

Hebrews

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 December 2017

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] I am prepared a little bit. We are here in Hebrews chapter 12. I want to remind you that when we conclude Hebrews, which should be within the next few weeks, we look forward to engaging the book of Daniel, which many have described as the book of the revelation of the Old Testament.

And we who have been through Revelation a number of times are committed to the idea there is no possibility of an adequate understanding of the book of Revelation if you omit the book of Daniel, because it is really, really key, particularly with what is right there in the very second chapter. So we've got that to look forward to, and I think you will really enjoy it, especially given some of the things that are going on in the world today. However, until we get there, we've got our work cut out for us in the epistle to the Hebrews.

And as the name indicates, and as I've said before, and at the expense of sounding like a broken record, I want to emphasize it because it is so very important.

Well-meaning Christians try to Christianize the book of Hebrews. And that can be done in a very profitable way if you limit yourself to applications.

[1 : 19] But if you try to inject interpretation into it and make it fit today's believers in the body of Christ, you're going to have all kinds of problems and contradictions.

Simply because the epistle to the Hebrews was written for the exclusive, what shall I say, for the exclusive, go and do thou likewise to the Jewish people.

As the book says to the Hebrews. And that really ought not to be a stretch. So if you keep that in mind, then it makes perfect sense.

And as you go through the book of Hebrews, and you see all of this content about the offerings and the priesthood and all the rest of it, these things are not in keeping with the body of Christ's truth that we enjoy today.

But it fits perfectly into the historical situation regarding the children of Israel and God having called them out of Egypt and everything that went with it. So that brings us down to Hebrews chapter 12.

[2 : 24] And down in the lower right-hand corner, you should have page 1115. And may I remind you that this is taken from the 26th translation New Testament.

And the bold print that you see that begins each verse is the King James translation. Others that are indicated follow below that.

And sometimes each one will shed a little bit different light, maybe a little different angle than what some of the other translations do. So that's why they are there, and they are neatly compacted, all for your consideration so that you don't have to have a half a dozen books open at the same time. You can just look at the text right here, and that's very helpful. So we have arrived at the contrast that is established in chapter 13.

And I'm going to just read, if I may, the contrast that is established.

[3 : 26] And the writer of Hebrews, whom I personally believe to be the Apostle Paul, but I'm not ready to go to the mat for that because that's controversial. But he is contrasting the reality that existed under the covenant and under the law of Moses for the Israelites to whom he is writing this epistle.

But he is reminding them that's all past. That's history. And the burden of Hebrews is for those Jewish people who have been exposed to the truth that is in Jesus Christ regarding his death, burial, and resurrection.

They are to embrace that reality and move on and develop and mature in their Christian life, not laying again the same old foundation that was necessary under the law of Moses, because that's all passé.

That is the old covenant stuff. And now Christ has established, even as he indicated on the night that he was betrayed, he has established the basis for the new covenant.

And he is contrasting the difference between functioning under the law of Moses and functioning under the finished work of Christ. And the contrast is enormous.

[4 : 47] So Hebrews is designed, and it starts out in the very first chapter, of pointing out the superiority of Christ as opposed to Moses, and the superiority of Christ in the sacrifice that he made, as opposed to all of the animal sacrifices, and everything in connection with Christ having arrived on the scene.

And what the writer of Hebrews is getting at is that God functions through the law of Moses, but what God had in mind all the time was that he was going to send his son Jesus to be the Savior of the world.

And the writer of Hebrews is saying, that's happened. That's history. That's history. That's history. Now get with that, and move on from that, and don't hang around the law of Moses, the sacrifices, the washings, and all the rest that goes along with it.

So it is an upgrade. An upgrade to the law of Moses. And what the writer of Hebrews is saying, make it very clear, nobody is denigrating the law of Moses. The law of Moses served its purpose for which God intended at the time.

But God's purpose for the law was that it was to be a temporary thing from the beginning. And here is where a real problem developed.

[6 : 11] Because for the average Jew living in the first century, during the lifetime of Christ, death, burial, and resurrection, adhering to the law of Moses, many of them had memorized large portions of the law, and by the law of Moses we're talking about the Torah, Genesis through Deuteronomy.

The idea that the law of Moses should ever be superseded and replaced by something else was unthinkable.

Because most of the Jews viewed the law of Moses as being as eternal as God himself. And you will recall, as you read through the book of Acts, what was the principal charge that the Jewish constituency leveled against Paul the Apostle.

Over and over again we find it. This fellow does not deserve to live because he teaches against the law of Moses. And that was the charge they consistently leveled against him.

