

# Introduction to the Book of Hebrews

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## Purpose of the Book

The Book of Hebrews was written to **encourage Jewish believers** in Jesus Christ to remain faithful in the face of persecution and to resist the temptation to return to the rituals and sacrifices of the Old Covenant. It emphasizes the **superiority of Jesus Christ**—His person, His priesthood, and His finished work—over all aspects of the Old Testament system.

Hebrews is a **bridge book**, highlighting the **transition from the Old Covenant (Law) to the New Covenant (Grace)**. From a dispensational perspective, Hebrews reinforces the **distinction between Israel and the Church**, while affirming that God's redemptive plan unfolds in distinct dispensations or economies of His working.

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## Authorship of Hebrews

The author of Hebrews is **anonymous**, which is unique among New Testament epistles. Several early church figures proposed different authors:

- **Paul:** Supported by some early traditions and the theological depth consistent with Pauline teaching. Dispensationalists often view Paul as the likely author but acknowledge differences in style and vocabulary.
- **Barnabas:** A Levite familiar with the temple system, making him a good candidate.
- **Apollos:** A learned Jew with a strong grasp of Scripture (Acts 18:24).
- **Luke or Priscilla:** Occasionally suggested, though with less support.

While the **Holy Spirit is the ultimate author**, the human writer was clearly well-versed in Jewish history, theology, and the Greek language.

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## Date and Audience

- **Date:** Likely written between **AD 64–68**, before the destruction of the **Jerusalem Temple (AD 70)**, since temple sacrifices are referred to in the present tense.
  - **Recipients:** Jewish Christians (possibly in Rome or Jerusalem) who were **facing persecution, spiritual fatigue, and temptation to return to Judaism**.
  - **Reason Written:** To show that Jesus is better than all that came before and that faith in Him is worth enduring trials and persecution.
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# Main Themes and Theological Concepts

## 1. The Superiority of Christ

- Better than angels (Ch. 1–2)
- Greater than Moses and Joshua (Ch. 3–4)
- Superior High Priest in the order of Melchizedek (Ch. 5–7)
- Mediator of a better covenant (Ch. 8–10)

## 2. The New Covenant Supersedes the Old

- Based on Christ's finished work
- Fulfillment of Jeremiah's New Covenant prophecy (Heb. 8:8–13)

## 3. Faith and Endurance

- Hall of Faith (Ch. 11)
- Encouragement to press on (Ch. 12)

## 4. Heavenly Calling and Priesthood

- Jesus' ministry is not earthly but heavenly
- Believers are encouraged to approach the throne of grace boldly

## 5. Warnings Against Apostasy

- Five major warning passages against drifting, doubting, dullness, despising, and defying God's Word

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# Outline of the Book of Hebrews

## 1. The Superiority of the Son (1:1–4:13)

- Greater than prophets and angels (Ch. 1–2)
- Greater than Moses and Joshua (Ch. 3–4)

## 2. The Superiority of Christ's Priesthood (4:14–7:28)

- Jesus as sympathetic High Priest
- Comparison to Melchizedek

## 3. The Superiority of the New Covenant (8:1–10:18)

- Better covenant, sanctuary, and sacrifice

## 4. Exhortations to Faith and Endurance (10:19–12:29)

- Call to perseverance
- Hall of Faith (Ch. 11)
- Encouragement to run the race (Ch. 12)

## 5. Practical Exhortations and Final Greetings (13:1–25)

- Instructions on love, leadership, and worship
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# Why Hebrews Is Important for Today

- **Builds Christ-centered confidence** in uncertain times
  - **Clarifies our relationship to the Old Testament** and the Law
  - Encourages believers to **mature spiritually** (Heb. 5:12–14)
  - Provides **assurance of access to God** through Christ alone
  - Shows that **God’s plan is progressing**, even in suffering
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## Overall Application for Today’s Christian

- **Stay anchored in Christ** despite trials or cultural pressure.
  - Recognize the **once-for-all sufficiency** of Jesus’ sacrifice.
  - Understand our **New Covenant blessings** and responsibilities.
  - Embrace our identity as **pilgrims and heavenly citizens**.
  - Apply the **faith-filled examples of Old Testament saints** to today’s challenges.
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## Key Questions for Forward Thinking

These questions will be explored throughout the study to deepen understanding:

1. **How is Jesus Christ superior to every Old Testament figure and system?**
  2. **Why is understanding the New Covenant essential for Christian living?**
  3. **What does it mean to “hold fast” our confession of faith today?**
  4. **What is the believer’s relationship to the Law, Temple, and priesthood?**
  5. **What warnings should we take seriously, and how do they apply to us?**
  6. **What does biblical perseverance look like in modern times?**
  7. **How does God use trials to train and mature His children?**
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## Starter Questions to Guide Understanding

- What do you know about the Old Testament system of worship and sacrifices?
- Why do you think the early Jewish believers might have been tempted to return to Judaism?
- What does it mean that God has “spoken by His Son” (Hebrews 1:2)?
- How does knowing Christ is seated at the right hand of God give you confidence?
- What is the difference between **religion** and **relationship** in the context of Hebrews?