



NT 650 *The Book of Hebrews* (3)

Spring 2014

Instructor: R. R. Remin

Contacting the Instructor

Office: L2081

Office Phone: 410-2000 ext. 7906

Email Address: rrem@ambrose.edu

Class Times: Monday to Friday 9:00-12:00 and 1:00-4:00

Class Location:

Course Description

The distinctive Christology, the form of an ancient sermon and the encouragement to complete the Christian journey faithfully all make Hebrews particularly relevant to Christians at the beginning of the new millennium. Hebrews critiques a world view which is two thousand years old and at the same time uncannily similar to the post-modern world view with which we now live. In addition to angels Hebrews also demonstrates a doctrine of scripture and principles of interpretation. The major written assignment is the development of five sermons or lesson plans which as a group reflect the message and content of Hebrews. Students will be required to complete a personal Christological inventory and to visit an “angel store.”

Course Objectives.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is an exhortation (sermon) to Christians who are traveling on a spiritual journey towards the heavenly city. The purpose of this course to challenge the student to examine the message of this sermon and seek its relevance to our spiritual journey in this new millennium. The challenges facing the Christians of the first century and the twenty-first century are extraordinarily similar.

The sum of the matter is this – the student objectives. I, your professor, want you, my students, to

1. Learn and understand the homiletical big idea of this ancient sermon (and how the sermon is put together and what’s in it);
2. Claim for your own spiritual life the exhortation of Hebrews; and
3. Help fellow travelers do the same (1 and 2).

The course is intended to be somewhat inter-disciplinary in as much as students are expected to with the exegetical issues as well as examine the message's application to ourselves. Moreover students will then determine how best to communicate this

message to our contemporaries. Students will first be expected to learn and understand the meaning of this sermon to those who first heard it read to them and then the student will be required to seek its relevance for the church today and the best way in which to communicate that relevant message. Thus the student is expected to work in the disciplines of exegesis, theology, hermeneutics and homiletics (or equivalent). The epistle has several implications for those working as spiritual guides.

The student will examine the thesis of the sermon so as to be able to demonstrate the unity of the epistle in theme and form. Students will learn the distinctiveness of this epistle's Christology. Students will formulate a thesis as to the identity of the addressees of this epistle and the nature of the heresy (heresies) which was (were) weakening the church. The student will consider the relation of the epistle to the thought of Philo of Alexandria, the Old Testament, Hellenistic Judaism and Greco-Roman paganism and how this affects the meaning of the epistle. Students will be challenged to proclaim this sermon's message of encouragement (*paraklesis*) to our contemporary church in a manner consistent with the epistle itself.

The assignments and class sessions are intended to facilitate the student's interaction with the text and with each other in terms of what the Epistle to the Hebrews meant to its recipients and what it means to Christians today. The goal is that at the end of this course each student will have a significant understanding of the epistle itself as well as its application to him/herself personally and to the church at large.

Although this is a course in English Bible, the student will be required to become aware of the fact that the English Bible is a translation from Greek. The student will be expected to learn approximately a dozen distinctive Greek words, the concept(s) associated with the words, and the manner in which translators have translated them. The student will also encounter two Greek grammatical constructions which are essential to understanding the message of Hebrews. During the course the student will be shown the methodology for doing word studies based on Greek vocabulary in translation. The student will also be repeatedly exposed to the methodology used by translators doing the task of translating Greek scriptures into English.

This course is intended to facilitate a student's learning from his / her own observations about the text of the epistle and the observations of others such as classmates, the professor and published scholars. Students cooperate in learning / exegeting and learning first hand how the community of faith can function in the exegetical process.

Required Texts

In an ideal world text books would always be available when needed (and at a reasonable price). This is not an ideal world!

The required text is either Lane or Ellingworth.
William L. Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary 47a,b, Hebrews* (Word Books, Dallas, Texas, 1991).

However, an alternative for students who have a working knowledge of Greek is Ellingworth in conjunction with select pages from Lane's introduction regarding genre and literary structure.

