

# Hebrews - Introduction & Background

## Author

The Book of Hebrews is an anonymous letter. Thus, numerous suggestions have been given as to who wrote the book. Almost every character in the Book of Acts (except Dorcas) has been suggested as a possible author. Many characters found throughout the NT as a whole have been suggested. One prominent suggestion is that the book was written by Apollos (Acts 18:24). It is possible to harmonize the book's detailed understanding of the OT system with Apollos since he was a man "mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts 18:24b). It is also argued that Apollos is an appropriate candidate given the fact that he was an Alexandrian Greek (Acts 18:24). It is suggested that Hebrews follows the logical style and rhetorical pattern of the Alexandrian Greeks. Another worthy suggestion as to authorship is Barnabas. The factors favoring Barnabas include his status as a Levite (Acts 4:36), his close ties to Paul, and the fact that Barnabas and Timothy presumably knew one another. Timothy had been converted in the vicinity of the first missionary journey (Acts 16:1-3) that Barnabas had accompanied Paul on. The fact that Barnabas was a Levite may explain the Jewishness of the letter. The connection between Barnabas and Timothy would explain the writer's connection to Timothy (13:23).

The most popular suggestion for authorship of Hebrews, however, is the apostle Paul. Clement of Alexandria first made this suggestion in 180 AD. This suggestion has several pieces of evidence in its favor. First, just as Paul and Timothy are associated throughout the NT, the author of Hebrews is associated with Timothy (13:23). Second, the writer draws illustrations from Israel's past failures (4:11) just as Paul does (1 Cor 10). Third, the writer places great emphasis upon the New Covenant just as Paul does (2 Cor 3:6). Fourth, Hebrews was probably written from Rome (13:24) just as Paul's prison letters were written from Rome.

Fifth, Pauline authorship of Hebrews was accepted in the Eastern Church from the end of the second century onward. Through the influence of Jerome and Augustine, Pauline authorship also became the dominant view in the Western Church.

Sixth, similarities of doctrine and style can also be detected upon comparing Hebrews to Paul's writings. For example, both exhibit a high esteem for the OT in general and the Law in particular. Both Hebrews and Paul couch the relationship between the Law and New Covenant in terms of good versus better (8:6; Rom 7:12). Also, both Hebrews and Paul seem to promote faith over attempts of the flesh to keep the Law. Moreover, both Hebrews and Paul place a high priority on the person and work of Christ. Furthermore, both focus upon Christ's final propitiatory sacrifice. In addition, both make extensive use of OT

citations. Also, both exhibit a pattern of basing exhortations upon previously expounded doctrinal truth (Rom 1–11; 12–16; Heb 1:1–10:18; 10:19–13:25). Finally, a similarity in phraseology is found when comparing Hebrews to Paul's letters.

Despite the potency of the arguments favoring Pauline authorship, numerous counter arguments can be cited. However, upon closer inspection, many of these counter arguments do not seem unassailable. First, in Hebrews the name of the author is not stated. However, in Paul's other letters he attaches his name (2 Thess 3:17). However, Paul may not have given his name for good reason. The believing Jews may have already held him in high esteem. Thus it was not necessary for him to sign his name. Also, he may not have signed his name on account of the fact that the Hebrews would have overtly rejected the book without even considering its message because it came from someone who was not an original apostle or from someone who was a member of the Sanhedrin. Second, the author of Hebrews cites the OT exclusively from the LXX version while Paul cites from the MT as well as the LXX in his other letters. Third, differences in language and style can be found upon comparing Hebrews with Paul's other writings. However, perhaps these two objections can be explained in terms of someone other than Paul writing the letter yet still writing it under his supervision. The use of an amanuensis was common in the NT world (1 Peter 5:12). Mark seems to have written his gospel under the supervision of Peter (1 Peter 5:13). Also, the differences of language and style are more understandable if Tertullian's suggestion is accurate that Paul wrote the letter in Hebrew and Luke translated it into Greek. Fourth, Paul could not be the writer of this letter since it was written to Jews and Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. If Paul had written to the Jews he would have stepped upon Peter's jurisdiction since Peter was the apostle to the Jews and Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal 2:7–8). However, according to Acts 9:15, part of Paul's ministry was to the Jews as well. Also, Paul touched upon Jewish issues in his other writings (Gal 3–4; Col 2:16–17).

