

NOTES

I. UNIT 16 - A BURNING BUSH WE'VE PUT UNDER A BUSHEL (Hebrews-pt 1)

A. The "Black Sheep" of the New Testament

1. Hebrews is one of the most important, yet least appreciated _____ for truly understanding The Story.

a. It is under-preached, quickly _____, and rarely studied.

b. Yet, it is Scripture's most expansive _____ of The Story, and the pitfalls associated with being in it:

(1) It lays out the entire panorama of The Story from _____ to the Second Coming (see 1:2 and 9:28).

(2) It painstakingly portrays _____ as a vital but provisional "chapter" in The Story.

c. Understanding it requires _____ with the Old Testament:

(1) It quotes directly from _____ Old Testament books, and 11 different psalms (Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, 2 Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habbakuk, Haggai, Proverbs).

(2) Of the _____ proper names in the letter, only 2 are from the New Testament era (Jesus, Timothy).

(3) Understanding how they _____ out their place in The Story is vital to understanding The Story itself.

2. The World *Behind* The Letter: Learning to Live With Silence

a. The Letter to the Hebrews has been an enigma since the 2nd century regarding both _____ and audience:

(1) Eusebius of Caesarea, writing in the 3rd century, cites Origen of Alexandria of the 2nd century:

¹¹ In addition he makes the following statements in regard to the Epistle to the Hebrews in his Homilies upon it: "That the verbal style of the epistle entitled 'To the Hebrews,' is not rude like the language of the apostle, who acknowledged himself 'rude in speech that is, in expression; but that its diction is purer Greek, any one who has the power to discern differences of phraseology will acknowledge. ¹² Moreover, that the thoughts of the epistle are admirable, and not inferior to the acknowledged apostolic writings, any one who carefully examines the apostolic text will admit.' ¹³ Farther on he adds: "If I gave my opinion, I should say that the thoughts are those of the apostle, but the diction and phraseology are those of some one who remembered the apostolic teachings, and wrote down at his leisure what had been said by his teacher. Therefore if any church holds that this epistle is by Paul, let it be commended for this. For not without reason have the ancients handed it down as Paul's. ¹⁴ But who wrote the epistle, in truth, God knows. The statement of some who have gone before us is that Clement, bishop of the Romans, wrote the epistle, and of others that Luke, the author of the Gospel and the Acts, wrote it. "But let this suffice on these matters."

Ecclesiastical History, 2.22.1-8

3. The "evidence" *against* _____ being the author is worth noting:

a. The letter is _____, whereas every one of Paul's 13 letters are ascribed to him (e.g. Rom 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1, etc.).

- b. The strong emphasis in this letter on the role or relationship of Jesus as “_____ or _____”
- (1) This concept is *totally* _____ to Paul (Rom 15:16 only, a reference to *himself*).
- (2) Hebrews has _____ references to the priesthood in 10 different chapters.
- c. There are over _____ Greek vocabulary words that do not appear in Paul’s other writings (or anywhere else in the New Testament).
- d. The author’s manner of referring to Yahweh’s _____ is consistent with Greek-speaking Jewish synagogues, but the opposite of Paul:
- (1) Paul uses the phrase, “*it is written...*” [Gk, *graphō*] 30x in his writings. It appears _____ in Hebrews.
- (2) The writer of Hebrews refers to Yahweh “*speaking*” [Gk, *legō*] _____, the same number Paul used in all 13 of his letters (this is 6x that of Paul).
- e. Most importantly, the author of Hebrews makes it clear that he is *not* one of the _____-_____ of the resurrection that were commissioned by Jesus, the very thing Paul constantly argued for:
- “...how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard,”*
Hebrews 2:3
- “For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”*
Galatians 1:11, 12
- f. The author is _____ in the allegorical interpretive model that was used by the Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria (e.g. extensive portions on Melchizadek).
- g. Hebrews seems more like a transcript of a _____ than a letter:
- “About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.”* 5:11
- “Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.”* 9:5
- “And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets...”* 11:32
4. The Undeclared Audience of an Unsigned Letter
- a. Our only certainty is that these listeners are _____ Christians:
- (1) There is no _____ of any of the extensive references to tabernacle worship, the priesthood, or ancient Jewish history.
- (2) There are _____ quotations and some 34 allusions to the Old Testament, *all* taken from the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible.

