



A PASSAGE THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT  
PART TEN

# **The Letter to the Hebrews**

by Jeff S. Smith

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# The Epistle to The Hebrews

## Authorship: Uncertain

The book of Hebrews is clearly a letter, but it lacks both the sender's and addressee's names. It is not a circular letter like the General Epistles and reads more like a series of sermons on the superiority of Christ than anything else.

Even those in early church history were uncertain about the author of Hebrews, but the mention of Timothy's name (13:23) gives credence to the conclusion that the apostle Paul is the writer. Too, the writing style is Pauline at times, but a hint of Greek background has led some to favor Apollos as the author. Barnabas, Luke, Silas, Aquila or Priscilla have all been suggested as possible writers as well. This, however, must remain a secret thing that belongs to God and in the end, the book is consistent with the rest of the New Testament and its place in the canon is unquestionable.

Jewish Christians are addressed in the book -- those who had come to Christ from a Hebrew background and were now faced with persecution and pressure to renounce Jesus and return to Mosaic worship. The letter employs very dramatic language to persuade these saints that Christ and his new testament are so far superior to Moses that they should consider it an honor to endure persecution and remain faithful. The alternative would bring acceptance by Jewish kin but rejection by God and a sentence of hell.

Deep doctrinal discourses are often interrupted by very practical commandments regarding various aspects of the Christian's life, including sexual morality, prayer and contentment. The writer chides his audience for their dullness of hearing and encourages them to grow in their knowledge.

The message throughout the letter, however, is one of comparison between old and new. The new covenant of Jesus Christ is better than the old covenant of Moses; the letter is in some ways a counterpart to the letter to the Romans. The key word to understanding Hebrews is "better." The Hebrew Christians were in danger of reverting to the law of Moses, giving up their faith, and falling away.



# Lesson 1: Spoken Through Jesus

Hebrews 1:1-14

1. Who wrote the book of Hebrews? To whom was it written?

2. By whom did God speak unto the fathers in times past? By whom has He spoken in these last days?

2. List seven things said about Jesus in verses 2-3.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

g.

3. Much of chapter one is composed of a number of Old Testament quotations which predicted certain things about the Messiah, which were fulfilled in Jesus. How do we know that Jesus is higher than the angels?

4. To what event does this “begetting” refer (Acts 13:32-35)?

5. What phrase in verses 8 and 9 solidifies our knowledge that Jesus was and is deity?

6. What tells us of the preexistent nature of Christ?

7. What is the role of angels toward believers?

8. How do they accomplish this work?



5. Was his death foreknown by God before his nativity (First Peter 1:17-21)?

6. How was the captain of our salvation made perfect? How is Christ made unashamed to call us his brethren (cf. John 17:17)?

7. How is man's attitude toward death changed because of the work of Christ?

8. How is he particularly qualified to be the high priest of our faith?

# Lesson 3: Better Than Moses

Hebrews 3:1-19

1. What is the difference between Moses and Jesus?
2. What does the word “apostle” mean? How is Jesus an apostle?
3. How do we remain in Christ’s house?
4. How does 3:7-15 teach that apostasy is possible?

5. What things made the Hebrews fall away during the Exodus (First Corinthians 10:1-12)?

6. Why did many of the Exodus pilgrims fall short of the promised land?  
How could this happen to us?

# Lesson 4: High Priesthood of Christ

Hebrews 4:1-16

1. What attitude is necessary lest we fall short of God's promised rest?
2. Why does the gospel not benefit all who hear it?
3. How is a hardened heart expressed today (cf. Ephesians 4:17-19)?
4. At what point may the Christian retire from life's good works?
5. What type of effort is required to enter that rest?

6. How does the writer describe the power of God's word in these verses?

7. Why can Jesus sympathize with our weaknesses?

8. What opportunity does this afford us in time of need?

# Lesson 5: A Superior High Priest

Hebrews 5:1-14

1. What limitations of character did human high priests have under the law of Moses?
2. Did one make himself a high priest?
3. According to which order is Christ a priest?
4. Why was Jesus heard?
5. How did he learn obedience?
6. How did Jesus become the author of eternal salvation?

7. Why was the author reluctant to explain the priesthood of Melchizedek to this audience?

8. What was their shortcoming?

9. How does one gain the ability to discern right from wrong?

# Lesson 6: Hope

Hebrews 6:1-20

1. List the elementary principles identified in this passage.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

2. Since they are elementary principles, it should be simple to say a few things about each. Do so.

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

3. What was the danger in falling away?

4. What did the writer require of these Christians?

5. How firm should our faith be?

6. By what two things did God confirm his word?

7. Into what has Jesus gone to minister for us? What promise does this hold for us?

# Lesson 7: Melchizedek

Hebrews 7:1-28

1. List three mysterious things said about Melchizedek which also apply to Jesus.

a.

b.

c.

2. List three things that show Melchizedek was greater than Abraham.

a.

b.

c.

3. What change was necessitated that Christ could become a priest? Why?

4. How does this principle establish the importance of the silence of God regarding authority?

5. Through what do we draw near to God?

6. What does Christ ever live to do?

7. How did Jesus make offering for our sins once for all?



6. How had Jeremiah described the new covenant according to the quotation of him in verses 10-12 of this chapter?

7. How is it true of the church that no one in it needs to be taught to know God?

8. According to verse 13, what was the status of the old covenant as the writer held his pen?



5. What four things are specifically mentioned which Moses sprinkled with blood?

a.

b.

c.

d.

6. Where has Jesus gone now? What does he do there?

7. What happens to men after they die? Reincarnation? What should be the attitude of the living toward Christ's return?





# Lesson II: Hall of Faith

Hebrews 11:1-12:2

1. How does the writer describe faith?
  
2. Complete the following chart of members of the Hebrews 11 catalog of faith:

<b>VERSES</b>	<b>CHARACTER</b>	<b>COMMENDATION</b>
4	Abel	
5-6	Enoch	
7	Noah	
8-10	Abraham	
11-12	Sarah	
17-19	Abraham	
20	Isaac	
21	Jacob	
22	Joseph	
24-28	Moses	
31	Rahab	

3. Why did such people not accept deliverance?

4. What two things are we instructed to lay aside? To whom should we look for encouragement and example?

# Lesson 12: Suffering

Hebrews 12:3-29

1. How should the Christian respond to God's chastening?
2. What two things should Christians pursue? Which is more important and should take precedence over the other?
3. How can a Christian be made to fall short of God's grace?
4. Explain the lesson in Esau's negative example.

5. In one word, describe the reaction of Israel to the presence of God and his authority. What should be our response to Christ and his authority in the New Testament?

6. How does the writer describe the church of Christ?

7. How does the writer characterize our service in the ideal?

8. Why should we strive to serve God acceptably?

# Lesson 13: Exhortations

Hebrews 13:1-25

1. How can brotherly love continue?
2. How has modern society's acceptance of multiple marriages and free sex changed God's standing?
3. How can covetousness cause us to distrust God?
4. Who are the likely objects of this remembrance?
5. What did it mean for a Jew to go "outside the camp" to be with Jesus?

6. Are church rulers (certainly elders are meant) accountable for their service? To whom?

7. What are our responsibilities to them?

8. What does the writer ask them to do regarding his word of exhortation in this letter? Why?



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