THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS:
An Expository Outline

I. GOD HAS SPOKEN TO US THROUGH HIS SON (1:1-2:4)

A. God has spoken through his Son (1:1-2a)
   1. The medium of God’s supreme revelation–his Son
   2. The time of God’s supreme revelation–at the end of these days

B. Who is the Son? or The Identity of the Son (1:2b-14)
   1. The heir of all things (1:2b)
   2. God’s agent in creation (1:2c)
   3. The Exalted One (1:3-14)
      a. His person–the Son’s essential divine nature (1:3)
         1) The Son is the radiance of God’s glory
         2) The Son is the exact representation of God’s nature
      b. His work–in providence and in redemption (1:3)
         1) The Son is the sustainer of all things
         2) The Son is the purifier of sins
      c. His superiority to the angels (1:4-14)
         1) The fact stated (1:4)
         2) The fact proven from the Scriptures (1:5-14)
            a) The Son–superior in name to the angels (1:5)
            b) The Son–angels are under obligation to worship Him (1:6)
            c) The Son–the anointed King and unchanging Creator who is served by angels (1:7-14)
C. How shall we escape? An exhortation and warning based on the preceding (2:1-4)

1. An exhortation to wholehearted devotion to God’s revelation through his Son (2:1a,3b-4)

2. A warning against turning away from the gospel of Jesus Christ (2:1b-3a)

II. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOD’S ORIGINAL PURPOSE FOR MAN NECESSITATED THE INCARNATION AND SUFFERING OF HIS SON (2:5-18)

A. God’s purpose for man has been accomplished through the incarnation, death, and exaltation of Jesus—the representative man (2:5-9)

1. God’s purpose for man was that he should exercise dominion over the creation (2:5-8b)

2. The reality of man’s situation in the present world (2:8c)

3. What then of God’s purpose for man? It has been accomplished by the incarnation, death, and exaltation of Jesus—the representative man (2:9)

B. Jesus’ incarnation and suffering were necessary to the accomplishment of God’s purpose for his people (2:10-18)

1. The Captain of Salvation had to be perfected for his office by suffering (2:10)

   a. God’s purpose—bringing many sons to glory

   b. God’s agent—a Captain of Salvation

   c. God’s method of qualifying this Captain of Salvation—he was perfected for his office by suffering

   d. God’s reason for this method—the demands of his character

2. The Captain of Salvation had to be made like his brethren (2:11-18)

   a. A declaration of the Captain of Salvation’s humanity—he belongs to the same class as those whom he saves (2:11-13)

   b. The necessity and purposes of the Captain of Salvation’s humanity (2:14-18)
1) The necessity of the Captain of Salvation’s humanity (2:14,17)

2) The purposes of the Captain of Salvation’s humanity (2:14-18)
   a) His death nullified the devil (2:14)
   b) He freed his people from bondage to the fear of death (2:15)
   c) He was a faithful high priest for his people (2:17)
   d) He is able to help his people in their trials (2:18)

III. CONSIDER THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF OUR CONFESSION (3:1-12:17)

A. The central admonition (3:1)

B. Jesus in the office of apostle compared with the apostleship of Moses (3:2-4:16)
   1. Jesus and Moses compared (3:2-6a)
      a. Jesus was faithful to God who appointed him, as was Moses (3:2)
      b. The favorable comparison notwithstanding, Jesus is superior to Moses and worthy of more glory and honor (3:3-6a)
         1) The affirmation–Jesus is deserving of more glory and honor than Moses (3:3a)
         2) The affirmation undergirded by the analogy of a house (3:3b-6a)
   2. A warning against apostasy based on the preceding comparison of Jesus and Moses (3:6b-4:13)
      a. The true members of God’s covenant people are distinguished by their perseverance (3:6b)
      b. The peril of imitating the Israelites in the wilderness (3:7-4:11)
         1) A warning from the example of the wilderness generation
2) A promise of entering God’s Sabbath rest remains (4:1-11)

   a) A promise of rest remains; let us fear lest we come short of it (4:1)

   b) We have been evangelized, even as the wilderness generation was (4:2-3b)

   c) Proof that there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God (4:3c-9)

   d) Diligently enter God’s rest—do not imitate the example of the disobedient Israelites (4:10-11)

   c. A warning against self-deception based on the nature of God and his Word in judgment (4:12-13)

3. In view of the danger of apostasy just described, an exhortation to perseverance and prayer based on the high priestly work of Jesus for his people (4:14-16)

   a. The duty of perseverance (4:14)

   b. Encouragement derived from the high priestly office of Christ (4:14-15)

   c. A promise of help for the battle (4:16)

C. Jesus in the office of high priest compared with the Old Covenant priesthood (5:1-12:17)

1. Jesus’ appointment to the high priesthood (5:1-6)

   a. The nature of the Levitical high priesthood (5:1-4)

   b. Jesus’ appointment to the high priesthood (5:5-6)

2. Jesus’ perfection for the high priesthood (5:7-10)

   a. In the days of his flesh, Jesus learned obedience from the things that he suffered (5:7-8)

   b. Being made perfect for his office, Jesus became the author of
eternal salvation to all those who obey him (5:9-10)

3. A cautionary digression occasioned by the spiritual slothfulness of the readers (5:11-6:20)
   a. Their spiritual dullness noted and, by implication, rebuked (5:11-14)
   b. An exhortation to progress in the gospel (6:1-3)
   c. Further warning against apostasy (6:4-8)
   d. Further encouragement to perseverance (6:9-20)
      1) The writer’s persuasion concerning the spiritual state of the readers (6:9)
      2) The basis of the writer’s persuasion (6:10)
         a) The fruitfulness of their lives
         b) The faithfulness of God
      3) The writer’s longing for the readers (6:11-15)
      4) The unchanging promise and oath of God--the foundation of the believer’s strong encouragement (6:16-20)

