

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

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O U T L I N E

- Doctrinal: The Superiority of Christ and His Priesthood	Hebrews 1:1 - 10:18
- Christ is Superior to <i>the Prophets</i> : the Glories of the Son of God	Hebrews 1:1-4
- Christ is Superior to <i>the Angels</i> : as Son of God and Son of Man	Hebrews 1:5 - 2:18
- Christ is Superior to <i>Moses</i> : the House of God	Hebrews 3:1-6
- (The Folly of Unbelief: Christ is Superior to <i>Joshua</i>)	Hebrews 3:7 - 4:13
- Christ is Superior to <i>Aaron</i> : the Melchizedek Priesthood	Hebrews 4:14 - 7:28
- Christ is Superior to <i>the Entire Jewish System</i> : Two Covenants	Hebrews 8 - 10:18
- Practical: The Results of Christ's Superiority in the Believer's Life	Hebrews 10:19 - 13:17
- Exhortations Concerning Access into the Holiest	Hebrews 10:19-31
- Exhortation to Endure Persecution	Hebrews 10:32-39
- The Life of Faith: a Great Cloud of Witnesses	Hebrews 11
- Exhortation to Endure Chastening	Hebrews 12
- Exhortations for Christian Living	Hebrews 13:1-17
- Concluding Instructions	Hebrews 13:18-25

The Book of Hebrews was written to professing Jews, that had embraced Jesus as their Messiah. But there was a danger that some of them might “fall back”, and come to the wrong conclusion, that Jesus was not the true Messiah. They had been exposed to the highest truth (the Person of Christ), and they were in danger of apostasy. In this epistle God is striving with them to see that Jesus was not only David’s son, but David’s lord (Matt. 22). God insists that we recognize not only Christ’s messianic title (humanity, Son of David), but His intrinsic deity (Godhood, Son of God). *“If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins”* (John 8:24).

The Writer. Based on the greetings at the end of this epistle, and Peter’s reference to an epistle of Paul to the Hebrews (3 Pet. 3:15), it would seem most likely that Paul is the writer of Hebrews. It is no more surprising than that John does not attach his name to his first epistle. Why doesn’t Paul bring out his apostleship in the opening verses of Hebrews as he does in many other epistles? First, in this epistle, *Christ’s apostleship* is brought forward (Heb. 3:1), and that eclipses all other apostles. We see this in the beginning of ch.2 where the twelve are called *“them that heard Him”*, rather than apostles or “sent ones”. Second,

Paul was the apostle to the uncircumcision (Gal. 2:7), and therefore he does not write to the Jews in an apostolic character, although he certainly carried all the authority of an apostle even to the Jews. For instance, we see Paul addressing Jews in several chapters in the book of Romans, etc. In Hebrews, Paul writes as a teacher to his Jewish brethren, appealing to the Old Testament scriptures rather than his apostolic authority.

Overview. The book of Hebrews is one of contrasts and of parallelism. By way of contrast, the Spirit of God compares Christ to the Prophets, to the Angels, to Moses, to Joshua, to Aaron, then to the whole Jewish system, and shows how Christ is far superior to all of them. At the same time, the Spirit illuminates the glories of Christ by drawing parallel features from the Old Testament typology. The point of this book is to detach believing Jews from Judaism by attaching their hearts to Christ! We have twelve chapters in which the glories of Christ are unfolded, and finally we get the call to *“go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come”* (Heb. 13:13-14). The Jew, with all his earthly hopes would not easily be convinced to give up earth in exchange for heaven. The Spirit of God does this by giving the reader a view into the opened heavens, a view of Jesus crowned with glory and honor. Then, with hearts attached to that glorified, heavenly One, we can separate from all the trappings of an earthly religion. He first puts us within the veil, then calls us outside the camp.