

SIGNIFICANCE PAPER # 1:

HEBREWS

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A Paper

Presented to

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Course

BE5107OL Hebrews, General Epistles, and Revelation

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by

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# The Significance of Hebrews to Your Life & Ministry

## 1. Purpose and Argument

Purpose (Major Theme or Purpose):

The purpose of Hebrews is to show the superiority<sup>1</sup> and sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice to both unbelieving Jews who rejected the new covenant and to believing Jews who considered falling back to the Mosaic sacrificial covenant because of Jewish persecution. The debated author is addressing a lack of faith on the part of Jewish believers who he is exhorting to live a life of faith, just as certain Old Testament believers did (Heb 11). Through explaining the role and superiority of Christ, the proper response of God's people is to obey and submit despite external circumstances. The author emphasizes Jesus' humanity which qualifies Him to be a high priest for God's people because He understands the trials, temptations and struggles from His own experiences, thus He can provide both a perfect help to His people while offering a perfect sacrifice on behalf of His people.<sup>2</sup>

Argument (What is the author trying to accomplish and how is he doing it?):

The author argues that the superiority of Christ should lead the reader to follow Christ rather than following the rituals, rules and sacrifices of the Mosaic Law. The writer explains that Christ's sacrifice and His position of eternal high priest is superior to the priesthood of the Old Testament. The author expositis many people from the Old Testament to explain that faithfulness and not external works is what God desires. The author begins in Heb 1-3, showing the superiority of Jesus Christ. The author contrasts the way God spoke with His people which was through prophets and various ways but now God speaks through His Son Jesus, the Son of God, who is Creator, who is God, who speaks for God, who is God's glory, who is heir and sustainer of all things, who provided purification for sins, and who sits at the right hand of the majesty in heaven (1:1-3). The author expounds on this prologue by asserting Jesus is superior to angels (1:4-2:8) all humans (2:9-18), and Moses (3:1-19). In Heb 4 the author reminds Jews the promise of entering God's rest is still available, so they should be obedient unlike the disobedient Jews in the wilderness (4:1-13). From Hebrews 4:14-8:5 the author shows the superiority of Christ as the Great High Priest. Jesus' proved His superiority to all priests throughout history who is the Son of God ascended to heaven, and able to empathize with humanity's weaknesses since He was tempted in every way, just as we were but without sin, offering grace and mercy in our time of need (4:14-16). In Heb 5:1-10, Jesus was selected by His Father to be High Priest forever in the order Melchizedek and Jesus obeyed as a suffering human who learned further obedience while petitioning in reverent submission on behalf of His fellow humans save them from death to eternal life. From Heb 5:11-7:28 the author exhorts the audience to fully commit to following Christ as His priesthood was superior to Melchizedek. From Heb 8-10:18 the writer says that Jesus is superior as He offers a superior covenant and sacrifice. From 10:19 to 12 the writer contrasts genuine faith and a false faith and explains that true faith is a persevering faith with Old Testament examples. explains what kind of faith save is superior to a false faith. Hebrews 13 concludes by exhorting the reader to live a superior life in Christ which manifests itself in living a holy life, obedience and love to God, love to both believers and unbelievers people and submission to pastoral leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth G. Hanna, *From Gospels to Glory: Exploring the New Testament*. Bloomington, Indiana: WestBow Press, 2015), 389.

<sup>2</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Commentary On The Epistle to the Hebrews, The English Text With Introduction, Exposition And Notes*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964), xix.

2. Select at least 4 themes you feel are pertinent to the argument and purpose of the book. Give cross-references (books or passages), doctrines, people, attitudes, and/or activities that relate to other books in both Testaments.

O.T.	Present Book	N.T.
Jeremiah 31:33	Old Covenant obsolete / New Covenant is superior Hebrews 8:10	Luke 22:20; 2 Cor 3:6
1 Samuel 15:22	God wants faith / obedience not sacrifices Hebrews 10:38	John 1:15
Deut 32:43	Jesus is superior to angels and Moses Hebrews 1:6	Col 1; John 1:17
Psalms 110:4	Jesus is the eternal high priest Hebrews 5-7	John 17
Hos 14:2; Ps 141:2; Num 28:4	Only Jesus offers an everlasting sacrifice for sins Hebrews 9:11-10:18	John 5:24
Daniel 3:16-18	Believers are to endure affliction and persecution Hebrews 10:32-39	Matt 5:10; 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Peter 2:20
Genesis 3:6	Jesus Tempted in all ways humans are tempted Hebrews 4:14-16	Matt 4:1-11; Jn 2:15-16

### 3. KNOWING/MEMORY

- Jesus is appointed as God's speaker in these last days (1:1-2). God used to speak to humanity through prophets but now speaks to us through Jesus Himself, the creator. *...all things were created by him and for him" (Col 1:15-16).*
- Jesus is the radiance of God's glory (1:3) "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power."

