

HEBREWS

Hebrews was most likely written to Jewish Christians who were being persecuted and were wavering. The strongly Jewish character of the letter helps to narrow down its date of composition, most likely AD 64-69. Additionally, the letter makes no reference to the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem in AD70. With the many references to Hebrew customs and the Old Testament, the letter was likely sent to a Jewish Christian community, possibly in Rome.

Theme:

The central theme of Hebrews is the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ as revealer and mediator of God's grace. It clearly lays out the present priestly ministry of Christ in the life of the believer. Jesus is both the divine Son of God and completely human, and he clears the way for human beings to approach the Father through prayer. The priesthood of Jesus is superior to the Old Testament priesthood of Aaron because only through Jesus do we receive eternal salvation. Additionally, Jesus became the perfect High Priest, going beyond all other priests by offering Himself as a sinless sacrifice on behalf of the sins of human beings.

Hebrews makes clear that Jesus Christ exceeds all other people, pursuits, objects or hopes to which human beings offer allegiance. The letter pictures Jesus as better than the angels, as bringing better lives to humanity through salvation, as offering better hope than the law could promise, as a better sacrifice for our sins than a bull or goat, and as providing a better inheritance in heaven for those who place their faith in Him.

This message of the superiority of Jesus would have been particularly important to Jewish Christians in Rome, who were struggling under Nero's persecution and were considering moving back toward the Mosaic Law. The writer showed these people that, though they were faced with suffering, they were indeed following a better way and that they should persevere.

Questions:

What is the writer trying to establish with so many Old Testament references?

As shown in Hebrews, what is the Christian perspective of the Old Testament?

How does Hebrews apply, or how should we apply Hebrews today?

BIBLE STUDY AIDS

Hebrews Overview Chart

HEBREWS

Prologue (1:1-4)	Jesus Christ: Superior in His Person Superior to: Prophets Angels Moses The Sabbath Other priests CHAPTERS 1:1-4:13	Jesus Christ: Superior as Our Priest Better than: Earthly priesthood Old covenant (Mosaic system) Animal sacrifices Daily offerings CHAPTERS 4:14-10:18	Jesus Christ: Superior for Life Let us have: Faith to believe God Hope to endure trials Love to encourage others CHAPTERS 10:19-13:25	Epilogue (13:20-25)	
	Emphasis	Instruction	Exhortation		
Key Words	"Much better than" 1:4	"Better" 7:19	"Let us" 12:1		
Warnings	2:1-4	3:7-4:13	5:11-6:20	10:19-39	12:25-29
Theme	The absolute superiority of Jesus Christ				
Key Verse	4:14				
Christ in Hebrews	Jesus is the absolutely superior revelation of God and our eternal High Priest (1:1-14; 3:1).				

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(<https://insightforliving.swncdn.com/images/ifl-usa/content/ascendio/resources/bible/58-Hebrews.png>)

View Chuck Swindoll's chart of Hebrews (<https://insightforliving.swncdn.com/images/ifl-usa/content/ascendio/resources/bible/58-Hebrews.png>), which divides the book into major sections and highlights themes and key verses.

Final Jeopardy question –

“Paul’s letter to them is the New Testament epistle with the most Old Testament quotations.”

And the answer is ?