

# ***“BE Holy & Hold On!”***

Hebrews 1:4a & 13:22

April 29, 2018

**VIDEO:** H.B. Charles Jr.

(While that's some **24/7 truth**... it's for us **NOW**)

**WELCOME:** ...to a continuation of that video message & our sermon series

- We're coming back to Hebrews: ***“Hold On!”***
- We've just finished Leviticus: ***“BE Holy!”***
- My prayer for today... **See how they unite in Christ!**

*Leviticus blew the doors of Hebrews wide open so that we can get a glimpse into glory!* - JDP

**CONTEXT:**

- **2018** = the **year of REVERENCE!**
- Why did God add Leviticus & Hebrews to His Word
  - Leviticus: **BE Holy & Love comes thru the Law**
  - Hebrews:
    - **EXHORT** the Jewish church to **“BE holy!”**
      - Urgings & Warnings
      - Reminding & Refining

**Remember:**

*Holiness is God in action & grace in obedience!* - JDP

**T/S:** Let's jump into God's Word & then unpack it together!

**TEXT:** Hebrews 1:1-4a

<sup>1</sup> Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup> having become/BE-ing as much superior (BE-ing MUCH superior)

Hebrews 13:22

<sup>22</sup> Brothers, I urge you to bear with (obey) my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter.

**BIG IDEA:** To "BE holy" means BE-ing holy & holding on!

**T/S:** *Holiness is God in action & grace in obedience!* - JDP

*You don't hold on so that you can be Holy... No!*

*You're BEing Holy is what enables you to hold on!* - JDP

**T/S:** Next week... deeper into Hebrews... Today we bridge!

**PREVIEW:**

A. BE Holy & Hold On to His **MESSAGE**

B. BE Holy & Hold On to His **TREASURE**

C. BE Holy & Hold On to His **STANDARDS**

D. BE Holy & Hold On to His **FAMILY**

E. BE Holy & Hold On to His **MISSION**

# I. BE Holy & Hold On to His MESSAGE

**T/S:** Let's think back for a second to H.B. Charles' words...

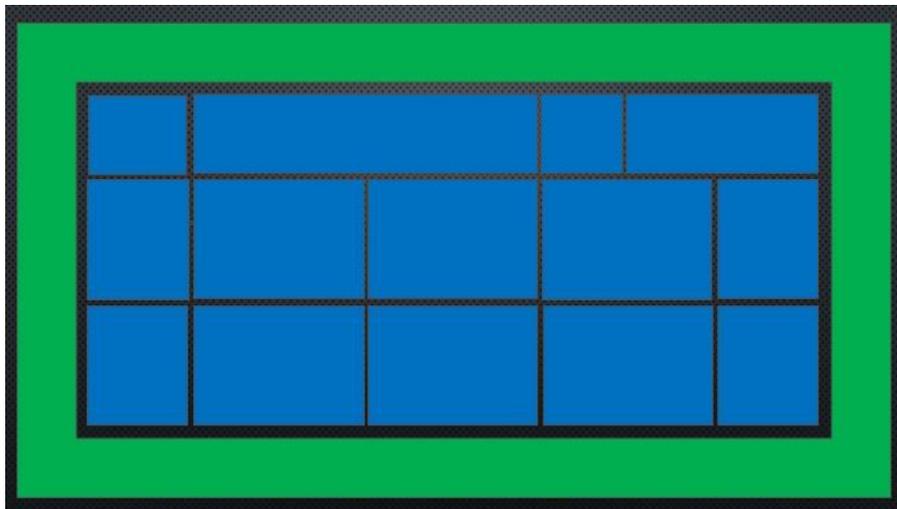
- T4G18 = ***BE distinct from the world*** (aka BE holy!)
  - *Let the world be the world & Church be Church*
  - *Too many churches fall into the world...*
  - Cross-centered preaching & gospel living is #1

**\*\*\* *Preaching the cross... Preaching Christ crucified... is NOT just preaching the historicity of Christ's crucifixion, and it's not just telling people of the gospel's "potential promises." No. Instead, preaching the cross & crucifixion of Christ is to preach, in FULL context, the TRUTH-in-Love that addresses humanity's-reality & each individual's NEED for THE miraculous Gift of our Messiah, as well as His missional mercy & grace, which is gifted & given to transform us into disciples who make disciples who make disciples... locally, regionally, and globally - ALL by God's grace & all for God's glory.***

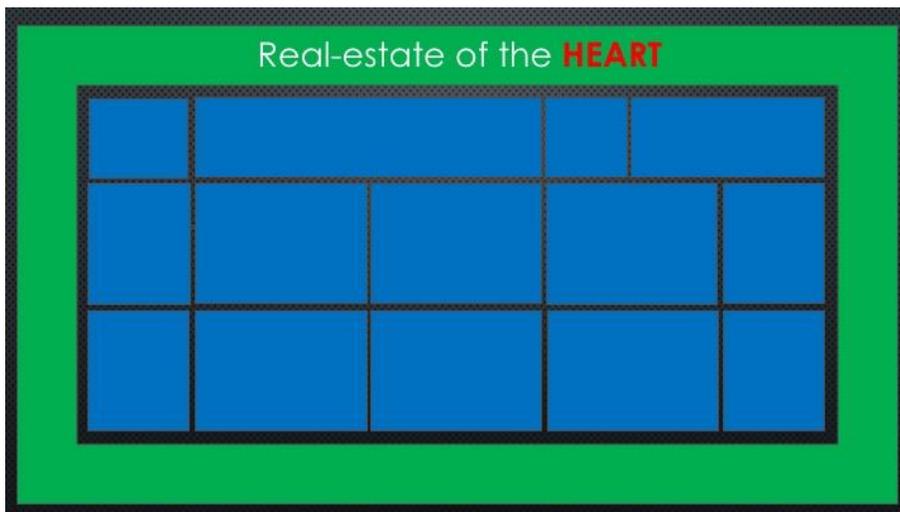
***Amen and AMEN!*** -JDP

***Ultimately, as in ALL matters of the faith... it comes down to what we really believe & how we really behave... as evidenced by the Content in one's HEAD, the Culture of their HEART, and the Combat they do with their HANDS in context of conflict & Spiritual Warfare.*** -JDP

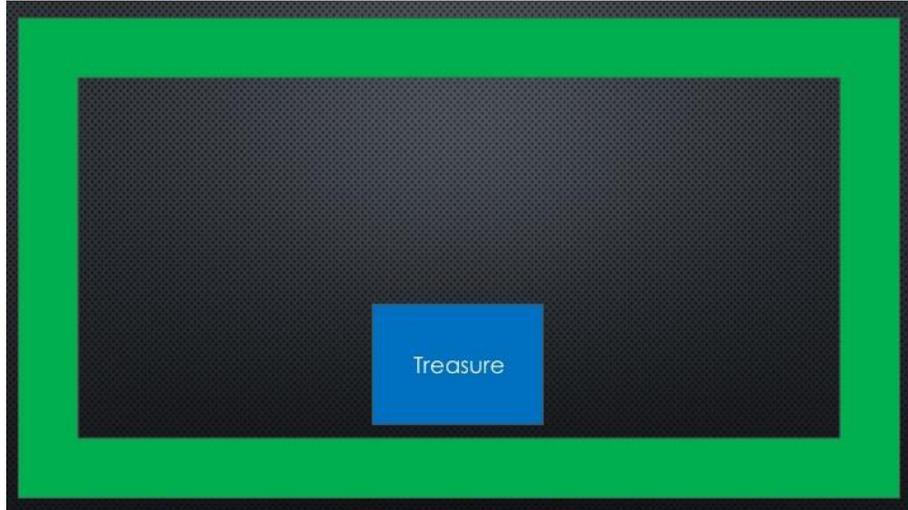
Jesus shared ***a parable that helps*** to bring this to light...



What do you see?



Jesus taught that His treasure is worth total liquidation!



**T/S:** We derive our pleasure from our treasure...

- ***We all hold-on-to & protect what we treasure***
  - Pennies vs. \$100 bills?
  - Pet goldfish vs. young children?
  - Culture vs. Christ???
- This is part of the message we Hold On to when we choose to BE Holy!

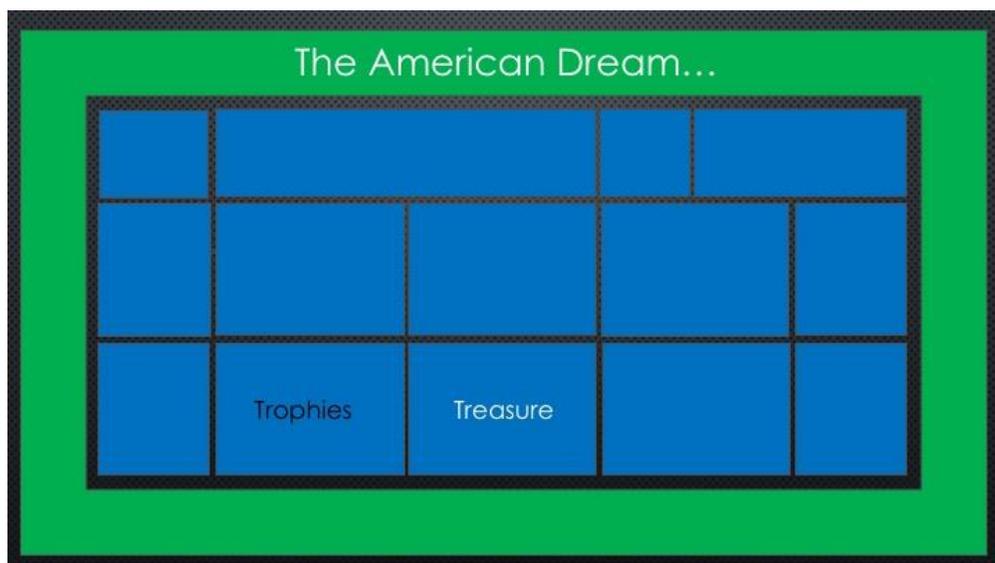
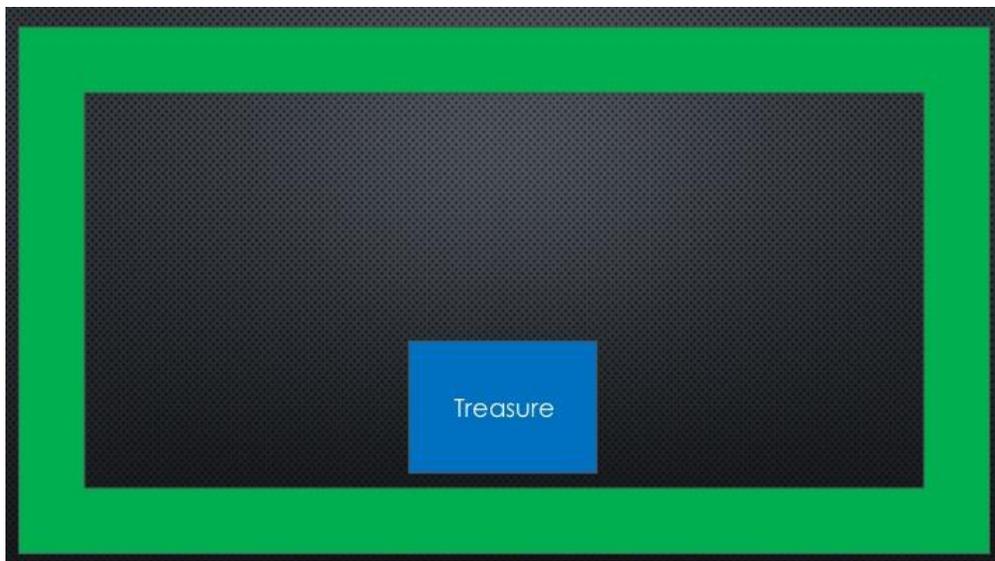
## **II.** BE Holy & Hold On to **His TREASURE**

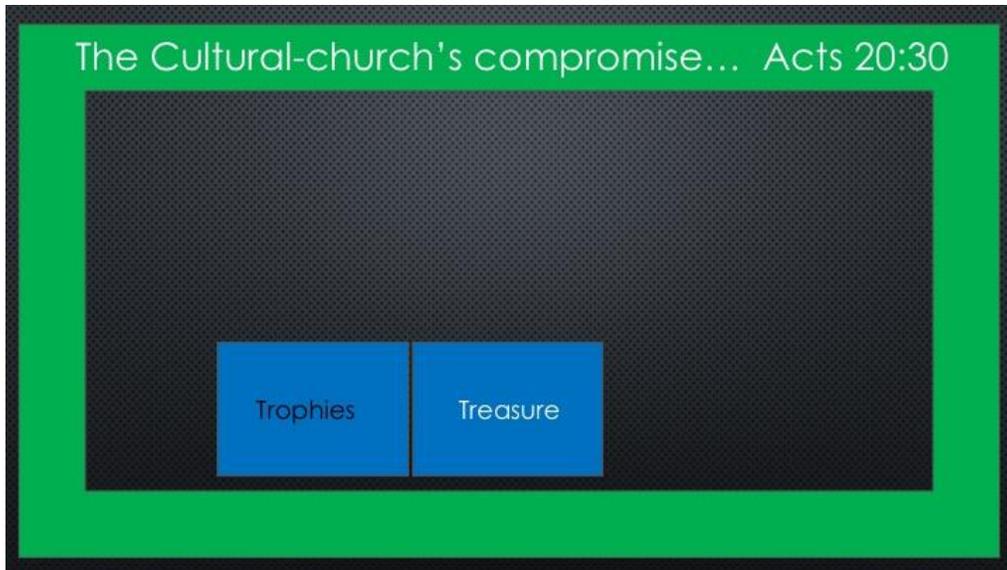
- When your passions change, your priorities change
- When your treasure changes, your temperament...
- When your delights change, your decisions change

And where & when these things DON'T really change, those people WON'T really change :-)