*"Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) had a sunny disposition and was adamant that it is our view of God that shapes us most deeply believing we become like what we worship. God is simply bursting with warm and life-imparting nourishment, far more willing to give than we are to receive. And that's...why he created the world: If God had not a communicative, spreading goodness, he would never have created the world. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were happy in themselves, and enjoyed one another before the world was. Apart from the fact that God delights to communicate and spread his goodness, there had never been a creation or redemption. It was the knowledge that God is so sunny, so radiant with goodness and love, that made Sibbes such an attractive model of Godlikeness."*<sup>3</sup>

- Jesus sympathizes with us because He was tempted like us (4:15). He is our superior high priest and we can trust He is best to speak for us being perfect and sympathetic.
- Jesus appears in the presence of God in heaven on our behalf (9:24). The temple in Jerusalem was a copy of the heavenly temple who Jesus is present at now on our behalf.

<sup>3</sup> Taken from Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012) 48-49. (cf. Richard Sibbes, "The Successful Seeker," in *Works of Richard Sibbes* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1862-64), 6:113).

**DOING/ACTION – What you will lead others to do that is based on the text or passage that suggested this action. You are required to do two (2) of these and be sure to give references It must be supported by a particular text, so be sure to give chapters and verses, example 2:12.**

1. Study/program/event/etc. to be implemented (be specific). Tell *what* you want to do.

A study plan to be used to bring the children of God closer to God could be implemented in a three-part Sunday School lesson plan over the course three consecutive Sundays. The series would be called, "*The Root, Shoot and Fruit of our Salvation in the Book of Hebrews.*" The aim of the study will be in a theme of a growing plant or tree which represents growing in faith.

2. Expand on the details of *how* you will implement the study/program/event, etc. (be specific).

Each Sunday School lesson will incorporate a stage in the life of a believer and after the lesson a foundational question from the days lesson will be posed to each Sunday School student.

Day 1 will focus on *the root of our salvation* and its subject will center on how *we can rest by faith in our salvation, because of the finished work of Jesus*. Hebrews 4:11 says, "Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience." The root is the foundation of both the shoot and the fruit of any plant or tree and thus illustrates that the life of the believer begins at the moment of salvation. After concluding the lesson the student will be asked to answer on their own the following question: How would you address the argument that the emphasis on faith might lead some to neglect personal responsibility and accountability in their spiritual journey? This question aims the student to reflect on their own life and how their salvation has changed them. Jesus sat down (Heb 10:12) means that His redemptive work is done. The work is done. Jesus said, "it is finished" (John 19:30) A follow up question would thus be: Are you resting in Jesus finished work? The aim of the question is to ponder if someone would be making the grave error of trying to work for their salvation when only Jesus can do all the work for it.

Day 2 will focus on the shoot of our salvation. *The shoot represents the growth of the believer* as it would represent the weaning work of the plant. (Hebrews 10:32-39) Growth represents the opposite growth which is shrinking or in other words "shrinking back" (v. 39). Growth may come through in the right season which is still to come. Until then believers may have seasons in life when we must simply endure. Hebrews 10:35 says, "do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward." During certain times we must be encouraged to endure suffering and persecution. The author tells the readers to have confidence of a great reward. The great reward to come is what we should focus on. *We need to encourage each other*: Heb 3:13 explains how to counteract the hardening and deceitfulness of sin—"encourage one another day after day." The antidote for developing a hard heart is a caring, encouraging community of believers <sup>4</sup>. Hebrews 10:23-25 explains further, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." Our appreciation for Jesus Christ is essential for faithful perseverance, and a significant reason many Christians turn away from the Lord is because they fail to recognize His greatness.<sup>5</sup> Coming together in community and worshipping Jesus rightly because of who He is exhorts one another and counteracts sins power to harden our hearts or devouring us.

