

Hebrews

Who, When, Where

Written by Paulus (Paul). Paulus was originally a fanatical Pharisee, persecuting, imprisoning, and even killing Christians for teaching what he thought was heresy, that Yeshua was the Anointed, (The Jewish Messiah). After meeting Yeshua in a miraculous way on the road to Damascus, Paulus became not just a Christian but one of Christianity's most fervent preachers and teachers. He spent most of his life as an itinerant missionary, with all the life threatening perils that that brought with it, to the towns and cities which lay along the route between Jerusalem and Rome. Paulus died in Rome somewhere in the 60'sAD, and he wrote most of the letters which we have in the New Testament. The authorship of this letter isn't certain. But to me it reads like something Paulus would write, and it ends mentioning his brother Timotheos, as Paulus often did.

But if you think it was written by someone else, then feel free.

Since it refers to the temple, which was destroyed in AD70, but doesn't mention that destruction, it seems pretty certain it was written before then. If it was written by Paulus, then probably AD63-64 would be likely.

In the end, who wrote it and when is not as important as what they have said, and what that means for your Christian life.

Summary

Reading this letter to the Hebrews is just so exciting.

It is all about showing them, (the Hebrews), and us that the new covenant, (also called the new testament), based on the sacrifice of Yeshua, which we Christians have with Yahweh, is **so** much better than the old covenant, (old testament), based on Law, which they had with Yahweh.

The new is based on a one time for all sacrifice which changes our standing with Yahweh to be a perfect relationship forever. The old was based on time after time after time sacrifices which only temporarily covered over our transgressions and restored our relationship with Yahweh until next time we sinned.

The new covenant is not "Plan B" because "Plan A" failed. It was always the intention. Both were part of "The Plan" from before God created Adam. And all throughout this letter we see references back to time when Yahweh had told the Jews of his long term plan, but they simply had not understood it. (To be fair, they didn't have the holy spirit like we do, and without him we probably wouldn't get it either).

The old covenant had shadows of the real thing, dealing with Yahweh though an earthly copy of his heavenly temple. But the new covenant is the real thing, dealing directly with Yahweh in his actual heavenly temple. Kind of like an architect's model of a building compared to the actual building

How much more then, our confidence to step out in faith? We are holy children of Yahweh. Guaranteed. How will he not provide what we need?! If you were/are a parent, I'm sure you would do everything you can to provide for your children. Do you think God is a worse parent than you?

Before You Read

Ever heard of Melchizedek?
It might be worth looking him up in the Old Testament and having a read.

Do you have someone you can turn to for advice when things get tough? What is it about them that makes you confident that they will be able to help you through it?

How helpful would it be to know someone who has successfully been through that exact thing that you're struggling with?

Have you ever received a message directly from God?
Did you do it?

How mature, out of 10, would you rate yourself as a Christian? Are you grown up?
How much of the Bible would you say you understand?

How sure are you that you're saved?

Which is better, a contract which is in effect only as long as the other party is alive, or one which is in effect as long as the other party is dead?
Which one is eternal?

Who is a better parent? You or God?

How would you define "faith"?

Key Verses

Hebrews 1:1

Having spoken to our fathers long ago, in many parts and in many ways, through the prophets, God spoke to us in the last of days through a son

Yahweh has spoken to us (mankind) before. Many times. Now he has sent his son. This could be our last chance to listen. Yeshua told parables like this a few times. About a land owner, who, as a last resort, sent his son to sort out the bad tenants of his property. Only to have the tenants kill the son.

Hebrews 1:4

Becoming so much better than the messengers, he's inherited a much more excellent name than them.

Yeshua is better than, (above), the messengers (angels).

Hebrews 2:2-3

For if the message which was spoken by messengers became steadfast, and all transgression and disobedience received a fair recompense — how will we escape, having neglected so great a salvation, which in the beginning was received by being spoken through the lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard.

The people of the Old Testament took messages delivered by Yahweh's messengers seriously. (As they should). But now the message has come through the son himself. So how much more important is this message! And how much more upset will Yahweh be if we ignore it?

