



Nipawin Bible College
BT252 – The Letter to the Hebrews
Instructor: Dr Joel Houston
Winter 2018
3 Credit Hours
jhouston@nipawin.org

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Times were bleak for Hebrew Christians in the mid first-century. Despite a strong start in the faith, Jewish Christians faced violent persecution and were subsequently demoralized.

The writer of Hebrews, sometimes referred to as the “Pastor”, took up their pen in order to encourage this fledgling band of believers. Pointing to the absolute supremacy of Christ, the Pastor exhorted the discouraged Christians to cling fast to their only hope, the risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

Two millennia later, not much has changed. New (and old!) Christians, still face persecution and discouragement on a daily basis—does the message of Hebrews still apply? BT252 seeks to demonstrate the timelessness of Holy Scripture, and in particular, the Pastor’s exhortation to all Christians to “hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful” (Heb 10:23).

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The Holy Bible, *Recommended Translations: ESV, NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV.*

Brown, Raymond, *The Message of Hebrews: The Bible Speaks Today*, Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press. 1984.

THE BIG QUESTION

What hope is there for the faithful, yet discouraged, in the time of trial?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) The student will understand and articulate the historical circumstances surrounding the letter to the Hebrews.
- 2) The student will be aware of, and conversant in, the exegetical and hermeneutical challenges involved in interpreting the letter to the Hebrews.
- 3) The student will feel more confident in their ability to trace the theological argument of Christ’s supremacy throughout the letter to the Hebrews.
- 4) The student will apply their knowledge of exhortation passages of Hebrews in order to encourage fellow believers.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Bible Reading – 15%

- The Student will read the Epistle to the Hebrews through in its entirety (preferably, in one sitting), making marginal notes and highlighting in their bible. Students will complete the reading completion form (see end of syllabus) and submit it by end of day on the first class of the semester. **(15pp)**

DUE: February 7th, 2018

Participation – 10%

- Students will be expected to participate enthusiastically in the in-class exercises, demonstrations, and discussions. Additionally, supplemental reading will be provided and students will be expected to critically engage with this additional material. As this class is shorter in duration, participation is mandatory and vital to a robust educational experience.
- Grading: Pass/Fail.

DUE: Ongoing Throughout Course

The Message of Hebrews Course Text Reading – 15%

- Read Raymond Brown's *The Message of Hebrews* textbook in its entirety and interact with the book. Your interaction with the writers will include underlining and/or highlighting the text along with written comments in the margins (or sticky notes if you so not like writing in books). Your written comments need to be legible and written in **pen only**. Finally, write a one-page critique of the book. Your book will be evaluated as evidence of your careful reading. **(275 pp)**

DUE: March 7th, 2018

A Letter of Encouragement – 30%

- We have all experienced a season of discouragement in our faith journey. Indeed, you may find yourself in one even now. In the spirit of the letter to the Hebrews, **the student will write a letter of encouragement to a friend, family-member, or even acquaintance**. Using the language and theology of Hebrews (citing no less than three passages), and in particular, the exultant

Christology of “the Pastor”, the student will seek to encourage and exhort their audience to perseverance and faith in Christ. This letter must be handwritten, and **be three-double spaced pages on lined foolscap paper**. The student will write clearly, and legibly, and in some cases, beautifully.

- The student must write in a caring and gentle manner, not indelicately handling the circumstances of their audience’s source of discouragement. The student will not place blame or fault with their audience, and the letter will not unduly air private grievances.
- The student will indicate to whom the letter is intended, and it is expected the letter shall be delivered to the recipient by Easter Sunday (April 1st, 2018). If the student has no appropriate recipient, they will write and mail the letter to themselves, reading it aloud to themselves on the morning of Easter Sunday.
- Students will photocopy their letter and submit it to the instructor of record by the due date below.

DUE: March 15th, 2018

Research Paper - %30

- The Student will write a carefully researched paper of 6-7 pages on one of the following topics (see below). The student is to make sure that their reading for this research includes some authors whose viewpoint differs from their own. A minimum of five sources should be used of which a maximum of two can be Galaxie Journals. Internet resources are discouraged, owing in large measure to NBC’s impressive holdings on Hebrews related material.

Potential Research Topics Include:

The New Covenant in Hebrews
The Persecuted Church in Hebrews
The Crisis of Unbelief in Hebrews
The Warning Passages of Hebrews
The Superiority of Jesus in Hebrews
The Need for Perseverance
Who was Melchizedek and how is he connected to Jesus?
What is the “Rest” in Hebrews 4?
The Use of Psalm 110 in the Book of Hebrews

DUE: April 6th, 2018

All written assignments are to be typed (with the exception of “*A Letter of Encouragement*”) in accordance with the NBC Study Guide for papers. Assignments will be graded on the basis of content, clarity, grammar, and spelling. Assignments will be due **no later than 5:00 pm** on the day that they are assigned.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- Refer to the NBC Handbook 2017/2018

LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY:

- Refer to the NBC Handbook 2017/2018

Reading: 300pp

Writing: 9-10pp

Selected Bibliography for the Epistle to the Hebrews

Allen, David L. *Hebrews*. The New American Commentary. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010.

Arnold, Clinton E. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation*. Vol. 4. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002.

