

Hebrews Sunday School Class Study Plan

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Consideration</u>
1	1/11	Intro & Context – Understanding a 1 st Cent Jewish believer & OT Quotes mentioned in the letter.
2	1/18	Intro & Context – Jewish Beliefs, Observations on the Book
3	1/25	Intro & Context – Doubts a Believing Jew May Have Faced & Our Response
4	2/1	Ch 1
5	2/8	Ch 2
6	2/15	Ch 3
7	2/22	Ch 4
8	3/1	Ch 5
9	3/8	Ch 6
10	3/15	Ch 7
11	3/22	Ch 8
12	3/29	Ch 9
13	4/5	Ch 10
<i>(Break for Easter)</i>		
14	4/19	Ch 11
15	4/26	Ch 12
16	5/3	Ch 13
17	5/10	Wrap Up, Final Observations & Discussion

An Introduction to HEBREWS

Context / Perspective of a 1st Century Jewish Believer Reading this Letter

BACKGROUND:

Author – Unknown

Original Audience Sent to – Unknown

Written -- 64-68 A.D. (prior to the destruction of the temple built by King Herod in 70 A.D.)

Their “Bible” / God’s Word to consider with the message of this letter:

- Complete Old Testament (**their Scriptures**)
- James, 1 & 2 Peter ??? – see “Sacred Writings / Bible for Readers of Hebrews) handout.
- Author has numerous quotes from the OT, but confined to just a couple of books / passages (NOTE – this list is not exhaustive or complete, but is meant to emphasize the major passages referred to. Those references in **Bold** are cited more than once):

<u>Quote from</u>	<u>Ref’d in Hebrews</u>	<u>Subject of Passage</u>
▪ Psalm 2:7	1:5; 5:5	Messianic
▪ Psalm 97:7	1:6	Messianic
▪ Psalm 45:6-7	1:8-9	King
▪ Psalm 102:26-27	1:10-12	Unchanging God
▪ Psalm 110:1-4	1:13; 5:6; 7:17,21; 10:12-13	King-Priest
▪ Psalm 8:4-6	2:6-8	God’s Majesty
▪ Psalm 22:22	2:12	Suffering Savior
▪ Psalm 95:7-11	3:7-10,15; 4:3,5,7	Call to Worship
▪ Jeremiah 31:31-34	8:8-12; 10:16-17	Promise of a New Covenant
▪ Psalm 40:6-8	10:5-9	Righteous Living
▪ Habakkuk 2:3-6	10:37-38; 12:26	Just to live by Faith

Cultural Context – see “Life of Jesus -- First Century Context of Palestine (Israel)” handout.

Religious Context – see “Jewish Principles of Faith” handout

Observations on the Purpose of this Letter:

Scofield – “The occasion of the Epistle was the need of special exhortation for Hebrew readers who had professed faith in Jesus as the Messiah, some of whom were wavering in their attitude. Hence the exhortation to “hold fast” (3:6) and “press on to maturity” (6:1). The purpose of the book, then, was (1) to confirm Jewish Christians by showing that O.T. Judaism had come to an end through the fulfillment by Christ of the whole purpose of the law; (2) to warn some who identified themselves as Christians against (a) falling back into Judaism or (b) pausing short of true faith in Christ; and (3) to bring to the attention of Christians everywhere the preeminence of Jesus Christ.

Walk Thru the Bible – see separate handout.

Life Application Bible – Conscientious consumers shop for value, the best products for the money. Wise parents desire only the best for their children, nourishing their growing bodies, minds and spirits. Individuals with integrity seek the best investment of time, talents, and treasures. In every area, to settle for less would be wasteful, foolish and irresponsible. Yet it is a natural pull to move toward what is convenient and comfortable.

Judaism was not second rate or easy. Divinely designed, it was the best religion, expressing true worship and devotion to God. The commandments, the rituals, and the prophets described God’s promises and revealed the way to forgiveness and salvation. But Christ came, fulfilling the Law and the Prophets, conquering sin, shattering all barriers to God, and freely providing eternal life.

This message was difficult for Jews to accept. Although they had sought the Messiah for centuries, they were entrenched in thinking and worshipping in traditional forms. Following Jesus seemed to repudiate their marvelous heritage and their profound Scriptures. With caution and questions they listened to the gospel, but many rejected it and sought to eliminate this “heresy.” Those who did accept Jesus as the Messiah often found themselves slipping back into familiar routines, trying to live a hybrid faith.

Hebrews is a masterful document written to Jews who were evaluating Jesus or struggling with this new faith. This message of Hebrews is that Jesus is better, Christianity is superior, Christ is supreme and completely sufficient for

salvation. Whatever you are considering as the focus of life, Christ is better. He is the perfect revelation of God, the final and complete sacrifice for sin, the compassionate and understanding mediator, and the only way to eternal life. Read Hebrews and begin to see history and life from God's perspective. Then give yourself unreservedly and completely to Christ. Don't settle for anything less.

Bible Knowledge Commentary – The Epistle to the Hebrews is a rich part of the New Testament canon. In a unique fashion it exalts the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In doing so, it makes immensely valuable contributions to the doctrines of His Incarnation, His substitutionary death, and His priesthood. Among the other truths to which the epistle effectively contributes are those involving the relationship between the New Covenant and the Old, the interpretation of the Old Testament, and the life of faith. The church would indeed be incalculably poorer without the teaching of this inspired book.

But despite its unquestioned value, little is known with certainty about its occasion, background, and authorship. Ignorance in these matters, however, does not seriously affect the understanding of the epistle's message. That remains timeless and relevant whatever the circumstances out of which it arose.

“Doubts That a Believing Jew May Have Faced” - see separate handout.