Hebrews 2:9

And we observe the one who has been made a little lower than messengers, Yeshua, through the suffering of death, having been crowned with glory and honour. So that by the grace of God he should taste death on behalf of everyone.

Yeshua died on your behalf as a gift. Something you didn't deserve, but he wanted to do it for you anyway.

This verse also highlights God's way... he often makes us go through something humbling, (to see how we handle it), before bringing us through glory and honour. Which one are you going through at the moment? How are you doing with it? However you're doing, you're proving your character. (Good or bad).

Hebrews 2:14-15

So since the children have shared in flesh and blood, and he himself, in like manner, partook of the same, so that through death he should nullify the one who has the power of death, (this is Diabolos), so he might set free those who were subject to slavery for their entire lives, because of fear of death.

Yeshua became one of us so he would be able to defeat death on our behalf, and nullify the power of Diabolos, and so could set us free. Us, who live our whole lives in slavery because of our fear of death.

We don't need to fear death any more. We have been set free to enjoy life.

Hebrews 2:17

so that he may become a compassionate and trustworthy chief priest in the things of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

More in chapter 7 about what it means for Yeshua to be our chief priest.

A propitiation is a gift given to someone who is angry, expressly for the purpose of calming them down.

Yeshua became our propitiation. He became a gift to God to calm him down because he was so angry with our sin.

But now he's calm. Now we don't need to fear God. Now we can even be friends with God instead of living as his enemies. This is such an amazing thing!

Hebrews 2:18

For since he himself suffered, being tested, he's able to help those who are tested.

Yeshua suffered. Yeshua has been tested. Just like you. Whatever you are going through he went through something exactly the same.

So he can help you. He understands what you're going through. Talk to him about it. Listen to what he has to say. Take comfort in the knowledge that he really does understand what you're going through.

Hebrews 3:5-6

Moshe was trustworthy in his whole household, like a man-servant, for a testimony of the things which will be spoken afterwards. But the Anointed, like a son over his household

Moshe is the hero of the Jews. Incredibly respected in religious matters, by every Jew after him. But Moshe was only a servant. Yeshua is the son. Who is your hero? Are they a servant? Or the son?

Hebrews 3:7-8

Therefore just as the holy spirit says, "Today, if you should hear his voice, you shouldn't harden your hearts, as in the rebellion in the day of the trial in the wilderness,

And still today. If you hear the voice of the holy spirit... do it. No matter how extreme, or scary, or "out there" it seems. Do it.

Hebrews 4:12

For the message of God is living, and active, and sharper than all kinds of double edged sword, and penetrating to the division between soul and spirit, between joints and marrow, and a judge of inner thoughts and the notions of a heart.

This includes the Bible, but it is not speaking specifically about the Bible. The Bible didn't exist when this was written. Any message from God, any message from the holy spirit. That message can divide you. It can reach parts of your life you thought impenetrable. Listen to it. It is for your benefit.

Hebrews 4:15

For we don't have a chief priest who isn't able to sympathise with our weakness, but who, when he'd been tested in all things in a like manner, was without sin.

Have you ever been through something difficult? Perhaps all sorts of people offered you advice. Usually just platitudes. In those times, and the person you're most likely to listen to, is the one who went through the same thing, and came out successful. Right? You want to know how they did that. How did they get through this excruciating trial that you're in right now. Yeshua has been through what you're going through. Whatever it is. Your trial is tempting you to sin. To look for the easy way out, (which is actually a way deeper in). Tempting you to just give up. To walk away from God. Yeshua went through all that. But did not fail. Talk with him about what you're going through. Ask him to show you the true way to get through it.

Hebrews 5:6

Just as also in a different place he says, "You're a priest into the age, according to the order of Melchizedek."

This is one of the most important verses in all of Hebrews. It literally changes everything. Chapter 7 expands a lot on this teaching. But it is SO important.

But he wasn't a priest like Aaron, he was like Melchizedek. Aaron had responsibility to administer the Law. To do sacrifices. All that old testament stuff.

