

Summary Handout

Jesus Christ: “The Author and Finisher of Our Faith”

Lesson
37
Summary

Hebrews

Scripture Summary:

Heb. 1: The Son is in the express image of the person of the Father—Christ is the Only Begotten Son and thus above the angels. Heb. 2: Jesus came to suffer death and save men—He came to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Heb. 3: Christ is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession—Jesus, being the Son is more than a servant—Now is the time and the day of our salvation. Heb. 4: The gospel was offered to ancient Israel—Saints enter into the rest of the Lord—Though tempted in all points, Jesus was without sin. Heb. 5: Ministers must be called of God as was Aaron—Christ was a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek—Jesus Christ is the author of eternal salvation. Heb. 6: Let us go on to perfection—Sons of perdition crucify Christ afresh—God swears with an oath that the faithful shall be saved. Heb. 7: The Melchizedek Priesthood brings exaltation and administers the gospel—It is received with an oath and covenant—Superiority of the Melchizedek over the Aaronic Priesthood—Salvation comes through the intercession of Christ. Heb. 8: Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin—God promised to make a new covenant with Israel. Heb. 9: Mosaic ordinances prefigured Christ’s ministry—Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant. Heb. 10: We are sanctified by the shedding of the blood of Christ—Superiority of His sacrifice—Those who fall from grace through willful sin are damned—The just shall live by faith. Heb. 11: By faith we understand the word and work of God—Faith of the ancients was centered in Christ—By faith men subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and worked miracles. Heb. 12: Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth—God is the Father of spirits—To see God, follow peace and holiness—Exalted saints belong to the Church of the Firstborn. Heb. 13: Marriage is honorable in all—Christ is the same everlastingly—How the saints are to offer acceptable sacrifices.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Old Testament Actually Starts with the Higher Law: The gospel and eternal covenants were given to man from the beginning. “Commencing with Adam . . . the first to hold the spiritual blessings . . . was made known the plan of ordinances for the salvation of his posterity unto the end . . . the keys of . . . the dispensation of all the times have been and will be revealed through him from the beginning to Christ, and from Christ to the end of the dispensations that are to be revealed.” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Four 1839-42 p.167)

Children of Israel Opt for Less Than the Best: Moses was able to create the lesser law as a Messianic guideline. The compromise commandments specifically anticipated the Savior. The lesser law was predicated on performance-related criteria rather than on intent or attitude. Simply put, do’s and don’ts became the law instead of the Spirit of God dictating the law. The prophet Ezekiel speaks of God’s sadness in giving His children less than the best. Some selected verses highlight His feelings of giving statutes (commandments) that were less than the best, resulting in judgements (rewards) that were less than the best. In fact, the lesser statutes and judgements were a pollution. Here are selected verses from the twentieth chapter of Ezekiel. “Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live . . . I polluted them in their own gifts . . .” (Ezekiel 20:6-25)

Gathering and Restoration Promised: Both the physical and spiritual scattering of Israel is compared to heathens who want to worship stone and wooden images. The Israelites stayed away from those images, but resorted to rules of do’s and don’ts instead of the Holy Spirit. Yet, in the end, the children of Israel will be gathered, and their original covenants will be restored. Ezekiel chapter twenty continues: “And I will . . . gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out . . . I will bring you into the bond of the covenant . . . and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen . . . and there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled . . . Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will kindle a fire in thee . . . all flesh shall see that I the LORD have kindled it: it shall not be quenched.” (Ezekiel 20: 26-38) The world will truly see . . . “The spirit of God like a fire is burning.” As of now, only a part of the family of Israel knows that the original covenants have been restored. “The everlasting gospel made known in the last days is nothing more nor less than the ancient religion restored. It is the commencement of the “restitution of all things, spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world was.” (John Taylor, The Gospel Kingdom, p.2-3)

A Challenge – Will it be “Faith” or “Works?” A few more comments about Jewish philosophy on faith/belief and works (mitzvot) show some wavering between the two. “The developing rift between Christianity and Judaism and the animosity after their final split in the second century C.E. produced many great disputations. A crucial one occurred about the time of the Bar Kokhba revolt (c. 135 C.E.) between the Christian Justin Martyr and the Jew Tryphon. While the two adversaries expressed friendship toward each other, the argument became bitter. Justin challenged the Jewish concept of being the chosen people by pointing out their low position in the world, and argued that the Jews were made

to follow laws as punishment by God. Tryphon countered by charging Justin with selecting his quotes from the Bible, and - proclaiming that true salvation comes from strictly following the law, not from faith in man.”

First Principles of Jewish Religion: “ The medieval Jewish philosophers gave a great deal of thought to formulating articles of faith and disagreed among themselves as to how many there should be. Some even opposed any such formulation on the grounds that every mitzvah (deed or act) is an article of faith.” “One of the first formulations was that of Hananel ben Hushi’el who was an important Babylonian scholar of the 11th century. He saw, as basic to the Jewish religion, the following four principles: (1) belief in God; (2) belief in the prophets; (3) belief in the World to Come; and (4) belief in the coming of the Messiah.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

The Messiah – Known or Unknown? That Messiah, still unknown by a part of the House of Israel (and most of mankind), is the original author and finisher of our faith. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.” (Revelation 1:8)

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