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NT 646 Hebrews

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Asbury Theological Seminary
Department of Inductive Biblical Studies

NT (IBS) 646
January, 2005

Hebrews

David R. Bauer, Instructor

This course involves a detailed study of the thought-development of this epistle with a focus on its structure, its teaching on the incarnation and high priesthood of Jesus, and its insights into the relation between the old and new covenants. Emphasis is placed on the methodology of studying discursive literature. In addition, attention is given to thinking, valuing, and living biblically by learning how to apply Scripture to life and ministry. This course seeks intentionally to incorporate the grammatical analysis of the Greek language into the overall inductive process.

I. Course Objectives.

- A. Methodology. The student should be able to:
 - 1. Employ structural observations for the interpretation of individual passages within the book, as well as for the interpretation of the book as a whole.
 - 2. Raise various kinds of interpretive questions, and answer these questions, based on the use of exegetical determinants;
 - 3. Employ various kinds of relevant evidence, including that which involves exegetical use of the original languages, in a process of inferential reasoning for the interpretation of individual passages within the book, as well as for the book as a whole.
 - 4. Synthesize the interpretation of units of various lengths, such as the paragraph, the segment, the section (division), and the book as a whole;
 - 5. Use aspects of methodology that are especially relevant for epistolary material;
 - 6. Evaluate and apply truths that emerge from the interpretation of the material.
 - 7. Articulate the major issues involved in the movement from text to proclamation; move from the interpretation and application of the text towards its proclamation; and integrate the interpretation and application of a passage in Hebrews with that of a correlative passage from the Old Testament so as to move toward a sermon (or teaching lesson) based on both an Old Testament and New Testament text.

- B. Content. The student should be able to do the following
 - 1. Think through the contents of Hebrews without recourse to the printed text;
 - 2. Identify significant passages in Hebrews and interpret them contextually;
 - 3. Demonstrate the importance of a sound methodology for interpretation, including specific examples from Hebrews;
 - 4. Describe thoroughly the meaning and development of major themes in Hebrews, citing individual passages and other specific data to support conclusions;
 - 5. Discuss the historical and religious background of Hebrews, demonstrating a general knowledge of critical problems regarding Hebrews and an ability to use these data in the interpretation of Hebrews.

- C. Attitude. The student should:
 - 1. Appreciate the value of sound methodology for the interpretation of the biblical materials, resulting in a desire to apply the inductive method to other biblical books;
 - 2. Desire to make the Book of Hebrews the object of intensive and creative study throughout life;
 - 3. Intend to employ seriously the Book of Hebrews in preaching and teaching within the context of the church.

II. Course Texts.

- A. Required Texts:
 - Revised Standard Version of the Bible, or New Revised Standard Version of the Bible,
 - Greek New Testament, or Interlinear Greek New Testament.
 - It's Still Greek to Me, by David A. Black
 - An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry, by David R. Bauer
- B. Collateral Text:
 - "Hebrews," by William L. Lane, in Dictionary of the Later New Testament & Its Development. (This dictionary is a fine book to own, and is reasonably priced. But copies of this article are available at the Circulation Desk at the Library.

III. Course Requirements.

- A. The completion of the following lessons in writing, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. Assigned lessons are printed in **bold**. All lessons are to be handed in at the end of the class period on the day designated. No late papers will be accepted save in cases in which permission is granted by the instructor based on emergency.
- B. Punctual attendance at all class sessions. Absence of more than two will result in a grade penalty. Absence of more than four will result in loss of credit for the course. Exceptions will be made for emergencies or unavoidable absences.
- C. Careful reading of the assigned portions of the required and collateral texts.
- D. Listening to a tape of an expository sermon on a passage in Hebrews with a view toward entering in class discussion on the movement from text to proclamation (preaching or teaching).

IV. Course Evaluation.

Assignments - 100% Assignments are scheduled so that no more than two assignments will be required per week. Moreover, the lowest grade will be dropped.

2. Lessons.

- Lesson 1. Survey of the Book as a Whole.**
Read the entire book through at one sitting several times.

1. **Identify the general and specific materials of the book;**
2. **Locate the main units and sub-units in the book, and identify the major structural relationships operative in the book as a whole;**
3. **Ask a few interpretive questions regarding each major structural relationship observed;**
4. **Identify the key verses and strategic areas which provide insight into the book as a whole. Give reasons for each selection in terms of structural significance;**
5. **Note data bearing on such higher critical questions as the author, place and date of writing, recipients, provenance, unity of the book, etc.**
6. **Note other major impressions relating to the book as a whole.**

Lesson 2. Hebrews 1:5 – 2:18.

