

# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

*Hebrews 13:22 Now I urge you, brothers, to bear with this word of encouragement, for I have written you only a brief letter.*

- Hebrews is a letter written to advise and encourage Christians who know they are “aliens and strangers on earth” on their way to “a better country”
- The author wrote to a specific audience. He wanted them to do certain things. He told them why they should do it, always backing up his reasons with passages from the Old Testament.  
Approaching Hebrews in this way, we find three simple and memorable commands in Hebrews:
  - o Listen – to the word of God revealed through the Son, Jesus
  - o Draw near – to God through the High Priest, Jesus
  - o Endure – through faith, which looks up to Jesus
- To urge people to not abandon their faith in Christ

## AUTHOR

*Hebrews 2:3 ...First the message was spoken by the Lord; then it was confirmed to us by those who heard him.*

- Not one of the \_\_\_\_\_

*Hebrews 13:18-19, 22-23 Pray for us, because we are sure that we have a good conscience, and because in everything we want to conduct ourselves in an honorable way. <sup>19</sup>I urge you to do this even more, so that I may be restored to you quickly. Now I urge you, brothers, to bear with this word of encouragement, for I have written you only a brief letter. <sup>23</sup>I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives very soon, he and I will see you.*

- Previously \_\_\_\_\_ the congregation and planned to \_\_\_\_\_
- We do not know who wrote Hebrews. But we know the author was obviously known by his hearers and did not wish to emphasize his own personal identity. Instead, he spoke God’s Word in a humble way as one who had heard it from those who had heard it from the Lord.
  - o In every part the authorship of the Holy Spirit is apparent

## AUDIENCE

*Hebrews 13:24 Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.*

- Unnamed – but possibly a \_\_\_\_\_
- Three points that support this
  - Timothy, mentioned in 13:23, was well-known to the Christians in Rome
  - The teaching in this book on the lasting city of God (13:14) would discredit the secular claim that Rome was an eternal city
  - Quotations from the book of Hebrews in other writings in Rome shows that the book was well known in Rome
- Readers were a definite group of Christians with whom the author had once lived and with whom he hoped to be reunited

*Hebrews 5:12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the beginning principles of God's word all over again. You have become people who need milk, not solid food.*

- They had been in the faith for some time, but were now in danger of growing stagnant

*Hebrews 10:32-36 Remember the former days when, after you were enlightened, you patiently endured a great struggle of sufferings. <sup>33</sup> Sometimes you were publicly shamed by insults and persecutions. At other times you became companions of those who were treated this way. <sup>34</sup> Indeed, you also sympathized with those in prison, and when your possessions were seized, you accepted it with joy, because you knew that you yourselves had a better and lasting possession. <sup>35</sup> So do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. <sup>36</sup> Certainly you need patient endurance so that, after you do God's will, you may receive what was promised.*

- They had previously suffered persecution, but were now in danger of suffering more
- They were still believers in Christ but were now in danger of turning away from him
- Would seem to be Jewish in background

“Some have shied away from this book as perhaps one of the most difficult in the New Testament. But what a book it is! It demonstrates the supremacy of Christ and presents him as God's perfect word to man and man's perfect representative with God. It describes Christ's ministry for the people, a ministry that is still going on in heaven today. It speaks of unshakable rest in a time when all around us is shaking in unrest. It urges the child of God not to sit down or slide backward but to stride forward on the trail blazed by Christ. It picks the child of God up when discouraged and provides him with incentive to travel upward to the eternal home. Surely such a book has much to say to us!”

## DATE

- Most likely between 60-70 AD

## THEME

- Don't forsake Christ

# DON'T FORSAKE JESUS

## FOCUS ON THE SON

### ➤ READ HEBREWS 1:1-4

#### Look

- *"In these last days"* – The last days refer to what we call the New Testament period, between Jesus' ascension and his second coming.