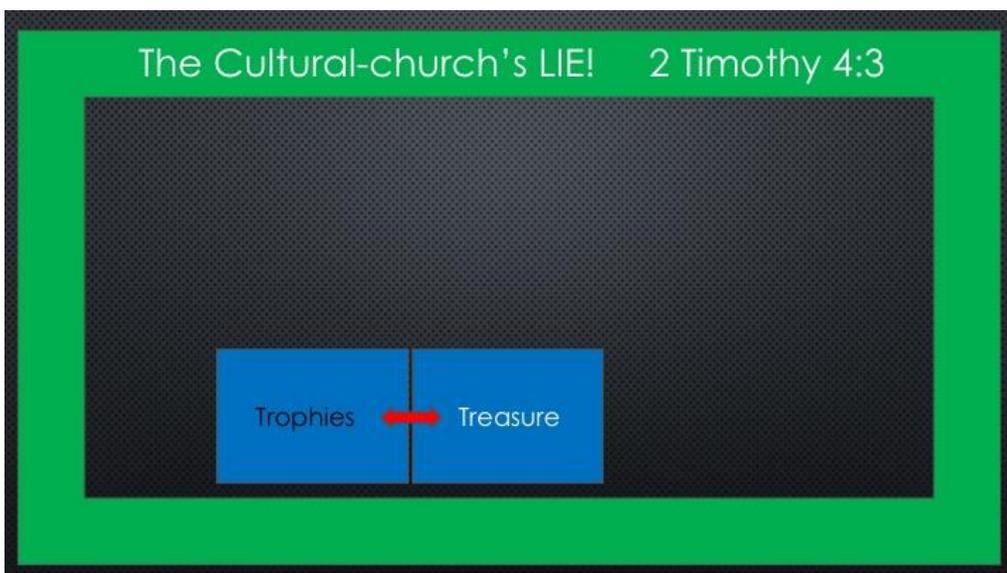
**VIDEO:** *T4G18 – John Piper*

**T/S:** Let's go back to Jesus' parable & take a closer look...



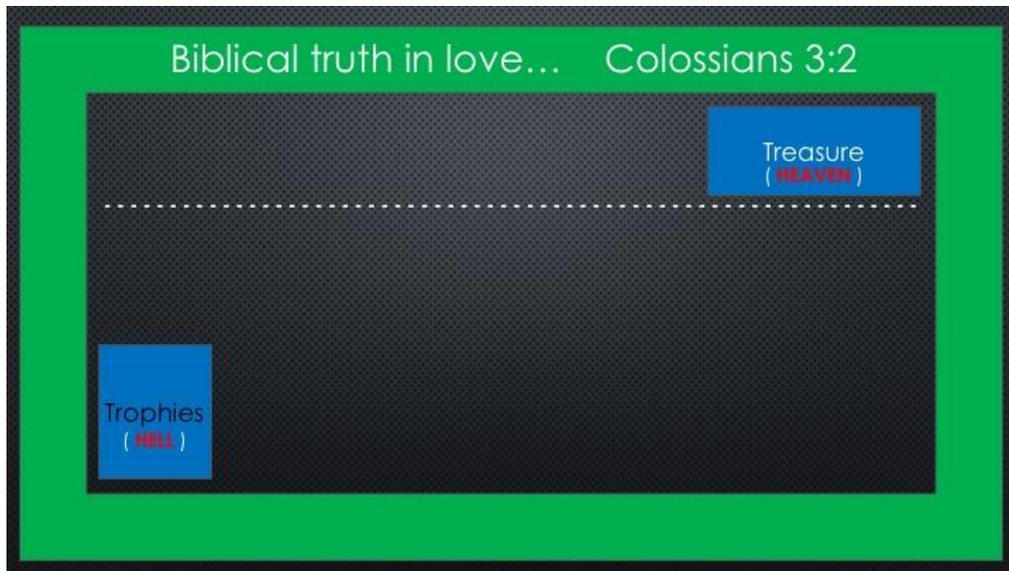


In response to Christ's call to sell everything and buy that field... & take hold of Him, who IS the treasure, too many in churches today say: "I know what I'll do... I buy two fields, two plots of land... and I'll dig for treasure on the one (like a modern day, adventurous treasure-hunter), and I'll build my house & life on the other... and then I'll live my life, trying to balance my time, going back & forth between the two properties..."

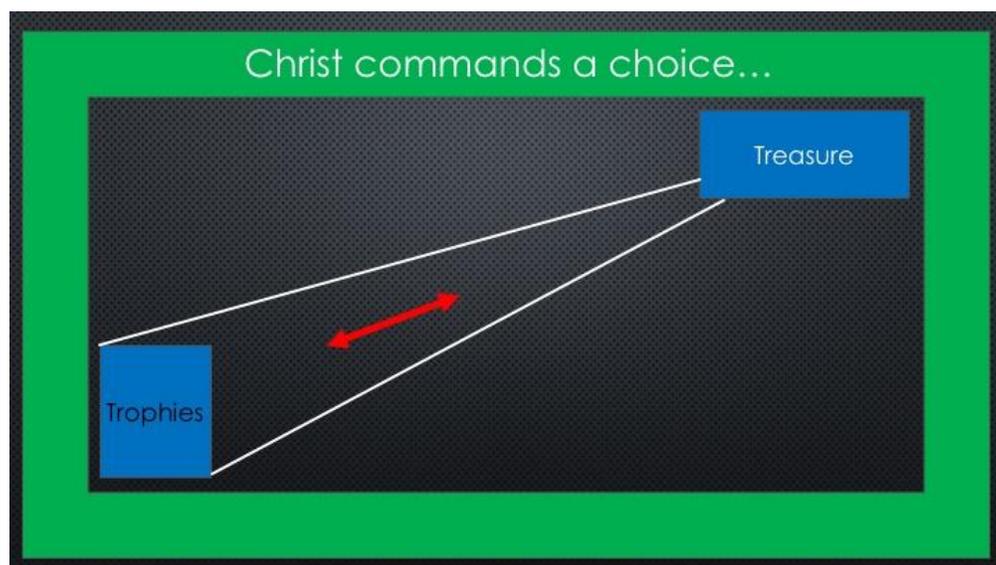


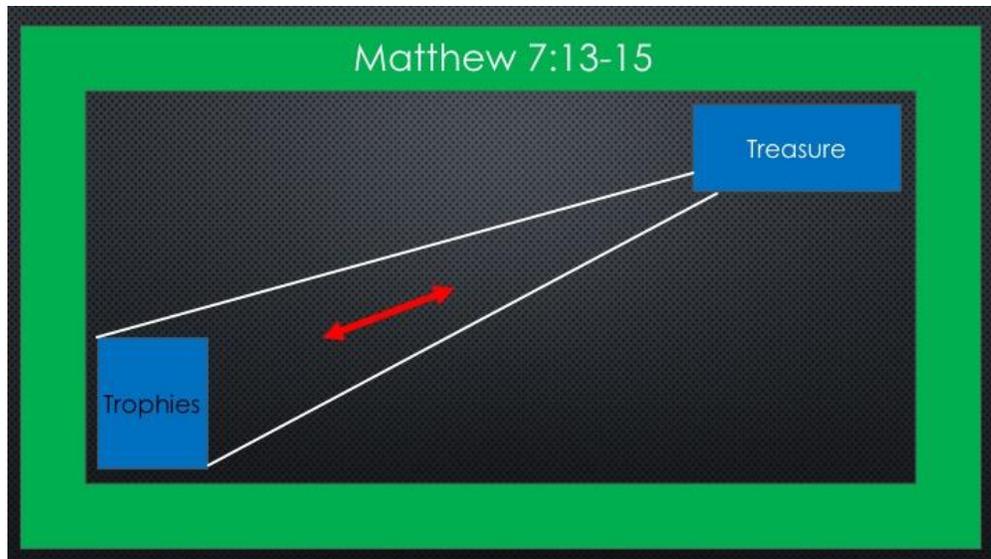
*You don't "balance" grace & obedience, you exhort BOTH and bask in them simultaneously as a single, indivisible blessing. -JDP*

*The problem is, those properties, those plots of spiritual land, are NEVER connected... they're never as close together as Satan & his minions (who are like lying, spiritual real estate agents in this analogy) promise you they are... No. In reality, the property with the treasure from heaven, and the plot that provides the American dream, are far, far apart.... In reality, they are ETERNALLY separated!*



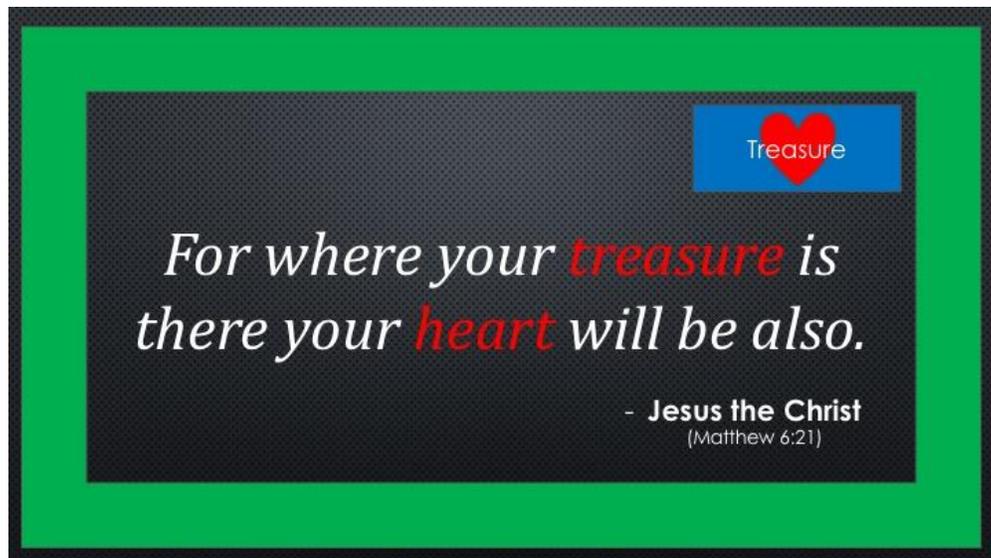
And the road that connects them is WIDE going DOWN, and NARROW heading UP in the opposite direction.





When it comes to your “treasure” Christian,  
I have one question for you.

*What is God's R.O.I. for His invested Treasure in you?*



**T/S:** BE-ing holy & holding on is not just about your pleasure & treasure... It's about God's truth, love, & standards as the One & Sovereign God of creation.

# III. BE Holy & Hold On to His STANDARDS

- Hebrews is telling the Jewish Church to Hold On...
- God's standards of holiness & faithfulness...
- Too many for beginning to fall away...

**VIDEO:** *T4G18 Albert Mohler*

*The church in Corinth is a mirror image of the churches in OUR country... our counties... our cities... our communities!*

## *Vitamins for Victory*

(Inspired by Dr. David Slamp's "Spiritual Growth Survey")

1. **CONSISTENT BIBLICAL WORSHIP** Hebrews 10:24-24
  - a. Consistent contributing of holistic praise & worship within your local church
  - b. Consistent, personal, passionate-worship expressed vertically & horizontally
  - c. Consistent BE-ing from the inside out; walking your worship day in & day out
2. **TRANSFORMATIVE BIBLE STUDY** 2 Timothy 3:16-17
  - a. Understanding the Bible's Source & structure, purpose & promise
  - b. Learning how to read the Bible for impact & faith-strengthening
  - c. Growing in your understanding of the Bible's context, content & commands
  - d. Reading & meditating more & more in/on the Bible's micro & macro truths
  - e. Becoming a Bible-studying disciple... who disciples others in Bible-studying
3. **SPIRIT-LEAD INTERNAL-DISCIPLISHIP** Ephesians 5:15
  - a. Maturing in Prayer & Grace through faith-filled obedience
  - b. Maturing in Purity & Repentance through faith-filled obedience
  - c. Maturing in Power & Love through faith-filled obedience
  - d. Maturing in Proclaiming & Ambassadorship through faith-filled obedience
  - e. Maturing in Purging & Cross-carrying through faith-filled obedience
  - f. Maturing in Passion & Discernment through faith-filled obedience
  - g. Maturing in Patience & Forgiveness through faith-filled obedience
  - h. Maturing in Perseverance & Spiritual Warfare through faith-filled obedience
  - i. Maturing in Passion & Discipleship through faith-filled obedience
  - j. Maturing in Peace & Joy through faith-filled obedience

4. **BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP** Matthew 6:33
  - a. First & foremost, your time is faithfully surrendered to the Lord's calling
  - b. First & foremost, your talent is faithfully surrendered to the Lord's calling
  - c. First & foremost, your treasure is faithfully surrendered to the Lord's calling
  - d. First & foremost, your LIFE is faithfully surrendered to the Lord's calling
  
5. **PERSONAL MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT** Ephesians 2:10
  - a. You are learning, loving & living who & how the Lord has called you to BE
  - b. You are accepting the privilege & responsibility for your personal ministry
  - c. You are investing yourself deeply into the calling/mission God has given you
  
6. **MISSION-COMMITTED LIVING/LIFESTYLE** Acts 1:8
  - a. You personally submit & commit to ALL God's Word, God's will, & God's ways
  - b. You personally submit & commit to the two Great Commandments
  - c. You personally submit & commit to Christ's Great Commission for Christians
  - d. You personally submit & commit to contributing locally, regionally & globally
  - e. You personally submit & commit to perpetually submitting & committing...
  
7. **BE-ING THE CHURCH** (*EKKLESSIA in KOINONIA*) Acts 2:41-47
  - a. BE-ing the biblical Church calls for both believing & behaving biblically...
  - b. BE-ing ekklessia means "BE-ing the Church" – the miraculous, family of God
  - c. BE-ing in koinonia means "BE-ing supernaturally unified" in & for Christ
  - d. BE-ing ekklessia in koinonia is your greatest blessing, mission, & ministry
  - e. BE-ing ekklessia in koinonia is summarized in: "together/homothoomadon"
  
8. **ACTIVE PASSIONATE WITNESSING** Matthew 28:18-20
  - a. You pray for opportunities to share the gospel with a diversity of people
  - b. You empathetically refuse to see or treat people like inferiors or "projects"
  - c. You look for & maximize your potential possibilities to go fishing for men
  - d. You intentionally improve your capabilities to share the gospel with others
  - e. You invest in the starting & building of God-honoring, missional relationships
  
9. **HOLISTIC CHRIST-LIKE ATTITUDES** Philippians 1:27
  - a. You aim to live in the power & promises of God's Word
  - b. You aim to align your attitudes & actions with God's will
  - c. You aim to think thru & process every circumstance & challenge God's way
  
10. **LIVING DISTINCT FROM THE WORLD** James 4:4
  - a. You know the "world" is where Satan & the flesh fight against God's ways
  - b. You know that God's holy, biblical-standards & definitions are yours too now
  - c. You know that God wants you to live as a contrasting witness in this world
  - d. You know that Christ is to be seen in & at the core of your cultural contrast
  - e. You know that living distinct from the world will come at a very real cost

11. **JOYFULLY SERVING THE WORLD** Mark 10:45
- a. Your goal in Christ-like service is the glory of God & the advance of His gospel
  - b. Your epitomizing of Christ-likeness is in your loving, joyful, selfless-service
  - c. Your methods of service will be biblically-affirmed in their aim & application
12. **MISSIONAL & RELATIONAL-DISCIPLESHIP** John 20:21
- a. Your mission is a personal, life-long journey to mature in Christ-likeness
  - b. Your mission is to bring God glory by finding & growing more glorifiers
  - c. Your mission is to invest in relationships that inform, inspect & inspire!
  - d. Your mission shares God's truth in love locally, regionally, & globally
  - e. Your mission is to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples
  - f. Your mission is lived out in grace-based, loving, life-on-life relationships
  - g. Your mission is to make disciplined-warriors while winning spiritual warfare

## IV. BE Holy & Hold On to **His FAMILY**

### **What kind of Christian do you want to BE?**

*It's like someone who enlists in the military because they like the prestige & privileges of living their life in the uniform of a soldier... No doubt, when they put on the uniform, they get some personal perks... BUT... as strange as it might sound, or, as hard as it may be to believe, many who love to wear the uniform have no interest, no INTENT, of uniting with the real soldiers --- those who are LIVING as soldiers UNDER their uniforms... vs merely looking like soldiers, BASED on their uniforms. There's a reason why the highly esteemed military medal is called the Purple-HEART vs Purple-shirt. - JDP*

### **What kind of Church do you want?**

**VIDEO:** T4G18 – Mark Dever

*You can GO to church with churchians or you can BE the Church with Christians!*



**One FAITH. One FAMILY. One FOCUS.**

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will BE My witnesses (locally, regionally, and globally)." – Acts 1:8*

**One Question:** *WHAT DO YOU WANT?*  
**One Offer:** *COME AND SEE.*  
**One Promise:** *TRUTH IN LOVE!*

***Our Truth-in-Love Distinctives: We are...***

- 1.** Responding to grace & repenting of sin...
- 2.** Trusting the Bible & obeying God's Word...
- 3.** Growing in-Christ & living Spirit-led...
- 4.** Praying for guidance & following by faith...
- 5.** Dying to self & carrying our cross...
- 6.** BE-ing the Church & loving one another...(*truly* loving one another)
- 7.** Equipping the saints & exemplifying supernatural unity...
- 8.** Ministering as ambassadors & discerning matters shrewdly...
- 9.** Worshipping God vertically & experiencing Him horizontally...
- 10.** Proclaiming the Gospel (*no matter what*) & fishing for men...
- 11.** Making disciples-warriors & winning spiritual-warfare...
- 12.** Loving our King & serving His kingdom!