Other Possible Concerns / Factors:

- Was Jesus the Messiah?
- Delay in fulfillment of prophecies and the Messiah returning to reign in the Kingdom
- Shifting emphasis of the spread of the Good News from a people with a predominately Jewish background to a predominantly Gentile background.
- Growing unrest in the Roman empire towards Jews (e.g. Acts 18:2)
- Persecution of believers by Jews (e.g. Acts 8:1-3)
- The influence of false teachers within the church (Acts 21:17-30; Galatians esp. ch 2 & 3; Phil 3:2-3; Col 3:16-23; 1 Tim 1:5-8; Titus 1:10-16)

The Message of Hebrews – Jesus is BETTER

		<u>Encouragement for the Reader</u>	<u>Hebrews Ref.</u>
B	“Believe that He is”	a call to Faith	11:6
E	“Encourage One Another”	a group effort	3:15; 10:25
T	“Throne of Grace”	unprecedented access	4:16; 12:2
T	“Tempted to Aid Us”	no one understands like Jesus	2:18; 4:15
E	“Enter His Rest”	now and the not yet	ch4
R	“Run with Endurance”	action plan	12:1f

Many Jewish believers, having stepped out of Judaism into Christianity, wanted to reverse their course in order to escape persecution by their countrymen. The writer of Hebrews exhorts them to "press on" to maturity in Christ. His appeal is based on the superiority of Christ over the Judaic system. Christ is better than the angels, for they worship Him. He is better than Moses, for Moses was created by Him. He is better than the Aaronic priesthood, for His sacrifice was once for all time. He is better than the Law, for He mediates a better covenant. In short, there is more to be gained by suffering for Christ than by reverting to Judaism. Pressing on to maturity produces tested faith, self-discipline, and a visible love seen in good works.

Focus	Superiority of Christ's Person 1:1 4:13 4:14			Superiority of Christ's Work 10:18 10:19			Superiority of the Christian's Walk 13:25		
Divisions	Christ over the Prophets 1:1 1:3	Christ over the Angels 1:4 2:18	Christ over Moses 3:1 4:13	Christ's Priesthood 4:14 7:28	Christ's Covenant 8:1 8:13	Christ's Sanctuary and Sacrifice 9:1 10:18	Full Assurance of Faith 10:19 11:40	Endurance of Faith 12:1 12:29	Exhortation to Love 13:1 13:25
Topics	Majesty of Christ			Ministry of Christ			Ministers for Christ		
	Doctrine						Discipline		
Place	Place of Writing Unknown								
Time	c. A.D. 64-68								

Sacred Writings / Bible for the Readers of Hebrews

Reference Probability

Law, Writings & the Prophets

Old Testament

Definitely - their primary source to compare against the letter they received
(Note numerous references to the OT by the author)

The Gospels

Matthew <small>(AD58-68 Syrian Antioch or Palestine)</small>
Mark <small>(AD55-65 from Rome)</small>
Luke <small>(AD60-68 from Greece/Rome)</small>
John <small>(AD80-90 from Ephesus)</small>

Doubtful - see Note 1

Doubtful - see Note 1

Doubtful - see Note 1

No, not yet written

Luke's 2nd Writing

Acts of the Apostles <small>(prior to AD62)</small>
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Doubtful - see Note 1

Letters of Paul

Romans <small>(AD56-57 from Corinth in S'ern Greece)</small>
1 Corinthians <small>(AD56 from Ephesus)</small>
2 Corinthians <small>(AD56 from Macedonia in N'ern Greece)</small>
Galatians <small>(AD49 from Antioch)</small>
Ephesians <small>(AD60-61 from Rome)</small>
Philippians <small>(AD61 from Rome)</small>
Colossians <small>(AD60-61 from Rome)</small>
1 Thessalonians <small>(AD51 from Corinth)</small>
2 Thessalonians <small>(AD51 from Corinth)</small>
1 Timothy <small>(AD62-63 from Macedonia)</small>
2 Timothy <small>(AD67 from Rome)</small>
Titus <small>(AD63 from Corinth)</small>
Philemon <small>(AD60-61 from Rome)</small>

Doubtful - see Note 1

Doubtful - see Note 1

Doubtful - see Note 1

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General Letters

Hebrews <small>(AD c.64-68)</small>
James <small>(AD c 46-49)</small>
1 Peter <small>(AD c 63-64)</small>
2 Peter <small>(AD c 64-66)</small>
1 John <small>(Prior to AD95 c. 81-96)</small>
2 John <small>(Prior to AD95 c. 90)</small>
3 John <small>(Prior to AD95 c. 90)</small>
Jude <small>(Prior to AD70, possibly 66-80)</small>

Possibly - this may have been the earliest writing in the NT, as there is no mention of gentile Xtns or their relationship to Jewish Xtns as would be expected in a later epistle. Also, James died in AD62.

Doubtful - see Note 1

Doubtful - see Note 1

No, not yet written

No, not yet written

No, not yet written

Doubtful - see Note 1

End Times

Revelation <small>(AD95-96)</small>
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No, not yet written

NOTE 1 By AD100, all 27 books of the New Testament were in circulation and all but Hebrews, 2 Peter, James, 2 John, 3 John & Revelation were universally accepted.

NOTE 2 Dating of NT writings taken from "Talk Thru the Bible" by Bruce Wilkinson & Kenneth Boa

Jewish Principles of Faith

Source: Open Encyclopedia (open-encyclopedia.com/Jewish_principles_of_faith)

Monotheism

Judaism is based on strict unitarian monotheism, the belief in one God. The prayer par excellence in terms of defining God is the Shema Yisrael, "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One", also translated as "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is unique/alone."

God is One

The idea of God as a duality or trinity is heretical for Jews to hold; it is considered akin to **polytheism**. Interestingly, while Jews hold that such conceptions of God are incorrect, they generally are of the opinion that gentiles that hold such beliefs are not held culpable.

God is all-powerful

Most rabbinic works present God as having the properties of omnipotence, omniscience and omnibenevolence (being all good). This is still the primary ways that most Orthodox and many non-Orthodox Jews view God.

The words of the prophets are true

This does not mean that Jews are required to read the books of the prophets literally. The Jewish tradition has always held that prophets used metaphors and analogies just like people today use them. As such, there is a wide degree of interpretation for many prophetic verses.

Holy Books

The Tanakh and the Talmud are the main holy books in Judaism. The Tanakh contains the Written Torah, the writings of the major prophets, and the writings of the minor prophets. The Talmud contains Judaism's oral law.

Reward and punishment

The mainstream Jewish view, clearly expressed in the Bible and rabbinic literature, is that God will reward those who observe His commandments and punish those who intentionally transgress them.

According to the Kabbalah (not a universally-accepted set of doctrines) God judges who has followed His commandments and who doesn't and to what extent. Those who do not "pass the test" go to a purifying place called Sheol lit. *gloom* (sometimes referred to as Purgatory, sometimes Hell) to "learn their lesson". There is, however, for the most part, no eternal damnation. The vast majority of souls can only go to that reforming place for a limited amount of time (less than one year).

The concept of "life after death" in the Jewish view is therefore fuzzy, but whatever its nature, it's a reward from God, not a punishment, and is not guaranteed to everyone. Jews are encouraged to concentrate more on the life they live now than on a possible afterlife, and to ritually remember (*yizkor*) those loved ones who have died, as an important (and possibly the only) form of continuation for their lives.

