

And This Will We Do, If God Permits

An Expository Journey through the **Epistle to the Hebrews**

Chapter 1: Introduction

2: Introduction: Part 2

WAOY Tuesday 12/30/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our journey through the **Epistle of Hebrews** and I want to begin our study by looking at some introductory information about this great **Epistle to the Hebrews**.

First of all, like every other Book in the Bible, this Book is about Jesus the Christ. **Hebrews** is a very detailed discussion about the Preeminence of Jesus Christ, the Superiority of Jesus Christ, the Glory of Jesus Christ, and the Excellency of Jesus Christ.

The writer of **Hebrews** writes this Book to three groups of people. First of all, he wanted to encourage the first-century Jews who had come to trust Jesus for Salvation. He wished to write about the rock-solid nature of their faith in Christ, which is firmly based on God's Revelation and His fulfilling the Promises of the Old Testament.

You see, before they were dispersed from Palestine, these Jews had believed the Gospel. And the writer encourages these saved people to continue in their walk with God in spite of the hardships they faced.

But the writer of **Hebrews** also directs part of this Epistle to those Jews who have *intellectually* agreed with the Gospel, but have not yet actually been saved. He writes to embolden them to get off the fence and accept Christ by Faith... or face God's Judgment.

And then there is the third group, the third audience. Those are those Jews who are either friends or family of the other two groups who are physically in attendance in this little Church, located somewhere in what is modern-day Turkey, around the last half of the first century. They are *in* the Church, all right; they are not *of* the Church. They know *about* Jesus but they are not saved. And this writer periodically provokes this third group through this Epistle to hurry and be saved... or perish.

The writer wants all three groups to know that Salvation is by Grace alone, through Faith alone, in the finished work of Christ alone, and that their “Jewishness” and their false religion will not allow them entrance into Heaven.

Hebrews provides an amazing and inspiring analysis of Salvation through Jesus Christ alone and gives us great mental pictures of both the need and the comfort of God’s Promises.

The key word that is used throughout this Book is the word “better”. The word *better* is used twelve times throughout this Book and is demonstrated many times more. It best describes how the Holy Ghost ranks Jesus compared to anyone and everything else.

Hebrews boldly declares that Salvation in Christ is infinitely superior to *everything* and *anything* in Judaism, and all of which was intended to prepare God’s people to accept Christ when He came. For example, all throughout this Epistle we will find that:

- Jesus has a superior Name.
- Jesus is superior to the angels.
- Jesus is superior to Moses.
- Jesus gives a superior Sabbath Rest.
- Jesus is superior to the Levitical Priesthood.
- Jesus provides a superior Covenant.
- Jesus enters a superior Sanctuary through the superior Blood of a superior Sacrifice.
- Jesus provides a superior Hope and a superior Security.

Other “superior” things that **the Epistle to the Hebrews** teaches that Jesus provides are:

- A Better Salvation
- A Better Hope
- Better Promises
- Better Possessions in Christ
- A Better Heavenly Country
- A Better Resurrection
- Better Provision for the Christian

For example:

Hebrews 1:1-3 says that Christ has a better Name.

Hebrews 1:4 and 2:18 says that Christ is better than the angels.

Hebrews 3:1-19 says that Christ is better than Moses.

Hebrews 4:1-13 says that Christ gives a better rest.

Hebrews 4:14 and 7:28 says that Christ is a better priest.

Hebrews 8:1-13 says that Christ provides a better Covenant.

Hebrews 9:1-10 says that Christ entered a better Sanctuary.

Hebrews 9:11 and 10:18 says that Christ provides a better sacrifice with better Blood.

Hebrews 10:19-39 says that Christ gives us better assurance through Faith.

Hebrews 11:1-12:3 gives us the nature of Faith, the gallery of Faith, the cost of Faith, the race of Faith, and tells us that Jesus is the object of that Faith.

Hebrews 12:4-13:25 tells us that chastening is the evidence of true Faith and that the fruit of true Faith is perseverance and godly fear.

Hebrews is the best commentary ever written on the Old Testament sacrifices, priesthood, covenant, and promises. And it clearly shows the Lord Jesus Christ as fulfilling all these things and much more. The finished Work of Christ is gloriously portrayed as the final High Priest offering the final Sacrifice on the final Altar, once and for all, at Calvary.

