



Stay Fixated on Hebrews!

Lesson One • Introduction to the Book of Hebrews

Reading the Book of Hebrews: *"Toto, I have a feeling we're not Kansas anymore!"*

The Challenge of Hebrews

- The **OLD** Testament Background.
- The **WARNING** Passages.
- The **THEOLOGICAL** Tensions.
- The **CONTEXT** of the Letter.

The *many unknowns* of this book are a downside but, ultimately, they are an **UPSIDE** for us!

Introduction to the Book of Hebrews

1. What Kind of Letter Is It?

- Begins like a **SERMON** and ends like a **LETTER**. (1:1-14; 13:18-25)

*"But I urge you, brethren, bear with **this word of exhortation**, for I have written to you briefly."* Hebrews 13:22

*"After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, 'Brethren, if you have any **word of exhortation** for the people, say it.' Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, 'Men of Israel, and you who fear God, **listen**:'"* Acts 13:15-16

Purpose of a Sermon-Letter

Meant to be *heard first as a sermon* while being *read as a letter*!

Pattern of the Sermon-Letter

Explanation (interpretation) followed by *exhortation* (application) on repeat!

2. Who Wrote This Sermon-Letter?

We **DON'T KNOW!**

- Many speculations: *Paul, Luke, Apollos, Barnabas, Silas, Philip, Stephen, Jude, Timothy, Clement of Rome, Priscilla, even Mary the mother of Jesus.*

Some of these are a good guess while others are **WILD** speculations.

- What do we know?

Male, likely Jewish, Greek-cultured, well-educated, synagogue-familiar, eloquent speaker, quotes the Greek Old Testament (LXX), second generation believer, leader with a pastor-teacher's heart!

Plus, not one of their local leaders and yet considered one of them! (13:17-19)

APOLLOS is a great guess (Acts 18:24-28) and was Martin Luther's first choice!

- Not knowing keeps the focus on the **DIVINE** Author which is what this “pastor-teacher” does even when he knows who the human author is! (1:5-7, 13; 2:6, 12-13; 3:7)

SERIES: Hupakouw: Hearing to Obey: Master the spiritual skill of listening to God speak through sermons.



3. To Whom Was This Sermon-Letter Delivered?

We **DON'T KNOW!**

- What do we know?
 1. Largely **JEWISH** Christians who heard the gospel from others who heard it from Jesus. (2:3)
 2. Saved **LONG** enough should be disciples but had also endured difficult persecution. (5:11-12; 10:32-35)
 3. About to face more persecution, perhaps even **DEATH**. (12:3-4)
 4. Beginning to **FALL AWAY** from Christ and forsake worshipping together to avoid suffering. (3:12; 10:23-25)
 5. Risked being like the **WILDERNESS** generation that heard God's voice but refused to enter God's rest. (3:12-15; 4:12-3)
 6. But the pastor-teacher believes **BETTER** things and ends with a **BLESSING** regarding God's ability to work in and through them. (6:9; 13:20-21)
- Not knowing reminds us that we are **ALL** weary pilgrims who must trust and obey the Son through our present wilderness until we enter God's future rest!

4. Where Was This Sermon-Letter Delivered?

We **DON'T KNOW!**

- What do we know?

Perhaps to Jewish Christians in **ROME** (13:24). But this could also mean the writer was in Rome writing to Jewish Christians in Palestine!
- Not knowing keeps the Bible in the **FOREGROUND** and forces us to **COMPARE** Scripture with Scripture which is done throughout this “sermon-letter”!

5. When Was This Sermon-Letter Delivered?

We **DON'T KNOW!**

- What do we know?

Likely **after AD 62 or 65** since Timothy has been released from prison (13:23), yet this is never mentioned in Acts or Paul's letters. But **before** the destruction of the Temple in **AD 70**, since sacrifices are apparently still being offered (10:2). So, between **AD 65-70?** Or before Nero's persecution **AD 60-65?**
- Not knowing keeps the focus on **“TODAY”** which is exactly where the pastor-teacher wants us to stay fixated! (1:5; 3:7, 13, 15; 4:7; 5:5; 13:8)!

3-FOLD FOCUS in HEBREWS and 3 HELPS for READING HEBREWS...TODAY!

