

Introduction to Hebrews

I. Basic Facts:

Hebrews is 303 verses. Quotes 49 verses of Old Testament Scripture, from 27 different Old Testament passages. This is done in 37 places in 13 chapters of Hebrews.

A. Who wrote it? A friend of Timothy (13:23)

- Clement of Rome and the Western Church rejected the Pauline authorship
- Clement of Alexandria thought Paul wrote it, and Luke translated into Greek (but 9:16-17)
- Others suggest Luke himself was the author, though he was not Jewish (Col.4:11, 14)
- Tertullian thought Barnabas wrote it (mentioned as if it was generally regarded)
He was a Levite, a companion of Paul's, his name means "Son of Consolation"
- Luther thought Apollos wrote it.
- Pricilla?
- Origen: "God only knows!"

B. To whom was it written?

1. Hebrew Christians (hence the frequent appeal to scripture)
2. Possibly in Italy (13:24) or Jerusalem (13:13-14)
3. Second-generation believers (2:3-4), leaders dead? (13: 7, 17)
4. Christians for some time (5:12)
5. Persecuted and discouraged (10:32-33)
6. They were in danger of backsliding, apparently to Judaism (10:25-26)

C. When was it written? Shortly before 70 AD (8:13)

D. Why was it written? An exhortation (13:22) to persevere in the faith

E. The author's approach

1. Emphasize superiority and finality of Christ and His work
2. Explain relation between O.T. and N.T. provisions for atonement
3. Issue severe warnings about the dangers of backsliding
4. Encourage steadfastness (10:36/ 12:1/ 13:13)

F. The distinctive contribution of Hebrews: Christ's high priesthood

II. Themes

A. The ultimacy of Christ (1:1-3)

1. *Christ's superiority to every aspect of the Old Order*
 - a. Over Angels (1:4-14/ 2:5-18)

- b. Over Moses (3:2-6)
- c. Over Joshua—a better “rest” (4:2-3, 8-10)
- d. A better priesthood (4:14 - 5:10/ 6:13 - 7:28)
- e. A better tabernacle (8:1-5/ 9:11)
- f. A better covenant (8:6-13)
- g. A better sacrifice (9:1 - 10:18)
- h. A better altar (13:10)

2. *Shadows Vs. Substance*

- a. Sabbath and Canaan rest (4:3-11/ 11:15:16)
- b. Melchisedek (chapter 7)
- c. Tabernacle and Day of Atonement (8:1-5/ 9:1-28/ 10:1-4)
- d. Zion/Jerusalem (11:10/ 12:22-24/ 13:14)

3. *Finality of Christ's work* (1:3; 9:25-28; 10:10, 14)

B. The High Priesthood of Christ

- 1. *The order of Melchisedek* (Chapter 7)
- 2. *The blood and the holy of holies* (9:6—10:18)

C. Pursuit of perfection

- 1. Old Covenant was inadequate and is obsolete (7:12; 8:6-13; 10:4-9, 18)
- 2. Christ made perfect (2:10; 5:8-9)
- 3. Men made perfect (Faith; God's rest)
 - a. Perfect “pertaining to the Conscience” (9:9)
 - 1. Not through the old system (7:11, 19; 9:9; 10:1)
 - 2.. Christ did through His offering in “more perfect tabernacle” (9:11; 10:14)
 - b. Maturity (5:15; 6:1 (11:40? 12:23?))

D. Sanctification in Hebrews

- a. Related to the conscience (9:13-14/ 10:1)
- b. Related to perfection of the conscience (10:14)
- c. Always said to be accomplished by Christ's blood or sacrifice (2:11/ 10:10, 29/ 13:12)
 - d. Not treated as a progressive sanctification or a second blessing, but as the application of the blood of Christ to the believer at conversion. (despite 2:11 & 10:14)

III. Warnings about falling away or falling short

- 1. Example of Israel (3:7 - 4:2)
 - 2. Nothing to go back to (10:26/ 12:27/ 13:14)
 - 3. The magnitude of the privilege neglected (2:3/ 3:6, 14/ 4:9/ 6:4-5, 17-19/ 10:19-22/ 12:22-24)
 - 4. The magnitude of the offense of neglect (2:2 / 10:28-29/ 12:25)
 - 5. The deserved and coming judgment (6:8/ 10:30-31/ 12:29)
 - 6. Exhortations to continue (2:1/ 3:12-13/ 4:11/ 6:1, 11-12/ 10:19-25, 35/ 12:12-16, 28)
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1. Sanctification (holiness) always said to be accomplished by blood or offering of Christ

He who sanctifies and those being sanctified (2:11)

Blood of bulls sanctifies the tabernacle (9:13)

Sanctify= purge the conscience by blood (9:14)

We have been sanctified through the offering (10:10)

Perfect forever those being sanctified (10:14)

The blood...by which he was sanctified (10:29)

That He might sanctify the people (13:12)

Hagiazō = to make holy (*hagios*)

An inheritance among “those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32; 26:18 —“by faith in Me”)

Washed, sanctified, justified (1 Cor.6:11)

Church sanctified by His death (Eph.5:26)

Sanctified by association (Rom.11:16; Matt.23:17, 19)

Sanctified in experience (1 Cor.7:34; 1 Pet.1:15; 1 Thess.5:23)

Holiness (Heb.12:10, 14)