

John Blackwell - Masterpiece of Logic

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So our subject today is the Book of Hebrews, and we feel the author is the Apostle Paul, and it's marked by his brilliant logic, his solemn reverence, and his personal humility.

We see the authorship has been severely questioned.

The authenticity, the audience, the purpose has been questioned. When it was written was questioned, and the language has been questioned.

So we'll take a look at each one of these and see what we can find out. Some have questioned its authorship, but to us there is not any room for doubt that it was written by the Apostle Paul. The Book of Hebrews is marked throughout by a brilliant logic, solemn reverence, and humility, and we just look at First Corinthians 15, 1, 21 and 22. We see.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead, whereas in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, and so we have a wonderful description in 1st Corinthians 15, chapter of the ransom and the reason for the resurrection.

Just taking a look at Paul's appropriate background, we see that he was born in Tarsus. His father and ancestors were Pharisees. He became a devoted Pharisee, Acts 23:6, and he persecuted the Christians severely, but that was all he'd been taught as a Pharisee by birth. He was a Roman citizen.

In Acts the 22nd chapter, the 28th verse, his background was in the Greek and Hebrew languages. In Acts the 21st chapter, the 40th verse, he was taught by Gamaliel. In Acts 22, the third verse.

His credentials as a Jewish doctor of the law, as well as his credentials as an apostle are the very finest. He was very capable of interpreting the Old Testament types and shadows. As the ministry was drawing to a close, he asked Timothy for a cloak for books and especially the parchments. In second Timothy 4:13, just like to turn to Acts 9:15 and read that verse, and that shows us basically the purpose of Paul being an apostle and appointed by our Lord.

So Acts 9:15. But the Lord said unto him, go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me. Bear my name before one, the Gentiles, two Kings, and three, the children of Israel. We lost the audio. Something is.

I'm not sure. Maybe your microphone changed. The audio is gone. No, no, it's still there, but it's. Oh, it's weak.

Okay, thank you. I'll get closer to the mic. Thank you very much.

So that we see he was chosen for the threefold missions, the Gentiles, the Kings, children of Israel, and the last one, the one that we want to focus on a little bit.

We see that it's been argued by some that the style of the Book of Hebrews is a higher and more lofty style than Paul's other epistles, and there's a reason for that, and this is easily accounted for. The other books were written in a simple and easy style for the Gentiles, while the Book of Hebrews was written particularly for the apostles and other learned Jews who were having difficulty in grasping the change of dispensation from the Jewish age to the Gospel age. It was here that he

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labored with them, endeavoring logically to clarify Israel's past, God's dealings with them as a typical nation, to help them see the features of the law that had now been fulfilled by our Lord Jesus Christ, and the better things had now replaced them.

And so that's why we have the style of Hebrews.

Just like to read from Smith's dictionary tells us. It's interesting to note that during the first century after the Epistle was written, no one disclaimed it who the writer was.

But in the third century, where a lot of changes came to the church and doctrine modifications like the Trinity, doubts arose in the Latin churches, and no Greek or Syriatic writer, however, ever doubted its authority, and that's what Smith's dictionary tells us.

We notice that all the epistles of Paul ends with grace be unto you all, and so that's another indication or sign that it was written by Paul.

So who is the book written for? What was the purpose in writing the Epistle?

It was written in a simpler manner.

His other epistles to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were in danger of idolizing human eloquence and wisdom. So in those Epistles he wrote in an unadorned manner, so that the attention would be given entirely to the Gospel.

The Hebrews were in no such danger. His Hebrew Grecian education would enable him to write in a style attractive to the Hebrews. Note 1st Corinthians 9, 20. The apostle says unto the Jews, I became a Jew, that I may gain them that are under the law. Here we have a number of reprint articles where Pastor Russell discusses who the book was written for and the purpose.

Reprint 2085 for Israelites, 4510 for the Hebrews, the early church and the Gentiles. Reprint 78, paragraph 2, about how the converted Jews knew the Old Testament writings and therefore could harmonize and sync them together, and finally, reprint 2821, where it showed the change of the dispensation of the old Law covenant to a newer covenant, we see that the law was at an end. The Jewish age was a type of the Gospel age, and it was a real faith strengthener for the Jews at the time and the apostles.

Some of the other proofs that Paul was the writer Peter refers to Paul's epistles in 2nd Peter 3, 15, 16 and says, on account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, as also in all his epistles, speaking to them of these things in which some things are hard to understand, which they that are unlearned and unstable, rest as they do the other Scriptures unto their own destruction.