Paul Ellingworth, *Commentary on Hebrews (NIGTC, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1993)*
and
Lane, "Introduction, Genre," and "Introduction, Literary Structure," *Word Biblical Commentary, Hebrews 47a*, (1991) pages lxxxiv-ciii.

There are other commentaries on the Recommended Reading list which follows. (I've marked them with an asterisk. In addition there are very respectable commentaries by Bruce, Hughes, Westcott (Greek) and Spicq (French).

Recommended Reading:

*Hurst, Lincoln Douglas. *The Epistle to the Hebrews: its background of thought* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990). BS2775.2 .H87 1990

Hughes, Graham, *Hebrews and hermeneutics: the Epistle to the Hebrews as a New Testament example of biblical interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). BS2775.2 .H8 1979

*Kasemann, Ernst. *The Wandering people of God: an investigation of the letter to the Hebrews* (trans. Roy A. Harrisville and Irving L. Sandberg; Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, [c1984]). BS2775.2 .K3313 1984.

Nuwe Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap van Suid-Afrika. Ad Hebraeos: essays on the Epistle to the Hebrews. (Neotestamentica 5, Pretoria, South Africa: Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, 1971). BS2775.2 N88 1971

Dean, William Walter. *A church at risk: the encroachment of American culture upon the church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: F. Asbury Press, 1990). BS2775.4 .D33 1990

Peterson, David. *Hebrews and perfection: An examination of the concept of perfection in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Society for New Testament Studies monograph series 47; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). BS2860.H6 .P28 1982.*

*Jewett, Robert. *Letter to Pilgrims: a commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981). BS2775.3 .J48

Horton, Fred L. *The Melchizedek tradition: a critical examination of the sources to the fifth century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Society for New Testament studies. Monograph series 30;Cambridge [Eng.] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976). BS580 .M4 H67.

D'Angelo, Mary Rose. *Moses in the letter to the Hebrews* (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation series no. 42 Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979). BS580 M6 D33 1979

Williamson, Ronald. *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden, Brill, 1970). BS2775.3 .W5 1970.

*Lindars, Barnabas. *The theology of the letter to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). BS2775.5 .L55 1991

*Trotter, Andrew H. Jr. *Interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews (Guides to NT Exegesis, Baker, 1997).*

Arnold, Clinton E. *Ephesians: Power and Magic. The Concept of Power in Ephesians in Light of Its Historical Setting* (Baker, 1992).

Carr, Wesley. *Angels and Principalities, The Background, Meaning and Development of the Pauline Phrase hai archai kai hai exousiai* (SNTSMS 42, Cambridge, 1981).

Noll, Stephen F. *Angels of Light, Powers of Darkness, Thinking Biblically about Angels, Satan & Principalities* (InterVarsity, 1998).

Course Schedule

1. The scheduled class times are as prescribed by the program and are subject to slight modification as the class agrees. It is unlikely that any of us will survive until 4:30 on any given afternoon.

Monday	9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday – Friday	9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday has a chapel and a free lunch for all students and faculty.

2. The schedule of topics for the week are as follows;

Monday	Introduction. Hebrews 10.19-25. Author, addressees, genre; Hebrews 1.1-2.4 Syllabus
Tuesday	Hebrews 2.5-3.19
.Wednesday	Hebrews 4.1-6.12; Hebrews 6.13-10.18
Thursday	Hebrews 6.13-10.18; Hebrews 10.19-39
Friday	Hebrews 11.1-40; Hebrews 12; Hebrews 13

3. All assignments are **due July 15, 2014**. These three assignments must be handed in complete by this date.
1. The five sermon/lesson project.
 2. The student's journal
 3. The student's reading evaluation and self evaluation form.

Course Requirements

1. Complete the "Pre-course Assignments – Not!" assignments.

The following assignments must be completed before the beginning of the second day of classes. In an ideal world the student benefits most from these three assignments if they are completed before the beginning of the course. In all events these assignments must be completed (if at all) before the student completes the self evaluation for this course.

