SW2004 - Study Group 1

Hebrews 1v1 - 2v8: Christ superior to the Prophets & Angels

BACKGROUND

Acts 2v41-47
Acts 4v4
Acts 4v29-37
Heb 10v32-34
Zeal of the Jerusalem brethren & sis's. They had a wonderful spirit in early days.

I Cor 15v5-6 500 had seen Jesus at once – in Jerusalem.
Sold their houses and laid the money at the apostles' feet. Amazing fellowship.
They suffered trials and their goods had been plundered. They took it joyfully!

In early days this was a large, thriving ecclesia. But now there was a weariness amongst them – they were turning their backs on Jesus Christ by going back to Judaism and the priesthood under the law.

Remember that this is an emergency epistle: Heb 13v22 Paul apologizes for being brief.

Heb 9v5 "cannot now speak particularly" – Brief! Every word was important and charged with meaning.

Important to look at the *background* as to *who* the epistle was written to and *why* it was written (pages 7-9)

Key theme of Hebrews - Christ's superiority to all other forms of revelation. See page 11 of notes – vita!!

Remember the prophecy of Deut 28v47-57,64-65 - These words came true in AD70! If the Hebrews didn't take heed to this epistle, this is exactly where they would end up. Most of the Jews in Jerusalem did end up suffering these curses. Also see Matt 24v12-21: Why did Jesus warn them not to go back into their houses or the city? Because the Spiritual dangers were so great! You would be persuaded to stay by your relatives and friends, plus the influence of their houses and possessions. Faithful believers in AD70 fled to Pella on the other side of Jordan when the Romans retreated for a short time. They remembered Christ's words.

HEBREWS 1v1 - 2v8

1v1 God previously spoke in many portions, and by various methods. Over thousands of years, portion by portion, from the days of Abraham to Malachi's day, by narrative, psalm, by ritual, poetry, by prophecy.

1v2 "last days" – A dramatic way to open! There is an urgency about this message (cp. Jms 5v3; 2 Pet 3v3; 2 Tim 3v1). If Jesus is the Son, he has inherited his Father's property.

1v3 What is the brightness of **God's glory**? (see **Exod 33v12-34v8**) Why was it necessary for God to show this in a man? What benefit do we gain by actually seeing God's glory lived out in a man?

☑ Consider the 7 OT quotations in Hebrews 1 - Good exercise is to underline the quotes in our Bibles.

1v5 "Thou art my son..." (cp. Psa 2v7)— Look at Psalm 2. What is the context? Psalm 2 is about Christ's 1st coming (quoted in Acts 4v25-26) and also his 2nd coming (quoted in Rev 19v15).

1v5 "I will be his Father, and he shall be my son" (cp. **2 Sam 7v14**)— Look at Promises to David. Consider the practical implications of the promises to David (page 19 of the notes)

1v9 "loved righteousness and hated iniquity" – Do we feel like this every day in the world in which we live? What are some examples in life where we feel the same way Christ does?

1v13 "Enemies thy footstool" - When will this happen? Where else do we find this concept in the Bible?

2v1 "Therefore" = Key word: The exhortation of chapter 1 has practical implications. How is it possible for the Truth to slowly "slip away" from us like a ship from its moorings? What steps can we take to make sure this does not happen to us? How can we help others also? 'Lest' = A watch word of warning – See the occurrences listed in the notes (lesson is to heed the exhortation given, lest...)

2v3 What was it that they would have to "escape" from? (in the short term, and eternally)

2v5 Christ will have the world in his "subjection" because he is best qualified to do so. As **Son of Man**, he had our nature. Look at Jesus as "Son of God" & "Son of Man" in **John 5v25-27**. Why did Jesus have to be both Son of God and Son of Man? What does this mean for us today?

2v6-8 What is the relevance and background to **Psalm 8**? **Psalm 8** shows that Christ had dominion over the flesh and therefore has authority to have dominion over the world (see **1 Cor 15v25-28**).

In summary, Jesus is superior to all other forms of revelation -

1v4 Christ had a superior name

1v5 He had a superior origin – He was God's son1v6 His superior worthiness – angels to worship him.