Although Paul may have indeed been the author, it is best to not be dogmatic on the matter. No clear scholarly consensus has emerged concerning who the writer was. Perhaps the best suggestion was articulated by Origen when he wrote, "As to who actually wrote the epistle, God knows the truth of the matter." Because the writer desired anonymity, it seems best to let his wishes stand. While debates about authorship can be interesting, who wrote the book has little bearing upon interpretive issues within the book. Nor does the issue of authorship affect the book's authority, canonicity, and trustworthiness.

### **Date**

The Book of Hebrews must have been written before 95 AD since Clement of Rome quoted from it. Moreover, the book must have been written prior to 70 AD since it makes numerous references to the temple system as still being in operation (8:4,13; 9:6; 10:1–2; 13:10). If the temple had not been standing at the time the letter was written, there would have been no

temptation on the part of the audience to seek refuge in the temple system. Because Titus destroyed the temple in 70 AD, Hebrews must have been written prior to that time. Another reason that Hebrews was written prior to 70 AD is that the writer tells his audience that they had not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood (12:4). Because much Jewish blood was shed in the events of 70 AD, the letter must have been written prior to that time. If the approaching day mentioned in 10:25 is a reference to the events of 70 AD, then Hebrews must have been written just before these events transpired.

Furthermore, the book was most probably written prior to 64 AD, which marks the beginning of the Neronian persecutions. Since there is no reference to any of these persecutions in the letter, it must have been written before they took place. However, it is inappropriate to place the date of the book earlier than 62 AD. The recipients of the letter were second-generation believers (2:3). Thus, there must be adequate time for the apostolic generation to be replaced by the second generation. Thus, a date of 62-64 AD for the composition of the book would not be far from wrong.

## **Audience**

### ***Believing Status***

A far more significant matter regarding how the book is to be interpreted is the issue of the spiritual status of those who received the letter. The believing status of the audience has a direct bearing upon how the warning passages are to be understood. If the audience was already regenerated, then neither the Calvinist nor Arminian views of the warning passages can be sustained. If the audience was already justified, then the warning passages cannot be addressed to unbelievers or an audience comprised of believers and unbelievers. Nor can these warning passages deal with loss of salvation since too many other passages teach eternal security (John 6:39; 10:28; Rom 8:29-39; Eph 1:12-14; 4:30; Phil 1:6; 1 Peter 1:3-5). Rather, the warning passages are warning against a loss of blessings that flow from justification and have nothing to do with initial justification itself. This view allows for a theology that says while all those blessed are believers, not all believers are blessed.

It is clear from the book as a whole that the addressees were genuine believers. The author routinely uses "us" when describing his audience thus equating his own spiritual status with that of his audience (1:2). He also refers to his audience as those who had their sins purged (1:3) and those who were on the verge of neglecting rather than rejecting their salvation (2:1-3). The notion of neglecting implies a prior possession. For example, the fact that Timothy was told not to neglect his ministry gift automatically implies that he presently possesses such a gift (1 Tim 4:14). He also calls his audience holy brethren who are partakers of the heavenly calling (3:1). The term "brethren" is used 10x in Hebrews. Four of these uses do not describe the original audience. The word simply refers to either humanity in general (2:17) or is used in the OT sense of Jewish brethren (2:12; 7:5; 8:11). However, the remaining six uses do describe the original audience. These uses either

