

# Outline of Hebrews

We hope this overview and outline of Hebrews will help you as you endeavor to study God's holy Word — His letter to you.

Unique among the books of Scripture, Hebrews stands alone as an intended treatise on Jesus Christ. The gospels tell the story of Christ's life on earth. Acts tells of the spread of Christ's mission on earth. The Pauline, Petrine, and Johannine epistles, as well as James and Jude, tell of the Christ-life in believers. and Revelation tells of Christ's coming. But Hebrews alone gives us a treatise on the superiority of Jesus Christ. Depending on how you count the references, there are at a minimum some 148 references to Christ in this book. The number may actually range up to around 200 in 303 verses. The word "better" appears 19 times in the New Testament, 13 of which are found in this book (1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6(2); 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24). The words "perfect," "perfection," and related words appear 14 times out of a total of 49 times in the New Testament in this book (2:10; 5:9, 14; 6:1; 7:11, 19, 28; 9:9, 11; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:2, 23).

We do not know who the human author of Hebrews was. The oldest statements as to authorship, stemming from the second century, set forth Paul as the author. Origen, who lived at the end of the second and beginning of the third century, a theologian from Alexandria, Egypt, stated as to the author of Hebrews, "God only knows." The other primary contender for authorship is Barnabas, who was a Levite. Tertullian, at the end of the second century, seemed to accept this position. The book was written probably from Italy (13:24) and before the destruction of the temple, while Timothy was still living.

The book is a development of Christ in relation to the Old Testament, with a particular emphasis on the priesthood and the book of Leviticus, although that book is never quoted. There are 38 direct quotations of Old Testament books and a total of some 212 allusions to Old Testament books. Only Matthew and Romans have more direct quotations, and only Matthew has more allusions. But Hebrews is the most intense book in the use of the Old Testament.

The character of our Lord Jesus Christ is disclosed in this one book like no other. I title the book, "Jesus Christ: Better than the Best." He is:

- Better than angels — 1-2
- Better than Moses — 3-4
- Better than Aaron — 5-7
- Mediator of a Better Covenant — 8
- Minister of a Better Tabernacle — 9-10
- A Better Example — 11-12
- A Better Shepherd — 13

He is:

- The Son — 1:2
- The Heir — 1:2
- The Creator — 1:3
- The Reflection of God's Light — 1:3

- The Very Expression of God — 1:3
- The Sustainer of all — 1:3
- The Purger of sins — 1:3
- Better than the angels — 1:4
- The Preeminent Being — 1:6 (see 6:7; 1:15; Ps. 89:27; Jer.31:9)
- God — 1:8
- King — 1:8
- Lover of Righteousness — 1:9
- Hater of Iniquity — 1:9
- Eternal — 1:11; 7:3, 16
- Immutable (Unchangeable) — 1:12; 13:8
- Giver of God's Word — 2:3
- Taster of death for us — 2:9
- Author of salvation — 2:10; 5:9
- Our Sanctifier — 2:11; 13:12
- A brother — 2:11-12
- A singer — 2:12
- A father — 2:13
- A human — 2:14
- The Destroyer of death — 2:14
- The Deliverer from bondage — 2:15
- Merciful and Faithful High Priest — 2:17
- The Payment for sin — 2:17
- A Sufferer — 2:18
- Temptable — 2:18
- An Apostle (Sent One) — 3:1
- The Builder of His House — 3:3
- Son of God — 4:14
- Sinless — 4:15
- One who knows how to pray — 5:7
- A Student — 5:8
- A Forerunner for us — 6:20
- King of righteousness — 7:1-2
- King of peace — 7:1-2
- Lord — 7:14
- Our guarantee — 7:22
- Our intercessor — 7:25
- Holy — 7:26
- Innocent — 7:26

- Undefined — 7:26
- Separate from sinners — 7:26
- Higher than the heavens — 7:26
- Minister of the true tabernacle — 8:2
- Mediator of the new and better covenant — 8:6; 9:15; 12:24
- Obtainer of Eternal Redemption — 9:12
- Victor over sin — 9:26
- Bearer of sins — 9:28
- A Returning Savior — 9:28
- Our Perfecter — 10:14
- The New and Living Way — 10:20
- Our Focus — 12:2
- Author and Finisher of our faith — 12:2
- Our Model in overcoming sin — 12:3
- Our Model in bearing reproach — 13:13
- The Great Shepherd — 13:20

There are five warning passages in Hebrews that have spurred great controversy. There is a:

- warning against drifting (2:1-4);
- warning against unbelief (3:12-4:13)
- warning against falling away (5:12-6:8)
- warning against willfully sinning (10:26-31)
- warning against defying the work of God (12:14-29)

Some have interpreted these passages as referencing unbelievers. Some, believers. Some have seen them as warnings of impending eternal judgment, others as temporary judgment. Some have seen in them support for the temporality of salvation. Some have seen in them support for the eternal nature of salvation. My view is that we should take the warnings seriously and thereby avoid the judgments of which they warn.