1v7-12 He has a superior future destiny. God is going to give the govt. of the world into his hands.

1v13-14 Christ has a superior position now. He is sitting at God's right hand as our high priest & mediator.

Why it is so important to appreciate Jesus Christ as the centre of our hope? Why is Christ so central to the gospel message and the hope of a future kingdom? Key Verses in Hebrews: 1v2-4; 7v12; 8v1.

SW2004 - Study Group 2

Hebrews 2v9 - 3v19: A merciful and faithful High Priest

Remember the big picture of where this section fits in with the whole of Hebrews (see page 11).

- **2v9** Refer to comments by Harry Tennant on pg.29 of the notes. Look at how our unique understanding of Christ's sacrifice gives us a special relationship with Christ.
- 2v10 Look at Islip Collyer's comments about God being a Father. See Psalm 103v7-13.
- 2v11-12 Look at how Psalm 22 is an important background to the subject of Hebrews 2.
- 2v13 "I will put my trust in him" Why is Psalm 18 such a good Psalm to use in this context?
- **2v14 KEY VERSE:** Consider how vital it is to properly understand what the real Bible devil represents. The devil *is* powerful, *does* exist and *must* be dealt with but it is not a supernatural monster. Look at the practical implications of this doctrine (on page 33). Deal with the questions at the bottom of p.33. How does Christ's destruction of the devil emphasise his greatness? How does this fit in with the overall theme of Hebrews? Look at the triple emphasis in **v14** "he, himself, likewise, took part of the same..." Why so much emphasis on Christ's humanity?
- 2v15-16 Read Michael Ashton's comments on p.34 and look at Isaiah 59v15-20 to see why man could not be sinless. It required God's intervention in human affairs to provide a saviour. Think about how this is such a beautiful concept On one hand sinlessness was possible (and was ultimately achieved), yet he also can sympathise with our weaknesses because he suffered temptation.
- 2v17-18 If Jesus came in the nature of angels he could never have sympathized with our weaknesses. Sin could never have been destroyed on its own territory. Consider the importance of Christ as a mediator. God forgives us for Christ's sake (Eph 4v32). Because of the love God has for His Son, and given that Jesus pleads to the Father on our behalf, God looks on us as righteous (even though we are not) John 15v4-5. He forgives our sins, because instead of seeing our sins, he sees his Son. Without Christ's victory over sin, this could never have been possible.
- **3v4** God was greater than the house because He was the builder of that house!
- "Servant" Gk. 'therepia', one who cares for the health and wellbeing of others. What are some practical ways we can do this in the ecclesia? In our homes? For those outside? Paul looks at this positive aspect of Moses' character then says "But Christ is even greater than Moses!"
- 3v5 Look at Paul's method of presenting an argument to Hebrews who would have been skeptical. He doesn't denigrate Moses by recalling Moses' sins (as he could have). Instead, he quotes the Scripture which most elevates Moses (Numbers 12v7-8). He is trying to appeal to the Hebrews. Moses was great indeed, but he was only A SERVANT in that house. Christ was A SON, therefore THE HEIR. The law was a testimony of things to come. Carcasses fell in the days of Moses in the wilderness because of lack of faith. Carcasses would fall again in Jerusalem for the same reason!
- **"firm unto the end" -** 40 years was a long time to be in the Truth. It is the same today! The year 1967 came with a great impact to the brotherhood in Australia. Those who lived then thought it was the prelude to Armageddon. What about **40 years later?** No good beginning in the Truth enthused, and finishing up disillusioned and half an unbeliever. The lesson for them is the lesson for us!
- Think about the practical implications of believing that Jesus Christ is Son of God (end of p.38). Read the comments by Michael Ashton at the top of page 39. "rejoicing in the hope" What is it that we rejoice about? How does this influence how people in the world see us? How does this affect our attitude in daily life? What are some real life examples of this?
- **3v10 KEY PHRASE**: "They have not known my ways" What are God's **WAYS** in contrast to God's **actions**? Quoted from **Psa 103v7-8**. God's **ways** were appreciated by Moses. He had a **personal relationship** with God. This involves an understanding of God's **character Exod 33v12 34v8**.
- **3v12** Why is it so vital to understand that salvation is conditional? (see practical implications of this on p.42 of notes). Look at **Matt 7v21-23**. Also **Rom 2v6-8**... What are some ways in which we can "patiently continue" towards the Kingdom and keep the faith over many years?
- 3v13 How can we become hardened over a period of time without even realising it? How are the words of Rom 1v32 relevant for us today? How can we "exhort one another daily"?

