



## SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Hebrews 1:1-4

**Author:** Although some include the Book of Hebrews among the apostle Paul's writings, the certain identity of the author remains an enigma. Missing is Paul's customary salutation common to his other works. In addition, the suggestion that the writer of this epistle relied upon knowledge and information provided by others who were actual eye-witnesses of Christ Jesus (2:3) makes Pauline authorship doubtful. Some attribute Luke as its writer; others suggest Hebrews may have been written by Apollos, Barnabas, Silas, Philip, or Aquila and Priscilla. Regardless of the human hand that held the pen, the Holy Spirit of God is the divine author of all Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16); therefore, Hebrews speaks with the same canonical authority as the other sixty-five books of the Bible.

**Date of Writing:** The early church father Clement quoted from the Book of Hebrews in A.D. 95. However, internal evidence such as the fact that Timothy was alive at the time the epistle was written and the absence of any evidence showing the end of the Old Testament sacrificial system that occurred with Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 indicates the book was written around A.D. 65.

**Purpose of Writing:** The late Dr. Walter Martin, founder of the Christian Research Institute and writer of the best-selling book *Kingdom of the Cults*, quipped in his usual tongue-in-cheek manner that the Book of Hebrews was written by a Hebrew to other Hebrews telling the Hebrews to stop acting like Hebrews. In truth, many of the early Jewish believers were slipping back into the rites and rituals of Judaism in order to escape the mounting persecution. This letter, then, is an exhortation for those persecuted believers to continue in the grace of Jesus Christ.

### Key Verses:

Hebrews 1:1-2: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."

Hebrews 2:3: "How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation..."

Hebrews 4:14-16: "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."

Hebrews 12:1-2: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

**Brief Summary:** The Book of Hebrews addresses three separate groups: believers in Christ, unbelievers who had knowledge of and an intellectual acceptance of the facts of Christ, and unbelievers who were attracted to Christ, but who rejected Him ultimately. It's important to understand which group is being addressed in which passage. To fail to do so can cause us to draw conclusions inconsistent with the rest of Scripture.

The writer of Hebrews continually makes mention of the superiority of Christ in both His personage and in His ministering work. In the writings of the Old Testament, we understand the rituals and ceremonies of Judaism symbolically pointed to the coming of Messiah. In other words, the rites of Judaism were but shadows of things to come. Hebrews tells us that Christ Jesus is better than anything mere religion has to offer. All the pomp and circumstance of religion pales in comparison to the person, work, and ministry of Christ Jesus. It is the superiority of our Lord Jesus, then, that remains the theme of this eloquently written letter.

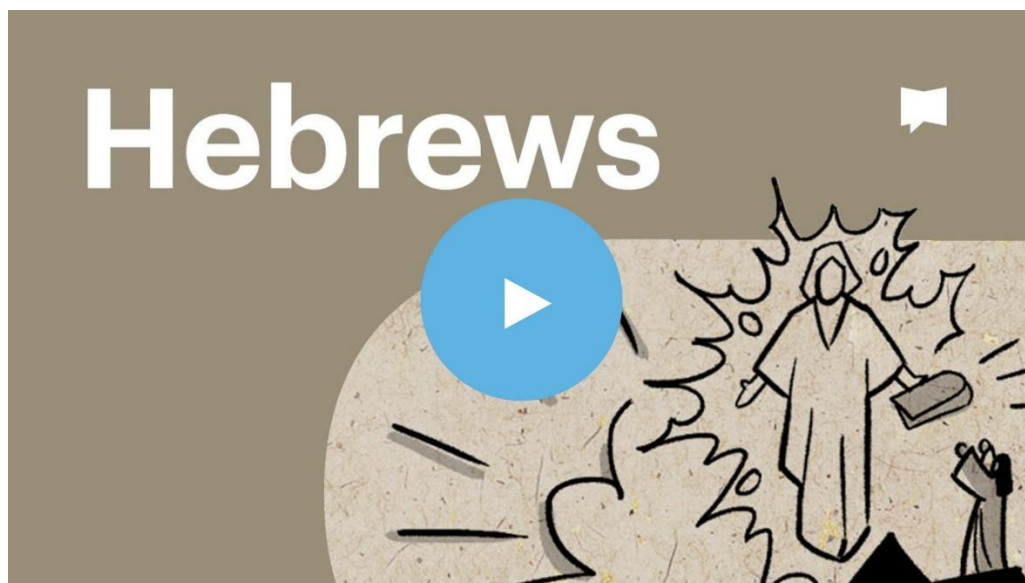
**Connections:** Perhaps nowhere in the New Testament does the Old Testament come into focus more than in the Book of Hebrews, which has as its foundation the Levitical priesthood. The writer to the Hebrews constantly compares the inadequacies of the Old Testament sacrificial system to the perfection and completion in Christ. Where the Old Covenant required continual sacrifices and a once-a-year atonement for sin offered by a human priest, the New Covenant provides a once-for-all sacrifice through Christ (Hebrews 10:10) and direct access to the throne of God for all who are in Him.

