

Letter to the **Hebrews**



Lesson 1-Intro to Hebrews and the Prophesied Christ!

Focus: Hebrews 1:1-14

- **Introduction:** The Book of Hebrews has been accepted very strongly among Christians as an inspired, biblical or canonical book of the Bible since the very early centuries. During the earliest centuries after the days of the apostles its author was somewhat in question. In the eastern part of the Roman Empire, most Christians believed and accepted that Paul was the author of this book. In the west though, many thought it might have been written by Barnabas, Luke, Clement, or some other anonymous author. In spite of this, **from about the 4th century to the late 1800's most Christians accepted Paul as the author of Hebrews.** There has been both internal and external evidence for that. Some aspects of literary style and theology are very similar to Paul's. The book also mentions Timothy (**Heb. 13:23**), who was known as Paul's young "son in the faith." That verse also tells us that the author would come with Timothy, saying "...I will see you." These are the kind of evidences that suggest Paul's authorship. Also **Heb. 13:24** suggests that this letter was written from Rome or somewhere in Italy, and directed to the Hebrews or Jewish people. **Many scholars are not fully conclusive as to where the letter was written from.** One thing the letter is missing concerning Paul's usual style is the greeting at the beginning which would have included his name. The book starts out with "God, who at various times..." (1:1) rather than with a usual greeting from "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ..." For such reasons, some have questioned whether it truly was written by Paul. Anyway, regardless of these questions, the validity of this book as a solid piece of biblical Scripture has not been questioned! Its truths are fully in line with all Bible teachings, very informative, and also understood to have come from a very well-known apostle or author.

Hebrews was quoted by Clement of Rome in the year A.D. 95, so obviously it was written prior to that date. It did not mention however, the end of the Old Testament sacrificial system at the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70. So that also indicates an earlier date for writing than A.D. 70. **The evidentially suggested date would be between A.D. 64 and 68** for its being written.

There are 13 chapters in Hebrews and the book focuses a lot on our faith in Christ Jesus as the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies and also the fulfillment of the old sacrificial system of worship. Jesus Christ was the Lamb to be slain and He is also our High Priest or Intercessor before God! These things, along with a description of God's different covenants with men are the focus of this book. Believers are encouraged to press on in faith and not go back or lose their precious faith in Jesus Christ who was the fulfillment of the all the ancient promises of God concerning the Messiah or Savior!!

- **The Revelation of Christ, God's eternal son and our Savior to all the world (v.1-3)**
 - We start out with "God!" "In the beginning, God..." (Gen. 1:1). Everything is centered upon Him! God has always had his prophets to share His truth with people! God does nothing without revealing His secrets to His prophets for showing to other people (Amos 3:7). There are many examples. People like Noah (Heb. 11:7) whom God warned of the coming flood (ref. Gen. 6:3), the Prophets Samuel and Nathan who guided Israel through the early years of their kingdom, Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, etc., etc. **Isaiah made so many wonderful prophecies of the coming Savior.** One favorite is **Isaiah 9:6.** (A child born to Israel who would also be called by the very name of God). Unfortunately, when Christ came, many of God's own professed people did not accept Him. **They did not listen to the prophets!** (See Mark 12:1-8 where Jesus pointed out this sin). Isaiah also prophesied that many would not! (Isaiah 53:1-4). Christ was put to death, but then raised back to life on the third day—many of the leaders of the Hebrew nation even failed

to accept that! Jesus said, “If they don’t hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:31). Christ point people to the Scriptures and the writings of the prophets as evidence of His being the Messiah! (Luke 24:25-27, 44). We should look there for our faith too! “...Believe His prophets and so shall you prosper” (2 Chron. 20:20). Truly, these religious leaders did not know God as they should have (John 8:18,19). Let it not be our case too.

➤ **Christ’s Divinity is clearly portrayed here (v.4-14)**

- Christ is pictured here as God...as also in the other Scriptures! Very clearly He is revealed as being God—a Divine being! No angel could, would, ever has, or ever will receive such a praise and honor or glory. Such only belongs to God!
- (v.4-6) Even the angels of God are to worship Him! Worship is not allowed to anyone except for God Himself! (**See Exodus 20:3**). The Ten Commandments make that very clear! No angels of God would ever receive such worship (See Rev. 19:10). There are some churches today who do not believe in the Divinity of Christ, but the Bible makes Christ’s place and position extremely clear! When Christ came, it was the angel’s **joy** to present their blessed Lord, the King of heaven and earth to mankind (ref. Luke 2:8-14).
- (v.7-9) The Bible says, “Your throne O God, is forever...” in speaking of Jesus Christ! When the Bible calls Him God, then we must believe that He is God! Some try to make Jesus to be a mere creation. They forget His divinity! They often use a verse like **John 20:17** where Jesus says that the Father is his God. But, we have to remember that this was in the words of Jesus’ humanity here on this earth! Hebrews 1:8 is clearly stressing His Divinity. The Father was God to Jesus, only as Jesus was as a man. Christ had “glory” “with the Father” from ancient times, even from everlasting (Micah 5:2; John 17:5; John 8:57, 58). Daniel 2:44,45 also follow the idea of verse 9 in presenting the coming of Jesus Christ and how He, “God” will set up His everlasting Kingdom. We should look forward to this and serve the blessed King, Jesus! More on verse 9: *Christ became one of us. He lowered himself to our level. God the Father was over him as his God. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism and proclaimed to be the beloved Son of God in whom the Father was well pleased (Luke 3:21,22; 4:18; Acts 10:37,38). Christ was “anointed with the oil of gladness” more than His companions, or fellow human beings, into whose family He had entered by choice. “Oil” and being anointed are both connected with receiving the Holy Spirit. Oil in the Bible is symbolically connected with receiving the Holy Spirit. See 1 Samuel 16:13).*
- (v.10-12) God, even Christ Jesus, is the Creator of all things (See John 1:1-3, 14; Gen. 1:1-3). The heavens will grow old, but God never will! God is the same. He does not change (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8). The heavens will perish eventually, but God will make all things new! (Rev. 21:5; 2 Peter 3:10, 13). Jesus Christ also wants to make us new creatures! Even now, even today, by the work of the Holy Spirit, God wants to convert our hearts and to make us new in Him (John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; also Rom. 6:3-8). We are to be new creatures with new hearts in God—“born again”!
- (v.13,14) The angels were sent as God’s servants to minister to broken and hurting mankind in this world. Through Jesus Christ their work is centered! Jesus is the ladder of Jacob’s dream from the Old Testament (the angel’s work is centered around His work!); they ascend and descend from Heaven to work for us, based on what Jesus Christ himself has done for us (ref. Genesis 28:12,13 and John 1:51). They are His ministering spirits, sent to help us!
- Christ is certainly greater than the angels! He is God! He is the bridge between God and man. His nature is a mystery of Humanity and Divinity come together! His ministry was and still is to reconcile us to God. Let’s be sure to give Him that chance in our lives!

Question (s) for the Heart:

Would you like to serve Jesus Christ and be in His eternal kingdom? _____