

HEBREWS

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Who wrote this epistle?

Apparently it was in the collective writings of Paul and accepted in the Eastern Church but not in the West, Eusebius did not directly list this epistle among the disputed books.

By the end of the second century, serious doubts were raised about the authorship of this epistle. Tertullian attributed Barnabas as the author. Gaius of Rome and Hippolytus exclude it from the works of Paul, and Hippolytus said the author was Clement of Alexandria. The style of this epistle is unique in NT literature,

The modern view is that the evidence against Paul's authorship is too solid for scholarly dispute. Donald Guthrie of the *New Testament Discovered* of 1976 and many others insist on this. But does it matter?

That there may be a very few similarities between in other writers which may be a product of a shared usage and accepted language of the time.

What follow are brief notes, not a thorough exposition. I have used the KJV text most of the time interspersed with a few comments. This probably would benefit from editing.

Hebrews 1

God spoke to our forefathers in the past by the prophets but, in these last days, has spoken to us by His Son who created the worlds and is the heir of all things.

The Son is the final revelation of God and He has has the brightness of God's glory and is the express (moral) image of God's person, upholding all things by the words of His power having purged our sins Himself, and is now seated at the right hand of God in the Majesty on high.

The reference to His purging our sins reminds us that in 2 Peter 3. 9 we read that the Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all come to repentance. In 1 Timothy 2.4, it is recorded that the Lord desires all to be saved and come to the knowledge of all the truth.

The Son is greater than the angels having a more excellent name than them. God has never called any angel Son or has begotten any angel or said that He would be a father to any angel or that any angel could be His Son.

When God brought the Eternal Word into the world as His begotten Son, He said, Let the angels of God worship Him. The Eternal Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1.14). God said, This is my beloved Son, this day have I begotten Him. There was a day when the Lord Jesus was begotten.

The angels are ministers and sometimes likened to flames of fire. The Son has an eternal throne. The sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of His Kingdom. He loves righteousness and hates iniquity. God has anointed Him with the oil of gladness and He is far superior than all others. In the beginning, He laid the foundation of the earth and also created the heavens. Creation may eventually perish but the Creator Himself will endure for ever. Creation will be folded up like clothes but the Son will remain.

No angel will or ever has sat at God's right hand nor will. There will be a time when God makes all His enemies His footstool. Angels are ministering spirits helping believers to bring others unto salvation.

It is good to realise that God still communicates with us and that the Son has done so and continues to do so. He listens, He knows and He cares. Christ is compassionate and cares for His own and wants people everywhere to come to the knowledge of all the truth and be saved.

Christ is supreme and above all else. As Colossians 1 puts it, in all things He has the pre-eminence. He is sovereign, He is Lord and He is King.

There may be a problem to consider here. The Lord said of Christ, Thou art My beloved Son, this day have I begotten thee.

There was a day when Christ was begotten and became the Son. That is very clear.

And yet He created the worlds.

This is answered by Genesis 1 and John 1, In the beginning was the Word. The Word became flesh, (John 1.14) a man, a human being with a body. There was day when He was begotten as Son yet in eternity past He was the Eternal Word. All members of the Trinity are eternal and deity. We do not read, In the beginning was the Eternal Son.

I also note that God the Father is referred to as a person in this chapter. As stated before in previous essays, the Father and the Holy Spirit are spirits whereas a person has a human body. It does show the incorrect use of words of which we are all probably guilty.

If the Godhead is three persons each would have an individual body and that would constitute three gods and the heresy of tritheism. Tritheism is the belief that God is three persons or in three persons and therefore three gods. Even experienced Christians fail hopelessly on this and are unintentionally indicating a false doctrine if they teach God as three or in three persons.

Someone has asked, Why is this not called the epistle to the Jews? In Philippians 3. 5, Paul calls himself a Hebrew of the Hebrews. Might this signify that he wrote this epistle?

Hebrews 2

This chapter is God's programme for salvation which is outlined with words and exhortations.

The writer says that we ought to give more attention to what we have heard and not to let any teaching slip. The words spoken by angels were steadfast and all transgression and disobedience must be punished. How will anyone escape if they neglect salvation which is so great and spoken of by the Lord and, as the first chapter said, the Lord Himself purged our sins to effect salvation.

The hymn is right, A wonderful Saviour is Jesus, my Lord.

