

Lessons From Hebrews

Introduction

(He 1:1-3)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of "Lessons From Hebrews."
 - a. Today we will begin by looking at some introductory material, some backdrop into this magnificent book.
3. It is a book of renown literary and yet it is a book of great mystery.
 - a. When was it written, or who is the author...
4. Let us examine this wonderful book and learn the lessons therein.

I. The Historicity Of Hebrews

A. Date

1. Most people place this writing between 62 and 70 A.D. for good reason.
 - i. It was written after the church was established.
 - a. **He 5:12** "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food"¹
 1. **He 10:32-39; 13:17**
 - ii. It was written while the temple was still standing.
 - a. **He 9:24-25** "For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own"
 1. **He 10:11; 13:10**
 - iii. It was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - a. **He 8:4** "Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law."
 1. **He 10:11; 10:25**
 - iv. It was written after "some" of the disciples had already passed away.
 - a. **He 13:7** "Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."

B. Author

1. There are have several men considered as the author of Hebrews.
 - i. Paul, Barnabas, Luke, Clement of Rome, Apollos, Peter, Stephen, Philip...
 - ii. I'm going to address the oldest and most widely discussed, Paul.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

Lessons From Hebrews

2. Evidence for Paul.
 - i. The oldest existing evidence of authorship points to Paul.
 - a. Clement of Alexander
 1. He lived toward the end of the second century.
 2. He noted it was written to the Hebrews in the Hebrew language and translated into Greek by Luke for the Greeks.
 - b. Origen, Clement's successor.
 1. He said, ""the thoughts of the Epistle...were Paul's, but the style and composition were the work of someone else." (Jesus Christ Today A Commentary on the Book of Hebrews by Lightfoot, Neil R. pg. 20)
 - i. This was the prevailing thought until the Reformation movement.
 - ii. The internal evidence of the closing remarks of chapter 13.
 - a. **He 13:23** "want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you." (NIV)
 1. Paul and Timothy have a close relationship as does the Hebrew writer it appears.
 - b. **He 13:18** "Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things."
 1. Paul often appeals to brethren for prayers.
 - i. **Ro 15:30; II Co 1:11**
 2. Paul often refers to a good or clean conscience.
 - i. **Ac 23:1; 24:16; II Co 1:12; I Ti 3:9**
 - c. **He 13:19** "I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner."
 1. Paul writes in the same manner to Pilemon and the Philippians.
 - i. **Pl 22; Ph 1:24-25**
 - iii. The internal evidence of the terms and phrases.
 - a. **He 1:5 & 5:5** "You are my Son, today I have begotten you."
 1. Paul is the only other one to quote **Ps 2:7**.
 - i. **Ac 13:33**
 - b. **He 4:12** "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."
 1. Paul is the only N.T. writer to merge the sword with the Holy Spirit.
 - i. **Ep 6:17**
 - iv. There is much more but this is sufficient.

Lessons From Hebrews

3. Evidence against Paul.
 - i. The earliest extant evidence isn't exactly solid.
 - a. Clement of Alexandria's account is inaccurate concerning the Hebrew to Greek.
 1. Most all agree the letter had its origin in Greek due to the smoothness and artistic polish.
 - b. Origin wasn't gun hoe about Paul being the author.
 1. "But who it was that really wrote the epistle, God only knows." (Ecclesiastical History by Eusebius 6.25 pg. 216)
 - ii. The internal evidence.
 - a. The most common argument against Paul is the difference in style between Paul and the Hebrew writer.
 1. Paul was very rough and abrupt in letters which often led to interrupted thoughts only to be completed later in the letter.
 2. This Hebrew letter is very polished with precise syntax and a wonderful use of rhetorical devices. It was a careful constructed composition.
 - b. There are differing thoughts used between the two writers.
 1. The mentioning of Jesus as High Priest.
 - i. The Hebrew writer mentions at great length Jesus being High Priest.
 - ii. Paul in all his letters never once mentions this.
 2. The remarks concerning quoting of Scripture.
 - i. Paul usually phrases such as "it is written" or "the Scriptures says."
 - ii. The Hebrew writer phrases such as "God says" or "the Spirit says."- 4. Though these points are contended each are validity.
 - i. Hence why I simply say the "Hebrew writer."
- C. The literary form of Hebrews
 1. There are a number of differing literary forms in the New Testament.
 - i. There is the dialogue form.
 - a. This was a conversational writing were ideas or thoughts are put into conversations between two or more persons.
 1. **Jn 20:30-31** "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."
 - b. This was an ancient literary form perfected by Plato around 400 B.C.