The messianic age

There will be a Jewish Messiah known as *Mashiach*, and a messianic era with the words expressing this as formulated by Maimonides: "I believe (*Ani Ma'amin*) with complete faith in the coming of the Messiah, and even though he may delay, nevertheless I anticipate every day that he will come" (from the Artsroll siddur, p. 181). Note that the Jewish belief regarding the messiah has little to do with the Christian definition of this term. The traditional Jewish understanding of the messiah is non-supernatural, and is best elucidated by Maimonides (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon), in his commentary to tractate Sanhedrin, of the Babylonian Talmud. He writes:

"The Messianic age is when the Jews will regain their independence and all return to the land of Israel. The Messiah will be a very great king, he will achieve great fame, and his reputation among

the gentile nations will be even greater than that of King Solomon. His great righteousness and the wonders that he will bring about will cause all peoples to make peace with him and all lands to serve him.... Nothing will change in the Messianic age, however, except that Jews will regain their independence. Rich and poor, strong and weak, will still exist. However it will be very easy for people to make a living, and with very little effort they will be able to accomplish very much.... it will be a time when the number of wise men will increase...war shall not exist, and nation shall no longer lift up sword against nation.... The Messianic age will be highlighted by a community of the righteous and dominated by goodness and wisdom. It will be ruled by the Messiah, a righteous and honest king, outstanding in wisdom, and close to God. Do not think that the ways of the world or the laws of nature will change, this is not true. The world will continue as it is. The prophet Isaiah predicted "The wolf shall live with the sheep, the leopard shall lie down with the kid." This, however, is merely allegory, meaning that the Jews will live safely, even with the formerly wicked nations. All nations will return to the true religion [monotheism, although not necessarily Judaism] and will no longer steal or oppress. Note that all prophecies regarding the Messiah are allegorical - Only in the Messianic age will we know the meaning of each allegory and what it comes to teach us. Our sages and prophets did not long for the Messianic age in order that they might rule the world and dominate the gentiles....the only thing they wanted was to be free for Jews to involve themselves with the Torah and its wisdom."

The soul is pure at birth

Humans are born morally pure; Jews have no concept of Original sin. Judaism affirms that people are born with a yetzer ha'tov, a tendency to do good, and with a yetzer ha'ra, a tendency to do bad. Thus, human beings have free will and can choose the path in life that they will take. The Rabbis even recognize a positive value to the yetzer ha'ra: without the yetzer ha'ra there would be no civilization or other fruits of human labor. The implication is that yetzer ha'tov and yetzer ha'ra are best understood not as moral categories of good and evil but as selfless versus selfish orientations.

Jews recognize two kinds of "sin", offenses against other people, and offenses against God. Offenses against God may be understood as violation of a contract (the covenant between God and the Children of Israel). In a post-Temple world, Jews believe that right action (as opposed to right belief) is the way for a person to atone for one's sins.

Is faith necessary?

The meaning of the word for "faithful belief" in Hebrew, *emunah*, had undoubtedly been strained too far. Underlying the practice of the Law was assuredly the recognition of certain fundamental principles, culminating in the belief in God and revelation, and likewise in the doctrine of divine justice.

The first to make the attempt to formulate Jewish principles of faith was Philo of Alexandria. He enumerated five articles: God is and rules; God is one; the world was created by God; Creation is one, and God's providence rules Creation.

Additional Information from a later period - Maimonides's 13 Principles of Faith

The 13 Principles of Faith were formulated by Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, better known as Maimonides (1135-1204 CE). Today most of Orthodox Judaism holds these beliefs to be obligatory, and that anyone who doesn't fully accept each one of them may be a heretic. These principles deal with the following 13 subjects: The existence of God; God's unity; God's spirituality; God's eternity; God alone should be the object of worship; Revelation through God's prophets; the preeminence of Moses among the Prophets; God's law given on Mount Sinai; the immutability of the Torah as God's Law; God's foreknowledge of men's actions; retribution; the coming of the Jewish Messiah; and the resurrection of the dead.

Maimonides's 13 principles never received formal official approval; until recently Jewish law has never required Jews to accept them in full. In the last two centuries however, large segments of the Orthodox Jewish community have begun to demand strict adherence to Maimonides' principles. Others reject this view, noting that his views were never considered the last word in Jewish theology.

DOUBTS THAT A BELIEVING JEW MAY HAVE FACED

Source: messiahtruth.com – Why a Jew Must Reject the Belief in Jesus (based on modern day Jewish beliefs, but used to help us gain insight)

What Does the Hebrew Bible Teach?

An important, though often overlooked or neglected, fact is that the Scripture in force during the lifetime of Jesus, and even for many years following his death, was the Hebrew Bible. Given this fact, the Christian view of "Who Is Jesus?" needs to be validated against what the Hebrew Bible teaches. This is done in terms of a series of claims and responses.

Christianity's Claim

† Jesus is the Messiah who fulfilled hundreds of "messianic prophecies" in his "First Coming", and who will preside over the "Kingdom of Heaven" in his "Second Coming"

Judaism's Response

✧ The משיח (*mashi'ah*), Messiah of Judaism

During the first century B.C.E., the Jewish messianic paradigm experienced a significant transformation. It shifted away from the idea of a future blissful era, אחרית הימים (*aharit ha'yamim*), the end of days, and evolved into the notion of future mortal leader who will redeem Israel from the oppression the people had been suffering in exile and from enemies who occupied the Holy Land. It was during this time frame that the modern title of משיח (*mashi'ah*) was adopted as the common reference to this individual, who was expected to be the next occupant of the throne of King David. Since the Hebrew Bible speaks of a future king from David's lineage who will preside over a united Israel during a joyful era for Israel, this paradigm shift did not give birth to a new idea, it just refocused the messianic picture.

✧ The Advent of the משיח (*mashi'ah*)

Many of the prophetic passages that make up Judaism's "messianic agenda" point to a future descendant of King David who will execute this "messianic agenda" and reign as the King of Israel during the promised future era of bliss, a time characterized by some as an age of universal perfection. Due to the paucity of attributes provided in the Hebrew Bible about this future ruler, the משיח (*mashi'ah*), it will be possible to identify him only after he already is king. Therefore, in order to qualify, he will have to accomplish the "messianic agenda" at his first advent.