As Isaiah says, No one can compare with Him and so the teaching of typology is futile. No one can be a type of Christ. See Isaiah 40. 18 and 25, Isaiah 46.5. To hear some say that Solomon is a type of Christ is blasphemous. Solomon was evil (1 Kings. 11.6), a serial adulterer and serial idolater.

In speaking of salvation, God confirmed it with signs and miracles according to His own will. He then refers to Psalm 8. 4-6 where one testified that all things were under the jurisdiction of man whereas all jurisdiction is conferred on the Messiah. He has not put the world to subjection under

the feet of angels or men but all authority is under the jurisdiction of God. It was said, What is man that thou are mindful of Him or the son of man that thou visits Him? All things are under the power and authority of God, not men or angels (Matthew 28.18).

Verses 7 to 9 again compares the Lord Jesus to angels. The Lord was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death but the Lord has glory and honour and authority over the works of His hands. All things were under His subjection although we do not see this now. However, we see Jesus who was made a little lower than angels to endure the suffering of death and we note His crowning with glory and honour and that He tasted death by the grace of God and this for every man that responds. The following verse states that it was God's will to bring many sons to glory and to make the Lord, the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. The word perfect is akin to 1 Corinthians 13.10 in which the Lord is described as perfect and we read that the Word of God is perfect, meaning complete, and must not be added to or subtracted from (Revelation 22.18. 19).

Sadly, we have today those who add to Scripture with new alleged prophecies of God particularly among Elim, Pentecostals and charismatic groups. In one Pentecostal group, a so-called speaking in tongues was interpreted as Mrs Jones going to give her brand new piano to the Sunday School, greeted by cheers and shouts of Praise the Lord, Amens and Blessed Jesus. Mrs Jones rightly left that church.

We pass on to the subject of sanctification. He that sanctifies and those who are sanctified are one. He is not ashamed to call them brethren. He will sing praise of such in the church and put His trust in them saying, Behold I and the children which God has given to Me. (We are the sons of God by adoption and regeneration due to the wonderful goodness and condescension of the Lord).

As the children of the Lord are flesh and blood, so did the Lord become flesh and blood and took on humanity and through death would destroy the power of death which is of the devil and He would deliver those subject to bondage because of their fear of death. The Lord did not take on the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham, who was a Hebrew. In all things, the Lord was made like His brethren to make reconciliation for the sins of the people being a faithful and merciful high priest. That He suffered and was tempted means that He is able to succour those who are tempted. Succour is not a familiar word these days but means to give help, assistance and relief.

The more I read all these verses the more I am struck by the marvellous work and character of the sinless son of God.

It passes knowledge, that dear love of Thine,
My Jesus, Saviour yet this soul of mine,
Would of Thy love in all its breath and length,
Its height, its depth its everlasting strength,
Know more and more.

Hebrews 3

We are partakers of the heavenly calling.

We are to consider the High Priest and the Apostle, the Lord Jesus who was faithful to God who had appointed Him . Moses was faithful to his house and people. The Lord is more worthy of glory than Moses.

All houses are built by men. He who builds has more honour than the house. But the builder of all good things is God.

Moses was faithful to his house and a servant and a faithful testimony.

We are of Christ's house and we are to hold secure confidence and hope unto the end.

The Holy Spirit has said, Today if you would heed my voice harden not your hearts as in the days of provocation and temptation in the wilderness. Your forefathers tempted Me, proved Me and saw my miraculous works over forty years.

I, the Lord, was grieved with that generation and said, They do always err and have not known My ways and I swore that they would not enter into my rest.

Take heed brethren lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Exhort each other daily while it is day lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

For we are partakers of Christ (and of the heavenly calling) if we hold on steadfastly with confidence to the end.

It is said, Today if ye will hear My voice harden not your hearts as in the provocation. Some when they heard My voice did provoke Me but not all those that came out of Egypt with Moses provoked Me. Moses was also grieved for forty years with those who sinned and died in the wilderness.

Those who did not enter into God's promised rest was because of their unbelief.

