
Moving Forward

Introduction to Hebrews

Hebrews 1:4

*“Being made so much **better** than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they....*

Hebrews 6:9

*But, beloved, we are persuaded **better** things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak....*

Hebrews 7:19

*For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a **better** hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God....*

Hebrews 7:22

*By so much was Jesus made a surety of a **better** testament...*

Hebrews 8:6

*But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a **better** covenant, which was established upon **better** promises....*

Hebrews 9:23

*It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with **better** sacrifices than these...*

Hebrews 10:34

*For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a **better** and an enduring substance...*

Hebrews 11:16

*But now they desire a **better** country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city....*

Hebrews 11:35

*Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a **better** resurrection...*

Hebrews 11:40

*God having provided some **better** thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect....*

Hebrews 12:24

*And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh **better** things than that of Abel.”*

INTRODUCTION:

- **Jesus is Better**
 - **That is the main argument that the writer of the book of Hebrews is trying to convey**
 - **The idea that the writer is saying—is not that Jesus is better than some things—but that He is supreme to all things**

- **Jesus is supreme over everyone and everything**

Hebrews 8:8

*“For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a **new** covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...*

Hebrews 8:13

*In that he saith, A **new** covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away...*

Hebrews 9:15

*And for this cause he is the mediator of the **new** testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance...*

Hebrews 10:20

*By a **new** and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh...*

Hebrews 12:24

*And to Jesus the mediator of the **new** covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”*

- **Jesus is the New Way**
 - **The Old is passing away**
 - **The Old cannot do what the New can**

- **The Old is inferior to the New**
- **The Old can't give eternal life—the New can**
- **The Old, though authored by God—was never designed to do what the New would do**

- **The writer's purpose—is to call people to embrace His supremacy**

- **To embrace Him as the Substance that all the shadows the OT pointed to**
- **To embrace Him as the fulfillment of all the prophecies of the OT**
- **To embrace Him as Lord of all**
- **To MOVE FORWARD for Christ**

- **The Difficulties of Moving Forward for Christ**

- **Many people never really move forward for Christ**
- **They may make a decision about the person of Christ—but they stagnate in their obedience toward Him (as the Supreme Lord—that the author of Hebrews points out)**
 - **They say they know the Lord—in salvation—but they have nothing to do with Him outside of the church house**
 - **They are too caught up with their own lives—their own agendas—that they never take time to consider Him**
 - **He is their Lord—but they don't treat Him as such**

- **There are some that never make a decision for Him—because they fear man over God**
 - **Fear they will be laughed at**
 - **Fear they will be looked down upon**
 - **Fear they will even suffer because of Him**
- **Then some never move forward for Him—because they don't want to**
- **The Book of Hebrews was written to call people to follow Christ with all their heart—no matter what difficulties stand in the way**
 - **Jesus is greater than all those difficulties**
 - **Jesus is worth suffering hardship**

ILLUSTRATION:

Facing the Giants—the Death Crawl

- **Don't Quit!**
- **Paul is saying the same thing—Don't Quit**
 - **Don't just try Jesus on—and discard him when things get difficult**
 - **Hold tightly to Him even when things get tough—even when it gets hard to live for Christ**
 - **He is better**
 - **He is supreme**

CIT: Why is Moving Forward For Christ Such a Dilemma For Some People?

Who Are the People that Paul is Writing To? And Why are They Responding the Way They are?

NOTE: To understand the book of Hebrews requires that we know to what audience Paul is writing to. As we will see, the letter is written to three different groups of people.

I. It is a Dilemma Because of Conflict From the Old Life

The Hebrew Christian

A. Genuine Believers Who Had Come Out of Judaism

1. They have been born again
 - a. Making Him their person Lord and Savior—their Messiah
 - b. They have recognized Him to be the fulfillment of all Law and Prophets
 - i. That He has paid for their sins
 - ii. That He has made peace between them and God
 - iii. That He is the only way to God

2. Where did they come from?

- a. Hebrew tells us something about their conversion

They Had Been Evangelized

Hebrews 2:3-4—“*great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed **unto us** by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*”

- i. They were not direct witnesses of the person of Christ—but they were given testimony of Him—through those that had seen and heard
- ii. Those who evangelized them were God-ordained prophets

*and was confirmed **unto us** by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will”*

- These God-ordained prophets could have been some of the apostles—that Jesus particularly set apart to be witnesses of Him
- Or they could have been others who were set apart to be a light of Christ

Ephesians 4:11-12—“*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*”

- iii. The purpose for signs and miracles

- To confirm the message of Christ
- There was no NT Scripture available—for these believers to draw from

NOTE: People in America are very fortunate—because they have such access to the Word of God. There are many places in the world where the Word of God is banned.

