
Good References:

R174 – “Looking Unto Jesus”

R4510 – “The New Covenant in the Book of Hebrews”

Life and Epistles of St Paul, Conybeare & Howson “Epistle to the Hebrews” (Email me for this)

The title of this talk is “Looking Unto Jesus” from Heb 12:2. This epistle was directed to the Hebrew Christians. Before going into this lesson about the Book of Hebrews, we want to see why it was written to them?

As we go through “Hebrews” we’ll see that the majority of the topics in this epistle would be foreign to Gentile Christians, but not to Jewish Christians.

For years, Paul had seen a lack of deep understanding among the Jewish Christians about what Jesus had actually accomplished for them, even though they understood that Jesus was the Messiah.

Jesus’ miracles of raising the dead, stilling the storm, healing leprosy, feeding the 5000, etc. were undeniable marks of his Messiahship.

But many Jews failed to see the full ramifications of Jesus’ finished work... And because of this, they were in grave danger.

The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts document this great transition in Jewish faith from the Law of Moses to faith in Christ. This was made possible by 3 ½ years of Jesus’ ministry, ending at his crucifixion. This may seem abrupt after over 1600 years of the Law, but the opportunities afforded from that work stayed open.

Jesus (and the Father) wanted the Jews (and later the Gentiles) to come to their own conclusions, as Peter did, when, after years of seeing clear evidences, he put the pieces together, and finally, when asked or even urged by Jesus to proclaim what he really thought, said:

Mat 16:16 Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!

Jesus wanted this same process of evidence and conclusion to be experienced by all of his followers. None should be threatened or forced into a confession of faith. No peer-pressure no “group- think.”

Jesus had said...

[Mat 11:25](#) ...I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

As we know, at that time, all of these were Jews.

But seeing Jesus as the Messiah, as both “Lord and Christ,” ([Act 2:36](#)) seemed to be straightforward given the evidences shown during Jesus’ ministry.

But the deeper truths were harder to grasp. These truths concerned the basis of their relationship with God, along with a profound change in their “culture” which had been the major part of their lives... for centuries.

The Gospel of Luke gives a detailed, chronological record of the features of the earthly life, work and teachings of Messiah.

John’s Gospel records Jesus’ explanation of the Law and its constraining effect on Israel...

At Sinai, Israel agreed to the Law, which was a great blessing to them, and elevated them above other peoples, but it also constrained them from attaining the full blessings that God ultimately wanted for them.

In John 10, Jesus discusses the Law as a protective “pen” or “sheepfold” which “penned-in” all Israel. While under the law, they received blessings, but they could never fulfill the law and receive its ultimate reward of life. ([Lev 18:5](#))

Jesus entered the Sheepfold through the Door of the Law, The Porter was the Law Covenant which determined if the demands of the law were fully met, so that the ONE who would meet those demands could put an end to the constraints of the Law, and figuratively open the sheepfold and lead the sheep (as many of Israel as would follow) out from the constraints of the Law to the greater liberty in Christ.

Jesus explained this in [John 10:1-4](#)

The chronological record of Luke continues in Acts, about this great opportunity for Israelites to leave this constraint of the Law and come into liberty wherewith Christ makes free. (as mentioned in [Gal 5:1](#))

The MAJOR point was...

[Gal 2:16](#) ...man is not (no longer) justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, ...for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Paul kept explaining this Major Change, showing that keeping the Law could no longer bring even the typical or partial justification, (which we show on Plane P on the Chart.)

But “Judaizing Christians” followed after Paul from one place to another, trying to convince Gentiles that they should keep the Law in order to have a standing before God.

In the first Church Council of Acts 15, this issue came up due to this misunderstanding of what Jesus had accomplished with respect to the Law.

[Act 15:5](#) ...there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

Peter Replied...

[Act 15:10](#) Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

The Council endorsed the truth that there was no need for Gentiles to keep the Law.

Paul taught again and again that Jesus had put an end to the Law...

[Rom 10:4](#) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

[Col 2:14](#) Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us (Israel), which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

Paul addressed this Epistle to the Hebrews really to **Hebrew Christians**

This audience was assumed to be familiar with, and formerly faithful to, the Levitical worship, the Temple services, and all the institutions of the Mosaic Law.

These were the ones who were in the greatest danger of this apostacy (abandonment of true Christianity) BACK into Mosaic Judaism.

Note that in “Hebrews,” Paul gives no warnings about circumcision, as he did in his letter to the Galatians, because these Jews were already circumcised.

Paul’s main goal was to halt any apostacy back into Mosaic Judaism and to show that the former things of the Law were only types or symbols of the greater reality in Christ.

As Paul says in Galatians...

[Gal 3:24](#) Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

[Gal 3:25](#) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

It is important to note that many Jews didn’t see the Levitical ceremonies as typical. They saw them as exactly what God intended them to do... for all time!

Reading Paul’s epistle was a big “wakeup-call” or “paradigm shift” for them.

Our goal is to see how Paul gets Hebrews 12:2 and beyond, where Paul makes his main points.

87% of this Epistle is essentially a preparatory and explanatory introduction about who Jesus really was, what he really accomplished, and his preeminence.

