

New Testament Survey
HEBREWS

Author: Debated. The Eastern church accepted it as an Epistle of Paul, though his name is not found in it as in the other Epistles. The Western church eventually accepted it as canonical without a designation of its author. Writing style show definite Pauline influence, but there are also enough significant differences to cast doubt on Pauline authorship (lack of introductory salutation; 2:3 which alludes the author is not an eyewitness of Christ; exclusive use of Septuagint quotations; lack of compound titles for Jesus). Other possible authors suggested have included Barnabas (Tertullian), Luke (Clement of Rome), Apollos, Silvanus and Philip.

Date: A.D. 67 or 68

It was written prior to the Roman-Jewish war and the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 68-70). The mention of Timothy (13:23) supports this date.

Theme: The Superiority of Christ

Misc. Many Jews had become Christians, but with the rise of persecution against Christians it was tempting to return to Judaism. The author shows the foolishness of such a return by demonstrating the superiority of Jesus Christ in every way.

There is no specific group mentioned as the recipients of the letter, though it is unlikely to be Jerusalem since they had resisted to the point of blood (12:4). A greeting “from those of Italy” suggests that it may have been written to Jewish believers in Rome. This is also the location of a persecution that arose by the Romans against Christians, but for which those following Judaism were not persecuted.

Brief Outline

I. Superiority of Christ's Person. 1:1-4:13

- A. Superior to Prophets. 1:1-3
- B. Superior to Angels. 1:4- 2:18
- C. Superior to Moses. 3:1-4:13

II. Superiority of Christ's Work. 5-10:18

- A. Superior Priesthood. 4:14-7:28
- B. Superior Covenant. 8:1-13
- C. Superior Sanctuary & Service. 9:1-10:18

III. Superiority of the Christian's Walk. (10:19- 13:25)

- A. Assurance of faith. (10:19-11:40)
- B. Endurance of faith. (Chapter 12)
- C. Exhortation to love. (Chapters 13)

People to Know: Jesus, Melchizedek, those mentioned in the “Hall of Faith” in chapter 11.

Key Chapters & Verses: (Bold required for Elders)

1. . . . Christ is God's full revelation. Superior to Angels because He is Deity.
1:1-3. . *"And He is the radiance of His glory..."*
2. . . . More revelation = more accountability. Superior to Angels because he is fully human.
His temptation & suffering allow Him to be high priest.
2:3-4 . *"How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation.... God also bearing witness with them both by signs and wonders and..."*
2:17 . . *"Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest..."*
- 3 Christ is Superior to Moses. Beware of an unbelieving heart.
3:7-19. Do not harden your hearts - peril of unbelief.
4:12-13 *"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, ..."*
4:14-16 Christ tempted as we are. (cf. James 1:13).
5. . . . Christ: Superior Priest in the order of Melchizedek
6. . . . Warning of apostasy. Assured hope in God's promise.
6:1-8. Pressing on to maturity vs. falling away.
7. . . . Melchizedek vs. Aaronic priesthood. Christ's priesthood is eternal.
9:11-15. Superiority of Christ's sacrifice.
- 10.** . . Christ's sacrifice is superior - *"once for all."* Confident access to God thru Christ.
10:14. *"For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified."*
10:16-29 God's vengeance on those who willfully sin after receiving truth / who reject Christ
- 11.** . . Faith: defined and exemplified.
11:1. . *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."*
12. . . The Fatherly discipline of God. Need of sanctification. Mt. Sinai vs. Mt. Zion.
12:1-3. *"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin with so easily entangles us... run/race... fix eyes on Jesus"*
12:4-11. God disciplines His children.
13:2 . . Hospitality - it could be to angels
13:4 . . Hold marriage in honor, avoid sexual sin
13:5 . . Do not be a lover of money, be content
13:15-16 Offer up the Sacrifice of praise - thanksgiving
13:17 . Obey leaders, they watch over your soul and will give an account.