And who was more familiar with the law of Moses? Paul. So when he came to faith in Christ, you talk about an upheaval. I mean this thing hit him like a bombshell.

[7 : 34] And he sat in the house of Ananias, there in the city of Damascus, for three days and three nights, and didn't eat and drink, and was stone blind from the light that he saw, sitting there at this table shaking his head after having seen Jesus on the road to Damascus, and getting his commission from him, and Saul sitting there saying to himself, I can't believe it.

I just can't believe it. That really was him. Did I dream that? Did I really see him? Yes, I saw him. There were those with me who heard the voice. They didn't get the message. And this man is in shock.

He's in shock because this is the one that he had dedicated his ministry to, stamping out the followers of this Jesus of Nazareth.

And now everything is turned upside down. And it is a cataclysmic time in the first century. I pointed out to you before, the key to understanding the book of Acts is the realization that it is doctrine on the move.

It is developing. It is changing. It is moving from the old order to the new. And it took 32 years of history for the unfolding of the book of Acts to come out on the other end.

[8 : 48] And it was a time of complete chaos. Because the Jews still wanted to cling to that old law of Moses. They still went to the temple. They still offered the sacrifices. And Christ was saying, that's all passe now.

And when did that come to an end? It came to an end when the Son of God hanging on that cross said, it is finished. That's it.

And the veil in the temple, there in Jerusalem, the veil was torn in two, split from the top to the bottom, exposing that which was never supposed to be exposed.

And that was the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was, where the High Priest alone was allowed in, one time a year, not without blood, to make atonement for the sins of the nation that was the Day of Atonement.

And now, God split that veil. This wasn't a flimsy little curtain. This was a veil that was perhaps six inches thick and went from the ceiling to the floor, and nobody could look behind that veil.

[9 : 59] And now, God split the thing and opened it up for everybody, and in effect was saying, the way of access to God is now open. And before, it was not.

Except through the law of Moses. Now, a whole new thing has entered the picture. And it hit like a bombshell. This became the most controversial issue of that whole first century.

And it is these people, these Jewish people, who are dealing with all of this change and all of this upheaval, that the epistle to the Hebrews is written.

So, it's got some very striking content in it, some brand new stuff. And he makes this contrast, and he tells them, beginning with verse, well, let's see.

I'll just read this. I'm not going to make a comment, but I just want to read it. I want you to get the flow of it. We're starting on the left-hand page with verse 18.

[11 : 02] And he's making a contrast here. And as he writes to them, he says, For you, meaning, of course, the audience he's addressing, For you are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire.

Now, he's talking about Sinai. The mount that might not be touched. Sinai, that was burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated, that the word should not be spoken to them anymore, for they could not endure that which was commanded.

And if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it shall be stoned or thrust through with the dark. And so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.

But, and here's a contrast. Now, he's saying, he's reminding these people, these Hebrews, he's saying, that's not your situation now. That's the way it was before, but that's not the way it is now. And the but is the conjunction of contrast that is setting up the difference that's to come. But, you are come unto Mount Zion. And this, of course, is where the temple is located.

[12 : 24] And unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. He's not talking about the earthly Jerusalem. He's talking about the Jerusalem in heaven, the one of which John spoke in Revelation 21 when he said, and I beheld new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband.

That's yet future, but this is the one that he's talking about here. This is what he's saying. This is the contrast. The city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.

That's an interesting expression. Myriads of angels, countless hosts of angels, thousands upon thousands of angels. We don't have any idea how many angels God created, but it was a bunch. And of those angels, of course, some were fallen and became demonic spirits, and some are unfallen and we read in Revelation 12 where when Lucifer rebelled from heaven, he succeeded in recruiting one-third of the angels that God had created to follow him in his rebellion.

And that, of course, indicates that angels, like human beings, were given volition. That is, the power of choice, the power of obeying God or disobeying God.

[13 : 53] And a third of them followed Lucifer and disobeyed. But you are called to the innumerable company of angels and to the general assembly and church of the firstborn. That's an interesting expression, but we'll not belabor that point other than to say that the word church literally means the ecclesia, the called out assembly.

Sometimes it's translated assembly, sometimes it's translated congregation, but it has reference to a peculiar group of people that are called out from the ordinary into something different.

And that, of course, is the picture of the body of Christ that is a different church. Here he's talking about the Jewish church or the Jewish assembly, and he describes it as the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

This, of course, has reference to believers who have passed on and these individuals were justified in their faith, and now they are the spirits of just men made perfect.

That means they have been completed. We talked about this a little bit the last time. None of us is complete as an individual. Each and every one of us is under construction.