His terminology Paul was the only writer in the New Testament who used the word mediator as found in Galatians 3, 19, 20 of course, 1st Timothy 2, 5 and 6. Our favorite scripture on our Jesus was given a ransom not for any, but for all, and that he was a mediator. It's also found in Hebrews, the 9th chapter, the 15th verse, and the 12th chapter, the 24th verse, and then of course, as we've mentioned before, the Book of Hebrews ends all of Paul's epistles with the phrase grace be unto you all.

Why would we think that Paul would admit his name from this Epistle? Well, as we know, some Hebrews were prejudiced against him, and it might repel some of the Jewish brethren who

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regarded him as an enemy of the Law. He was also known as the apostle to the Gentiles.

Some of the things were very hard to understand, and that's why with the Book of Hebrews as the question that Pam raised earlier this morning, we wouldn't understand the sin offering. We wouldn't understand the tabernacle, the Aaronic, the Melchizedek priesthood as well, without having the Book of Hebrews.

Who was it written to? Well, primarily at the time, to the Hebrew brethren who'd come out of Judaism. The law was so important to the Jew in every respect of his life, and now that Christ had come, things had changed. The teachings of the apostle were of Christ and faith in Christ.

What were they to do with the Law and all its ceremonies and requirements?

So what was the purpose of this epistle? The Hebrews had a hard time grasping the fact that the law was at an end. It had been fulfilled in Christ. There was a need to point out the Jewish age and God's dealings with them as a nation was what about a type of better sacrifices of better things to come all fulfilled in Christ for the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year, continually make the comers thereunto perfect. In Hebrews the 10th chapter 1 to 4, Hebrews 10:1, 4.

So Christ was the substance for which the sacrifices were but a shadow. The type must give away to the antitype.

Their faith was also in need of strengthening by showing them that the God of their fathers was the same God who'd now spoken to them through His Son Jesus, and we'll read Hebrews one, the first couple of verses, and we see they were written in sundry times and diverse manners, as it tells us in Hebrews 1:1:2. What does that mean? Well, it means the divine plan in the ages is spread throughout the Old Testament and the New Testament, and we have the seventh messenger, Brother Russell, who basically the truths were already there, but what he did, he compiled them in the six volumes of Studies in the Scriptures.

That's why they're called Studies in the Scriptures, and they help us understand God's plan. Just one of my favorite scriptures. So God, who at sundry times and in diverse manner spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory and the expressed image of his person, and not beholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Just a beautiful passage telling us God's plan in a nutshell.

The core doctrine that we have in the Scriptures, of course, is the ransom, and that's told to us in Hebrews 2, 9 and 10.

And just quickly look at that.

But we see Jesus, who is made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God should taste death. For how many men? A few men? No, every man, like every person, and that really highlights that point.

And then we get into the sin offering later on in the chapter, like the 17th verse, whereof, wherefore in all things have behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

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Just beautiful scriptures.

Just like. To comment on the content of Hebrews in all of its complexities is simple And Paul summarizes the complete book in those first three verses that we read in Hebrews 1, and it talks about God's prophetic expressions before the first advent, his current teachings via Jesus, and the eventual extinction of sin for mankind. So the remainder of the book expands upon these basic doctrines and is written to give us spiritual confidence.

We see the apostle builds his argument by stepping through the features of the law, showing how they were shadows of things to come, of better things, of things that were now to be fulfilled in Christ. So let's take a look at some of the Scriptures.

What doctrine is Paul speaking of here in Hebrews 2, 7 and 9? Well, of course, the ransom. A life for a life, and we have that for us in 1st Timothy 2, 4, 6 and the one we referred to before 1st Corinthians 15 and 22. The law made nothing perfect.

Sacrifice had to be repeated year after year and cut Christ died once for all. The economy of God's plan. Absolutely wonderful.

Now reading in Hebrews 2, 10, 17 and 18 as we continue along, we see the feature of the priesthood presenting and of course that shows the sin offering and the merciful and faithful high priest Jesus.

The priesthood of law was the Aaronic order which he was shown to be inferior to the priesthood of Melchizedek. Abraham himself paid tithes to Melchizedek, the king of Salem. Paul tells us that Levi was represented as paying ties to him through Abraham.

Excuse me.

So we have a lot of Scriptures, Hebrews 5, 4, 6, Hebrews 7 1, 3, 23, 28, Hebrews 7, 10, 12 where we see the need of both priesthoods sacrificial is shown by Aaronic showing the sacrificial priesthood and the priest in glory, the Melchizedek, a king and a priest.

Continuing on, another feature of the law we see the apostle discusses the old Law covenant and the need for the new covenant, and that's told to us in Hebrews 8:6 to 13.