Detailed Outline

- I. Superiority of Christ's Person. 1:1-4:13
 - A. Superior to Prophets. 1:1-3
 - B. Superior to Angels. 1:4- 2:18
 1. By Reason of His Deity (1:4-14)
 - a. He Has a More Excellent Name (4)
 - b. He is the Eternal Son of God (5-)
 - c. He is to Be Worshiped by Angels (6-7)

- d. He Has an Eternal Throne (8)
- e. He was Anointed by God (9)
- f. He is Eternal & Immutable (10-12)
- g. He is At the Right Hand of the Father (13)
- h. Angels are Ministering Spirits (14)

2. First Warning: Heed the Message (2:1-4)

3. By Reason of His Humanity (2:5-18)

- a. Man's Dominion over the Earth (5-8)
- b. Jesus' Temporary Humbling (9-18)

C. Superior to Moses. 3:1-4:13

- 1. By Reason of His Work (3:1-4)
- 2. By Reason of His Position (3:5-6)
- 3. Second Warning: Unbelief (3:7-4:13)
 - a. The Danger of Hardness of an Unbelieving Heart (3:7-19)
 - b. The Failure to Enter His Rest by Faith (4:1-13)

II. Superiority of Christ's Work. 5-10:18

A. Superior Priesthood. 4:14-7:28

- 1. Superior as High Priest (4:14-5:10)
 - a. Superior in Position (4:14-16)
 - b. Superior in Qualifications (5:1-10)

2. Third Warning: Danger Not Maturing (5:11-6:20)

- a. Consequences of Being Dull of Hearing (5:11-14)

b. Consequences of Falling Away (6:1-8)

c. Consequences of Maturing (6:9-20)

i. Being Diligent (9-12)

ii. God's Faithfulness to His Promises (13-20)

3. Superior Order of Melchizedek Priesthood (7:1-28)

a. Description of Melchizedek (1-3)

b. Aaron Paid Tithes to Melchizedek (4-10)

c. Aaronic Priesthood Could Not Bring Perfection (11)

d. Aaronic Priesthood was Temporal (12-23)

e. Jesus is Eternal and Perfect (24-28)

B. Superior Covenant. 8:1-13

1. A Ministry in Heaven (1-6)

b. A New Covenant (7-13)

C. Superior Sanctuary & Service. 9:1-10:18

1. The Old Covenant's Sanctuary and Sacrifice (9:1-10)

a. The Old Covenant's Sanctuary (1-5)

b. The Old Covenant's Sacrifice (6-10)

2. The New Covenant's Sanctuary and Sacrifice (9:11-10:18)

a. The New Covenant's Sanctuary (9:11)

b. The New Covenant's Sacrifice (9:12-10:18)

i. A Cleansing Sacrifice (9:12-22)

ii. A Substitutionary Sacrifice (9:23-28)

iii. A Sufficient Sacrifice (10:1-18)

III. Superiority of the Christian's Walk. (10:19- 13:25)

A. Assurance of Faith. (10:19-11:40)

1. Exhortation to Faithfulness (10:19-25)

2. Fourth Warning: The Danger of Shrinking Back (10:26-39)

a. Consequences of Willful Sin (26-31)

b. Consequences of Endurance (32-39)

B. Examples of Faith (11:1-40)

1. Definition of Faith (1-3)

2. The Faith of Abel (4)

3. The Faith of Enoch (5-6)

4. The Faith of Noah (7)

5. The Faith of Abraham & Sarah (8-19)

6. The Faith of Isaac (20)

7. The Faith of Jacob (21)

8. The Faith of Joseph (22)

9. The Faith of Moses' Parents (23)

10. The Faith of Moses (24-29)

11. The Faith of Joshua & Israel (30)

12. The Faith Rahab (31)

13. The Faith of Many Others (32-40)

C. Endurance of faith. 12:1-29

1. Exhortation to Follow Christ's Example (1-3)
2. Exhortation to Endure God's Chastening (4-13)
3. Exhortation to Pursue Peace and Sanctification (14-17)
4. Contrast of Mt. Sinai and Mt. Zion (18-24)
5. Fifth Warning: The Danger of Refusing God (25-29)

C. Living in Faith. 13:1-25

1. Love of the Brethren (1)
2. Love of Strangers (2)
3. Remember Prisoners (3)
4. Honorable Marriage (4)
5. Financial Contentment (5-6)
6. Imitate the Faith of Your Leaders (7-14)
7. The Sacrificial Life (15-16)
8. Obedience to Leaders (17)

D. Conclusions

1. Paul's Prayer Request (18-19)
2. Benediction (20-21)
3. Final Instructions & Greetings (22-24)
4. Salutation (25)