

## Introduction to Hebrews

### Background and Setting

Jesus Christ is greater than anything and everything! He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament; all that came before pointed to Him. This Book tells us of the Supremacy, Sufficiency, Pre-eminence, and Divinity of Christ. He is supreme over all—over angels, Patriarchs, prophets, priests, traditions, Law, and all that was created. Jesus is Superior in His Name, His role, and His purpose; He is the Ultimate Word of God! Because He is so, He can give us redemption and purify us from our sins. These has been given by God for Jesus and presented to us. Jesus is the Son and the eternal Sovereign God; God wants the entire universe to recognize Christ's Sonship and LORDSHIP and rule. In fact, we too must recognize and worship Jesus as LORD.

This Epistle is about the God Who is here, the One who speaks. He is the God of promise and fact; He has an inheritance and an Inheritor and a role for us. The audience was a Church that was confused about the role of Christ and angels and which of them was superior. They tried to compromise His status to appease both pagans and Jews. For us, we can learn from their good example and be warned of their failures, so we can take the faith we have and grow it because He is able and He is the greater reality. The value and role we have in Christ is greater than any reality we may think we have.

These people, Jews by birth and converts to Christianity, were under persecution and harassment from their synagogue, friends, and family and it would get worse (10:32). Thus, they had to learn faith and take what the Lord had done and let it become more real and impacting. They had not done so well in this area, as many of us today struggle with too; the understanding and application of our faith can be allusive when we are not focused on what faith is all about. Life comes at us hard and fast and when we are not prepared by the development of our faith, we will fail at the deployment of our faith and our call and opportunities and suffer needlessly as a result. God wants us to succeed in life and faith and gives us instructions, encouragements, and warnings to get lined up to Him before it is too late.

The author of Hebrews is also appealing to those who are philosophically minded, as the Jewish philosopher Philo, who had some Gnostic tendencies but is credited in saying *our reality on earth is only a mere shadow to heaven*. Here, the twist is that God is the Builder and the Essence of reality and we are in His shadow to please Him by following His purpose for our lives. We are shown the qualifications of Jesus to be our High Priest, sole Mediator, God, and Friend. And

we are shown our response, the importance of our emergent spiritual maturity, to know and grow in the power of God and His Word.

This is a work of encouragement too. The human author is identifying with his readers as a priest identifies with the weak, yet in great sincerity and passion points out the error of their ways so they will not fail or further waste away. At the same time, he is disappointed in his church of seasoned believers who should know and do more. He wonders if they have the intellectual and effectual faith to understand what he is saying. Perhaps even God Himself is frustrated by our lack of conviction, refusal of His Son, and the slowness of our faith—what we need to hear and be aware of today in our personal lives and church.

These people were once growing and thriving Christians who have stopped or have become lethargic in the furtherance of their faith. Many people in this early church were taking their new faith for granted because they thought grace was a license for apathy and irresponsibility. Indifference and sluggishness will cause us to drift away from the Word of God and His wondrous precepts and call and thus the opportunities He has for us too. Their struggle was also with laziness and complacency and perhaps stress with leadership transitions and pride as most churches do today. They were in eminent danger of backsliding away from Christ and into their old ways and even sin. They needed a lesson on the preeminence of Christ and encouragement to persevere and carry on what Christ had given them (Heb. 6:19; 11:10; 12:4; 13:3-17). A call to get right with Christ and move on with your faith is a call that we too must heed (Heb. 4:11-16; 6:1; 10:19-25)!

The recipients of this Epistle were also struggling with bad ideas and false doctrine, such as a misguided consideration that angels were supreme and that their messages were binding and infallible beyond that of the Prophets and even Christ. This teaching was not from the Torah or Writings; it was a first century heresy infecting both Jewish and Christian groups. Why is this so important? So the role of Christ is not confused with the role and purpose of angels who are inferior or seeking anyone or anything to replace Christ as so many Christians are doing today. So people in the early church and today will not compromise Christ' status to appease others. Hebrews makes it clear: Christ is All in All and His Word is far more infallible and binding than angels or anything else. Then a climatic and careful argument is made that builds on Christ priesthood, so our rest is in Christ as Lord and Mediator and so we all can be equipped and encouraged to move on in the faith for His glory and our mutual benefit as a Church. And it is so we may draw nearer to Him and in so doing be the example for others to do so too.