**Practical Application:** Rich in foundational Christian doctrine, the Epistle to the Hebrews also gives us encouraging examples of God's "faith heroes" who persevered in spite of great difficulties and adverse circumstances (Hebrews 11). These members of God's Hall of Faith provide overwhelming evidence as to the unconditional surety and absolute reliability of God. Likewise, we can maintain perfect confidence in God's rich promises, regardless of our circumstances, by meditating upon the rock-solid faithfulness of God's workings in the lives of His Old Testament saints.

The writer of Hebrews gives ample encouragement to believers, but there are five solemn warnings we must heed. There is the danger of neglect (Hebrews 2:1-4), the danger of unbelief (Hebrews 3:7-4:13), the danger of spiritual immaturity (Hebrews 5:11-6:20), the danger of failing to endure (Hebrews 10:26-39), and the inherent danger of refusing God (Hebrews 12:25-29). And so we find in this crowning masterpiece a great wealth of doctrine, a refreshing spring of encouragement, and a source of sound, practical warnings against slothfulness in our Christian walk. But there is still more, for in Hebrews we find a magnificently rendered portrait of our Lord Jesus Christ—the Author and Finisher of our great salvation (Hebrews 12:2).<sup>1</sup>

## Optional:

Watch an 8 minute overview of the Book of Hebrews: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/hebrews/>



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Book-of-Hebrews.html>

**AUTHOR: ?**

• PAUL?  
• BARBARAS?  
• APOLLOS?  
→ APOSTLES  
→ JEW!

**AUDIENCE: ?**

• SEE 10:32-34  
PERSECUTION & IMPRISONMENT

**THROUGH OF THE  
OLD TESTAMENT  
SCRIPTURE**

ABRAHAM

ISAAC OF  
ISRAEL

MOSES = MT SINAI

1:1-3

IN THE PAST **GOD** SPOKE TO OUR  
**ANCESTORS** IN MANY **DIFFERENT WAYS**,  
BUT IN THESE **LAST DAYS** HE HAS SPOKEN TO US IN **HIS SON**