The emphasis in **Heb 3v13-15** is that the time of opportunity is **"TODAY!"** Not when we are in another ecclesia, or have more money, or different opportunities. Take hold of what we have while we can!

SW2004 - Study Group 3

Hebrews 4v1 - 6v6: Jesus superior to Joshua and Aaron

Hebrews 4 continues on from the theme of **ch. 3**, but the focus changes from Moses to Joshua. **Hebrews 5** however begins a new theme, and one which continues through until **ch.10v18**. The priesthood theme is the greatest theme of Hebrews. The big question – Would the Word of God produce faith in the Hebrew brethren and sisters? Would they learn the lessons from Israel's wilderness wanderings?

- The Word of God is **living** and **energetic**. Paul often speaks of things being **LIVING**. Look at the practical implications of believing that the Word is infallible and our only source of authority (see p.50). How is it that this book can be so powerful in daily life? (**Psa 119v103-105**; **Prov 2v1-5**; **3v1-6**; **1 Pet 1v23-25**). **If this is** the inspired Word of God, then give our lives to understand it!! Remember that Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh! (**John 1v14**)
- **4v14-16 KEY VERSES**: Jesus Christ is the perfect high priest. On one hand he was identical to us in that he possessed the same temptation to sin. Yet on the other hand, he was completely perfect. He can therefore represent us before God. Consider carefully the practical implications of believing that Jesus Christ is our High Priest and Mediator comments by Harry Tennant (on page 51).
- 5v2 "having compassion on the ignorant" How does this help us in having understanding for others?
- From Sead Psalm 2. This priest will also be king! There were 2 fulfillments to Psalm 2 the 1st when he was crucified (Acts 4v25-26) and the 2nd when he takes control of the world (Rev 19v15)
- **5v6** Read **Psalm 110**. Melchizedek is used as an example to show that Christ was called of God. Think about why Christadelphians do not have priests Jesus Christ is all we need!
- 5v7 Why did Jesus Christ have to suffer to the extent that he did? Why did he have to die?
 - Jesus willingly submitted to God's will rather than his own right to the point of death (Matt 26v39).
 His death on the cross was the last act of obedience in a whole life of perfect obedience (Rom 5v19; Phil 2v8).
 In doing so he "declared God's righteousness" (Rom 3v25-26).
 - He *inherited Adam's dying nature* through Mary (Rom 8v3; Gal 4v4)
 - He could only defeat sin by living a perfectly sinless life right to the point of death (Rom 6v6-7, Heb 2v14).
 - Jesus could only **overcome death** by actually dying first and then being resurrected to immortality (1 Cor 15v55). He could only be resurrected to immortality if he was sinless.
 - A fellow feeling for all those he came to save, including those killed for their beliefs. Therefore, noone can say Jesus doesn't understand (Heb 2v14-18; 4v15).
- **5v8** How did Jesus Christ learn obedience by the things which he suffered? Why does God allow suffering? How do trials develop our characters? How does it help us to depend on God?
- **5v11** Have we become **dull of hearing** (translated "**slothful**" in **6v12**). How can we become slothful? What is it that helps us overcome slothfulness?
- 5v14 The importance of God's Word It changes our way of thinking to God's Way of thinking. We must make the Word of God our daily food and seek after it as of pure water (Psa 42v1). How does God's Word help us in discerning between good and evil? Look at some practical examples? How did it help Jesus in the wilderness? (Luke 4v1-12)
- **5v14 Vigorous exercise** What happens to an athlete who stops exercising? Or sports people who stops practicing? Why do even the best sports people keep practicing, even minutes before a game? What is the spiritual lesson for us?
- **Repentance** is **vitally important** and a basic first principle. It is for our benefit. Not only are our sins forgiven, but we have **a new perspective in life** this is what God is looking for. We need to be truly sorry for our sins and honestly resolve to change our ways. Otherwise our sins would become deliberate and continuous. It is not just that we would disobey God's commandments, but we would actually turn into a rebellious person rebellion would become part of our character.
- **6v5** Making choices and decisions in life Look at Harry Tennant's words on page 60 of the notes.
- 6v6 "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh" To reject Christ would be to reject the only way to forgiveness and salvation. To return to Judaism would be to join with those who crucified Christ.

