15 “fill our lives with praise to God”

13.16 “share with those in need”

13.18-19 “pray for one another”

13.20-21 Look to our Savior / Shepherd in All Things

13.25 “Grace be with you all”

Pastor Mark Blair  
BICF ZGC  
April 2017