PRESTES = SACRIFICES

THE WILDERNESS

THE PROMISED  
LAND

**THE LETTER TO THE  
HEBREWS**

JESUS IS THE ULTIMATE REVELATION OF GOD

A BAPT "AND OF  
EXHORTATION  
13:22

**#2**  
**MAIN GOAL**

**#1**  
ELEVATE JESUS  
AS SUPERIOR  
TO REMAIN FAITHFUL

**#2 CHALLENGE**  
THE READER TO  
REMAIN FAITHFUL  
TO JESUS DESPITE PERSECUTION

1-2

ANGELS & TORAH

THE "REVELATION" OF  
GOD'S GLORY

JESUS  
MAKES THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE  
IDENTIFICATION BETWEEN  
JESUS AND GOD

THE EXACT "IMPRINT" OF  
GOD'S NAME

3-4

MOSES & THE PROMISED LAND

9:10  
NEW CREATION

11-13

15-17  
PRIEST

5-7

PRESTES & MELCHIZEDEK

8-10

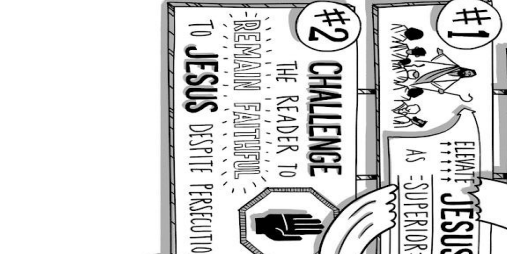
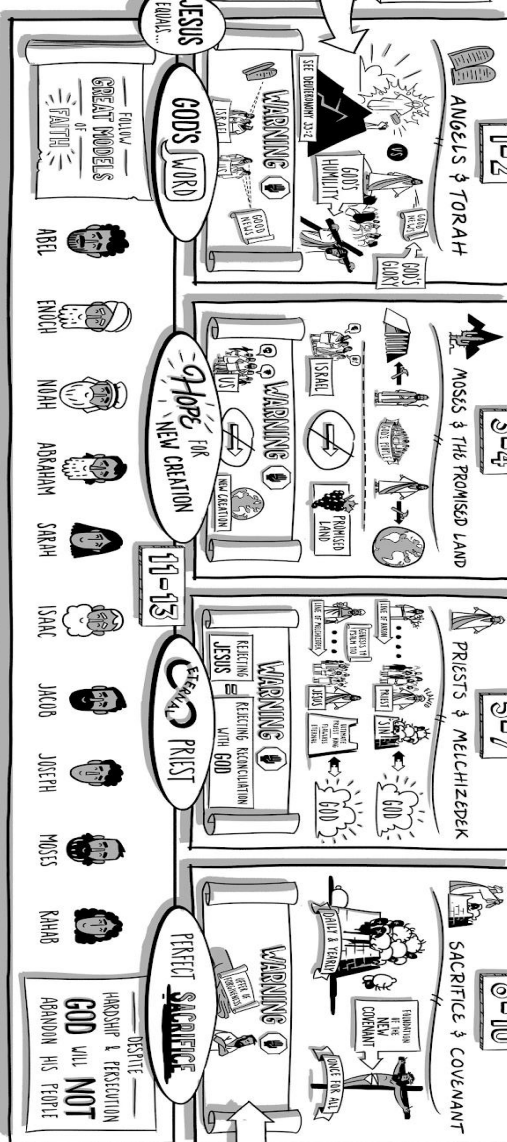
SACRIFICE & COVENANT

#1

LOOK UP OLD TESTAMENT  
**QUOTATIONS**  
(THERE ARE A LOT)

#2

THE POINT IS  
TO FEEL A BIT  
**UNCOMFORTABLE**,  
BUT NOT  
**AFRAID**



created by  
the Bible Project

# INTRODUCTION

Cornerstone University President, Dr. Joseph Stowell, has written concerning today's text: "God has always had spokesmen ready to speak for Him. When He wanted to announce the birth of His Son, He sent an angel with a message too significant to trust to a human being." The same was true for the news of Christ's resurrection. But God's greatest spokesman was neither a patriarch nor a prophet nor an angel. According to the author of Hebrews, when God wanted to reveal Himself fully, He spoke "by his Son" (Heb. 1:2).

There's a very good reason that God spoke fully, and finally, through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only Person of whom it can be said, "He is exactly like God." That's because Jesus is God--He is therefore both perfect and superior to anyone who has come before or since.

In a nutshell, that's the thesis of the letter to the Hebrews: Christ is superior in every way. This wonderful, and sometimes hard to understand, book is the focus of our study this month. We believe you'll be richly repaid for the time you spend in God's Word over the next thirty days. Hebrews will remind you of the incredible provisions and privileges you have in Christ.

Our study of Hebrews will follow this basic outline: the superiority of Christ's Person (1:1-4:11), the superiority of Christ's priesthood (4:12-10:18), and the superiority of Christ's power (10:19-13:25).

Since the book is anonymous, we don't know who the author of Hebrews was. It could have been Apollos, Barnabas, Silas, or Paul. It was probably written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, since it refers to the Mosaic sacrificial system as if it were still in practice.

What we don't know about the book of Hebrews is not nearly so significant as what the content of the book itself makes clear. In Jesus Christ, we have a Savior and a High Priest who is superior to the Old Testament prophets (vv. 1-2), superior to the Old Testament priests and their sacrifices (v. 3), and superior to the angels (v. 4). Jesus alone can claim the title "Son of God."

## TODAY ALONG THE WAY

If it's been awhile since you have thought about the provisions and privileges you have in Christ, Hebrews is the right book for you!

Here are three privileges you can praise God for today, as you prepare your heart for this study. First, since Jesus is God's final "spokesman", we have God's complete Word in our hands. Second, since Jesus offered the final sacrifice on the Cross, you don't have to bring an animal to church to sacrifice next Sunday--He paid the price of sin once and for all! And third, because Jesus is superior to the angels, you don't have to go through any other human or heavenly being to gain direct access to God.<sup>2</sup>

**Watch It**  Bible Principles

Watch Bible Principles #1; Heb. 1:1-4 [www.villagebible.church/bibleprinciples](http://www.villagebible.church/bibleprinciples)

## Open it

1. Do you like public speaking? Why? What qualities are needed to excel when speaking to a group of people?

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<sup>2</sup>[https://www.preceptaustin.org/hebrews\\_devotionals](https://www.preceptaustin.org/hebrews_devotionals)

## Read it

Hebrews 1:1-4

## Explore it

2. How does the writer of Hebrews characterize how God spoke to his people in the past?
3. Who did God use to speak his truth in the past?
4. Who has he spoken through in these last days?
5. How is Jesus described and what things has he done/is doing for us?