*Does your fellowship define your worship... OR  
does your worship define your fellowship? One is holy & to be  
held on to, while the other is NOT...*

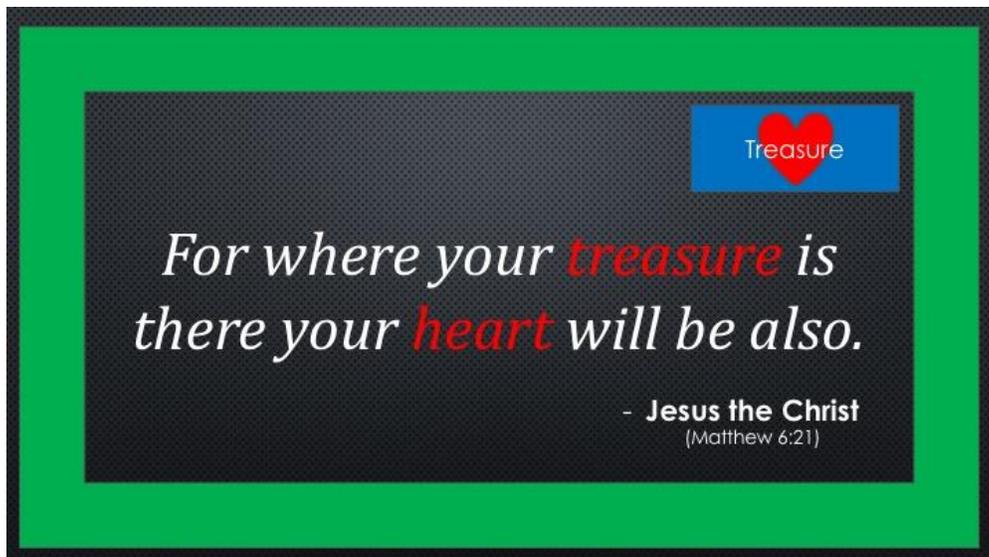
**CLOSE:**

## **V.** BE Holy & Hold On to **His MISSION**

**Philippians 2:12-13** (ESV)

*<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

**Leviticus 19:2 & Hebrews 1:4 & 13:22**  
**(John 20:21)**



**Let's Pray!**

# HEBREWS: Introduction

I have titled this study of the book of Hebrews, "The Preeminence of Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ is superior to and preeminent over everyone and everything.

The first three verses provide a fitting introduction. But before we look at these, we need some background as a foundation for our study. Studying Hebrews is a thrilling adventure. Part of that adventure is due to the difficulty of the book. It is a book that has many, many deep truths that are difficult to grasp and that demand diligent and faithful study. There are things here that are beyond understanding apart from complete reliance on God's Spirit and sincere commitment to understand His Word.

My former Old Testament professor, Dr. Charles L. Feinberg, often said that you cannot understand the book of Hebrews unless you understand the book of Leviticus, because the book of Hebrews is based upon the principles of the Levitical priesthood. But don't worry about your lack of understanding of Leviticus. By the time we get through Hebrews, you should have a pretty good grasp of Leviticus as well. It would be a definite advantage, however, if, on your own, you began to **familiarize yourself with Leviticus. It contains the ceremonial symbols for which Hebrews presents the realities.**

## Authorship

**This epistle was written by an unknown author.** Some say it was by Paul, some say by Apollos, some say by Peter, some say by this, that, or another person. Due to differences in style, vocabulary, and pattern of personal reference in the epistles known to be his, I do not believe it was written by Paul. **We know it was written by a believer, under inspiration, to a suffering, persecuted group of Jews somewhere in the East, outside of Israel.** As to the exact human authorship, I stand with one of the great teachers of the early church by the name of **Origen**, who **said simply, "No one knows."** How fitting, since the book's purpose is to exalt Christ. Throughout this study we will refer to the fact that it was written, as was all Scripture, by the Holy Spirit—whom we do know.

## Audience

There are no references to Gentiles in the book. **Problems between Gentiles and Jews in the church are not mentioned or reflected here, indicating almost certainly that the congregation being addressed was strictly Jewish.** To these suffering Jewish believers—and some unbelievers—are revealed the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ and the New Covenant, in contrast to the Old Covenant, under which they had so long lived and worshiped.

**We do not know the exact location of this group of Hebrews.** They were perhaps somewhere near Greece. **We do know that this community had been evangelized by apostles and prophets (2:3-4).** By prophets, of course, is meant New Testament prophets ([Eph. 2:20](#)).

Evidently this church had been founded fairly soon after Christ's ascension. By the time the letter was written, a small congregation of believers already existed there.

**Also addressed in the letter are unbelievers, who evidently were a part of this Jewish community.** Unlike many Jews in Palestine, these had never had opportunity to meet Jesus. Anything they may have known about Him was secondhand ([Heb. 2:3-4](#)). They of course had no New Testament writings, as such, as a testimony, for it had not yet been brought together. Whatever they knew of Christ and His gospel they knew from believing neighbors, or perhaps directly from the mouth of an apostle or prophet.

**The letter had to have been written after Christ's ascension, which was about A.D. 30, and before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, since the Temple must still have been standing.** I believe it was probably written close to 70, perhaps as early as 65. We know that there were not any apostolic missionaries from Jerusalem until at least seven years after the church there had been founded. Likely it was some time later that they would have reached this Jewish community, perhaps many miles away. And, after they had been reached, the believers would have had a certain amount of time to have been taught, as reflected in the letter itself.

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ([5:12](#))

He says, in other words, *"You've had enough time to become mature, but you are not."*

**We must understand that three basic groups of people are in view throughout this epistle.** *If one does not keep these groups in mind, the book becomes very confusing. If, for example, as some have said, it was written exclusively to Christians, extreme problems arise in interpreting a number of passages which could hardly apply to believers. And because it so frequently addresses believers, it could not have been written primarily to unbelievers either. So, it must have been written to include both. In fact, three basic groups in this Jewish community are addressed. Here is the critical basis for understanding the epistle; and here is where people often get mixed up, especially in interpreting chapters 6 and 10.*

## **Group I: Hebrew Christians**

**First of all, there was in this Jewish community a congregation of true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. They had come out of Judaism**, in which they had been born and raised. Now they were born again. They had received Jesus Christ as their personal Messiah and Savior. They had become His followers. **The frequent result was tremendous hostility from their own people—ostracism from their families, persecution and suffering of many sorts, though not yet martyrdom (10:32-34; 12:4).** They suffered greatly, persecuted not only by their fellow Jews, but also perhaps by Gentiles.

**They should have anticipated as much and have been mature enough to deal with it. But they had not and they were not. They lacked full confidence in the gospel, and consequently in their Lord. They were in danger of going back into the standards and patterns of Judaism—not of losing their salvation but of confusing the gospel with Jewish ceremony and legalism and of thereby weakening their faith and testimony.** They could not bring themselves to accept the clear-cut distinction between the gospel, the New Covenant in Christ, and the forms, ceremonies, patterns, and methods of Judaism. They were still hung up, for example, on the Temple ritual and worship. **That is why the Spirit talks to them so much about the new priesthood and the new Temple and the new sacrifice and the new sanctuary, all of which are better than the old ones.**

They had gone beyond Judaism in receiving Jesus Christ but, understandably, they were tempted to hang on to many of the Judaistic habits that had been so much a part of their lives. When their friends and their countrymen began to persecute them in earnest, the pressure led them to hold even tighter to some of the old Jewish traditions. They felt they had to keep a foothold in their old and familiar relationships. It was hard to make a clean break.

With all that pressure, together with their weak faith and spiritual ignorance, they were in great danger of mixing the new with the old. They were in great danger of coming up with a ritualistic, ceremonial, legalistic Christianity. They were a whole congregation of "weaker brothers" (cf. Rom. 14:2; 1 Cor. 8:9), who were still calling "unclean" what the Lord had sanctified (Mark 7:19; Acts 10:15; Rom. 14:12; 1 Tim. 4:1-5).

The Holy Spirit directed this letter to them to strengthen their faith in the New Covenant, to show them that they did not need the old Temple (which in a few years would be completely destroyed by Titus Vespasian anyway, showing that God had brought an end to that economy; cf. Luke 21:5-6). They did not need the old Aaronic-Levitical priesthood. They did not need the old day-in, day-out, day-in, day-out sacrifices. They did not need the ceremonies. They had a new and better covenant with a new and better priesthood, a new and better sanctuary, and a new and better sacrifice. The pictures and symbols were to give way to the reality.

**The book of Hebrews was written to give confidence to these floundering believers. The Lord was speaking to Christians and telling them to hold to the better covenant and the better priesthood, and not go back into the patterns of Judaism**, either to that priesthood or to that assemblage. They must steadfastly and exclusively live in, and live out, their new relationship in Christ.

## **Group II: Hebrew Non-Christians Who Were Intellectually Convinced**

We have all met people who have heard the truth of Jesus Christ and who are intellectually convinced that He is indeed who He claimed to be, and yet are not willing to make a commitment of faith in Him.

In the group of Hebrews to whom this epistle was written, there were such non-Christians, as there are in many groups today. It is likely that every church group since Pentecost has had people in it who have been convinced that Jesus is the Christ but who have never committed themselves to Him.

These Hebrew non-Christians, intellectually convinced but spiritually uncommitted, are the object of some of the things that the writer has to say. They believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ, spoken of in the Jewish Scriptures (what we now call the Old Testament), but they had not been willing to receive Him personally as their Savior and Lord. Why? Perhaps, like those described by John, **they believed in Him, but they loved the approval of men more than the approval of God (John 12:42-43).** They were not willing to make the sacrifice required. And so they are exhorted by the Holy Spirit to go all the way to saving faith; to go all the way to commitment to the lordship of Christ.

In chapter 2 is one of the special statements to this group of the intellectually convinced but spiritually uncommitted.

*For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? (2:1-3a)*

They were at the point of acknowledging but not of committing. They were guilty of the great sin of neglecting to do what one is intellectually convinced is right. The truth of the gospel had even been confirmed to them by the apostles, with all the miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit (v. 4).

In chapter six this group is addressed again:

*For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame. (6:4-6)*

Here is a warning to the merely intellectually convinced not to stop where he is. **If he stops after having received full revelation, and especially after he is convinced of the truth of the revelation, he has only one way to go. If, when a man is totally convinced that Jesus Christ is who He claimed to be, he then refuses to believe, this man is without excuse and without hope**—because, though convinced of the truth of the gospel, he still will not put his trust in it. He is here warned that there is nothing else God can do.

## What is the greatest sin that a man can commit? The sin of rejecting Christ.

*For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. (10:26)*

If a man has heard the gospel, understands it, and is intellectually convinced of its truth, but then willfully rejects Christ, what more can God do? Nothing! **All God can now promise this man is "a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries"** (v. 27).

The warning continues:

*How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? (10:29)*

When you know the truth of the gospel and reject it, the consequences are terrible and permanent.

In chapter twelve, verse fifteen, is still another warning...

*See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many he defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears. (12:15-17)*

This is the tragedy of being too late—with no one to blame but ourselves.

These are controversial passages, and we will deal with them in detail at the proper places.

## **Group III: Hebrew Non-Christians Who Were Not Convinced**

Not only does the Holy Spirit in this book speak to Christians in order to strengthen their faith and to the intellectually convinced in order to push them over the line to saving faith, but **He also speaks to those who have not believed at all**, to those who may not yet be convinced of any part of the gospel. **He seeks to show them clearly that Jesus is in fact who He claimed to be, and this truth is the main thrust of chapter nine.**

For example, in **9:11** He says:

*But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation. (9:11)*

And He goes on to explain Christ's new priesthood:

*How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance....And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.*  
(9:14-15, 27-28)

These messages speak directly to unbelievers, not to Christians and not to those who are already convinced of the gospel intellectually. They are given to those who first need to know who Christ really is.

### 3 Groups In View:

These, then, are the three groups in view in the epistle. **The key to interpreting any part of Hebrews is to understand which group is being addressed. If we do not understand that, we are bound to confuse issues.** For example, the Spirit is surely not saying to believers, "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (9:27). **We must always understand what group it is to whom He speaks. As we study the book of Hebrews, we will relate each text to one of the three groups.**

**The primary message is addressed to believers. Periodically there are interspersed warnings to the two unbelieving groups. In a masterful way, in a way that could only be divine, the Holy Spirit speaks to all three. He meets every one of their particular needs and their specific questions in this one supernatural masterpiece.**

In Hebrews there is confidence and assurance for the Christian. There is warning to the intellectually convinced that he must receive Christ or his knowledge will damn him. Finally, there is a convincing presentation to the unbelieving Jew who is not even intellectually persuaded that he should believe in Jesus Christ. To these three groups Hebrews is a presentation of Christ, the Messiah, the Author of a New Covenant greater than the one God had made in the Old Testament. The old one was not bad or wrong; it was God-given and therefore good. But it was incomplete and preliminary. It set the stage for the new.

### A Thematic Outline of the Book

As we have stated, **the overall theme is the superiority, or the preeminence, of Christ. He is better than anything that was before. He is better than any Old Testament person; He is better than any Old Testament institution; He is better than any Old Testament ritual; He is better than any Old Testament sacrifice; He is better than anyone and everything else.**

This general outline of the book of Hebrews shows the basic pattern of presenting the superiority of Jesus Christ. We will loosely follow this pattern as we study.

*The letter begins with the general superiority of Christ to everyone and everything, a kind of a summary of the whole epistle in the first three verses.*

Next comes:

- the superiority of Christ to **angels**, then
- the superiority of Christ to **Moses**,
- the superiority of Christ to **Joshua**,
- the superiority of Christ to **Aaron** and his **priesthood**,
- the superiority of Christ to the **Old Covenant**,
- the superiority of Christ's sacrifice to **old sacrifices**,
- the superiority of Christ's faithful people to all **the faithless**, and
- the superiority of Christ's testimony to **the testimony of any other**.

