

A LOOK AT THE BOOK HEBREWS

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AUTHOR AND DATE

The author of Hebrews is a mystery today, though it certainly was no mystery to the early readers of the letter.

The debate has continued from the tradition of the early church to the present day.

The main discussion focuses around whether Paul was the author.

Basic differences of style, although not conclusive, argue against Pauline authorship.

If Paul was not the author, it is not clear who was.

Other candidates include Barnabas, Luke, Apollos, and Clement of Rome.

None of these offers definitive evidence.

The book depicts a time of severe persecution for the sake of the gospel, which would place it near the time of James or 1 Peter.

References to the continuing sacrifices in the temple indicate that it had not yet been destroyed (10:11; 13:11-13).

Thus the letter must have been written shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It appears that the date would be near A.D. 65.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Hebrews was apparently written to scattered Christian Jews who were suffering persecution because of their identification with Christ.

To escape persecution, many have returned to Judaism.

Many who have not yet returned are considering that alternative.

The author writes to help them consider the implications of such a move and to urge them not to go back.

PURPOSE AND THEME

The author's purpose is to exhort them to endure persecution.

Rather than turn back, he wants them to continue growing in their faith.

To accomplish this purpose, the author writes them a letter of exhortation (13:22).

Negatively, he points out the dangers of returning to Judaism.

To go back will not solve their problem.

Judaism has nothing to offer.

It is a bankrupt system.

If they reject the truth, they will be subject to God's judgment which is about to bring destruction to Israel.

Positively, he demonstrates that Christ is better than Judaism.

He is better because He offers better access, without restriction to God's presence.

Therefore, we should keep on striving and trust God to care for us.

He has obtained the means of entering into the presence of God.

Therefore, we should enter with confidence into His presence.

WHAT LESSONS DOES HEBREWS TEACH US ABOUT LIVING IN MODERN SOCIETY?

HEBREWS

Jesus is the best!

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Doctrinal: Christ's Superiority over Judaism		1-10:18	Practical Response to Christ's Superiority over Judaism			10:19-13:25					
Superiority of Christ's Person		1-7	Superiority of Christ's Work	8-10:18	Exhortation to Faith	10:19-12:17	Exhortations based on Faith	13:1-19	Concluding Prayer and Notes	13:20-25	
Best Revelation of the Father	1-4:13	Best High Priest	4:14-7:28								
Better than the prophets	1:1-3	His understanding of our weakness	4:14-16	Served by better High Priest	8:1-5	Basis for faith	10:19-21	Love one another	13:1-3	Concluding Prayer	13:20-21
Better than the angels	1:4-2:18	His qualifications as High Priest	5:1-10	Based on better covenant	8:6-13	Call to faith	10:22-25	Maintain sexual purity	13:4		
Because He is God	1:4-2:4	Their inability to understand	5:11-6:20	Offered in better tabernacle	9:1-24	Warning concerning apostasy	10:26-31	Be content with what you have	13:5-6		
Because He is man	2:5-18					Expectation of faith	10:32-39	Imitate the faith of your leaders	13:7-8		
Better than Moses	3:1-4:13	His superiority as High Priest	7:1-28	Offered a better sacrifice	9:25-10:18	Examples of faith	11:1-12:1	Follow sound doctrine	13:9-14	Concluding personal notes	13:22-25
						Supreme example of faith	12:2	Praise God and help one another	13:15-16		
						Exhortation against discouragement	12:3-13	Submit to your leaders	13:17		
						Danger of rejection	12:14-17	Pray for us	13:18-19		
						Importance of decision	12:18-29				