B. These Believers Have Not Moved Forward in Their Faith

1. They have received great hostility against them for their faith

Hebrews 10:32-34—“*But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. 34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully **the spoiling of your goods**, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.*”

a. They were persecuted by fellow Jews

- i. Family ties broken
- ii. Being rejected by the society (the Jews)
- iii. They would be excommunicated from the Temple

b. They might have even suffered from Gentiles

c. Though the Hostility was great—it had not reached its full potential yet

Hebrews 12:4—“*Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*”

NOTE: Paul was not saying that there is a point at which someone is to quit moving forward. He is reminding them that if they are trying to avoid hardship—by being soft about their faith—they have a lot more coming.

2. They were being tempted to back away from Christ

- a. Instead of moving forward confidently for Christ—they have withdrawn
- b. They were in danger of going back into the standards of Judaism—blurring the clear distinction—between Judaism and the Gospel

c. They felt they needed to keep a strong foothold in the old life

NOTE: It was incredibly difficult for the Jewish believer to break completely from Judaism.

Reasons why

- They grew up in their faith—taught them from birth
- Their faith came from God—not some false god
- All their heritage revolved around Judaism
- The temple, priests, and sacrifices continued on for 40 years after Christ
- They would lose much for Christ

C. They Needed Strengthening

1. Their faith was weak

- a. They were losing their confidence in the gospel
- b. They were losing their confidence in Christ

2. What they need and don't need

a. They don't need the Old Covenant

i. How the Old Covenant worked

- Established at Mt. Sinai
- It was the place where God gave the Jews the 10 Commandments (Covenant)

- God established a sacrificial system with this covenant—because of sin
- Sin separates man from God—death was the only way sin could be dealt with—the sacrifice
- Continual sacrifices for continual sin
- That just proved its ineffectiveness

Hebrews 10:1-4—*“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins”*

Hebrews 10:11—*“And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins”*

ii. The Purpose for the Old Covenant

- To point to the new covenant

- To point to man’s need for a new covenant

b. They needed the New Covenant

i. The New Covenant

- Christ was the new sacrifice\
- His sacrifice was a better sacrifice than the Old Sacrifice

Hebrews 10:10—*“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”*

Hebrews 10:12—*“but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God”*

ii. The New Priesthood

- The priesthood of the Old Covenant was fallible
- The priesthood of the New—was sinless

3. The words “Better” and “New”

- a. These are words that Paul continually uses to point these struggling believers back to a solid faith in Christ

- i. Jesus is the New Way
- ii. Jesus is the Better Way

APPLICATION: The reason why many genuine Christians do not move forward for Christ—is because they are intimidated by the world (the Old Life) and they have lost their confidence in the person and work of Christ.

They need to be strengthened in Christ.

II. It is a Dilemma Because of Shallowness of Faith

The Hebrew Non-Christian Who is Intellectually Convinced of Christ

A. The Intellectually Convinced—but Spiritually Non-Committed

NOTE: There have been many people throughout history that have fallen into this category. They have heard the truth of Christ, and they are even convinced that Jesus is indeed the Christ—the Son of God who came to pay for man’s sins. But they have never made any spiritual commitment toward Christ. They are not willing to truly follow Christ. They are still lost and on their way to eternity without Christ.

Paul addresses this group in His letter to the Hebrews.

1. Reasons for their lack of commitment to Christ

- a. They love the praise of men over the praise of God

John 12:42-43—“*Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; **but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.***”

- b. They were then unwilling to make the sacrifice that following Christ would demand

2. These people had the same exposure to the gospel that the first group had

Hebrews 2:1-4—“*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 3 how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”*

- a. These people were on the edge with Christ—they were at the point of acknowledging, but not willing to commit to Him

b. They were neglecting Christ—not doing anything about what they know is right—concerning Christ

Hebrews 6:4-6—“*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*”

i. They had been drawn so close to the gospel that it could be said...