**This brief outline gives us the flow of the book, which, above all else, teaches the total, complete, and absolute superiority of Jesus Christ.**

## **A Few Background Observations**

*No Jew Could See God and Live*

Before we begin looking at particular passages and verses, let me suggest a couple of footnotes.

**To the Jew it had always been a dangerous thing to approach God. "No man can see Me and live" (Ex. 33:20).** On the great Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), which occurred one time a year and which many Jews today still keep to one degree or another—at that time and that time alone could the High Priest enter into the Holy of Holies, where the Shekinah Glory dwelt, where God was uniquely present. They could not see God, they could not behold God. They could not even approach Him except on this one day a year—and only one person, the high priest, could do this. And he had to go in and get out quickly. He could not linger there lest he put Israel in terror of judgment.

Since there was naturally no personal nearness to God, there had to be some basis for communion between God and Israel. So, God established a covenant. In this covenant God, in His grace, and in His sovereign initiative, offered to Israel a special relationship with Himself. In a unique way He would be their God and they would be His people to reach the world. They would have special access to Him if they obeyed His law. To break His law was sin, and sin interrupted their access to Him. Since there was always sin, access was always being interrupted.

## *The Old Sacrifices*

So, God instituted a system of sacrifices as outward acts of inner repentance. Through the Levitical priesthood, sacrifices were made to symbolize atonement for sin, in order that the barrier might be taken down and there might be access to God. It worked something like this: God gave His covenant, which included His law, and thereby offered the people access to Him. Man sinned, the law was broken, and the barrier went up again. Another repentant act of sacrifice was then made so that the barrier would be dropped and the relationship reestablished.

We naturally wonder how often they had to make sacrifices. The answer is incessantly—hour after hour, day after day, month after month, year after year. **They never stopped. Besides this, the priests themselves were sinners. They had to make sacrifices for their own sins before they could make sacrifices for the sins of the people.** And so the barrier went up and down, up and down, up and down. This in itself proved the ineffectiveness of the system. It was a losing battle against sin and the barrier it erects. And besides this, **the whole system never removed sin fully and finally. It only covered it up.**

What man needed was a Perfect Priest and a Perfect Sacrifice to open the way once and for all—a sacrifice that was not just a picture and that did not deal just with one sin at a time, over and over again, but one that took it all away once and for all. That, says the writer of Hebrews, is exactly what Jesus was and what He did.

## *The New Sacrifice*

Jesus Christ came as the Mediator of a better covenant because it is one that does not have to be repeated every hour, or even every month or year. **Christ comes as the mediator of a better covenant because His sacrifice once and for all removes every sin ever committed.** Christ comes as the mediator of a better covenant because He is a priest who does not need to make any sacrifices for Himself. **He is totally perfect, the Perfect Priest and the Perfect Sacrifice.** Jesus Christ, in His own sacrifice—His sacrifice of Himself—showed the perfection that eliminated sin.

*By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*  
(10:10)

**Sanctified here means "made pure,"** and the emphasis is: *"...through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ ONCE."* That is something wonderfully new in the sacrificial system—one sacrifice, once offered. That is indeed a wonderfully better covenant.

*But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.*  
(10:12)

That is something no priest could ever do. There were not even any seats where the sacrifices were made in the Tabernacle or the Temple. The priests had to keep making sacrifices; their task

was never finished. Jesus made His sacrifice and "sat down." It was finished. It was done. "*For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified*" (10:14).

*Better Priest, Better Sacrifice*

**Thus, there is a better priest making a better sacrifice. This is a central message of the book of Hebrews.**

**To the believing Jew the Spirit says, "Continue to have confidence in this Priest and this sacrifice." To the one intellectually convinced He says, "Receive this Priest and accept the sacrifice He made. You are on the borderline of decision; don't fall into perdition when you are only a step away." And to the unconvinced He says, "Look at Jesus Christ. See how much better He is than the Levitical priests and how much better His one sacrifice is than all of their innumerable sacrifices. Receive Him."**

The Spirit is saying, "All of your lives you Jews have been looking for the Perfect Priest. You've been looking for the Perfect Final Sacrifice. I present Him to you—Jesus Christ."

*Difficulties for Jewish Christians*

**Keep in mind that the idea of a new covenant was not easy for Jews to accept. Even after they accepted the new, it was hard for them to make a clean break with the old. The Gentiles did not have that problem,** of course, since they had never been a part of the old. They had long before lost any real knowledge of the true God, and in consequence were worshipping idols—some of them primitive and some of them sophisticated—but all of them idols (see [Rom. 1:21-25](#)).

But the Jews had always had a divine religion. For centuries they had known a divinely appointed place of worship and a divinely revealed way of worshiping. God Himself had established their religion. One might effectively say, when witnessing to a Gentile, "Here is the truth." But **when you went to a Jew and said, "Here is the truth," he would likely say, "I already know the truth." When you countered, "But this truth is from the one true God," he would respond, "So is the truth that I have."** (\*\*\*) like the "churched" of our culture...)

It was not an easy thing for a Jew to forsake completely all his heritage, especially when he knew that much of it, at least, was God-given. **Even after a Jew received the Lord Jesus Christ this was difficult. He had a traditional desire to retain some of the forms and ceremonies that had been a part of his life since earliest childhood. Part of the purpose of the book of Hebrews, therefore, was to confront that born-again Jew with the fact that he could, and should, let go of all his Judaistic trappings.**

**But since the Temple was still standing and the priests still ministered in it, this was especially hard to do.** Letting go became easier after the Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70.

When you consider the intense persecution Jewish Christians were going through at this time, it is easy to appreciate the difficulties and temptations they faced. The high priest Ananias was especially hard and unrelenting. He had all Christian Jews automatically banished from the holy places. That was tough. All their lives they had had access to these sacred places. Now they could have no part in the God-ordained services. They were now considered unclean. They could not go to the synagogue, much less the Temple; they could not offer any sacrifices; they could not communicate with the priests. They could have nothing to do with their own people. **They were cut off from their own society. For clinging to Jesus as the Messiah, they were banished from almost every sacred thing they had ever known. Though in God's eyes they were the only true Jews (Rom. 2:28-29), they were considered by fellow Jews to be worse than Gentiles.**

**Many Jewish Christians were beginning to say to themselves, "This is rough.** We received the gospel and believed it. But **it's hard to break with our old religion and with our own people and the traditions we have always held and to face persecution.** It is hard for us not to doubt that Jesus is the Messiah." Such doubts were a great problem for them, because they were spiritually infantile.

**Throughout Hebrews these immature, but beloved, Christians are told to keep their confidence in Christ,** the mediator of a better covenant and their new Great High Priest. **They are reminded that they were losing nothing for which they were not getting something infinitely better.** They had been deprived of an earthly temple but they were going to get a heavenly one. They had been deprived of an earthly priesthood but they now had a heavenly Priest. They had been deprived of the old pattern of sacrifices but now they had one final sacrifice.

**Better Everything:** *In Hebrews, **CONTRAST** reigns!*

**Everything presented is presented as better:** a better hope, a better testament, a better promise, a better sacrifice, a better substance, a better country, a better resurrection, a better everything. Jesus Christ is presented here as the supreme Best. And we are presented as being in Him and as dwelling in a completely new dimension—the heavenlies. We read of the heavenly Christ, the heavenly calling, the heavenly gift, the heavenly country, the heavenly Jerusalem, and of our names being written in the heavenlies. **Everything is new. Everything is better. We don't need the old.**

**Now the point in what has been said is this:** *we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. (8:1) Here is the whole summary of Hebrews in one sentence. Ours is the High Priest of high priests, and He is seated. His work is done, completely finished for all time and for us.*

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Hebrews.

# Introduction

Hebrews is certainly one of the most intriguing books of the New Testament. It poses unique challenges, particularly when it comes to answering introductory questions regarding its author and original audience. Hebrews is peculiar in this sense. For example, the letters of Paul not only explicitly state that Paul was the author of each epistle, they also often explicitly or implicitly indicate the historical context, the audience, and the situation surrounding the origin of the letter. Of course, similar statements could be made about the epistles of Peter, Acts, Revelation, and even the Gospels.

Yet the book of **Hebrews—so rich in its biblical theological exploration of the work of Christ and the gospel—provides very little information about its own origin.** In fact, we know almost nothing about who wrote it, its original audience, or the context behind it. In order to set the stage, we will examine the following introductory issues:

- Title
- Original Audience
- Date of Composition
- Author

## Title

**We typically refer to this book simply as “Hebrews.” The title found in most ancient manuscripts reads, “to the Hebrews,” thus identifying this book as a letter or an epistle.** Hebrews, however, is unique in that it does not begin with a salutation, as in the case of Paul’s epistles. Yet, while the book does not have a typical epistolary salutation, other features of this book (particularly its end) share similarities with other epistles in Scripture.

## Original Audience

Who were the original recipients of this letter? As already stated, in ancient manuscripts the epistle is addressed “to the Hebrews.” **The tone of the book assumes that the readers were Christians. This indicates that the book must have been meant for a Jewish community that had converted to Christianity. But this does not necessarily answer every question about the original audience.** Some in the early church suggested that the letter might have been intended for converts who were formerly Jewish priests, since Hebrews assumes a great deal of knowledge about the Old Testament Scriptures and the Levitical priesthood. As intriguing as this suggestion may be, there is no evidence that the letter is intended for such a specific group.

**The most detailed description we can give of the overall audience is that they were converted Jews.** Other clues in Hebrews also reveal some traits of the original recipients. Hebrews is obviously written to people **who have a significant amount of knowledge of the Old Testament.** At the same time, the author of Hebrews frequently quotes from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament), demonstrating that this is the version of the Scriptures most familiar to the original audience. **Since they were depending on the Septuagint, it is likely that the audience was made up of Hellenistic Jews.** They composed part of the cosmopolitan areas in the Greco-Roman Empire outside of Palestine. **Their primary language was Greek, and they mainly resided in Alexandria and Rome.**

**Ultimately,** we must exercise a certain reluctance to be dogmatic in our historical reconstructions. Three things we do know about the Epistle to the Hebrews are that it was written to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ ([2 Tim 3:16-17](#)), it plays a unique role in the canon, and it **instructs all Christians on how to read the Old Testament in proper relation to Christ.**

## **Date of Composition**

Hebrews was probably written prior to AD 70 and the destruction of the Jewish temple. The epistle was almost certainly penned prior to this date because the book mentions the sacrificial system in Jerusalem as if it were still in place ([7:27-28](#); [8:3-5](#); [10:1-3](#)). Furthermore, the book mentions Timothy ([13:23](#)), who we know from elsewhere in Scripture was a contemporary of the apostle Paul. These clues point to the fact that Hebrews was written sometime before the Romans destroyed the Jerusalem temple in AD 70.

## **Author**

**Who wrote Hebrews? Ultimately, we do not know.** Biblical authority and inerrancy require that we affirm the authorship of every book as it is attributed within the Scriptures. Therefore, we must contend for the fact that Peter wrote 1 and 2 Peter because that claim is made within the inerrant text itself. The same applies for the epistles of Paul. When it comes to anonymous authors of New Testament books (e.g., Matthew, Mark, Luke, Acts), we have good historical and textual reasons to continue to affirm the traditionally proposed authors. Hebrews, however, does not give any hints as to who wrote it. Furthermore, there is no unanimous historical tradition that testifies to a specific author. In fact, scholars have posited several possible authors for the letter.

Many in the history of the church have proposed that Paul wrote Hebrews, but there is no evidence that Paul wrote this letter. As a matter of fact, **the grammar, syntax, and phraseology found in Hebrews are not characteristic of Paul's writing.** What is characteristic of Paul's writings, however, is a salutation in which Paul makes clear that he is the author! Moreover, Paul often indicates that he writes as one with apostolic authority. **The author of Hebrews, however, never makes such claims. Instead, the author of Hebrews communicates as one who is affirming the truth of what was revealed to the church through the apostles.**

**Other suggestions as to who wrote the book include Apollos, Barnabas, and Luke.** The reason these names crop up is because the author of Hebrews seems to have known Timothy intimately, thus linking him with the apostolic circle. **There are, however, problems with each of these proposals.** Luke, for example, comes from a Gentile background—a background that has obviously influenced the way he wrote both his Gospel and the book of Acts. Hebrews, on the other hand, seems more likely to have been written by someone immersed in Judaism. **Barnabas is an attractive choice since he was a Levite. His Levitical status would explain the book's attention to priestly issues, but there still remains a lack of evidence for assigning authorship to Barnabas.** The eloquence of the letter could point to Apollos as the author, but again, **there is insufficient evidence to ascribe Hebrews to Apollos.** Proposed authors for the book of Hebrews are simply appealing guesses.

**Ultimately, we need to limit our imaginations and trust that the Holy Spirit has given us all that we need.** God, in his providence, did not reveal to us the human author or the original recipients. **Evidently, we are not meant to know these things and can still understand this book.** Perhaps God did not reveal that data because with it we might read the book differently from the way the Holy Spirit has intended for us to read it. **What is clear is that the Holy Spirit desires for us to read this book—along with all of Scripture—as written to “the church.”** Therefore, we must approach the book of Hebrews understanding that it is God's word to all Christians, and we must allow the book to shape how we read the Old Testament after the reality of Christ's sacrificial work on the cross.

## **Prolegomena: Keeping Our Old Testaments Open**

Many Christians find Hebrews a very challenging book to understand. This is most likely because Hebrews assumes a certain amount of knowledge of the Old Testament. **Hebrews discusses most of the major figures, covenants, and biblical-theological themes found there.** The book even spends a significant amount of time discussing minor characters in the Old Testament such as Melchizedek. Therefore, **in order to understand this New Testament letter, we must become familiar with the history, themes, and theology of the Old Testament.** Hebrews will guide us along this journey, but it is important that we keep our Old Testaments open as we read this epistle.

**- Christ-Centered Exposition - Christ-Centered  
Exposition Commentary – Exalting Jesus in Hebrews.**

# Hebrews by Chuck Swindoll

## Who wrote the book?

The author of the letter to the Hebrews remains shrouded in mystery. Even early in the church's history, a Christian as learned as Origen had to admit his ignorance of the true author of Hebrews. Several theories regarding the author's identity have been proposed over the years, but all of them contain significant problems.

Most of the churches in the eastern part of the Roman Empire believed Paul to have authored the book, leading to its early acceptance into the Canon by the churches in those areas. Even though Clement of Rome drew much from Hebrews in his late-first-century letter to the Corinthian church, many in the Western church pointed away from Paul as the source of the book. Authors such as Luke, Barnabas, Apollos, and even Clement have been considered as possibilities. The unknown authorship of this book should not shake our confidence in its authority. Hebrews makes important theological contributions to the biblical Canon, it has been drawn upon as sacred Scripture since the late first century, and Christians have for two millennia consistently upheld the divine inspiration and, therefore, the canonicity of the book of Hebrews.

