

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

BOOK OF HEBREWS

HEBREWS OVERVIEW

THE AUTHORSHIP IS UNKNOWN

Many believe Paul wrote Hebrews because of his other contributions to the NT and his relationship with Timothy, but style and reference to Timothy as "brother" rather than "my true son in the faith" (1 Timothy 1:2) makes it doubtful

- It could've been Priscilla, Luke, Barnabas, Apollos, Clement of Rome, Peter, or Aristion. Ultimately it doesn't matter.

THE AUTHOR KNEW THE RECIPIENTS WELL

He or she identifies himself as a 2nd generation Christian, and the original recipients must have known who it was because they asked for prayer and had expressed the desire for Timothy to come with them as they visited

HEBREWS WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN AROUND 64 A.D.

It's clear it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. because it's not mentioned. So, knowing that this book was penned at the time of Nero's persecution of the church gives us perspective and context

- With all study of the Bible, it is important to know the setting, demographic, and circumstances around the writing

THE AUTHOR WANTED TO EXALT JESUS CHRIST

The Greek word kreitton which means "more excellent," "superior," or "better" is used consistently throughout Hebrews

- Not only is Jesus superior, but the NT covenant is as well because Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT covenant and the embodiment of God's promises. No book ties the OT and NT together so well.

SUPERIOR TO PROPHETS (HEBREWS 1:1-3)

NO NAME, NO CLEAR DESTINATION

Though the author and the destination are unclear, the message is not. The writer tells us 3 things right off: God spoke and revealed Himself to humanity, and He did so in many ways, including the prophets

- Throughout history God has revealed Himself in fragments and in various ways: angels, visions, events, and people

WHAT GOD ANNOUNCED WAS IMPORTANT

Through the prophets kings, nations, and peoples were warned, corrected, and edified by the word given to them by God. But, what God did through His Son was climactic, definitive, and superior, even over the prophets

- Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension showed that humanity was entering into new territory with God

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE SON TO ALL CREATION

God "made the universe through Him" shows us that Christ has always existed and that He was the Creator of the time and space (Colossians 1:16) and that He controls all creation (Hebrews 2:8)

THE SON'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE FATHER

Jesus is "the radiance of God's glory" and reflects God's spotless purity. Jesus is the Light that changes the heart (John 1:9) and is the exact expression and representation of God. In other words, Jesus is God.

- It is ok to not fully understand the Trinity! If aspects of God were not incomprehensible, He wouldn't be God

"For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal... The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible." From the Athanasian Creed

WHAT THE SON IS DOING IN THE WORLD

Jesus is the sustainer of the world, and He will carry God's plan to its completion. With Jesus in charge, we know the world will not fall into utter chaos because God has a plan and it will triumph.

- This unfolded in the Word of God that is "sustaining all things" through Jesus Christ
- The redemptive work of Jesus
- The Son brought "purification for sins" through the grace of God the Father. Jesus' death removed the stain of sin if we accept. There is no merit on our part and no work that we can do, it is by **God's grace and love we can be forgiven, justified** (declared good/righteous), and **sanctified** (the process of being set apart for God)

THE SON IS...

- The Prophet through whom God spoke the final word to humanity.
- The Priest who has removed sin, shame, and guilt if we choose to follow Him
- The King in the supreme place of honor
- The eternal incomprehensible God

SUPERIOR TO ANGELS (HEBREWS 1:4-14)

MANY PEOPLE WERE IGNORANT OF HIS PLACE

The recipients of this letter may have referred to Jesus as an angel, missing His superior role over (and the creator of) the angels

- The author aimed to clear up misconceptions by consistently referring to the Son and blatantly clarifying His rank through OT quotes

TO PROVE THE POINT, 7 OT QUOTES ARE USED

V5 is quoting Psalm 2:7, a passage Paul, via the author Luke, also used in Acts 13:33 to proclaim Jesus' royal dignity in His resurrection and ascension to heaven

THE 2ND QUOTE IS FROM 2 SAMUEL 7:14

The prophet told David that through his bloodline would come the Messiah. This also reaffirmed in Romans 1:3

HE IS SUPERIOR IN HONOR AND DIGNITY (V6-7)

Christ is superior because He's the Son of God, but also the honor He is due

- V6-7 are a blend of Psalm 97:7 and Deuteronomy 32:43 referencing the worship of Jesus at His earthly birth by the angels (Luke 2:8-15). Christ has more dignity than angels because He is the Creator, **He worships and bows down to no one**

WHAT DO ANGELS DO?

V7 is quoting Psalm 104:4 and compares angels to natural elements of wind and fire. They do God's bidding and are often His messengers. V14 also mentions they are ministers that are sent out to aid those who "inherit salvation."

JESUS HAS A SUPERIOR ROLE COMPARED TO ANGELS (V8-9)

From Psalm 45:6-7. These words show 3 important facts about Jesus' role

- First, **He is the Ruler on His throne.**
- Second, **the throne is eternal**, and is never in jeopardy.
- Third, **Jesus loves righteousness** and nothing pleases Him more than us loving righteousness (Psalm 1:1-6, Matthew 5:6)

JESUS IS SUPERIOR BECAUSE HE IS UNCHANGING

The longest of the 7 quotes is v10-12 that come from Psalm 102:25-27 and are echoed by Peter in 2 Peter 3:11-13

- Only God can create and undo all. **He's the only stability and security.** He's a rock, and **we are secure if we anchor ourselves to Christ.**

JESUS IS SUPERIOR BECAUSE HE HAS AUTHORITY

The last quote is from Psalm 110:1. Christ's ascension lifted Him to a place of authority and power at the "right hand of God."

- Jesus claimed this verse pertained to Him in Mark 12:36. Although we live in a time when Christ's enemies are not yet a footstool, the NT promises His inevitable victory (1 Corinthians 15:24-26)

IN CONTRAST TO THE SON'S ROLE, IS THE ANGELS

Jesus is the source, and the angels carry out his directives. V14 mentions that their primary duties are to care for and deliver believers (Psalm 34:7 and Acts 12:7-10)

FROM SOMEONE WHO HAD IT ALL

- Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 1 that everything is "absolute futility." This came from a man who had all the sex, money, power, fame, and luxuries anyone could possibly obtain.

WHEN EVERYTHING ELSE HAS FAILED

- If one desires truth and goodness, all the distractions, sedatives, and intoxicants of life will always leave us wanting
- Not just pleasures, but religion. Research the works Islam and Buddhism require, and the self-centeredness of Hinduism and humanism. Look at what Christianity becomes when ritual trumps relationship

IN ALL THINGS, JESUS IS SUPERIOR

- To the paths we have tried to find fulfillment and contentment in
- To all religious figures and practices
- Because of His work, not ours, we can be reconciled to God. He is gracious!
- He holds all power, authority, answers, and eternity. Have you whole-heartedly tried Him? (1 Thessalonians 5:16-22)