Bro. Paul gives many explanations of type and antitype that we don’t anywhere else. “Hebrews” is like the “Rosetta Stone” of the New Testament.

The Rosetta Stone was inscribed the same message in three languages. The Greek message was used to decipher the same message in the ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphs and Demotic.

Because of Paul's great love for his Jewish Brethren, he patiently speaks to them, in their own language. (Like the Brethren on Pentecost who spoke in the tongues of the foreign Jews, to help them!)

Paul shows that these Hebrew Scripture "types" can be deciphered through an understanding of the realities in Christ.

"Hebrews" contains seven main comparisons and contrasts, with a few parenthetical discussions and digressions along the way.

Paul discusses things for which Jews should have great respect, reverence, and veneration.

He then shows how each of these can be compared to Jesus, to show Jesus' preeminence above all of them in God's plan.

Paul begins with a brief summary introduction:

(Heb 1:1 KJV) God... spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

(Heb 1:2 KJV) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

(Heb 1:3 KJV) Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Let us begin where Paul begins... with the **Angels**

Angels were properly held in high veneration by Israel, as messengers of Jehovah.

- spoke to Abraham by angels about Isaac's birth.

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- stayed the hand of Abraham, on Mt. Moriah and spoke of the seed of Abraham as the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea shore.
 - Wrestled with Jacob and changed his name to Israel
 - pronounced the birth of Samuel, John the Baptist
 - appeared to Joshua before the taking of Jericho.
 - angel slew the armies of Sennacherib in one night.
 - Gabriel pronounced good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Seeing the high veneration that Israel had for angels, Paul begins his argument:

(Heb 1:4 KJV) Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

(Heb 1:5 KJV) For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

(Heb 1:6 KJV) And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

Angels were seen as the venerated messengers of God who spoke for God about the things that Israel should do.

Paul then makes another comparison:

Heb 2:1 We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

Heb 2:2 For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment,

Heb 2:3 how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord (Jesus), and was confirmed to us by those who heard him.

Secondly – Paul speaks of Moses

Heb 3:5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant,

Heb 3:6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we,

Third - He then speaks of Aaron, the High priest.

for Aaron was made the High Priest after the law of a carnal commandment (his human lineage) without an oath, and could not continue forever by reason of his death, He also offered up sacrifices, first for his own sins; and then the people

while Jesus priesthood was made after the power of an endless life, with an oath

Psa 110:4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

...who ever liveth to make intercession for us, and is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.

In fact, "Hebrews" is the only Epistle that mentions the terms "Priest" or "High Priest."

Paul pauses to give the Hebrew Christians an admonition to wake up and grow up.

Heb 5:11 (NIV) We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand.

Heb 5:12 ...by this time you ought to be teachers, but you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

Fourth - He then speaks of Melchizedek

Heb 7:2 ...the name Melchizedek means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace.

Heb 5:9 and, once made perfect (Glorified), he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

Heb 5:10 and was designated by God to be high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Paul showed that the Melchizedek priesthood is greater than the Aaronic priesthood, because after defeat of the kings of the plain...

Gen 14:19 Melchizedek blessed Abram

Gen 14:20 And Abram gave Melchizedek tithes of all

Paul then explains that...

Heb 7:7 the person who gives a blessing is greater than the one who receives the blessing.

God also showed that the Melchizedek priesthood was superior to the Aaronic (Levitical) priesthood because...

Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek while he was still in the loins of Abraham (as Abraham's descendent).

Melchizedek was not a picture of a sacrificing priest but a reigning priest, who pictures Christ's work in Glory.

Heb 7:16 Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

Heb 7:17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Fifth, Then Paul speaks of the Law Covenant

Heb 7:19 For the law made nothing perfect,

Heb 8:7 For if that first [Law] covenant had been faultless, (if it could have made men perfect) then should no place have been sought for the second.

Seeing the deficiency of the Law Covenant, God said...

Heb 8:8 ...Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

Heb 8:9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers

Heb 8:10 ... I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

This New [Law] Covenant will have a better mediator

Heb 8:6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant...

The same promise in Lev 26

Lev 26:12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

(To be ultimately fulfilled by the time of Rev 21:3)

Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Sixth, Paul speaks of the tabernacle...

Heb 9:2 (NIV) A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread, and the golden altar of incense; this was called the Holy.

Heb 9:3 Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy

Heb 9:4 which had ark of the covenant, which contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.

Heb 9:7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people.

But Jesus...

Heb 9:11 But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

Heb 9:12 Not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the [Most Holy], having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Heb 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Here, Paul shows them of what the law really is... a shadow or outline of the reality which would come over 1600 years later...

Heb 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect

Heb 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered?

Compared to Jesus...

Heb 10:5 Therefore when He came into the world, He said, "Sacrifice and offering [of bulls and goats] You did not desire, but You have prepared a [perfect human] body for Me.

A pivotal verse...

Heb 10:9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first [the typical sacrifices of the Law], that he may establish the second [the real sacrifice which will satisfy Divine Justice].

Establish (Webster) 1. To set and fix firmly, unalterably; to settle permanently

Paul contrasts the futility of the typical sacrifices with Christ's sacrifice...

