

Hebrews Lesson 1, Introduction

24 June 2024

The epistle to the Hebrews takes away the Hebrews religion and leaves them only Jesus Christ. When this book is done, they have nothing left but Jesus. And if they read it and believe it, they realize they need nothing—but Jesus.

THE TITLE: HEBREWS. The original recipients of this letter were Jewish people.

- When Jesus Christ came, He called upon the Hebrew people to abandon their God-given religion, practices, and national life to follow Him.
- Jews who followed Jesus were cut off from their homes, family, temple, religion, and nation.
 - Trusting Jesus required them to turn their back on everything they were.
 - Trusting Jesus immediately brought upon them terrible persecution.
 - Their countrymen saw them as those who turned away from the temple and Moses.
 - In the days of the Judges and Kings, failing to be true to Moses and the temple resulted in persecution and captivity.
- The resulting persecution caused some Jewish believers to waiver in their faith and turn back to Judaism and the principles and practices of the Jewish religion.

PURPOSE OF HEBREWS:

- To warn the Jewish believers not to go back to Judaism.
- To proclaim that Jesus Christ is better than everything they ever had in the Jewish religion.
 - He is better than angels, Adam, Moses, Joshua, Judaism, Aaron, the Hebrew's hope, the Hebrew's covenants, the Old Testament promises, the Law, their altars, their priests, their sacrifices, their land, Abel, their resurrection.

FALSE IDEAS CONCERNING THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK:

- Some denominations teach that Hebrews was written for future Jews who will be living after the Church is raptured out, instructing them on how to go back to practicing Judaism.
 - Considering that the entire book instructs the Jews not to go back to Judaism because Jesus Christ is better, this teaching is without foundation.

THE RECIPIENTS OF THE LETTER:

- Hebrews, saved and lost, living in the city of Jerusalem, were addressed in this letter.
 - Some passages are written to Jews who had already trusted Jesus Christ.
 - Some passages are written to Jews who have not yet trusted Jesus Christ.
 - The letter is written to a people, not to a local church.
- **Hebrews 6:10.** This letter was initially written to a specific group of people. It wasn't merely a public posting.
- **Hebrews 10:32.** The recipients of this letter had been persecuted for their faith.
- **Hebrews 13:7, 17.** The recipients had overseers responsible for their well-being.

THE AUTHOR OF THE LETTER: The Holy Spirit of God

- The penman of this letter is anonymous, though it is presumed to be Paul.
- Remaining unnamed, would ensure a greater readership. Resentment toward a named author would possibly cause some not to read the letter.

THE DATE OF THE LETTER: Before 70 A.D. (destruction of the temple)

- **Hebrews 10:11.** The letter was written when priests were still ministering the daily sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem.
- **Hebrews 8:4.** Priests offered gifts (present tense) according to the law at the time of writing.
- **Hebrews 8:13.** The new covenant was here, but the old covenant was still in operation “ready to vanish away.” That could only be said if Jerusalem and the temple were still standing.

SCRIPTURE GIVING THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER:

- **Hebrews 6:1-3.** To lead Jewish believers from a basic, fundamental knowledge of Christian truth into a mature faith and understanding of Christianity. It encourages Christians to go on unto perfection.
 - **Hebrews 10:32-33.** To warn them not to let the persecution weaken their faith and cause them to go back to Judaism.
 - **Hebrews 5:11-12.** To remind them that Christianity is more than just trusting Jesus and waiting to go to heaven. They need to progress and become leaders.
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