- a. Listen to a recorded reading of the whole of the Epistle to the Hebrews in one uninterrupted session. Do this twice! Do not follow along in a written text. Do not take notes. Any translation is acceptable. As an alternative to listening to a recording you may have a second person read to you the entire sermon in one session. Eugene Peterson's *The Message* (Navpress) is highly recommended.
- b. Immediately after hearing the reading of the whole sermon, without any reference to a written text, write in your journal a one page (or less) summary of what you were impressed with as the main point(s) of the sermon. Try as much as possible to write this summary on basis of what you

have just heard as opposed to what you remember from previous readings and study of this epistle.

- c. Visit at least two bookstores in your area and browse the shelves for books about angels, spirituality and spirit guides. How many titles are on the shelves? Browse through the books in order to gain a sense of their content, quality, genre, etc. Keep a record in your journal of what you discovered. At least one of the two stores should be a major chain such as Chapters, Coles or W.H. Smith. The second store should be a store with more depth and quality and typically will not be part of a national chain. If at all possible, make one of your choices a store which specializes in New Age literature.
2. Read *The Epistle to the Hebrews* several times during the course. Use different translations. Eugene Peterson's *The Message* (Navpress, 1993) and the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible* are highly recommended.
3. Read the required textbook (see above) thoroughly and at least twice. Read handouts given in class. Complete the reading evaluation form.
4. The major assignment. Prepare and write a series of five sermons or lessons (or Bible studies) which are based on select texts from Hebrews but which also as a series reflect the message of the Epistle. At least two of the five will be developed in some detail during the class sessions. Details of expected format, etc. are attached and will be discussed in class. See attachment to this syllabus.

These sermons must be submitted in electronic format! Microsoft Word must be used.

5. Keep a journal of personal interaction with the scripture, discussions in class, the textbook and other readings. At the end of each day of the week of class sessions, put in your journal your personal reflections on the day's study, questions which have arisen that you need to pursue, notes of discussions with other students and/or the professor, etc. As the week progresses and as you complete the course requirements over the next few weeks include new personal reflections, notes of interaction /discussion with other students, notes from readings, sermon / lesson outlines, syntactical diagrams, outlines of the epistle, etc., etc. are all appropriate to this journal. Include in your journal the findings of several short research projects undertaken as a result topics raised in class discussion. For example, the use of the epistle in devotional literature, the use of the epistle in early Christian and Missionary Alliance (Simpson, Saphir and Tozer), Philo of Alexandria (*logos*, temple, etc.), history of Hellenistic Judaism, use of OT (priesthood, temple, covenant, sacrifice, etc.), hermeneutic of OT, Christology in Hebrews, journey motif, etc., etc.

This journal must be submitted in electronic format! Microsoft Word must be used.

6. Read as much literature about this epistle as time allows. This literature includes other commentaries on Hebrews, books on Hebrews as well as journal articles, theological dictionaries, *etc.* Students are encouraged to share with one another literature they have found and its content. See list of recommended reading above as a good place to start.

Course Grade

The student's performance in this course will be evaluated on this basis:

Sermon/Lesson Projects	65 %
Students Journal	10 %
Student's Reading Evaluation and Self Evaluation	25 %

Important Notes

1. Remember The Rules For The Class
Have fun!
Make mistakes!
Ask dumb questions! There are no dumb questions!
Cheat in class!
Consider this classroom a safe zone! There are no topics which are off limit.
2. Office hours for your professor.
 - No regular office hours during the summer.
 - By appointment only.
 - Email me at home.
 - Email all assignments to my seminary email.
3. Email.
 - a. Email to the office: rremin@ambrose.edu
 - b. Voice in the office: 410-2000 ext 7906
 - c. Voice at home: 403-946-4635
4. Absences are intolerable because of the nature of the subject being learned and the manner in which this course is taught, namely the inductive method. If you must miss a class please work through the lesson(s) missed and then come to the

instructor with any problems or questions. In the event you cannot be prepared, you are better being in class unprepared than not in class at all.