## Where are we?

The strongly Jewish character of the letter to the Hebrews helps to narrow down its date of composition, most likely AD 64–69. Significantly, the book makes no reference to the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem in AD 70, and the author wrote as if the sacrificial system were still in existence (Hebrews 10:1–2, 11). With its myriad references to Hebrew customs and the Old Testament, the book was likely sent to a Jewish Christian community, possibly in Rome.

## Why is Hebrews so important?

**Hebrews clearly lays out the present priestly ministry of Christ in the life of the believer.** Jesus is both the divine Son of God and completely human, and **in His priestly role He clears the way for human beings to approach the Father in heaven through prayer** (Hebrews 4:14–16). The priesthood of Jesus is superior to the Old Testament priesthood of Aaron, because only through Jesus do we receive eternal salvation (5:1–9). Furthermore, **Jesus became the permanent and perfect High Priest, going beyond all other priests by offering Himself as a sinless sacrifice on behalf of the sins of human beings** (7:24–26; 9:28).

## What's the big idea?

Throughout its pages, **Hebrews makes clear that Jesus Christ exceeds all other people, pursuits, objects, or hopes to which human beings offer allegiance.** Hebrews pictures Jesus as better than the angels, as bringing better lives to humanity through salvation, as offering a better hope than the Mosaic Law could promise, as a better sacrifice for our sins than a bull or a goat, and as providing a better inheritance in heaven for those who place their faith in Him (Hebrews 1:4; 6:9; 7:19; 9:23; 10:34). **Jesus is indeed superior to all** others.

This message of the superiority of Jesus would have been particularly important to Jewish Christians in Rome, who were struggling under Nero's persecution and were considering moving back toward the Mosaic Law. The writer to the Hebrews showed these Jewish Christian believers that, though they were faced with suffering, they were indeed following a better way . . . and they should persevere.

## How do I apply this?

The ancients created idols fashioned of wood and stone. Modern society has set aside that type of idol in favor of new idols—idols of fancy gadgets, material wealth, a comfortable lifestyle, and even our children. Human beings have seen and experienced the limitless bounty of idolatry, where we place some created object or person in the place of the one true God. What idols do you hold dear in your life?

The letter to the Hebrews makes clear that only one Person deserves to hold the primary place in our lives. While we are busy idolizing our move up the corporate ladder or placing all our hopes in our kids, Jesus offers us a better position, a better priest, a better covenant, a better hope, and a better sacrifice.

**Only when we give Jesus His rightful place in our lives will everything else in life fall into its rightful place.**

# Book of Hebrews

(GotQuestions.com)

**Author:** Although some include the Book of Hebrews among the apostle Paul's writings, **the certain identity of the author remains an enigma.** Missing is Paul's customary salutation common to his other works. In addition, the suggestion that the writer of this epistle relied upon knowledge and information provided by others who were actual eye-witnesses of Christ Jesus (2:3) makes Pauline authorship doubtful. **Some attribute Luke as its writer; others suggest Hebrews may have been written by Apollos, Barnabas, Silas, Philip, or Aquila and Priscilla.** **Regardless** of the human hand that held the pen, **the Holy Spirit of God is the divine author of all Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16); therefore, Hebrews speaks with the same canonical authority as the**

## other sixty-five books of the Bible.

**Date of Writing:** The early church father Clement quoted from the Book of Hebrews in A.D. 95. However, **internal evidence** such as the fact that Timothy was alive at the time the epistle was written and the absence of any evidence showing the end of the Old Testament sacrificial system that occurred with Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 **indicates the book was written around A.D. 65.**

**Purpose of Writing:** The late Dr. Walter Martin, founder of the Christian Research Institute and writer of the best-selling book *Kingdom of the Cults*, quipped in his usual tongue-in-cheek manner that **the Book of Hebrews was written by a Hebrew to other Hebrews telling the Hebrews to stop acting like Hebrews.**

In truth, many of the early Jewish believers were slipping back into the rites and rituals of Judaism in order to escape the mounting persecution.

**This letter, then, is an exhortation for those persecuted believers to continue in the grace of Jesus Christ.**

### **Key Verses:**

**Hebrews 1:1-2:** *"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and*

*through whom he made the universe.”*

**Hebrews 2:3:** *"How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation..."*

**Hebrews 4:14-16:** *"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."*

**Hebrews 11:1:** *“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”*

**Hebrews 12:1-2:** *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."*

## **Brief Summary:**

**The Book of Hebrews addresses three separate groups: believers in Christ, unbelievers who had knowledge of and an intellectual acceptance of the facts of Christ, and unbelievers who were attracted to Christ, but who rejected Him ultimately.** It's important to understand which group is being addressed in which passage. **To fail to do so can cause us to draw conclusions inconsistent with the rest of Scripture.**

The writer of Hebrews continually makes mention of the superiority of Christ in both His personage and in His ministering work. In the writings of the Old Testament, we understand the rituals and ceremonies of Judaism symbolically pointed to the coming of Messiah. In other words, **the rites & rituals of Judaism were but shadows of things to come.**

**Hebrews tells us that Christ Jesus is better than anything mere religion has to offer. All the pomp and circumstance of religion pales in comparison to the person, work, and ministry of Christ Jesus. It is **the superiority of our Lord Jesus**, then, that **remains the theme of this eloquently written letter.****

**Connections:** Perhaps nowhere in the New Testament does the Old Testament come into focus more than in the Book of Hebrews, which has as its foundation the Levitical priesthood.

The writer to the Hebrews constantly compares the inadequacies of the Old Testament sacrificial system to the perfection and completion in Christ.

**Where the Old Covenant required continual sacrifices and a once-a-year atonement for sin offered by a human priest, the New Covenant provides a once-for-all sacrifice through Christ ([Hebrews 10:10](#)) and direct access to the throne of God for all who are in Him.**

**Practical Application:** Rich in foundational Christian doctrine, the Epistle to the Hebrews also gives us encouraging

examples of God's "faith heroes" who persevered in spite of great difficulties and adverse circumstances (Hebrews 11). These members of **God's Hall of Faith** provide overwhelming evidence as to the unconditional surety and absolute reliability of God. Likewise, we can maintain perfect confidence in God's rich promises, regardless of our circumstances, by meditating upon the rock-solid faithfulness of God's workings in the lives of His Old Testament saints.

The writer of **Hebrews** gives ample encouragement to believers, but there are *five solemn warnings we must heed*:

1. There is the danger of neglect (Hebrews 2:1-4),
2. The danger of unbelief (Hebrews 3:7-4:13),
3. The danger of spiritual immaturity (Hebrews 5:11-6:20),
4. The danger of failing to endure (Hebrews 10:26-39), and
5. The inherent danger of refusing God (Hebrews 12:25-29).

And so we find in this crowning masterpiece a great wealth of doctrine, a refreshing spring of encouragement, and a source of sound, *practical warnings against slothfulness in our Christian walk.*

But there is still more...

*In Hebrews we find a magnificently rendered portrait of our Lord Jesus Christ—the Author and Finisher of our great salvation (Hebrews 12:2)*



## Hebrews

CONSCIENTIOUS consumers shop for value, the best products for the money. Wise parents desire only the best for their children, nourishing their growing bodies, minds, and spirits. Individuals with integrity seek the best investment of time, talents, and treasures. In every area, to settle for less would be wasteful, foolish, and irresponsible. Yet it is a natural pull to move toward what is convenient and comfortable. Judaism was not second-rate or easy. Divinely designed, it was the best religion, expressing true worship and devotion to God. The commandments, the rituals, and the prophets described God's promises and revealed the way to forgiveness and salvation. But Christ came, fulfilling the Law and the Prophets, conquering sin, shattering all barriers to God, freely providing eternal life.

This message was difficult for Jews to accept. Although they had sought the Messiah for centuries, they were entrenched in thinking and worshiping in traditional forms. Following Jesus seemed to repudiate their marvelous heritage and Scriptures. With caution and questions they listened to the gospel, but many rejected it and sought to eliminate this "heresy." Those who did accept Jesus as the Messiah often found themselves slipping back into familiar routines, trying to live a hybrid faith.

Hebrews is a masterful document written to Jews who were evaluating Jesus or struggling with this new faith. The message of Hebrews is that Jesus is better, Christianity is superior, Christ is supreme and completely sufficient for salvation.

Hebrews begins by emphasizing that the old (Judaism) and the new (Christianity) are both religions revealed by God ([1:1-3](#)). In the doctrinal section that follows ([1:4-10:18](#)), the writer shows how Jesus is superior to angels ([1:4-2:18](#)), superior to their leaders ([3:1-4:13](#)), and superior to their priests ([4:14-7:28](#)). Christianity surpasses Judaism because it has a better covenant ([8:1-13](#)), a better sanctuary ([9:1-10](#)), and a more sufficient sacrifice for sins ([9:11-10:18](#)).

Having established the superiority of Christianity, the writer moves on to the practical implications of following Christ. The readers are exhorted to hold on to their new faith, encourage each other, and look forward to Christ's return ([10:19-25](#)). They are warned about the consequences of rejecting Christ's sacrifice ([10:26-31](#)) and reminded of the rewards for faithfulness ([10:32-39](#)). Then the author explains how to live by faith, giving illustrations of the faithful men and women in Israel's history ([11:1-40](#)) and giving encouragement and exhortation for daily living ([12:1-17](#)). This section ends by comparing the old covenant with the new ([12:18-29](#)). The writer concludes with moral exhortations ([13:1-17](#)), a request for prayer ([13:18, 19](#)), and a benediction and greetings ([13:20-25](#)).

Whatever you are considering as the focus of life, Christ is better. He is the perfect revelation of God, the final and complete sacrifice for sin, the compassionate and understanding mediator, and the *only* way to eternal life. Read Hebrews and begin to see history and life from God's perspective. Then give yourself unreservedly and completely to Christ.

## Vital Statistics

### *Purpose:*

To present the sufficiency and superiority of Christ

### *Author:*

Paul, Luke, Barnabas, Apollos, Silas, Philip, Priscilla, and others have been suggested because the name of the author is not given in the biblical text itself. Whoever it was speaks of Timothy as "brother" ([13:23](#)).

### *Original Audience:*

Hebrew Christians (perhaps second-generation Christians, see [2:3](#)) who may have been considering a return to Judaism, perhaps because of immaturity, stemming from a lack of understanding of biblical truths

*Date Written:*

Probably before the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70 because the religious sacrifices and ceremonies are referred to in the book, but no mention is made of the Temple's destruction

*Setting:*

These Jewish Christians were probably undergoing fierce persecution, socially and physically, both from Jews and from Romans. Christ had not returned to establish his Kingdom, and the people needed to be reassured that Christianity was true and that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

*Key Verse:*

"The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven" ([1:3](#)).

*Key People:*

Old Testament men and women of faith ([chapter 11](#))

## **The Blueprint**

- A. THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST ([1:1-10:18](#))
1. Christ is greater than the angels
  2. Christ is greater than Moses
  3. Christ is greater than the Old Testament priesthood
  4. The new covenant is greater than the old

The superiority of Christ over everyone and everything is clearly demonstrated by the author. Christianity supersedes all other religions and can never be surpassed. Where can one find anything better than Christ? Living in Christ is having the best there is in life. All competing religions are deceptions or cheap imitations.

- B. THE SUPERIORITY OF FAITH ([10:19-13:25](#))
- Jews who had become Christians in the first century were tempted to fall back into Judaism because of uncertainty, the security of custom, and persecution. Today believers are also tempted to fall back into legalism, fulfilling minimum religious requirements rather than pressing on in genuine faith. We must strive to live by faith each day.

## MEGATHEMES

THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
<i>Christ Is Superior</i>	Hebrews reveals Jesus' true identity as God. Jesus is the ultimate authority. He is greater than any religion or any angel. He is superior to any Jewish leader (such as Abraham, Moses, or Joshua) and superior to any priest. He is the complete revelation of God.	Jesus alone can forgive our sin. He has secured our forgiveness and salvation by his death on the cross. We can find peace with God and real meaning for life by believing in Christ. We should not accept any alternative to or substitute for him.
<i>High Priest</i>	In the Old Testament, the high priest represented the Jews before God. Jesus Christ links us with God. There is no other way to reach God. Because Jesus Christ lived a sinless life, he is the perfect substitute to die for our sin. He is our perfect representative with God.	Jesus guarantees our access to God the Father. He intercedes for us so we can boldly come to the Father with our needs. When we are weak, we can come confidently to God for forgiveness and ask for his help.
<i>Sacrifice</i>	Christ's sacrifice was the ultimate fulfillment of all that the Old Testament sacrifices represented—God's forgiveness for sin. Because Christ is the perfect sacrifice for our sin, our sins are completely forgiven—past, present, and future.	Christ removed sin, which barred us from God's presence and fellowship. But we must accept his sacrifice for us. By believing in him, we are no longer guilty but cleansed and made whole. His sacrifice clears the way for us to have eternal life.
<i>Maturity</i>	Though we are saved from sin when we believe in Christ, we are given the task of going on and growing in our faith. Through our relationship with Christ, we can live blameless lives, be set aside for his special use, and develop maturity.	The process of maturing in our faith takes time. Daily commitment and service produce maturity. When we are mature in our faith, we are not easily swayed or shaken by temptations or worldly concerns.
<i>Faith</i>	Faith is confident trust in God's promises. God's greatest promise is that we can be saved through Jesus.	If we trust in Jesus Christ for our complete salvation, he will transform us completely. A life of obedience and complete trust is pleasing to God.
<i>Endurance</i>	Faith enables Christians to face trials. Genuine faith includes the commitment to stay true to God when we are under fire. Endurance builds character and leads to victory.	We can have victory in our trials if we don't give up or turn our back on Christ. Stay true to Christ and pray for endurance.

## Introduction To The Letter to The

# Hebrews

## Author, Audience, and Title

The author of Hebrews neither names himself nor clearly designates his audience. The traditional title “to the Hebrews” reflects the ancient assumption that the original recipients were Jewish Christians.

The author’s identity has been a matter of significant conjecture throughout church history. In antiquity, authorship was attributed to figures such as Barnabas or especially Paul. However, several of the most astute church fathers recognized considerable differences in style and method of argument between this book and Paul’s named writings. Scholars have suggested other possible authors, such as Clement, Luke, or Apollos. However, most today concede that this author remains anonymous. It seems that the judgment expressed by Origen (d. c. A.D. 254) remains correct: “Who actually wrote the epistle, only God knows” (cited in Eusebius, [Ecclesiastical History 6.25.14](#)).

The author clearly knew his recipients and longed to be reunited with them ([Heb. 13:19](#)). They had a mutual friend in Timothy ([13:23](#)), and probably this was the same Timothy who ministered alongside Paul. The author was presumably male, since he refers to himself using a masculine participle (see [11:32](#): “would fail me to tell”). Since “us” included the author in [2:3](#) (the salvation “attested to us by those who heard”; also [2:1](#)), it appears that he was not an eyewitness of Jesus. The author passed on the greetings of those “from Italy” ([13:24](#)). Scholars debate whether he was in Italy writing to the church elsewhere or was outside Italy (though accompanied by Italians) and writing back to an audience in Italy (possibly at Rome).