Moses was one of the prophets to whom God spoke but the Lord is greater than Moses and the angels. The supremacy of Christ is paramount. God is not putting Moses down but lifting the Lord Jesus up. The Lord reminds the Hebrews of His mercy towards them in a generation in which they provoked Him to anger. Ingratitude to the Lord was and is despicable and we must take heed lest we fall. We are not called to follow a great teacher or evangelist or a particular group but to follow Christ. It is not what we do in ministry or leadership; it is what Christ has done that should always occupy our hearts.

In these three chapters we have doctrines to correct. There was a day when the Son was begotten and announced as the Son of God (Matthew 3.17), to say or imply that anyone is a type of Christ is degrading to His sovereignty and supremacy and we must use words correctly and, for example, avoid any suggestion of tritheism, a dangerous heresy. God is not three persons. There are not three gods.

As F B Hole points out, this epistle was written to new Hebrew converts.

Hebrews 4

Therefore let us fear. Fear here is not the daily terror of doubting salvation and being left out of the believer's eternal heavenly rest but a warning not to fall short of that rest. These new Hebrew converts were at risk of reverting to Judaism.

The word rest is used of the completion of creation. It is used as the eventual conquest of the promised land. It is the eternal rest and the end of the believers pathway. The gospel has been preached but not everyone has taken heed of it and have no faith.

In the years of the provocation in the wilderness God swore in His anger that those who did not believe would not enter into rest. There is a reminder of all His works including creation from the foundation of the world and that God did rest on the seventh day. Those who do not believe will not enter into rest because of their unbelief. It is again repeated, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

What is clear is the Lord's concern for people as we have already seen. He implores people not to harden their hearts, not to let truth slip or be compromised. To these Hebrews He refers to Israel's lack of faith and trust in the Lord in the days of the escape from Egypt and wandering in the wilderness and their abuse of Moses and of the Lord Himself. They quickly forgot all His goodness and complained.

And we must take heed. In our day where are outnumbered by modern theology, the song and dance brigade and the lifting of hands as if to change light bulbs. Some churches state that if you do not speak in tongues you are not a real Christian. There are so many departures from the faith once and forever delivered to the saints, as Jude wrote.

Verse 9 presents a problem. Some believe it does refer to Joshua and the rest desired on entering the promised land. Others believe it refers to the Lord Jesus. Today if ye will hear His voice would not be repeated if the rest had been won by Joshua some 1400 to 1200 years BC.

Some will not enter into rest because of their unbelief. Those who enter God's eternal rest will cease from the work that they have done as did God Himself.

Hebrews 5

This deals with the office of the High Priest who deals with matters pertaining to God and who offers sacrifices and gifts to God brought by men for that purpose. The High Priest had compassion showing this compassion to ordinary unlearned people, including those who committed sins of ignorance, and those sadly out of the way. The priest might well have an infirmity and so could identify with those who also suffered.

The High Priest would offer up sacrifices for himself.

Priests were called by God as was Aaron but not for personal honour and glory. Christ did not glorify Himself in being a priest but God called Him saying, Thou art my Son. Today have I begotten Thee. The Lord is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec.

In the days of His flesh, the Lord uttered agonizing prayers to God as His death approached, who was able to deliver Him and He was heard. Though a Son, He learned obedience in His suffering and, being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation to those who obey Him.

Called by God to be a high Priest after the order of Melchizedec of whom we have many things to say but (as new converts) you can only take milk as a baby now and strong meat belongs to them of full age who can understand the word of righteousness.

We must go on with Lord for if we do not we are likely to go back. We must take heed and be diligent lest we slip and fall short. Immaturity can lead to a break with Christ,

Hebrews 6

Let us leave the rudiments of the doctrine of Christ and consider the doctrines of baptism, laying on of hands, the resurrection and eternal judgment. This we will do as time permits. A better

proficiency in faith is enjoined as this will prevent apostasy. The foundation of faith is in doctrine but why does the writer now introduce strong meat when they are still babes? Those enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and partakers of the holy spirit, tasted the good words of the Word of God and the powers of the world to come, but if they fall away then they have to repent since they are crucifying the Son of God again and putting Him to shame.

The earth drinks the rain and brings forth herbs which are blessings from God but that which produces thorns and briars are rejected and burnt.

Brethren, have confidence as there are better things for you... things that accompany salvation. God is not unjust. He knows your works and labour of love which shows love for the Lord. Continue in your diligence to the end that you do not become sluggish but imitate those who through faith and patience will inherit.