Christian apologists and missionaries counter this and claim that Jesus will fulfill these in his "Second Coming". However, this contradicts the accounts in the Hebrew Bible, which do not include such a concept, and which indicate that the משיח (*mashi'ah*) will fulfill the prophecies outright. Moreover, there is no indication anywhere in the Hebrew Bible that an anointed king of Israel/Judah would come and be sacrificed, via crucifixion, as an offering that would redeem mankind of sin, rise from the grave (i.e., be resurrected), and eventually return to fulfill the messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Bible and preside over an everlasting heavenly kingdom. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the notion of a "Second Coming" seems to have grown out of the recognition by Christian theologians that Jesus did not fulfill the expectations concerning the state of universal perfection described in the Hebrew Bible. This fact led to the development of a new messianic vision centered on the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as the Christian Messiah.

Conclusion: Jesus cannot be the משיח (*mashi'ah*) of Judaism

CBC'ers – Your Response. Can we show Jesus is the Messiah just from the OT?

NT support we could also mention - _____

Christianity's Claim

Jesus is "G-d"/"the L-rd" who incarnated "in the flesh" in the form of a man

Judaism's Response

Item 1 – The deity in the Hebrew Bible, the G-d of Israel, is an indivisible Unity. The credo of traditional Judaism, the *Sh'ma*, describes G-d as being One:

Deuteronomy 6:4 – Hear, O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One.

Since the word "One" in this verse is an adjective, it describes the proper noun "the L-rd", which rules out the possibility of a "compound unity". The concept of G-d as an indivisible unity can also be understood from the following passage:

Isaiah 44:6 – So said the L-rd, the King of Israel and his Redeemer the L-rd of Hosts, "I am first and I am last, and besides Me there is no G-d.

The declaration by G-d, "... I am the first ...", indicates that He has no father. When He said, "... I am the last ...", it means that He has no begotten son. Finally, when G-d proclaimed, "... besides me there is no G-d ...", it shows that He does not share His role with any other god or entity – He has no "partners".

By contrast, the deity for the overwhelming majority of those who identify with Christianity is a triune godhead consisting of the Father, the Son (who is Jesus), and the Holy Spirit (or Ghost) – the Trinity. The common explanations of the triune nature of the Christian deity vary from the description of the three components as being three separate "persons" at one extreme, to the admission that the Trinity eludes explanations and is a mystery, at the other extreme. In between these two extremes is the description that the Trinity is a "compound unity" – a single entity that has three different personalities or manifestations. The common thread in these descriptions is that all Trinitarians hold the Trinity to be consistent with monotheism. Yet, according to accounts the New Testament, the entities that comprise the three components of the Trinity all have different knowledge, different powers, and different wills, which is characteristic of polytheism.

Item 2a – The Third Principle of Faith of RAMBAM states that G-d is incorporeal. This means that He cannot be perceived as having any form, a conclusion that is based on the following passage in the Torah:

Deuteronomy 4:15-19 – (15) And you shall watch yourselves very well, for you did not see not any image on the day that the L-rd spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire. (16) Lest you become corrupt and make for yourselves a graven image, the representation of any form, the likeness of male or female, (17) the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the heaven, (18) the likeness of anything that crawls on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters, beneath the earth. (19) And lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, and see the sun, and the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, which the L-rd your G-d assigned to all peoples under the entire heaven, and be drawn away to prostrate yourselves before them and worship them.

Since no form of G-d was visible and seen at the Revelation on Mt. Sinai, the Israelites are told that representing Him via any sort of image is prohibited – G-d is a spiritual being who cannot be depicted in terms of any likeness.

Item 2b – The view of Judaism that G-d's nature is "constant", that He does not change, is related to His incorporeal nature, and is reflected in the following passage:

Malachi 3:6 - For I, the L-rd, have not changed; and you, the sons of Jacob, have not reached the end.

Yet, Christianity's deity changed from the infinite and transformed itself into the finite form of the man Jesus.

Item 3 – The understanding that G-d is neither male nor female follows directly from the fact that G-d is incorporeal (Item 2a). In sharp contrast to the Jewish view, the incarnation of Christianity's deity as the man Jesus makes it a male. This is also evident from the New Testament account of Jesus' circumcision:

Luke 2:21(KJV) – And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Conclusion: Jesus cannot be the G-d of the Hebrew Bible and Judaism

CBC'ers – Your Response. Can we show that Jesus is God? _____

Christianity's Claim

† Jesus is the "only begotten" son of "G-d" whom "G-d", out of His love for humanity, sent to earth to be "sacrificed" that would redeem mankind from the stain of "Original Sin"

Judaism's Response

Of the various Christian positions on the aspects of G-d's nature being addressed in this essay, this one is perhaps the most extreme relative to what the Hebrew Bible teaches. Several issues that relate to this claim must be addressed: G-d "begetting" a son, the sacrifice of one's own child, and (human) vicarious atonement. A discussion of the issue concerning the Christian doctrine of "Original Sin" appears in another essay and will not be repeated here. Suffice it to say, Judaism rejects this doctrine.

☆ **Would G-d "beget" a son?**

Any dictionary of the English language shows that "to beget" means to procreate, to generate offspring. The question is: *Can this apply to G-d?* The answer to this question can be deduced by asking some other relevant questions.

Does the Hebrew Bible contain any accounts of G-d procreating? The answer, of course, is no. G-d created everything, including our progenitors, Adam and Eve. However, as to the rest of humanity, while Jewish tradition holds that G-d is a "partner" in the process of procreation, all humans come to existence through the biological process where the sperm of the father fertilizes the egg of the mother.

Being incorporeal and neither male nor female (i.e., without genitalia), how would G-d beget offspring? There is no answer to this question, though it is not so much an issue of G-d's ability to procreate as it is a question about why He would do it. After all, since G-d was

able to create the first man and woman, *why would there be a need for Him to beget a child if He could have simply created a child?*

✧ **Did G-d sacrifice His "only begotten" son?**

Huh? Assume, for the sake of argument, that G-d actually "begot" a son. According to the Hebrew Bible, G-d abhors child sacrifice:

Deuteronomy 18:10 - There shall not be found among you anyone who passes his son or daughter through fire, a soothsayer, a diviner of [auspicious] times, one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, [See also Lev 18:21, Jer 7:31, 19:32; Ezek 23:37-39.]

Would G-d violate His own law and sacrifice His "only begotten" son? You decide!

✧ **Would G-d participate in an act of human vicarious atonement?**

According to the Hebrew Bible, human vicarious (i.e., substitution) atonement is strictly prohibited; every person is responsible for his or her own sins:

Deuteronomy 24:16 - Fathers shall not be put to death because of children, nor shall children be put to death for fathers; each person shall be put to death for his own sin. [See also Exod 32:31-33; Num 35:33.]

