

And This Will We Do, If God Permits

An Expository Journey through the **Epistle to the Hebrews**

Chapter 1: Introduction

4: Introduction: Part 4

WAOY Thursday 01/01/09

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our journey through the **Epistle of Hebrews**, and I want to continue with some introductory information about this great **Epistle to the Hebrews**.

On the last broadcast we saw how the main purpose of this entire Epistle is to show to the Jews that Christianity, in general, and Jesus Christ, in particular, is superior to anything and everything that they had under the Old Covenant. So, in Chapter One, the writer begins this Epistle differently than any other Epistle in the Bible.

Now we need to understand that most of the New Testament Epistles start out by telling you who wrote the letter, and then telling you to whom the letter was written. Paul began his Epistles by saying things like:

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God”.

And then Paul would explain to whom his letter was written by saying things like:

“To the saints and faithful brethren which are at Colosse”, or

“To the faithful in Christ Jesus”, or

“To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints”.

But, by looking at the very first two verses of **Hebrews**, we can see that the writer's name is *not* mentioned, and that he begins his letter by telling his Jewish readers that God no longer speaks to Man through prophets, or in the various and sundry ways that God used to communicate with Man. God speaks to Man today only through His Son, which is far better than using sinful human beings like Prophets to

communicate His Word. The writer then goes on to describe Jesus in glowing terms and tells the people of this little Church in Asia Minor around the last third of the first century certain things about Jesus.

The writer tells us that Jesus is seven things:

1. He is the Heir of all things that God has made.
2. He is the Instrument by whom God made the worlds.
3. He is the Brightness or Radiance of God's Glory.
4. He is the express or exact Image or Representation of God's very own nature.
5. He upholds all things by the Word of His Power.
6. He alone purged our sins.
7. He alone sat down at the "right hand" of Majesty.

And over the next several verses, the writer spends great detail showing his Jewish friends that Jesus Christ is far superior to angels and archangels, and to cherubim and seraphim.

Over the next four chapters, this writer tells us that Jesus is superior to angels. He is superior to Moses, Joshua, David, and Aaron; the writer then introduces us to a very mysterious person named Melchisedec who lived in Abraham's day.

But periodically, this writer stops discussing the superiority of Jesus Christ and gives exhortations and warnings to those who are listening with their ears but their heart is far from God. There are a total of five warnings in this Epistle. As we will see as we go verse by verse through it, the first warning was in **Hebrews 2:1-4** when this writer told these people to "*Give the more earnest heed so that what you have heard will not slip*". The second warning came in a section that begins in **Hebrews 3:7** and goes all the way into **Hebrews 4:16**, which is a huge Evangelistic section of this Book. It begins by telling these interested but unsaved people not to harden their hearts, and ends by reminding the Church members whose names are not yet on God's *roll up yonder* that they can come boldly to the throne of Grace in order to repent.

The third warning begins in **Hebrews 5:11** and goes through **Hebrews 6:8**. The fourth warning is found in **Hebrews 10:26-39**, and the fifth and last warning is found in **Hebrews 12:25-29**.

These warnings are *progressive* in that the writer teaches that every time a person rejects God's demand to repent and be saved, his heart is hardened more and more. Every time God convicts a person of sin and he refuses to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and he rebels against the authority of the Scriptures, that person's soul is seared with a hot iron. The urgency of this writer's pleas with these rebellious people is to tell them to repent *now* and be saved *today*, to stop rebelling *this day*, because the end of these people who hear the Gospel but who constantly and consistently reject the Gospel is truly tragic. It is tragic because persistent rejection of Christ may result in such persons' spiritually passing the point of no return... of losing forever the opportunity of Salvation. That is what always happens to someone who refuses Jesus the Christ. They eventually follow their evil heart of unbelief and turn their back forever on the living God.

Such people often have adopted a *form* of Christianity, but they do not have the reality of it. In **Matthew 7:21-23**, Jesus says of them:

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

You see, unlike a knife which become duller with use, Divine Truth becomes sharper with use; the more you read and study Scripture, the sharper the blade of spiritual conviction gets. So, the only way for us to "use" Divine Truth correctly so that it will divide between the soul and spirit and discern between the thoughts and intents of our hearts, is to first of all accept *all of Scripture* to be Divine Truth. Secondly, we are to graciously and humbly submit to that Truth so that we may obey that Truth with gladness of heart.