inarguably refer to believers or must refer to believers since the exhortations they are associated with would be inapplicable to unbelievers (2:11; 3:1, 12; 10:19; 13:22,23). In Heb 4 the writer expresses concern that his audience will not attain *rest* rather than not attain *salvation* (4:1). He also refers to them as fellow believers together with him (4:3). He assumes that Christ their high priest is interceding for them (4:14, Cf. 7:26-8:1; 10:21), and that they already have access to the throne of grace to obtain help in time of need (4:16). He speaks of the intense persecution they have already experienced (10:32-34). Why would they experience such intense persecution on account of an empty profession? He assumes their need is patient endurance rather than salvation (10:36-39). According to 10:22-25, they have been cleansed, sprinkled from an evil conscience, made a public confession, and identified with other believers. He presupposes that they could serve the living God (9:14), have been sanctified (10:10), have received the ministry of the Holy Spirit (10:15), and that Jesus is the author and finisher of their faith (12:2). He also refers to them as sons (12:7) and as those who are inheriting a kingdom (12:28). The believing status of the audience is also evidenced through the numerous exhortations given in the book. Pentecost identifies at least 38 exhortations that the writer gives to his readers. Yet there is not to be found in the book a single exhortation to trust Christ for salvation. One would expect this exhortation to show up at least once if the writer was addressing unbelievers. By way of comparison, one of the reasons we know that the Gospel of John has an evangelistic purpose is because the purpose statement of the book is an exhortation to saving faith (John 20:31). Yet no similar exhortation is found in Hebrews. In sum, it is safe to say that the book was written to believers rather than to unbelievers or a mixed audience. Thus, the warning passages should be understood in terms of conveying a loss of blessing flowing from justification and are unrelated to justification itself. See **Addendum: 8 Evidences Why Hebrews was Written to Believers Only** below.

### ***Second Generation Believers***

Although the audience was comprised of believers, they were second-generation believers. This becomes clear from 2:3, which says, "...After it was at first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard." Thus, a chain is established from the Lord, to the apostolic generation, to the next generation that heard the gospel from the apostolic generation. The apostolic generation confirmed the message to the next generation through signs and wonders performed under the power of the Holy Spirit. The fact that the audience was a second-generation Christian audience may explain why they were more casual about the value of their initial confession.

### ***National Identity***

Some have postulated that the book was written to Gentiles. They contend that the title "Hebrews" is not found in the earliest manuscripts and the book was not so named until

Clement did so in 180 AD. This view is also buttressed by the arguments for Pauline authorship since Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and Peter was the apostle to the Jews. However the arguments for a Gentile audience should be discarded. Why would a Gentile audience be concerned with Levitical priestly practices? The audience was obviously well acquainted with the OT system and rituals. The numerous references to the OT and OT history argue convincingly that a Jewish audience is in view. Others have postulated a mixed audience comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. A Jewish/Gentile audience is apparent in Paul's other letters as he deals with Jewish/Gentile conflicts (Eph 2). However, no such conflict is evident in Hebrews. Thus, a purely Jewish audience is addressed.

### ***Location***

Other NT letters addressed exclusively to believing Jews are addressed to those spread out in the *Diaspora* (1 Peter 1:1). However, the situation seems to be different in Hebrews. The audience is under duress to return to the Levitical system as represented by the functioning temple. For this temptation to be real, the audience must have been in close proximity to the temple. Thus, it is safe to conclude that the audience was located in the land of Canaan. The letter's frequent allusions to the functioning temple (8:4, 13; 9:6; 10:1-2; 13:10) as well as the audience's intimate knowledge of the details of the Levitical system seem to support this conclusion as well.

### **Addendum: 8 Evidences Why Hebrews was Written to Believers Only**

Because the epistle to the Hebrews is a challenging book to understand, many believers today don't take the time and effort to mine its rich truths. One reason it has become difficult to understand is the debate concerning whom Hebrews was written to.<sup>1</sup> Many view Hebrews as a message that was written to a combination of "true" believers and "professing" believers, i.e., unbelievers. With the mixed-audience view, the five warning passages (2:1-4; 3:1-4,16; 5:11—6:12; 10:19-39; 12:14-29) are typically regarded as being addressed to "professing" believers (= unbelievers), with the rest of the book addressing "true" believers. However, if the entire book of Hebrews was in fact written to "true" believers, then all of it becomes beneficial to believers today. In this way a believer today doesn't have to dismiss parts of Hebrews because those parts were not written to him. There are eight reasons to believe the entire book of Hebrews was written to believers (i.e., to those who have eternal life):

First, the writer calls the audience "holy brethren" (3:1).

