



Sermon Notes

US N°. 63

Date: July 8, 2012

Title: Intro to the Book of Hebrews

#1 in Series on the Book of Hebrews

1. Judaism and Jewish beliefs

a. History

- i. Adam to Abraham (the first Hebrew; cf. Gen. 14:13); from one man to a tribe.

- 1. Melchizedek, the King of Salem. (cf. Gen. 14:18) There's no genealogy or no history, and it's shocking to find a king/priest of the Lord prior to Moses and the Sinai covenant.

- ii. Moses and the people of God; from tribe to nation.

b. The Law and the Prophets

- i. Luke 16:15-17, "*You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. 'The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.'*"

- ii. Mt. 17:2-3, "*He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.*"

- c. The purpose of the law. Gal. 3:23-26, "*But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*"

- d. Priests. Particularly the Levitical priesthood which was established at Mt. Sinai and through the Aaronic priesthood. The old covenant required continual sacrifices and a once-a-year atonement for sin offered by a human priest. The Levites were set apart as unto the Lord and were to serve before the Lord. However, in the Messianic prophecy found in Ps. 110:4 we read, "*The LORD has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'*"

- e. Angels. The nation of Israel also had extensive experience with angels throughout their history: the angels guarding the gates of Eden, Abraham's entertaining of angels, Jacob fighting with the angel of the Lord, the angel of death in Egypt, the parents of Samson, Gideon, etc. There are 93 verses in the OT that speak of angels.

- f. God is highly concerned with justice, both in relation to our walk before Him and with men.

- i. Micah 6:8, "*He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?*"

- ii. Mt. 22:36-40, "*Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?*" Jesus said to him, "***YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'** On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*"

2. The early church and the Jews

- a. The Jewish problem. Privilege engenders responsibility; *Noblesse oblige*. However, what was meant to be an outgoing, outward focused, purpose driven society withdrew within itself, fell upon their carnal

appetites and created ghettos (first used in Venice back in the 1500's). The Church lives daily in face of this danger of withdrawing rather than advancing; letting the world go to hell while it goes to heaven. A classic example is of the woman healed one Sabbath in the Synagogue by Jesus; Luke 13:14-16, *"But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, 'There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and not on the Sabbath day.' The Lord then answered him and said, 'Hypocrite! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead it away to water it? So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?'"*

- b. The Jewish privilege. As the descendants of Abraham, the Hebrews receive special privileges such as the initial ministry of the Word. Also, it is important to remember that Jesus was a Jew, that He came to the Jews and that He ministered out of a Jewish context.
 - i. Rom. 1:16, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."*
 - ii. Rom. 3:2, *"Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God."*
 - iii. Acts 17:1-3, *"Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.'"*
- c. The Gentile conflict. The inclusion of the Gentiles, outsiders, was a difficult pill to swallow and proved to be a majorly divisive issue within the early church and even between the apostles for a time. At question was *"How big is our God,"* and *"upon what is our salvation founded?"* The parallels between the Kingdom of God and yeast and light, demonstrate its outward growth and aggressive nature.
 - i. Peter & Cornelius (cf. Acts 14-15)
 - 1. Acts 11:12-18, *"Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."*
 - ii. Jerusalem Council (cf. Acts 15)
 - 1. Acts 15:1-2, *"And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren [in Antioch], 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.' Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question."*
 - 2. Acts 15:7-11, *"And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: 'Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them,*

purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.'"

3. The place and importance of the book of Hebrews
 - a. Despite much speculation, the author of the book of Hebrews remains unknown but it is fairly certain that he was a Hebrew himself. The audience however is well known, the Hebrews. Therefore it is written by a Hebrew to the Hebrews telling them to stop acting like Hebrews.
 - b. It is believed that it is written prior to the fall of Jerusalem to the Roman army in 70AD.
 - c. Hebrews addresses three separate groups: believers in Christ, unbelievers who had knowledge of and an intellectual acceptance of the facts of Christ, and unbelievers who were attracted to Christ, but who rejected Him ultimately. It's important to understand which group is being addressed in which passage, failing to do so can cause us to draw conclusions inconsistent with the rest of Scripture.
 - d. The principal theme of the book is the superiority of Jesus which is an essential doctrinal understanding for every Christian. Upon Jesus, the Cornerstone, many religions are crushed: Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc. Luke 20:17-19, *"Then He looked at them and said, **"What then is this that is written: 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE'? Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."** And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people—for they knew He had spoken this parable against them."*
 - e. As children of Abraham through faith, the OT is also our history now, and we ought to be better students of both the text and context of the OT to help us live under the NT.