

# Books of The Bible

## The Structure of Hebrews

### Introduction

It has often been said that to understand a Biblical book one must use the correct key. In all books there is a need to discover where the Holy Spirit has put the divisions, what the goal of the book is, and how the passages are built on each other. There is the quest to understand why certain portions are where they are. For instance, what has the rain coming down on two pieces of land have in connection with that which has gone before (ch. 6:7-8)? It seems out of place, but God is the God of order and consequently, not a thought in the scriptures is out of place.

When we approach Hebrews we soon observe that there are a series of groups of four steps. That is, in the first major step there are four “steps”. They are:

- a) The exposition of divine truth
- b) An exhortation based on the divine truth stated
- c) A warning against rejecting the divine truth
- d) An exhortation to respond to the divine truth

Putting this in table form it looks like the following:

Passage	Exposition of divine truth	Exhortation based on the divine truth	A warning against rejecting the divine truth	Exhortation to respond to the divine truth
<b>Ch. 1:1-2:4</b>	ch. 1:1-1:14	ch. 2:1	ch. 2:2-3a	ch. 2:3b-4
<b>Ch. 2:5-4:16</b>	ch. 2:5-3:6	ch. 3:7-3:11	ch. 3:12-4:11	ch. 4:12-4:16
<b>Ch. 5:1-6:20</b>	ch. 5:1-5:11	ch. 5:12-6:3	ch. 6:4-6:8	ch. 6:9-6:20
<b>Ch. 7:1-10:39</b>	ch. 7:1-10:18	ch. 10:19-10:25	ch. 10:26-10:31	ch.10:32-10:39
<b>Ch. 11:1-13:21</b>	ch. 11:1-11:40	ch. 12:1-12:14	ch. 12:15-12:27	ch. 12:28-13:21

### Filling In The Details

#### **Section 1: Ch. 1:1-2:4**

- a) The exposition of divine truth:
  - i) (Ch. 1:1) God spoke in “sundry times” . . . (Ch. 1:14) “to minister for them who shall be heirs.”
- b) The exhortation, based on the divine truth:
  - i) (Ch. 2:1a) “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard.” Be assured of its truth by the superior spokesman and signs by the Holy Spirit.
- c) The warning:
  - i) (Ch. 2:2b-3a) “Lest at any time we should let them slip . . . How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation”
    1. To the waverers, “if you neglect so great salvation”, there is no escaping its ultimate consequences.
    2. The case history background for this warning, the Exodus and Sinai (Ex. 19:1, 19; 20:1-23:33)
    3. Do not neglect the spoken message.

## Books of The Bible

### The Structure of Hebrews

- d) The exhortation to respond to the divine truth:
  - i) (Ch. 2:3b-4) “Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord . . . gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.”

#### **Section 2: Ch. 2:5-4:16**

- a) The exposition of divine truth:
  - i) (Ch. 2:5) “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection” . . . (Ch. 3:6) Rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end”
- b) The exhortation based on the divine truth:
  - i) (Ch. 3:7) “Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear His voice” . . . (Ch. 3:11) “So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest”
  - ii) God through Christ is promising rest
  - iii) God through Christ is promising security
- c) The warning:
  - i) (Ch. 3:12) “Take heed . . . lest there be in any of you . . . unbelief” . . . (Ch. 4:11) “Let us . . . enter . . . lest any man fall through unbelief”. **(Ch. 4:7)** “Today if ye will hear His voice”.
  - ii) The case history background warned of the solemnity of neglecting the judgment which God had shown historically for their refusal to enter the land had severe consequences.
  - iii) Respond today and enter His rest.
  - iv) If you harden your heart you shall never enter His rest.
- d) The exhortation to respond to the divine truth:
  - i) (Ch. 4:12) “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful” . . . (Ch. 4:16) “Obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”

#### **Section 3: Ch. 5:1-6:20**

- a) The exposition of divine truth: (Ch. 5:1-11)
  - i) (Ch. 5:1) “For every high priest taken from among men” . . . (Ch. 5:11) “Hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing”
  - ii) The likeness of Christ to the Aaronic Priest.
  - iii) His superlative glory being a priest after the order of Melchizedec, having shown the permanence of our High Priest and His succouring for us in the second section.
- b) The exhortation based on the divine truth: (Ch. 5:12-6:3)
  - i) (Ch. 5:12) “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers” . . . (Ch. 6:3) “And this will we do, if God permit.”
  - ii) Develop and be established in the truth, the Lord is speaking.
  - iii) Rebuke the believers (Ch. 5:11-14).
  - iv) Warning the waverers (Ch. 6:1-4).
- c) The warning: (Ch. 6:4-6:8)
  - i) It is impossible to renew them again. . . (Ch. 6:8) “Nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.”
  - ii) Do not doubt the severity of the warning.
  - iii) The case history is the background in the wilderness and the tempting of the Lord.
  - iv) Do not delay.
  - v) Regarding the believers, there comes a time when dealing with people we must leave them to the discipline of God and stop trying to do the work of the Holy Spirit.
- d) The exhortation to respond to the divine truth: (Ch. 6:9-6:20)