SW2004 - Study 4

Hebrews 10:32 - 11:22

The judgement of AD70 was coming. Were they going to associate themselves with the Jewish priesthood, the ones who crucified Messiah, right at the time of that system's judgement? Remember that this was written in the context of impending judgement (hence the example of Noah in 11v7). Jesus had already warned of what was to come in his Olivet prophecy many years earlier. The Roman Invasion of AD70 was now only 7-8 years away. ...We are also living in the days of Noah. Read Luke 17:26-27.

See Luke 21v20-24: Jesus's words would have echoed in the ears of Jewish believers for years. <u>But now</u>: Almost 40 years had past since they were baptised into Christ. There was a *general weariness* growing amongst them. They now had doubts about their faith. No longer were they certain about what they believed. They were bowing to the pressures of the world around them.

10v32-39 An appeal for **patient endurance and faith**. The Hebrews were now failing to look beyond the immediate problems and the material aspects of life. They had lost their enthusiasm. Here was a plea for them to **recapture** their faith! (the faith of "former days"). Remember that this section of **Hebrews** has a **special application to the Jerusalem Ecclesia.**

10v32 RSV "A hard struggle with sufferings" - See examples of these persecutions in Acts 8v1; 12v1-5.

Two ways they had endured: 1. they had suffered, and 2. they shared the persecutions of others.

10v33 They had become a public spectacle, they had suffered defamation & persecution

10v34 Their 'enduring substance' had not been in material goods but the hope of the Truth.

10v37-39 "yet a little while" – Lesson from Hab 2v3-4 - many parallels to AD70. Hab 2 says "It shall come" cp. Heb 10v37 says "He shall come" ie. Jesus Christ.

"the just shall live by faith" - those who live their lives with faith as their motivating influence.

10v39 "perdition" = the destruction of AD70 soon to come. Note: "them that believe" (ie. have FAITH)

11v1 FAITH is the belief and confidence in God's Truth. "substance" = a foundation (like in a house) "evidence" – proof, a convincing argument, evidence that would be accepted in a Court of law. Faith is what underlies all our actions in life. It is what holds up our life in Christ.

NIV "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see"

→ Without faith our hope would have no foundation! Given that we BELIEVE the truth and are convinced of it, we become *personally involved* when the Truth then becomes our **HOPE**. <u>Lesson</u>: A lot of hope given today, but it is a *false hope* because it has *no substance*. Without substance there is **NO HOPE**. Pressure today to give in to *false hopes* and *worthless pursuits*. The faithful of old were motivated by belief in principles. They were *convinced* about what they believed. Their Faith gave them Hope! They were then *moved* to action! The stronger someone's faith in something, the more radical their practical response.

We often think of **Hebrews 11** as just a chapter about faith. **But...** It is also a chapter about Hope! Common to all examples was that **faith inspired actions**! They became <u>personally</u> involved. **1 Cor 13** speaks of **faith, hope & love** – Faith 1st, then hope and love (an emotional response that follows).

11v4 ABEL - His faith produced **ACTION**. He offered a "more excellent sacrifice". Abel understood the **principles** behind his offering. He saw that it pointed forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. Did the Hebrews?

The slain lamb symbolised the promise God had made – the promise of a woman's seed to crush the serpent's head. All this was ignored by Cain. When Cain murdered his brother he actually demonstrated the **ENMITY** between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

→ Cain was not an irreligious man. He was quite happy to sacrifice to God – but in his own way.

"by it he being dead yet speaketh" – ie. "actions speak louder than words" - Like Abel, the Hebrews were surrounded by resentment and hatred from their fellow Jews, their brothers. Could they overcome that?