Heb 10:11 (ESV) And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

Heb 10:12 (ESV) But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God

Paul also shows the future results of Jesus's sacrifice and mediatorship...

Heb 10:9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first [the typical Law Covenant], that he may establish the second [the NEW Law Covenant in the Mediatorial Kingdom].

Paul quotes Jer 31:33 to bring to mind the future New Covenant

Jer 31:33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Heb 10:16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,"

Lastly, Paul brings to their attention the Elders, the Ancient Worthies.

These were the examples of faithfulness to Israel.

We read in the King James...

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Heb 11:2 For by it the elders obtained a good report.

We see this phrase... by faith, by faith, by faith. several times...

But in the Old Testament, the word "faith" is used only twice...

Including...

Hab 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

Here "faith" is translated from H529

firmness; moral fidelity

This is based on..

Intellectual assurance and heart reliance, even in the face of adversity

This is an active faith shown through trust. Their faith was demonstrated by their trust in God even in severe adversity.

As Paul goes through these elders from...

Abel, to Enoch, to Noah, to Abraham whom all Israelites claimed as their father.

That Abraham looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God...

Heb 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Heb 11:18 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

Heb 11:19 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Heb 11:27 By faith Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

Heb 11:29 By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.

Heb 11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

Heb 11:36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

Heb 11:37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

Heb 11:38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:)

But even after all that these elders endured...

Heb 11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promises [made to them]:

Heb 11:40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Because the real sacrifice for sins had not yet come to satisfy God's justice, in due time.

Paul talks about the records of their lives of faithfulness to what God had revealed to them...

Heb 12:1 (NIV) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,

...like legal depositions to help inspire our faith to what God has revealed to us now...

We do not look to follow these faith heroes of the past, but with the same zeal, we should ...

let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Paul now sets the focus for these Hebrew Christians, and for all the Body of Christ...

Heb 12:2 Looking unto **Jesus** the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising [or disregarding] the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Author – forerunner – who gave up all the blessings guaranteed by the Law Covenant (everlasting human life) Lev 18:5

But entered into the covenant of sacrifice, typified Lev 8. Where the wafer of (Lev 8:26) in the wave offering represents the Exceeding Great and Precious Promises, including the promise of the Divine Nature.

For the Joy set before him...

Br Russell expresses these Joys in Vol 5, E118-119

- (1) A joy to render a service acceptable to the Father
- (2) A joy to redeem mankind
- (3) A joy to be the mighty ruler and blesser, King and Priest of the world; to share the knowledge of the divine plan, and to lift up to human perfection all accept of the terms of the New Covenant.
- (4) to be made an associate in the Kingdom of the Universe, next to the Father

Paul then discusses our inspiration and mission...

Heb 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

In other words, don't think of yourselves, look at Jesus. Because focusing on self can result in being weary in faint. Look at Jesus' example for inspiration.

After all, if we are still here...

Heb 12:4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood (unto death, as Jesus did), striving against sin.

Realize that God will chasten you and be thankful for it...

Heb 12:5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

Paul quotes Prov 3:11-12

Pro 3:11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

Pro 3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

God is dealing with you as Sons, no longer as mere servants.

God's chastening may be initially hard to endure...

Heb 12:11 ...nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

So renew your strength and courage...

Heb 12:13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame [those who will not walk] be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Copy Jesus character...

Heb 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord

If we don't, we could...

Heb 12:15 fail of the grace of God; by allowing any root of bitterness to spring up and trouble you, and defile many

This is what happened to Esau. He had more regard for temporal and carnal things that he did for God's promises. He lost his birthright of the First-born.

Those under Moses came to the physical Mt Sinai (Exo 19), and were forbidden to touch the mount.

Paul contrasts this with the unseen reality of our destination...

Heb 12:22 But you [are approaching] mount Zion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Heb 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect [Ancient Worthies],

Heb 12:24 and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

Paul shared these the great antitypes, the lessons that God intended from the Mosaic types, to strengthen these Hebrew Christians... (and us.)

So...

Heb 13:9 Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.

Or by influences that try to turn you back to practicing the Mosaic Law.

For...

Heb 13:10 We have an altar from which those priests in the typical Tabernacle can't even approach.

Jesus is the great antitype and our example

Heb 13:11 For the bodies of those beasts [the typical sacrifices], whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

Heb 13:12 ...Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood [the real sacrifice], suffered without the gate.

Heb 13:13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

Like father Abraham...

Heb 13:14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

I am thankful that Paul helped these Hebrew Christians to understand not only that the Law had ended, but that it was typical of deeper truths that pointed to Christ, and their greater opportunities in Christ.

I am thankful that the problems of the early church were turned into blessings for them, and for us.

Paul helped the Galatians to see their liberty in Christ, the purpose of the Law, and other principles, in ways that they could understand.

Paul helped the Corinthians to see the deeper meaning of the Lord's Memorial, and other principles, in ways that they could understand.

The Body of Christ have truly been enriched by the lessons of Paul to help these Hebrew Christians, and us to...

Heb 10:23 ...hold fast the profession [the acknowledgement] of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)