



JESUS IS BETTER!

Introduction to Hebrews

Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.

—C. S. Lewis

Who is Jesus? And what difference does it make?

The book of Hebrews deals with two main issues:

1. The identity of Jesus.
2. Our response in light of the identity of Jesus.

Key Word: _____ (1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24). The book switches back and forth from instruction (i.e., Jesus is superior to prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, Levitical priesthood) to exhortation.

Author: _____.

Audience: Jewish believers, perhaps in Rome (13:24), facing increasing persecution and tempted to turn away from Christ.

Date of Writing: Probably around AD _____. If written to Jewish believers in Rome, then it may be written around the time of the persecution of Christians by the emperor Nero.

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³ who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. (1:1-4, NKJV)

| GOD'S... | Past Revelation | Present Revelation |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Audience | | |
| Content | | |
| Ways | | |
| Messenger | | |

Hebrews is a delight for the person who enjoys puzzles.

...The purpose of Hebrews is to strengthen, encourage, and exhort the tired and weary members of a house church to respond with courage and vitality to the prospect of renewed suffering...

—William L. Lane

Hebrews is a written sermon or homily.

—David J. MacLeod

169 terms found in Hebrews occur nowhere else in the NT.

—George H. Guthrie

No believer can cope with adversity unless Christ fills his horizons, sharpens his priorities, and dominates his experience.

...Nothing is of greater importance in our own time than a reminder of the immense dimensions of the biblical doctrine of Christ. ...In a day when many people may try to discern some form of acceptable syncretism, whereby Christ and his gospel become merely one expression among others of the idea of salvation, Hebrews directs us to the uniqueness of Christ's redemptive work.

—Raymond Brown

At various times. Greek, *polymeros*, lit., "many parts" or "by many portions." "It came piecemeal, bit by bit" (Kent).

THE SUPERIOR REVELATION AND IDENTITY OF JESUS CHRIST...

1. He is _____ (1:2).

All of creation rightfully belongs to Jesus (cf. Ps. 2:7-8; Col. 1:16).

2. He is _____ (1:2).

All of creation—both its substance and its “ages”— was created through the agency of Jesus Christ (cf. John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16).

3. He is _____ (1:3).

The brightness of God’s glory. The fullness of God’s character shines forth in the person of Jesus (cf. Ex. 33:18-22; Is. 6:1-3).

The express image of His person. The very substance and essence of God is manifested in Jesus Christ (cf. Jn. 1:14, 18; Col. 2:9).

4. He is _____ (1:3).

All of creation is being presently held together and carried along by the power of Jesus’ voice (cf. Col. 1:17; Ps. 29:3-9).

5. He is _____ (1:3).

Jesus, by Himself, in one definite act on the cross, provided a perfect sacrifice to bring both removal and cleansing from sins.

6. He is _____ (1:3).

Sitting down at the right hand of the sovereign God, Jesus has fully accomplished God’s work of redemption (10:10-14) and now serves as our eternal High Priest, interceding for us (Rom. 8:34).

7. He is _____ (1:4).

The name of Jesus—Son of God, Son of Man, Prophet, Priest, and King—is exalted above all others and every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (cf. Phil. 2:9-11).

Whatever we pursue or do, if it is not connected to Jesus, no matter how important it may seem, is ultimately worthless. Whatever we pursue or do, if it is connected to Jesus, no matter how unimportant it may seem, is eternally significant (Col. 3:17).

Worlds. Greek, *aions*, “a period of indefinite duration” (Vine). “The vast periods of time along with all that transpires within them. It denotes this world not only as a physical entity but also its time extent” (Kent).

Brightness. Greek, *apaugasma*, “shining forth, of a light coming from a luminous body” (Vine). “Out-raying” (Vincent).

God’s glory is the outward radiance of the intrinsic beauty and greatness of His manifold perfections.

—John Piper

Express image. Greek, *charakter*, “the instrument used in engraving or carving; the exact expression (the image) of any person or thing; precise reproduction in every respect” (Thayer’s Lexicon).

In Jesus Christ there has been provided a perfect, visible expression of the reality of God.

—William L. Lane

Here we have God’s portrait of Jesus Christ. We have seen the preeminent Christ in all His offices. We have seen Him as prophet, the final spokesman for God. We have seen Him as priest, atoning and interceding. We have seen Him as King, controlling, sustaining, and seated on a throne. This is our Lord Jesus Christ.

—John MacArthur, Jr.

The opening sentences of Hebrews are designed to bring them and us to our knees; only then can we hope to stand firmly on our feet.

—Raymond Brown