

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Wednesday Nights Bible Studies

Saint Mary Coptic Orthodox Church of Colleyville

The message of Hebrews can be summed up in three words, "**Christ is better.**" The book seems to un-fold the message in a crescendo of arguments. Christ is better than the angels who revealed the first covenant (Hebrews 1:1-2:18). Christ is better than Moses who was the mediator of the first covenant (Hebrews 3:1-19). Christ was better than Joshua (Hebrews 4:1-13).

But the heart of the argument comes in Hebrews 4:14-10:18. There the language of the priesthood, altar, and sacrifice comes to the forefront. Christ is a better priest than the Aaronic priests of Judaism. Christ offers a better sacrifice. He is a better tabernacle. He is a better altar. His priestly work is superior to that of the Old Testament. One is left with the conclusion that a decision to abandon faith in Christ and to return to Judaism would be the worst mistake a person could make. This was obviously the conclusion Saint Paul, the author of Hebrews, hoped his readers would draw.

Exhortation is another common element in the message of Hebrews. Exhortations not to slip or not to neglect the superiority of Christ appear regularly in the opening nine chapters. However, it is in the final four chapters that exhortation becomes the dominant motif. The great faith chapter in Hebrews 11 lists numerous examples of Jewish heroes who had looked forward to their Messiah. Saint Paul reacts in horror to the idea that their descendants would turn their backs on the long-hoped-for Messiah to return to the security the heroes had hoped to escape.

Study Questions for Reflection and Discussion

These readings and study questions are in preparation for next week's lesson.

As you begin each day pray that the Lord would speak to you through his Holy Spirit as you open yourself to his word.

First Day: Read Hebrews 1. *Focus in on Hebrews 1:1-4.*

1. List the characteristics of Christ according to these focus verses. What overall picture of Christ emerges immediately?
2. What is the spiritual condition of human beings that is implied by these verses? In other words, why was it necessary for Christ to be revealed the way these verses say that he was revealed?
3. What spiritual desires for relationship with Christ or Christlikeness do these verses awaken in your heart?

Second Day: Read Hebrews 1. *Focus your attention on Hebrews 1:5-9.*

1. Verse 5 quotes from Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14. Find those verses and read the surrounding verses. What other insights into Christ to you receive from those Old Testament passages?
2. If, as verse 6 states, angels worship Christ what should our daily response to our Lord be? Jot down a few ways in which that daily response can become a pattern in your life.

Third Day: Read Hebrews 1. Focus on Hebrews 1:5-14.

1. Verses 8 and 9 quote from Psalm 45. Read Psalm 45 and discover the verses there that are quoted. What does Saint Paul find in Psalm 45 that causes him to apply it to Christ?
2. What common elements do you discover between Psalm 45 and Isaiah 61:1-11?
3. The idea that creation was made by Him (our Lord Jesus Christ) and by His Word is also found in John 1:1-5 and Colossians 1:15-20. Read those passages and think about why it was important for the New Testament to describe Jesus as being involved in the Creation of the world. Jot down some of your ideas.

Fourth Day: Read Hebrews 1:1-2:4. Now focus in on Hebrews 2:1-4.

1. What warning does Saint Paul give in Hebrews 2:1-4?
2. What argument does Saint Paul use to show how serious the danger was? Is the danger equally dangerous for us today? Why?
3. What activities and disciplines could help you to not drift away from what you have heard? Write a brief prayer asking the Lord to help you incorporate those disciplines into your life so that you can stay true to Christ and grow in his grace.

Fifth Day: Read Hebrews 2:1-18. Focus in on Hebrews 2:5-9.

1. Verses 6-8a quote from Psalm 8:4-6. Read all of Psalm 8. What view of human beings is found in Psalm 8? What responsibilities and/or privileges are primary messages in Psalm 8?

2. Trace all the references to "subjecting" or "putting under feet" in Hebrews 2:5-8. What is your final conclusion about subjection?

Sixth Day: Read Hebrews 2:1-18. Turn your focus to verses 10-18.

1. How is Jesus described in verses 10-13? What is important about each description?
2. Verse 12 quotes Psalm 22:22. Read all Psalm 22 and list the phrases that remind you of Christ.
3. What was accomplished by the death of Christ according to verses 14-18? What application or importance is that to you?

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FOCUS VERSE

Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. Hebrews 2: 17,18

Wednesday Nights Bible Study
At St. Mary Coptic Orthodox church
From 7-830pm

Live at www.suscopts.org

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Questions, suggestions to stmarydallas@yahoo.com