The audience’s social situation can be inferred from commands to “remember those who are in prison” and who are “mistreated” ([13:3](#)). Timothy himself had just been set free ([13:23](#)). Indeed, the author of Hebrews commended his audience for their former endurance of persecution, for their compassion on those in prison, and for having “joyfully accepted the plundering of your property” ([10:32-34](#)).

The author warned against “strange teachings” in the church ([13:9](#)), and these teachings may have been related to the use of ritual foods ([13:9-10](#)). Moreover, he repeatedly called his audience to persevere in the faith and cautioned them about the danger of leaving the Christian communion, as he sought to show the superiority of Christ to Mosaic sacrifices and rituals ([chs. 3-10](#)). Hence the early church was likely correct to assert that Jewish Christians (as well as Gentiles who had previously been drawn to the Jewish religion) were the intended audience for this book (see “our fathers,” [1:1](#)). Furthermore, such an audience would have well understood the book’s many citations and allusions to the OT (and would have shared in the writer’s frequent use of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT).

## Date

Hebrews was almost certainly written in the first century and probably before A.D. 70. Reasons for asserting a first-century date include the mention of Timothy ([13:23](#)), who was known to be active in the first century, and the influence of Hebrews (and its way of thinking) on [1 Clement](#) (written c. A.D. 96).

The crucial issue in dating the book concerns whether the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (A.D. 70) had already occurred. Hebrews speaks of the Jewish sacrificial system as if it were a still-present reality ([Heb. 7:27-28](#); [8:3-5](#); [9:7-8](#), [25](#); [10:1-3](#); [13:10-11](#)), which does not seem likely after the cessation of the Jerusalem temple sacrifices in A.D. 70. Admittedly, Hebrews focuses on the Mosaic tabernacle rather than the Solomonic (or the Herodian) temple. Nonetheless, if the writer was attempting to convince his readers of the inferiority of the Mosaic system (and possibly dissuade church members from returning to Jewish practices), an obvious argument would have been to mention the cessation of the temple sacrifices, if they were in fact no longer taking place.

## Theme

Christ is greater than any angel, priest, or old covenant institution; thus each reader, rather than leaving such a great salvation, is summoned to hold on by faith to the true rest found in Christ and to encourage others in the church to persevere.

## Purpose, Occasion, and Background

The genre of Hebrews is unusual. The book is without an introduction or other early indications that it is a letter. Yet the final verses do pass on greetings and blessings ([13:23-25](#)), and the author speaks of having “written to you” ([13:22](#)). However, the author also identifies his work as a “word of exhortation” ([13:22](#)). The careful rhetorical progression of the book, along with its frequent practical exhortations, has led many to consider it a single sermon. Perhaps Hebrews is best understood as a sermonic letter.

Hebrews frequently encourages the audience to endure and warns against leaving Christ ([2:1-4](#); [3:7-4:13](#); [5:11-6:12](#); [10:19-39](#); [12:1-29](#)). These warning passages are interspersed throughout the book (see [chart](#)) and have noticeable structural similarities (esp. in terms of exhortation and threatened consequence). Around these passages the argument of the book progresses carefully. Moreover, these specific exhortations themselves flow out of the surrounding material. Thus the book is unified in both structure and intent.

The warning passages exhort church participants to remain faithful. The more expository sections of the epistle show the superiority of Christ and his new covenant work to angels, Moses, the tabernacle priesthood, and the sacrificial system. The implication is that these are so inferior to Christ that it is futile to return to them (or to go anywhere else). Thus the book encourages the church to hold fast to its faith, because that faith is grounded in the most superior revelation.

The background of such exhortations must have been the audience's need to continue enduring through persecution and the trials of life (e.g., [ch. 12](#)). They appear to have grown less attentive to Christian instruction ([5:11-14](#)); and some apparently have ceased regular attendance at their meetings ([10:25](#)). Nonetheless, the author reminds them of their past faithfulness and communal love in the midst of persecution ([10:32-34](#)). He encourages their faithfulness by careful exposition of the OT in light of the revelation in Jesus Christ.

The soteriology (salvation teaching) of Hebrews is rooted in its Christology—the Son of God became the heavenly high priest, who offered himself as a sacrifice once for all. Christ obtained salvation for all who approach in faith ([6:1](#); [11:6](#); cf. [4:2](#)), and such faith perseveres until it receives the promised eternal reward ([6:12](#); [10:22](#), [38-39](#)).

## Key Themes

1. Jesus is fully God and fully man. [1:1-14](#); [2:5-18](#)
2. Jesus as Son of God reveals God the Father, is the agent of creation, and sustains all creation. [1:1-14](#)
3. Jesus serves as the eternal high priest, who as a man sympathizes with human weaknesses, and yet who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin. [1:3](#); [2:10-18](#); [4:15-16](#); [9:11-10:19](#)
4. Jesus is superior to angels, to Moses and the Mosaic covenant, and to the earthly tabernacle and its priesthood. [1:4-2:18](#); [3:1-6](#); [5:1-10](#); [7:1-10:18](#); [8:1-13](#)
5. All humanity faces eternal judgment for sin. [4:12-13](#); [9:27-28](#); [10:26-31](#)
6. Faith is necessary to please God and to participate in his eternal salvation promises. Faith requires conviction about the unseen realities of God and his promises. Such faith produces perseverance. [4:2-3](#); [6:1](#), [12](#); [10:22](#), [38-39](#); [11:1-40](#)
7. Perseverance is necessary in the Christian life, and thus church participants are warned against a lack of endurance. [2:1-4](#); [3:7-4:13](#); [5:11-6:12](#); [10:19-39](#); [12:1-29](#)
8. God's promises are trustworthy, including his promise of eternal salvation. [6:13-20](#)
9. With the advent of Jesus Christ, the last days have begun, though they await consummation at his return. [1:2](#); [2:5](#); [4:9-11](#); [9:9-28](#); [12:22-29](#)

## History of Salvation Summary

Christ has accomplished final salvation, has brought the final word of God, and has become the final priest and the one atoning sacrifice to which the OT pointed. (For an explanation of the

“History of Salvation,” see the [Overview of the Bible](#).

# Literary Features

As noted above (see [Purpose, Occasion, and Background](#)), the book of Hebrews has affinities with the genres of both the epistle and the sermon. The [first 12 chapters](#) conduct a sustained theological argument about the superiority of Christ over a number of rivals and about the need to persevere in following this vastly superior Messiah. While following many ancient customs of rhetorical argumentation, these chapters can remind the modern reader of an essay with a thesis, a series of subordinate generalizations, and supporting proof consisting of data and commentary on that data.

The book of Hebrews is one of the most stylistically polished books in the NT. The writer is a master of imagery and metaphor, allusions to the OT, comparison and analogy, contrast, and long, flowing sentences that build to a climax and often use parallel construction of clauses.

The rhetoric of the book is partly argumentative, as the author conducts a sustained theological exposition such as modern readers might expect in a debate or in a theology book. The persuasive strategy adheres to one of the classical ways of arguing a thesis, which is to repeat the main idea often and from a variety of angles. In addition to the rhetoric of argument and debate, readers will find in the book of Hebrews a persuasive rhetoric of exhortation in which the writer appeals to his readers not to abandon their faith.

The central motif of the book is the formula “better,” with the cluster of words “better,” “more,” and “greater” appearing a combined total of 25 times. The comparative motif, in which one thing is declared superior to another thing, is the main rhetorical strategy of the book. A common rhetorical form by which the comparison is conducted is analogy, with something in the OT being declared similar to the person and work of Christ. But the analogies are not between two equal things; rather, the author argues from the lesser to the greater.

## Outline

1. Jesus Is Superior to Angelic Beings ([1:1-2:18](#))
  1. The supremacy of God’s Son ([1:1-14](#))
    1. Introduction: summary of the Son’s person and work ([1:1-4](#))
    2. Evidence of his status as Son ([1:5-14](#))
  2. Warning against neglecting salvation ([2:1-4](#))
  3. The founder of salvation ([2:5-18](#))
2. Jesus Is Superior to the Mosaic Law ([3:1-10:18](#))
  1. Jesus is greater than Moses ([3:1-6](#))
  2. Warning: a rest for the people of God ([3:7-4:13](#))
    1. The failure of the exodus generation ([3:7-19](#))
    2. Entering God’s rest ([4:1-13](#))
  3. The high priesthood of Jesus ([4:14-10:18](#))
    1. Jesus the great high priest ([4:14-5:10](#))
    2. Pause in the argument: warning against apostasy ([5:11-6:12](#))

3. The certainty of God's promise ([6:13-20](#))
4. Return to main argument: the priestly order of Melchizedek ([7:1-10](#))
5. Jesus compared to Melchizedek ([7:11-28](#))
6. Jesus, high priest of a better covenant ([8:1-13](#))
7. The earthly holy place ([9:1-10](#))
8. Redemption through the blood of Christ ([9:11-28](#))
9. Christ's sacrifice once for all ([10:1-18](#))
3. Call to Faith and Endurance ([10:19-12:29](#))
  1. The full assurance of faith ([10:19-39](#))
    1. Exhortation to draw near ([10:19-25](#))
    2. Warnings against shrinking back ([10:26-39](#))
  2. By faith ([11:1-40](#))
  3. Endurance until the kingdom fully comes ([12:1-29](#))
    1. Jesus, founder and perfecter of faith ([12:1-2](#))
    2. Do not grow weary ([12:3-17](#))
    3. A kingdom that cannot be shaken ([12:18-29](#))
4. Concluding Exhortations and Remarks ([13:1-25](#))
  1. Sacrifices pleasing to God ([13:1-19](#))
  2. Benediction ([13:20-21](#))
  3. Final greetings ([13:22-25](#))

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## The Epistle to the Hebrews

### *AUTHOR*

The author of Hebrews was skilled in Greek and Hellenistic literary style, immersed in the Old Testament (in the Greek translation, the Septuagint), sensitive to the history of redemption culminating in Jesus, and pastorally concerned for the original readers, who knew him personally ([13:22, 23](#)) and whose background he knows ([10:32-34](#)). Like his readers, he came to faith not through direct contact with Jesus, but through the apostles' preaching ([2:3, 4](#)). In addition, he was acquainted with Timothy ([13:23](#)).

But the epistle does not tell us his name, leaving a tantalizing mystery. In the Eastern church by the time of Clement of Alexandria (c. a.d. 150-215) and Origen (a.d. 185-253) the epistle was attributed to Paul, although both of these theologians recognized the stylistic differences between Hebrews and the Pauline epistles. In the West, Tertullian (c. a.d. 155-220) proposed Barnabas, a Levite of the Jewish Dispersion who was noted for his encouragement of others ([Acts 4:36](#)). Other early suggestions were Luke and Clement of Rome (c. a.d. 95). From the fifth to the sixteenth centuries Paul's authorship was accepted in East and West. During the Reformation Luther proposed Apollos, a Jewish Christian from Alexandria who was skilled in speech and powerful in the Scriptures ([Acts 18:24](#)). Suggestions in the modern period have included Priscilla (but cf. [11:32](#), where the author refers to himself with a masculine gender participle), Epaphras ([Col. 1:7](#)), and Silas ([Acts 15:22, 32, 40; 1 Pet. 5:12](#)). While it is difficult to rule out many of these candidates, it is equally hard to make a convincing case for any one of them. From the standpoint of early tradition, Paul has the strongest claim, but as Calvin observed, Hebrews differs from Paul in style, teaching method, and in the author's inclusion of himself among the disciples of the apostles ([2:3](#))—a statement at odds with Paul's characteristic claim to have received his appointment and revelation of the gospel directly from Christ ([Gal. 1:1, 11, 12](#)).

If the author is not Paul (or someone such as Luke whose other writings we have), knowing the author's name would add little to our understanding of the epistle in any case. The epistle does have theological affinities with Paul. On the other hand, John's lofty doctrine of Christ as the divine "Word" is detectable. But these combined characteristics, along with the portrayal of Jesus' suffering as described in the first three (Synoptic) Gospels, are to be expected in view of the Holy Spirit's unifying authorship of all of Scripture. While the human author of this book remains unknown, the important thing is that this writing, like the Old Testament before it, is what "the Holy Spirit says" ([3:7](#)).

## DATE AND OCCASION

Hebrews offers a fair amount of information about the original recipients and their situation, while leaving questions of date and destination without certain answers. The original readers spoke Greek and used the Greek translation of the Old Testament. They could follow arguments drawn from the Old Testament and were interested in the Old Testament sanctuary, sacrificial system, and priesthood. They had not heard the gospel directly from Jesus, but from apostles ([2:3](#)), had faced previous persecution ([10:32-34](#)) and were facing present persecution, including expulsion from Jewish institutions ([13:12, 13](#)). They were in danger of falling away, perhaps fearing death ([2:14-18](#)), although their faith had not yet led to martyrdom ([12:4](#)). In addition, they may have been undergoing a transition in church leadership ([13:7, 17](#)), and were therefore concerned about security and permanence ([6:19; 11:10; 13:8, 14](#)). Finally, they receive greeting through the author "from Italy" ([13:24](#)).

Drawing these features together, we conclude that the recipients were Jewish Christians of the Dispersion (the scattering of Jews outside Palestine), probably in Italy. This would take [13:24](#) to be a greeting sent "home" by expatriates. The earliest evidence of acquaintance with the epistle is from Rome, in 1 Clement, a work dating from about a.d. 96. Apparently the temple was still standing and its sacrificial rituals were being performed ([10:2, 3, 11](#)). Perhaps the situation is that of the persecutions under Nero (c. a.d. 64). In that case, the suffering mentioned in [10:32-34](#) could have been caused by the edict of Claudius, which expelled Jews from Rome in a.d. 49 ([Acts 18:2](#)).

Subject to suffering and shame for their confession of Jesus, stripped of the familiar and visible institutions of organized Jewish religion, and confused by the hidden character of Jesus' glory (veiled in suffering when He was on earth and now hidden in heaven), the readers are tempted to turn away from the faith ([10:38, 39](#)), to fall into unbelief and so to give up their pilgrimage toward God's rest and God's city ([4:1, 2, 11; 11:10, 14-16; 13:14](#)).

## CHARACTERISTICS AND THEMES

Hebrews' high literary style and special focus on Christ's high priesthood set it apart from other New Testament books. Its unique contribution to the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ is the disclosure of Jesus' fulfillment of the sanctuary, sacrifices, and priesthood established in the law of Moses.

The author refers to his work as a "word of exhortation" ([13:22](#)). Since the same Greek expression in [Acts 13:15](#) refers to a synagogue speech, the term may identify this "epistle" as an expository sermon in written form. Hebrews is aptly described as a "word of exhortation," for exhortation or encouragement is the heart of the book's purpose ([3:13; 6:18; 10:25; 12:5](#)). The author repeatedly calls his readers to an active and courageous response ([4:11, 14, 16; 6:1; 10:19-25](#)).

