

Book of Hebrews

Introduction

Many religious people in the first century after Jesus' birth, both Jews and Gentile, had questions about the religion of the early Christians. They were looking for evidence that this new faith was genuine. Jews had the miracle of crossing the Red Sea and the agreement made with God at Mount Sinai to support their faith. What miracles do Christians have? Jews had beautiful worship ceremonies and a high priest who offered sacrifices in the temple so that the people would be forgiven. But what did Christians have? How could this new Christian faith, centered in Jesus, offer forgiveness of sins and friendship with God?

The letter to the Hebrews was written to answer exactly these kinds of questions. In it the author tells the readers how important Jesus really is. He is greater than any of God's angles (1:5-14), greater than any prophet, and greater even than Moses and Joshua (2. 1---4.14). Jesus is the perfect high priest because he never sinned, and by offering his own life he has made the perfect sacrifice for sin once for all time (9:23---10:18). By his death and return from death he has opened the way for all people to come to God (4.14---5:10; 7.1---8.13).

This letter has much to say about the importance of faith. The writer points out that what Jesus offers comes only by faith. And this faith make his followers sure of what they hope for and gives them proof of things that cannot be seen. The writer praises God's faithful people of the past (11:1-40) and encourages those who follow Jesus now to keep their eyes on him as they run the race (12.1-3).

What does it mean to have a high priest like Jesus?

“Jesus understands every weakness of ours, because he was tempted in every way that we are. But he did not sin! So whenever we are in need, we should come bravely before the throne of our merciful God. There we will be treated with undeserved kindness, and we will find help.” (Hebrews 4.15,16) ¹

¹The New Testament: Contemporary English Version. American Bible Society New York (1995)