

THE EPISTLE OF TO THE HEBREWS

WHO IS THE MEDIATOR TO GOD?

THE SON, ISRAEL

OR

THE SON, JESUS

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HEBREWS

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMENTARY

*[Refer to the **“Introduction to Epistles”** at www.BiblicalStory.org for a broader explanation of how epistles play their unique part in the Biblical Story]*

*[Refer to **The Author of Hebrews’ Use of Melchizedek from Genesis**,² for a detailed study of Melchizedek in Hebrews 5—7.)*

Problem: The unbelieving nation Israel (antagonist) is deceiving the believing Jewish remnant (readers, who have joined the church and rejected Israel) to return to Israel (and reject Christ) based on the theology that rest and blessing can only be obtained by blessing Israel (Genesis 12:1-3).

Solution: The unknown author (protagonist) is encouraging (and warning) the believing remnant (readers) to endure persecution and be faithful to Christ based on the theology that the only means of rest and blessing comes through Jesus the Christ (Psalm 2) as the Priest just like Melchizedek (Psalm 110).

Situation

The Nation Israel: Had rejected Christ and labeled Israelites who joined the church as apostates from the Abrahamic Covenant and thus under a curse.

Hebrew believers: Had trusted Christ as Deliverer and had, of necessity, left Israel to become part of the new group called the church. Labeled Israel (reluctantly) as apostate for killing Christ and under a curse.

The Gentile Nations: Were ruling over Israel (Rome, the final Gentile nation of Daniel's 'Times of the Gentiles' demonstrating that they were under a curse.

The 'Times of the Gentiles': Daniel had prophesied four Gentile nations that would rule over Israel. This continued under Rome, placing Israel under a curse as long as they were disobedient.

The Question of the Hebrews: While they could observe that Israel was under Gentile dominion, the Israelites felt relatively at peace since they seemed somewhat under their own control (temple in operation under some Jewish control). However, the Christian Hebrews were not enjoying such

² The Author of Hebrews’ Use of Melchizedek from Genesis 14, ThD Dissertation, by Dr. Charles P. Baylis. (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1989). This may be accessed through the author’s webpage, www.BiblicalStory.org.

luxuries in Israel. Not only did the Israelites persecute them (Acts 2--8) but also the Romans.

The Answer of Israel: According to the Abrahamic Covenant (in their view) they had been elected to the kingdom (cf. Romans 2) and were thus blessed. If one cursed them (called them apostate) then they were under a curse. Thus, the Hebrew believers that had left Israel for the church were considered under a curse. Thus, the Hebrew believers, who were suffering under a curse, should return to Israel and find rest (from the enemies).

The Answer of the Author: Rest from the enemies was not the case in Israel which was under Roman domination. In fact, Israel had not been at rest since Babylonian dominion began in Daniel's time (Dan. 2, 7). Deuteronomy 6 had proclaimed that they should always remember their deliverance from Egypt (exodus from Gentile dominion) and so now the author does that. Their deliverance from Egypt was the assurance that God would deliver them from their enemies. Now that they had been placed under Gentile dominion once more, they were to look for another exodus from that control (Hosea 11) under the New Moses. The mention of Joshua reminds the reader of the book of Joshua where God gave them rest; as well as under Solomon and even Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 20:30)

But it would appear that Jesus was absent and thus not their Deliverer. The author will argue that Jesus, as the New Moses (the Son greater than any angelic warrior or O.T. leader). While Moses was rejected (ch. 4) at Kadesh-Barnea, so also was Christ rejected by Israel at the cross. As Joshua led the new generation into the land, so also Christ will return and lead the new generation of Israel into the land. However, it is necessary that Jesus lead the exodus personally by having victory over the Gentiles first as a demonstration to those who would follow Him that He had the power to conquer them. Thus He enters the rest (victory over the enemies) at His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father and now awaits those to join Him in returning to conquer the enemies and take them into the rest (the kingdom).

Thus, one of the large points is that the first exodus is Jesus in His ascension over Gentile rulers. He leads and we follow. He endured their oppression faithfully and entered in, and now we are to follow His example of oppression faithfully and then we also will enter in. And since we know that He did, then we have a guarantee that we will (we being the Israelites, and now, by application, the church).

	ISRAEL AS PRIEST	SON AS PRIEST TO ISRAEL
	(Deut. 14:1, Gen.12-22, Ex. 19:5-6)	(Ps. 2, Gen. 12-22, esp. 14, Ps. 110)
	REVELATION	REVELATION FULL
1 - 2	Old Testament ESTABLISHED Israelites as SONS OF GOD (Deut. 14:1)	Old Testament ANTICIPATED SON AS SUFFERING HIGH PRIEST to establish Israelites as SONS OF GOD (Ps.8,Ps.22,Ps.110)
	REST	REST FULL
3 - 4	Provided by MOSES & JOSHUA available NOW IN ISRAEL realized now through O.T. rituals (Josh. 21:44)	Anticipated In CHRIST available NOW APART FROM ISRAEL Realized at Christ's Return (Ps. 95)
	BLESSING	BLESSING FULL
5 - 7	To Israel determined through AARONIC HIGH PRIEST Established by genealogy (Exodus, Leviticus, Deut.)	Anticipated to Israel determined through MELCHIZEDEKIAN HIGH PRIEST Established by Appointment (Gen. 14, Ps. 110)
8 -10	to Israel determined through LEVITICAL SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM (Lev. 26)	To Israel determined through anticipated SACRIFICE OF HIGH PRIEST IN HEAVENLIES (Ex. 25:40)
	RESPONSE: WORKS	RESPONSE: FAITH
11	Obedience in Old Testament produced immediate blessing in this life (Deut. 28)	Faith in Old Testament anticipated delay, future blessing in Christ at return
12	SUFFERING Is the Wrath of God apostate to Israel are disobedient (Deut. 28).	SUFFERING is Chastisement of God for true sons of God (Prov.3:9, Deut. 8:2)
13	SACRIFICES only means of PLEASING GOD	SACRIFICES FULFILLED in Christ, now SACRIFICES OF PRAISE, love of brother, submission to Christ