11v5 ENOCH "walked with God" (Gen 5v22) ie. He was in agreement with God (see Amos 3v3). He had CONSISTENCY OF WORSHIP – Lessons here for us! "God had translated him" – The reason for Enoch's inclusion in this chapter. One day he is preaching against the evil of his times. The next day he is gone. The Hebrews were also about to be translated so they would not see the death of AD70.

"before his translation" – very important! Enoch's faith was seen under trial before God acted.

Read Jude v14-15. Enoch would have been ridiculed – He testified that their works were evil. Enoch understood that the promised seed would be one who would come with a multitude of saints with him. That the seed of the woman would come as saints of God to bring judgements upon a faithless world.

- **11v6 2 vital aspects of faith:** Believe that he is, and that He is a rewarder.
- **11v7 NOAH Judgement** about to be wrought by God upon an ungodly generation. The Jerusalem ecclesia was **warned in advance** about what to expect and what action to take. Noah's faith was a perfect example of faith's definition- "**not seen...** as **yet**". No-one had seen a flood.
- 11v8-10 ABRAHAM Departure from his native land (v8). The Jews were about to do the same! Soon another "get out for yourself" call would come to the Hebrews. The same for us. Do we treat this world as if it can give us all that we want? Or do we see it as something very temporary? See the practical implications of the PROMISES TO ABRAHAM (top of page 83). Did these Hebrews understand that the "hope of Israel" centred around Jesus Christ coming as the King of the Jews, as their Messiah? (see comments by Graham Pearce in the box on page 83).
- 11v13 KEY VERSE: Read the practical implications of belief that man is Mortal (bottom of page 84)
- 11v14 Abraham at any time COULD HAVE <u>GONE BACK</u> to UR but his FAITH prevented it. "able to" –Abraham attributed to God the power to perform something **NEVER DONE BEFORE A RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD!** This was real faith!
- 11v15-19 ABRAHAM & ISAAC Would the Hebrews be able to see God's Son as the Lamb provided? Did they understand what this type represented?.
- **11v20-22** Again, *very obscure examples* taken from the lives of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Why? **Examples of family pressures!** Would the Hebrews allow ties to family and loved ones hold them back? Family members were pleading with them to go back to Judaism and to stay in the city!

SW2004 - Study 5

Hebrews 11:23 - 12:13

Remember again that this section of **Hebrews** has a **special application to the Jerusalem Ecclesia**. The judgement of AD70 was coming. Were they going to associate themselves with the Jewish priesthood, the ones who crucified Messiah, right at the time of that system's judgement?

See Luke 21v20-24: Jesus' words would have echoed in the ears of Jewish believers for years. **But now**: Almost 40 years had past since they were baptised into Christ. There was a **weariness** growing amongst them. They now had doubts about their faith. No longer were they certain about what they believed.

11v20-23 Moses and his parents: His parents were not afraid of the King's commandment. The Hebrews also needed to overcome their fear of the Romans - by **FAITH**

- → God can "DRAW OUT" his children from seemingly hopeless situations. So too in AD70!
- → Moses led *an exodus* out of Egypt. Would the Hebrews have enough faith to lead an exodus out of Jerusalem?

11v24 A very unnatural decision. Because his mind was on things "NOT SEEN AS YET".

11v27-29 "forsook" = TO ABANDON (when Moses left Egypt a 2nd time)

11v31 RAHAB The most appropriate example for the Jerusalem ecclesia. Why?

She developed faith in the **IMMINENT DESTRUCTION** of her city and way of life. **What was Rahab's attitude towards the city?** She couldn't wait to leave! Also....

Rahab is the only example (in detail) in Heb 11 of one who lived AFTER the LAW was given!

Joshua 2: Rahab believes in ONE God who created all things & she knows Him by His Name Yahweh.

She is also quotes the Bible! ...from Deut 4:39! She believed in the promises to Abraham.

She believed that Israel was the Promised Land.

She says "WE heard" - (about the children of Israel crossing the red sea).

→ So here is a woman who "heard" and developed faith. Others "heard" but did not believe. When did the Red Sea dry up? 40 YEARS before! (she wouldn't have even been 40)

In **Joshua 6** the Israelites overran Jericho and & "they burnt the city with fire" - In AD70 the city was also burnt with fire.

