



The Epistle To Hebrews
Code: 12/ NT / 1

1. General Aims of the unit

Better Understanding of the "word of God" to live according to its instructions

2. Special aims of the lesson

1. To have an overview of the epistle, to whom it is written and the main theme of the epistle and the suitability of the theme to the need of the targeted people .
2. To study the main sub-themes (parts) of the epistle
3. To briefly acknowledge the need to have a good understanding of the OT, and the main topics of the OT which St. Paul referred to in the epistle.
4. Highlight the priesthood of Jesus on the order of **Melchizedek** and compare with the priesthood of Aaron.
5. Explore the meaning of faith as recorded in this epistle Ch. 11 and the practical commandments in Ch. 13

3.Outcomes

By the end of this lesson the teens are able to:

1. Brief an introduction to this epistle and its uniqueness.
2. Remember by heart the main theme of this epistle, and the main sub-themes.
3. Debate the superiority of the priesthood of **Melchizedek** over priesthood of Aaron, and Jesus as a High priest over Aaron .
4. Remember by heart some of the heroes of faith.

4.Verses: Heb. 1:2-4 , 2:2-4 ; 3:13 ; 4:12 ; 7:21, 24-25 ; 10:10 ,25-27 ,29 ; 11:1 ; 12:1-2 , 4 ; 13:7 , 17

- 5.References:**
1. See the attached notes
 2. Any Commentary to the book of Hebrews

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**Saint Mark's Church
Servants' Meeting**

The Epistle to the HEBREWS

INTRODUCTION

The epistle to the Hebrews has a special importance among the epistles of Saint Paul .It is different not only in its style but also in ideas. It has a defensive style and aimed to show the superiority of Christianity over Judaism.

The Christian who were from Jewish origin were kicked out from the temple and deprived from sharing in the Jewish worship .They felt that they lost their treasures, the temple , the sacrifices ,and the priesthood . So , the Saint Paul explained to them that although they lost their Jewish treasures , yet they gain far more better treasures, Jesus Christ who is higher than the angels and the prophets, a High Priest on a better order , and an everlasting sacrifice. He also, encouraged them to continue in the Christian faith as there was intense pressure for Jewish Christians to return to Judaism.

Jesus Christ the Son of God and the founder of Christianity is super and better than any other being (angels, Moses , Joshua) . His priesthood is far more better than the OT priesthood (Aaron priesthood) . His sacrifice is the complete unique sacrifice when it is compared with the repeated sacrifices of the OT. All the sacrifices and traditions of the OT were not capable to lead the person into the most Holy place to meet God. But Jesus Christ was able through His sacrifice to reconcile us to His Father.

The new Covenant of Jesus Christ is far more capable than the Covenant of the OT. It can lead the believers to heaven

AUTHOR:

Saint Paul is the writer according to the Church of Alexandria traditions.

In the early centuries of the Church, several differing opinions circulated as to the authorship of Hebrews. Tertullian (C. A.D. 160-225) cited Barnabas. St. Clement of Alexandria (C. A.D. 150-215) suggested Paul wrote Hebrews in Aramaic, the language of the Hebrew people, and Luke translated it into Greek. St. Irenaeus (C. A.D. 130-200) and St. Hippolytus (C. A.D. 170-236) questioned Paul's authorship. Origen (C. A.D. 185-254) saw the content of Hebrews as Pauline, but not the style and expression. Several early scholars believed Hebrews was written by a Hellenistic Jew, such as Apollos (Acts 18:24).

By the fourth century most witnesses ascribed Hebrews to St. Paul including, St. Athanasius (d. A.D. 373). St. John Chrysostom (d. A.D. 407) and Church historian Eusebius (d. C. A.D.

340) included Hebrews in his list of Paul's epistles , but noted that Rome rejected the letter because it was not Pauline

In the Eastern Churches ,it was confirmed in the canonical book Of the NT since 367 AD when it was recorded in the Pascal letter of Saint Athanasius.

In the Western Churches , it was canonized in the council of Carthage (397AD).

In the 16th century ,Martin Luther and followed by all the Protestant churches believed that the writer of the epistle is anonymous .

All the Orthodox lectionaries introduce Hebrews as Pauline .

DATE.

The content of the epistle and the witness of the early Church argue for a date of composition near A.D. 70. One possible date is prior to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70. There is no reference to the fall of the city, and temple worship is described as if ongoing (although the author could be describing the Old Testament tabernacle).

As Saint Paul was beheaded ~ AD 67, so Hebrews must be written before that date.

St. Clement of Rome referred to Hebrews in his letter to Corinth late in the first century(~AD 85).

MAJOR THEME:

Persevering faith in the incarnate Son. Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets, angels, Moses and Aaron. He offers a better priesthood, sanctuary, and sacrifice,. for in worshiping Him we enter heaven. Therefore, we must faithfully hold fast to Him.

TO WHOM IT IS WRITTEN

It is clear that the epistle was written to a church with the following characteristics

- ❖ converted to Christianity since long time ago (refer to Heb. 5:12)
- ❖ her members were only of Jewish background who knew well the fathers (refer to Heb.1:1 , 3:9) .
- ❖ knew about the chosen people history and the books of the OT (Heb. 11:4-39) , respecting Moses' Law (Heb. 2:2) , practiced worshipping in the temple or synagogues(Heb. 13:10) and abiding by the Jewish traditions .(refer to Heb. 3:2 , 9:1-10 , 10:22 , 10:28 13:11 ,.....)
- ❖ suffered severely for the sake of their faith in Christ (refer to Heb. 10:32-35)
- ❖ Internally, there was the perpetual battle with sin (12:1), and they had become dispirited and lax (12:2-4, 12, 13).

- ❖ Its members had ceased to grow in their faith (5:11-14); and they neglected corporate worship 10:25);

There are many opinions about the location of this church which includes only Hebrew members:

- ❖ Saint Clement of Alexandria supported the idea that this church was in the land of Palestine (Jerusalem or any church within the region of the land of Israel) .
- ❖ Some suggested the Hebrews of Antioch Syria or of Alexandria
- ❖ Some suggested that they were the Hebrews of Rome

OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE

A) First Part: The Superiority of the Covenant of Christ

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| 1) Jesus is superior to the angels | Ch. 1-2 |
| 2) Jesus is superior to Moses | Ch. 3 |
| 3) Christ's rest is superior to Joshua's | Ch.4 |
| 4) Christ's priesthood in the order of Melchizedek is superior to Aaron's | Ch. 5-7 |
| 5) Christ's Covenant is superior to Moses' Covenant | Ch. 8:1 -10:18 |

B) Second Part: Persevering towards entering the rest

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| 1) Perseverance in spiritual progress | Ch. 10:19:39 |
| 2) Perseverance in faith and the heroes of faith | Ch. 11 |
| 3) Perseverance in discipline | Ch.12 |
| 4) Perseverance in Christian behavior | Ch.13 |