

Bible Survey, part 12
The New Testament – Hebrews
“The Superior Blood of Christ”

Enhanced CD contains:

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- **Sermon Notes** – content of the PowerPoint slides in Word document

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Four things people disagree about:

- #1 – **WHO** the recipients were
- #2 – **WHEN** it was written
- #3 – **WHO** wrote it
- #4 – **WHY** he wrote it

Question #1

WHO were the recipients of the Letter to the Hebrews?

It is obvious from both the title and the subject matter of the letter – that the recipients were Jewish people.

The recipients were not just **ANY** Jewish people, but Jewish believers!

- Hebrews 3:12 – “brethren”
- Hebrews 6:9 – “beloved”
- Hebrews 3:1 – “partakers of the heavenly calling”

Recipients of the Letter to the Hebrews = Jewish believers most likely living in and around Jerusalem.

Question #2

WHEN was the Letter to the Hebrews written?

It was certainly written **before A.D. 70** –

- Because Jerusalem and its Temple were destroyed in A.D. 70
- Yet the writer speaks of the Temple and its rituals in the “present tense”
- Indicating that these rituals were still going on when he wrote his letter

On the other end – Hebrews 13:23 mentions “Timothy,” who did not become a well-known person in the early church until after A.D. 55.

Date of the Letter to the Hebrews = c. A.D. 55-70.

Question #3 – WHO wrote the Letter to the Hebrews?

Reason #1 – Ancient tradition

King James Version: “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews”

This superscription – attributing this letter to the Apostle Paul – goes back to the earliest days of the New Testament manuscript tradition.

These superscriptions are not part of the inspired text – but they reflect old and well-established church tradition that should be heard.

In Eastern Christianity (Greek, Syrian, Russian, Armenian) – the Pauline authorship of Hebrews has never been questioned.

Reason #2 – Writer was (or recently had been) in jail

“For you had compassion on me in my chains.” Hebrews 10:34

Paul was in jail three times:

- **Two years** in Israel (A.D. 58-59)
- **Two years** in Rome (A.D. 61-62)
- **One year** in Rome (A.D. 66)

As far as we know – no other early church leader was in jail like this between A.D. 55-70.

Reason #3 – Paul’s proximity to Timothy during the years A.D. 55-70

“Take note that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom, if he comes shortly, I hope to see you also.” Hebrews 13:23

We know that Paul and Timothy were almost inseparable between A.D. 55-66 (when Paul was martyred), so the mention of Timothy as being present with the writer of Hebrews fits well with Paul’s authorship.

Reason #4 – The Letter to the Hebrews is filled with many of Paul’s common themes

- Hebrews 1 and Colossians 1 & 2
- Hebrews 2 and Philippians 2
- Hebrews 8 and 2 Corinthians 3
- Hebrews 11 and Romans 4

Unless someone plagiarized Paul on a wholesale level – then Paul wrote Hebrews just like he wrote these other books!

Reason #5 – The phenomenal grasp the writer of Hebrews had on the Old Testament, and the operation of the Temple, and Jewish religious rituals

Hebrews has over **86 direct references** to over **100 Old Testament passages** – and the theological arguments that the writer uses are masterful.

Only a **brilliant mind** – with a **superlative knowledge of Judaism and the Old Testament** – could have written the Book of Hebrews!

“I am a Jew . . . brought up in Jerusalem, and strictly educated under Gamaliel, according to all the laws of our fathers . . .” Acts 22:3

Rabbi Gamaliel II = the greatest rabbinic scholar of his day.

To be educated under him was equivalent to doing “post-doctoral” studies in Judaism.

This is the most compelling reason why I believe Paul wrote the Book of Hebrews: because there is not a single believer mentioned in the New Testament who had the theological training – and the grasp of Judaism and the Temple ritual and the Old Testament needed to write this book – except Paul!

Question #4 – WHY did Paul write the Letter to the Hebrews?