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Kem Oberholtzer, "Kingdom Rest in Hebrews 3:1-4:13." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145, no. 578 (April 1, 1988): 189. <https://research-ebsco-com.dts.idm.oclc.org/linkprocessor/plink?id=f521ccad-3617-3881-95b3-81adc8ea77b9>.

<sup>5</sup> Constable, Thomas L.. *Dr. Constable's Notes on Hebrews*: 2025 Edition. 15. <https://soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/hebrews.pdf>. Accessed June 3, 2025.

Day 3 will focus on *the fruit of our salvation*. Though the work of our salvation is finished, and though God must discipline us to grow, we are to work hard full maturity in Christ. The fruit of a plant or its final byproduct should be aboundingly fruitful. Abounding in fruit comes from a healthy root and shoot system which has been nourished by the Lord. If every plant produces fruit then there is a certain type of fruit that God expects. Simply put there is good fruit and bad fruit. When we take an honest look when we view the fruit we are producing in life, we can see if it is fruit that God approves of. Examining five warnings in the book of Hebrews along with the purpose of God's disciplining His children will represent both the work of the believer in response to salvation and the work of God through His discipline. The five major warnings are from Hebrews 2:1-4, 3:7-4:13, 5:11-6:20, 10:26-39, and 12:14-29 and the two discipline passages are from Heb 12:5-9 and 12:10-11. After concluding the lesson the student will be asked to answer on their own the following question: What would you say to someone claiming the warnings in Hebrews are a fear-based motivation rather than genuine encouragement for growth? The purpose of the question is intended to aim the believer in seeing that God is a nurturer of His children and gives warnings because He loves His children. Seeing God as a nurturer may be crucial to believers who have always viewed God with a distorted perspective view of God: a God who may be seen as a tyrannical punisher rather than a loving Father who disciplines His children because He loves them.

Day 4 or Conclusion to day 3 lesson. A conclusion or possibly Day 4 focus will be that the reward of a good plant is producing good fruit. Good fruit is that work which is more like who Jesus is. The focus will thus be evaluating the fruit we produce. The writer of Hebrews shows us the good fruit is based on faith which is essential in producing good fruit that is pleasing to God. Considering that good fruit must come from a good plant which has its foundation in the roots of salvation, weaned by God's discipline, fruit must be daily evaluated through the lens of God's word and by a deeper trust day by day. Understandings of good fruit may reference the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). This message will go with John 15:1-5. The question of the day will be: In what ways or areas of your life can your faith grow? The aim of this question should point the student to prayerfully consider in what areas do things need to match what God says about faith.

3. Evaluate/assess/appraise. How will you *determine* if you have met your objective(s)?

Each lesson will begin the student to reflect and evaluate areas of their life which they may be blind to. The Word of God will be used as a metric in evaluating, assessing and appraising each person's life. The principles from Hebrews provide examples of both good plants and unhealthy plants and will also provide an explanation of what good fruit is based on His definition of good fruit and not our own. In determining if any adjustments need to be made in the life of a believer pertaining to unbiblical thoughts, struggling with temptation, repeated or habitual sins in the life of a believer, or failing in striving to live day by day in faith, the student will be welcomed to speak in a private setting with the student so it does cause undue embarrassment to the struggling believer. The Sunday School teacher will pray with the believer or unbeliever and individually address each spiritual issue.

### **BEING/PERSONAL CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT –**

The one thing that touched my heart / influenced me was the 2 Purposes of Divine Discipline found in Hebrews 12: 1. Divine Discipline demonstrates God's love for His children (vv. 5-9). and 2. Divine Discipline is designed to conform His children to His holiness (vv. 10-11)<sup>6</sup>. It is a reminder that God disciplines His children because He loves them not because He hates them. I'm going to talk with God about it. All the pain and setbacks in this life have obviously been orchestrated by God Himself. It means that God loves me and is actively working in my life. These things shouldn't stop me and by God's power I'll keep barreling through until the end of my salvation. Even though terrible things in life happen and will continue to happen, God is good and He is in charge.

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen Kim. "Hebrews." Unpublished class notes for BE5107 Hebrews, General Epistles, and Revelation. Dallas Theological Seminary. Dallas, Texas: Summer Semester, 2025.

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