

# Endurance

Mingled with the warnings are uplifting passages of encouragement. Christians must fix their eyes on Jesus, their champion and perfecter of faith, now sitting at God's right hand (12:2-4). Jesus gave Himself to release us from the paralyzing fear of death (2:10-16) and makes propitiation for our sins (2:17-18). Jesus sympathizes with our weakness and we can seek His help in time of need (4:14-16). God will not forget our service if we patiently endure (6:9-15). Those who endure in doing the will of God will receive the promise (10:36). **Endurance** is a key word in Hebrews (Heb. 6:15; 10:32; 10:34; 10:36; 11:27; 12:1; 12:2; 12:3; 12:7; 12:20). As you read Hebrews, look for these encouraging passages, while also being admonished by the warnings.



Have you ever visited a "Hall of Fame" like Cooperstown, NY (baseball) or Canton, OH (football)? In Hebrews, we are taken on a tour of Faith's Hall of Fame in chapter 11. Nothing encourages us to endure like seeing a good example. In this chapter we meet the men and women we must emulate to endure in the faith. As you read, note that their faith always led them to **obey** and act faithfully toward God. No easy-believism (faith without works) here!

"That You May Grow Thereby..."

A weekly Bible reading plan



## Hebrews

### Don't Turn Back!

Hebrews is generally classed as an epistle, but until chapter 13, it does not read like an epistle. The author describes it as a "word of exhortation" (13:22). In Acts 13:15, in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch, the rulers invite Paul to speak to the congregation: "...if you have any *word of exhortation* for the people, say on," so Paul gave a sermon. Several passages in Hebrews stress the actions of speaking and hearing (2:5; 5:11; 6:9; 8:1; 9:5; 11:32). Reading Hebrews (chapters 1-12), we are reading a sermon delivered for the benefit of some struggling Jewish Christians of the first century.

### Why were they struggling?

They were suffering persecution for their faith (10:32-34). Instead of rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus' name (Acts 5:41; Mt. 5:11-12), they were in danger of "going back" (apostatizing); of "throwing in the towel." They are admonished: "Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:38-39). Built into this awesome sermon are five warnings:

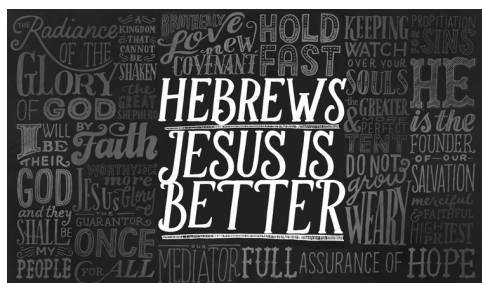
1. Do Not Reject the Word Spoken by God's Son (2:1-4).
2. Do Not Be Faithless (3:7-4:2)
3. Do Not Fall Away (5:11-6:8)
4. Do Not Draw Back (10:26-31)
5. Do Not Refuse God's Word (12:25-29)

These passages illustrate the dire spiritual plight of someone who leaves the faith of Jesus Christ.

Just as these first-century Jewish disciples are warned not to make the same mistake as their ancestors in the Wilderness (3:7-4:2), all Christians need to understand the danger in going back to old patterns of sin, vain religion, and the world (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-12). Hebrews is clearly relevant for twenty-first century Christians as well.

### Reading Schedule

- Monday: Hebrews 1-2
- Tuesday: Hebrews 3-4
- Wednesday: Hebrews 5-7
- Thursday: Hebrews 8-10
- Friday: Hebrews 11-13



In our day, it is not "politically correct" to assert one faith is better than another, but this truth is set forth by God in Hebrews! The word "better" is a key word in Hebrews (1:4; 6:9; 7:19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24). If the disheartened Jewish Christians gave up and went back to Judaism, or if we give up and go back to the world, the superior is being surrendered for the inferior way of life.

### Jesus is Superior

- 📖 To the OT Prophets (1:1-3)
- 📖 To the Angels (1:4-2:18)
- 📖 To Moses (3:1-6)
- 📖 To Joshua (4:1-10)
- 📖 To Aaron, the Levitical Priesthood & the entire Levitical System of Sacrifices & Worship (5:1-12:29).

In other words, Christianity is superior to Judaism in every way. And Judaism was superior to every other way of life in the world! (Gal. 3:21) Peter told the Sanhedrin, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

## Did you know?

- ❖ Hebrews is the only NT book that presents in depth the **high priesthood** of Jesus Christ?
- ❖ In the oldest manuscript containing Hebrews (Beatty Ⓟ46), the book is placed between Romans and 1 Corinthians?

### Who wrote Hebrews?

There is no opening greeting that identifies the author and the recipients, as we find in the epistles of Paul, Peter and John. Paul or one of his associates—Barnabas, Luke, Silas, or Apollos—have all been championed by one scholar or another. It is clear, however, that the *human* penman of the book has been purposely obscured to focus the audience's attention on **the God who speaks**. Listening to the voice of God is the theme running throughout Hebrews (1:1; 2:1; 3:7-9, 15; 10:5, 15). An inspired preacher gave the sermon, but it is God speaking to His people!

