

Introduction to the Book of Hebrews – Part 3

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The main theme of the book

1. "...In a unique fashion it exalts the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ."¹
2. The main theme is to demonstrate the superiority of the person and work of Christ over the Old Testament Mosaic system. It is central to the doctrine of Christ.

Themes are important to the unfolding of subjects within any writing.

Hebrews: studying this book is studying the “deeper things” of God’s Word.

1. These things are “hard to explain” things of Christ, (5:11).
2. These things are advancing or leaving the “elementary principles” of Christ, and moving on from foundational things to the deeper things of God, (6:1).
3. These are the “better” things Christ provided for us that accompany salvation, (6:9).

The book of Hebrews is not for babies. The writer wants to take the reader to mature things.

Comparisons with Christ

1. Angels and Christ, (1:4-2:8)
2. Moses and Christ, (3:1-6)
3. Joshua and Christ, (4:1-10)
4. Aaron and Christ, (4:14 - 5:10)
5. Melchizedek and Christ, (7:1-28)

By comparing Christ to other Old Testament characters, the writer reveals changes to doctrine and practice.

Designations of Christ²

1. Apostle, (3:1)
2. Author, (12:2)
3. Captain, (2:10; 12:2)
4. Christ, (3:6)
5. Finisher, (12:2)
6. First Born, (1:6)
7. Forerunner, (6:20)
8. God, (1:8)
9. Heir, (1:2)
10. High Priest, (2:17)
11. Jesus, (2:9)
12. Jesus Christ, (10:10)
13. Lord, (2:3)
14. Lord Jesus, (13:20)
15. Mediator, (8:6)
16. Priest, (5:6)
17. The Same, (1:12)
18. Shepherd, (13:20)
19. Son, (1:2)
20. Son of God, (4:14)
21. Son of man, (2:6)
22. Surety, (8:22)

Christ's life

1. The incarnation, (1:2; 2:16-17)
2. The ministration, (5:7-9)
3. The crucifixion, (6:6; 7:27; 9:12,14,28, 10:10,12,14,19,29; 13:12,20)
4. The resurrection, (13:20)
5. The ascension, (4:14; 6:20)
6. Present session, or ministry in heaven (2:9; 7:25; 8:1; 9:12,24; 10:12,13)
7. Second advent (9:28)

By the author dealing with these seven general aspects of Christ's life, he has made it possible to call this book the fifth Gospel.

Christ is "better" or "superior" to Old Testament things

1. Christ superior to prophets and angels, (1:1-14)
2. Christ superior to Moses, (3:1-19)
3. Christ superior to Aaron, (5:1-14)
4. Christ superior to Old covenant, (8:1-13)
5. Christ superior to atonement, (10:1-25)
6. Christ superior faith, (11:1-40)
7. Christ superior privileges, (12:1-13:25)³

1. Superiority of the Person of Christ, (1:1-4:16)
2. Superiority of the Priesthood of Christ, (5:1-10:39)
3. Superiority of the Power of Christ, (11:1-13:19)⁴

1. Better messenger, (1:1-2:18)
2. Better apostle, (3:1-4:13)
3. Better priest, (4:14-7:28)
4. Better covenant, (8:1-9:28)
5. Better sacrifice, (10:1-31)
6. Better way, (10:32-12:29)⁵

“Although the book is nameless, this fact does not detract from the authenticity or inspired authority of its contents.”⁶

By looking at these outlines, the fact that Christ is “better” or “superior” comes out very clearly.

Three of the five confusing terms used of Christ appear in Hebrews

1. "Begotten" (Gr. "gennao,") meaning "a special relationship, a one-of-a-kind, a unique relationship," (Acts 13:33; Heb.1:5; 5:5). Paul stated that he had "begotten" Onesimus, who was older than him referring to a special relationship, (Phile. 10)
2. "First born" (Gr. "prototokos") meaning "a special position, a special relationship, a highly exalted position," (Col. 1:15; 1:18 Heb. 1:6 Rev. 1:5). David was called the firstborn (Ps. 89:19-29) yet he was the youngest of eight children. The president's wife is called the "first lady" yet she is not the first lady of the country.
3. "Son" (Gr. "huios") meaning "a follower of another, a special relationship, shares special privilege, recognition of position," (Jn. 3:16 Heb. 4:14). people of higher responsibility sometimes call others of different position "son."

These are three of the five most common terms that are used with Christ, but often confused by the cults.

References:

¹"Hebrews," Zane Hodges, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Wheaton: Victor, 1983, p. 777

²*Willmington's Guide to the Bible*, H. L. Willmington, Wheaton: Tyndale, 1981, p. 516

³*What the Bible is all about*, Henrietta Mears, Ventura: Regal, 1994, p. 591

⁴*The Ryrie Study Bible*, Charles Ryrie, Chicago: Moody, 1994, p. 1851

⁵*New Testament Survey*, Merrill Tenney, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974, p. 359-360

⁶*Stand Bold in Grace: An Exposition of Hebrews*, Robert Gromacki, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984, p. 13