The exhortation to persevere in the pilgrimage of faith is grounded in the author's proof that the Old Testament itself testified to the imperfection of the covenant at Sinai and its sacrificial system, thereby pointing ahead to a new High Priest—Jesus Christ. Jesus is better than the mediators, sanctuary, and sacrifices of the old order. He is worthy of "more glory" than Moses ([3:3](#)). The arguments from lesser to greater of [2:2, 3; 9:13, 14; 10:28, 29](#); and [12:25](#) ("if ... much less") underscore the greater grace and glory, and the greater accountability, which have now arrived in the new covenant mediated by Jesus. Unlike the earthly and external aspects of the Old Testament sanctuary, Jesus sanctifies us for the true worship of God, so that we draw near to heaven itself with clean consciences. He is the guarantee of this better covenant bond, for He links us inseparably with the God of grace.

## OUTLINE OF HEBREWS

- I. Christ Is Superior to the Angels (chs. 1; 2)
  - A. Prologue: God's Last and Best Word Is Spoken in His Son ([1:1-4](#))
  - B. Scripture Testifies to the Son's Greater Honor ([1:5-14](#))
  - C. Exhortation Not to Neglect the Salvation Revealed Through the Son ([2:1-4](#))
  - D. The Son Became Like His Brothers as Our High Priest ([2:5-18](#))
- II. Christ Is Superior to Moses ([3:1-4:13](#))
  - A. The Son Has Greater Honor Than the Servant ([3:1-6](#))
  - B. Exhortation Not to Imitate Those Who Disbelieved in the Wilderness ([3:7-4:13](#))
- III. Christ Is Superior to Aaron ([4:14-7:28](#))
  - A. Christ the Eternal High Priest ([4:14-5:11](#))
  - B. Exhortation to Perseverance and Spiritual Maturity ([5:12-6:12](#))
  - C. A Priest Forever by Divine Oath ([6:13-20](#))
  - D. A Priest Forever After the Order of Melchizedek (ch. 7)
- IV. The Superior Priestly Ministry of Christ ([8:1-10:18](#))
  - A. A Superior Covenant (ch. 8)
  - B. A Superior Tabernacle ([9:1-10](#))
  - C. A Superior Sacrifice That Cleanses the Conscience ([9:11-28](#))
  - D. Christ's Sacrifice Once for All ([10:1-18](#))
- V. Call to Persevere in Faith ([10:19-12:29](#))
  - A. A Superior Covenant Implies Greater Responsibility ([10:19-39](#))
  - B. Examples of the Life of Faith (ch. 11)
  - C. True Children of God ([12:1-17](#))
  - D. The Heavenly Jerusalem ([12:18-29](#))
- VI. Conclusion (ch. 13)
  - A. Final Exhortations ([13:1-19](#))
  - B. Benediction and Greetings ([13:20-25](#))

- The Reformation Study Bible.

## Hebrews

### Introduction

The epistle to the Hebrews is a tribute to the incomparable Son of God and an encouragement to the author's persecuted fellow believers. **The author feared that his Christian readers were wavering in their endurance. The writer had a twofold approach: (1) He exalted Jesus Christ,** who is addressed as both "God" and "the Son of Man," and is thus the only One who can

serve as mediator between God and man; and (2) he exhorted his fellow Christians, "Let us go on to maturity," and live "by faith."

*Representatives of the Greek city states had competed in the Olympic Games (Olympiakoi Agones) for nearly 850 years when the book of Hebrews was written. The writer of Hebrews had likely seen these kinds of competitions and drew on his readers' experiences of such events when he encouraged them to recall the large cloud of witnesses surrounding them as they ran. He urged them to "lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus" (12:1-2).*

## Circumstances of Writing

**Author:** The text of Hebrews does not identify its author. What we do know is that the author was a second-generation Christian, for he said he received the confirmed message of Christ from "those who heard" Jesus Himself (2:3). Because Paul claimed his gospel was revealed directly by the Lord (1Co 15:8; Gal 1:12), it is doubtful that he was the author of Hebrews. The author was familiar with Timothy, but he referred to him as "our brother" (13:23), rather than as "my true son in the faith," as Paul did (1Tim 1:2).

Scholars have also proposed the following persons as authors: Luke, Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Apollos, Timothy, Philip, Peter, Silas, Jude, and Aristion. Ultimately it does not matter that the identity of the author is now lost. We should be satisfied with the fact that early Christians received the letter as inspired and authoritative Scripture and that its value for Christian discipleship is unquestioned.

**Background:** The author of Hebrews knew his recipients well since he called them "brothers" (3:12; 7:5; 10:19; 13:22) and "dear friends" (6:9). Like the writer, they were converts who had heard the gospel through the earliest followers of Christ (2:3). Scholars have speculated that those to whom the book was written were a breakaway group such as a house church that had separated from the main church. Another theory holds that the recipients were former Jewish priests who had converted to Christianity, and that they were considering a return to Judaism (at least in conformity to certain practices) in order to avoid persecution from fellow Jews. Another theory holds that the group was not necessarily Jewish since Gentile Christians also revered the OT as Scripture.

Regarding when the book was written, it is clear that the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) had not yet occurred. The destruction of the temple would have been mentioned if it had already occurred, for it would have strengthened the letter's argument about Christ's sacrifice spelling the end of

the temple sacrificial system. The public persecution mentioned in [10:32-34](#) implies one of two possibilities for dating the book. We know that the Roman emperors Nero and Domitian in (A.D. 64-68 and 81-82 respectively) persecuted Christians. Most likely Hebrews was written during the persecution under Nero, perhaps just before the destruction of the temple.

## Message and Purpose

The author of Hebrews wanted to exalt Jesus Christ. A verbal indication of this desire is the consistent and repetitive usage of the Greek word *kreitton*, which means "more excellent," "superior," or "better." This word is the common thread that binds together the complex and subtle theological argumentation of the book. In comparison to everything else in the divine plan for creation and redemption, Jesus Christ is superior. The author described the superiority of the new covenant to the old covenant because he wanted his readers to remember that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the law and God's promises in the OT. In this light, readers should be careful about "recrucifying the Son of God and holding Him up to contempt" ([6:6](#)). The author wanted to move these believers from their arrested state of development into a pattern of growth in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

## Contribution to the Bible

No other book in the NT ties together OT history and practices with the life of Jesus Christ as thoroughly as the book of Hebrews. Just as Jesus Christ taught that the OT was fulfilled in Himself ([Mt 5:17-18](#); [Lk 24:27](#)), so the author of Hebrews taught that the old covenant was brought to completion in the new covenant ([7:20-8:13](#)). Hebrews also shows that because the old covenant has been fulfilled in the new covenant, the new covenant is actually "better" ([7:22](#)). The new covenant was made superior by the ministry of Jesus Christ.

## Structure

In concluding the book of Hebrews, the author wrote, "Brothers, I urge you to receive this message of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly" ([13:22](#)). If the literary style of Hebrews indicates anything, it is that it is a written theological sermon. It is not so much a letter—although it certainly ends like one—because it has no opening subscription, as was the norm with ancient letters. Hebrews instead begins with an introductory essay about the superiority of Jesus Christ ([1:1-4](#)). However, its capacity to encounter the reader's soul indicates it is more than just a literary essay. Indeed, it has a definite sermonic character since it expounds the Scriptures at length in order to challenge the reader to faith and faithfulness. The sustained development of a complex, holistic theology of covenant indicates that Hebrews is a written theological sermon that discloses the broad sweep of God's grand redemptive plan for humanity.

## Outline

- I. The Superiority of the Son of God ([1:1-2:18](#))
  - A. The exaltation of Jesus Christ ([1:1-4](#))
  - B. The divine nature of the Son ([1:5-14](#))

- C. The human nature of the Son ([2:1-18](#))
- II. The Superiority of the Son's Faithfulness ([3:1-4:16](#))
  - A. The faithfulness of the Son ([3:1-6](#))
  - B. A warning ([3:7-19](#))
  - C. The way forward ([4:1-16](#))
- III. The Superiority of the Son's Work ([5:1-6:20](#))
  - A. The work of the Son ([5:1-10](#))
  - B. The call to maturity ([5:11-6:3](#))
  - C. The way forward ([6:4-20](#))
- IV. The Superiority of the Son's Priesthood ([7:1-10:39](#))
  - A. The superiority of His order ([7:1-19](#))
  - B. The superiority of His covenant ([7:20-8:13](#))
  - C. The superiority of His ministry ([9:1-28](#))
  - D. The superiority of His sacrifice ([10:1-18](#))
  - E. The way forward ([10:19-39](#))
- V. The Superiority of the Christian Faith ([11:1-12:2](#))
  - A. The hall of heroes ([11:1-40](#))
  - B. The way forward ([12:1-2](#))
- VI. The Superiority of the Father's Way ([12:3-29](#))
  - A. The work of God ([12:3-13](#))
  - B. The way forward ([12:14-29](#))
- VII. The Superiority of the Christian Life in the Church ([13:1-25](#))
  - A. The way forward ([13:1-19](#))
  - B. A blessing from the author ([13:20-25](#))

- HCSB Study Bible.

## Much/Great

Usage Number: 8

Strong's Number: [<G5118>](#)

Original Word: **ΤΟΣΟῦΤΟΣ**, *tosoutos*

**Usage Notes:** "so great, so many, so much," of quantity, size, etc., is rendered "so great," in [Matt. 8:10](#); [Luke 7:9](#), of faith; [Matt. 15:33](#), of a multitude; [Heb. 12:1](#), of a cloud of witnesses; [Rev. 18:17](#), of riches. See [LARGE](#), [LONG](#), [MANY](#), [MUCH](#).

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words.

## Better

Usage Number: 1

Strong's Number: [<G2908>](#)

Original Word: **κρείσσον**, *kreisson*

**Usage Notes:** from *kratos*, "strong" (which denotes power in activity and effect), serves as the comparative degree of *agathos*, "good" (good or fair, intrinsically). *Kreisson* is especially characteristic of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it is used 12 times; it indicates what is (a) advantageous or useful, [1 Cor. 7:9](#), [38](#); [1 Cor. 11:17](#); [Heb. 11:40](#); [Heb. 12:24](#); [2 Pet. 2:21](#); [Phil. 1:23](#), where it is coupled with *mallon*, "more," and *pollo*, "much, by far," "very far better" (RV); (b) excellent, [Heb. 1:4](#); [Heb. 6:9](#); [Heb. 7:7](#), [19](#), [22](#); [Heb. 8:6](#); [Heb. 9:23](#); [Heb. 10:34](#); [Heb. 11:16](#), [35](#).

## Beseech

Usage Number: 1

Strong's Number: [<G3870>](#)

Original Word: **παρακαλέω**, *parakaleō*

**Usage Notes:** the most frequent word with this meaning, lit. denotes "to call to one's side," hence, "to call to one's aid." It is used for every kind of calling to a person which is meant to produce a particular effect, hence, with various meanings, such as "comfort, exhort, desire, call for," in addition to its significance "to beseech," which has a stronger force than *aiteō* (see [ASK](#)). See, e.g., the RV "besought" in [Mark 5:18](#); [Acts 8:31](#); [Acts 19:31](#); [1 Cor. 16:12](#). See [CALL](#), No. 6, Note (2), [COMFORT](#), [DESIRE](#), [EXHORT](#), [INTREAT](#), [PRAY](#).

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words.

## Forbearance

**Usage Number:** A-1

**Part Of Speech:** Verb

**Strong's Number:** [<G430>](#)

**Original Word:** [ἀνέχω](#), *anechō*

**Usage Notes:** "to hold up" (*ana*, "up," *echō*, "to have or hold"), is used in the Middle Voice in the NT, signifying "to bear with, endure;" it is rendered "forbearing (one another)" in [Eph. 4:2](#); [Col. 3:13](#). See [BEAR](#). Cp. B, No. 1, below.

**Usage Number:** B-1

**Part Of Speech:** Noun

**Strong's Number:** [<G463>](#)

**Original Word:** [ἀνοχή](#), *anochē*

**Usage Notes:** "a holding back" (akin to A, No. 1), denotes "forbearance," a delay of punishment, [Rom. 2:4](#); [Rom. 3:25](#), in both places of God's "forbearance" with men; in the latter passage His "forbearance" is the ground, not of His forgiveness, but of His pretermission of sins, His withholding punishment. In [Rom. 2:4](#) it represents a suspense of wrath which must eventually be exercised unless the sinner accepts God's conditions; in [Rom. 3:25](#) it is connected with the passing over of sins in times past, previous to the atoning work of Christ.

Note: Cp. the noun *epieikeia*, [Acts 24:4](#), "clemency;" [2 Cor. 10:1](#), "gentleness."

Synonymous with this are *makrothymia*, "longsuffering," and *hypomonē*, "patience" (see [Col. 1:11](#)). *Anochē* and *makrothymia* are used together in [Rom. 2:4](#). See also [Eph. 4:2](#) (where A, No. 1, is used in this combination). Trench (Syn.) and Abbott-Smith (Lex.) state that *huponone* expresses patience with regard to adverse things, *makrothymia* patience with regard to antagonistic persons. It must be observed, however, that in [Heb. 6:15](#) the verb *makrothymeō* is used of Abraham's patience under the pressure of trying circumstances (cp. also [Jas. 5:7, 8](#)). *Makrothymia* and *hypomonē* are often found together, e.g., [2 Cor. 6:4, 6](#); [2 Tim. 3:10](#).

"Longsuffering is that quality of self-restraint in the face of provocation which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish; it is the opposite of anger and is associated with mercy, and is used of God, [Exod. 34:6](#), Sept., [Rom. 2:4](#); [1 Pet. 3:20](#). Patience is the quality that does not surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial; it is the opposite of despondency and is associated with hope, in [1 Thess. 1:3](#); it is not used of God." \* [\* From Notes on Thessalonians, by Hogg and Vine, pp. 183,184.]

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words.

## **Comforter**

**Usage Number:** A-1

**Part Of Speech:** Noun

**Strong's Number:** [<G3874>](#)

**Original Word:** [παράκλησις](#), *paraklēsis*

**Usage Notes:** means "a calling to one's side" (*para*, "beside," *kaleō*, "to call"); hence, either "an exhortation, or consolation, comfort," e.g., [Luke 2:25](#) (here "looking for the consolation of Israel" is equivalent to waiting for the coming of the Messiah); [Luke 6:24](#); [Acts 9:31](#); [Rom. 15:4, 5](#); [1 Cor. 14:3](#), "exhortation;" [2 Cor. 1:3-7](#); [2 Cor. 7:4, 7, 13](#); [2 Thess. 2:16](#); [Philem. 1:7](#). In [2 Thess. 2:16](#) it combines encouragement with alleviation of grief. The RV changes "consolation" into "comfort," except in [Luke 2:25](#); [Luke 6:24](#); [Acts 15:31](#); in [Heb. 6:18](#), "encouragement;" in [Acts 4:36](#), "exhortation." RV (AV, consolation"). See [CONSOLATION](#), [ENCOURAGEMENT](#), [EXHORTATION](#), [INTREATY](#).

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words.

“Let us” = 13X in Hebrews (8X in ch.11-13)

Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words.