Lessons From Hebrews

- ii. There is the diatribe form.
 - a. This was the philosophical form of writing where there is an imaginary opponent raising questions and objections.
 - 1. **Ro 3:1** "Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?"
 - 2. **Ja 2:18** "But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works."
 - iii. There is the epistle form.
 - a. This was the less formal form of writing where the audience was intended to be a larger circle of readers than a letter would be.
 - 1. I&II Peter; I&II&III John, James...
2. So what is the literary form of Hebrews?
- i. This is very difficult as it holds multiple characteristics.
 - a. It is said that Hebrews, "begins like a treatise, continues like a sermon, and concludes like a letter." (Jesus Christ Today A Commentary on the Book of Hebrews by Lightfoot, Neil R. pg. 43)
 - ii. Most agree it is either an epistle or letter by which it shouldn't be argued either way.

II. The Context Of Hebrews

- A. The Hebrew writer wrote to a specific people about a specific need.
 - 1. The readers were people the writer knew and wanted to be reunited with.
 - i. **He 13:19, 23**
 - 2. The writer knew of their suffering and public shame they had endured.
 - i. **He 10:32-34**
 - 3. The readers had in the beginning been good faithful Christians that had showed love and compassion for the abused.
 - i. **He 6:10; 10:34**
 - 4. But now the readers were not doing well spiritually as they were babes instead of teachers and there were signs of them drifting away from the truth.
 - i. **He 5:11-15; 2:1; 10:25**
- B. The readers were a group of Jewish/Hebrew Christians of the 60's
 - 1. This is made evident by the massive amount of appeal to the Old Testament.
 - i. As seen above these Jews were under great persecution and were considering going back to the Old Law.
- C. Thus...
 - 1. When studying Hebrews always keep who the reader is in mind.

III. The Content Of Hebrews

- A. The Hebrew book outlines into three parts
 - 1. Christ is supreme over all others (1-7)
 - 2. The Old Law is fulfilled in the New Law (8-10)
 - 3. Maintain faithfulness no matter the outside ridicule (11-13)

Lessons From Hebrews

- B. The content of the book can be summed up by saying the writer is striving to keep the fading Christians faithful
 - 1. The key verse
 - i. **He 3:12-13** "Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."
 - 2. The key word
 - i. Better – found 13 times

IV. The Opening Statement Of Hebrews

- A. The Hebrew writer establishes a "timely" timeline considering the audience
 - 1. God in the past spoke to the people through His prophets.
 - i. **He 1:1** "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets"
 - 2. God now speaks to us in these "last days" through His Son.
 - i. **He 1:2a** "but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son..."
 - 3. "If the recipients of this letter wanted to know what God expected of them, they needed to pay close attention to Jesus (not Moses, David or anyone else.)" (Notes on Hebrews by Parrish, Eddie pg. 10)
- B. The Hebrew writer then establishes that this One whom God speaks through now is superior to the prophets He spoke through in the past
 - 1. This One whom speaks for God now...
 - i. Is God's Son.
 - a. **Jn 3:16** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (NKJV)
 - ii. Is appointed by God as heir of all things.
 - a. **Mt 28:18** "And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."
 - iii. Is Him through whom God created all things.
 - a. **Jn 1:3** "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - iv. Is the radiance or reflection of God's glory.
 - a. If radiance then God's glory flows out of Christ.
 - 1. **Jn 14:9** "Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"
 - b. If reflection then God's glory is reflected by Jesus.
 - 1. **Jn 12:45** "And whoever sees me sees him who sent me."
 - c. Both are possible and neither are unscriptural.
 - v. Is the express image of His person.
 - a. **Jn 1:1** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Lessons From Hebrews

- vi. Upholds the universe by the word of His power.
 - a. **Co 1:17** "And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."
 - vii. Made purification for our sins.
 - a. **II Pt 1:9** "For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins."
 - viii. Sits at the right hand of God.
 - a. **Co 3:1** "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."
2. If this One is not superior to the prophets who is?

CONCLUSION

1. "The Roman letter presents the necessity of the Christian faith, Galatians presents the certainty of the Christian faith, while Hebrews presents the superiority of the Christian faith." (Notes on Hebrews by Stapleton, Robert pg. 3)
 - a. Brethren what a treat it truly is to study such a magnificent book on the superiority of the Christian faith.
2. Question: Have you recognized Jesus as Him who is superior and are you holding fast to that faith which is superior to all others, Christianity?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not? Make it right now.
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**