

Hebrews

The Big Picture

Date of writing – Probably around 68 or 69 A.D. Since the writer regards the sacrificial system as still in effect, the temple would not yet have been destroyed (70 A.D. by Titus).

Author – There is much tradition that Paul wrote the book and also evidence that Barnabas was the author. Origen made the famous statement, "...only God knows who wrote the book."

Background and setting –

1. The writer had a history with the readers. 10:32-34
2. The readers were mainly Jewish. There is a heavy emphasis on the Levitical system and much appeal to the Old Testament Scriptures.
3. The readers were under pressure from their unbelieving fellow Jews to give up their Christian profession and return to their ancestral faith.

Theme – (Hebrews 10:35-36) The readers (believers) are encouraged, in light of the surpassing greatness of the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus, to endure and press on to maturity so that they might receive the promises and rewards.

Evidence that the writer assumes the readers are believers:

1. They are called *brethren* nine times. 2:11, 2:12, 2:17, 3:1, 3:12, 7:15, 10:19, 13:1, 13:22
2. He identifies with them by using the term "we" over 50 times. Note 2:1, 3; 3:6, 14; 8:1, 10:10, 26
3. He uses the phrase "let us" 13 times, implying that they are believers just as he is. 4:1, 11, 14, 16, 6:1, 10:22, 23, 24, 12:1 (twice) 12:28, 13:13, 13:15
4. He speaks of their *inheritance* five times. 1:14, 6:12, 9:15, 11:8, 12:17
5. He speaks of their *reward* for faithfulness three times. 10:35, 11:6, 11:26
6. He encourages them to become *companions or partakers* with Christ. The word for companion or partaker, (Greek – metochoi) is used five times. 1:9, 3:1, 3:14, 6:4, 12:8

It is critical that we recognize the difference between *justification* and *sanctification* in Hebrews. Salvation from the penalty of sin, (justification) occurs the moment we believe in Christ alone. We are declared righteous and receive the gift of eternal life. Salvation from the power of sin (sanctification) is a lifelong process and demands growth to maturity by the power of the Holy Spirit. The writer to the Hebrews assumes that they are justified and is warning them to press on to maturity.

Overview

1:1-2 – Christ is superior to the prophets!

1:3 – The Person and Work of Christ. He is God and His payment for sin is finished! Note the phrase "sat down" occurs five times in Hebrews: 1:3, 1:13, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2

1:4 – 2:18 – Christ is superior to the angels!

The First Warning – 2:1-4

The Second Warning – 3:12-4:16

The Third Warning – 5:11-6:12

The Fourth Warning – 10:19-39

The Fifth Warning – 12:1-11

The Faith Hall of Fame – Chapter 11

Live out your faith! – Chapters 12 – 13. There are nineteen specific commands in these two chapters (12:2, 5(2), 12,13, 14, 25, 13:1, 2, 3, 7(2), 9, 16, 17(2), 18, 22, 24.

Secure in your relationship to God! Notice the double negative and triple negative in 13:5

οὐ μή σε ἀνῶ οὐδ' οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω
Not not you desert and not not not you forsake

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (13:20-21)

THE RACE OF LIFE
The Five Warning Passages of Hebrews

Kenny Hodges, 1990

| Verses | Warning | Danger | Help |
|---------------|---|---|---|
| 2:1-4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay Attention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drift Away | <p>2:10, 14-18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus comes to the aid of those tempted |
| 3:12-4:16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care • Encourage each other • Hold fast • Fear/reverence • Be diligent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbelieving heart • Hardened by sin • Come short of entering rest • Fall through disobedience | <p>4:14-16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Priesthood of Christ offers us all the resources we need |
| 5:11-6:12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show diligence • Don't be sluggish | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We won't realize the full Assurance of hope • We won't inherit the promises | <p>6:19-20; 7:24-27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Priesthood of Christ offers us security |
| 10:19-39 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw near • Hold fast our confession • Don't forsake assembling • Don't willfully sin • Don't throw away confidence • Endure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willful sin has no sacrifice • Willful sin will be judged • Rewards will be lost • Promises will not be received | <p>10:19-21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Priesthood of Christ offers us confidence to live the Christian life |
| 12:1-11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lay aside every weight and sin • Run the race with endurance • Consider Him | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entanglement by sin • Growing weary and losing heart | <p>12:2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus the Author of our faith <p>12:24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus the Mediator <p>12:28</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unshakable kingdom <p>12:29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God the Consuming Fire |

For an excellent overview of the five warning passages, see Scott Crawford's, *Hebrews, Five Warning Passages For BELIEVERS* at: <http://wordoftruthclass.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Hebrews-5-warnings-for-believers1.pdf>