God made a promise to Abraham saying, Surely I will bless you and multiply you. Therefore the blessing was both on Abraham and His descendants who are God's people. Abraham patiently endured and obtained the blessings which God swore by an oath since men do so swear by what or who is greater. Great was the oath as it was made by God himself. God was determined to show more abundantly His promises. It is confirmed that it is impossible for God to lie. We have to lay hold on the hope set before us which is the anchor to our soul. The anchor is the Lord Himself. The Lord has passed within the veil as our great high priest, a priest after the order of Melchizedec, and to mediate between God and man. We could have no greater Advocate.

Hebrews 7

From now on things become a little complicated.

This chapter continues with details of Melchizedec, King of Salem, King of peace and righteousness, priest of the Most High God. He met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and Abraham gave him tithes, The priestly tribe of Levi, those of the line of Aaron, took tithes. Melchizedec had no beginning of life or end of days, no father, mother or dependents.

The priesthood began with Aaron in Exodus 28. There is no mention of a priesthood before apart from Melchizedec. How did Abraham know him as a priest?

Incidentally, the Lord Jesus was of the tribe of Judah not the priestly tribe of Levi.

Many Christians believe Melchizedec is Christ Himself.

Was Melchizedec a Canaanite king of a noble religious disposition? And why is little known of him and his family. Is he simply a mysterious character?

The comparison between the Lord and Melchizedec is fascinating. Both kings of peace and righteousness and of endless life. Both were high priests. But the Lord had a father when He was begotten as Son.

It is suggested that Abraham was born between 1852 and 1872 BC and many years before this the Sumerians had priests but Abraham's dates are speculative.

Hebrews 8

We have a High Priest set on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is the true tabernacle refers to His supervision of worshippers including these new Hebrew converts. The Lord is sovereign over all holy places.

Today worship is astray from the Bible. It is more like entertainment and a variety show with pop groups, dancing and often noisy pandemonium. God is not deaf.

Every priest is ordained to offer sacrifices and gifts. The Lord offered Himself as the sacrifice and gift to all who trust in Him. He gave Himself as an offering and sacrifice to God.

The sacrifice of Christ and His priesthood is of superior excellence over all else.

Moses was at fault several times (he was human)but in the Lord Jesus you can find no fault.

The Lord sets out a new future covenant and it is exclusively for Israel, not for Christians,The Lord says, I will put My laws into their minds and write them in their hearts. I will be their God and they shall be My people.No teaching will be necessary as all will know Me. I will be merciful for their unrighteousness and remember their iniquities no more. The old covenant will be redundant,

This new covenant refers to the millennial reign of Christ on earth.

Hebrews 9

The subject here is the tabernacle relevant to the first covenant. It was in two parts, firstly, the holy place often called the sanctuary where was the candlestick, table and showbread. The second part was the Holy of Holies, the most holy place with the golden censer, the ark of the covenant overlaid with gold, the pot of manna, Aaron's rod which budded, and the tables of the covenant. The priests were always performing their duties for the people. The High Priest went into the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement when he offered a blood sacrifice for himself and for the people. This day is also known as Yom Kippur.

In Leviticus 16.2, the Holy Spirit guards against coming at all times into the Holy of Holies and confirms that it should be once a year. Access to the Holy of Holies was forbidden at any other times in the old order of things. But the new order of things would have a tabernacle which would not be a building but the Lord Jesus, the ultimate sacrifice for sins.

An Israelite coming from outside into the gate of the tabernacle looking at the courtyard would see in front of him the brazen altar where the offerings involving the shedding of blood were offered on it. The meal offering was on the brazen altar as well. The incense offering was on the golden altar in the holy place.

Verses 8 following have confused many and some accept it as a parable. The way into the Holiest was not manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. The Old Testament tabernacle was a figure of its time but it could not make anyone perfect. It was an established institution and part of the first covenant. But Christ is the High Priest and the tabernacle not made by hands,not a building. And now not by the blood of beasts but by His blood would He enter the Holiest of Holies having obtained eternal redemption for those who trust and obey Him.

How much more would the blood of Christ avail? He offered up Himself without spot to God to purge your conscience from dead works and for us to serve the living God.

