

HEBREWS

COULD YOU USE A FAITH PEP TALK?

GROWING WEARY AND LOSING HEART?

AFRAID OF GOD?

LOSING YOUR CHRISTIAN *FOCUS*?

This book is for the new Christian who is putting it all together, and it is for the experienced Christian who has lost the first excitement of belief. Hebrews is for people who are “in it for the long haul.” It is for you and me.

The author and the audience of this book are never named. Our attention is immediately directed to Jesus, the Son who is superior to angels, who is the “imprint of God’s being,” who has made purification for sins and now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on High. (Hebrews 1:2-3)

The author seems to be a Jewish Christian, for he (or she?) writes of “our ancestors” whom God spoke to. (Scholars suggest individuals, including Paul, but there are no convincing names.) The author assumes the listeners know Jewish worship and history. However, well-taught Gentile Christians of the first century – or the 21st century – also appreciate God’s revelation to Abraham’s people.

This book, more than any other in the New Testament, uses Old Testament worship to explain the significance of Jesus’ incarnation, suffering, death and resurrection.

Jesus is the eternal high priest and the perfect sacrifice who takes away sin once and for always. This description is worked out in chapters 7 through 10. Parallel after parallel with the Jewish high priest, the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) and sin offerings is made with Jesus and his sacrificial death. After you read chapters 8 and 9 of Hebrews, read Leviticus 16 about the Day of Atonement. I also recommend Leviticus 4:1 – 6:7 for background on sin offerings. In the second half of chapter 12, the contrast with the covenant at Mt. Sinai is made. That is the time to read Exodus 19 and 20.

For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands, . . . but he entered heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; . . . he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Hebrews 9:24-26)

The remaining chapters are the “faith pep talk.” Since we have the example of faithful believers before us (chapter 11), therefore *let us lay aside every weight and the sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)*

