

# Hebrews

## *Overview of the Book*

### Hebrews 1:1-2:4

Hebrews 2:1 will be the text verse for our study – the reason why it's important to study this epistle.

The book of Hebrews makes a direct connection with the Old Testament. There are forty direct quotations. When it comes to the sheer number of Old Testament quotations in the New Testament epistles, Hebrews is second only to Romans which has sixty-three quotes. However, if you look at the percentage of quotes to the number of verses or volume of the epistle, Hebrews has significantly more. Not only is it shorter than Romans, but its quotations are generally longer. In the Greek, the Hebrews quotes total 737 words – about 15% of its complete content. For Romans, on the other hand, the quotes come to only 639 words – about 9% of the total. So, the population density of Old Testament quotes in Hebrews is greater than in any other book of the New Testament. The quotes make up a significant proportion of the Epistle.

(The above information has been adapted from Stephen Voorwinde's work on Hebrews.)

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### ***A. Number of chapters – 13***

***B. Writer – unknown (not stated in the book), but many believe it was the Apostle Paul. Dr. James H. Brooks gives the following reasons why he believed Paul was the human author:***

1. The entire Eastern Church of Palestine, Syria, and Alexandria unanimously ascribed it to the Apostle Paul, and the brethren there were in a better condition to be correctly informed as to its authorship than others at a distance from those to whom it was sent.
2. About thirty of the so-called Greek fathers, and at least fifty of the Latin, quoted it as written by Paul.
3. There has been an utter failure on the part of guessers, who deny his authorship, to unite with the least plausibility upon any other person.
4. The aim and argument of the Epistle is precisely such as we should expect from all the Apostle's writings.
5. There are a great many words, phrases and allusions that are peculiar to Paul, so that all who dream of some other author admit that it is written in his style.
6. His reference to his bonds (10:34; 11:36; 13:3), and his statement about Timothy being set at liberty (13:23), point very clearly to Paul.
7. The Apostle Peter says Paul wrote it – 2 Peter 3:15-16 – vs. 15 states that Paul wrote unto "you," which, considering the fact the Peter wrote to the Jews, the only possible book that would fit that verse that was written to Jews that the Apostle Paul could have written is Hebrews (all the other books Paul wrote were either to

churches or individuals).

**C. Why did Paul withhold his name, if he was the author?**

1. "Because he was well and widely known among the Jews for his zeal for Christ and hated by them, the Apostle wisely refrained from introducing himself so as not to prejudice the minds of the Jews against reading this Epistle" (W. S. Hottel). The Holy Spirit inspired the book, and the author's name was withheld because He wanted it so, but the above answer is certainly plausible, on the human side of the equation.
2. Another author put it this way: "Since the author is unknown, there is no introduction as in the other Pauline Epistles, yet the salutation is somewhat typical of Paul. It was the author's wish to give all the glory to God and seek none for himself in the Epistle by inserting his name." (Dr. Allen W. Campbell)

**D. Time of the writing – about 64 A.D. – it was before the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. because the book refers to the Temple as still standing, and the sacrifices as still being offered – 10:11.**

[Hebrews 10:11](#)

<sup>11</sup> And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

**E. Christ is seen as our "great high priest, that is passed into the heavens" – 4:14.**

## Hebrews 4:14

<sup>14</sup> Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

### ***F. Hebrews may be compared to Romans:***

1. Romans reveals the necessity of the Christian faith.
2. Hebrews reveals the superiority of the Christian faith.

### ***G. The book concludes with the walk and worship of the believer – chs. 12, 13.***

## **II. KEYS TO THE BOOK**

### ***A. Key chapter – 11***

### ***B. Key verse – 11:1 (other key verses – 1:1-2; 2:3; 4:14-16; 12:1-2)***

### ***C. Key word – "better" – 13 times***

#### ***Other key words:***

1. "Priest(s)," "high priest," "priesthood"– 37 times
2. "Heaven" (in its various forms) – 16 times
3. "Perfect" (in its various forms) – 12 times
4. "For ever" – 9 times
5. "Eternal" – 5 times
6. "Partakers" – 6 times