And you can maybe look at this later on, but it's just a beautiful passage showing the Old Covenant and how the new covenant is going to replace it going on. We see the tabernacle furnishings are discussed in Hebrews 9 to 12 and the various furnishings in Hebrews 9. In Hebrews 10 we see the various sacrifices that are mentioned help us understand tabernacle, and of course tabernacle is one of the first books written by Brother Russell very early on and it just helps us understand the court condition, the holy and the most holy and the progression of it in the antitype in Hebrews 13:10 to 13 we have the atonement day sacrifices.

And it talks about the Christian life of sacrifice. Just turn to that 11th verse, and every priest standeth daily ministering, offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins. But the man, after he offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God. Isn't that just beautiful?

Showing Jesus place right beside God and how he's going to be the mediator through the millennial age.

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But it's just a wonderful chapter. You know the way Hebrews 10 starts out for the law having a shadow of good things to come, not the very image of the things can never with those sacrifice which they offered year by year continually make the comers there unto perfect.

Then we come to the 11th chapter of Hebrews, and here we see the ancient worthies are listed and their examples of faith, and here we have 17, 18 Heroes of Faith that are mentioned through. Throughout the 11th chapter we see that Hebrews is filled with admonition for us and for the early church.

First of all, it tells us we're leaky vessels and how we have to keep refilling ourselves with the truth. Third chapter, how we can help one another as we walk along this narrow way.

The tenth chapter, how we consider one another, how we can provoke one another in a good way, and how we can assemble ourselves together like we are today, to just help increase our knowledge and understanding of God's plan.

In the 12th chapter, not very nice, talks about chastings, or as another way of putting it, instructions in righteousness for Hebrews 12 and how important they are in our development as new creatures, and then finally, chapter 13, the satisfaction that we get now. There are also some warnings in Hebrews, some of the perils that we have to watch out for. So the peril of drifting, neglect. It's subtle, it's serious, it's suburbus.

How it may be avoided. Submission, sacrificial service, serious consideration of the Scriptures. The peril of missing the rest of faith, the peril of departure through unbelief, the peril of hardness through the deceitfulness of sin, and how we have to be very careful and watch out for that. The peril of the fainting heart in Hebrews 12:3, the peril of lameness in Hebrews 12:13, and the peril of dissension or bitterness in Hebrews 12:15.

The peril being led astray by the flesh. How we have to continually look out for that, or we will be led astray.

Some other Interesting points about the Book of Hebrews.

It uses this word in Christ bettered.

And it occurs 13 times. There are 13 chapters.

Key thought is let us go on.

An OT recurring phrase is let us and what are we to let us do?

Let us fear, let us give diligence.

Let us draw near with boldness.

Let us go on, draw near with a true heart.

Let us hold fast, let us consider one another.

Let us lay aside a lot of the things that might distract us.

Let us run with patience, let us have grace and therefore go forth.

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We see some very striking contrasts and comparisons with Christ in the Book of Hebrews. Talking about angels, talking about Christ, talking about Moses, talking about Aaron, Melchizedek, the sanctuary, the covenants, the tabernacle, the day of atonement, the offerings, and how they relate to Christ.

So in summary, who wrote the book and why it was written? Well, we see that it was Paul and it was written for a number of reasons. Like Acts 9, 15 says Paul was basically on a threefold mission, one to the Gentiles, two to the Israelites and also to those of influence, the Kings.

And let's just take a quick look again at the doctrines.

The most important of course is the ransom and the sin offering.

He also elaborated on pointing out the types of the two priesthods, the Aaronic and the Melchizedek.

He talks about the law covenant and the purpose of the law covenant. He also talks about the new covenant and what the benefit of that is that everyone is going to know the Lord and appreciate what God has done through his Son Jesus.

The other thing that I really brings home is in the early chapters of Hebrews is Jesus relationship to God and where he is and as the Logos, what Jesus accomplished in his pre human existence, the high calling of the Gospel age, very important in the book of Hebrews, and he mentions the ancient worthies in Hebrews 11 and all their different examples of faith and the reward of faith, the admonitions. He warns us about things that we have to look out for and that's important too, and then the perils that are out there and how we have to guard against being caught up and sucked in by some of these things.

So hopefully what this study has done has helped us become more familiar with Paul.

The purpose of Paul writing this book, the fact it is a masterpiece of logic and that it makes really good sense to us in understanding all these various doctrines, admonitions and perils.

So brethren, we hope that this has been a help and encouragement and what a beautiful book we have here. With Paul's precise logic, may the Lord add his blessing.