## Books of The Bible

### The Structure of Hebrews

- i) (Ch. 6:9) “But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you” . . . (Ch. 6:20) “Jesus made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec”.
- ii) A fortification from remembrance Ch. 6:9)
- iii) An encouragement from the present (Ch. 6:10)
- iv) An emotional longing for the saints (Ch. 6:11)
- v) An encouragement not to be slothful but followers of that which is good having:
  - 1. A sure promise (Ch. 6:13-15)
  - 2. A sacred pledge (Ch. 6:16-18a)
  - 3. A secure pledge (Ch. 6:18b-10)

#### **Section 4: Ch. 7:1-10:39**

- a) The exposition of divine truth: (Ch. 7:1-10:18)
  - i) (Ch. 7:1) “For this Melchisedec . . . priest of the most high God” . . . (Ch. 10:18) “Where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin.”
- b) The exhortation based on the divine truth: (Ch. 10:19-10:25)
  - i) (Ch. 10:19) “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter” . . . (Ch. 10:25) “So much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”
- c) The warning: (Ch. 10:26-10:31)
  - i) (Ch. 10:26) “If we sin wilfully after that we have received” . . . (Ch. 10:31) “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
  - ii) To the waverers, when you know the truth, seriously think of the consequences of your rejection of the message and the horrific consequences of belittling God and His Son.
  - iii) To believers, do not despise the chastening of the Lord.
  - iv) The case history background, is the judgment of God on the two sons of Aaron and the distinction between wilful and unwitting son.
- d) The exhortation to respond to the divine truth: (Ch. 10:32-10:39)
  - i) (Ch. 10:32) “But call to remembrance the former days” . . . (Ch. 10:39) “But of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

#### **Section 5: Ch. 11:1-13:21**

- a) The exposition of divine truth: (Ch. 11:1-11:40)
  - i) (Ch. 11:1) “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for” . . . (Ch. 11:40) “That they without us should not be made perfect.”
- b) The exhortation based on the divine truth: (Ch. 12:1-12:14)
  - i) (Ch. 12:1) “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about” . . . (Ch. 12:14) “Without which no man shall see the Lord.”
  - ii) It is the will of God to seek to cause us to spiritually develop in the truth and to display the truth by life.
- c) The warning:
  - i) (Ch. 12:15) “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God” . . . (Ch. 12:27) “Those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”
  - ii) To believers, Don’t despise (Ch. 12:5).
  - iii) To waverers, Don’t refuse (Ch. 12:25).
  - iv) The case history background is Sinai and that despite the warning, they did go up to the mountain.
  - v) There is no escape (Ch. 12:25).

## Books of The Bible The Structure of Hebrews

- d) The exhortation to respond to the divine truth: (Ch. 12:15-13:21)
  - i) (Ch. 12:28) “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved” . . . (Ch. 13:21) “To whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen”.

### The Interrelationship of The Sections To Each Other

In such a survey as this, or any study of the Word of God, it is good to ask questions. Regarding Hebrews, questions such as:

- a) What makes the first section so important?
- b) What does the exhortation have to do with the exposition?
- c) What effect ought the exposition and exhortation have on the warning?
- d) How does the closing comments assist in making the right decision relative to the exposition and exhortation?

Like any good piece of art, be it story or music, each stanza or sentence is built on that which has gone before and forms the basis for that which follows. That is, the first sentence, verse, etc., lays a foundation on which each suspending sentence or verse leads to a slightly different but complete in itself thought, leading to a particular goal. It is the same with Hebrews.

- a) Hebrews, as the above shows, has five distinct steps leading to the ultimate purpose of God of making us perfect (Heb. 13:21), that is, mature believers. Once we see this then it is logical that the first section lays the foundation and then the second section follows and develops some aspect of it while preparing the reader for the next section.
  - i) Section one lays the foundation. God has spoken, Jehovah has spoken, not through sinful man but in the One who is His co equal, His Son. Furthermore, this One has been made higher than angels, is the Mighty Creator and remover of the universe, and is sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. This is speaking about the Lord as a man, speaking about Jesus, for it was Jesus who is the inheritor of all things, and in the days of His flesh made purification for sin.
  - ii) Section two now develops two major truths begun in the first section. The superlative position Jesus has over the angels, for it is under man God has put the world in subjection, and Jesus was and is a real man. When on the cross it was no Christ like aurora, it was Jesus the man who, by the grace of God, did a work no angel could do. He tasted death for every man. We never read of an angel dying nor much less dying on behalf of someone else. Not only did the Son take part of humanness but He knew what it was to suffer so that He could be a suitable High Priest who would be able to succour the tempted.

*To be continued....*

---

**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.  
John 16:13**

Rowan Jennings, Abbotsford, British Columbia