

General Epistles

Hebrews-Revelation



Hebrews

James

1, 2 Peter

James

1, 2, 3 John

Jude



AKA: Hebrew Christian Epistles

“Hebrew”:

Hebrews: Fathers, prophets, us

James: To the twelve tribes...

1 Pet: Strangers scattered

2 Pet: 3:1—same as 1 Peter

3 Jn: ...taking nothing of the gentiles...

“Hebrew”:

None of these are addressed “to the church.”

They do not teach church doctrine, nothing about church as the body of Christ, mystery revealed, etc.



“Hebrew”:

They do not focus on our position in Christ or
our eternal security

History:

- Judaism is the only divinely given religion.
 - Designed to reconcile God and Man (Gen 12:1-3).
 - Jesus was a Jew and kept the observances of the law.

History:

- Early church was Jewish and the Kingdom was still theirs for the receiving (Acts 3:12-26,4:1) through Christ the fulfillment of the law.
 - Jews nationally/religiously rejected the Kingdom
 - Christ's first advent—crucified him
 - After Pentacost—rejected early church (Acts 4-6. See 4:1-2, 5:17, 33; 6:9-14)
 - Killed Stephen (Acts 7).

History:

- The transition from Judaism to the church (Jew and Gentile) occurred after the Jewish rejection of the kingdom
 - Acts describes it historically.
 - Romans through Galatians gives us the doctrinal truths of the cross applied for Jew and Gentile alike—through faith in Christ, not by the law.
 - Eph-Col expounds on the mystery of the church (and Church age)—Jew and Gentiles alike.
 - 1 and 2 Thess—Instructs on Christ's return for the church.
 - Pastoral epistles instruct on how the church is to be run (1 Ti 3:15)
 - The change was not sudden. (Acts 21:20)

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 - **Hebrew Epistles helped the saved Jews within the early church with this transition.**

Future History :

- Tribulation Israel will turn unto Christ (Rev 12).
 - Woman is Israel:
 - Birthed Christ v.5
 - Earth during tribulation v.6
 - These Jews will be followers of Christ V. 11,17

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Future History:

- So, where does the redeemed Nation of Israel go to learn of Christ, and to get their doctrine?
- General Epistles will provide the link between their Judiasm and new faith in Christ.

Doctrine. “Do’s”:

- Recognize the Gen. Epistles as doctrine for the tribulation!
- Consider that Hebrews picks up after the gospels to show us who He is (like Acts picks up after the gospels to give development of the church).
- Remember the General Epistles are Jewish in nature. This will help us:
 - Look for the things that are manifested by the fulfillment of the Divinely given religion of Judaism. For example:
 - Jesus as the High Priest and intercessor
 - This is a purpose that transcends both Judaism and the Church!
 - But it is perhaps best appreciated through Judaism.
 - Look for that which we might otherwise miss as those never under the law.

Doctrine. Don'ts:

- Establish church age doctrine from these books. This is how cults get their fodder.
 - From the J.W. official website:

God.

We worship the one true and Almighty God, the Creator, whose name is Jehovah. (Psalm 83:18; Revelation 4:11)
He is the God of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.—Exodus 3:6; 32:11; John 20:17.

Jehovah Witness

- Bible.
- We recognize the Bible as God’s inspired message to humans. (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16) We base our beliefs on all 66 of its books, which include both the “Old Testament” and the “New Testament.” Professor Jason D. BeDuhn aptly described it when he wrote that Jehovah’s Witnesses built “their system of belief and practice from the raw material of the Bible without predetermining what was to be found there.” *
- While we accept the entire Bible, we are not fundamentalists. We recognize that parts of the Bible are written in figurative or symbolic language and are not to be understood literally.— Revelation 1:1.

Jehovah Witness

- Jesus.
- We follow the teachings and example of Jesus Christ and honor him as our Savior and as the Son of God. (Matthew 20:28; Acts 5:31) Thus, we are Christians. (Acts 11:26) However, we have learned from the Bible that Jesus is not Almighty God and that there is no Scriptural basis for the Trinity doctrine.—John 14:28.

- The Kingdom of God.
- This is a real government in heaven, not a condition in the hearts of Christians. It will replace human governments and accomplish God's purpose for the earth. (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:9, 10) It will take these actions soon, for Bible prophecy indicates that we are living in "the last days."—2 Timothy 3:1-5; Matthew 24:3-14.
- Jesus is the King of God's Kingdom in heaven. He began ruling in 1914.—Revelation 11:15.

