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Hebrews: Christ - the Believer's High Priest

Harold Willmington
Liberty University

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Hebrews

Christ—The Believer's High Priest

by Harold L. Willmington

At this very moment Jesus sits at God's right hand to serve as our High Priest! This, in essence, is what the Book of Hebrews is all about.

Let us imagine a conversation between a Hindu and a Christian. The Hindu listens intently as the Christian briefly summarizes the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. At the conclusion of the message, four basic questions might quickly come to his mind:

Question: Why did Jesus have to be born?

Answer: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).

Question: Why did Jesus have to die?
Answer: "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4).

Question: Why did Jesus have to be resurrected?

Answer: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15:14).

Question: Why did Jesus have to ascend?

Answer: The Book of Hebrews!

The Book of Hebrews presents the only full discussion in the New Testament of Christ as the believer's High Priest. It answers the question, "Whatever happened to Jesus?" This book has been called the fifth Gospel. The first four Gospels describe what Christ once did on earth, while Hebrews describes what He is now doing in heaven. Hebrews 10:11 reveals that the book was written before the destruction of the Temple by Titus in A.D. 70.

Hebrews may be compared to Romans in that Romans reveals the necessity of the Christian faith and Hebrews reveals the superiority of Christian faith.

There are six key words to this book: perfect (used 14 times); eternal, forever (15 times); better (13 times); partakers (9 times); heaven (17 times); and priest, high priest (32 times).

There are at least 86 direct references to the Old Testament in Hebrews, taken from 100 passages.

Hebrews is the only one of the 27 New Testament books whose author is unknown. It provides the most extended biblical record of conversations between the Father and the Son (1:5-13; 2:12-13; 10:5-9). It gives us the first recorded words of Christ in relationship to His earthly ministry (10:5-9).

It is the only New Testament book to explain the purpose of the Old Testament tabernacle (chs. 7-10). It is the first of two New Testament books that refer to the heavenly tabernacle (6:10,20; 8:1-5; 9:11-12,23,24). (For the other book, see Revelation.)

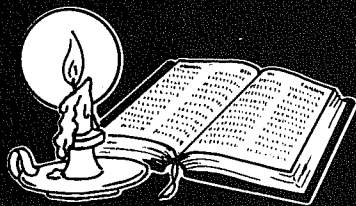
Hebrews 11 is the greatest chapter on faith in the Bible. This book records the final (of three) New Testament references to that Old Testament quotation, "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4). These three are Galatians 3:11, Romans 1:17, and Hebrews 10:38. Hebrews lists the second (of three) statements concerning the shepherding ministry of Christ: Jesus said He was the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). Hebrews says He is the Great Shepherd (Heb. 13:20). Peter says He is the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).

Hebrews offers Scripture's greatest analogy between the Old Testament pilgrim and the New Testament pilgrim (3:7-4:16). This epistle also has one of the most controversial passages in the entire Word of God (see 6:4-6). It includes the most extended passage on the subject of divine discipline (see 12:1-15). Hebrews 4:12 is probably the Bible's most concise description of itself.

Hebrews is the 9th longest New Testament book, and 31st longest biblical book, with 13 chapters, 303 verses, and 6,913 words. There are quotations or allusions from 21 Old Testament books in Hebrews.

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"The entrance
of thy Word
giveth light."



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