Second, the writer describes himself and his readers ("we") as ones who "have faith" (10:39). This would be true only of believers.

Third, readers are referred to as "sons" who have a relationship with God the Father (12:5,7,8). Unbelievers, professing to believe or otherwise, do not have a "son" relationship with God the Father until they are adopted and have eternal life (Gal 4:5).

Fourth, the author did not exhort readers to “believe in Jesus for eternal life” anywhere in Hebrews. The starting point for unbelievers is to place their faith in Jesus Christ for the gift of eternal life (John 3:16; Rom 6:23).

Fifth, the author did exhort 13:22) readers to “press on to maturity” (6:1) in the faith they already possessed (6:4-5). To exhort unbelievers to “press on to maturity” makes no sense. Without faith in Christ there is no life to be matured!

Sixth, the readers went through sufferings, reproaches, and tribulations for their faith (10:32-33). They even “accepted joyfully the seizure of [their] property” (10:34, NASB). It seems unlikely that unbelievers would be willing to go through these things for a nonexistent faith.

Seventh, in each of the five warning passages, the writer uses first person plural pronouns (us or we); he includes himself with the readers. Because the author was a believer in Jesus Christ, this is noteworthy. He views the warnings as applicable to both himself, as a believer, and to his readers, also believers. Had the warnings been for “professing” believers/unbelievers, he would not have included himself. For example, (10:26) says, “For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.” The writer sees “sinning willfully”— a return to animal sacrifices as a means for atonement, (10:29)— as something which he, as a believer, could commit, as could the believers he is writing to. After the five warning passages below are the verses containing “us” and/or “we” demonstrating the author included himself in the warning.

First warning (2:1-4): 2:1,3

Second warning (3:1—4:16): 3:6,14; 4:14

Third warning (5:11—6:12): 6:1

Fourth warning (10:19-39): 10:19-24,26

Fifth warning (12:14-29): 12:25

Because the warning passages in Hebrews include the author, it does not stand to reason that these sections are addressed to unbelievers.

Eighth, there are no clear signs *in the text* to indicate switching of the audience between “true” believers and “professing” believers. The burden of proof for a spiritually-mixed readership rests on those who propose this view. This is not simply an argument from silence. It is logical to assume that the writer is addressing one consistent group of Jewish believers unless a change is clearly indicated by the text. The idea that the readership switches back and forth between believers and unbelievers seems to be governed by its proponents’ need to support their theological position rather than by evidence from the text.

### **Why Does It Matter That Hebrews Was Written to Believers Only?**

Hebrews is a “word of exhortation” (13:22) written to Jewish believers who were experiencing persecution and considering returning to the external practices of Judaism, including animal sacrifices for sins. The writer encourages these believers to persevere in their faith, even in a hostile world. This encouragement includes five warnings about the consequences of not holding fast to their faith.

Rosemarie Matlak’s summary relates the overall message of Hebrews to believers today: As modern day Christians, we are also beguiled and pressured to distance ourselves from Christ through false teachers, worldly philosophies, discouraging circumstances, social pressure, and even persecution. As believers we all experience times of spiritual defeat...in our walk with God. It can be tempting to return to our old way of life where we felt accepted and admired...and to the pursuit of wealth and comfort rewarded us with immediate gratification.” [Rosemarie Matlak, Hebrews Study Guide (2010), p6.]

Many of today’s believers are not Jewish and none of us live in the First Century, but we all still face similar challenges. Over the past twenty years many born-again people have left Bible-teaching churches for the liturgical practices of Catholicism or Orthodoxy. Many believers have departed from the teachings of God’s Word to practice counterfeit means to spiritual maturity like transcendental meditation, centering prayer, *lectio divina*, and prayer labyrinths. Sadly many believers have been duped into ceasing to believe that everlasting life is everlasting and thus they have begun trying to give and work so as to retain that life. Legalism both for justification and sanctification is quite alluring today. When a believer in Jesus Christ returns to a religious system or perspective that denies the sufficient work of Christ on the cross, they are making the mistake the book of Hebrews warns against.

