

The Bible Notebook

HEBREWS

CHRIST: SUPERIOR IN LIFE AND IN DEATH

A Verse By Verse Study

By

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I. THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST IS DECLARED, 1:1 - 4:13.

A. Christ Is Superior to the Prophets, 1:1-3.

CHRISTOLOGICAL PASSAGE, 1:1-3

Hebrews 1:1-3 is one of the four most important Christological passages in Scripture, along with John 1:1; Phil. 2:6-11; and Col. 1:15-20. The writer takes note of the variety of ways and manners by which God has spoken to man, concluding that God ultimately and more perfectly spoke through His Son. Seven affirmative statements are made about the Son of God in these verses (see list on vs. 2 below). William Barclay calls verse 1-3, "the most sonorous piece of Greek in the whole New Testament. It is a passage that any classical Greek orator would have been proud to write.

God is revealed more perfectly through His Son than through the prophets of the Old Testament period. In "these last days," or in this period of time, God has spoken to us through His Son. The Gospel according to John documents this fact. God sent His Son into the world to pay the price for man's salvation and to initiate a new age; the age of grace. He really does love us. Observe in verses 2 and 3:

- a. Jesus is the "heir of all things."
- b. He is the creator of all things.
- c. He is the brightness of the glory of God.
- d. He is the express image of His person.
- e. He sustains all things through the word of His power.
- f. He made provisions for our salvation.
- g. Having provided for our salvation, He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

B. Jesus is superior to the Angels (1:4 - 2:18).

1. He is superior in His relationship with the Father, 1:4-14.
 - a. He has a name more excellent than theirs, 1:4 .
 - b. He has a closer relationship with God than the angels, 1:5-7.

FACTS ABOUT ANGELS.

- (1) It seems that they are organized and ranked (Isa. 6:1-3; Dan. 10:13; Eph. 3:10; Jude 9).
- (2) Angels ministered to Christ often during His earthly ministry and they will accompany Him at His return (Matt. 2:13; 4:11; 26:53; 28:2, 5; Luke 22:43; 2 Thess. 1:7-8).

- (3) They serve believers (v. 14) and watch over them (1 Cor. 4:9; 11:10).
- (4) Michael is the only one designated an archangel (Dan. 10:13, 21; Jude 9), though Gabriel also has an important position and may hold that rank (Luke 1:19, 26).

- c. He reigns forever. His throne is forever and ever, 1:8-9.
- d. He is immutable (changeless), 1:10-12.
- e. He alone sits at the right hand of God, 1:13-14.

2. His preeminence is seen in His message of salvation (2:1-4).
 - a. We must pay attention to His word, 2:1.
 - b. There is no escape for those who reject His salvation, 2:2-3a.
 - c. His message is confirmed by God, 2:3b-4.
3. Jesus is superior in His purpose, 2:5-18.

C. Christ is Superior to Moses (3:1-6).

1. A builder is superior to the house, 3:1-4.
2. A son is superior to a servant (5-6).

D. Unbelief Is a Grave Matter (3:7-11).

E. Rest Is Promised Through Jesus Christ (4:1-16).

1. There is a rest that may be entered into only by faith (4:1-7).
2. Rest was foreshadowed in Joshua, realized in Christ (4:8-11).
3. Judgment is certain (4:12-13).

II. SUPERIORITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST DECLARED (4:14 - 8:13).

A. We Have a Great High Priest (4:14-16).

B. Christ Is Superior in His Qualifications for the Office of High Priest, 5:1-10.

1. Responsibilities of the earthly high priest, 5:1-4.

2. The Qualifications of Christ are stated, 5:5-10.
 - a. He was appointed by God, 5:5-6.
 - b. He suffered in the flesh, 5:7.
 - c. He suffered willingly for mankind, 5:8.
 - d. Being made perfect, He became the author of our salvation, 5:9.
 - e. He was appointed High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, 5:10.
- C. Believers Are Warned of the Danger of Spiritual Immaturity, 5:11-6:20.
1. Failure to grow to maturity carries severe consequences, 5:11-14.
 2. We must go beyond the ABC's of the Doctrine of Christ, 6:1-3.
 3. A difficult note is added to the warning, 6:4-8.
 4. Precautions assure maturity and fruitfulness in the Christian life, 6:9-20.
- C. Jesus Is Superior in the Order of His Priesthood, 7:1-8:13.
1. Christ is the superior High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, 7:1-10.
 2. The Levitical priesthood yields to the superior priesthood of Jesus Christ, 7:11-24.
 3. Christ holds a permanent priesthood, 7:25-28.
 4. Jesus is our High Priest, 8:1-13.

