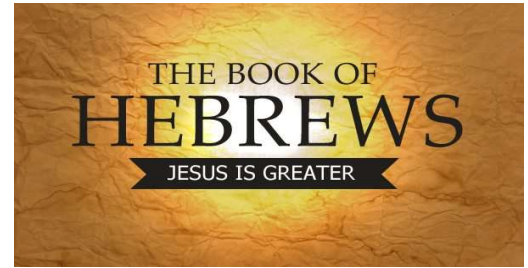


- ° The book of Hebrews is one of the two greatest theological letters in the NT, along with Paul's letter to the Romans.
 - These two letters lay the groundwork for why the hearer should have faith in Jesus & trust Him with their eternal salvation.



To whom was this letter written?

- Hebrews was clearly aimed at people who were now Christians but had come out of Judaism.
- Heb 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets...*
- It was to the Jews that God spoke to thru the prophets in the old covenant.
 - This letter focuses on their Jewish background, & proves how Jesus was its fulfillment; & in fact, how He surpassed all those institutions they had been taught.
 - The Jews had come from a divinely appointed religion, with divinely appointed priests, worshiping in a divinely appointed Temple, & following a divinely ordered service.
 - The Torah; the first five books of the bible, painstakingly describe all of the activities the Jews had been religiously & lovingly following throughout their history.

Who wrote this letter?

- ° Hebrews is an unsigned book & there are many theories, but the available evidence, I think, seems to justify Paul as the author; we'll look at this evidence in a minute.
- Apollos? Some suggest that Apollos wrote this epistle, although there is not much evidence to support the theory other than according to *Acts 18:24* he was an eloquent speaker who knew the Jewish scriptures.
 - Also; Apollos was from Alexandria, & yet even in Alexandria since the earliest times the book was always attributed to Paul.
 - If Apollos was the author, he couldn't even convince his own hometown.
- Barnabas? Others attribute the book to Barnabas, but here again there is no evidence to support this theory.
- Pricilla? Again there is no evidence that she wrote the letter other than she was a close associate of Paul's & maybe she learned a lot from him.
- Paul? There are many technical reasons that point to Paul as the author.
- From the earliest days of Christianity, it has been recognized & accepted by most leaders in the church as Paul's letter.
- Paul had a special mark proving his authorship in each of his letters.



2 Thes 3:17 *The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle I write.*

- Because of a forged letter supposedly from Paul, he personally included a special ending.

2 Thes 3:18 *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

- So, what is the ending of the letter to the Hebrews?

Heb 13:25 *Grace be with you all. Amen.*

- Why is this so important? Because the word "Grace" only appears in the salutations of one other epistle; *2Pet 3:18*, but it's used differently than Paul used it.

- ° *Habakkuk 2:4; The Just shall live by faith,* This verse is quoted three times in the NT; *Rom 1:17, Gal 3:11, Heb 10:38.*

- These three letters form a trilogy on *Hab 2:4* & all three I believe are written by Paul.
 - The Book of Romans answers the question; Who are *the Just*.
 - Galatians shows *how we are to live*; free from the bondage of the Law.
 - Hebrews is the *epistle on faith*; Faith in Jesus & His righteousness.
- In Romans 8:35-39, Paul lists a number of things that can separate you from the love of Christ.
 - He lists seven things, & then 10 more, for a total of 17.
 - In *Heb 12:18-24* we find a similar list: Again there are seven things, & then 10 more, for a total of 17; & in *Gal 5:19-21* there is also a list of 17 things.
 - Again, it's Romans, Galatians, & Hebrews that show a likeness of style.
- Paul also favored the Greek word, *huios*, "sons," rather than a similar Greek word, *teknon*, which other writers use, which means "children."
- In *Heb 13:18*, the writer says, "Pray for us." There is only one epistle writer that makes that specific request: The apostle Paul.
- Timothy; In Chapter 13 of Hebrews, there is a reference that notes that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was accompanied by Timothy.
 - We know from a number of epistles that Timothy accompanied Paul, but we don't have any record of him accompanying anyone else.
- So if Paul did write the book, why would he keep it anonymous?
 - Paul was a polarizing figure, & every time he tried to address the Jews there were riots.
 - They were intolerant against his ministry because he taught that their ancient Jewish rituals & ceremonies were now replaced with the sacrifice of Jesus.
 - Nowhere in the book of Hebrews does Paul claim apostolic authority, unlike his other epistles, But instead he builds his entire argument from the OT scriptures.
 - He wants them to see & base their faith on Jesus from those scriptures, not his position as an apostle.
- Peter also seems to allude to Paul's as the author of Hebrews in his second letter.