This Epistle also points out a major problem in the practice of any religion, here being Judaism. It can easily become an idol. Just as misguided Christians in the Middle Ages sought relics from the holy land, today people seek miracles and signs without substance and/or chase false end time predictions and movements,

while the main thing gets left out. The Jews so idolized Moses, they forgot who he was and what he pointed to. Thus, the author carefully points out that Christ is Lord and superior to Moses so to realign their focus on the main thing: Christ as Lord. It is the impact that Christ has had because His teaching has been listened to and adhered to. He is our help and our Lord; we can go to Him and we do. In so doing, we have the skills to know His Truth and practice it, living wholehearted and content lives in Him.

## **Theme and Purpose**

The Permanence, Sufficiency, Preeminence, and Superiority of Jesus Christ! Jesus is the One upon Whom our faith rests and depends, from start to finish. The major purpose of this Epistle was to challenge and encourage one's spiritual development and maturity in Christ so to resist temptations and persecution by the building up of mutual faith and knowledge of Christ (Heb. 4:1-11; 11:10-16; 13:14).

This Epistle of Hebrews introduces two major themes; one is the divinity of Christ. He is supreme over all—over traditions, Law, and all that was created, including angels and Patriarchs. He is the Ultimate Word of God! Jesus is the heir of all things. He is incarnate, He made the universe, and He is the radiance of God's glory and sustains all things. In so doing, He is able to give us redemption and purify us from our sins (Mark 16:19; Eph 1:20; Col 1:15-20; 3:1; 1 Pet. 3:22). The second major theme is we are in a new Covenant. Christ is our Divine Mediator and Priest. God is the One who speaks, both then and now, and there is a relationship between the old and the new covenant (Heb. 2:2-3; 4:12; 6:5; 11:3; 12:25). He is a God of promise and fact; He has an inheritance and an Inheritor and a role for us. The audience was a Church that was confused about who Christ is and what He does. Perhaps they were fatigued by family and cultural pressures to compromise His role and purpose to placate friends, family, the pagans and Jews. Who today do we try to appease? Are we even aware of it?

Hebrews was primarily written to prevent the Jewish Christians from throwing away their faith and be encouraged to be a testament for the Church through the ages, for us today and tomorrow, on what it means to live by faith by Who and what Christ has done. These people, like many of us today, were struggling with their faith. Suffering had gotten them down, family pressures and society had them doubting or weak in the commitment to Christ they once had given. Thus, perhaps shame and regret had set in because they were trying to maintain their Jewish identity while wearing the new label of "Christian," and were finding it difficult to walk in both worlds or leave one for the other (Heb. 10:32-39; 13:3). They needed instructions and encouragement.

Hebrews sets up an eloquent and carefully crafted case for the clear indication of the infinite deity, superiority, and supremacy of Jesus Christ as the

eternal, Holy God, all of which is also documented in the Old Testament. In addition, Jesus is infinitely superior to any created being or entity. This argument uses various verses quoted from the LXX *Septuagint* (first century Greek translation of the Old Testament, most recognizable to the early church and Jews) using key words, such as *Son*, in order to link the thoughts from the coming Messiah to the revelation and resurrection of Christ Himself, a then common Jewish exegetical technique. These quotes come mostly from the Psalms such as Psalm 2:7 and the Old Testament passages 2 Samuel 7:14 and Habakkuk 2:3-4. Then the “author,” inspired by the Holy Spirit, uses “rhetorical” questions to prove Christ’s coming and His Supremacy (worshiped by angels) to a misguided church that thought angels were supreme and that Christ was also an angel of some sort, or at least not as authoritative (Deut. 32:43; 2 Sam. 7:14; Psalm 2:7; 97:7; Acts 13:33).

We are shown the importance of our continual spiritual formation. We are given the object of our faith, Christ; as He is the One who gives us our faith, we are to respond back to Him by faith. If we do not know His Word, the Bible, we do not know much about Christ and thus will not grow in Him. Our lives will backslide and fall to apostasy because of our spiritual laziness. Thus came a stern warning to take the Christian journey seriously and be faithful to our responsibility. If we turn our backs on Christ, we will be held responsible and receive the natural and supernatural consequences, even judgment. We must persevere in our faith and be encouragers and equippers of one another’s faith too, so we all can persevere, no matter what life and Satan throw at us, as we have our High Priest at our side!

