
Mission 119 Ministries

BETTER WITH JESUS: INTRODUCTION

A Series Through Hebrews

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AUTHOR

- **Unknown, but probably NOT the apostle Paul**
 - **Hebrews 2:3: How will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? This salvation had its beginning when it was spoken of by the Lord, and it was confirmed to us by those who heard him. (Cf. Galatians 1:15-2:9)**
 - **Other suggestions for the author include Apollos, Barnabas, Silas, Phillip, John Mark, and Luke**
 - **It seems the author must have a thorough understanding of the OT from a Jewish perspective and quite likely be familiar with Paul's teachings**
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DATE

- **Hebrews is referenced by the church father Clement of Rome in A.D. 96**
 - **Hebrews references Timothy (13:23) who was evangelized by Paul (16:1-3) around AD 50**
 - **Hebrews speaks of an existing Levitical system (10:11), suggesting the Temple was still standing, and that puts the outer date to AD 70**
 - **From 2:3 we know the recipients are second generation believers, so with the AD 50-70 window, a date in the 60s is reasonable**
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AUDIENCE

- **Heavy reliance on OT passages and Jewish concepts**
 - **Numerous indicators the intended audience is composed of believers (3:1, 3:12, 4:14, 6:9, 10:22, 10:25, 10:32, 10:34, 10:39, 12:1-2, 13:20-21)**
 - **Audience is Jewish Christian apparently facing persecution from non-believing Jews (10:32-36, 12:3-4, 13:10-14) for a prolonged period of time**
 - **The temptation is to return to Judaism (not to abandon faith in JC)**
 - **Likely outside Jerusalem because they have the resources to be charitable (10:34) and have not yet been killed (12:4), but within Judea because of the emphasis on a coming temporal judgment**
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ESCHATOLOGICAL FOCUS

- **Numerous verses are eschatological or have a kingdom orientation (1:2, 6, 8, 12, 14; 2:3, 5, 8; 6:5, 12; 9:28; 10:13, 35-37; 11:10, 13-16, 39; 12:22, 28; 13:14)**
 - **Author quotes OT verses about the Messianic kingdom, tells us in 2:5 that the subject matter of chapters 1-2 is the “world to come” to be placed under Jesus’ dominion, then pervasively speaks of the coming kingdom, inheritance and rewards, promised future blessings throughout the book**
 - **Indeed, the concept of inheritance/rest in chapters 3-4 is primarily about enjoying rewards in the kingdom**
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5 “WARNING” PASSAGES

- **The book has proven controversial because of (1) disagreement about the audience and (2) the so-called warning passages**
 - **The 5 disputed passages are Hebrews 2:1-4, 3:7-4:13, 6:4-8, 10:26-31, and 12:25**
 - **Traditional views are (1) the Christian audience is being warned about the danger of losing salvation; and (2) the mixed audience is being warned about the danger of being fake Christians or spurious faith Christians**
 - **Another common view among those that hold to eternal security is that the warnings themselves are intentionally empty threats**
 - **The Free Grace view is that if these Christian Jews return to Judaism they may face temporal discipline and a loss of rewards**
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KINGDOM / ESCHATOLOGICAL FOCUS

Heb. 1:2 In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.

Heb. 1:6 When He again brings His firstborn into the world, He says, **And all God's angels must worship Him.**

Heb. 1:8 ¶ but to the Son:

¶ **Your throne, God,
is forever and ever,
and the scepter of Your kingdom
is a scepter of justice.**

Heb. 1:12 **You will roll them up like a cloak,
and they will be changed like a robe.
But You are the same,
and Your years will never end.**

Heb. 1:14 ¶ Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve those who are going to inherit salvation?

Heb. 2:5 ¶ For He has not subjected to angels the world to come that we are talking about.

Heb. 2:8 **and subjected everything under his feet.**

¶ For in **subjecting everything** to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. As it is, we do not yet see **everything subjected** to him.

Heb. 6:5 tasted God's good word and the powers of the coming age,

Heb. 6:12 so that you won't become lazy but will be imitators of those who inherit the promises through faith and perseverance.

Heb. 9:28 so also the Messiah, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

Heb. 10:13 He is now waiting until His enemies are made His footstool.

Heb. 10:35 So don't throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

Heb. 10:36 For you need endurance, so that after you have done God's will, you may receive what was promised.

Heb. 10:37 ¶ For yet in **a very little while,**
the Coming One will come and not delay.

Heb. 11:10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Heb. 11:13 ¶ These all died in faith without having received the promises, but they saw them from a distance, greeted them, and confessed that they were foreigners and temporary residents on the earth.