2 Kings 14:6 - And the sons of the assassins he did not execute, as it is written in the book of the Torah of Moses, which the L-rd commanded saying: "Fathers shall not be put to death for sons, nor shall sons be put to death for fathers, but each man shall be put to death for his own sin." [See also Jer 31:29{30 in Christian Bibles}; Ezek 18:4,20; Ps 49:7-8.]

In other words, the concept of human vicarious atonement goes against Torah, and contradicts the inspired words throughout the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Would G-d violate his own law?

Conclusion: G-d does not "beget" children nor would he offer any human as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of mankind and violate His own laws. Therefore, Jesus could not have been the "begotten" son of "G-d" whose purpose was to serve as a sacrificial offering that would redeem mankind from the stain of "Original Sin"

CBC'ers – Your Response. Why would God bring His Son into this world to be sacrificed?

Christianity's Claim

† **Jesus was the "Moses-like" prophet promised by Moses, and whose miracles rank with the likes of Elisha and Elijah**

Judaism's Response

According to Torah, false prophecy is punishable by death, a penalty that must be administered by a human tribunal:

Deuteronomy 18:20 - But the prophet who shall wantonly speak a word in My name which I did not command him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods; that prophet shall die.

The true prophets of Israel chastised the people for not doing G-d's will and for turning from G-d's laws. They always acted according G-d's will and in accordance with the Torah and its immutability, never on their own authority. Jesus, on the other hand, although he chastised his people as did the true prophets of Israel, justified his actions on his own authority and, therefore, he did not follow the path of the true prophets of Israel.

The New Testament contains numerous accounts to which Christian apologists and missionaries point as being prophetic statements by Jesus. They also claim that some of these were even fulfilled, although the validity of those claims is questionable. However, many statements attributed to Jesus, which were clearly intended to be prophetic, were not fulfilled at all. One such example is when he tells his disciples about his imminent return, his "Second Coming":

Matthew 16:28(KJV) - Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

➔ ➔ **THIS "PROPHECY" WAS NOT FULFILLED! The generation that Jesus addressed died some 19 centuries ago!**

Jesus, addressing the scribes and Pharisees, allegedly prophesied his death and resurrection:

Matthew 12:38-40(KJV) – (38) Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. (39) But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: (40) For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

➔ ➔ **THE "PROPHECY" OF THE "SIGN OF JONAH" [3 DAYS & 3 NIGHTS] WAS NOT FULFILLED! Jesus was “in the heart of the earth” 36 hours or less. According to the Gospel of Luke, he died Friday afternoon and “rose” Sunday before dawn. When the women reached his tomb, he was already gone (Lk 23:54--24:3). According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus remained in the tomb from Friday afternoon until Saturday evening at nightfall - a total of some 26 hours (Mt 28:1)!**

➔ ➔ **THE ENTIRE "PROPHECY"] WAS NOT FULFILLED! Jesus addressed his doubters, the scribes and Pharisees, with this "prophecy". Why did he not appear to them following his alleged resurrection? According to the accounts in the New Testament, the "witnesses" were his followers, on whose accounts of the resurrection one is expected to rely.**

According to the "litmus test", even a single false prophecy is sufficient to brand an individual as a false prophet, which makes him punishable with death by execution.

CBC'ers – Your Response. How would you respond to these claims? _____

(Hint: Matt 16:28 – think back to the Highway of Life study and what we studied on the Age of Grace [the “Mystery”]. Matt 12:38 – see enclosed handout “On what day was Jesus crucified?” for insight)

☆ **Miracles and their purpose**

Unique among the religions of the world, Judaism is based on a national revelation, not on claims of miracles performed by an individual. The "personal revelation" claimed by founders of some major religions must be accepted by others purely on faith, even if their founders perform miracles to try to support their claim. Miracles, even if they are genuine, may only indicate that an individual has certain powers, but do not prove his or her being a true prophet. One of the "litmus test" passages above specifically warns the Israelites about such persons (Deut 13:2-4).

In performing miracles, true prophets of Israel did so in the name of G-d and on His authority, and their purpose was to strengthen people's belief in G-d and draw them nearer to Him.

According to accounts recorded in the New Testament, Jesus, too, is said to have performed miracles. However, in contrast to the actions of the true prophets of Israel, Jesus declared miracles on his own authority, and he performed them in order to make people believe in him.

Conclusion: If Jesus was a prophet at all, he was not a prophet of G-d; rather, he was a false prophet!

CBC'ers – Your Response. Did Jesus prove He was God? _____

SUMMARY

This essay addresses the issue of why a Jew should not believe in Jesus. The validity of four of the main Christian aspects of the nature of Jesus was investigated with respect to the Hebrew Bible, the Scripture in force during the era in which Jesus is said to have lived and ministered, and even for many years thereafter. The results of the analysis are summarized in Table III.1.

Table– Summary of claims and responses

Christianity's (✝) Claim:	Is it Acceptable to A Jew?	Judaism's (☆) Response: Why? According to the Hebrew Bible...
Jesus is the Messiah who came, died, and resurrected, and who will return	No	Jesus is disqualified. The promised מָשִׁיחַ (mashi'ah) will accomplish the "messianic agenda" in his first appearance.
Jesus is "G-d" who came to earth incarnated in the flesh	No	G-d is not a man. G-d has no form and He does not change.
Jesus, the son of "G-d", is the sacrifice that redeemed mankind from sin	No	G-d does not procreate; He can forgive sins without the need for a human sacrifice, which he abhors.
Jesus was a prophet and performed miracles	No	Jesus was a false prophet; he failed the "litmus test".

The Christian apologist and missionary will attempt to counter these facts from the Hebrew Bible with various arguments that are based on the New Testament as well as on misinterpreted and mistranslated passages from the Christian "Old Testament".

