

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 18TH–19TH, 2025 // HEBREWS

THE AUTHOR IS UNKNOWN

Many believe Paul is the author because of his other works and his relationship with Timothy, but style and reference to Timothy as “brother” not “son in the faith” (1 Timothy 1:2) raises questions.

- Other possibilities: Priscilla, Luke, Apollos, Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Peter, or Arision.

Ultimately it does not matter.

WHO WAS THIS WRITTEN TO?

The author and recipients had a good relationship because several times they are referred to as “dearly loved friends” and “brothers and sisters.” These were also “secondhand” Christians.

- Some believe this was written to former Jewish priests, Jews who had converted, or new Gentile Christians studying the OT.

HEBREWS WAS PROBABLY WRITTEN IN 64 A.D.

Hebrews had to be written before the sack of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. because it's not mentioned. So, knowing this was penned during Nero's persecution gives us perspective and context.

- Knowing as much about setting, demographics, and circumstances as possible helps us understand Scripture.

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 is as well, because Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT covenant and of God's promises. No book ties the OT and NT together so well.

PURPOSE AND MAJOR THEMES

Many people were **starting to fall away from a personal relationship with Jesus and being in church community**. The author reiterated that Jesus is superior to all!

- **Because of their lack of commitment, many were falling into sin that was hurting them and their witness.**

SUPERIOR (HEBREWS 1:1–3)

NO NAME, NO CLEAR DESTINATION

The author and destination are unclear, but the message is not. The writer immediately tells us that God has spoken and revealed Himself to humanity in many ways (angels, visions, events, prophets, the Bible) but the superior way was through Jesus Christ.

SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST IN MAJESTIC PHRASES

Vs. 2–3 pack in some simple phrases that reveal the magnitude of Jesus.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE SON TO ALL CREATION

God “made the universe through Him” shows that Christ has always existed, is the Creator of time and space (Colossians 1:16), and He controls all creation (Hebrews 2:8).

THE IMPORTANCE OF JESUS AND THE BIBLE

Every avenue God has used to speak is important, but two stand out. First, He gave us His Word to clarify His expectations. Secondly, He gave His Son to be the “**radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of His nature.**”

- **We have both a clear path and example of how to live a God-honoring life.**

THE EXACT EXPRESSION OF GOD

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

- **It's ok to not fully understand the Trinity!** If God were fully comprehensible, He would not be God.

THE ACTIVITY OF JESUS IN THE WORLD TODAY

Jesus is the “heir of all things” because God “made the universe through Him” and all things are “sustain[ed]...by His powerful word.”

- **Not only is salvation (“purification for sins”) found in Jesus, but only through Him can we have freedom, growth, contentment, peace, and true lasting love.**

THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF JESUS

The Son brought us “purification for sins” through the grace of God the Father. Jesus' death removes the stain of sin if we accept it. 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), and **sanctified** (set apart/changing).

SUPERIOR TO ANGELS (HEBREWS 1:4–14)

MANY WERE IGNORANT OF JESUS' PLACE

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

- The author aimed to clear this up by consistently referring to Jesus as the Son of God and by blatantly clarifying His rank through OT quotes.

TO PROVE THE POINT, 7 OT QUOTES ARE USED

V. 5 quotes Psalm 2:7, a passage Paul, via Luke, also used in Acts 13:33 to proclaim Jesus' royal dignity in His resurrection and ascension to heaven.

THE SECOND QUOTE IS FROM 2 SAMUEL 7:14

Nathan told David the Messiah would come through his bloodline (also in Romans 1:3).

JESUS IS SUPERIOR IN HONOR AND DIGNITY

Vs. 6–7 blend Psalm 97:7 and Deuteronomy 32:43, referencing the angels worshiping Jesus at His earthly birth (Luke 2). Christ has more dignity than angels because **He is the Creator and worships and bows down to no one.**

- **Jesus deserves honor because of Who He is, not just what He has done for us.**

WHAT EXACTLY DO ANGELS DO?

V. 7 quotes Ps. 104:4 and compares angels to natural elements of wind and fire. They do God's bidding and are often His messengers. V. 14 mentions they are ministers sent out to aid those who “inherit salvation.”

- Angels are workers with us and not to be worshiped (Revelation 19:10; 22:9).

JESUS HAS A SUPERIOR ROLE

Vs. 8–9 come from Psalm 45:6–7. These words show three important facts about Jesus' role.

- 1) **He is the Ruler on His throne.** 2) **The throne is eternal** and is never in jeopardy. 3) **Jesus loves righteousness**, and nothing pleases Him more than us loving righteousness (Psalm 1:1–6; Matthew 5:6).

WHAT WE LOVE AND HATE

The Bible defines righteousness, the laws of God's Kingdom (how to act/think), and tells us to respect authority/law as long as they don't contradict Scripture (Romans 13; 1 Peter 2; Acts 5).

- As Christians, **do we love the things of God (Word), honor authority, value order and peace, and hate lawlessness?**

SUPERIOR BECAUSE HE IS UNCHANGING

The longest of the seven quotes is vs. 10–12 that comes from Psalm 102:25–27 and is echoed by Peter in 2 Peter 3:11–13.

- Only God can create all and undo all. **He is the only stability we have in life.** He is a rock, and **we are secure IF we anchor ourselves to Christ.**

LOOK AT THE INSTABILITY OF THE WORLD'S WAYS

Vs. 11–12a remind us that the ways of the world “will perish” because they “wear out like clothing” that has to “be changed.”

- **Not only does the world's standard of good and bad shift, but the stability of the methods of the world has not solved our greatest problems!**

SUPERIOR BECAUSE OF HIS 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 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 victory.**

ANGELS ARE “MINISTERING SPIRITS”

Jesus is the source of all, and angels carry out His directives. V. 14 mentions that their primary duties are to care for and deliver Believers (Psalm 34:7; Acts 12:7–10).

- This is a subtle reminder to **not idolize or pray to angels, but to only seek Jesus for salvation and help.**

FROM THE MAN WHO HAD IT ALL

- Solomon (who had all the sex, money, power, fame, and luxuries anyone could possibly obtain) wrote in Ecclesiastes 1 that everything is “absolute futility.” This does not mean everything is meaningless, but that **trying to achieve contentment without God is pointless.**

JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO CULTURE/SOCIETY

- We often let culture dictate our pursuit of fulfillment, but society changes, people are flawed, and culture promotes things contrary to Scripture (selfishness, hate, materialism, consumption, excess, etc.).
- **Jesus and His Word are unwavering truth, righteousness, hope, wisdom, and stability.**

RELATIONSHIP IS SUPERIOR TO RELIGION

- We often value religion more than a true relationship with God. Not all religious practice is bad. In fact, many religious practices benefit us, but **if we lean on our or someone else's ways/abilities over Jesus', we will remain unfulfilled and unstable.**

JESUS AS THE SOURCE

- To be saved and to live in contentment, fulfillment, security, and peace, **Jesus must be the main focal point of our lives.** We must honor Him by **acknowledging He is superior, honoring Him for Who He is, and thanking Him for what He has done for us.**

TAKING PRACTICAL STEPS

- This begins with a foundation of **daily prayer, ingesting the Word privately and corporately**, being in **church community**, and being **obedient** to the Word and the conviction of the Spirit.
- **If we will prioritize our lives biblically, we will have deep, God-honoring existences.**