One way Hebrews is applicable to Gentiles today is when an active Mormon comes to faith in Christ apart from their works he is contradicting the teachings of the church of his family and friends. The result is that he will face very real pressure to stop saying he knows he has everlasting life simply by faith alone in Christ alone. If this new believer continues to confess his belief in justification by faith alone, the result is often complete rejection by all his friends and family. New believers from a Mormon background face a very real temptation to return to Mormonism at least in some external way to restore relationships with their relatives in particular.

Of course, leaving a Bible-teaching church and returning to the works-based system of Mormonism will prevent the new believer from going on to spiritual maturity and puts him in danger of being disciplined by the Lord.

Even someone who has no religious background may be tempted and/or pressured to return to their previous lifestyle without God instead of following Jesus more closely and continuing on to spiritual maturity. Old friends may hound the believer to come back and party like the old days. These “friends” and their lifestyle may hamper the believer from growing spiritually. But Hebrews is warning against more than just returning to a sinful



lifestyle. The warning is against denying the sufficient sacrifice of Jesus Christ in their life. This might take the form of verbally rejecting or denying critical truths about Jesus including his death, resurrection, or ability to forgive our sins. Such a change in beliefs is what Hebrews warns against.

The writer of Hebrews was deeply concerned because he knew that the believer who departs from the faith reaps fiery judgment in this life (6:7-8; 10:27-31). Worse, the believer who apostatizes will not be one of those chosen to be Christ's partners (*metochoi*), His co-rulers, in the life to come (1:9; 3:14). Instead of hearing the Lord's "Well done, good servant" at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Luke 19:17), he will experience rebuke and shame before His Lord and Savior (Luke 19:20-26; 1 John 2:28). That's why this matters. Departure from the faith is a terrible thing.

### **Conclusion**

Knowing that the entire book of Hebrews was written to believers in Jesus Christ is vital to understanding God's message in Hebrews. Because it was written to believers, the entire book is relevant for today's Christians. The message is not that "professing" believers must prove their faith by commitment and perseverance, but rather that "true" believers are to move on to spiritual maturity despite difficulties. The dangers are clearly described in the five warning passages in Hebrews: negligence, unbelief, immaturity, willful sinning, and unresponsiveness. A believer today who "neglects" their spiritual life, remains "immature" and "unresponsive" to the Lord Jesus is not at a spiritually neutral place. These warnings remind us that not going on to maturity has negative consequences, and we must guard against these dangers if we are to press on to maturity.

### **Occasion for Writing**

The nation of Israel had come under judgment because of its rejection of its own messiah (Dan 9:26; Matt 12:31-32; 23:36-38; 24:2; Acts 2:40). This judgment was to be meted out in the rapidly approaching events of 70 AD. However, the Jewish believers addressed in the letter through their baptism or confession (3:1; 4:14; 10:23) had publicly severed themselves from the nation and instead had publicly identified themselves with the new order ushered in by Christ's death. In making such a public statement, they were publicly testifying to the inadequacy of the Jewish religion. Such a public statement obviously did not sit well with the Jewish leaders of the time. Thus, these leaders were placing the recipients of the letter under duress to return to the religion of Judaism.

The primary tool that the leadership was using to create this desired result was persecution. The audience had already been put out of the synagogue (John 16:2) and had experienced religious persecution at the hands of the Jews (10:32-34). Apparently the Hebrews were being worn down by this persecution over an extended period of time. Thus, they were becoming discouraged. Consequently, they were contemplating renouncing their confession and returning to Judaism. Someone may have had the idea that if they just



showed up on the right feast day, then their persecutors would overlook their baptism. Perhaps they thought that their persecutors would forget their baptism completely since thousands were being baptized and the Jewish establishment had no record of who was baptized. After all, if Paul had returned to temple activity (Acts 20:16; 21), why could they not do it also? The temple already figured prominently in their thinking by virtue of the fact that the Book of Acts records numerous instances of believers fellowshiping in the temple (Acts 2:1; 3:1,11; 5:12,21,42). They thought they could still be Christians and hold on to some aspects of Judaism for the purpose of appeasing their persecutors as a means of escaping persecution. Thus, their desire to return to Judaism should be categorized as regression rather than apostasy. They were not completely renouncing Christianity. Rather, they were simply syncretizing some aspects of Judaism with Christianity for the purpose of appeasing their persecutors and alleviating the persecution they were under.