A Jew who is approached by Christian missionaries should remember the following point-by-point summary of the lessons brought forth in this essay:

- ☆ **A Jew must reject the idea that Jesus was the Messiah since he did not fulfill the prophecies that constitute the "messianic agenda", the best evidence for this being that, at no time following his arrival and death was the world redeemed – tragedy, suffering, and pain are still rampant throughout the world.**
- ☆ **A Jew must reject the notion that Jesus was G-d incarnated since this violates a cardinal tenet of Judaism, namely, that G-d is purely spiritual and is incorporeal.**
- ☆ **A Jew must reject Jesus as the divine begotten son of G-d since G-d does not generate progeny. At best, one can recognize Jesus as just another spiritual child of G-d in the sense that all people are His children.**
- ☆ **A Jew must reject the idea of human vicarious atonement in relationship to his own deliverance since this is prohibited in the Torah. The Hebrew Bible teaches that every person is responsible for his or her own sins; no other person can take on someone's sins, suffer their consequences, and thereby absolve the sinner. Related to this is the notion that a Jew does not need a mediator, not even a symbolic one, in his or her relationship with G-d; Jews approach G-d directly.**

The notion that a person can be redeemed (saved) only by accepting the belief in Jesus, and that all those who do not are destined to roast in (the Christian concept of) "hell", is not only repugnant to Judaism, it is antithetical to the idea of compassion and justice.

CBC'ers – Your Conclusion _____

Why a Jew Must Reject Belief in Jesus -- Answers to their Assertions

The Messiah of Judaism – Jewish expectation of the Messiah has changed (website claims during the 1st century BCE (Before common era). No indication of this in the Gospels. Do we put our faith in tradition and the opinions of men or in God’s Word and promises, whether Jewish or Christian? In the Word of God (Torah / Tanakh) or the views of men (Talmad / Bible Commentaries)?

The Advent of the Messiah – *Claims a paucity of attributes about this future ruler and that the Messiah will only be identified AFTER he begins to reign.*

Ref’s to Attributes – Isaiah 9:1-7; Isaiah 35 (signs); Daniel 7:9-14, 27; Zechariah 14:4-10;

Advent – no ref to a 2nd Coming in Hebrew bible. True, but also claims Messiah will fulfill prophecies outright. (Interesting – how can they be sure they are fulfilled if their understanding of their fulfillment is not literal?) No indication in Hebrew bible of the Messiah being sacrificed via crucifixion, rising from the grave and eventually returning to fulfill the messianic prophecies. This observation is true as well – the reaction of the Apostles confirms this.

Ref’s in OT

- Sacrifice / Crucifixion: Psalm 22; Isaiah 53
- Resurrection (general): Job 14 esp. v12; Job 19:25-26; Eze 37:1-14

Other Factor to Consider – see page 22-23 of the Introduction handout – The Coincidence Argument. Mathematically, there is absolutely no doubt that Jesus is the Messiah.

Jesus is God / Incarnated in the flesh

Shema (Deut 6) – the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. Response: This was for Israel to guard against worshipping other gods / false gods – Exodus 20:1-6; Deut 31:16-21.

Allusions to “Persons of God” / Aspects of Trinity in OT: Gen 1:2, 26; 11:7 “Let Us”; Psalm 110:1 “the Lord says to my Lord”; Dan 7 “Ancient of Days & Son of Man;” numerous references to the Spirit of God – Gen 1:2; 1 Sam 11:6, 16:13; Isaiah 61:1; Eze 11:24; Job 33:4; Psalm 51:10-11.

Christian understanding – 1 God / 3 Distinct Persons. Not $1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 = 1$ Whole God, but similar to water that can manifest itself in 3 different forms – liquid, steam and ice, all water but different states / functions. Theologically, our redemption could only be accomplished by a perfect sacrifice / a Redeemer who satisfies the payment and judgment of sin in our place. Such a sacrifice could not be found among sinful men (Job 14:4; Rom 3:9-20 quoting various OT passages) – God had to provide the lamb as foreseen in Gen 22. Perfect is God alone. A Perfect Sacrifice demands another Person of the Godhead to be the sacrificial Lamb and another Person of the Godhead to offer the Sacrifice.

Would God beget a Son?

No example of God procreating in the OT – True. God doesn’t need to He can simply create by speaking something into existence (Gen 1:1); take ordinary material and breath life into it (Gen 2:7); take dry bones and reanimate them (Eze 37). The reason for begetting a Son is Jesus’ dual nature – fully God and fully man. Through the virgin birth Jesus enters into our world without Original sin, live a completely sinless life, and offers Himself as the sacrifice in our place. As John the Baptist observed, “Behold the Lamb of God.” (John 1:36). Gen 22 foreshadowed what God would actually do for us – compare the observation of John the Baptist, to Abraham’s own words “God will provide for Himself the lamb...”

Human Sacrifice Forbidden in Hebrew Bible – Absolutely. Yet, what answer would a Jew give to the purpose of God’s instructions to Abraham in Gen 22? Yes, it was definitely a test of faith and God stopped Abraham before the sacrifice was carried out. But why test Abraham to do something that was forbidden? Of necessity, it had to have another purpose. To be a sign of what God Himself would have to

do to show us how great His love is for us, in order to actually do it. Another interesting detail – the location of the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham (Gen 22:2 – “land of Moriah, on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.” Compare to 2 Chron 3:1 – Solomon’s temple “in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah. It’s also very possible that the place of the sacrifice in Gen 22 was also the place of Jesus’ crucifixion).

Prophecies Spoken by Jesus and not fulfilled means He’s a False Prophet

Matt 16:28 – “not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

Usual explanation given – Matt 17 transfiguration – Scofield Bible subtitle “A foreview of the future kingdom.” Problem – location of Jesus’ 2nd Coming – Mount of Olives (Acts 2:11-12; Zech 14:1-11).

Geographic references in Matthew – 16:13 district of Caesarea Philippi (in Northern Israel, 25 miles North of the Sea of Galilee – 110 miles from Jerusalem); 17:1 a “high mountain” – unlikely to be the Mount of Olives (elevation 2,652 ft / ½ mile); 17:22 “and while they were gathering together in Galilee.” Thus between Matt 16:13 and 17:22 it would appear that Jesus and the Apostles were in the region of Galilee.

Better explanation – Jesus words were in line with God’s revealed prophetic plan and had the Jewish nation accepted, rather than rejected Jesus as the Messiah, this would have come to pass. The Apostles were curious about the details of Jesus Coming as King before Jesus’ death (e.g. Matt 24), apparently heard more about it after His resurrection (Acts 1:3) and looked for further clarification (Acts 1:6-7) prior to His Ascension. What was not in view then was God’s Revelation of the Mystery (Eph 3:1-12; Rom 16:25-27) – this period in which we live also referred to as the Age of Grace. Because of Israel’s rejection, God in His grace, offers salvation to all freely through faith in Jesus, but one day His prophetic plan will be completed (as outlined in the Book of Revelation).

Matt 12:38-40 – sign of Jonah – 3 days and 3 nights...