4. Jesus, a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, is superior to the priests of the Old Covenant (7:1-10:18)
   a. Melchizedek introduced and described (7:1-3)
   b. The superiority of the priesthood of Melchizedek to that of the sons of Levi (7:4-10)
   c. Jesus, a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, is superior to the priests of the Levitical order (7:11-10:18)
      1) The superiority of Jesus’ priesthood proved from the fact that his priesthood accomplished the great purpose for which priesthood was designed--that is, to bring men consummately to God (7:11-19)
      2) The superiority of Jesus’ priesthood proved from the fact
that his priesthood was instituted by divine oath (7:20-22)

3) The superiority of Jesus’ priesthood proved from the fact that it is eternal and unchanging (7:23-25)

4) The superiority of Jesus’ priesthood proved from his sinless perfection (7:26-28)

5) The chief point— the superiority of Jesus’ priesthood proved from the actual ministry which he performs (8:1-10:18)

   a) The chief point— Jesus has a superior ministry (8:1-6a)

   b) Jesus is mediator of a superior covenant with superior promises (8:6b-13)

      (1) Jesus is mediator of a better covenant with better promises (8:6b)

      (2) A general principle attesting the superiority of the New Covenant and its promises (8:7)

      (3) The better covenant and promises attested from the Old Covenant scriptures (8:8-12)

      (4) An inference drawn concerning the Old Covenant (8:13)

   c) The comparison between the Old Covenant and New Covenant ministries expanded (9:1-10:18)

      (1) The sanctuary and ministry under the Old Covenant (9:1-10)

         (a) An introductory observation (9:1)

         (b) The earthly sanctuary described (9:2-5)

         (c) The ministry of the earthly sanctuary (9:6-7)

         (d) The significance of the ministry of the earthly sanctuary (9:8-10)
The sanctuary and ministry under the New Covenant (9:11-28)

(a) A general description of the ministry and sanctuary served by Christ (9:11-12)

(b) A digression from the main comparison occasioned by the statement that Christ obtained eternal redemption through his own blood (9:13-23)
   i) The superior value and efficacy of the blood of Christ declared (9:13-14)
   ii) The necessity of Christ’s death derived from his mediation of a new testamentary covenant (9:15-23)

(c) The main comparison resumed, with emphasis on the superiority of Christ’s New Covenant sanctuary and ministry (9:24-28)
   i) The crux of the comparison: Jesus’ single sacrifice for sin (9:24-26)
   ii) Christ’s single death and its benefits related to the certain appointments of men (9:27-28)

The comparison concluded (10:1-18)

(a) The Old Covenant is unable to take away sins (10:1-4)

(b) The New Covenant order is according to the will of God as
revealed in the Old Covenant Scriptures (10:5-10)

(c) The finality of the New Covenant order (10:11-18)

5. An exhortation and warning based on the preceding comparison of Jesus and the Old Covenant priesthood (10:19-12:17)

a. An exhortation to persevering faith and to mutual encouragement (10:19-25)

b. Further warning against apostasy (10:26-31)

c. Do not cast away your confidence (10:32-35)

d. You have need of persevering faith (10:36-39)

e. Persevering faith defined, exemplified, and commanded (11:1-12:17)

1) A definition of faith (11:1)

2) Examples of persevering faith (11:2-40)

3) Persevering faith commanded (12:1-17)

a) The setting of the exhortation

b) The exhortation itself—“lay aside . . . and run” (12:1)

c) The source of persevering faith and its ultimate example—Jesus Christ (12:2-3)

d) The Christian runner’s surest hindrance—weariness and discouragement (12:3)

e) Two supporting facts (12:4-13)

(1) You have not yet resisted unto blood in striving against sin (12:4)

(2) Remember that even in trials God is dealing with you as sons (12:5-11)
f) Strengthen your running lest you be turned out of the way (12:12-13)

g) The necessity of persevering faith further reinforced (12:14-17)

(1) A twofold duty: (12:14)

(2) The climate of perseverance (12:15-17)

IV. REFUSE NOT GOD WHO SPEAKS--FOR HE IS A CONSUMING FIRE (12:18-29)

A. The solemnity of Mt. Sinai (12:18-21)

B. The superior solemnity of Mt. Zion (12:22-24)

C. The critical issue—refuse not God who speaks (12:25-29)

1. Refuse not God who speaks (12:25)

2. The shaking of the heavens and the earth (12:26-27)

3. Let us have grace (12:28-29)

V. CONCLUDING EXHORTATIONS, REQUESTS, AND GREETINGS (13:1-25)

A. An exhortation to love (13:1-3)

1. A general exhortation to love (13:1)

2. Special cases (13:2-3)

   a. Strangers (13:2)

   b. Those in bonds (13:3)

B. An exhortation concerning sexual ethics (13:4)

C. An exhortation concerning greed and anxiety over material things—Christian contentment (13:5-6)

D. Exhortations concerning the relationship of elders and church members (13:7,17)
E. Jesus Christ the same (13:8)

F. A final warning against returning to the Old Covenant order (13:9-16)
   1. An altar outside the camp (13:9-14)
   2. Sacrifice well-pleasing to God (13:15-16)

G. A request for prayer (13:18-19)

H. A closing prayer (13:20-21)

I. A postscript (13:22-25)