Melchizedek came before the Law. There is no Law. And now, Yeshua is a high priest in that system. And for Christians... there is no Law. So many Christians, so many churches, in fact so many theologians don't get this. For Christians there is no Law. That was for the Jews. We interact with Yahweh through a whole different system. With no Law.

Hebrews 5:12

...by this time you ought to be teachers, you have a need of one to teach you again the fundamentals of the beginning of the announcements of God, and you've come to have a need of milk and not of solid food.

How much of the message of God do you understand? Have you tried? Or are you happy just having milk? Being spoon fed? By this time you ought to be teachers. Remember, it's not intellect that gives you understanding of the message of God. It's the holy spirit who gives you that. And ONLY the holy spirit. Intellect actually gets in the way. Many of the early teachers of the church were uneducated people. Fishermen. With no computers, no internet, no access to teaching 24x7 like you do. By this time you ought to be a teacher.

Try out one of our [6 Chapter Studies](#) and see how you go. You might surprise yourself and understand way more than you expect to.

Hebrews 6:1-2

Therefore, leaving behind the message of the beginning of the Anointed, we should be being brought to maturity. Not again laying down a foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith in God, of immersions, of teaching, of laying on of hands, of the resurrection of the dead, and of everlasting judgement.

These are the basic things. Fundamental teachings. If you're a new Christian, these are the things to learn about first. If you're an older Christian, you should already have a good understanding of these things, and be moving on already to learning deeper things. Your Christian life shouldn't be stagnating. Do you feel like you're a more mature Christian now than you were 5 years ago?

Hebrews 6:4-6

For it's impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted of the heavenly gift, who have become partakers of the holy spirit, and who have tasted the good declaration of God, and the works of power in the age about to come, and who've fallen away, to again be renewed into repentance, re-executing the son of God to themselves, and making an example of him.

Is this saying you can lose your salvation? If you read the next few verses as well as about land which brings forth useful food when it receives rain. We can see that the author is illustrating the same thing.

Just as we saw in the verses at the beginning of this chapter... Christians should be growing in maturity. If they made a start, but they're not progressing in maturity; then perhaps something is wrong. Perhaps they're not saved at all, but just attending church and going through the motions.

A bit like James says, "faith without works is dead". Here we're saying, "faith without growth is dead". This is not to make you fear that you're not saved if you really are. It's to encourage you to keep growing.

Hebrews 6:20

... Yeshua, who has become chief priest of the order of Melchizedek into the age.

This is a massive thing. Yeshua isn't a priest of the Levitical Jewish line, (which is based on Law). He is the high priest of the line of Melchizedek, (who was a priest before the Law was even given).

This is Christianity 101, the kinds of things mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Very fundamental stuff. But so many Christians have it wrong.

The old covenant, (the Law), does not apply to Christians in any way.

Like Yeshua, we are of the order of Melchizedek not the order of Levi.

We are under a new covenant. Sealed with the blood of Yeshua. A covenant of freedom. A covenant of grace. **Not** a covenant of rules and laws.

[This article](#) might help if you're not getting this.

Hebrews 7:9-10

And so to speak, Levi, the one who receives tithes, has also given a tenth through Abraham. For he was still in the loins of the father when Melchizedek met with him.

This is an incredibly important chapter, and it explains so much for us. But this section in particular. We can see how Levi was still unborn when his great-grandfather Abraham gave 10% of the treasure, which he had recaptured with Yahweh's help, to Yahweh's priest Melchizedek.

So Levi was "in" his great-grandfather when that happened. And effectively, Levi made that offering too.

And for us then... the Bible says that we were "in" Yeshua when he was executed. So effectively, we died then too, we died for our sins that day.

Even though we are alive now, spiritually, we died 2,000 years ago, when we were "in" Yeshua. Get it?

[This article](#) might help explain that in a bit more detail.

Hebrews 7:19

For the law doesn't make anything perfect, but the bringing in of a better expectation, through which we come near to God.

1500 years of the Jewish Law had already proven that nobody can be saved by the Law. It's impossible. We all have that inherited sin nature from Adam, and because of that we just cannot keep the law, even if we really want to.