- A. Survey. Read 1:5 – 2:18 rapidly at one sitting. Survey this section by following these steps:
1. Give a brief title to each paragraph;
 2. Locate the main units and sub-units of the section, and identify the major structural relationships operative in the section as a whole;
 3. Ask a few interpretive questions regarding each major structural relationship observed;
 4. Identify the key verses which provide insight into the section as a whole. Give reasons for each selection in terms of structural significance.
 5. Note other major impressions.
- B. Interpretation of 1:5-14. Interpret this segment (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive questions, major issues, or strategic areas identified in your survey. Or answer one or more of the following interpretive questions:
1. What is the meaning of each of the major contrasts between Christ and the angels in 1:5-14 (note in the process the meaning of the major christological titles)? How are these major contrasts related to each other, and how do they illumine each other? Why are these contrasts emphasized? What implications emerge from these contrasts (especially in terms of angelology and christology)?
 2. Examine each OT quotation in its original context. On the basis of this examination, how does the writer use the OT? Why does he thus use the OT? Implications?
- C. Synthesis of 1:5-14
1. Summarize the teaching of 1:5-14 regarding Christ. Identify specific ways in which the christology of this segment can affect Christian living.
 2. How does 1:5-14 relate to 1:1-4? How does 1:1-4 illumine 1:5-14, and how does 1:5-14 illumine 1:1-4?

Lesson 3. Hebrews 1:5 - 2:18, Continued.

- A. Interpretation of 2:1-18. Interpret this segment (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive questions, major issues, or strategic areas identified in your survey. Or answer one or more of the following

interpretive questions:

1. What is the meaning of the exhortation in 2:1? What motivations for obeying this exhortation are mentioned in 2:2-4, and how does each substantiate the exhortation? How is 2:1-4 related to ch. 1 (note especially the full meaning of the "therefore" in 2:1)?
 2. Trace the thought of 2:5-18. In light of the development of the argument, answer the following questions:
 - a. The meaning and implications of 2:5-8?
 - b. What are the main assertions made regarding Jesus in 2:18? Meaning and implications of each? In light of these assertions, why is it "fitting" that Jesus should be made "perfect through suffering" (v. 10)?
 3. What problems of the readers are suggested by the emphases of this segment? How does 2:1-18 address, and attempt to solve, these problems?
- B. Synthesis of 2:1-18.
1. Summarize the teaching of this segment regarding (a) christology, (b) anthropology (i.e., doctrine of humanity), and (c) atonement. How are these three concerns related to each other in an overall theology of the segment?
 2. How are these theological emphases relevant for Christians today, i.e., how should they specifically affect Christian thinking and behavior?
- C. Application and Proclamation
1. On the basis of your interpretation, explore specific ways in which this segment can be applied to yourself and/or other contemporary persons.
 2. Develop a proclamation outline. A proclamation outline is not synonymous with a sermon outline (which assumes homiletical crafting), but is rather the statement of a specific proclamatory thesis, with three to five main points that develop the overall proclamatory thesis (and are clearly and explicitly related to one another). Each of the main points should itself be developed in a brief but specific paragraph, which describes the (theological) teaching derived from the interpretation of the text, the contemporary appropriation derived from the application process, and the relationship between the two.

Lesson 4. Hebrews 3:1 - 4:16.

- A. **Survey. Using the suggestions in Lesson 2.A., survey this section.**
- B. **Interpretation of 3:1-19. Interpret this segment (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive questions, major issues, or strategic areas identified in your survey. Or answer one or more of the following interpretive questions:**
 1. **What is the meaning of the contrast between Jesus and Moses in 3:2-6a? How does this contrast substantiate and illumine the appeal in 3:1? Elucidate the meaning of the "therefore" in 3:1.**
 2. **What exhortations are found in this segment, and what is the meaning of each? How is each exhortation supported by the argument of the segment (note especially the flow of the argument,**

and key terms, e.g. "faithful," "confidence," "unbelief," "rebellion")? In your own words, paraphrase each exhortation and the author's support of it.

3. Examine the quotation from Psalm 95 in light of its original context and Numbers 14:1-35. Analyze Israel's sin as set forth in this quotation. What does this analysis reveal regarding the dangers the readers were facing?

C. Synthesis of 3:1-19.

Explore the relationship between the individual exhortations in this chapter. What main concern lies behind all these exhortations? How does the comparison between Israel and the readers underscore this main concern? What dangers in the contemporary church are reflected in this segment? How does this segment speak to these? Be specific.

D. Follow the suggestions under Lesson 3, part C.

Lesson 5. Hebrews 3:1 - 4:16, Continued.

- A. Interpretation of 4:1-16. Interpret this segment (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive questions, major issues, or strategic areas identified in your survey. Or answer one or more of the following interpretive questions:**

1. Trace the argument of 4:1-10. Keeping in mind the use of Ps. 95 here, and the references to creation and Joshua, what is meant by the "rest of God?" How does one enter that rest?
2. What is the meaning of the exhortation in v. 11? How does it result from the argument in vv. 1-10? What assertions are made regarding the word of God in vv. 12-13, and how do they substantiate the exhortation of v. 11?
3. How do the exhortations in 4:14-16 relate to chs. 3-4? What is said regarding Jesus' role as high priest, and what is the meaning of this description? How does this description of Jesus as high priest substantiate and illumine the exhortations in this paragraph?

B. Synthesis and Application of 4:1-16.

Summarize the teaching regarding the "rest of God" in chs. 3-4.

C. Follow the suggestions under Lesson 3, part C.

Lesson 6. Hebrews 5 and 6.