You see, dear friends, Truth that is heard but not accepted becomes dull and meaningless. Truth that is accepted on some mental level and yet not obeyed becomes despised in our eyes over time. And Truth which is not obeyed joyfully becomes a burden and a labor and grievous to us.

But Truth which is eagerly accepted into the eyes and into the ears, and which goes all the way down into the heart of a grateful bond slave of Jesus... and Truth that is fully accepted and recognized as coming from Father, and which is fully accepted as being Right, and Truth which is obeyed earnestly... so much so that you are willing to struggle and suffer, and maybe even die to obey with gladness of heart... that kind of Truth becomes a Source of the greatest pleasure on earth. It becomes the greatest source of contentment and fulfillment that any human can ever know. It is the fullness of Joy.

But because the infinite reward of accepting and obeying Divine Truth is so great, majestic, and meaningful, rejecting this same Truth, either hearing it but not accepting it or accepting it on some level, yet not obeying it, is horrific far beyond the most devastating natural disaster that anyone has ever known.

The more that the Gospel is heard and yet neglected, the more immune to it we become. And the writer of Hebrews knew that by not accepting the Gospel when it was still "news," these first-century Jews had begun to grow indifferent to it and had become spiritually sluggish and neglectful. Some had already become hard-hearted. And because of the disuse of their knowledge of the Gospel, they now found themselves unable to make the right decision about it. They were, in fact, in danger of making the desperately wrong decision of turning around and going back into Judaism because of pressure and persecution.

That was the situation that the unbelieving Jews faced over 1900 years ago. Sadly, it is the very same place that many people find themselves in today. Spiritually speaking, these people who were in the *Church* but not in the *Body* were growing dull, hard, and stupid.

And we live in a day when that very thing is happening before our eyes. Silly people who do not understand what Jesus actually did, and I mean people who are *in the church!*, are becoming dull, blind, and stupid. They are going back down the mountain and they are leaving the final, full, and completed Revelation of God found only in the New Covenant. They are returning to the inferior Covenant of Judaism and they are being converted to Jews.

You know, back in the early 1970's when I was saved, there were what we called "Messianic Jews". And these were people who were born and raised as Jews, yet God's Hand was upon them and God sovereignly opened their eyes and ears and gave them a heart to believe, and they

heard the Gospel, and they repented and trusted fully in the finished Work of Jesus Christ for Salvation.

And the result was they fully and totally *abandoned* the false religion of Judaism and embraced Jesus. The result was that they were terribly persecuted by their Jewish friends and family, and their names were written in the lambs Book of Life. That was what was called Messianic Jews.

But today, what we have are disgruntled and untaught Christians who don't know the Bible and who are easily led astray... who are enticed by new-sounding words and concepts that they have never been taught right out of the Old Testament. These people are caught away in the emotion of feelings to abandon Biblical Christianity to embrace the false religion of Judaism. And these groups are calling themselves "Messianic" when they really are not. And they are popping up all over, teaching nothing more nor less than the *inferior* Revelation of God that was superseded by the superior Revelation of Jesus Christ in the New Covenant.

It is the very same heresy of the "Judaizers" of the first century who taught that in order for Gentile converts to become good Christians, they first had to become good Jews. They did so by keeping the Sabbath and the dietary and ceremonial aspects of the Law of God, which were only meant for a particular time and a particular people.

And most of these people hate the Epistle to the Hebrews because of the great damage that this Book does to their erroneous cause. I have had some people in my office tell me that the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apostle Paul corrupted Christianity, and that Jesus is not God. They say that the Doctrine of the Trinity is not true, the New Testament is not reliable, Salvation is by keeping the Law, and some have said that a Muslim who tries to keep the Law of God is closer to Heaven than a Protestant who is trusting in the finished Work of Christ for Salvation. These are all classic Jewish beliefs. So they have only proved my point.

Dear friends, we must acknowledge that these are not earnest believers who have received a new Revelation from God, a revelation that is telling them to return to the Law of God so they can be holy. No, these are deceived people who have abandoned Biblical Christianity and are embracing heresy. I pray they will repent and come home to

Jesus. If they listen to what this unknown writer tells them under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in this **Epistle to the Hebrews**, they will.

Now through these thirteen chapters of **Hebrews**, we will see Jesus Christ and we will savor His Supremacy. That will allow us to love Him, worship Him, follow Him, and obey Him like we have never done before. We all will come near to Jesus during this journey and God will be glorified and our joy will be full.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **Hebrews**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. *Soli Deo Gloria*. For the Glory of God alone.