

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church
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Sermon title: The Final Charge, Hebrews 13

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INTRODUCTION: We've been on a journey here and a meaningful one. I've received phone calls and emails from some of you in the congregation and from people who watch our TV program. I've found myself in numerous discussions about Hebrews, including one this past week. I appreciate when I hear from you that you've learned something new.

Well, let me tell you...I have learned, too. I haven't preached to you canned sermons straight from a book, although I read the sermons and writings of others. I studied, and probably the best way to say it is, at times, I laughed, and at times I was frustrated. At times, the light came on, and at other times, I had to look for the light switch. It strikes me as funny that sometimes people naively think understanding the scripture is easy for ministers. At various times in my ministry, people have asked me the meaning of certain scriptures and were a bit disappointed to find I didn't have an instant answer...which brings me to this point: Folks, I am just a pilgrim passing through, like you. I don't have any special revelation. Those of you, who teach in Sunday School or in other Bible studies, know what I'm talking about. You know what it's like to get to a point in your study where you wonder what's next. You get to a point where you ask God to please help you see what's next. If you've labored over any passage of scripture, then you know the joy of the moment when it hits you.

Now, I've said all this to say, I'm really glad we have the Book of Hebrews. This book was written for people who tried to find their way in this new world, where Jesus was all that mattered. Before Jesus, people who were segregated by race and religion were now united. What we gather from the subject matter of the book is: Many were struggling with their new found faith. And, they were being encouraged by the Judaizers to either return to the Jewish faith or to include all of the Jewish traditions and laws along with their Christianity.

So, the Apostle Paul, who I believe is the author of Hebrews, decided it was time to write a special and unique book, which would revisit and summarize the Hebrew scriptures through the lens of Christ.

And so, in Hebrews 1, we had clarification: Jesus was superior to angels. Verse 4 says, *“So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.”*

In Chapter 2, we had further clarification about angels. In this day, there are all kinds of beliefs about angels. We learned how the power of Jesus frees people from the slavery of the fear of death. Verse 18, *“Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”*

In Chapter 3, we had teaching: Jesus was greater than Moses. Verses 4 and 5 say, *“For every house is built by someone, but God is the building of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God’s house, testifying to what would be said in the future. But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house. And we are his house if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.”*

In Chapter 4, we had a review of the Sabbath and the introduction of Jesus as the high priest, which went into Chapter 5, where we were introduced to Jesus as the high priest. Chapter 4, verse 16 says, *“Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*

Chapter 5 ends with a warning about falling away. Verse 14: *“But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.”*

Chapter 6 gives further teaching about the importance of growing in the faith. Verse 1 *“Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings of Christ and go on to maturity,”*

Chapter 7 tells us: Jesus is a priest in the order of Melchizedek, which is a rather complicated concept for those of us in modern times who don’t know about Melchizedek, but I’ve already covered him, so if you want to learn about it, I guess

you'll have to get the DVD. Verse 26, *“Such a high priests meet our need – one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens ...*

Chapter 8 explains the new covenant and renders the old covenant obsolete. Verse 13, *“By calling this covenant ‘new,’ he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.”*

Chapter 9 reviewed what worship was like in the tabernacle of old. We learned Jesus became the high priest of a greater and more perfect tabernacle, which was not handmade. We learned, Jesus alone is the mediator of the new covenant, and therefore, it is not possible for any human to mediate for us. Verse 15, *“For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.”*

Chapter 10 confirms: Jesus Christ's sacrifice for us on the cross was once for all. We also learned: No animal sacrifice of yesteryear ever really forgave any sin, and only the sacrifice of Jesus was sufficient. This means the sins of people from before Jesus were rolled forward to the time of the crucifixion of Jesus. Verse 12, *“But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.”*

Chapter 11 gave us a definition of faith, and along with the definition, we had a review of noted people of faith. Verse 1 *“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”*

Chapter 12 tells us about running the race, tells us of God's discipline, and warns us not to refuse God. Verse 2 says, *“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

Chapter 13 concludes Hebrews with various truths and exhortations, most of which I covered last week. Now, let's move to the final words of Hebrews.

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 13:20-22 ²⁰ *Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep,* ²¹ *equip you with everything good for doing his will, and*

may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

²² *Brothers and sisters, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for in fact I have written to you quite briefly.*

EXPLANATION: In Verse 20, we have a parenthetical phrase. Look at the first comma in verse 20— From there until the end of the verse is another review and build up for something. *And, now may the God of peace* do what? Look in Verse 21: *“May the God of peace equip you with everything good for doing his will.”*

Here’s another way of saying it. If I had been the writer of Hebrews, I may have ended it like this:

- Now that I have written all this and clarified many things about Jesus,
- Now that I have reviewed what you knew to be true about your old life as a Jew,
- Now that I have reviewed what you know to be currently true,

MAY THE GOD OF PEACE EQUIP YOU WITH EVERYTHING GOOD FOR DOING HIS WILL.

And, secondly, what does he say?

And, MAY HE WORK IN US WHAT IS PLEASING TO HIM.

Now, let me run through some ways this book could have ended.

- It could have ended with a psalm of sorts – praise to God for all he’s done.
- It could have ended with a prayer.
- It could have ended telling people to be reflective and reverent as they think on these things.

But, no, it ended with a charge for God’s people to do his will and let him work in his people.

In other words, the writer could have said: “Now that I’ve clarified all this, let’s debate no more, and let’s all go to work.”

APPLICATION: A central truth to the scripture is: When God reveals truth to his people, he expects them to put it to action. There is just not any charge to take what you know and do nothing, yet it does seem that’s what many do.

CONCLUSION: And, there you have it. If you’ve had any doubts about the work of Christ and his role in your salvation, it should be cleared up now.

Let me ask you, do you know for certain you know this high priest named Jesus? Have you had a salvation experience where you have repented of your sins and trusted Jesus the Savior? You can do that today.

As we’ve learned in Hebrews, only the blood of Christ can save.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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Sincerely, Paul Gunn
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