## Apply it

### “Brand New Day”

*In view of Christ’s supremacy, the writer exhorts his readers to persevere in the faith in the face of persecutions. He points out the consequences of not doing so and encourages them by reminding them of examples of devoted heroes and heroines of the faith. He ends by explaining the role of discipline and giving them some practical advice for living the Christian life.*

*No one really knows who wrote the Letter to the Hebrews, for no author’s name is mentioned in the text. Ancient traditions ascribe it to Paul, Barnabas, Luke or Clement of Rome. All that we know about the author is that he knew the OT very well and was acquainted with Timothy (13:23).<sup>3</sup>*

6. Take a moment and jot down some of the headings from Hebrews from your bible. What is the writer seeking to teach his readers? Why are such truths important for us today?

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<sup>3</sup> Africa Bible Commentary (p. 3904). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

7. Hebrews is the only book in the Bible that is left without a clear author. Should this anonymity affect our view of this book? Why?

### “The Climb”

*Many people have avoided the epistle to the Hebrews and, consequently, have robbed themselves of practical spiritual help. Some have avoided this book because they are afraid of it. The “warnings” in Hebrews have made them uneasy. Others have avoided this book because they think it is “too difficult” for the average Bible student. To be sure, there are some profound truths in Hebrews, and no preacher or teacher would dare to claim that he knows them all!<sup>4</sup>*

8. Over and over again we see the writer warn his readers regarding common temptations and pitfalls of their day that might hinder their walk with God. Looking at our landscape today what specific warnings might the writer have given the 21st century believers?

*The author of Hebrews says that our perseverance against the temptations to sin amidst our present sufferings is traceable, in part, to the depth of our appreciation for the surpassing greatness of Christ our high priest. In other words, receiving and resting upon Christ our great high priest alone, as He is presented in the Word, is a means by which the grace of perseverance comes to us His people.<sup>5</sup>*

9. What areas of your faith do you need more perseverance? What encouragement is there knowing that Christians in the past struggled in this way?

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<sup>4</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W.. Be Confident (Hebrews): Live by Faith, Not by Sight (The BE Series Commentary) (pp. 17-18). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ligonier.org/blog/our-great-high-priest-hebrews-son-greater-prophets-pt-1/>

10. One great theme in the book is the need to persevere. The writer gives us a litany of godly examples in Hebrews 11 as ones who we can follow. Why are such examples important when one feels like giving up?

*With Christ standing at the pinnacle of perfection, to defect from Him would be to exchange Him who is greatest for things that are lesser. Because Jesus Christ is better than all things, we should take care not to drift away from Him or the gospel. As the author asserts in the climax of this section: “Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. . . . Let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (4:14, 16).<sup>6</sup>*

*Some first-century Jewish Christians had abandoned their faith because they no longer recognized Christ’s deity and equality with God. The author’s first task is to expound and exalt God’s Son.<sup>7</sup>*

11. Like all of Scripture Jesus is the greatest of themes and subjects in Hebrews. Why is it imperative for us to have a clear and deep understanding of the person and work of Christ? What happens if our views of Him are shallow and unclear?

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<sup>6</sup> Swindoll, Charles R.. Insights on Hebrews (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 12) (p. 11). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

<sup>7</sup> Brown, Raymond. The Message of Hebrews (The Bible Speaks Today Series) . InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

## “Hey You!!!”

Drawing on the great regard the Hebrew people had for the major means of revelation in the Old Testament, the prophets and angels, the author of Hebrews compares these celebrated earthly and heavenly beings with God’s Final Word and Messenger, Jesus Christ. As powerful and significant as those holy people and holy angels were, they were inferior to the Son of God. He alone is God’s Last Word, superior in His person to God’s previous messengers and ministers—whether human or angelic. Why? Because Jesus is the Word incarnate—fully human and fully divine—who occupies a superior place over all things.<sup>8</sup>

**12. God revealed his word and will to Old Testament saints at “many times and in many ways.” Take a moment and look up the following passages and identify to whom and how God spoke.**