The temptation to lapse back into Judaism was compounded by the fact that they were living in a transitional era in between the Day of Pentecost and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. Because the temple was still standing during this era, it was still available to seek refuge in. The temptation to lapse back into Judaism was also compounded by the fact that the addressees of the letter were second-generation believers who may not have appreciated the significance of their baptism as much as the first generation of believers had. The temptation to lapse back into Judaism was also compounded by the fact that they had only been excommunicated from the synagogue. Unlike the temple, which was divinely ordained, the synagogue was a human institution. Thus, the argument was probably made that because they had only been removed from the human institution and not the divine institution, it was not too late for them to return to Judaism.

### **Purpose for Writing**

Because of such prolonged religious persecution at the hands of the Jews, the Hebrews were becoming discouraged (12:3). They were in desperate need for a word of encouragement. Such encouragement and exhortation was the goal of the writer of Hebrews (13:22). The writer accomplishes such exhortation in two ways. First, he shows that what the readers possess in Christ is superior to every significant vestige of Judaism. The writer takes the most significant aspects of Judaism (angels in Heb 1–2, Moses in 3:1–4:13, and the Aaronic order in 4:14–10:18) and shows how Christ is superior in comparison. Given the supremacy of Christ over Judaism, it is foolish to return to Judaism. In using this methodology, the writer in no way disparages Judaism but simply shows that what the believers currently possess is better than anything the previous dispensation had to offer. Thus, the writer's trajectory is from good to better rather than from bad to good (8:6). Hence, the adjective "better" is found 13x throughout the book.

The second strategy that the writer uses to exhort his audience is through the warning passages. Here, the writer warns his audience of the consequences they will face if they

syncretize Judaism with Christianity. Thus, the writer warns the believers of the consequences of drifting away from the truth (2:1-4), disobeying the truth (3:7—4:13), immaturity (5:10—6:20), despising the truth (10:26-39), and denying the truth (12:25-29). Because the addressees were already believers, the warnings need to be understood from the perspective of a loss of blessing that flows from justification rather than issues related to justification itself.

### **Structure/Outline**

#### **I. Doctrinal Section of the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 1:1—10:18)**

##### **(1) The attributes of Christ demonstrating Him to be superior to Old Covenant Judaism (1:1-3)**

(A) Although God spoke in various ways during the dispensation of the Old Covenant, God has spoken through Christ in the dispensation of the New Covenant (1:1-2a)

(B) Seven significant attributes of Christ showing His superiority to Judaism (1:2b-3)

- (a) Christ is heir of all things (1:2)
- (b) Christ is maker of all things (1:2)
- (c) Christ is the radiance of the Father's glory (1:3)
- (d) Christ is the exact representation of God's nature (1:3)
- (e) Christ upholds all things (1:3)
- (f) Christ made a complete purification of sins (1:3)
- (g) Christ sat down at the right hand of God (1:3)

##### **(2) Christ is superior to the Angels (Heb 1:4—2:18)**

(A) Use of Old Testament passages that demonstrate Christ's superiority to the Angels (1:4-14)

- (a) Intro (1:4)
- (b) Psalm 2:7; 2 Sam 7:14 (1:5)
- (c) Deut 32:43 (1:6)
- (d) Psalm 104:4 (1:7)
- (e) Psalm 45:6-7 (1:8-9)
- (f) Psalm 102:25-27 (1:10-12)
- (g) Psalm 110:1 (1:13)
- (h) Conclusion (1:14)

(B) Hebrews are warned against drifting away from Christ (2:1-4)

(C) Reasons for the incarnation (2:5-18)