[15 : 20] None of us is a finished product, and we will not be a finished product until our bodies are fashioned like unto the body of Christ, which means a glorified body. This corruptible will put on

incorruption, this mortal will put on immortality, and you and I are well aware we are not there now. We are very mortal, and our bodies are very subject to corruption and decay, and that process sits in a few hours after we die. But we are going to have a perfect body, and it will be a completed situation.

Roger, do you have a comment or question? Is that a reference to Abraham's prison? That may well be. I don't know.

I can't answer that. She's talking about Luke 16, where Lazarus, not to be confused with the Lazarus that Jesus rose from the dead, but Lazarus is referred to as in the bosom of Abraham. And if you have a Jewish mindset, of course, that would speak of a place of incredible solace and peace and comfort and so on, as opposed to the other guy who was in torment in the flames, and that's Luke 16.

[16:36] That's a difference. It may very well be connected, but I'm not able to make that connection for sure. And to Jesus, verse 24, and to Jesus, the mediator, that is, the go between, the one who established the new covenant.

And I think we've probably spent sufficient time on the new covenant and the distinction between them, but I don't want to assume that, so if there's more elaboration or input that is needed, feel free.

Anybody? Are we square on the new covenant? Does everybody know the difference, the distinctions? The gospels are the covenant. Gospels are old covenant. Correct?

The gospel? Yeah. Is the old covenant? I've seen Matthew, Mark, and John. They're technically going to be part of the old covenant. Oh, yeah. Yeah. And this is highly controversial stuff that I'm sharing with you now.

But Mike brought it up, and it's a very valid point, and a very important one too. And I fully understand, I fully understand if you were saying, well, I don't buy what this guy's saying now.

[17:51] I mean, I think Marv is out of line. I understand that perfectly, and I'm not offended by it at all. But I am persuaded that the four gospels, theologically and doctrinally, belong to the Old Testament, not the New.

And the reason for that, of course, is that, and what makes people think to the contrary, of course, is the fact that you open what is called the New Testament, and there it is in black letters, the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What could be clearer than that? But you've got to ask yourself, who put those words there? There. They were not part of the original text. Matthew, when he was inspired of God to write his gospel, did not sit down and at the top of the page write the New Testament, and then start in with verse one.

No, no. Who put that there, the New Testament, was the people that printed the book. They put it there. And the reason they did was because they were laboring under what I am calling a faulty assumption.

And the faulty assumption is the Old Testament was closed with Malachi being the last book, and the New Testament doesn't come into being for 400 years.

[19:23] This is the time of silence where God is not revealing anything from heaven for anybody to write. It's called the intertestamental period, four centuries, between the closing of Malachi and the opening of Matthew.

And by the way, guys, this just occurred to me. It's a beautiful thing. When you finish reading Malachi 3 and 4, in chapter 3, Malachi prophesies the coming of John the Baptist, the one who will prepare the way of Christ.

And then in the very next chapter of Malachi 4, he talks about the Messiah who is coming. Then you've got 400 years of nothing.

And when Matthew opens and does begin writing, bang, right from the get go. Who do you have? You have the genealogy given of Jesus Christ, just as Malachi predicted it 400 years earlier. But what really throws this is the 400 years of silence. So it's very logical to assume that there is a permanent intended break there between Malachi and Matthew.

[20:57] But my contention is there isn't. And what we have with the four Gospels in reality is nothing more than a continuation of the Old Testament, a continuation of Malachi.

Because when you read the Old Testament, you read those 39 books in the Old Testament, and you come to the end of Malachi, you cannot escape the feeling.

Well, where's the rest of the story? It just ends there. And the reality is the whole Bible, Genesis to Revelation, is the story of redemption.

It's the story of paradise created, paradise lost, and paradise regained. the theme of redemption runs all the way through the book. And that sets up the redeemer as the central character.

And that's the one that Moses begins speaking about when he talked to Eve way back in Genesis 3. The seed of the woman is going to crush the head of the serpent.

[22 : 16] and he was looking 4,000 years ahead. Because that's how long would transpire before Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

4,000 years. And what we've got with Christ coming on the scene is nothing more than a continuation of Malachi is just 400 years later.

And to me, the clincher of this is, under what economy did Jesus function when he was here on earth for those three to three and a half years?

Under the law. Yeah, under the law. Under the law. He kept the law of Moses. In fact, he's the only one who ever really did keep the law of Moses in the spirit with which it was intended to be kept.

He did everything according to the law of Moses. He supported the law of Moses. He quoted the law of Moses. Have you not read? Did not Moses tell you?