The bottom line is that the object of this faithful trust is Christ; our salvation culminates in the Person and Word of Christ. He reveals even more of Himself. We are shown that we are in desperate need for forgiveness and for a Savior to give us mercy and grace. So Christ willingly participated in our humanity without compromise and sin, and became the High Priest to not only represent us, but also to pay our debt of sin. He sees our utter exposure before God and covers us by His suffering atonement. The benefit for us is that He can help us—not just in salvation, but also in our daily life of weakness, actions, and thoughts (Psalm 110:4; Mark 12:35-37).

## **Authorship**

The Big mystery is, *who penned this?* Although this Epistle has Paul’s “fingerprints” all over it in the words and themes used, it is not in his style; perhaps it was written from a lost letter he wrote after he had passed away. But, this work has no personal ascription to Paul or the autobiographical/personal references as his other letters clearly do. Nor do most of word usage and styles match Paul or Luke, the only two likely authors who had the education and ability to write in this high style over any other New Testament writer. This is written in a classic, formal Jewish style similar to the opening of “Ecclesiasticus,” “a popular

apocrypha Jewish wisdom book (*deuterocanonical*) written in a “high language” style. Thus, whoever wrote it was highly educated, and influenced or personally disciplined by Paul. Or, maybe Paul did write it to a different scribe near or at the time of his death. Where he slowly and carefully crafted this as a treatise, this is in contrast to his epistles that were dedicated in a hurry, while on the run, in prison or under some kind of pressure. And perhaps it was unfinished or the title page address, often written on the outside of the scroll, was lost. But these are theories and there is no hard evidence for them. Whoever the author was, he was well versed in the Old Testament, other Hebrew writings, and the Septuagint (Greek Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures). He was also intimate with his audience, perhaps their pastor or the one who founded their church, as he is very personal and caring when he address them, and can be very challenging—as a good pastor is (Heb. 10:32-34; 13:22-23).

Who could have written Hebrews? The author states in chapter thirteen (Heb. 13:23), that he traveled with Timothy; thus the person being a traveling companion to Paul is most probable. The most likely men who had the skills to compose this letter are first of all, Silas (Acts 16:37; 1 Pet. 5:12). He had the educational opportunities and was a citizen of Rome and was possibly a professional scribe. Second is Apollos, who was also a contender. He too traveled with Paul and was schooled in Alexandrian rhetoric as well as a trained and perhaps professional philosopher (Titus 3:13). Some have suggested it could have been a woman, perhaps Priscilla (Heb. 11:32). And that could be the reason why the author’s name is left out. That would be extremely rare, as all letters, like today, have the author’s name(s) and address on them. In those times, for a woman to write, and write something important was socially unacceptable. Priscilla is certainly a likely contender, but there is no evidence—only speculation. In addition, the author uses a masculine verb for himself (Heb. 11:32). Barnabas (Acts 4:36; 14:4,14) is also in the running from Jerome’s view (347-420 A.D.), who gave us the Vulgate, but again, there is no evidence to uphold Barnabas as the secret author, even though an early translation of the Bible, *Codex Claremontanus*, had the title as *The Epistle of Barnabas*. Clement of Alexandria (early church father, 150-220 A.D.) as well as Origen (185-253 A.D.) believed it was Paul, and other early church fathers, Tertullian (155-220 A.D.) believed it was Barnabas, others have suggested Luke or Clement of Rome (95 A.D.), but he comes on the scene way too late. Toward the end of his life, after careful study, Origen said, *only God knows who has written the book*. Most Church Fathers and scholars such as Pantaenus (around 160 A.D.) believed it was Paul and the debate then was if it was originally written in Hebrew and not Greek, but there no evidence supported this either. Martin Luther proposed it might have been Apollos. Calvin was the first to really dig into this issue and see the textual deviations from other Pauline Epistles, and thus ruled out Paul and proposed this author was just a mystery. Even if we did know the author, it would not add anything to our knowledge or understanding of this Epistle. The main point is this: God’s Word is inspired by Him and He used the

hands and means of men to pen His thoughts and decrees. The real Author is the Holy Spirit of course.