Barclay, William, ed. *The Letter to the Hebrews*. The Daily Study Bible Series. Philadelphia: The Westminster John Knox Press, 1975.

Barton, Bruce B., David Veerman, Linda Chaffee Taylor, and Philip Wesley Comfort. *Hebrews*. Life Application Bible Commentary. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997.

Brown, Raymond. *The Message of Hebrews: Christ Above All*. The Bible Speaks Today. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988.

Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. Rev. ed. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990.

Calvin, John. *Hebrews*. Electronic ed. Calvin’s Commentaries. Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998.

Calvin, John, and John Owen. *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010.

Cockerill, Gareth L. *Hebrews: a Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*. Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 1998.

- Ellingworth, Paul. *The Epistle to the Hebrews: a Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1993.
- Ellingworth, Paul, and Eugene Albert Nida. *A Handbook on the Letter to the Hebrews*. UBS Handbook Series. New York: United Bible Societies, 1994.
- Eubanks, David L., and Robert C. Shannon. *Hebrews: Unlocking the Scriptures for You*. Standard Bible Studies. Cincinnati, OH: Standard, 1986.
- Evans, Louis H., Jr, and Lloyd J. Ogilvie. *Hebrews*. Vol. 33. The Preacher's Commentary Series. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1985.
- Everett, Gary H. *The Epistle of Hebrews*. Study Notes on the Holy Scriptures. Gary Everett, 2010.
- Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G. *The Messianic Jewish Epistles: Hebrews, James, First Peter, Second Peter, Jude*. 1st ed. Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2005.
- Gaebelein, Arno C. *The Annotated Bible: Philippians to Hebrews*. Vol. 8. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009.
- Gaebelein, Frank E., Leon Morris, Donald W. Burdick, Edwin A. Blum, Glenn W. Barker, and Alan F. Johnson. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*. Vol. 12. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981.
- Gingrich, Roy E. *The Book of Hebrews*. Memphis, TN: Riverside Printing, 2004.
- Greenlee, J. Harold. *An Exegetical Summary of Hebrews*. 2nd ed. Dallas, TX: SIL International, 2008.
- De Haan, M. R. *Studies in Hebrews*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996.
- Hacking, Philip H. *Opening up Hebrews*. Opening Up Commentary. Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006.
- Hughes, R. Kent. *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993.
- Ironside, H. A. *Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1932.
- Isaacs, Marie E. *Reading Hebrews and James: a Literary and Theological Commentary*. Reading the New Testament Series. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2002.

- Joseph, Oscar L. *The Expositor's Bible: Ephesians to Revelation*. Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll. Vol. 6. Expositor's Bible. Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton Co., 1903.
- Kistemaker, Simon J., and William Hendriksen. *Exposition of Hebrews*. Vol. 15. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001.
- Lange, John Peter, Philip Schaff, Carl Bernhard Moll, and A. C. Kendrick. *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Hebrews*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008.
- Lauersdorf, Richard E. *Hebrews*. The People's Bible. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Pub. House, 1986.
- Lea, Thomas D. *Hebrews, James*. Vol. 10. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999.
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- Lucado, Max. *Life Lessons from the Inspired Word of God: Book of Hebrews*. Inspirational Bible Study Series. Dallas, TX: Word Pub., 1987.
- MacArthur, John F., Jr. *Hebrews*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Press, 1983.
- Manser, Martin H. *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser, 2009.
- McGee, J. Vernon. *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Epistles (Hebrews 1-7)*. Vol. 51. Electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991.
- McGee, J. Vernon. *Thru the Bible Commentary: The Epistles (Hebrews 8-13)*. Vol. 52. Electronic ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991.
- Miller, Jeffrey E. *Study, Apply, Share: Hebrews*. Edited by Elliot Ritzema. Pastorum Series. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012.
- O'Brien, Peter T. *The Letter to the Hebrews*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010.
- J. Dwight, and Ken Durham. *Faith That Endures : a Practical Commentary on the Book of Hebrews*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2000.

Pink, Arthur Walkington. *An Exposition of Hebrews*. Swengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, 1954.

Sacks, Stuart. *Hebrews through a Hebrew's Eyes: Hope in the Midst of a Hopeless World*. Baltimore, MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers, 1995.

Schaff, Philip, ed. *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of St. John and Epistle to the Hebrews*. Vol. 14. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series. New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889.

Stedman, Ray C. *Hebrews*. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Tozer, A. W., and Gerald B. Smith. *Jesus, Author of Our Faith*. Camp Hill, PA.: WingSpread, 1988.

Tozer, A. W., and Gerald B. Smith. *Jesus, Our Man in Glory: 12 Messages from the Book of Hebrews*. Camp Hill, PA.: WingSpread, 1987.

Utley, Robert James. *The Superiority of the New Covenant: Hebrews*. Vol. Volume 10. Study Guide Commentary Series. Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 1999.

Westcott, Brooke Foss, ed. *The Epistle to the Hebrews the Greek Text with Notes and Essays*. 3d ed. Classic Commentaries on the Greek New Testament. London: Macmillan, 1903.

BT252 Reading Report

I, _____, have read the entirety of the Epistle to the Hebrews for this specific class, from the following translation: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____