[23 : 17] And he cited Moses, the writing of Moses. Of course, it wasn't Moses. It was God writing through Moses, but it was the authority of God. And Christ continually upheld it. And he chided the scribes and Pharisees.

He said, you people, you people make the word of God of none effect by your added traditions and nitpicking, hair splitting that you engage in and it allows you to completely nullify the law of Moses.

And he charged them for that repeatedly. So, when Christ functioned under the law of Moses, he did so as a loyal, faithful, observant Jew.

He kept the Sabbath even though he was the Lord of the Sabbath. And he had a, I'm sure he had a kosher diet and everything that went with it. And that's the way he functioned because he was born of the seed of Abraham.

him. And that's another story in itself. We won't go there. Any questions or comments about this? Dan? You said Malachi predicted. Yeah. Chapter 3 predicts John the Baptist coming.

[24 : 26] Chapter 4 predicts Christ coming. Okay, but is this why some people thought John the Baptist was the Savior because Malachi had predicted that? Possibly. There was confusion about that.

And some asked John the Baptist. You're right. When John came baptizing, people came to him and said, are you the Messiah? And he said, no, no, no, I'm not the Messiah. I am a voice in the wilderness. I am the one who is sent to introduce the Messiah.

And by the way, here he comes. Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. And Jesus came walking down there and John ended up baptizing him.

And this is an incredible thing. You've got to remember that John the Baptist and Jesus were second cousins. their mothers were first cousins. And John was six months older than Jesus.

And he had become a priest at the age of 30. That's when a Jew, and by the way, you had to be born of the tribe of Levi to be a Jew.

[25 : 34] And John the Baptist's mother, Elizabeth, was from the tribe of Levi. Levi, and his father, Zacharias, was from the tribe of Levi. They were both Levites.

And John the Baptist was 30 years old, and he was inducted into the Aaronic priesthood. And six months later, guess who's coming down the road, and he is going to be inducted into the priesthood also.

But it will not be the Aaronic priesthood, because Jesus didn't come from the tribe of Levi. Levi. He came from the tribe of Judah. Levi was the priestly line.

Judah, the fourth born son of Jacob and Rachel.

I'm sorry, it wasn't Rachel. Rachel wasn't the mother. Leah. Yeah, Leah. Thank you. Leah was the mother. and he was the priestly, the first of the priestly tribe.

[26 : 39] So, and by the way, we already looked at this in Hebrews earlier, when the writer of Hebrews says that for it is evident that our Lord sprang, that's the language that's used in the King James, that our Lord sprang out of the tribe of Judah.

And he had a special priesthood that had only two members in it. And one was Melchizedek. He surfaces back in Genesis, I think, 14, and he is depicted as the superior to Abraham, which is quite

striking because the Jewish people revere Father Abraham like they do no other Jew. And it's our Father Abraham, and he was, for all practical purposes, considered the first Hebrew. And the word Hebrew literally means the one who came across, the one who crossed over. And he got his name from crossing over the Euphrates River into the land that God was going to give him. And Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. So in this one person, you've got offices that no one else ever held. And Christ is priest after the order of Melchizedek.

[28 : 07] He is a prophet. According to Deuteronomy 18, he is that prophet that should come. And he is a king. So we've got all three offices fulfilled in one person, the only one of whom that can ever be said.

Prophet, priest, and king. And I don't know if you're aware of it or not, but we had some rather godly men who had some insightful concepts regarding the nature of humanity.

When our constitution was drafted and when the declaration of independence was crafted, these men had some biblical savvy and they knew about human nature.

they knew that you could not entrust any single entity with complete power. And that birthed for this nation something that has blessed us ever since.

And that is the separation of powers we have in the legislative and the judicial and the executive where each of those three branches are equal and each is to provide a check and balance on the other two.

[29 : 21] Why? Because they know human nature and you cannot trust any one branch with complete power. And that goes all the way back to Christ being prophet, priest, and king.

And I don't know if you're aware of this or not, but in the Jewish economy, no priest under the law and under the provision of Aaron, no priest would ever have been able to be crowned king.

and no priest would have been acknowledged as a prophet. And no prophet could be a king. And no king could be a priest. But in Christ there is that one exception.

He is the only one. He fulfills all three offices, prophet, priest, and king. because we're not worried about his corrupting the power. And he's the only one that we wouldn't have to worry about.

Any other thoughts or comments? Anybody? Okay. And to Jesus, the mediator, the go-between, the establisher of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

[30 : 27] Of course, this is referring to the blood of Christ. See that exercise diligence beware, take care, be careful, that you refuse not him that speaketh.