- **Salvation.**
- Deliverance from sin and death is possible through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus. (Matthew 20:28; Acts 4:12) To benefit from that sacrifice, people must not only exercise faith in Jesus but also change their course of life and get baptized. (Matthew 28:19, 20; John 3:16; Acts 3:19, 20) A person's works prove that his faith is alive. (James 2:24, 26) However, salvation cannot be earned—it comes through “the undeserved kindness of God.”—Galatians 2:16, 21.

- Heaven.
- Jehovah God, Jesus Christ, and the faithful angels reside in the spirit realm. * (Psalm 103:19-21; Acts 7:55) A relatively small number of people—144,000—will be resurrected to life in heaven to rule with Jesus in the Kingdom.—Daniel 7:27; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:9, 10; 14:1, 3.

- Earth.
- God created the earth to be mankind's eternal home. (Psalm 104:5; 115:16; Ecclesiastes 1:4) God will bless obedient people with perfect health and everlasting life in an earthly paradise.—Psalm 37:11, 34.

- Evil and suffering.
- These began when one of God's angels rebelled. (John 8:44) This angel, who after his rebellion was called "Satan" and "Devil," persuaded the first human couple to join him, and the consequences have been disastrous for their descendants. (Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 5:12) In order to settle the moral issues raised by Satan, God has allowed evil and suffering, but He will not permit them to continue forever.

- Death.
- People who die pass out of existence. (Psalm 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) They do not suffer in a fiery hell of torment.
- God will bring billions back from death by means of a resurrection. (Acts 24:15) However, those who refuse to learn God's ways after being raised to life will be destroyed forever with no hope of a resurrection.—Revelation 20:14, 15.

- Family.
- We adhere to God's original standard of marriage as the union of one man and one woman, with sexual immorality being the only valid basis for divorce. (Matthew 19:4-9) We are convinced that the wisdom found in the Bible helps families to succeed.—Ephesians 5:22-6:1.

• Our worship.

- We do not venerate the cross or any other images. (Deuteronomy 4:15-19; 1 John 5:21) Key aspects of our worship include the following:
- Praying to God.—Philippians 4:6.
- Reading and studying the Bible.—Psalm 1:1-3.
- Meditating on what we learn from the Bible.—Psalm 77:12.
- Meeting together to pray, study the Bible, sing, express our faith, and encourage fellow Witnesses and others.—Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:23-25.
- Preaching the “good news of the Kingdom.”—Matthew 24:14.
- Helping those in need.—James 2:14-17.
- Constructing and maintaining Kingdom Halls and other facilities used to further our worldwide Bible educational work.—Psalm 127:1.
- Sharing in disaster relief.—Acts 11:27-30.

Jehovah Witness

- Summary of Sources of JW Doctrines:
 - Old Testament: 19
 - Gospels: 14
 - Acts: 7
 - Pauline Epistles: 9
 - Gen Epistles: 5
 - Revelation: 7
 - 9/61 verses found in Pauline Epistles.
 - 18/61 verses in Matt, Acts, James, Hebrews

Personal:

- Go deeper!
- What is the utmost goal of the Christian experience?
 - Fellowship with God
 - How do we get there?

So if the experiences of Israel are ensamples for us (1 Co 10:), what about the temple, ordinances, priesthood, etc.

Personal:

- Go deeper!
 - Pauline Epistles establish church doctrine and focus on why the church is different than Judaism, Gnosticism, etc. “Do not try to add Judaism to the church believer. That would be adding dead works to a new life!”
 - Hebrew Epistles focus on Christ’s fulfillment and finality of Christ.
 - So considering Christ, do not add to your faith, not because the new faith is different, but because the requirements of your old faith is complete! This requires a leaving off of the old, and believing the new, but not because it is different, but because it is complete!

Personal:

- Go deeper!
 - Do not dismiss the Hebrew Epistles! Glean from them a personal understanding of God's completeness and the finality of Christ's work.
 - Look for the transcendent nature and works of God and apply them to your life devotionally!

Personal:

- Go deeper!
 - Hebrews: Faith—completeness in Christ
 - James: Works
 - 1 Peter: Hope
 - 2 Peter: Growth in Grace
 - Johns: Love and Fellowship
 - Jude: Contending for Faith