***D. Key note – the transcendent glory of Christ compared with that of the Old Testament***

### **III. THE PURPOSE OF WRITING THE EPISTLE**

***A. It was to strengthen the Jewish Christians and to show the danger of relying upon Judaism.***

***B. It was to show the relation of Christ and His sacrifice to the Old Testament dispensation.***

***C. It is a Divine Commentary upon the Levitical dispensation and the Levitical system of worship.***

***D. It was written for all Christians to show that Christ is able to supply all your needs here on earth.***

***E. This Epistle was apparently written primarily to Christian Hebrews who were constantly in danger of relapsing into Judaism.***

### **IV. THE MAIN WORDS OR PHRASES THAT TEACH GREAT TRUTHS FOUND IN THIS BOOK**

#### ***A. Better***

1. A better revelation – 1:1-4
2. A better hope – 7:19
3. A better priesthood – 7:20-28
4. A better covenant – 8:6

5. A better promise – 8:6
6. A better sacrifice – 9:23
7. A better possession – 10:34
8. A better country – 11:16
9. A better resurrection – 11:35

## **B. Sat Down**

Christ's finished work – 1:3; 10:12; 12:2

[Hebrews 1:3](#)

<sup>3</sup> Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

[Hebrews 10:12](#)

<sup>12</sup> But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

[Hebrews 12:2](#)

<sup>2</sup> Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

## **C. Heavenly**

1. We have a heavenly calling – 3:1
2. We have a heavenly priest – 4:14
3. We have a heavenly gift – 6:4
4. We have a heavenly substance – 10:34

5. We have a heavenly country – 11:16
6. We have a heavenly city – 12:22

***D. Let us***

1. Fear – 4:1
2. Labor – 4:11
3. Come boldly to the throne of grace – 4:16
4. Go on – 6:1
5. Draw near – 10:22
6. Hold fast – 10:23
7. Consider one another – 10:24
8. Lay aside every weight and run with patience – 12:1
9. Have grace – 12:28
10. Go forth – 13:13
11. Offer the sacrifice of praise – 13:15

**V. THE SUPERIORITY OF CHRISTIANITY OVER JUDAISM**

This is the basic outline we will use for our study.

***A. Christ is superior to the prophets – 1:1-3***

***B. Christ is superior to the angels – 1:4-2:18***

***C. Christ is superior to Moses – 3:1-4:13***

***D. Christ is superior to the Levitical priesthood – 4:14-8:5***

***E. Christ is superior to the old covenant – 8:6-10:39***

***F. Christ is the fulfillment of the faith of the saints of the Old Testament – ch. 11***

***G. Conclusion: Walk and worship of the believer – chs. 12-13***

## **VI. HEBREWS...THE "BETTER" BOOK – 9:24**

(from Willmington's Guide to the Bible)

### ***A. The better things***

1. Christ – the Superior Person – 1:1-5:10
2. Perfection – the Superior Purpose – 5:11-6:20
3. Melchizedek – the Superior Priesthood – 7:1-10:39
4. Faith – the Superior Principle – 11:1-13:25

### ***B. The better "nots"***

1. Do not disregard His Word – 2:1-4
2. Do not doubt His Word – 3:12-13; 4:11
3. Do not depart from His Word – 6:4-6
4. Do not despise His Word – 10:26-29
5. Do not disagree with His Word – 12:25

### ***C. The Superior Person (Christ)***

1. Better than the prophets – 1:1-3
2. Better than the angels – 1:4-2:18
3. Better than Moses – 3:1-4:7
4. Better than Joshua – 4:8-16
5. Better than Aaron – 5:1-10

### ***D. The Superior Purpose – 5:11-6:20 (Perfection)***

### ***E. The Superior Priesthood – chs. 7-10 (Melchizedek)***

1. It offers a better source – ch. 7
2. It offers a better sanctuary – ch. 9

### ***F. The Superior Principle (Faith)***

1. The people of faith – ch. 11
2. The pattern of faith – ch. 12

Conclusion: "The Book is crimson with the precious Blood of God's dear Lamb. It exalts the Lord Jesus in a day when Modernism seeks to place Him among the prophets of the false religions. The Book of Hebrews offers another service to the believer today. It makes clear the relationship between the Levitical sacrifices and their fulfilment in the Lord Jesus and His substitutionary atonement for sin. While the Gospels give the details of the fulfilment of the Levitical sacrifices in

the death of our Lord on the Cross, yet it is left for the Book of Hebrews to present Him as the High Priest of the believer, in all the glory and richness of the imagery of the Old Testament. One cannot become familiar with this Book without entering into a new and deeper appreciation of the Lord Jesus as his Saviour from sin.” (Dr. Wuest)