- That they were enlightened by it (brought to full understanding)
- That they have tasted the heavenly gift (eternal life—Jesus Christ)
- That they have partaken of the Holy Ghost (convicting work—miracles and signs)
- They have tasted the good word of God (the preaching and teaching of the word)
- They have experienced the power of God

B. The Warnings Given

1. Hebrews 6—gives the warning that to come so close and not commit is tragedy to the soul

a. God cannot, nor will not do any more
b. There is only one direction a person can go from the top--down

i. They person can only reject from such a vantage point—if they do not totally embrace Him—as Savior and Lord

- They cannot claim ignorance
- They cannot say they don't understand

ii. They end up joining hands with those who put Christ to death

Vs. 6—“*if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame”*

2. Hebrews 10 gives similar warnings

Hebrews 10:26-31—“*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 **but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.** He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 **of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who***

hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

a. To be drawn so close to the gospel—being so convinced of it—and to go back without ever committing to it has fearful consequences

- i. It is to join hands with God’s enemies
- ii. It is to trod under foot the very Son of God
- iii. It is to consider His blood—unholy (common—no different than any one else)
- iv. It is to despise the Spirit of God—who has been extending His grace to you
- v. It is fearful to be in such a condition with God

3. Hebrews 12 gives another warning

Hebrews 12:15-17—“*looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that*

afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

- a. A person to be so closely convinced but never commit will eventually become embittered with Christ
- b. They will sell Him out—for something far insignificant

i. Following the example of Esau—who sold his birthright (the most important thing he had) for a bowl of soup

c. And then when they stand before God—at the end of their life—they will realize their mistake—and will not be able to change it

NOTE: Don’t be just intellectually convinced—but do nothing when it comes to Christ. Put your faith in Him. Turn from your old life (which is passing away) and embrace the New (found in Christ).

MOVE FORWARD for Christ.

III. It is a Dilemma Because of Lack of Conviction

The Hebrew Non-Christ Who is Not Convinced of Christ

A. Not Rejecters, But Unbelievers

1. They had not been exposed to such claims

- a. They might not have been part of the group that saw the signs and miracles—that confirmed the message of Christ
- b. They might not have ever received witness from the Spirit of God—of their need for Christ
- c. They might have never had anyone tell them of Christ before
- d. They may have been just lightly exposed to the person of Christ

2. Paul addresses them in his letter to the Hebrews as well

B. The Call to Salvation

1. Hebrews 9:11-15

Hebrews 9:11-14—*“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the*

transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”

a. Paul is writing to Jews who have never heard of Christ’s greater sacrifice and priesthood

i. They have grown up in Judaism thinking that this is all there is—it is not sufficient—but it is all they have

ii. Paul points them to Christ’s sacrifice and priesthood

- Christ is become the high priest
- He has entered into the tabernacle of God—not made with hands—but the heavenly tabernacle—where the very presence of God is
- He has brought His own blood into the holy place—appeasing the wrath of God
- He has obtained eternal redemption for us (as opposed to Judaism—that could never do that)
- He has provided purging for the sinner

- To purge the conscience of sin
- To call you from dead works (Judaism)—to serve the living God

NOTE: Judaism is dead, because it has no power to save the sinner from the wrath of God. Christ alone can do that.

- There is eternal value for being part of the new covenant—having put away the old—eternal inheritance

NOTE: This passage is not written to the saved or the intellectually convinced. It is written to those who know nothing of Christ's sacrifice and priesthood. It is a call for them to openly embrace Christ—to turn from that which is dead and embrace the new and better way—so that they might be partakers of the eternal inheritance that God has promised to all that are in Christ.

2. Hebrews 9:27-28

Hebrews 9:27-28—*“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”*

- a. Christ died—bearing the sins of many

- b. When he returns—all those who have turned their heart to him will find that He comes not with judgment, but salvation

NOTE: Paul's plea to them is the same. **MOVE FORWARD** for Christ.

CONCLUSION:

QUESTION: Are you moving forward for Christ?

- † If you died today are you sure you would go to heaven?
- † Maybe you've been exposed to the gospel many, many times—and yet have really done nothing with it
 - You're in a dangerous place
 - It's time to make Christ your savior and Lord
 - It's time to stop worrying what everyone else thinks—and start worrying about what God thinks
- † Maybe you've never really understood what it means to be a Christian
 - Jesus died and rose again for your sin
 - To become a Christian, you must recognize your sinfulness before Him
 - That you deserve judgment
 - Repent—turn from your sin
 - Faith—embrace Christ and your Lord and Savior

- Be willing to follow Him

† It you are a believer and not moving forward for Christ—start moving forward

- Get in the word
- Get to know Christ better
- Get your eyes off the world—and put your heart upon Christ