

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

FOUNDATION BAPTIST CHURCH, FALL 2025

CLASS GOALS

- To gain a more in-depth knowledge of this New Testament epistle in light of the entirety of the Word of God
- To test assumptions and conclusions
- To build a strong foundation against errors that are caused by failing to “rightly divide the word of truth”
- To saturate ourselves with the knowledge of God’s Word
- Finally, and most importantly, to better know the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ through the way that He has given us to know Him.

CLASS PREREQUISITES

- Required: None
- Suggested: Having a knowledge of the Old Testament, the Gospels, and Acts

PITFALLS TO AVOID

- Extended debates about the author
- Long discussions about angels
- Discussions about the identity of Melchizedek that take up more class time than Bible gives the subject

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Bible (King James Version)
- Something to use to take notes

CLASS STRUCTURE

- 45 Minutes total
- 30–35 minute lecture mixed with questions from teacher to class
- 10–15 minute discussion with time for class’s questions at end if time allows
- Goal is to keep moving to get through one chapter or about 15 verses per week
- Homework reading each week so it sinks in and is better learned because the struggle is where most is learned.

TEACHER'S POINT OF VIEW

- Christian
 - Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh
 - Jesus Christ died for my sins and rose again, and is because of this my Savior
 - Jesus Christ is Lord, and is to be submitted to as such
 - Salvation is by God's grace through faith in Him, believing the gospel, 1 Cor 15:1-4
- Bible-believing
 - The Bible is the final authority
 - God's Word, a coherent book of the revelation from God of Himself and His dealings with man
 - The Bible is understandable when it is believed
 - The King James English Bible version vs. other Bible versions
 - The usefulness of the "original languages" and using other languages
- Fundamentalist
 - Doctrine matters
- Dispensational
 - The Bible means what it says where it says it. Believe what you read where you read it.
 - The Bible needs to be understood as a whole book, not in just random parts
 - The dispensation of the grace of God given to the apostle Paul, Ephesians 3:1-12

LESSON 1. INTRODUCTORY NOTES

POINT OF VIEW REGARDING THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:

For a foundation, we need all of the Scriptures that have gone before. To understand the place and the purpose of the book, we must have a grasp on the book of Acts. To understand Acts, we must understand Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. To understand the Gospels, we must understand the Old Testament.

Since we are starting here in Hebrews, near the end of the book, there are some important assumptions that we are going to start with. If you are not as well versed in the foundational material, do not despair. By the end, if you are diligent and (gulp) do your homework, you will.

Some Basics:

1. There was a very special relationship between God (the LORD, Jehovah, Yahweh) and the Hebrew people, otherwise known as the people of Israel. It was a very different relationship than that of any other people group. We also must understand that it was different with His relationship with us as "the Church which is His Body" (Ephesians 1:21–23) corporately, or with us as individual Christians.
2. There were many Hebrew people, or we could say Jews, who did believe on Jesus Christ. Those who did believe in Jesus the Christ, Jesus of Nazareth (many knew Him face to face), God's Son who is God's Christ—DID NOT convert from Judaism to Christianity. They were the covenant people, you could say they were the remnant at the time, who held to the words of the covenant. They were walking with the God of the Covenant while the rest of the nation was still gone astray. When they believed on Christ, they were faithful to the Covenant while the rest were apostate. These were the Jews of Romans 2:28–29, 9:6, Galatians 6:16. They were "the remnant according to the election of grace", Romans 11:6
3. Notice something in Galatians 2:7:
*"But contrariwise, when they saw that the **gospel of the uncircumcision** was committed unto me, as the **gospel of the circumcision** was unto Peter;"*

Acts 3:11–26 — "And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And

Ephesians 2:11–22 — "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that

<p>his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.</p> <p>“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”</p>	<p>he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.</p> <p>“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”</p>
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Question: Which is “the gospel of the circumcision”, and which is “the gospel of the uncircumcision”?

The epistle to the Hebrews is to the “Acts 3” people.