Here, then, is my view of the passages:

- 2:1-4 — Since Christ is better than the angels, we better seek His salvation.
- 3:12-4:13 — Since Christ's house is better than Moses', we had better not find ourselves left out because of unbelief.
- 5:12-6:8 — Since Christ is a better high priest, we had better not fall away from Him.
- 10:26-31 — Since Christ has brought a better sacrifice, we had better not despise it.
- 12:14-29 — Since Christ has taught us how to resist sin, we had better follow His teaching.

The book is a jewel in a collection of jewels. The strongest assurance of the presence of Christ is found in this book (13:5). It contains a powerful view of the Word of God. God's Word is living, powerful and discerning (4:12), good (6:5), a refuge (6:17-18), and what your rulers have spoken (13:7).

**Date:** 61 A.D.

## **I. Meet the Son 1:1-4**

## **II. Better than Angels 1:5-2:18**

- A. Proven by Scripture 1:5-14
- B. [Warning Against Drifting] 2:1-4
  - 1. Example of the law 2:2
  - 2. Admonition to not neglect His salvation 2:3
  - 3. Spoken and confirmed 2:3-4
- C. Becoming a Man 2:5-18
  - 1. Made lower than the angels 2:5-9
  - 2. Became like us 2:10-13
  - 3. To overcome the enemy 2:14-16
  - 4. To come to our aid against sin 2:17-18

## **III. Better than Moses 3-4**

- A. Proven by Logic 3:1-6
- B. [Warning Against Unbelief] 3:7-4:13
  - 1. Example of Israel 3:7-19
  - 2. Admonition to enter into His rest 4:1-11
  - 3. The Power and Insight of the Word 4:11-13
- C. Invitation to come to the throne 4:14-16

## **IV. Better than Aaron 5-7**

- A. Proven by an Oath 5:1-11
  - 1. Function of a High Priest 5:1-4
  - 2. Calling of Christ 5:5-6
  - 3. Christ's Identity with Us 5:7-11
- B. [Warning Against Apostasy] 5:12-6:8
  - 1. Example of youth 5:12-14
  - 2. Admonition to pursue perfection 6:1-3
  - 3. Only one salvation 6:4-8
- C. Confidence in the readers 6:9-12
- D. The Immutability of God's Promise 6:13-20
- E. Melchizedek and Christ 7

1. Melchizedek is greater than Aaron 7:1-10
2. Christ would be in Melchizedek's order 7:11-19
3. Christ's greater work than Aaron 7:20-28

## **V. Minister of a Better Sanctuary 8-10**

- A. Proven by Location and Builder 8:1-6
- B. Based Upon a Better Covenant 8:7-13
- C. The Symbolism of the Old 9:1-10
- D. The Greater Work of the New 9:11-15
- E. The Necessity of Death 9:16-22
- F. The Greatness of the Offering 9:23-28
- G. The Inability of the Old to deal with sin 10:1-4
- H. The Need for a body 10:5-10
- I. The Perfection of His Sacrifice 10:11-18
- J. Our Response 10:19-25
- K. [Warning Against Willfully Sinning] 10:26-31
  1. Example of judgment under the law 10:26-28
  2. Admonition to treat matters as sacred 10:29
  3. Judgment of God on His people 10:30-31
- L. Persevere 10:32-39

## **VI. Live by Faith Under a Better Example 11-12**

- A. Introduction to Faith 11:1-3
- B. Faith is needed to please God 11:4-7
- C. Faith leads us on a pilgrimage 11:5-16
- D. Faith sees the future 11:17-22
- E. Faith sees Christ 11:23-29
- F. Faith makes people better than this world 11:30-40
- G. So Consider Christ 12:1-4
- H. Don't be discouraged at chastisement 12:5-13
- I. [Warning Against Defying the work of God] 12:14-29
  1. Example of Esau 12:14-17
  2. Our Better Place 12:18-24
  3. Admonition not to refuse Jesus 12:25a
  4. The coming judgment 12:25b-29

## **VII. Live Under the Great Shepherd 13**

- A. Live in love 13:1-6
  - B. Follow the Great Shepherd 13:7-19
    - 1. Remember Your Rulers in the Church 13:7
    - 2. Jesus doesn't change 13:8
    - 3. Live seeking the coming city 13:9-14
    - 4. Live praising God and doing good works 13:15-16
    - 5. Obey your rulers 13:17
    - 6. Pray 13:18-19
  - C. The blessing of the Great Shepherd 13:20-21
  - D. Closing words 13:22-25
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**Key Idea:** Jesus Christ is the Best!

**Key Passage:** 3:1

**Key Lesson:** Follow the example of Jesus in life.