

# The Letter to the Hebrews

## \*. **Who wrote the letter?**

This is one of the most debated letters in the New Testament as concerns authorship. The letter itself is anonymous. Some have historically attached this letter to Paul but writing anonymously was not a habit of his. The style and language are definitely different than Paul's other letters. Most believe that the letter was written by someone other than Paul, though there is no consensus as to whom that is. Origen stated, "Who wrote the book? Only God knows."

## \*. **When was it written?**

This letter appears to have been written in the late 60's AD, perhaps around 66 AD. Persecution of the church under the direction of Nero was breaking out in Rome.

## \*. **To whom was it written?**

This letter was written to "the Hebrews" – Jewish Christians. Throughout the book, the writer uses detailed arguments regarding the sacrificial system and the priesthood, as well as many quotes from the Old Testament. Those with a Jewish background would relate to and understand the book of Hebrews much easier than those with no Jewish background.

## \*. **Why was it written?**

Limited information is provided in the text but from what can be discerned, Jewish believers were being persecuted for their belief in Christ (while the Jews were not being persecuted). As a result, many of the Christians were considering whether it would be better to go back into Judaism and avoid persecution. Some were contemplating re-embracing the Jewish way of life in its entirety. The writer is encouraging the Jewish believers to be faithful in the midst of the chaotic times.

## \*. **What is the main topic?**

Jesus Christ is superior – remain faithful to Him.

## **Heb. 1:1-4:**

<sup>1</sup> God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, <sup>2</sup> in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. <sup>3</sup> And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup> having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

## **Heb. 4:14-16:**

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin. <sup>16</sup> Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

## **Heb. 10:19-25:**

<sup>19</sup> Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, <sup>21</sup> and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; <sup>24</sup> and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

## **Heb. 12:1-3:**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.