- A. Survey. Using the suggestions in Lesson 2.A., survey 5:1-10 and 5:11 - 6:20.**

B. Interpretation. Interpret this segment (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive questions, major issues, or strategic areas identified in your survey. Or answer one or more of the following interpretive questions:

1. What qualifications for a high priest are set forth in 5:1-4? What is the meaning of each? According to 5:5-10, how does Jesus meet these qualifications? Analyze and interpret 5:7-10.
2. What is the meaning of the exhortation in 6:1-3? How does the description of the readers in 5:11-14 illumine this exhortation, and how does this exhortation flow from this description?

3. How does 6:4-8 substantiate the exhortation in 6:1-3? Interpret 6:4-6. What are the implications?
4. What is the meaning of 6:9-12? How does it relate to 5:11 - 6:8?
5. Trace the argument of 6:13-20. How does the author reach his conclusion? How is this paragraph related to the preceding?

C. Synthesis

What are the main points in this material? How is each related to the flow of the argument in Hebrews?

- D. Follow the suggestions under Lesson 3, part C.**

Lesson 7. Hebrews 7.

A. Survey. Using the suggestions in Lesson 2.A., survey Hebrews 7.

B. Interpretation. Interpret this segment (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive questions, major issues, or strategic areas identified in your survey. Or answer one or more of the following interpretive questions:

1. What is the meaning of the description of Melchizedek presented here? How does Genesis 14:17-20 illumine this description?
2. In what ways is Melchizedek contrasted to the sons of Levi? Why this contrast? Implications?
3. Trace the logic of 7:11-28. What main points does the author make? How does he support these main points?

C. Synthesis

Summarize the differences between the priesthood of Jesus and the Levitical priesthood.

- D. Follow the suggestions under Lesson 3, part C.**

Lesson 8. Hebrews 8:1 - 10:18.

A. Survey. Using the suggestions in Lesson 2.A., survey Hebrews 8:1 - 10:18.

B. Interpretation of 8:1 - 9:10. Interpret this segment (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive questions, major issues, or strategic areas identified in your survey. Or answer one or more of the following interpretive questions:

1. Trace the argument of 8:1 - 9:10. What main contrasts are found here? What is the meaning of each? How is each supported? Why does the writer stress these contrasts? How are these contrasts related? Implications?
2. Examine 8:8-12 in its original OT context. How does this passage function in the argument of 8:1 - 9:10, and how does its original OT context inform its use and meaning here? How does OT background inform the meaning and function of 9:1-10?

C. Synthesis and Application of 8:1 - 9:10.

Summarize the main truths of 8:1 - 9:10. How do these truths relate to the preceding argument in Hebrews?

- D. Follow the suggestions under Lesson 3, part C.**

Lesson 9. Hebrews 8:1 - 10:18, continued.

A. Interpretation of 9:11 - 10:18. Interpret this segment (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive questions, major issues,

or strategic areas identified in your survey. Or answer one or more of the following interpretive questions:

1. Trace the reasoning of 9:11 - 10:18. What main contrasts are found in 9:11-14, and what is the meaning of each? Explore the relation of 9:15 to 9:11-14. How does 9:16-22 substantiate 9:15?
 2. How does the writer prove the superiority of Jesus' sacrifice in 9:23 - 10:18? How do the OT quotations function in this argument? Implications?
- B. Synthesis of 9:11 - 10:18.
Summarize the ways in which Jesus and his sacrifice are superior to the Levitical priesthood and the old covenant.
- C. Follow the suggestions under Lesson 3, part C.

Lesson 10. Hebrews 10:19-39.

- A. Survey. Using the suggestions in Lesson 2.A., survey this segment.
- B. Interpretation. Interpret this segment (or a portion of it) on the basis of one or more structural relationships, interpretive questions, major issues, or strategic areas identified in your survey.
Or answer one or more of the following interpretive questions:
 1. Explore the meaning and significance of the "therefore" in 10:19. How does this relationship with the preceding material illumine 10:19-39?
 2. What exhortations are given in this segment? What is the meaning of each? How is each supported? How are these exhortations related? Why these exhortations? Implications?
 3. Trace the argument of 10:26-31. What is the meaning of this passage? How is this passage related to 6:4-8?
- C. Synthesis
State the main truths of this segment in a paragraph.
- D. Follow the suggestions under Lesson 3, part C.

Lesson 11. Hebrews 11.

Do an original study of this unit. Identify the steps followed, and your findings regarding each step. On the basis of your study, develop a series of questions that could be used to lead an adult Bible study group on this passage.

Lesson 12. Hebrews 12.

Apply the suggestions under Lesson 11 to this unit.

Lesson 13. Hebrews 13.

Apply the suggestions under Lesson 11 to this unit.

Lesson 14. Synthesis of Hebrews.

Synthesize the Book of Hebrews by answering the interpretive questions raised under one major structural relationship identified in the survey of the book. Be as thorough, analytical and integrative as possible.

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Hebrews - page 14

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NOTE: German commentaries by Braun, Feld, Grässer, Hegemann, Schlatter, Strathmann, Strobel, Weiss, and Windisch; and French commentaries by Bénétreau, Bonsirven, Héring, Hugedé, and Spicq.