



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews

Chapter 1

Bishop Youssef

What Do You Need for This Study?



- A heart and mind open to the Holy Spirit
- A prayerful attitude
- A Holy Bible (NKJV)
- A pencil
- Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Hebrews



Methodology

- Observation : What does the text say?
- Interpretation: What does the text mean? Not what it means to you or me, but what it meant to its original readers
- Correlation: What light do other Scripture passages shed on this text?
- Application: How should my life change in response to the Holy Spirit's teaching of this text?



Warning

- By itself, Bible study will not transform your life
- You need to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide your study and your application of the Bible's truths
- So bathe your study time in prayer, asking the Spirit of God to illuminate the text, enlighten your mind, humble your will, and comfort your heart



Authorship

- There was consensus in the early church that St. Paul is the author “Know that our brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly” (Hebrews 13:22,23)
- Now some scholars reject this because:



Authorship

1. He did not mention his name
 - a. He was addressing the Jews who considered St. Paul as breaking the law of Moses “but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs” (Acts 21:21)
 - b. Since he is the apostle to the gentiles, so when he wrote to the Hebrews, he did not command them as their apostle



Authorship

2. St. Paul was not skilled in the Greek language
 - a. He wrote it in Hebrew and it was translated later to Greek

Recipients



- They are primarily Jewish Christians who are familiar with the Old Testament



Date

- In Hebrews 13:24 “those from Italy greet you.”
- The persecution in Rome under Nero was around 65 AD brought on by the fire that engulfed much of Rome
- Probably, Hebrews was written before 65 AD



Canonicity

- It was accepted by the early church fathers as among the standard New Testament writings among the writings of St. Paul



Purpose

1. To convince wavering Jewish Christians not to desert Christ and return to their former Judaism

The 5 Warnings Against Apostasy:

- Danger of Neglect (2:1-4)
- Danger of Unbelief (3:7-19)
- Danger of Not Maturing (5:11-14)
- Danger of Shrinking Back (10:26-39)
- Danger of Refusing God (12:25-39)

Purpose



2. To help both Jewish and Gentile Christians to make sense out of the Old Testament and show its relevance in a world influenced by Greek ideas

Theme



- The superiority of Christ and Christianity
- The Superiority of Christ's Person (chapters 1-4)
- The Superiority of Christ's Work (chapters 4-10)
- The Superiority of Christian's Privileges (chapters 10-13)

God Revealing Himself (1:1-3)



- Old Testament:
 - a. Through the prophets
 - b. At various times and in various ways
- New Testament:
 - a. Through His Son
 - b. How would the Son's words have more weight than those of the prophet?

God Revealing Himself (1:1-3)



1. Heir
2. Co-creator and agent of creation
3. The brightness of divine glory
4. The express image of God's being
5. The sustainer and preserver of the universe
6. Purifier of our sins
7. Co-Ruler

Christ-Superior to Angels (1:4-14)



- The Hebrews were proud that they received the Old Testament by angels (Acts 7:53)
- Christ has a better name: The word “name” functions here to stand for the whole person and their nature or character

Christ-Superior to Angels (1:4-14)



- He is the *Son* (Psalm 2:7) and (2 Samuel 7:14) while the Angels are His creation, who worship Him (Deuteronomy 32:43 Septuagint)
- He is the *Lord* and the *King* (Psalm 45: 6, 7) while the Angels are spirits and flames of fire (Psalm 104:4)

Christ-Superior to Angels (1:4-14)



- He is the *Christ*, anointed beyond His companions (Angels) (Psalm 45:7)
- He is the *Creator* (Psalm 102: 25-27)
- He is the *Pantocrator* (Psalm 102:25-27)
- He is the *Ruler* (Psalm 110:1) while the Angles are ministering spirits



Conclusion

- The Christian's life is wrapped up in the person of Christ
- Satan's goal is to downplay the role of Christ
- Our spiritual transformation is related to our worship of Jesus
- If Satan can get a Christian to take his eyes off of Jesus, then he has accomplished a major victory in stifling spiritual growth in that believer's life