THE LESSON: Why couldn't the Jerusalem ecclesia be just as clear about the destruction of their city as Rahab was about the destruction of Jericho? Can we?

☑ Lesson for the Hebrews: What did they really want out of life? Same with us! Decide now!

Consider the "Resurrection and Judgement" practical implications of basic doctrine summary on page 96.

11v38-40 KEY VERSES – To receive the promise, this requires resurrection, judgement, the granting of immortality and a hope for a future Kingdom.

Consider the "Hope of Immortality" practical implications of basic doctrine summary on page 97. Do we appreciate this hope?

12v1 The **cloud** of witnesses – Look at the role of these "clouds" in the chart on page 96. *"lay aside every weight"* – The relevance for us? (see Bro Carter's comments on p.99) What are some examples?

12v2 Jesus endured - For the joy set before him. Where else is **JOY** emphasised as a great aspect of God's Kingdom? See **Matt 25v23**.

12v3 What can influence us to grow weary and faint in our minds? How can we overcome this?

12v4-13 Consider the theme of God being a Father and us being children (eg. Psalm 103v7-13).

SW2004 - Study 6

Hebrews 12:14 - 13:25

Chapter 12 - Hope in Action.

v14 - 'Follow after' – actively chase/pursue peace with all men (cp Matt 58)

v15 - Look diligently – to view from a distance (big picture); at your walk/actions
Citation from Deut 29 v 18 – beware of the temptation to turn away from the truth, to be a poisonous influence on God's people who had been drawn out of the nations of the earth (Egypt). i.e. beware if you are the person responsible for encouraging people to forsake Christ/stay behind in Jerusalem.

v16 & 17 - Example of Esau – treating sacred things with contempt, too proud to repent. The Jews were treading underfoot God's word by rejecting Christ.

v18-21 -Mount Sinai / Mount Zion. Fear under law / mercy under Christ – (ref pg 106)

v24 - ...better things than Abel's blood – cp Ch9v12, 11v4 better because Christ's sacrifice spoke of salvation more clearly than Abel's offering.

v26 & 27 - 'Yet once more' - Hag 2v6

Destruction of Jewish powers/commonwealth (heavens, earth), shaking of the Mosaic order.

Chapter 13 – Love in Action

v1-7 – Paul is drawing to the end of his argument, but he wants to make sure that he finishes with a climax. There are some practical issues which he also wants to cover, but he is careful to deal with them prior to his climax.

However, Paul in dealing with theses practical issues brilliantly weaves through them his theme. Eg. – in dealing with the issue of covetousness he quotes from the life of Joshua(A type of Christ) when he was just about to take over the leadership from Moses.

v9 – the Crucial Argument

Paul gets down to the crucial argument. The Hebrews must leave the law ('meats') and go unto Christ ('established in grace')....why???

Because it was 'unprofitable'? Why was the Law unprofitable?

v10-11 - The Law did not provide true Fellowship with God

Paul shows from the Law itself, and in particular the sacrifice on the day of atonement that the Law did not provide provision for us to gain true fellowship with God.

- Law did not provide a sacrifice which could give true fellowship with God
- The Law did however <u>point forward</u> to an offering which could.
- It pointed to a sacrifice which would be made outside the law, that being Christ

v12-14 - the Sacrifice of Christ can provide us with true Fellowship

If the Hebrews wanted to be part of this sacrifice they must leave the Law....because it provided no eternal inheritance.

The Hebrews are now faced with the ultimate decision... Stay with the Law and in the City of Jerusalem and you will perish. Come to Christ and leave the city, and you can be part of the eternal city of the future age.

v15-16 – What then should be the response to such a sacrifice?

- Having been now shown the saving sacrifice of Christ, Paul outlines for the Hebrews what their response should be.
- "A sacrifice of praise'. They should be exceedingly thankful for the sacrifice of Christ, an it should be thanks that will show forth in the way they lived their lives.

How do we respond to the wonderful Blessing of Christ? Does our thanks spill forth into the way we live our Lives?