Response – first of all concerning the resurrection of Jesus, the historical reality of the event is completely sidestepped and ignored. Both Biblical and extra-Biblical sources clearly attest to it, even the Jewish historian Josephus. As to the 3 days and nights:

- Friday view – in the Jewish mind of the 1st century, a part of a day was considered a full day.
- Thursday view – too many details / events to occur in a 2-3 hour span between the time of Jesus’ death (3PM) and the start of the Sabbath (Fri at sundown).
- Wednesday view – 2 Sabbaths the week Jesus was crucified – Passover and normal celebration, consistent with the details of the various Gospel accounts.

Miracles and their purpose

Judaism is claimed as being unique among the religions of the world and based on national revelation and not on claims of miracles performed by an individual.

Response – “Signs” were very much a part of God’s work among the Jewish people (Deut 26:7-10; 1 Sam 2:34; 2 Kings 20:9; Jer 32:16-23; Eze 12:1-11; Daniel 6:25-27). NT bears this out as well – examples (Matt 12:38; Matt 16:1-4; John 2:18-22; John 6:14, 30; John 10:40-42; 1 Cor 1:21-23)

Jesus’ Proof that He was God:

- Paralytic Healed (Matt 9:6-8; Mark 2:3-12; Luk 5:18-26);
- Giving Sight to man born blind (John 9:30-33);
- Signs at His death (Matt 27:51-54);
- also Luke 7:36-50.

Ultimate proof – the fact that He predicted His death & resurrection, and it happened just as it was prophesied in the OT and spoken by Jesus. For a Jew to deny the reality of the resurrection would be similar and just as offensive as a non-Jew to deny the historical reality of the Holocaust.

HEBREWS Ch 1

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

Note What We're Told About Jesus in vv1-4:

- Spoken to us _____
 - o John 1:1, 14 _____
 - o Col 3:16 _____
- Appointed _____
 - o Rom 8:16-17 _____
- Who Made _____
 - o John 1:3 _____
 - o Col 1:16 _____
- Representation of _____
 - o John 1:18 _____
 - o Col 1:15, 19 _____
- Upholds _____
 - o Col 1:17 _____
- Made a Purification _____
 - o Col 1:13-14 _____
 - o Col 1:20-22 _____
- Sat Down _____
 - o Rom 8:34 _____
 - o Col 3:13, 18 _____

Compared to Angels ... Contrast What is True of Jesus, as compared to Angels (vv4-14)

True of Jesus

True of Angels

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Anything else? _____

HEBREWS Ch 2

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

Bad tendencies:

v1 – _____

v3 – _____

Necessary tendencies / attitudes to cultivate:

v1 – _____

v3 – _____

What makes our salvation so great? _____

Note in vv3-4 the various ways the message was confirmed:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

It's been said, "No one understands like Jesus:"

v9 – _____

v10 – _____

v11 – _____

v14-15 – _____

v17 – _____

v18 – _____

HEBREWS Ch 3

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

vv 7-11 are quoted from Psalm 95:7-11. Look at Ps 95:1-7 – see if you can come up with a plan / prescription for avoiding the failure of unbelief and apostasy:

v1 _____

v2 _____

v2 _____

v3 _____

v4-5 _____

v6 _____

v7 _____

Encouragement to foster a persevering faith:

v6 _____

v13 _____

v14 _____

Note in Heb 3- Factors that can lead to apostasy / turning away from faith in Christ:

v8 _____

v9 _____

v10 _____

v12 _____

v13 _____

vv16-17 _____

vv 18-19 _____

HEBREWS Ch 4

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

v9 “there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.” What does the writer want the reader to understand about the “rest” that God offers? _____

v11-13 What part does God’s Word have in us entering his rest? _____

v14-16 Note the basis of the confidence we can have in Jesus _____

v2 Summarize from this chapter your plan to enter God’s rest _____

HEBREWS Ch 5

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

vv1-8 the High Priest

Note the role of this individual - _____

How is Jesus Superior in this role? _____

Read Gen 22:1-14. Do you see any parallels to what the author is describing here? _____

Life Application Bible – The Choices of Maturity:

<u>Mature Choices</u>	<u>versus</u>	<u>Immature Choices</u>
Teaching others	rather than	Just being taught
Developing depth of understanding	rather than	Struggling with basics
Self-evaluation	rather than	Self-criticism
Seeking unity	rather than	Promoting disunity
Desiring spiritual challenges	rather than	Desiring entertainment
Careful study & observation	rather than	Opinions & halfhearted efforts
Active faith	rather than	Cautious apathy and doubt
Confidence	rather than	Fear
Feelings & experiences evaluated in light of God's Word	rather than	Experiences evaluated according to feelings

Consider the above the author's admonition in vv 11-14. What choices should it lead you to make?

HEBREWS Ch 6

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

What we can agree on:

- importance of pressing on towards maturity (see v1, 9-12) for observations. _____

- assurance of God's Promise (vv13-18) _____

- a steadfast hope (vv19-20) _____

What we need to wrestle with: v6 "have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them to ..."

vv4-5 Describing believers, those close to believing? _____

Author's other use of the word "impossible:" **Conclusion:** _____

6:18 _____

10:4 _____

11:6 _____

Other points to consider:

Rom 8:35-39 _____

Does an individual lose their free will when they become a believer? _____

Matt 12:31-32; Luk 12:8-10 _____

Apostasy – could the meaning be the opposite of Repentance = Salvation / Forgiveness of Sins

Consider Mathematically: (If A=B and B=C, then A=C)

Unpardonable Sin = Unbelief

Apostasy = Unbelief (here a return to Unbelief)

Unpardonable Sin = Apostasy

Look at as a circular analogy – does the action of the apostate return the person to the state of unbelief / the unpardonable sin or are there really two unpardonable sins – unbelief of the person who never believed and the unbelief of the apostate who apparently cannot be forgiven again? Is it back to square one or only one shot for each person?

HEBREWS Ch 7

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

Read Psalm 110 which the author quotes in Heb ch 7 and let's follow the argument he's making:

In Psalm 110, David writes of a priest who would serve forever. In context this refers to _____

Heb ch. 7

vv1-2 **Melchizedek**

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| a. King of Salem (Jerusalem) | RULER (king of righteousness / peace v2) |
| b. Priest of Most High God | MEDIATOR |
| c. Met Abraham as he was returning | INTERCESSOR |
| d. Blessed Abraham | REWARDER |

Sounds a lot like _____

v4 Abraham gave a tenth to Melchizedek, therefore _____ is greater than _____ .v7

vv9-10 The Levites (priests) in essence also tithed to Melchizedek since _____

Note the Contrast the author is pointing out between:

vv11-28

Levitical Priesthood

Jesus the Great High Priest

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Implied Changes:

v12 _____

v18 _____

v22 _____

HEBREWS Ch 8

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

Hard to miss the “Main Point” (summary of position of ch 5 & 7) – vv1-6: “Such a high priest ...

