

The Danger of Drifting Away - Wayne Barber



The Danger of Drifting Away Dr. Wayne Barber

3 rules when studying Scripture:

- (1). **Observe:** Why is he writing? Who to? The strength of studying Scripture comes from observation of the text bc the "context" will set the firm foundation for the remainder of your study and then you can go to step (See [inductive Bible study](#) and [observation](#))
- (2) **Interpret.** Don't think that if you don't know Greek that you cannot understand the text. Greek simply adds "color" to that which the context has already shaped. The Scripture is of no "private interpretation" and we will encounter verses in Hebrews where we will disagree (one of us is wrong). (See [Interpretation](#))
- (3), **Apply:** as varied as the needs of each person reading the text. Once you have accurately interpreted the text, then allow the Holy Spirit to make application to your life. The word then becomes yours, becomes personal. It is then "rhema" = spoken to our heart. (See [Application](#))

1). WHO WAS HEBREWS WRITTEN TO?

Jewish Brethren: probably Hellenistic Jews bc the ref come from the Septuagint (Hebrew OT text translated = Greek)

How do we know they were Jewish?

Frequent references to the Old Testament terminology to which a Gentile would have no reference.

Hebrews & 1 John are the only 2 NT books that don't tell you the specific audience to whom addressed.

References that support audience is Jewish:

- (1) the fathers & prophets
- (2) descendants of Abraham & high priest
- (3) Moses
- (4) Sabbath
- (5) High priest
- (6) Abrahamic covenant
- (7) Abraham, Law, Melchizedek
- (8) True tabernacle, better covenant, mediator of the covenant
- (9) offerings of bulls & goats (10) Law as the shadow (Borrow ["From Shadow to Substance" by Roy Hession](#) = Law is shadow of Jesus)
- (11) Hall of faith (Note: failure does not discredit us...or how could Samson make this list?)

(12) Mt Zion, Heavenly Jerusalem, Essau

(13) Altar & sacrifice.

Why Christian?

Refers to them as "brethren" (**ED**: But within this congregation the concern was some were only professing Christ but had not entered into His rest).

TWO MAJOR WAYS TO INTERPRET HEBREWS:

(a). Hebrews was written to not only Jewish Christians but a mixed multitude (those that were Jews & mentally assented to Christ but never born again; had been in enlightened. These interpreters do not equate enlightenment = salvation & tasting of something to them does not equate to partaking of it. They interpret difficult verses in Chap 6 & 10 as NOT to Believers but to lost Jews).

(b). Addressed strictly to Christians: Heb 6 & 10 are hypothetical situations bc a person cannot fall from grace.

Remember: Don't believe something bc it's in your study Bible ("My hope is built on nothing less than Scofield's notes & references")

2). WHO WROTE HEBREWS?

Some say Paul but Wayne does not think so: Paul always began his letters saying who wrote and to whom. See Heb 2:3 for verse that suggest this is a second generation believer (which would not be Paul). In sum we don't know.

Isa 48:11 "I will share My glory with no man": Hebrews lifts up Jesus as no other book in NT

3). WHY WAS HEBREWS WRITTEN?

Heb 13:22: So Hebrews was written as a "word of exhortation"

Briefly: see John 6:7: "a little" = same Gk word. The author only wrote a small amount, but it will satisfy you & be adequate

Exhortation: Para = alongside + kaleo = to call = The author is in the race of life, running the race & wants the reader to come alongside him. The author wants to encourage his readers to go on and accomplish what God has ask them to do.

Good things about the recipients:

Heb 6:10: love shown toward His name = ministered to the saints

Heb 10:32-34: "Former days" (there must have been a time when they suffered but came through w/ "flying colors")

Heb 13:1: love of the brethren

Bad news about the recipients:

Heb 5:11-14: something had happened to their commitment

Heb 10:25: forsaken assembling together = usually those who don't want to come be around believers are those dull of hearing (1 Jn 1:6-7)

Heb 12:1: Some must have stopped running the race (see Heb 5:12 "forgotten") For some reason they had "thrown in the towel" & they are being encouraged to press on (run the race set before you) by presenting Christ

Note the use of "Let us" phrases (13x): almost like a "cheerleader" saying let's go, you've forgotten these things, you're dull of hearing, get back on the track and do what's set before you. What a message of modern day Christendom!

SOME PRELIMINARY INTERPRETATIVE THOUGHTS HEBREWS 1:1:

What happened when they began to fall away from the "mooring" of obedience in our life = this secures our walk

1 John says falling away is walking out of the light back into the darkness... what has caused this?

1) They were not ignorant of the Word of God

IN the prophets = the literal Greek = So what? It adds a new dimension = God "IN" the prophets spoke (cp 2 Pet 1:21)

2) In His Son: no definite article before "Son"

Definite article ("the") in the Greek identifies a specific person but when not there it qualifies... it is not present before "Son"

A progression: God speaking through the prophets > God's Word made flesh > God assigning His Word to the apostles > the apostles

establishing and confirming the Word for us. So the recipients of this letter had the Word of God, and could not plead ignorance in their falling away & becoming dull of hearing.

3) The recipients were willfully negligent of the Word of God:

Pay much closer attention = literally "more abundantly heed".

Difference between hearing & heeding the Word: Heeding = obeying what you have heard. Jesus said many times in essence "Do you have ears? Do you hear?" Somewhere in their Christian walk the recipients of Hebrews had said "NO" to Jesus

Believers can do this: we can know more & more truth but if we stop heeding we no longer have the right to hear. Then all you have is cold, hard knowledge but no life behind what you know. Jn 7:17: If a man desires to do the truth, then he shall know the truth. James said do not be hearers only of the Word but be doers: the key to hearing is Heeding. Say "No" to God & you say "Yes" to yourself. If you stop heeding what you are hearing, you make yourself "god" & your spiritual life begins to fall apart, to drift away (not loss of salvation).

*The safety a believer has is in the harbor of obedience,
moored to the dock of Christ.*

The safety a believer has is in the harbor of obedience, moored to the dock of Christ. Stop heeding & you start drifting & become "dull of heeding" & then dull of hearing & then you become "dull" in caring! (Who wants to assemble together?) Note: It is a progression.

BEWARE OF DRIFTING

You can come to Bible studies, but it won't do any good unless you begin to heed the Word you hear. When you begin to hear with a willingness to heed it, God begins to work within you & you're back on track, back in the race. If there has ever been a time in your life when you loved Jesus more, when your prayer life was more, when you loved the Word more... the question is "When did you begin to drift? When did you stop heeding what you were hearing?" Hebrews is an exhortation to get back on track & start heeding the fact that JESUS IS GOD & as such He is worthy to be your LIFE. When you stop heeding, you will begin drifting.

HEED WHAT YOU HEAR IN HEBREWS

NOT TO GET KNOWLEDGE BUT TO KNOW JESUS

"Moored to Christ"

In the harbor of His will, my anchor finds its rest,
Obedience the rope that holds me to His best.
Yet if I loose that tether, and let His Word grow dim,
The current of my fleshly choosing pulls me far from Him.

The prophets spoke His whispers, the Son revealed His face,
The Spirit calls me onward to run this holy race.
But ears that hear without obeying will slowly lose the song,
'Til heart grows cold, and feet grow still, and love's no longer strong.

So heed, O soul, each word He speaks—let none fall useless to the ground,
For life and light and joy are in the truths that you have found.
Stay moored to Christ, the steadfast Rock, in storm or gentle breeze,

And you will find His harbor's rest through all eternity's seas.