



Exploring God's Love through the Bible:

God's Love in the Epistle to the Hebrews

February 12, 2017

INITIAL TEXTS FOR THOUGHT: HEB 10:19-39

- Friends, I chose this Text because in just a few verses, God's love in Hebrews is very well summarized.
- Hebrews, an inspired Epistle whose authorship is disputed, is in many ways difficult for many readers.

1. It's **Humbling**. It begins with a view not only of the majesty of Christ, but continually explains how wonderful His holy incarnation and High Priesthood is for our sakes.

Heb 1:1-4 *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

Heb 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*

Heb 5:8-9 *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*

2. It's **Messy**. It crashes against neat theological golden calves, with verses like these:

Heb 2:3 *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*

Heb 6:4-9 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. 7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. 9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.*

3. It's **Deep**. It explains, to a mostly Jewish audience, how Christ fulfills Old Testament types and shadows, particularly as it relates to the Temple. As one example:

Heb 9:11-15 *But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*

4. It's **Commanding**. It calls, in no uncertain terms, for holiness...

Heb 12:13-17 *And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. 14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

Heb 12:28-29 *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.*

- William MacDonald describes Hebrews this way:

In a general way, Hebrews deals with the tremendous struggle involved in leaving one religious system for another. There is the violent wrenching of old ties, the stresses and tensions of alienation, and the formidable pressures exerted on the renegade to return.

But in this Epistle the problem was not just a question of leaving an old system for a new one of equal value. Rather it was a matter of leaving Judaism for Christ, and as the writer shows, this involved leaving shadows for the substance, ritual for reality, the prior for the ultimate, the temporary for the permanent—in short, the good for the best.

The problem also involved leaving the popular for the unpopular, the majority for the minority, and the oppressors for the oppressed. And this precipitated many serious problems.

- The Answer of course, for all TRUE believers (Jewish or Gentile) is Christ. He is worth any persecution and His New Covenant, based on His perfect, atoning sacrifice, is greater than the Old Covenant! Again, from the Believer's Bible Commentary:

The Epistle to the Hebrews is really an answer to the question, "*What do you have?*" In a word the answer is *Christ*. In Him *we have*:

- One who is greater than the prophets.
- One who is greater than the angels.
- One who is greater than Moses.
- One who is greater than Joshua.
- One whose priesthood is superior to that of Aaron.
- One who serves in a better sanctuary.
- One who has introduced a better covenant.
- One who is the antitype of the typical furniture and veil.
- One whose once-for-all offering of Himself for sin is superior to the repeated sacrifices of bulls and goats.

Just as the stars fade from view in the greater glory of the sun, so the types and shadows of Judaism pale into insignificance before the greater glory of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus.

AMEN! SIMPLE EXHORTATIONS FROM ON OUR TEXT:

1. Because of the Love of God in Christ, we can **boldly** enter His Presence by His blood! (v19-20)
2. Because of the Love of God in Christ, our hearts have been changed, our faith assured, and our consciences purified! (v22)
3. Because of the Love of God in Christ, we can “hold fast” without wavering because HE is faithful! (v23)
4. Because of the Love of God in Christ, we can **exhort** each other to good works, including consistently coming together on the Lord’s Day! (v24-25)
5. Because of the Love of God in Christ, we are warned against **willful** sin. (v26-30) We must never trod Christ underfoot through our attitudes and behaviors!
6. Because of the Love of God in Christ, the faithful do not have to fear God’s **wrath**! (v31)
7. Because of the Love of God in Christ, we can endure afflictions with **joy**, because we have a “better and enduring” substance in heaven! (v32-34)
8. Because of the Love of God in Christ, we can be confident and bold despite afflictions! (v35)
9. Because of the Love of God in Christ, we can walk in patience and long-suffering! (v36)
10. Because of the Love of God in Christ, we can live by **faith** and not shrink back! We therefore believe to the saving of our souls! (v37-39)

FINAL EXHORTATIONS AND PRAYERS FROM HEBREWS.

Oh how God must love us to encourage us so!

- **Heb 12:1-3** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, **2** Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.
- **Heb 13:1-3** Let brotherly love continue. **2** Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. **3** Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.
- **Heb 13:5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.
- **Heb 13:7** Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.
- **Heb 13:15** By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. (Heb 13:8)

Amen!