

The Epistle to the Hebrews

The book of Hebrews has thrilled the hearts and minds of Bible scholars of all levels for 2000 years. It gives comfort and hope to the child-like faith while at the same time satisfying the intellectual and academic hunger of those who wish to dig into its depths. We hope, by this study, to begin to scratch the surface of Hebrews, and create a desire in you for a deeper understanding and appreciation of this unique book in the New Testament.

Theme: Jesus is better. The author will demonstrate that Jesus is better than anything else man can offer, including all that came before. Scattered throughout his discussion are a number of warning passages that we will attempt to look at in detail.

Date: Bible scholars indicate that the book was written somewhere between AD 60 and 70. Much is mentioned of the temple/tabernacle worship system, which was destroyed in the sack of Jerusalem in AD 70, but still in place at the time of writing. Many put the date after AD 64, when Emperor Nero forced all the Jews out of Rome, and the destruction of the temple.

Recipients: The letter was written to second generation Hebrew Christians. (Heb. 2:3). We do not know their location, but we know they were **Hebrew** Christians, as there is no mention of Greeks or Gentiles in the book. However, they were Jews outside of Palestine. While they may have been familiar with the Hebrew language, the Old Testament quotes are from the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Greek speaking Jews would be more familiar with the Septuagint than those living in Israel at the time.

Author: The author is unnamed. Many think it is the Apostle Paul, as the writing style is similar. The author was known to the recipients, and he mentions ‘our brother Timothy’ (Heb. 13:22,23). But, the standard greetings as seen in Paul’s other epistles is not given here. Other suggestions have been Barnabas, Apollos (who was a great orator), and even Priscilla, wife of Aquila. We really don’t know.

Background reading: If you have the time, please do a cursory reading of the Old Testament book of Leviticus particularly chapters 8,9, 16). Please read the entire book of Hebrews at least once.