This is the Book that compels us to leave our sin and the weight of that sin at the foot of the Cross and to follow the Lord. This is a great Book of Christian Doctrine that will strengthen your heart, infuse your soul, enlighten your mind, illuminate your spirit, and cause you to grow strong in Grace and in faith and in the Knowledge of God.

The title of this book, *“To the Hebrews”*, was given as a convenience at some point after A.D. 100, and was not on the original document. The writer of this Epistle is unknown to us today. There are many ideas about who could have written this Book and among them are Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Apollos, Luke, Philip, Priscilla and Aquila, and Clement of Rome.

Many great men throughout history have believed that the Apostle Paul wrote this Epistle. He may have, but there are problems with believing that. For example, we know that whoever wrote this Epistle included himself among those who had heard the Gospel from those who first heard Christ. Please turn and read with me.

Hebrews 2:3

3 How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,

Notice here that the writer says that this great Salvation began first to be spoken by Jesus Himself and then was:

3b confirmed to us by those who heard,

In other words, whoever the writer of Hebrews is, he is telling us here that he did *not* receive the knowledge of the Gospel from the Lord Himself. He received it from those men, probably the Apostles who had heard Jesus.

So this seems to rule out Paul, in my mind, as being the writer of this Book because Paul said in **Galatians 1:12** that he got his Revelation of Jesus directly from the Lord Himself and *not* from the other Apostles when he said:

For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but *I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.*

I may be wrong about that. But while we are not certain who actually *wrote* this Book, we are *not* confused about Who *Authored* this Book. God the Holy Spirit moved upon some holy man to pen down these words which are before us today. So we can read this Book and study this Book, and we can eat and digest this Book with full assurance that what we are reading and studying is inspired and reliable. It is from the very Heart and Mind and Mouth of Almighty God.

This Book, like the other 65 Books of the Holy Bible, is God-breathed. And it is inspired both in part and in whole. That means that every word taken individually and collectively, and every sentence

taken individually and collectively, and every paragraph taken individually and collectively, and every chapter taken individually and collectively, and the entirety of the Book, is *all* inspired. It is inerrant and it is infallible. It is one of only 66 Books on the face of the earth that make up the entirety of God's Revelation to Man and is called The Canon of Scripture, the rule of the Christian Faith... the Rod of Truth, the Foundation and Guide of all Christian Doctrine, of all Godly Correction, and of all holy Reproof and all Spiritual Instruction.

So you can trust what is in this Book. **The Epistle to the Hebrews** makes up part of what the Bible declares to be Holy Scripture. Look at what Paul wrote about this in **2 Timothy 3:16 and 17**:

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Now some have said that when Paul is referring to Scripture in this verse, he was only talking about the Old Testament because that's all that they had at the time that Paul wrote his letters. But that is not true. Aside from the five Books that the Apostle John wrote, and perhaps **Hebrews** and **Jude**, all of the other New Testament Books were written and were in circulation as far away as Spain to the West and India to the East, before Paul was beheaded in Rome sometime around A.D. 64 to 68.

So of the 27 Books of the New Testament, 20 of them were written and were in wide circulation at the time that Paul wrote this letter to Timothy. And of those 20 Books, **Romans** and **Ephesians** contain about eighty percent of all Christian Doctrine pertaining to Salvation that we have today.

Now to prove to you that Paul included the New Testament Books in his teaching about what Scripture is, please turn with me to **1 Timothy 5:18** that says:

18 For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

When Paul wrote this verse to Timothy, he quotes from both an Old Testament source and a New Testament source. The Apostle took one passage from **Deuteronomy 25:4** that says “**You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing**”, and then he took one passage from **Luke 10:7** that says “**the laborer is worthy of his wages**”, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul called both of these verses “Scripture”. So when Paul said in **2 Timothy 3:16**:

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

... We can rest assured that he was also talking about this Book called **Hebrews**. We can be certain that the **Epistle to the Hebrews** is inspired and that it is trustworthy for us today.

Well, I have to stop here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **Hebrews**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. *Soli Deo Gloria*. For the Glory of God alone.