**Bethel Christian Fellowship**

**Fair Lawn, NJ**

**Hebrews (29): The Book Of Better Things**

**“The Big Picture”**

**Hebrews 1:1-10:18**

**July 21, 2024**

Most students of the New Testament will acknowledge that Hebrews, like many of Paul’s letters, naturally divides into two major sections. In the words of Graham Scroggie, for example, there is “the Doctrinal Dissertation” (1:1-10:18) followed by “the Practical Application” (10:19-13:25) (The Unfolding Drama of Redemption: The Bible as A Whole). Up to this point, we have worked our way through this first major division (1:1-10:18). Would you believe that it’s *only* taken us twenty-eight consecutive Sundays (from January 7 – July 14)!

Before we move on to the second major unit (10:19ff) we are going to take a brief interlude. So now is the perfect time to review where we have been over the past half-year (plus two weeks). One of the best ways to do this is to sit back and look at “the big picture” that our author has put up on “the Biblical Screen.” It’s a picture that lifts up the Lord Jesus Christ in a very unique way:

He is “greater than” everything that has preceded Him in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Sometimes the author actually uses the words “greater than;” sometimes he doesn’t. But in every case, his point is still the same. The person and work of Jesus Christ is far superior to anyone and anything in the entire Judaic system.

The author develops this theme, as we now know, to prevent his readers from giving up the “substance” for its “shadow.” How so? By abandoning Christ, who is the fulfillment of all that the Old Testament has promised. Clearly, our author sees the New Covenant, which Jesus established by His death and resurrection, as vastly superior to the Old Covenant, which Moses introduced at Mount Sinai.

That’s the reason the author places a heavy stress on *doctrine* in this first section of Hebrews. He concentrates on *Christology* (the person and work of Christ) and *soteriology* (salvation). Along the way, he also exhorts his readers (including us) to “press on” to maturity in Christ, and “warns them against falling back, for this may result in falling away from their Christian faith altogether; he encourages them with the assurance that they have everything to lose if they fall back, but everything to gain if they press on” (F. F. Bruce).

The NIV Study Bible (2008) has an excellent overview of the many ways that Hebrews presents Jesus as “*greater than* all those things associated with the Jewish religion and way of life.” It’s taken from The Expositor’s Bible Commentary – Abridged Edition: New Testament. It’s a great way to view “the big picture” in this first section of Hebrews (1:1-10:18):

**The “Greater-Thans” in Hebrews**

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| **Theme Passage in Hebrews**  Jesus is greater than the prophets 1:1-3 |
| Jesus is greater than the angels 1:4-14; 2:5 |
| Jesus is greater than Moses 3:1-6 |
| Jesus is greater than Joshua 4:6-11 |
| Jesus is greater than the high priest 5:1-10; 7:26-8:2 |
| Jesus is greater than the Levitical priests 6:20-7:25 |
| Jesus as the high priest after Melchizedek is 7:1-10  greater than Abraham |
| Jesus’ ministry is greater than the 8:3-6; 9:1-28  tabernacle |
| Jesus’ new covenant is greater than the 8:7-13  old covenant |
| Jesus’ sacrifice is greater than OT sacrifices 10:1-14 |
| Experiencing Jesus is greater than the 12:18-24  Experience on Mount Sinai |