

Hebrews

I. Introduction: Many Jews, who had become Christians, were going back to Judaism. The persecution was too horrible. They were not only persecuted by their enemy, the Gentile Romans, they were persecuted by their own Jewish families! The Hebrew writer wrote this eloquent and studious letter PROVING that Jesus WAS the Christ and that HE should be followed! There were serious WARNINGS about going back into Judaism! Hebrews 13:24 "... *they of Italy salute you.*" This indicates that this letter could have been written FROM Italy or TO Italy.

II. Who Wrote Hebrews?

Many have credited Paul for having written it:

1. The Eastern Section of the Roman Empire soundly gave credit to Paul's authorship as early as the SECOND CENTURY and it was the accepted view as early as the THIRD CENTURY.
2. Although the Western Section of the Roman Empire did not accept Paul's authorship at first, his authorship was generally accepted even by them as early as the FOURTH CENTURY.
3. Clement of Alexandria refers to it expressly as PAUL'S! He says that the reason Paul did not put his name on it is because the Hebrews were prejudice against him and may dismiss the letter before giving it due consideration. He said that Paul probably wrote it in Hebrew originally (like he spoke to the Jews in Hebrew in Jerusalem), and Luke translated it to Greek for the Gentiles to read, thus giving it the "style" of Acts.
4. Origen quoted it and ascribed it as Paul's Letter. He said that since the earliest Christians believed it to be Paul's he had no reason to doubt it even though the letter was quite different than Paul's other writings. He admittedly said, "*Only God knows for certain who the actual writer was.*"
5. Paul, in many of his letters, argued that Christianity is superior to Judaism. Hebrews does the same.
6. Paul used "allegory" as a method of teaching and so does Hebrews.
7. Paul used certain WORDS & PHRASES in his letters that appear in Hebrews. For Example: "*Mediator*"; "*God of Peace*"; "*righteousness by faith*"; "*Sword of the Spirit*"; "*strong meat*"; etc.

Many do not believe Paul wrote it:

1. In the first century there was a tendency to write letters and FORGE another's name on the letter trying to give the letter authenticity. Paul wanted to be SURE that did not happen to his letters. So in II Thessalonians 3:17 we read, "*The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in EVERY epistle; so I write.*" Many did not believe Paul would be afraid of the Jews that were prejudice against him. He had been treated badly by them since he became a Christian and an apostle to the Gentiles.
2. Whoever wrote Hebrews admitted that he got his knowledge of the Lord "second handed"! Hebrews 2:3-4 says, "*How shall WE escape, if WE neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto US by THEM that heard him; God also bearing THEM witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*" Paul claimed NOT to have received his revelation

from men “second handed”, but straight from the Lord ... Galatians 1:11 “*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is NOT AFTER MAN. For I neither RECEIVED IT OF MEN, neither was I TAUGHT IT, but by the REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.*”

3. The Hebrew writer had a relationship with Timothy MUCH DIFFERENT than Paul’s relationship. Hebrews 13:23 “*Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; WITH WHOM, IF HE COME shortly, I will see you.*” It seems odd that Paul would have made plans around TIMOTHY’S Plans rather than making plans FOR Timothy. Paul would not have gone WITH TIMOTHY ... Timothy would have gone WITH PAUL.

III. What is the MESSAGE of the HEBREW writer?

1. Christ is BETTER (SUPERIOR) to Old Testament PROPHETS!
2. Christ is Superior to ANGELS!
3. Christ is Superior to MOSES!
4. Christ is Superior to JOSHUA!
5. Christ is Superior to Aaron and the HIGH PRIESTHOOD!
 - A. Christ received his priesthood by a CALL OF GOD! (*As was Aaron, yet Aaron was sinful ... Christ was SINLESS!*)
 - B. Christ’s priesthood was “*After the order of Melchizedek*” which is a BETTER LINTAGE than that of Levites!
 - C. Christ’s priesthood has a BETTER SACRIFICE! Christ, not bulls!
 - D. Christ’s priesthood has BETTER PROMISES!
 - E. Christ’s priesthood makes us PERFECT! Levites COULD NOT!
 - F. Christ’s priesthood has better HOPE!
 - G. Christ’s priesthood has better SALVATION POWER!
 - H. Christ’s priesthood IS A BETTER COVENANT! New Testament!
 - I. Christ’s priesthood sacrifice of himself can TAKE AWAY SIN!
 - J. Christ’s priesthood has a BETTER MOUNTAIN! Sinai was FEARFUL; MOUNT ZION is the HEAVENLY JERUSALEM which IS THE CHURCH of the FIRST BORN (CHRIST)!

The letter also makes the following points:

Jesus Christ is the Son of GOD! (*The Jewish Messiah promised*)

Jesus Christ is our Mediator and Intercessor to God for us

Jesus Christ IS GOD! (*The express image of his person*)

Jesus Christ offers a TRUE REST in HEAVEN (*greater than Jewish Canaan Land*)

Jesus Christ offers a new covenant (*Testament*) that is superior to the Old Testament

Jesus Christ offers BETTER PROMISES!

There are MANY great people of God who did not GIVE UP their faith ... Don’t quit!

There are Five Warning Passages in this Letter:

1. 2:1-4 Do not ignore God’s Message!
2. 3:7 – 4:13 Don’t Doubt God!
3. 5:11 – 6:12 Don’t be Lazy!
4. 10:19-33 Don’t Quit!
5. 12:18-29 Don’t REFUSE GOD!