#### Discuss

1. The writer's purpose in this book is to bolster his readers' faith and confidence that Jesus is superior to all things in every way. In verses 2-4, he praises Jesus by pointing out seven of Jesus' characteristics. Let's identify them?
  - a. 1:2b – Jesus is “\_\_\_\_\_”
  - b. 1:2c – Jesus made \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. 1:3a – Jesus is “\_\_\_\_\_”
  - d. 1:3b – Jesus is the “\_\_\_\_\_” of God's being
  - e. 1:3c – Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ all things by his Word
  - f. 1:3d – Because Jesus provided purification for all our sins, he can \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - g. 4 – Jesus is superior to the angels because he is called \_\_\_\_\_

### ➤ READ HEBREWS 1:5-14

#### Look

- The author of the book of Hebrews quotes directly from 11 OT books, all of which are regarded as God's Word with equal authority and relevance (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, 2 Samuel, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Haggai)
- Hebrews has more quotations from the Psalms than from any other book of the OT. It is the main source for the author's teaching of Christology. (17 quotations of and 16 allusions to Psalms)
- *"Angels"* – It would appear that the people addressed in this book were either worshiping angels or were saying that Jesus was only an angel, capable of powerful signs, but hardly the Son of God.
- *"Today"* – This is not saying that on a certain day God became the Father of Jesus. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father. This verse, however, refers to the time when Jesus was born and carried out his work of salvation. At this time God declared him to be his Son and exalted him. It points to the special relationship that exists between Father and Son – not a particular time.

Discuss

2. This section contains some of the greatest testimonies that Jesus is God. How does the writer show the "God-ness" of Jesus in...
  - a. v. 5 - \_\_\_\_\_ by God
  - b. v. 6 - \_\_\_\_\_ by angels
  - c. v. 7-8 - He has an \_\_\_\_\_ throne
  - d. v. 9 - He is \_\_\_\_\_ by God
  - e. v. 10-12 - He \_\_\_\_\_ everything and is \_\_\_\_\_

*Psalm 102:19-27 "The LORD looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth, <sup>20</sup>to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death." <sup>21</sup>So the name of the LORD will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem <sup>22</sup>when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the LORD. <sup>23</sup>In the course of my life he broke my strength; he cut short my days. <sup>24</sup>So I said: "Do not take me away, O my God, in the midst of my days; your years go on through all generations. <sup>25</sup>In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. <sup>26</sup>They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. <sup>27</sup>But you remain the same, and your years will never end.*

- f. v. 13,14 - God tells Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_

➤ **READ HEBREWS 2:1-4**Look

- "If the message spoken by angels was binding" - The writer is referring to the Law
- Acts 7:53 you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.*
- Galatians 3:19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.*

Discuss

3. According to these verses, why did Jesus perform miracles? What is the purpose of spiritual gifts?
  
4. Considering verse 3, what other purpose do these miracles serve?

- a. What different emphasis is made with signs, wonders and miracles?
  - i. Signs –
  - ii. Wonders –
  - iii. Miracles –

### Draw Near

5. What causes Christians to drift away?
6. How could these verses be used to help someone who does not see the danger of slipping in his or her church attendance? Focus especially on the word “drift.”
7. Which sin is worse – disobeying God’s law or rejecting his gospel?

### Apply

8. Discuss how the movie Star Wars uses myth to teach spiritual truths. How do the incarnation of Christ and our worship of him conflict with this film?
9. How might we use this section to tell someone that we should not be expecting any more inspired words given? Similarly, how can it be used as a reply to those who say that God is “speaking” to them (apart from the Bible)?

Endure**DON'T FORSAKE JESUS...WHY**

- ❖ He is \_\_\_\_\_
- ❖ Since Jesus himself is superior, his \_\_\_\_\_ is superior
- ❖ Since his Word is superior, we need to \_\_\_\_\_

Implications:

*Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud:  
"This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"  
Mark 9:7*

*Responsive Closing Prayer*

- L: Dear Jesus, in you God made his "final speech" to the world, a beautiful statement of his gracious and good will. You are God:  
**G: we worship you.**  
L: You are superior to all creation:  
**G: we submit to you.**  
L: You are changeless:  
**G: we depend on you to supply our every need in an every changing world.**  
L: You died on the cross for our sins:  
**G: forgive us.**  
L: You rose again on Easter morning:  
**G: give us your eternal life and peace.**  
L: You ascended into heaven:  
**G: dispatch your holy angels to touch our physical needs.**  
L: We pray all this in your name and by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
**G: Amen.**