

SYLLABUS

2NT705. Spring 08
Exposition of Hebrews
3 hours

Dr. Simon J. Kistemaker
Email: skistemaker@rts.edu
Office hours: anytime

The Epistle to the Hebrews is the only book in the New Testament that teaches the doctrine of Christ's priesthood. In every chapter we learn to appreciate the author as a skilled and outstanding theologian who is thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament and who knows the teachings of Christ.

In addition, we study the doctrine of the covenant, the message and purpose of this book, as we apply its teachings to the church of today.

Hebrews is an epistle that intertwines doctrine and exhortation from beginning to end. In the first few verses of chapter 1, the author presents a brief summary of what he is going to say in the first ten chapters. Then in the last part of chapter 10, once more he gives introductory material for chapters 11-13.

The doctrine the author teaches is that of Christ's priesthood; the exhortations invariably are warnings to heed the Word of God. The author shows that he has a high view of the Scriptures, which for him are the word of the Triune God.

The epistle itself is well written in classical Greek with a broad vocabulary and balanced sentences. Verse by verse the reader sees and appreciates the development of the theme: Jesus is our high priest. The author is a pastor at heart, for in nearly every chapter he exhorts his readers to obey God's written revelation.

Schedule

- Feb. 05* Characteristics, Author, Recipients, Date, Contents.
- Feb. 12* Structure, Theology, Exegesis
Chapter 1:1-14. Superiority of the Son, and his divinity.
Psalm Citations.
- Feb. 19* Chapter 2:1-9. Admonition to Heed God's Word. Humanity of Jesus.
Chapter 2:10-18. Jesus and God's children. Jesus the high priest.
- Feb. 26* Chapter 3:1-6. Jesus superior to Moses.
Chapter 3:7-18. Psalm 95 and its message. Moses in the desert.
Chapter 4:1-13. Sabbath rest for God's people.
- March 04* Chapter 4:14-16. Jesus the great high priest.
Chapter 5:1-10. Christ is superior to Aaron. Jesus' life on earth.
- March 11* Chapter 5:11-14; 6:1-12. Admonition not to fall away.

Chapter 6:13-20. God is faithful in his promises.

TEST

- March 18* Chapter 7:1-28. Melchizedek. Jesus and Melchizedek. God's oath and Psalm 110:4. Jesus the high priest.
- April 01* Chapter 8:1-13; 9:1-10. The high priest and tabernacle. Jesus the mediator. The old and new covenants. Worship in the tabernacle.
- April 08* Chapter 9:11-28. Outward and inward cleansing from sin. Covenant and will. Shedding of blood and forgiveness.
- April 15* Chapter 10:1-18, 19-39. Christ's sacrifice once for all. Conclusion and Introduction. Sin against the Holy Spirit. Good deeds and perseverance.
TEST
- April 22* Chapter 11:1-40. Faith of the patriarchs. Faith of Moses and Rahab. Material from other sources. Conclusion.
- April 29* Chapter 12:1-28. Jesus as author of our faith. Discipline. Be holy and live in God's grace. Contrast of Mount Sinai and Mount Zion. Worship God.
- May 06* Chapter 13:1-25. Exhortations to do works of love, to honor leaders in the church, to obey leaders, to pray. Benediction and greetings.
- May 13* **TEST**

1. Assignments

Textbooks. F. F. Bruce, *Hebrews*. Rev. Edition (Eerdmans, 1990) {ISBN 0-8028-2316-5} and D. Guthrie, *Hebrews* (Eerdmans, 1983) {ISBN 0-8028-1427-1}. You are responsible for the weekly assignments as we go through the chapters. There are three examinations in this course; in addition you are asked to write a fifteen-page term paper (plus references, bibliography, notes) on a Hebrews-related topic. The due date for the paper is April 29, 2008. You are advised to consult with me on a topic as well as the scope, structure, and progress of your paper. I have placed some books on the reserve shelf. Consult the library holdings for additional references.

There are 3 examinations in this course: March 11, April 15 and May 13.

2. Suggested Topics

Jesus' divinity and humanity in Hebrews.
The admonitions in the Epistle to the Hebrews.
Jesus' temptations and sinlessness.
The Sabbath rest for God's people.
Contrasting the priesthoods of Aaron and Melchizedek.
The sin against the Holy Spirit.
Melchizedek, the royal priest.
The high priest and the new covenant.
The tabernacle in the desert.
Christ's once-for-all sacrifice.
The faith of the patriarch Abraham.
Moses's faith and works.
Contrasting Mount Sinai and Mount Zion.
The author and the readers of his epistle.
The authenticity of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

3. Evaluation

The grading of your performance in the course is based on these criteria:

Three tests each 25% constitute	75%
Your class presentation and paper	25%
Total	100%

4. Reserve Shelf

Bruce, F. F. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*
Calvin, John *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*
Ellingworth, P. *Commentary on Hebrews*
Guthrie, D. *Hebrews*
Hagner, D. *Hebrews*
Kent, H. A. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*
Kistemaker, S.J. *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*
Lane, W. L. *Hebrews 1-8, 9-13, two volumes*
Moffatt, J. *Hebrews (ICC)*
Morris, L. *Hebrews*
Stedman, R. C. *Hebrews*
Trotter, A. H., *Interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews*