2 Pet 3:15 And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given to him has written to you...

 - Peter here attributes a letter written by Paul to the Hebrews. But the other 13 Pauline epistles all went to Gentile churches.
 - If Hebrews was not written by Paul, then there is a missing letter by Paul to the Hebrews.

2 Peter 3:16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the other scriptures.

 - Here Peter states that this writer who wrote to the Hebrews has also written many other letters.
 - Peter could very well be speaking of Hebrews 6 & 10 when he says that Paul had written some things that were hard to understand.
 - Many people find those chapters some of the most difficult to understand in the NT.



Why was this letter written?

- These Jewish believers, were suffering persecution because of their abandonment of these God given institutions & all their Jewish rituals.
 - Some of them had begun to return to temple worship to avoid persecution & being rejected.
 - At the time this letter was written, the Temple was still standing & the old, sacrifices were still being made.
 - If you were a believing priest or Pharisee, how could
 - you remain committed to the regulations of “The Law” after understanding the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross?
 - Those old covenant Laws & rituals were only a shadow of the true covenant Jesus made with His blood.
 - Going back under those old ways is not only wrong, but it is a rejection of Jesus Himself.
 - These Hebrews are warned of the seriousness of abandoning their faith in Jesus.



Heb 10:29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

- This letter to the Hebrews is one of the best examples of the chastening of God in the NT.
 - We don't see God condemning His people for disobeying, but instead we see Him lovingly showing them the error of their ways; all the while leaving the decision to them.
- The author of Hebrews had three main objectives:



1. Encourage them to remain strong on their faith in Jesus;

Heb 2:1-4; 10:19-25.

Heb 10:35-36 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise...

2. Encourage them to press on to spiritual maturity; *Heb 5:11-14; 10:32-39.*

Heb 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

3. Comfort them in their persecutions; *Heb 11:1-12:3.*

Heb 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth ... ¹⁶But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

- His method of achieving these objectives was to highlight the superiority of Jesus over Judaism.
 - The contrasts he describes are not between bad & good; (both are from God); but between good & better.
- As he discusses what these believing Jews had given up, he reminded them of what they had gained.
 - Notice how frequently the phrase "we have" occurs:
 - "we have" a great High Priest; *Heb 4:14, 8:1*
 - "we have" an anchor of the soul; *Heb 6:19*
 - "we have" a better and enduring possession in heaven; *Heb 10:34*
 - "we have" an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat; *Heb 13:10*



- ° All through this letter, these Hebrews were encouraged to forget the old things which were behind & to press toward those which they don't yet see.

- A new covenant; Heb 8:10, 9:11, 10:1

Heb 10:1 *For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect.*

- A world or age to come; Heb 2:5, 6:5

Heb 2:5 *For He has not put the world to come of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

- Good things to come; 10:37, 11:13-16,

Heb 9:11 *But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.*

- The Old Covenant Hebrew walked by sight; they could see the priests, the temple, the sacrifices, the rituals & daily Jewish life didn't require faith.
- The New Covenant Jew was now required to walk by faith.
 - He had to trust a High Priest he couldn't see or touch.
 - He had to believe in a sacrifice he couldn't see or touch.
 - He had to worship God in the spirit instead of a temple he could see & touch.
 - He had to follow the Spirit instead of the written Law which he could see & touch.
- This new way of faith; life in the spirit, would be hard to do after living a life by sight.
- The Holy Spirit has shown us in the book of Hebrews how believers now have in Christ the very substance of which all these physical things are only a shadow.
- Even though deprived of the temple, with its priesthood & altar & sacrifice, the Hebrews are reminded; We have the real temple, the great High Priest, the one sacrifice, & the true access into God's very presence in heaven.

- ° Everything about this New Covenant is *BETTER* than the old covenant the Jews had.

- The word better is used twelve times in Hebrews, proving Jesus is better than what they had.

We have better promises; Heb 8:6

We have a better hope; Heb 7:9

We have a better covenant; Heb 7:22

We have a better sacrifices; Heb 9:23

We have a better country; Heb 11:16

We have a better resurrection; Heb 11:35