If it had been possible, Yeshua wouldn't have needed to come and save us. But he did. And now we have a better way - without the Law.

And, since Yeshua can no longer die, he will be our priest in this new covenant for ever. So our eternal salvation is guaranteed - for ever.

Hebrews 8:10-12

Because this is the covenant which I'll covenant to the household of Yisrael after those days, says Yahweh. Giving my laws into their understanding, and I'll inscribe them on their hearts. And I'll be a god to them, and they'll be a people to me. And each one to his fellow citizen, and each one to his brother, shouldn't teach at all, saying, "Perceive Yahweh's", because all of them will see me, from small to great. Because I'll be merciful to their unrighteousness, and I won't be reminded of their sins, and of their lawlessness, at all."

This new covenant, which we know the truth. Don't you feel that sometimes? That you just know some Bible truth is right, without having to have it explained to you?

And because Yeshua dealt with all our sins, Yahweh will never even recall them, and he will treat us like his only son, as someone who lived a perfect life.

This is sin-swearing truth. It is game changing. Yahweh looks at you and me, and thinks, "Ah, my perfect children". How does that change the way you look at him? How does it change how you talk with him? What you would expect from him?

Hebrews 10:23

Let's hold fast to the profession of the unswerving expectation, for the one who promised is trustworthy.

Our expectation isn't based on us, it's based on him. And we can trust him. Would God lie? So if he says he no longer recalls your sin, just believe him and get on with serving him.

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let's consider one another, for provoking of love and good works. Not abandoning the gathering of ourselves together, as is the custom of some, but entreating one another, and by so much more as you observe the day drawing nearer.

I see this quote used to guilt people into going to church every week. But that is not what it's saying.

It's saying that we should encourage one another, meet together, spend time together, to build each other up, not to go off and be some isolated Christian, or even some monk who lives in a cave.

Spend time with other Christians. At a church service or not, up to you. But don't cut yourself off.

It's not about you. Because you have a responsibility to look after them and encourage them.

Hebrews 10:29

Of how much worse a punishment do you suppose they'll be considered worthy, who trample the son of God, and who consider the blood of the covenant, (by which it was made holy), to be common, and who insult the spirit of grace?

This is like so many other references in Hebrews. People use it to judge others, or sometimes themselves, to say they have lost their salvation. (Similar to the one in we talked about above in chapter 6).

But instead it is about people who look on the outside like they're Christians, but who demonstrate from their actions that they are not. They show that they don't value the sacrifice of Yeshua, and that they have no regard for living the way Yahweh says, but they justify their own sinful desires.

Their time will come. It won't be pretty.

Hebrews 11:6

Without faith it's impossible to please him (God), and because those who come to God must trust that he is, and that he's one who rewards those who seek him out.

So... are you pleasing God?

Can you think of any way you could please him more?

Hebrews 11:13

These all died according to faith, having not received the promises, but having seen them at a distance and greeting them, and acknowledging that they were foreigners and expatriates on the earth.

All - Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sara, ...

They all had massive faith, and put it into action.

But none of them received what they had been promised while they were still alive on this planet. They all had faith that one day they would, but they all recognised that this is not their real home.

We're not from here.

The sooner we realise that and stop trying to fit in, the better off we will be. The more we will live out the faith we have without worrying about what people will think.

Hebrews 11:16

... Therefore God isn't ashamed to be called their god, for he has prepared a city for them.

If you have faith like they did, God isn't ashamed to be called your god.

Implying that if you don't... he is? 😊

Hebrews 11

Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sara, Yishak (Isaac), Yaakov (Jacob), Moshe, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Yephtha, David, Samuel, the prophets ... who, through faith, prevailed against kingdoms. They won'ted righteousness, they attained promises, they blocked the mouths of lions, they extinguished the power of fire, they fled the mouths of the sword, they were empowered from weakness, they became strong in battle, they turned aside camps of strangers.

Women received back their dead through resurrection, and others were beaten, not accepting the redemption so that they might have a better resurrection. And others received a trial of mockings and scourging, and even bonds and jail. They were stoned, they were sawn, they were tested, they died being murdered by a sword.