- God spoke to \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen. 37:5)
- God spoke to \_\_\_\_\_ through (a) \_\_\_\_\_ (Isa. 1:1)
- God spoke to \_\_\_\_\_ through (an) \_\_\_\_\_ (Zech. 1:9)
- God spoke to \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Sam. 3:4)
- God spoke to \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ (Dan 5:5)
- God spoke to \_\_\_\_\_ through (a) \_\_\_\_\_ (Num. 22:28)

**13. Read 2 Kings 17:13. What was the role God wanted the prophets to fulfill? In what ways was their work unfinished and lacking compared to what Jesus Christ would accomplish?**

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<sup>8</sup>Swindoll, Charles R.. Insights on Hebrews (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 12) (p. 14). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.



### **“Don’t Speak....not our God!!!!”**

*One of the most important assertions made by the author of Hebrews in these initial verses is that God is a speaking God. The Bible regularly affirms this fact, and Hebrews 1:1-3 reminds us that few things are more important than the notion that God has spoken throughout history and has now given his final revelation in Jesus Christ. The Bible also regularly reminds us that God’s revelation is part and parcel of his amazing grace to us. We regularly think of God’s grace in the context of salvation, but we must also think about God’s grace in the context of revelation.<sup>9</sup>*

**14. How does knowing that God speaks to his people give us confidence in His Word? What are some things we know about God and man from what he has said? If we truly believe God is speaking, how should we respond?**

### **“That’s Just Me”**

*Christ is superior in His person and work. And He is the final and fullest expression of God’s message and word to all humankind. Not that the old means and manner of speaking to His people were defective or deficient. They were great. But Christ is Greatness. The prophets’ messages from the Lord were perfect. Jesus is Perfection. The seers of old were the instruments. The Son is the Music. He is the One to whom, for whom, through whom, and about whom all the musicians had been playing. In what follows in the argument of Hebrews, the centrality of Christ in God’s work of revelation depends on the superiority of Christ in His person and work. To underscore this point, the author of Hebrews opens his sermon-like letter with **seven strong statements** that demonstrate the superiority of the Son as God’s Word to all things on heaven and earth, visible and invisible.<sup>10</sup>*

**15. What seven things does the writer tell us about Jesus Christ in Hebrews 1:1-3? How should the truths of Hebrews 1:1-3 impact not only the way you view Christ but how we live for him each and every day?**

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<sup>9</sup> Mohler, R. Albert. *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews* (Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary) (p. 8). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

<sup>10</sup> Swindoll, Charles R.. *Insights on Hebrews* (Swindoll’s Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 12) (pp. 16-17). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

*We have been all over the universe with the cosmic Son, and then suddenly he is introduced as the priestly Purifier who paid for our sins with his own blood. The thought almost sounds like an aside—“ After making purification for sins” (v. 3d). Ceaseless cosmic activity, and then boom! his once-and-for-all sacrifice for our sins. Actually this is a cosmic achievement because Jesus did something no man or priest could ever do: offer alone the sacrifice that paid for all sins. That had to be the work of a cosmic being!*<sup>11</sup>

- 16. The writer makes it clear that because of Christ's death and resurrection that all our sins have been purified already. How would this have lightened the burden of these 1st century Hebrews? How does this truth lighten our burden as 21st century Gentiles?**

**“End It On This!!!”**

*Seated in the most exalted position in the universe, Jesus is superior in His person and work over all things. This includes “the angels” (Heb. 1:4)—those spiritual creatures fashioned by God through the Son to be ministers and servants (1:7). When the Son took on a human nature, endured death for sin, rose from the dead victorious, and ascended into heaven, He inherited a name that no angel had the right to bear (1:4). What name was this? As a son bears the name of his father, so the Son of God would bear the name of God, the divine name YHWH, often translated kyrios [2962] in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Paul also teaches this in Philippians 2:9-11, where he writes, “God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”<sup>12</sup>*

- 17. Our text affirms one all-important truth: Jesus is Supreme and superior to any created thing, why then do we put so many things as higher priorities? What in this world is getting in the way of Jesus having first place in your life?**

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<sup>11</sup> Hughes, R. Kent. Hebrews (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition) (Preaching the Word) (Kindle Locations 415-418). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

<sup>12</sup> Swindoll, Charles R.. Insights on Hebrews (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 12) (pp. 18-19). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

This study was compiled and questions were written by Pastor Tim Badal (Sugar Grove Campus)—[www.villagebible.church/smallgroup](http://www.villagebible.church/smallgroup)