

HEBREWS

Fear to Faith

Study 1a

Overview & Relevance

A. Why should we master *Hebrews*?

“... looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith ...”
— HEBREWS 12:2

1. In Hebrews we have the clearest expression in the Bible of Christ's post-ascension ministry in heaven. Thus, Hebrews is a natural extension of Acts, which gives us the account of Christ's post-ascension *earthly* ministry, through the Holy Spirit.
2. In giving us this unique glimpse into Christ's work between incarnation and second coming, Hebrews exalts Christ more clearly than any NT book till John & Revelation.
3. In exalting Christ's present position and superiority to all other authorities, Hebrews provides fantastic ammunition to the Christian desirous of doing battle with all claimants and rivals to Christ's authority in the present age.
4. In so glorifying Christ, the author of Hebrews not only supplied a needed corrective to defective faith in the first century, but also supplied for all time a spiritual diagnostic and curative for ALL brands of semi- and pseudo-Christian claim.

B. What can *Hebrews* do for us in the 21st century?

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever.” —
HEBREWS 13:8

1. Among the pseudo-Christian and anti-Christian authorities which Christians still *must* oppose:

EXALTATION OF OTHER PROPHETS (Heb.1:1-3)

EXALTATION OF ANGELS: (Heb.1:4-14; 2:5-9)

EXALTATION OF OTHER REVELATIONS: (Heb.2:1-4)

EXALTATION OF MOSES: (Heb.3:1-9)

EXALTATION OF PRIESTHOOD: (Heb.4:14-10:18)

2. Among the 21st century forms taken by the fear that is the opposite of faith:

FEAR OF DEATH — (Heb.2:14, 15) the source of authority for virtually all false religions, and every type of existentialist despair as well. And which causes even believers, unconsciously or not, to spend much of their lives in racing the clock to little — or NO — eternal benefit; instead, we need to seek the 'divine rest' which eluded even Israel (Heb.3:10-4:11)

FEAR OF FALSE MEDIATORS — who prey upon the fear of death to exalt their own religious claims, and who do NOT have the divine authority of the Levite priesthood, the principal 1st century rival to Christ's priesthood

LACK OF THE ASSURANCE OF MATURE FAITH — (Heb.5:9-6:20; 11:1) another cause of religious slavery, in that the restless Spirit seeks full assurance and often builds it on other foundations than Christ

FEAR OF PAIN (& therefore PERSECUTION) — Our culture defines happiness as if it were the same as pleasure, or absence of discomfort, even as it defines peace by absence of war. Both definitions are non-, even anti-biblical. Christ associates PEACE and JOY with the endurance of pain and tribulation (John 14:27; 16:20-24, 33), even as Hebrews associates Christ's joy with His cross (Heb.12:1-3). The very modern emphasis on pain-free existence has given impetus to the 'prosperity' gospel, which assumes God wishes no unhappiness (i.e. pain, deprivation, sacrifice) for His children. Very opposed to such assumptions is the statement that the Son "learned obedience from the things He suffered" (Heb.5:8), and that God "scourges every son He receives" (Heb.12:6).

FEAR OF GOD in the sense of lack of confidence of access (contrast Biblical fear which is akin to awe of God.) If true trust in Christ is present we will not fear approaching the Father (Heb.10:19-22)