SUMMARY: THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS CHRIST AS HIGH PRIEST

1. He is a superior priest to Aaron, 8:1; 4:16-7:28.
2. He works for a better sanctuary, 8:2, 5.
3. He offers a better sacrifice, 8:3f.
4. He is a mediator of a superior covenant, 8:6.
5. His work rests on a superior promise, 8:6.

WE MUST CONCLUDE THAT:

1. His is a superior ministry, 8:6.
2. His is a superior covenant, 8:7-13.
3. His is a superior sanctuary, 9:1-12.
4. His is a superior sacrifice, 9:13-10:18.

5. His is a superior promise, 10:19-12:3.
6. His is a superior priesthood, 4:16:7:28/

III. JESUS CHRIST IS SUPERIOR IN HIS PRIESTLY MINISTRY, 9:1-10:30.

THE HOLY PLACE CONTAINED:

1. The golden lamp stand stood on the south side. It was made of pure gold (one talent = 75 pounds). It was fed with pure olive oil and the lamps were always lighted.
2. The table for the shewbread, located on the north side, measured 3' x 18" and stood 2' 3" high. Twelve loaves were placed on it in two stacks every Sabbath.
3. The altar of incense was made of acacia wood sheathed in gold. It was 18" square, 3' high. Incense, symbolizing the prayers of the people, were burned morning and evening.

THE MOST HOLY PLACE CONTAINED:

1. The Ark of the Covenant, which contained the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the Law.
2. The Mercy Seat was the lid or covering of the Ark. On it were two cherubim of solid gold.

A. The Earthly Priests Ministered in the Earthly Sanctuary, 9:1-10.

Five reasons are set forth in this passage explaining why the sanctuary of the Old Covenant was inferior to the heavenly sanctuary in which Jesus Christ ministers as the supreme High Priest.

- (1) It was on earth and it was built of materials of the earth, 9:1.
- (2) It was only a shadow of that which was to come, 9:2-5.
- (3) It was inaccessible to the people (except the priests), 9:6-7.
- (4) It was a temporary sanctuary, 9:8.
- (5) It was ineffective in changing hearts, 9:9-10.

1. The Tabernacle of the first covenant is described, 9:1-5.
2. The ministry of the priests is detailed, 9:6-7.

MINISTRY OF THE HIGH PRIEST ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT:

- 1) He burned the morning incense, made the morning offering, and attended the trimming of the lamps on the lamp stand.
- 2) Dressed in his glorious robe, he sacrificed a bullock, seven lambs, and a ram (Numbers. 29:7).
- 3) He then took off the glorious robe, washed, and put on the white robe (symbol of purity).
- 4) Assistants brought him a bullock bought with his own money. With his hands on its head, he confessed his sins and the sins of Israel. The bullock was left at the altar.
- 5) Two goats were standing by, which by lots were designated, “for Jehovah,” and “for Azazel” (the scapegoat).
- 6) He then returned to the altar and killed the bullock, catching the blood in a basin (a swirling movement prevented coagulation).
- 7) With coals from the altar in a censer and incense in a dish, he entered the Holy of Holies to burn incense (His first entrance in to the Most Holy Place).
- 8) He came out and took the blood of the bullock and went a second time into the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood seven times up and seven times down.
- 9) He came out, killed the goat marked “for Jehovah” and with its blood entered the Holy of Holies for the third time to sprinkle it.
- 10) Then he came out, mingled the blood of the bullock and the goat, and sprinkled the horns of the altar, the altar of incense, and the altar itself. Thus, the Holy Place, and Holy of Holies were cleansed with blood.
- 11) Next, with his hands on the scapegoat, he confessed his sins and the sins of the people, after which it was led into the wilderness and killed (symbolizing the taking away of their sins).
- 12) Still dressed in his white robe, he prepared the meat of the bullock and the goat for sacrifice and repeated the words of Numbers 29:7-11.

13) He then cleansed himself with water, dressed in his glorious robe, sacrificed a kid for the normal evening offering, and then sacrificed the previously prepared bullock and goat.

14) He washed, put on the white robe, and for the fourth time entered the Holy of Holies to remove the censer of incense.

15) He cleansed himself in water, put on the beautiful robe, again and burned the evening offering of incense and trimmed the lamps on the golden lamp stand.

This ritual had to be repeated once each year and that high priest had to offer an offering for his own sins as well as the sins of the people. In the evening, at the close of the Day of Atonement, the high priest had a feast because he had been in the presence of the Lord and come out alive.