SEE CHART: Book of Hebrews

HEBREWS: Stay Fixated on Christ's Greater Glory to Hold Fast and Move Forward to God's Future Rest

Book of Hebrews

Begins like a Sermon but Ends like a Letter!
Background to This "Sermon-Letter" is Not Revealed!

Like Melchizedek, it is *without* father, mother, or genealogy. So, the focus is on **TODAY** God is *speaking*, Christ is *mediating*, and the Spirit is *convicting*.
Be quick to *hear*, quick to *obey* from the heart by faith in hope with love!

Stay Fixated on Christ's Greater Glory to Hold Fast & Move Forward Until We Enter God's Rest!

"fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God..." (12:2) "Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession..." (3:1) "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession..." (4:14) "Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience..." (4:11)

NO GREETING		STAY FIXATED on Our Calling in Christ!		HOLD FAST to Our Confession with Confidence!		MOVE FORWARD with Conviction in Community!	
1:1 <i>"You are My Son!" (1:5)</i>		4:13		4:14 <i>"You are a Priest—Son made perfect forever!" (5:6, 7:28)</i>		10:18 <i>"Jesus is the same, yesterday, today, and forever!" (13:8)</i>	
GREATER than Prophets & Angels <i>Messengers of the Law</i>		GREATER than Moses & Joshua <i>Mediators of the Law</i>		GREATER than Aaron, Abraham & Levi's Priesthood <i>Ministry of the Law</i>		In HOPE that ENDURES	
1:1 – 2:18		3:1 – 4:13		4:14 – 10:18		12:1-29	
SON of GOD Full Divine Nature (1:1-14) God's Final Revelation God's Flawless Radiance God's Firstborn Ruler WARNING! (2:1-4) SON of MAN Full Human Nature (2:5-18) Our Family Representative: <i>The Better Last Adam</i> Our Firstborn Representative: <i>The Better Big Brother</i> Our Faithful Representative: <i>The Better High Priest</i>		GREATER than MOSES Look Up! (3:1-6) Consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of Our Confession: <i>Hold Fast to the End!</i> WARNING! GREATER than JOSHUA Listen Up! (3:7-4:13) WARNING! Today Don't Harden Your Heart and Not Enter His Rest: <i>Fear Someone Won't Enter!</i>		GREATER than AARON Greater Priestly Qualifications than Aaron (4:14–5:10) WARNING! (5:11–6:20) GREATER than LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD Greater Priestly Order Like Melchizedek (7:1-28) Pictured in Melchizedek: <i>Literally Like the Son of God</i> (1-3) Preeminence of Melchizedek: <i>Over Abram & Levi</i> (4-10) Perfection in Another Like Mel.: <i>A Son Made Perfect</i> (11-28) Greater Priestly Ministry by Christ (8:1–10:18) Better Ministry: <i>Comes with the Better Mediator!</i> (8:1-6) Better Covenant: <i>Newly Cut with Better Promises!</i> (8:7-13) Better Sanctuary: <i>Heavenly Not Made with Hands!</i> (9:1-10) Better Sacrifice: <i>Himself Once for All!</i> (9:11-28) Better Perfection: <i>Sanctified by Christ's Sacrifice!</i> (10:1-18)		LET US... DRAW NEAR Confidently (19-22) HOLD FAST Continually (23) ASSEMBLE Consistently (24-25) Even More as the Doy Draws Near! WARNING! (26-39)	
GOSPEL LOGIC: <i>SUPERIORITY of the FIRSTBORN SON!</i>		He is LIKE US! 2:16-17a		He is FOR US! 2:17b; 7:26		He is WITH US! 2:18; 12:1-2, 22-24; 13:8, 13-14, 20-21	
WOEFUL WARNINGS		1 NEGLECTING <i>Danger of Drifting</i> 2:1-4		2 HARDENING <i>Danger of Distrusting</i> 3:7–4:13		3 STAGNATING <i>Danger of Delaying</i> 5:11-6:20	
God's Son		A P O S T A T I Z I N G : <i>The Danger of Denying Faith in the Triune God!</i>		4 FORSAKING <i>Danger of Departing</i> 10:26-39		5 REFUSING <i>Danger of Defying</i> 12:14-24 / 25-29	