- (a) To fulfill God's purpose for man (2:5-9a)
- (b) To taste death for all (2:9b)
- (c) To bring many sons to glory (2:10-13)

- (d) To destroy the works of the devil (2:14)
  - (e) To liberate those in fear of death (2:15)
  - (f) To become a faithful priest (2:16-17a)
  - (g) To make atonement for sins (2:17b)
  - (h) To sympathize with those tested (2:18)
- (3) Christ is superior to Moses (Heb 3:1—4:13)
  - (A) Similarities between Christ and Moses (3:1-2)
  - (B) Differences between Christ and Moses (3:3-6)
  - (C) The Hebrews are warned against disobeying God (Heb 3:7—4:13)
    - (a) Rebellion at Kadesh Barnea (3:7-11)
    - (b) Consequences of unbelief (3:12-19)
      - (i) Departure from God (3:12)
      - (ii) Hardening of the heart (3:13-16)
      - (iii) An act of rebellion (3:17)
      - (iv) Loss of blessings (3:18-19)
    - (c) Exhortation to enter the "rest" (4:1-13)
      - (i) Promise of rest (4:1-2)
      - (ii) Scriptural pattern of rest (4:3-5)
      - (iii) Perpetuity of promised rest (4:6-10)
      - (iv) Exhortation to enter rest (4:11-13)
- (4) Christ is superior to Aaron (Heb 4:14—10:18)
  - (A) Christ is our heavenly, sympathetic high priest (4:14-16)
  - (B) Christ fulfills the basic prerequisites of the Aaronic priesthood (5:1-9)
    - (a) Prerequisites (5:1-4)
      - (i) Man (5:1-3)
      - (ii) Called by God (5:4)
    - (b) Jesus fulfills the prerequisites
      - (i) Called by God (5:5-6)
      - (ii) Man (5:7-10)
  - (C) Believers are warned of the consequences of immaturity (Heb 5:11—6:20)
    - (a) The fact of immaturity (5:11-14)
    - (b) What the audience should leave behind (6:1-3)
    - (c) The warning (6:4-6)
    - (d) The illustration (6:7-8)
    - (e) The confidence (6:9-12)
    - (f) The reason for the confidence (6:13-20)
  - (D) The superiority of the Melchizedekian priesthood to the Aaronic priesthood (7:1-28)

- (a) Description of Melchizedek (7:1-3)
- (b) Melchizedek is superior to Aaron (7:4-10)
- (c) Weaknesses of the Levitical priesthood (7:11-19)
- (d) Melchizedekian priesthood based upon a better covenant (7:20-22)
- (e) Melchizedekian priesthood based upon resurrection life (7:23-25)
- (f) Melchizedekian priesthood based upon sinless perfection (7:26-28)
- (E) Christ is superior to Aaron because He occupies a superior position of ministry (8:1-5)
- (F) Christ's priesthood is superior to the Aaronic priesthood because it is based upon a better covenant (8:6-13)
  - (a) Superiority of Christ's covenant (8:6)
  - (b) Temporality of the Levitical covenant (8:7-13)
- (G) The limitations of the earthly tabernacle (9:1-11)
  - (a) Tabernacle furniture (9:1-5)
  - (b) Limitations of the tabernacle (9:6-11)
- (H) Superiority of Christ's sacrifice (Heb 9:12—10:18)
  - (a) Christ's blood is better (9:12)
  - (b) Christ's purification is better (9:13-14)
  - (c) The New Covenants mediated are better (9:15-22)
  - (d) Christ's position is better (9:23-24)
  - (e) Christ's single sacrifice is better (9:25-28)
  - (f) Inadequacy of Levitical sacrifices (10:1-4)
  - (g) Christ's volition is better (10:5-10)
  - (h) The effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice is better (10:11-14)
  - (i) Christ's covenant is better (10:15-18)

## II. Application Section of the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 10:19—13:25)

- (1) Exhortation section (10:19-39)
  - (A) Exhortation to approach God (10:19-22)
  - (B) Exhortation to hold fast to the confession (10:23)
  - (C) Exhortation to do good deeds (10:24)
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