Where there is a testator there must by necessity be the death of the testator.The first testament or covenant was by the blood of animal sacrifices as in the days of Moses and Aaron although

sacrifices existed before then. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. Christ was destined from the foundation of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. For us, it is appointed unto us once to die and, after that, the judgment. The Lord died on the Cross to bear the sin of many but He shall appear the second time to those who await His coming.

Hebrews 10

This chapter is reasonably straight forward and I will intersperse the text only with a few comments.

For the law, being a shadow of good things to come, can never, with those continual sacrifices year by year, make the worshippers perfect. For if that were so then they would cease to make offerings because worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins permanently.

Wherefore when the Lord came into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: (Another evidence of the Eternal Word becoming flesh and being begotten of God). In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said the Lord, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. He said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither had pleasure therein; which are offered by the law. Therefore He said, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

And in the old covenant, every priest standeth daily ministering and offering many times the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

But this Man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, namely Himself, sat down on the right hand of God and His enemies He made His footstool.

For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified Whereof the Holy Ghost is a witness to us. The Lord said before, This is the (new) covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of sin is, there is no more offering for sin.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, and having an high priest over the house of God let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;)

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as we see the day approaching.

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

He that despised Moses's law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

But call to remembrance the former days, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

For ye had compassion for me in my bonds, and took joyfully your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. (The reference to bonds cause some to think of Paul is the subject here but he was not the only one imprisoned for his faith).

For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. (Many first century Christians believed in the soon return of the Lord).

Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Hebrews 11

This chapter is commonly called Hebrews Hall of Fame.

The main subject is faith. Without faith its is impossible to please God. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Elders received a good report of their faith.

Faith believes the worlds were created by God. And you must believe in the existence of God

Faith believes in Divine creation, not evolution, the theory of Darwin who repented of his beliefs and disowned them and became a Christian apologising for his theory of evolution.

Abel is the first mentioned 'hero'. His sacrifice was better than his brother Cain who showed little respect for God. Enoch pleased God and walked with him and did not die but was translated into heaven. Noah, being warned by God, built an ark and saved his family for the flood, an event not seen before. Abraham had faith and believed God and went on a journey not knowing where he was going and stayed in a strange country yet he obeyed God. We seek a heavenly country. Sara received strength to conceive when she was past age and she honoured God for His faithfulness. Isaac was saved from possible death and exercised faith and blessed Jacob and Esau. Jacob, when dying, blessed the sons of Zebedee. Joseph by faith spoke of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt and commanded that his bones should be taken into the promised land.

Moses was hid for tree months as a baby and, of age, refused to be called the child of Pharaoh's daughter. He forsook Egypt and led the children of israel. He chose his people and God's people.

There were others such Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah. David, samson and he prophets Some endured violence, torture and death. Some women received their dead raised to life.

The world was not worthy of such people of faith. And yet one wonders why these heroes of faith had to endure such hardships and torture.

It is interesting to note that Solomon is not in this list which makes the claim that he is a type of Christ even more utterly ridiculous. Unlike his father, there is no record of any repentance in Solomon.

Of the others mentioned they have Divine approval because of their faith and it is said that God has something better for them.

Hebrews 12

Parts of this chapter are somewhat complicated.

This chapter begins with a reference to the cloud of witnesses, the heroes of the last chapter and calls upon us to lay aside every weight and the sins which easily beset us and with patience run the race that is before us. We have to apply faith and look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith and consider the joy that was set before Him after He had endured the Cross and despised its shame and is now sat down on the right side of the throne of God. He endured the contradiction of sin levelled against Him. Remember this and do not let it get weary or faint in your minds. You did not have to deal with blood and strive against sin as did the Lord. You must not forget the exhortation which speaks to you as children, Despise not the chastening of the Lord nor faint when He rebukes thee and chastens you with scourges. If you endure this, God will treat you as sons for what son would a father not discipline?

Scourging seems very harsh and was used in extreme cases of bad behaviour and administered by the biological father. The instrument used was probably a leather belt to discipline and re educate the child. What is envisaged here is the necessary but regretted discipline of a father on the son he loved. We must not consider God using the belt on us and scourging is not in His mind to deal with correction. His correction is not cruelty.

In the secular society of the time there would be cruel fathers some perhaps slaves to drink and would bear their children but that is not a picture of God. He doth not afflict willingly nor grief the children of men (Lamentations 3.33).