# ***Vitamins for Victory***

(Inspired by Dr. David Slamp's "Spiritual Growth Survey")

13. **CONSISTENT BIBLICAL WORSHIP** Hebrews  
10:24-24

- a. Consistent contributing of holistic praise & worship within your local church
- b. Consistent, personal, passionate-worship expressed vertically & horizontally
- c. Consistent BE-ing from the inside out; walking your worship day in & day out

14. **TRANSFORMATIVE BIBLE STUDY** 2 Timothy  
3:16-17

- a. Understanding the Bible's Source & structure, purpose & promise
- b. Learning how to read the Bible for impact & faith-strengthening
- c. Growing in your understanding of the Bible's context, content & commands
- d. Reading & meditating more & more in/on the Bible's micro & macro truths
- e. Becoming a Bible-studying disciple... who disciples others in Bible-studying

15. **SPIRIT-LEAD INTERNAL-DISCIPLESHIP**  
Ephesians 5:15

- a. Maturing in Prayer & Grace through faith-filled obedience
- b. Maturing in Purity & Repentance through faith-filled obedience
- c. Maturing in Power & Love through faith-filled obedience
- d. Maturing in Proclaiming & Ambassadorship through faith-filled obedience
- e. Maturing in Purging & Cross-carrying through faith-filled obedience
- f. Maturing in Passion & Discernment through faith-filled obedience
- g. Maturing in Patience & Forgiveness through faith-filled obedience
- h. Maturing in Perseverance & Spiritual Warfare through faith-filled obedience
- i. Maturing in Passion & Discipleship through faith-filled obedience
- j. Maturing in Peace & Joy through faith-filled obedience

16. **BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP**  
Matthew 6:33

- a. First & foremost, your time is faithfully surrendered to the Lord's calling
- b. First & foremost, your talent is faithfully surrendered to the Lord's calling
- c. First & foremost, your treasure is faithfully surrendered to the Lord's calling
- d. First & foremost, your LIFE is faithfully surrendered to the Lord's calling

17. **PERSONAL MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT**  
Ephesians 2:10

- a. You are learning, loving & living who & how the Lord has called you to BE
- b. You are accepting the privilege & responsibility for your personal ministry
- c. You are investing yourself deeply into the calling/mission God has given you

18. **MISSION-COMMITTED LIVING/LIFESTYLE**  
Acts 1:8

- a. You personally submit & commit to ALL God's Word, God's will, & God's ways
- b. You personally submit & commit to the two Great Commandments
- c. You personally submit & commit to Christ's Great Commission for Christians

- d. You personally submit & commit to contributing locally, regionally & globally
- e. You personally submit & commit to perpetually submitting & committing...

19. **BE-ING THE CHURCH** (*EKKLESSIA in KOINONIA*) Acts

2:41-47

- a. BE-ing the biblical Church calls for both believing & behaving biblically...
- b. BE-ing ekklessia means “BE-ing the Church” – the miraculous, family of God
- c. BE-ing in koinonia means “BE-ing supernaturally unified” in & for Christ
- d. BE-ing ekklessia in koinonia is your greatest blessing, mission, & ministry
- e. BE-ing ekklessia in koinonia is summarized in: “together/homothoomadon”

20. **ACTIVE PASSIONATE WITNESSING** Matthew

28:18-20

- a. You pray for opportunities to share the gospel with a diversity of people
- b. You empathetically refuse to see or treat people like inferiors or “projects”
- c. You look for & maximize your potential possibilities to go fishing for men
- d. You intentionally improve your capabilities to share the gospel with others
- e. You invest in the starting & building of God-honoring, missional relationships

21. **HOLISTIC CHRIST-LIKE ATTITUDES**

Philippians 1:27

- a. You aim to live in the power & promises of God’s Word
- b. You aim to align your attitudes & actions with God’s will
- c. You aim to think thru & process every circumstance & challenge God’s way

22. **LIVING DISTINCT FROM THE WORLD** James 4:4

- a. You know the “world” is where Satan & the flesh fight against God’s ways
- b. You know that God’s holy, biblical-standards & definitions are yours too now
- c. You know that God wants you to live as a contrasting witness in this world
- d. You know that Christ is to be seen in & at the core of your cultural contrast
- e. You know that living distinct from the world will come at a very real cost

23. **JOYFULLY SERVING THE WORLD** Mark 10:45

- a. Your goal in Christ-like service is the glory of God & the advance of His gospel
- b. Your epitomizing of Christ-likeness is in your loving, joyful, selfless-service
- c. Your methods of service will be biblically-affirmed in their aim & application

24. **MISSIONAL & RELATIONAL-DISCIPLESHIP** John 20:21

- a. Your mission is a personal, life-long journey to mature in Christ-likeness
- b. Your mission is to bring God glory by finding & growing more glorifiers

- c. Your mission is to invest in relationships that inform, inspect & inspire!
- d. Your mission shares God's truth in love locally, regionally, & globally
- e. Your mission is to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples
- f. Your mission is lived out in grace-based, loving, life-on-life relationships
- g. Your mission is to make disciplined-warriors while winning spiritual warfare

## The Town That Banned Death

**Publication Information:** "DEAD COLD Inside remote icy town where you're NOT ALLOWED TO DIE," By Susannah Keogh, The Irish Sun, March 10, 2018

**Publication Source:** [Click here to view source](#)

**Contributed By:** Illustration Exchange

**Author:** Illustration Exchange

### ILLUSTRATION

Susannah Keogh, with the Irish Sun, reports:

Longyearbyen, [Norway], a tranquil town in the middle of nowhere, is so remote that residents are not allowed to die there.

Dying has been banned on the island since 1950, when it was discovered that bodies in the local cemetery were not decomposing because of the chilly temperatures.

The island's climate is so arctic that in the 2000's, scientists ... tested corpses buried there who succumbed to the 1917 influenza virus – and to their amazement, retrieved live samples of the virus.

Residents had been living among the deadly virus for decades, without even realizing it.

The graveyard no longer takes any new inhabitants because of fears disease will spread throughout the island, meaning that even those who have lived their whole life on the island, cannot be buried there.

Instead, terminally ill residents have to be shipped to the mainland to prepare for death.

### APPLICATION

This little Norwegian town had a big problem, but it wasn't really with death. It was with the fact that death was not allowed to finish its job, to complete the process of mortification.

The same is true with us. Our biggest problem isn't with death but with everything that falls just short of death. If we are to overcome sin, we must die completely to sin. Anything that falls short of that, allows sin to live on. Of course, dying to selfish impulses provides momentary relief, but real victory only comes through the grave.

“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:54).

BE Holy & Hold On!

**You don't hold on so that you can be Holy... No! You are Holy so that you CAN hold on! – JDP**

- Definition: Being Holy & Holding On means holding on to Jesus, our joy, & our joyous journey with Jesus. But instead, we hold on to our “jobs,” our “jewels, and our JUNK!

- When it comes to your job... I want you to really REALLY think about which one is more important to your future (AND your family's future)... your JOB... or Jesus? (And before some of you get your scoffing, toxic tongues twisted & ready to spew... mine is NOT an either/or question of “Jesus OR your job.” No. Mine is a Lordship question that brings into light the heart's truest priorities, as attested to & evidenced by your life's (vs. your lip's) testimony.

Hebrews is self-defined as “a short word of exhortation” (13:22)

**You don't “balance” grace & obedience, you exhort BOTH and bask in them simultaneously as a single, indivisible blessing. - JDP**

**The church in Corinth is a mirror image of the churches**

**in OUR country... our counties... our cities... our communities! - JDP**

The contemporary church in our country & culture is looking & living like our contemporary culture :-{

I will preach Hebrews in the same way Hebrews was given to the Hebrews: (one focus = Christ; one purpose = exhort the Jewish Christian church; Message = BE Holy & Hold On!

1. To saved Hebrews
2. To lost but religious Hebrews
3. To overtly lost Hebrews

**\*\*\* Preaching the cross... Preaching Christ crucified... is NOT just preaching the historicity of Christ's crucifixion, and it's not just telling people of the gospel's "potential promises." No. Instead, preaching the cross & crucifixion of Christ is to preach, in FULL context, the TRUTH-in-Love that addresses humanity's-reality & each individual's NEED for THE miraculous Gift of our Messiah, as well as His missional mercy & grace, which is designed to transform us into disciples who make disciples who make disciples... locally, regionally, and globally - ALL by God's grace & all for God's glory. Amen and AMEN! - JDP**

**Leviticus blew the doors of Hebrews wide open so that we can get a glimpse into glory!**

\*\*\* We MUST acknowledge & remember that there are 3 different groups being addressed & referenced within the context of Hebrews \*\*\*

Biblical peace is not about comfort, but about a foundation.

Better or blended???

Hebrews 1:4 = “BE-ing Much Superior & More Excellent”

You better believe it!

- ~ He is holy - Holy! - HOLY!!!
- ~ Psalm 30:4

You better become it!

- ~ Leviticus 19:2 & 1 Peter 1:14-16
- ~ Ephesians 2:8-10 & 4:1-3
- ~ Fruit of the Spirit & Beatitudes

You better BE ready & stay focused!

- ~ 1 Peter 5:8; Matthew 7:15 & Acts 20:29
- ~ Matthew 10:16
- ~ Ephesians 6:10ff

“HOLD ON! to the treasure that you’ve found!

“HOLD ON! to the Love of your life!”

“HOLD ON! to the Giver of life!”

“HOLD ON! to the Sustainer of life!”

“HOLD ON! to the Truth of life that set you free!

**You can GO to church with churchians or you can BE the Church with Christians!**

**Fellowship defines your worship... OR  
Your worship defines your fellowship???**

CONTEXT:

A. **2018 = the year of REVERENCE!**

B. Re-introduce our sermon series "FLOW"

We started with 3 weeks in Hebrews 1:1-3

~ Read Hebrews 1:1-3

~ Connect to decision to go to Leviticus

We went to Leviticus to help learn Hebrews

We came back to Hebrews today...

We will finish Hebrews & head for Amos...

C. Last week we closed out Leviticus

"BE holy, for I, the Lord your God am holy"

Holiness = Christ-like love-child of:

~ God's grace

~ Our faithful obedience

**Holiness is God in action & grace in obedience!**

Leviticus ultimately preps for Jesus/cross

~ Sacrificial Atonement "system"

~ Established the necessity of holiness

~ Establishes the seriousness of holiness

- ~ Establishes the gracious gift of holiness
  - \* Recovery
  - \* Redemption
  - \* Refinement
  - \* Restoration
  - \* RELATIONSHIP

Contrast holy, holy, holy w/ loophole looking  
Apply holiness to every facet of life....

TRANSITION:

A. See the supernatural connection of Lev & Heb

Show Christ in each & how they dovetail

Show the implied application of both:

- ~ Be holy in, through, & for the LORD
- ~ Our Restoration & holiness is His gift
- ~ Hold on to God's word, will, & ways!

B. See overview of Hebrews (The Bible Project)

C. See connection of A & B & "Hold On" thru 1:4

See Jesus is the better revelation...

See the Bible Project's 2 overarching goals:

- ~ See Jesus as superior to all other options
- ~ See 5X warnings to "Hold On"

Jesus is the better:

- Revelation
- Messenger

- Moses/Leader
- Promise
- Priest
- Mediator
- Coming-King
- Sacrifice
- Covenant

D. Hebrews' application =

Inform.... We need to hold on.

Inspect... Whether or not we are holding on

Inspire... We are to hold on, no matter what!

E. OUTLINE of Hebrews:

1. INFORM: Introduction - 1:1-3

2. INSPECT:

a. Superior to Angels & Torah - ch.1&2

b. Superior to Moses & P-Land - ch.3&4

c. Superior to Israel's Priests - ch.5-7

d. Superior to Sacrifices & Covenants - 8-10

3. INSPIRE: Challenge to follow Jesus - ch11-13

F. Sermon Series: "HOLD ON!"

See Philippians 2:12-13 (see Mac notes!)

Do you want ear-tickling or heart-building sermons?

What kind of Church do you want?

What kind of Christian do you want to BE?

It's like someone who enlists in the military because they like the prestige & privileges of living their life in the uniform of a soldier... No doubt, when they put on the uniform, they get some personal perks... BUT... as strange as it might sound, or, as hard as it may be to believe, many who love to wear the uniform have no interest, no INTENT, of uniting with the real soldiers --- those who are LIVING as soldiers UNDER their uniforms... vs merely looking like soldiers, BASED on their uniforms. There's a reason why the highly esteemed military medal is called the Purple-HEART vs Purple-shirt. - JDP

In response to Christ's call to sell everything and buy that field... & take hold of Him, who IS the treasure, too many in churches today say: "I know what I'll do... I buy two fields, two plots of land... and I'll dig for treasure on the one (like a modern day, adventurous treasure-hunter), and I'll build my house & life on the other... and then I'll live my life, trying to balance my time, going back & forth between the two properties....., The problem is, those properties, those plots of spiritual land, are NEVER connected... they're never as close together as Satan & his minions (who are like lying,

spiritual real estate agents in this analogy) promises you they are... No. In reality, the property with the treasure from heaven, and the plot that provides the American dream, are far, far apart.... And the road that connects them is paradoxically WIDE when going one way, and NARROW when heading in the opposite direction. - JDP  
- When it comes to your “treasure” Christian, I have one question for you. What is God’s ROI for His invested treasure in you?

“Christians can-BE, because Christ came & still IS.” - JDP

*To Be Light in a Dark World*

### **Philippians 2:12-13 (ESV)**

- <sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,  
<sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

**2:12 obeyed.** Their faithful response to the divine commands Paul had taught them (cf. [Rom. 1:5](#); [15:18](#); [2 Cor. 10:5, 6](#)). ***work out your own salvation.*** The Greek verb rendered “work out” means “to continually work to bring something to fulfillment or completion.” It cannot refer to salvation by works (cf. [Rom. 3:21-24](#); [Eph. 2:8, 9](#)), but it does refer to the believer’s responsibility for active pursuit of obedience in the process of sanctification (*see notes on [3:13, 14](#); [Rom. 6:19](#)*; cf. [1 Cor. 9:24-27](#); [15:58](#); [2 Cor. 7:1](#); [Gal. 6:7-9](#); [Eph. 4:1](#); [Col. 3:1-17](#); [Heb. 6:10](#),

[11](#); [12:1, 2](#); [2 Pet. 1:5-11](#)). *fear and trembling*. The attitude with which Christians are to pursue their sanctification. It involves a healthy fear of offending God and a righteous awe and respect for Him (cf. [Prov. 1:7](#); [9:10](#); [Isa. 66:1, 2](#)).

**[2:13](#)** *God who works in you*. Although the believer is responsible to work ([v. 12](#)), the Lord actually produces the good works and spiritual fruit in the lives of believers ([John 15:5](#); [1 Cor. 12:6](#)). This is accomplished because He works through us by His indwelling Spirit ([Acts 1:8](#); [1 Cor. 3:16, 17](#); [6:19, 20](#); cf. [Gal. 3:3](#)). *to will and to do*. God energizes both the believer's desires and his actions. The Greek word for *will* indicates that He is not focusing on mere desires or whimsical emotions but on the studied intent to fulfill a planned purpose. God's power makes His church willing to live godly lives (cf. [Ps. 110:3](#)). *good pleasure*. God wants Christians to do what satisfies Him. Cf. [Ephesians 1:5, 9](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:11](#).

The MacArthur Bible Commentary.