

# Commentary on Hebrews

## Review

### Overview of Hebrews

1. The Letter was written to people of Jewish background. These Hebrews had heard the gospel preached by the apostles and others during the early days of the church, and had seen the mighty miracles of the Holy Spirit which confirmed the message.
2. The Epistle to the Hebrews is really an answer to the question, "What do you have?" In a word the answer is **Christ**. In Him we have:
  - a. One who is greater than the prophets.
  - b. One who is greater than the angels.
  - c. One who is greater than Moses.
  - d. One who is greater than Joshua.
  - e. One whose priesthood is superior to that of Aaron.
3. The book of Hebrews also warns us about apostasy – turning away from Jesus, the only savior.
4. The theme of Hebrews is the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ as revealer and as mediator of God's grace. The prologue (1:1-4) presents Christ as God's full and final revelation, far surpassing the limited preliminary revelation given in the OT.
5. Therefore, in order to understand the message of Hebrews we need to think like a Jew from the first century. In order to facilitate that we are going to do an overview of the sacrificial system described in Leviticus before we actually begin discussing the letter to the Hebrews.

### The Sacrificial System of Leviticus

- I. The Levitical Sacrifices (Offerings) were prophetic of Christ and in some ways prophetic of Christians themselves.
- II. Jewish sacrifices (sacrificial system) prefigures Jesus Christ
- III. Hebrews 9:23 speaks of Christ's sacrifices being plural in number. Hebrews 10:1 speaks of the plural Jewish sacrifices that were shadows of Christ in His many faceted offering.
  - A. In the Burnt Offering – His Consecration to God
  - B. In the Meal Offering – Presenting His People to God
  - C. In the Peace Offering – His Reconciliatory Gift to Man in the Restoration of Fellowship with God
  - D. In the Sin Offering – His Atonement
  - E. In the Trespass Offering – His Defending the Justice of God
- IV. **The Burnt Offering**
  - A. The first and most important sacrifice offered by the Hebrew people – the Burnt Offering. This sacrifice stands apart in its importance from all other offerings of the Law of Moses.

## Continuation

### *The Continual Burnt-Offering for the Nation*

In addition to the individual Burnt Offering that we study about last week, is the Continual Burnt Offering in Leviticus 6:8-13. This one is made by priests alone (Leviticus 6:8-13; Exodus 29:38-46).

- I. According to Ex 29:38-46, a lamb with cereal and drink offering was to be offered each morning and another each evening – see also Numbers 28:5-7
  - A. It was intended to be a constant reminder and renewal of Israel’s consecration to Jehovah as His kingdom.
  - B. Intended to be a constant expression of Israel’s worship to God
  - C. Also as a constant reminder of Israel’s constant privileged fellowship with God: “I will dwell among them” – Exodus 29:45-46
- II. The ritual was basically the same as the individual Burnt Offering
  - A. The purpose is basically the same – that of consecration
  - B. No sins confessed by the priest in the continual burnt-offering
    1. For it must not be confused with the sacrifice of the great Day of Atonement
    2. This evidently underscores the basic nature of the offering as not propitiatory
  - C. The theme is the devotion of the individual and the nation to Jehovah and the sin aspect is incidental to its purpose
    1. The spiritually minded Jew would rise each morning and identify with the sacrifice and each evening would renew his devotions
    2. It was not simply priests worshiping God but priests leading a nation of individual priests into their worship
- III. The fires of the continual burnt-offering must never go out in Israel!
  - A. Worship to God is not an occasional exercise in Israel
    1. Three times: Leviticus 6:9, 12, 13 – especially v 13 so demands
    2. Extinguished fires would indicate that Israel had forgotten God
    3. See 2 Chronicles 29:7-8 for the consequences of neglecting the burnt offering
  - B. As the priest removed the ashes twice daily, the spiritual Jew was expected to renew himself to God – morning and evening
- IV. Why did God later condemn in such scathing terms the burnt-offerings?
  - A. Isaiah 1:11-20 and Amos 5:21-24 are classic examples of such rejection
  - B. They kept up the external ritual even when there was no internal devotion in the heart of Israel – God hates vain rituals
  - C. Especially when the intent of the ritual is so expressive of deep devotions and consummate love – Read Matthew 15:1-15 and think!
- V. Remember, Christ is foreshadowed in the burnt-offering
  - A. From day to day, hour to hour this sacrifice depicts His whole life

1. The continual burnt-offering is prophetic of His constant self-consecration to God with consuming devotion, without reservation
2. Nothing partial, with-held, reserved for self – all for God, as He both stated and did: “Not my will, but thine be done” Matthew 26:39
- B. There is a significant difference between the continual burnt-offering and the sin-offering
  1. We never read of a continual sin-offering
  2. Even the annual sin-offering was soon finished – once for all
  3. Christ didn’t hang on the cross continually
  4. But in all His life He did continually consecrate Himself to God
- C. In the burnt-offering is seen the undying devotion, consummate love and sacrificial consecration of His whole life to God’s purposes
  1. John 17:19 “For their sakes I sanctify myself...” Jesus did not only to save us but also consecrates us to God’s service
  2. Eph 5:2 “Even as Christ loved you, and gave himself up for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell” (KJV)
    - a. This is the language of the burnt-offering
    - b. Sin-sacrifices are never called “an odor of sweet smell”!
  3. Hebrews 10:7 “I am come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God” – which is probably the book of Leviticus!
  4. John 2:17 – “Zeal for thy house consumes me...”
  5. Matthew 4:17; 17:5 – “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”
- VI. Christians are quite naturally expected to respond in like kind
  - A. John 17:19 “I sanctify (consecrate) myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth”
  - B. Romans 12:1-2 “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service”
  - C. Phil 1:20 Paul so presented himself wanting to “magnify Christ in my body, whether by life or by death”
  - D. Phil 2:17 perhaps Paul also includes his being “offered upon the (altar of) sacrifice and service of your faith
  - E. Eph 5:2 demands that we “be imitators of God” and Christ – read also v2
  - F. 2 Cor 8:5 those of Macedonia “first gave themselves to the Lord.”