Matthew Henry says that God's discipline is not condemnation. It is not cruelty but correction. Proverbs 3. 11-12 should be consulted, My son do not despise the chastening of the Lord neither be weary of His corrections for whom the Lord loveth He chasten even the Father to the Son He loves. The reference to being not real children but bastards, is very strong.

It has been pointed out that these new Hebrew Christians were in danger of reverting to Judaism hence the strong warnings. They are to follow peace with all men and pursue holiness which is essential for the life of any convert. Bitterness must not exist because it could produce failure and defilement. There is a warning against fornication and how Esau was wrong to sell his birthright for a meal. He found no rest and had repentance in his mind which he sought with tears..

Reference is now made to Moses who came to the burning mount in a tempest and a vision of God's majesty. If anyone approached the mount or touched it they would be put to death. Even Moses was very fearful.

The contrast is between Sinai and Sion.

How you are in Mount Sion, Jerusalem, the city of the living God with angels and the general assembly recorded in heaven and come to God who is the judge of all and you are in the company of just men being perfected, and to Jesus Himself the mediator of the new covenant and enjoying the provision of His shed blood, a vastly superior offering than that of Abel. Do not refuse Him or what He says. How shall we escape if we refuse His words and instructions. That would be turning away from Him.

Chastening is not joyous but grievous but it can produce righteousness to those who are disciplined. Don't be depressed. Let your hands be lifted and your knees no longer feeble. This probably refers to self discipline. Make all your paths straight lest you turn out of the way and have to be healed.

Listen to the heavenly voice and do not refuse to listen. We must not turn away from Him when He speaks. Those that refuse to listen to Him on the earth did not escape the consequences. His voice shook the earth but now He has said, Once more I shall shake the earth and the heaven as well and all will be removed that can be removed. But we are to receive a kingdom that cannot be moved so let us have grace that we may serve God reverently and with respect.

Reverence is missing in Christianity today. In quietness and confidence is our strength writes Isaiah 30 15 yet modern worship is certainly not reverential. Honour, respect and awe of God are the features of reverence. See Ephesians 5.22 and 2 Peter 3,2 for example.

God is a consuming fire who will devour everything that is unsuited to Him in His judgment.

Hebrews 13

A gentler approach now resumes/

Let brotherly love continue. This love is not physical of hugging and kissing but respect kindness with gossip or acrimony. Hospitality is enjoined since you may encounter angels unawares. Angels appear to men as in many instances starting with Genesis 32 verse 1. Sympathy is also encouraged for those in bonds, prison and yet the writer does not identify himself as Paul in bonds. Those in bonds are like these Hebrew converts part of the body of Christ. Marriage is honourable and undefiled but whores and adulterers will be judged. Your conversation and way of life must not be covetous and be content with what you have. The promise of God is precious I will never leave thee or forsake thee. You can say with confidence The Lord is my helper and I will not fear what men can do. Remember your leaders who have taught you the things of God and imitate their faith in your conversation and life.

We are the people of the unchangeable Christ He is the same yesterday today and forever. People do slight His character and immutability.

A warning follows not to be interested or influenced by different and strange doctrines as many are in our day and age We are to be stable and not unstable. Grace and non extremism is to be the order of the day. We have mentioned the dangers of today's modern worship which should not occupy us verse 10????

The bodies of sacrificed beasts in the old dispensation were burned outside the camp. The Lord Jesus sanctified us by His blood and death outside the camp

We should go to Him there and bear His reproach Those who are identified with Christ will always suffer reproach. We have no continuing city, no permanent abode but seek one that is to come We

are to offer Him the;praise of our lips continually giving Him thanks. Praise is not song and dance raised hands shouts of Alleluia and excitement and emotionalism but that personal joy and gratitude deep in our hearts, We are to do what is good and proper in our communications and God is well pleased with this.

Obey your elders who keep watch over you with joy and not grief and give a good account of you. Live honestly and pray for us that I may be restored to you sooner. Who is this to be restored? Someone in prison ? Is it Paul?

Now follows a benediction from the God peace who brought our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd, back to life through the everlasting covenant make you perfect to do His will and be perfect(complete and sincere) which is well pleasing to God.

Take heed of the exhortations I have written to you.

Timothy has been set free and I hope to see you with him shortly. Greet your leaders and all believers. Grace be with you all.

(6624)

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