By WHOM? WE DON'T KNOW! Speculations: Paul, Luke, Apollos, Barnabas, Silas, Peter, Philip, Jude, Priscilla, etc. Some likely, others not. We do know: Male, Jewish, Greek-culture (XX), synagogue-familiar, well-educated, eloquent speaker, not an apostle?, pastor-teacher's heart. Apollos is a great guess (Acts 18:24-28)! Favored by Martin Luther. Not knowing keeps the focus on the Divine Author while this "pastor-teacher" does even when he knows the human author (e.g., 2:6)!		To WHOM? WE DON'T KNOW! Begins like a sermon, ends like a letter! So, no greeting from author to recipients with their location. We do know: largely Jewish Christians who heard the gospel from others who heard it from Jesus (2:3). Saved long enough should be disciple yet had endured persecution (10:32-35) and were facing more, perhaps death (12:4). Were beginning to fall away from Christ and forsake worshipping together to avoid suffering. Risked being like the wilderness generation that heard God's voice but refused to enter God's rest. Not knowing reminds us that we are all weary pilgrims who must trust and obey the Son through our present wilderness until we all enter God's future rest!		WHERE? WE DON'T KNOW! Perhaps to Jewish Christians in Rome (13:24), but this could mean the writer was in Rome writing to Jewish Christians in Palestine! We do know: There was an expulsion of Jews, including Jewish Christians, from Rome by Claudius (AD 49), and later a more deadly persecution under Nero (AD 64). Not knowing keeps the Bible in the foreground and forces us to compare Scripture with Scripture which is done throughout this "sermon-letter!"		WHEN? WE DON'T KNOW! Likely after AD 62 or 65 since Timothy is released from prison (13:23) and it's never mentioned in Acts or by Paul. But likely before AD 70 when the temple was destroyed and sacrifices ceased. So, between AD 65-70? Or before Nero's persecution AD 60-65? Not knowing keeps the focus on "TODAY" (1:5; 3:7, 13, 15; 4:7; 5:5; 13:8)!	
Great Shepherd		"Since we have a great high priest..." 4:14		"We have such a high priest..." 8:1		"And since we have a great priest over the house of God..." 10:21	
GOSPEL LOVE: <i>SINCERITY of the FIRSTBORN SONS!</i>		He is LIKE US! 2:16-17a		He is FOR US! 2:17b; 7:26		He is WITH US! 2:18; 12:1-2, 22-24; 13:8, 13-14, 20-21	
BETTER BLESSING		1 NEGLECTING <i>Danger of Drifting</i> 2:1-4		2 HARDENING <i>Danger of Distrusting</i> 3:7–4:13		3 STAGNATING <i>Danger of Delaying</i> 5:11-6:20	
GREATER THAN		GREATER than MOSES Look Up! (3:1-6) Consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of Our Confession: <i>Hold Fast to the End!</i> WARNING! GREATER than JOSHUA Listen Up! (3:7-4:13) WARNING! Today Don't Harden Your Heart and Not Enter His Rest: <i>Fear Someone Won't Enter!</i>		GREATER than AARON Greater Priestly Qualifications than Aaron (4:14–5:10) WARNING! (5:11–6:20) GREATER than LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD Greater Priestly Order Like Melchizedek (7:1-28) Pictured in Melchizedek: <i>Literally Like the Son of God</i> (1-3) Preeminence of Melchizedek: <i>Over Abram & Levi</i> (4-10) Perfection in Another Like Mel.: <i>A Son Made Perfect</i> (11-28) Greater Priestly Ministry by Christ (8:1–10:18) Better Ministry: <i>Comes with the Better Mediator!</i> (8:1-6) Better Covenant: <i>Newly Cut with Better Promises!</i> (8:7-13) Better Sanctuary: <i>Heavenly Not Made with Hands!</i> (9:1-10) Better Sacrifice: <i>Himself Once for All!</i> (9:11-28) Better Perfection: <i>Sanctified by Christ's Sacrifice!</i> (10:1-18)		LET US... DRAW NEAR Confidently (19-22) HOLD FAST Continually (23) ASSEMBLE Consistently (24-25) Even More as the Doy Draws Near! WARNING! (26-39)	
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