Hebrews 5:13 – “babes”

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, . . . Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.” Hebrews 4:14

“Let us hold fast to our confession without wavering . . .” Hebrews 10:23

Paul wrote them to remind them of the **superiority of Jesus . . .** and His **High Priestly work . . .** and **His plan of salvation . . .** as opposed to Old Testament Judaism!

- **Recipients** = Jewish believers
- **Date** = c. A.D. 55-70
- **Author** = Apostle Paul
- **Subject matter** = the **superiority** of Jesus versus Judaism (or any other religious system)

Way #1 – In Jesus, we have a **SUPERIOR covenant with God**

“... He [Jesus] is the mediator of a new covenant...” Hebrews 9:15

“... ‘For the days are coming, says the LORD, ‘when I will make a new covenant with Israel...’” Hebrews 8:8

“Now, if the **first covenant** [Mosaic covenant/Mt. Sinai/Jews following with all their Temple sacrifices, rituals] had been sufficient, there would have been no reason for a second one.” Hebrews 8:7

INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT

“I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts...” Hebrews 8:10b

MEMBERS OF GOD’S FAMILY

“And I will be their God and they shall be **My people**...” Hebrews 8:10c

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD HIMSELF

“And they shall not teach everyone his fellow man, saying, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know Me, from the least to the greatest.” Hebrews 8:11

“Jesus is the mediator of a **superior covenant** [than the Mosaic] that has been established on **superior promises**.” Hebrews 8:6

Way #2 – In Jesus, we have a SUPERIOR High Priest

[In Judaism] “The priests are many in number, because they are prevented by death from continuing in office.” Hebrews 7:23

“But Jesus holds His priesthood **permanently**, because **He lives forever**... and is seated at God’s right hand.” Hebrews 7:24, 8:1

“Consequently **He is able to save to the uttermost** those who come to God by Him, since He forever lives to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25

A High Priest (1) seated at God’s right hand; (2) who lives forever; and (3) saves sinners to the **uttermost** = a **SUPERIOR** High Priest!

Way #3 – In Jesus, we have SUPERIOR forgiveness of our sins

“... And every [Jewish] priest stands daily, and offers the same sacrifices again and again, which can **NEVER take away** sins.” Hebrews 10:11

“But Jesus, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God . . . For by one sacrifice, He **PERFECTED FOREVER** those who come to God by Him.” Hebrews 10:12, 14

“For I will be merciful to their iniquities and their sins I will remember **NO MORE.**” Hebrews 8:12

“Now, where there is forgiveness like **THIS** [total/full/forever/amnesia forgiveness] no further offerings for sin are needed.” Hebrews 10:18

Forgiveness for sin that’s permanent and perfect and forever = **SUPERIOR forgiveness!**

Paul says to these Jewish believers: “**Why in the world** would you want to leave Jesus and go back to Judaism?”

- **In Jesus** – we have a **superior covenant with God**
- **In Jesus** – we have a **superior High Priest**
- **In Jesus** – we have a **superior forgiveness for sin**

The reason Jesus can give us all these superior things = because Jesus’ blood is **SUPERIOR** blood!

“ . . . without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.” Hebrews 9:22b

“The Law can never, by the same sacrifices, which were offered up continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near this way.” Hebrews 10:1b

“For it is impossible for the blood of bulls/goats [**blood used in the Temple sacrifices**] to take away sins.” Hebrews 10:4

“**BUT CHRIST . . .** Entered the Holy Place, **NOT** with the blood of bulls and goats, but with **His own blood . . .** And thereby secured eternal redemption for us **once and for all.**” Hebrews 9:11-12

BOTTOM LINE: The reason Jesus’ forgiveness and High Priesthood and new covenant with sinners is **SUPERIOR** is because the blood it is all based on – Jesus’ blood – is **SUPERIOR!**

[Isaac Watts]
Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain
Could give my guilty conscience peace
Or wash away my stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

So What?

[Isaac Watts]
Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse removed
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice
And sing His bleeding love

What can wash away my sin
Nothing but the blood of Jesus
What can make me whole again
Nothing but the blood of Jesus

O, precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow
No other fount I know
Nothing but the blood of Jesus