

21.1 The Book of Hebrews

I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly, 13.22

1) To what portion of the book does the writer refer in the words, "I have written"? *He is referring to the entire book.*

2) With the scope of the book in view, what lesson can we learn about Hebrews from these words: I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation (v. 22a)? *The entire book is an exhortation.*

3) How does the lesson from 22a reverse the "usual" doctrine to application order we find in other NT writings? *He moves from exhortation to doctrine.*

4) What subject about Christ (what doctrine) comes up in Hebrews as a hallmark or distinguishing feature (a subject *developed* nowhere else in the NT as here)? *The hallmark subject is the high priestly work of Christ.*

5) How does the writer put this distinct subject into perspective by the doctrine to application reversal? *He addresses Christ's priestly work to develop his exhortation.*

6) In general, what then is the main point of the book in relation to its distinct subject? *It is an exhortation to live by faith encouraging one another grounded in the priestly work of Christ.*

7) How can we balance (defend) this claim regarding the main point of the book in general in light of 8.1? **Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven. The section up to 8.1 (we have such a high priest) serves the larger objective of exhortation.**

8) How can we state the main point of the book in more specific terms with the aid of the following text noting the shift from 1.1-14 to 2.1 and its many parallels in the book (cf. 10.23-27)? Hint: the book keys into one of the five points of Calvinism. *The main point is the exhortation to persevere.*

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. ⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"? ⁶ And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." ⁷ Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire." ⁸ But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom." ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions." ¹⁰ And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; ¹¹ they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, ¹² like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end." ¹³ And to which of the angels has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? ¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? ^{2:1} Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. ²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries (10.23-27).

9) What lessons can we learn about learning from I have written to you briefly?

Consider our typical (what is your typical) attitude toward the task of learning the book of Hebrews. Consider it in light of 5.11-14 and the fact that the writer exhorts every day Christians who face many pulls and tugs of life. Thus, how old are you in the Lord?

Note: being a baby is not just a matter of baby knowledge; it is baby conduct.

We should think that we have a long way to go in our learning for living.