

The Mysterious Masterpiece

Chapter 1

Audio Lesson New Testament #73



Objective: To understand the background and importance of the book of Hebrews



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. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

—Hebrews 1:1-3

The book of Hebrews is a mysterious masterpiece. Bible scholars do not know who wrote it or who the Hebrews were to whom it was written, but we do know that they were Jewish Christians who were suffering persecution. The author of Hebrews offers much-needed assurance of salvation, encouragement, and exhortation to believe.

A few scholars say that Paul is the author, but many others disagree. Paul's letters always start with his name, but Hebrews does not. Paul often quoted from the Hebrew Old Testament, but the author of Hebrews quoted from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Also, the author of Hebrews did not focus on justification by faith, which Paul always emphasized. Unlike Paul, this author does not claim to have personally seen Jesus Christ.

Knowing the identities of the human authors of the books of the Bible is not critical, because ultimately it was God who authored the books. Rather, the important questions to ask about any book of the Bible are: What does the book say? What does it mean? What does it mean to me?

Hebrews is a masterpiece in content. More than any other book, it ties together the Old and New Testaments. It contains an argument from beginning to end. It shows that Jesus is the Messiah who was prophesied in the Old Testament, the Lord as revealed in the New Testament, and the coming King of Kings.

Three key words help us to understand the argument in Hebrews: **Better**, **believe**, and **beware**. Because Jesus Christ is God's Son, He is better than the prophets, the angels, the priesthood, the covenants, the tabernacle, everything. No more sacrifices need to be made, because Jesus' death fulfilled them all. And through believing in Christ's finished work on the cross, we can experience salvation.



Choose the best answer.

1. True or False: We know that the author of the Book of Hebrews was an apostle.
2. True or False: Hebrews deals extensively with who Jesus is.
3. True or False: The intended audience was Greek believers.
4. True or False: The identity of the author does not matter, because the book of Hebrews was written through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Choose all answers that apply.

5. Why do scholars believe Paul was not the author of Hebrews?
 - a. The book starts with his name.
 - b. Paul often quoted from the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint.
 - c. Hebrews does not focus on justification by faith.
 - d. Paul mentioned the author of Hebrews in his letter to Timothy.
6. What did the author of Hebrews offer to his readers?
 - a. Money from a collection he had gathered from other Christians
 - b. Advice on marriage
 - c. Assurance of their faith
 - d. Counsel to elders and deacons
7. When the author quoted from the Old Testament, he wrote, “God said” instead of “Moses said” or “David said.” Why?
 - a. He got confused.
 - b. He thought he would sound more spiritual if he wrote “God said”.
 - c. He could not remember who said it and did not want to look it up.
 - d. He wanted to show that the important thing was that God said it.

8. Why is Hebrews a masterpiece in content?
 - a. Because its theology is easy to understand.
 - b. Everything Paul wrote was a masterpiece.
 - c. It is a thorough, systematic argument about Jesus as the Christ.
 - d. Scholars consider the author to be the best writer in the Bible.

9. How does the book of Hebrews present Jesus theologically?
 - a. He was a good man and moral teacher.
 - b. He is the Messiah.
 - c. He was a healer and miracle worker.
 - d. He is the King of kings who will return someday.

10. Why is the book of Hebrews important?
 - a. It links the Old and New Testaments.
 - b. It addresses everything we need to know about suffering.
 - c. It explains why we should still make sacrifices to God.
 - d. It talks at length about the importance of angels.

11. What is the most important thing to remember about Hebrews?
 - a. The human author's identity
 - b. The application of its truth to our lives
 - c. The original audience
 - d. The author's reliance on the Greek translation of the Old Testament

12. What should we look for as we study each book of the Bible?
 - a. Examples of good works we must do
 - b. Ways to sin more effectively
 - c. Reasons why man is worthy to be saved
 - d. Jesus the Christ



When we study a book of the Bible, what are the first three questions we should ask about it? Why do you think these questions are important? Which is the most important?

Why was it necessary to explain that Jesus is better than certain things?



Praise God for Hebrews, a book to encourage us in our faith. Thank God for speaking to us through His Son. Thank God that Jesus is better and higher than anyone or anything that came before Him or since Him. Ask God to help you grow in your relationship with Him as you know and understand who Jesus is through this study.



Going Deeper

1. Give three reasons that this book is referred to as “The Mysterious Masterpiece.” _____

2. Give three reasons that scholars believe Paul did not write the book of Hebrews, and explain which of these reasons is the strongest argument. _____

3. Based on the content of this book, give a profile of the people to whom it was written. _____

4. Relate to and apply at least three ways the third and fourth chapters of Hebrews give meaningful commentary on the fourteenth chapter of the book of Numbers. _____

5. Show how the argument of the book of Hebrews uses the three words *better*, *believe* and *beware*. _____

6. How does the book of Hebrews show us that it doesn't matter who wrote a book or a passage of the Bible, but rather, the important thing is that it is the Word of God? _____

7. According to the author of this book, name eight things that are inferior to Jesus. _____