Heb. 11:14 Now those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.

Heb. 11:15 If they were thinking about where they came from, they would have had an opportunity to return.

Heb. 11:16 But they now desire a better place—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

Heb. 11:39 ¶ All these were approved through their faith, but they did not receive what was promised,

Heb. 12:22 Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God (the heavenly Jerusalem), to myriads of angels in festive gathering,

Heb. 12:28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us hold on to grace. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe,

Heb. 13:14 For we do not have an enduring city here; instead, we seek the one to come.

FIRST “WARNING” PASSAGE

Heb. 2:1 ¶ We must, therefore, pay even more attention to what we have heard, so that we will not drift away.

Heb. 2:2 For if the message spoken through angels was legally binding and every transgression and disobedience received a just punishment,

Heb. 2:3 how will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was first spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

Heb. 2:4 At the same time, God also testified by signs and wonders, various miracles, and distributions of gifts from the Holy Spirit according to His will.

SECOND “WARNING” PASSAGE

Heb. 3:7 ¶ Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

¶ **Today, if you hear His voice,**

Heb. 3:8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,

on the day of testing in the wilderness,

Heb. 3:9 where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,

and saw My works

Heb. 3:10 for 40 years.

Therefore I was provoked with that generation

and said, “They always go astray in their hearts,

and they have not known My ways.”

Heb. 3:11 So I swore in My anger,
“They will not enter My rest.”

Heb. 3:12 ¶ Watch out, brothers, so that there won't be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that departs from the living God.

Heb. 3:13 But encourage each other daily, while it is still called **today**, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception.

Heb. 3:14 For we have become companions of the Messiah if we hold firmly until the end the reality that we had at the start.

Heb. 3:15 As it is said:

¶ **Today, if you hear His voice,
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.**

Heb. 3:16 ¶ For who heard and rebelled? Wasn't it really all who came out of Egypt under Moses?

Heb. 3:17 And who was He provoked with for 40 years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

Heb. 3:18 And who did He swear to that they would not enter His rest, if not those who disobeyed?

Heb. 3:19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

Heb. 4:1 ¶ Therefore, while the promise to enter His rest remains, let us fear that none of you should miss it.

Heb. 4:2 For we also have received the good news just as they did; but the message they heard did not benefit them, since they were not united with those who heard it in faith

Heb. 4:3 (for we who have believed enter the rest), in keeping with what He has said:

¶ **So I swore in My anger,
they will not enter My rest.**

¶ And yet His works have been finished since the foundation of the world,

Heb. 4:4 for somewhere He has spoken about the seventh day in this way:

¶ **And on the seventh day
God rested from all His works.**

Heb. 4:5 ¶ Again, in that passage He says, **They will never enter My rest.**

Heb. 4:6 Since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news did not enter because of disobedience,

Heb. 4:7 again, He specifies a certain day—**today**—speaking through David after such a long time, as previously stated:

¶ **Today, if you hear His voice,
do not harden your hearts.**

Heb. 4:8 ¶ For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day.

Heb. 4:9 Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God's people.

Heb. 4:10 For the person who has entered His rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from His.

Heb. 4:11 Let us then make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

Heb. 4:12 ¶ For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart.

Heb. 4:13 No creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

THIRD “WARNING” PASSAGE

Heb. 6:4 ¶ For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, became companions with the Holy Spirit,

Heb. 6:5 tasted God’s good word and the powers of the coming age,

Heb. 6:6 and who have fallen away, because, to their own harm, they are recrucifying the Son of God and holding Him up to contempt.

Heb. 6:7 For ground that has drunk the rain that has often fallen on it and that produces vegetation useful to those it is cultivated for receives a blessing from God.

Heb. 6:8 But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and about to be cursed, and will be burned at the end.

FOURTH “WARNING” PASSAGE

Heb. 10:26 ¶ For if we deliberately sin after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

Heb. 10:27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire about to consume the adversaries.

Heb. 10:28 If anyone disregards Moses’ law, he dies without mercy, based on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Heb. 10:29 How much worse punishment do you think one will deserve who has trampled on the Son of God, regarded as profane the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

Heb. 10:30 For we know the One who has said, **Vengeance belongs to Me, I will repay,** and again, **The Lord will judge His people.**

Heb. 10:31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

FIFTH “WARNING” PASSAGE

Heb. 12:25 ¶ Make sure that you do not reject the One who speaks. For if they did not escape when they rejected Him who warned them on earth, even less will we if we turn away from Him who warns us from heaven.