5. The instructor shall comply with all academic regulations as printed in the current *Catalogue* and *Student Handbook*, and it is the student's responsibility to be familiar with these regulations. The following policies and regulations are particularly important.

- a. **Add/Drop Policy:**

- b. **Course Extensions or Alternative Examination Requests:**

- c. **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty.** The seminary maintains a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty can result in a failing grade for an assignment for the course, or immediate dismissal from the seminary.

Exegetical Sermon/ Lesson Plan

The sermon (or lesson plan) is to be a one or two page outline; not a *verbatim* text. Any illustrations used must be summarized.

Include with your outline for each sermon a one page summary of the exegetical difficulties in your particular texts.

The sermon will be expository in nature, that is to say, the sermon will reflect the biblical text. Do not equate expository with exegetical! An expository sermon is also relevant to the life of the hearers. Build the bridge! If the congregation cannot see the connection between your sermon and the text, you have just taught them that the Bible is irrelevant and not worthy of study! Remember the “twenty ten rule.”

The sermon is not to be a great collection of words. Use “sign-acts,” visual aids, skits, whatever! Our culture is no longer verbal but visual. Use it to your advantage!

At the top of the sermon outline which you hand in, but not part of the sermon, you will include a statement of purpose for your sermon. The purpose of your sermon may be to teach, to reflect upon a subject, to correct, to encourage, or to rebuke. But know and state in writing what you are trying to accomplish so that you have a criteria by which you can determine if the elements in your sermon are working to accomplish that purpose. Remember, everyone wants to be a prophet but they don't know which kind of prophet.

Closely connected to the purpose of your sermon is ‘tone of your sermon.’ There are two kinds of prophets: pre-exilic in which case they preach primarily judgement and salvation and post-exilic in which case they preach to encourage the people who are living in a ‘foreign land.’ Is your congregation pre-exilic, exilic, or post-exilic? Also remember the difference between pre-exilic prophets and pastors. Pastors worry about pension plans; pre-exilic prophets don't live that long.

PERSONAL CHRISTOLOGICAL INVENTORY

Please complete the following statement as many times as necessary to reflect how you think of Jesus. After you have filled in as many lines as are personally relevant to you, please rank them, 1, 2, 3, etc. according to the frequency (1 being the most frequent) with which you think of Jesus in that way. Then in the third column try to identify the source of this idea about Jesus, e.g. Bible, chorus, hymn, pastor, etc.

	Rank	Source
<i>Jesus is (my, our, the)</i> _____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____

Student name and/or number _____

Self Assessment – Hebrews for the New Millenium

Spring 2005

Student's Name _____

Directions: Please complete the evaluation honestly and to the best of your ability. Please submit it with your final assignments.

1. How would you characterize your reading of the commentary by Lane (or Ellingworth)? Please check one.

a. First reading of commentary

- _____ read carefully and digested it with full comprehension
- _____ read carefully with little comprehension
- _____ read quickly with considerable comprehension
- _____ read by skimming, with some comprehension
- _____ read with the assistance of a fan, while watching television
- _____ didn't read it.

b. Second reading of commentary

- _____ read carefully and digested it with fuller comprehension
- _____ read carefully with more comprehension
- _____ read quickly with considerable comprehension
- _____ read by skimming, with some comprehension
- _____ read with the assistance of a fan, while watching television
- _____ didn't read a second time.

2. Reading Hebrews using different translations.

For this course I have read Hebrews a total of _____ times.

I read Hebrews in these translations:

3. Which bookstores did you visit to check out the "angel stuff?"

4. Listening. Did you listen to a reading or recording of Hebrews?

_____ yes _____ no

5. Besides the required commentary and Hebrews what other reading have you done on Hebrews? Please list, if not in your journal.

Hebrews and Authorship

Colossians

1:7 This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant.

He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,

1:8 and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills.

4:13 For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.

4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.

4:15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

4:16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea.

4:17 And say to Archippus, "See that you complete the task that you have received in the Lord."

4:18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.