They came along in sheep skins and goat skins, lacking, pressured, wronged, of whom the world wasn't worthy, wandering in desolate places, and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

They did massive things. By faith. Believing that God was there for them and they were doing what he had asked.

Why are you so scared to do the same? You are his, he will look after you and they were. If Yahweh is asking you to do something for him - trust him, he will look after you - and stop out. What would the first step be? What little tiny thing could you do to begin that journey? Do it.

Hebrews 12:1

Therefore us too, since we have such a large cloud of witnesses packed around us, let's take off every weight and the sin which easily encircles, and let's run the contest laid out before us through perseverance.

Look at that list of witnesses. Look at what they did, and what they endured. Because they had faith.

So, how about your race. Most likely you're not being called to such great things. Maybe your life is pretty easy compared with them.

But make sure you're running the best race you can.

"I had a sore foot. Or my favourite TV show was on that day. Or I didn't want to give up my high paying career. Or I didn't want to live in such an ordinary looking house, or a bad suburb."

All of these. Are not acceptable excuses.

If you are making these, you will one day be ashamed that you didn't have the faith to overcome such weak things.

Hebrews 12:11

At the time, no discipline is assumed to be joy, but sadness. Yet afterwards, peaceable fruit to those who've been trained through it, yielding righteousness.

Is God disciplining you?

Rejoice. He only does that for his real children. He doesn't do it for illegitimate children who are pretending to be in his family.

He's doing it because it's the path to a better future for you.

Hebrews 13:1-3

Let brotherly love remain. Don't forget hospitality, for because of this some went obedient to having given lodging to messengers. Be mindful of prisoners, as if you've been bound together with them, of the mistreated, as if you yourselves were also in the body.

How you scoring there out of ten?

Hebrews 13:4

Let marriage be honoured among all, and the bed undefiled. But God will judge fornicators and adulterers.

Hopefully you're a 10 here?

Hebrews 13:5

Let your way of life be not being money, but being satisfied with what's at hand. For he himself has said, "I won't let go of you at all, nor will I abandon you at all."

This isn't saying that you must be poor. It's saying that you must not love money. You must be willing to walk away from every possession and every dollar you have tomorrow if that's what God is asking.

Remember the rich young ruler? He knew it was the one thing he struggled to do.

Hebrews 13:7

Recall your leaders who spoke the message of God to you. Carefully examine the outcome of their lifestyle. Imitate their faith.

I was very fortunate as a young Christian to have some very godly people who not only taught me the Bible, but who also lived it out in front of me, week after week after week.

Be that person for someone else if you have opportunity.

Hebrews 13:13

Now then, let's go out to him (Yeshua), outside the camp, bearing his reproach.

Being killed outside the city gate was a demonstration of how evil and despised you were. But Yeshua willingly suffered that disgrace for us.

Let's be willing to be seen standing next to him, outside the gate, and saying loudly, "I'm with him".

Hebrews 13:17

Obey what those who lead you, and submit to their discipline, for they are responsible for your souls, as those who will give an account), so that they might do this with joy, and not with groaning, for that's unprofitable to you.

If you think your leaders are wrong, go and talk with them privately and give them an opportunity to show you that it's your job is wrong. Be humble.

If you remain convinced ... either hold your tongue and submit anyway, or leave. Go and find another church where you are more in line with the leaders.

After You Read

What verses really stood out to you?

How would you summarize this book in a sentence or two? What is it about? What is God trying to say to us?

In what ways is Yeshua better than "The Law"?

Is there any trial or difficulty that you are going through right now, that Yeshua hasn't been through, and can give you advice on how to survive it?

Why is Yeshua showing them, (the Hebrews), and not a Levitical priest like other Jews?

List all the things which are now yours because Yeshua died the way he did?

If the Law no longer applies, why is it written on our hearts?

Why do you think Jews still follow Moshe, (Moses), but not their actual Messiah, Yeshua?

How much of "The Law" applies to you?

How sure are you that you're saved?

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