A Better Covenant - LIFE Application Bible Contrast:

<u>Old Covenant (Moses)</u>	<u>New Covenant (Christ)</u>	<u>Application</u>
Gifts & Sacrifice by those guilty of sin	Self-sacrifice by the guiltless Christ	Christ died for you
Focused on physical bldg for worship	Focused on reign of Jesus in believers hearts	God directly involved in your life
A shadow	A reality	Not temporal, but eternal
Limited promises	Limitless promises	We can trust God’s promises
Failed agreement by people	Faithful agreement by Jesus	Christ has kept the agreement which people couldn’t.
External standards & rules	Internal standards – new heart	Accountable to God, not rules
Limited access to God	Unlimited access to God	God is personally available
Based on fear	Based on love & forgiveness	Forgiveness keeps our failures from destroying the agreement.
Legal cleansing	Personal cleansing	God’s cleansing is complete
Continual sacrifice	Conclusive sacrifice	Christ’s sac was perfect & final
Obey the rules	Serve the living God	Relationship, not regulations.
Forgiveness earned	Forgiveness freely given	We have true & complete forgiveness
Repeated yearly	Completed by Christ’s death	Christ’s death applied to our sin
Human effort	God’s grace	Initiated by God’s love for you
Available to some	Available to all	Available to you.

Consider the chart above and read Jeremiah 31:31-34 quoted in Heb 8. Note some of the great features of the New Covenant promised:

v13 – Think about what obsolete means, and not a couple of contemporary examples that would help you to understand the point the author of Hebrews is making:

Obsolete & why

Replacement

HEBREWS Ch 9

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

HEBREWS Ch 10

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

Read vv1-18 and jot down your thoughts / observations about the “many sacrifices repeated” as compared to the “once for all” by Christ.

vv19-21 “Since therefore” (consider all the arguments and reasons that author has presented to this point) and how he summarizes it here. Note what Jesus has made possible –

vv22-25 Do you feel it’s time for an overwhelming resounding response & if so, what should it be?

vv26-31 Because without the overwhelming response, there is the concern for the opposite to occur (Remember: drifting [2:1]; neglecting [2:3]; falling away [3:12; fall [4:11]; fallen away[6:6]). Again, do we wrestle with trying to understand the process (e.g., lack of faith and falling), or do we embrace the seriousness of the matter the writer brings to mind and instead choose to “Press On” and Persevere? Support your position based on the author’s observations.

vv32-39 A call to Perseverance _____

HEBREWS Ch 11

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

Too often I think we consider ch11 on its own, as if it's a separate book / story. However, an appreciation of what the author is encouraging cannot be realized apart from what has already been discussed. Keep the preceding chapters in mind as you think about the following verses that are easy to gloss over:

v10 _____

vv13-16 _____

v22 _____

v25 _____

vv 4-35a describe the better known “Heroes of Faith” where their faith had a “positive outcome” as viewed from this side of life. Yet, the common thread is that they died WITHOUT (v39) _____

vv35b – 38 describes the lesser known “Heroes of Faith” where their faith had a “negative outcome” as viewed from this side of life. Yet, the common thread is that they died WITHOUT (v39) _____

v40 What should **YOUR / OUR response or conclusion** therefore be? _____

(STAY TUNED – more information on the Therefore provided in ch12)

HEBREWS Ch 12

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

Think of this as the conclusion of ch11 with a response being called for. Consider the author’s admonition and examples and what it should mean to you as a believer:

vv1-2 How to run the race - _____

vv2-4 The example of Jesus - _____

vv5-11 The purpose of discipline - _____

vv12-17 Other pursuits - _____

vv25-28 Shaken vs. Unshakeable - _____

v29 “for our God is a consuming fire.” is an abrupt ending to the chapter. Think of some examples of this in the Bible and then reflect on the author’s intent in bringing the reader to this sober observation.

(Note: if you need some examples to get you started - Gen 19:24,28; Ex 19:16-20)

HEBREWS Ch 13

REFLECT (on the Text / Re-Read)

Key Word (s) / Thought (s) _____

Key Verse / Why? _____

Questions _____

EXEGESIS (explanation, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. in the Bible)

APPLICATION (knowing / understanding this should result in...)

JESUS IS BETTER THAN _____

DISCUSSION (what can we learn / observe together)

Throughout this letter the author has encouraged the believer to persevere in their faith in Jesus as the Christ “the new, living and **BETTER** way.” Building on the encouragement in ch12, the author makes a summary statement in v1 “**Let love of the brethren continue.**” Note some other practical steps in the remainder of the chapter that you, as a believer, can take to mature in your faith:

vv2-4 Relationships - _____

Vv5-6 Money - _____

vv7-8 Spiritual leaders - _____

vv15-16 Acceptable Sacrifice of the Believer - _____

vv20-21 Closing Benediction – note the important details to bear in mind:

HEBREWS WRAP

The Message – Jesus is BETTER

		<u>Encouragement for the Reader</u>	<u>Hebrews Ref.</u>
B	“Believe that He is”	a call to Faith	11:6
E	“Encourage One Another”	a group effort	3:15; 10:25
T	“Throne of Grace”	unprecedented access	4:16; 12:2
T	“Tempted to Aid Us”	no one understands like Jesus	2:18; 4:15
E	“Enter His Rest”	now and the not yet	ch4
R	“Run with Endurance”	action plan	12:1f

Perseverance – the ONLY SURE WAY

2:1 _____

3:12-14 _____

4:11-16 _____

5:14 _____

6:9-12,19 _____

7:25 _____

9:27-28 _____

10:19-25 _____

10:32-39 _____

12:1-15 _____

13:1-17 _____

Consistency of Encouragement from the NT Writers (Exhortations, Conclusions and Prayers)

Heb 13:20-22 _____

Jude 24-25 _____

1 Pe 5:6-11 _____

2 Pe 3:17-18 _____

1 John 5:20-21 _____

Rom 16:25-27 _____

1 Cor 15:51-58 _____

2 Cor 13:11 _____

Eph 3:14-21 _____

Eph 6:10-17 _____

1 Thes 5:23 _____

2 Thes 3:16 _____

Recent Church Sign – *“It’s hard to stumble and fall, when you’re on your knees.”*