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| Hebrews | OT Citation | Hebrews | OT Citation | Hebrews | OT Citation |
|---------|----------------|---------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| 1:5a | Ps 2:7 | 3:15 | Ps 95:7 | 10:13 | Ps 110:1 |
| 1:5b | 2 Sam 7:14 | 4:3 | Ps 95:11 | 10:15 | Jer 31:33 |
| 1:6 | Ps 97:7 | 4:5 | Ps 95:11 | 10:17 | Jer 31:34 |
| 1:7 | Ps 104:4 | 4:7 | Ps 95:7 | 10:30 | Deut 32:35-36 |
| 1:8 | Ps 45:6 | 5:5 | Ps 2:7 | 10:37-38 | Hab 2:3-4 |
| 1:9 | Ps 45:7 | 5:6 | Ps 110:4 | 11:18 | Gen 21:12 |
| 1:10 | Ps 102:25 | 6:14 | Gen 22:16ff | 12:5-6 | Prov 3:11-12 |
| 1:11-12 | Ps 102:26 | 7:17 | Ps 110:4 | 12:20 | Exod 19:12ff |
| 1:13 | Ps 110:1 | 7:21 | Ps 110:4 | 12:26 | Hag 2:6 |
| 2:6-8 | Ps 8:4-6 | 8:5 | Exod 25:40 | 13:5 | Deut 31:6 |
| 2:12 | Ps 22:22 | 8:8-12 | Jer 31:31-34 | 13:6 | Ps 118:6 |
| 2:13 | Isaiah 8:17-18 | 9:20 | Exod 24:8 | — | — |
| 3:7-11 | Ps 95:7-11 | 10:5-8 | Ps 40:6-8 | — | — |

(3) There is no warning against _____ or any references to it, most likely because they already were (cf. 42 refs in Paul).

(4) The writer speaks of Levitical _____ still occurring (7:27; 10:2-3).

(5) There is not a single _____ to Gentiles or Gentile behavior.

b. It is very unlikely that they are in _____:

(1) The author indicates that they have not yet faced martyrdom (12:3-4).

(2) The Jerusalem Christians were recipients of financial help, the believers in this letter were _____ of help (13:1-5,16).

(3) The statement, "...those in Italy send greetings" may be a reference that this Hebrew congregation is in _____ (13:24).

B. The World Of The Letter: A Tapestry of High Christology and Ancient Memory

1. The author's arguments all address a group that is contemplating a unique form of _____—returning to Judaism!

2. His basic argument is that returning to Judaism is impossible, because in God's Story, it was only the " _____ " not the film:

a. Everything that led up to Yeshua was merely a "copy" or " _____ " pointing to Him:

"For since the law has but a shadow [Gk, skia] of the good things to come instead of the true form [Gk, eikon] of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near." Hebrews 10:1

b. This is the same thing Paul had taught those contemplating a " _____ " Christianity in Asia:

"He is the image [Gk, eikon] of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." Colossians 1:15

"Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow [Gk, skia] of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." Colossians 2:16, 17

C. The World Before The Letter: Removing Our Sandals

1. We have four misunderstandings that cause us to “keep our _____ on” when we read God’s Story:

a. We have a _____, not a “kosher” understanding of God’s self-disclosure.

(1) A “_____ God” was a terrifying thing to a Jew:

“For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of. Did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and still live?” Deuteronomy 4:32, 33

“Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.”

Isaiah 66:1, 2

“See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken--that is, things that have been made--in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.”

Hebrews 12:25-29

b. We fail to recognize the supernatural nature of what we read for our “quiet time”: the “oracles of Yahweh” mediated to Jews by _____!

“This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.’ This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us.”

Acts 7:37, 38

“For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?...”

Hebrews 2:2

(1) There are over _____ references to angels in The Story.

(2) There are _____ references to angels in 16 books of the New Testament; 11 in the first chapter of Hebrews

(3) They are in The Story to _____ us (Heb 1:14).

(4) They _____ us, have a language of their own, will accompany Jesus on His return, can take human form, invoked fear when seen, mediated the scriptures, yet can not understand _____ (1 Cor 4:9; 13:1; Gal 3:19; 2 Th 1:7; Heb 13:2; Lk 1:12; 1 Pet 1:12).

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c. As a result of all this, we fail to _____ the opening lines of this letter:

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 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. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.” **Hebrews 1:1-4**

d. Because we limit the Gospel to be God’s solution to our _____, we neglect one of the greatest purposes of the Incarnation:

(1) Jesus is the fullest and final _____ of Yahweh.

(a) *“the radiance of the _____ of God”* (1:3) — [Gk, *apau-gasma*]; speaks of the radiant manifestation of God’s presence. To see God’s glory, was to witness His presence. (i.e. *“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us...”*).

(b) *“...the exact _____ of his nature...”* (1:5) — [Gk, *charaktēr*]; 1x in our NT. Originally used for an engraving tool, a stamp, or even a branding iron. It eventually came to be used of the image or mark itself made, for example on coins or seals.

(2) This was _____ argument in Philippians 2:1-11.

(3) It was Yeshua’s own statement to _____ in John 14:9.

2. The author of Hebrews opens this letter with the strongest statement in all of Scripture about the role of _____ as God’s self-disclosure.

3. This book opens, *not* with a long discourse on _____, but on Yahweh and Yeshua.

4. If we want to know what Yahweh, the “God of the Old Testament” really “_____” like, we must “look unto Yeshua...”

5. This is the proper way to _____ and understand the Old Testament, *“the end from the beginning,”* like Yahweh (Is 46:9-10).

6. God’s *“working all things together for the good of those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose (i.e. The Story)”* did not begin on _____!

Next week: Five Ancient Warnings For Our Day