For if they escape not, and he's talking about when he's continuing the contrast here, and he's saying for if they escape not, the they he's referring to there, again, is that same faction that functioned under the law of Moses.

For if they escape not, who refused him that spoke on earth, much more, and of course, the one who spoke on earth was Moses, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaks from heaven.

In other words, you would be disobeying a greater authority than that earthly authority that they couldn't get away with disobeying. What makes you think we could get away with obeying the ultimate authority, whose voice then shook the earth.

And this may have been in reference to well, this could have been God at Sinai, or it could have been God speaking even at the baptism when the voice from heaven was heard, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased, saying, yet once more I shake, I shake and the earth, not only the earth only, but also heaven.

[32 : 03] And this, by the way, is a passing reference to the time of tribulation that is to come, and it is elaborated on in Matthew 24, in Matthew 24 in the Olivet Discourse, and also in the Revelation, as well as in 2 Peter, when the heavens and the earth are going to be violently shaken, and the earth will melt with fervent hate, and so on.

I think this is what he is referring to here, the meaning of those things that are shaken, as of the things that were made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Wherefore, we, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, and this kingdom is the mediatorial kingdom that Christ is going to establish that has never come into being.

And remember at the ascension of our Lord, in Acts chapter 1, when the disciples were gathered there on the Mount of Olives, and they asked Jesus the question, very logical question, because

remember, when he was going to Jerusalem for the last time, and he knew what was going to happen when he got there, he knew he was going to be crucified, and he even told them that, but it didn't register with them.

And we are told, in, I think it's maybe Luke 18 or 19, that as they were nearing Jerusalem, and this is close to Palm Sunday, as they were nearing Jerusalem, Jesus taught this parable, because they assumed, the twelve apostles assumed, that when Jesus got to Jerusalem, he was going to establish the kingdom.

[34 : 03] And he gave them a parable about the landowner, who had called responsible people to his side, and he had given them gifts to maintain and to fulfill certain responsibilities until he came, because in the parable he said, and the owner is going to go away for a long time and return.

Well, he's talking about himself, going to go away for a long time and return, because they supposed that when they got to Jerusalem, Jesus was going to establish that kingdom. And probably, you know, when he rode into town on the back of that donkey, and the crowds were cheering and everything, and he went to the temple and he cleansed the temple.

Remember that? For the second time? And the apostles were probably thinking, hot dog, boy, he's getting it on here. He's chasing these guys out. He upset the money changers and everything. And then, the tide turned.

Long story short, Jesus ended up on the cross. The apostles were totally puzzled, confused. They couldn't figure out, what's going on? He's the Messiah.

How did he end up on the cross? That can't be. And then after the resurrection, it starts making sense to them, and there they are on the Mount of Olives, and they're gathered around Jesus, and they ask him this question, Lord, is it at this time, now, after your crucifixion and resurrection, are you now going to establish the kingdom?

[35 : 34] Looked like the perfect time to do it. And what did he say? He said, it is not for you to know the times nor the seasons which the Father hath put in his power. But you shall be in due with power from on high later.

In other words, that kingdom was not yet going to be a reality. And it still hasn't been a reality. And that is the kingdom that he is talking about here. It's in question here.

And where am I? Verse 28. In receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, that kingdom has never been established. established. It has never been established.

What has been established is something that was totally out of the ordinary, canned like a bolt out of the blue. What is this? Where did this come from? And it's called the church, which is the body of Christ.

And it is a brand new thing. And it doesn't include just Jews. That's what the law of Moses did. You had to be an Israelite, you had to be circumcised, you had to keep the law, you had to keep the Sabbath and all the rest of it.

[36 : 42] And now, Jews and Gentiles, if you can believe this, are blended together and are on the same footing, that's unthinkable.

And for most of the Jews, they just could not and would not entertain that for a moment. They considered that heresy. And yet, that, that is the very commission that the Apostle Paul was raised up to preach and to teach, that God hath made of two, Jew and Gentile, one new man, that is the body of Christ.

And boy, the fat was in the fire. And the persecution began. And the initial persecution, guess what? It wasn't from Rome. It wasn't from Rome. the initial persecution was Jew on Jew.

Wow. And I can never escape this idea that it was with the Jewish people and none other than Saul of Tarsus that might be logically branded the first Gestapo agent against the Jew.

Wow. And hey, the pot is going to thicken as you move on through. Well, thanks guys for being here. We've been all over the place, but I think we've gotten to this covenant. All right. Okay. Thank you.