4. Many of the difficulties in the epistle start with the assumptions. One such assumption is that epistle was written to Christians who happened to be Hebrew. A better assumption, and I think that after we get into the text for a bit, is that it was written to Hebrews. Jews, period. Some may have been believers in Christ, some were not. All should have been.
5. Get this understood and really get a firm grasp on it. All twelve apostles were Jews, including Matthias who replaced Judas. In the Lord’s pre-crucifixion ministry while on earth, His ministry was only to the Jews. See Matthew 15:24. Romans 15:8. There were encounters with Gentiles, but really only in relation to Jews. The nation as a whole rejected Christ.

John 1:11 — *"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."*

But there was also this:

John 1:12 — *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"*

6. Prophetically Israel is to rise and to be a light to the Gentiles — the whole world. That is not what happened in history.

Isaiah 59:20–60:3 — *"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever."*

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."

7. The book of Acts leaves us with an unbelieving Israel who was not a light to the Gentiles; the Jews in Jerusalem and scattered among the Gentiles were really acting to impede the Gentiles from knowing the God and His Christ who they were supposed to represent. Look, for instance, at Acts 13:6–12:

"And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

That is really the pattern throughout the book of Acts. The Apostles (the Twelve) went out and preached the gospel as commissioned by the Lord, beginning at Jerusalem, and as there was some very good numbers, yet overall the message was rejected with hostility. As Bar-Jesus was blinded as we saw in chapter 13, so was the unbelieving nation as a whole.

But what would become of the Jews that did believe? We can see some of what would become of them in Acts 21:18–26:

"And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law: And they are

informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them."

Acts 15 explains some difficulties, but we at that point are still left with some. It is plain from that chapter that Gentiles who believed were absolutely not to be brought under the yoke of the law. We also have Romans and Galatians, and the whole of Paul's epistles to the Gentiles that make this plain.

Acts 15 says nothing about the Jews that believe. In fact, Acts 15:21 says that there are still disciples of Moses, even "Pharisees that believed" 15:5. Look back at chapter 21, and observe that James doesn't want Paul to correct these "torah-observant" disciples concerning their relation to the Law, but wants to correct Paul, or at least the concept that they had of Paul. He wanted Paul to show them that he also was a "torah-observant" Jew. This was the same guy that wrote Galatians and Romans.

And Paul went along with it!

I don't see that the Lord went along with it. I believe that it seems clear that the Lord used the riotous Jews in the temple to stop that.

"What is it then? The multitudes must needs come together."

Yes, the multitude needed to come together.

1 Corinthians 12:13— *"For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles..."*

Yet there seems to have been two streams of "Christianity" growing. One was under the law, one was not.

Even today many still don't know how to handle that. In Galatians 2, Peter didn't know how to handle this, even though these are the words of Peter in Acts 15:10–11:

"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

We (Jews) shall be saved even as they (Gentiles). Interesting turn-around.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS CORRECT

One big issue in the epistle to the Hebrews is the issue of eternal security. There are what many refer to as “warning passages”. Many denominations and simply individual Christians are very against the idea of eternal security, or “Once saved always saved”. Assemblies of God, Pentecostals and “Arminians” in general, among others who absolutely stand on the fact that one once saved is always in danger of becoming not saved will fly to some places in Hebrews and many from the other side don’t know what to do about it.

Calvinists don’t usually have a good answer. The best that they can do is say that those passages are addressed to people who think that they are saved but really are not. They would use terms like spurious faith, or people who never exercised true saving faith. They always keep you wondering if you really have the right kind of faith, so where the system of doctrine that they hold should have the believer so secure in Christ, since they were saved from when God elected them before the foundation of the world, makes them insecure.

Now we are Baptists, so we don’t side with either!

OK, that’s not a real good answer either. Part of this study will be to get a real answer to this and we will see how all of Scripture fits together to answer this. We will see how this epistle fits in with the entire scope of God’s revelation to man.

Study this through. Acts 15 made it clear that Gentiles that believed in Jesus Christ were not under the law. It said nothing about the Jews that believed, but left the Gentiles with instructions not to offend the believing “torah observant” Jews. What would be the word to these Jews? There would be a word to the torah observant believers and to the torah observant rejectors. Both will be addressed in

The Epistle to the Hebrews