Is it any wonder that the writer of Hebrews claims the sacrifice of Christ was superior to the sacrifice of bullocks and goats, and that his ministry of Jesus Christ was superior to the ministry of the earthly high priest?

3. This sanctuary was only a figure of the one to come, 9:8-10.

B. The Priesthood of Jesus Christ, 9:11-14

C. Christ Is the Mediator of the New Covenant, 9:15-28.

1. Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant by means of His death, 9:15.

2. A will does not go into effect until the death of the testator, 9:16-17.

3. Moses dedicated the covenant with blood, 9:18-22.

4. The sacrifice of Christ is better than that of the old sacrificial system, 9:23.

5. The priestly work of superior to that of the earthly priest, 9:24-26.

6. Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many, 9:27-28.

D. The Sacrifice of Christ Is Superior to the Sacrifices of the Old System, 10:1- 18.

1. The sacrifices associated with the Law were powerless to save sinners, 10:1-4.

2. Jesus Christ is the superior sacrifice, 10:5-10.

3. The old and the new sacrifices are contrasted (10:11-14).
 4. The Holy Spirit is a witness to us of the new covenant, 10:15-18.
- E. Parenthetical Exhortations and Warnings Are Stressed (10:19-39).

In 10:19-39 we have a parenthetical warning in which we are urged to hold fast our confession of faith in Jesus Christ. In 10:19-25 the author makes a practical application of all he has said. From theology he turns to practical exhortation. He is one of the deepest theologians in the New Testament, but all his theology is governed by pastoral instinct.

1. Jesus has presented us with a new and living way to enter His kingdom (10:19-21).
2. Some practical exhortations are in order for all of us (10:22-25).

10:23 - LET US HOLD FAST.

- 1) "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope."
 - 2) "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering."
 - 3) "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."
3. Some specific warnings must be considered (10:26-31).
 4. The author returns to specific exhortations, 10:32-37.
 5. The just shall live by faith (10:38-39).

IV. THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST IS SEEN IN HIS POWER (11:1 - 13:19).

- A. The Power of Faith Is Demonstrated (11:1-40).
1. Faith is described, 11:1.
 2. Old Testament examples of faith are given, 11:2-40.
- B. Jesus Christ Is the Supreme Exile for Believers (12:1-29).

1. We must run the race of life with our eyes on Jesus, 12:1-2.
2. Christians should take discipline seriously (12:3-11).
3. God's discipline should produce a Godly life, 12:12-17.
4. Believers are exhorted to yield to Him, 12:18-29.

C. Commitment to Christ Carries Social obligations (13:1-6).

1. We must love the brethren, 13:1.
2. We must not neglect strangers, 13:2.
3. We must remember those in prison, 13:3.
4. Marriage must be held in honor, 13:4.
5. Believers must guard their testimony, 13:5-6.

D. The Author Makes a Final Appeal to Be Loyal to Jesus Christ (13:7-19).

1. Follow good examples 13:7.
2. We serve an immutable Savior, 13:8.
3. Guard against strange teachings, 13:9-16.

BIBLE DOCTRINES:

- 1) The Doctrine of God.
- 2) The Doctrine of Jesus Christ.
- 3) The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.
- 4) The Doctrine of Scripture.
- 5) The Doctrine of Man.
- 6) The Doctrine of Sin.
- 7) The Doctrine of Justification (Salvation, Redemption).
- 8) The Doctrine of Sanctification.
- 9) The Doctrine of Eschatology (last things).

4. Support to your leaders, 13:17.
5. The author requests prayer, 13:18-19.

V. SALUTATIONS AND BENEDICTIONS CONCLUDE THE EPISTLE (13:20-25)

- A. Concluding Benedictions Are Stated, 13:20-21.
- B. The Salutation Is Included in the Concluding Remarks, 13:22-25 .

A PARTING EXHORTATION

“Let us...” This is a fitting exhortation with which to close this great epistle. Following is a list of thirteen “let us” exhortations.

1. Let us fear, 4:1.
2. Let us be diligent to enter that rest, 4:11.
3. Let us hold fast our confession, 4:14.
4. Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, 4:16.
5. Let us press on to maturity, 6:1.
6. Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, 10:22.
7. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, 10:23.
8. Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, 10:24.
9. Let us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, 12:1.
10. Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 12:1
11. Let us show gratitude, 12:28.

12. Let us go out to Him outside the camp, 13:13.

13. Let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, 13:15.