### **Date and Occasion**

I believe it was written before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., since the sacrificial system was still in play (Heb. 8:4, 13:9:6-9; 10:1-3, 11). I believe it to be 67-69 A.D. Looking at the text itself and the mentioned of Timothy being freed in chapter thirteen (2 Tim. 4:21; Heb. 8:13; 13:23-24), and correlating it to Acts and Paul, this happened during the terror of Nero's persecutions against Christians, 67-69 A.D. (Heb. 10:32-34). This is when Nero was at his fieriest; he died in 68 A.D. It also seems that the author wrote from Rome and perhaps saw for himself the terrors and horror from his window as well as his travels with the Apostles and personal dealings with the early church members. The fact that Paul may have died in 64 A.D. and he is not mentioned in this Epistle, would also be a strong indicator this was not a Pauline Epistle. During this time, Rome was at war with Judea, had laid siege to Jerusalem, and was about to destroy the Temple. Since the destruction of the Temple is not mentioned, this also places the book before or at 70 A.D. The term, *this age is passing away*, indicates not that this age has passed away, but is referring to the Jewish Temple sacrificial system in (Heb. 8:13).

### **Canonicity**

This Epistle had little controversy and was widely accepted as Scripture. 1 Clement, also wrote an early Epistle that was once a contender to be included in the Bible. It was almost accepted in the Canon of Scripture, but did not meet the requirement of having an eyewitness and/or an Apostle. 1 Clement (95 A.D.) endorses this letter to the Hebrews and is the first document we have thus far to do so.

### **Theological Value**

*A word of exhortation* (Heb. 13:22), this letter is a work of encouragement written by a Jew for fellow Jews who were educated in a synagogue and who had accepted Christ as Lord. They were generous, yet wondered if they should return to their ancestral faith (Heb. 3:13; 6:10, 17-20; 10:25; 12:5-6). This is a work unparalleled in giving us vital information about our Lord—His role, working in the Church and in our lives. This is rich in the Deity and incarnation of Jesus Christ, why He came to earth to pay our debt of sin, become our substitutionary death on our behalf, and His role as our High Priest, which means He paid our payment that we cannot do ourselves (Mark 10:45; 1 Cor. 1:23-25; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 9:15). This sacrifice of Christ does not manipulate and/or force God to love and accept us; but God is the one who initiated it, and we are given it freely by grace, which we receive by faith and respond to by our gratitude and growth in our faith (John 3:16). This is the full expression of love in God's heart. We are

reconciled to God, whose righteousness paid the price for the justification for our sins through the sacrifice of His Son, (Rom. 3:21-26).

The author uses a classic Jewish writing technique of the lesser to the greater (*qal vahomer* or “how much more”) while using images of Sinai as well as quotations from the LXX to bring his point home to those whose faith and knowledge of Christ was slipping away. This was confirmed by the first eyewitnesses, primarily the apostles, who had given their word that the message was true; it was then authenticated by signs and wonders (Heb. 3:12-14; 4:1, 11: 5:11-12; 6:11-12; 10:22-25; 12:1-13, 25-29). The basic message for us is to trust in Christ, not in His creation or even His messengers. In so doing, He will send us angels to serve us, when we need them, and we may never even be aware of it (Deut. 32:43; 2 Sam. 7:14; Psalm 2:7; 97:7; Acts 13:33).

This Epistle of Hebrews is also all about Christ, which is called “Christology,” the study of the nature of Jesus Christ—His Person, Work, and Role. Jesus is the Son Who is the source of our salvation and life, Who passed through the Heavens, Who is the Shepherd, and Who leads His Church. Christ is superior to all things that came before; those were the types and shadows that pointed to Him. He is the Better Promise and better sacrifice; He is the better possession over the Land and He is eternal. He is superior to Moses, the Patriarchs, the priestly system, the Temple, and anything that is popular such as angels. Jesus is the “archegos” as in the Pathfinder and Trailblazer, the Pioneer and Foundation of our faith. He supersedes the old covenant and he becomes the New Covenant (2:10; 5:9; 6:20; 7:3, 16-27; 8:6-13; 9:11-13, 23; 10:19-20, 34; 11:16; 12:2; 13:20). Christ is now the High priest; He is our Mediator and Lord. He became like us in life and death, He was tempted, tested, and suffered all in our behalf, yet he did not sin—so to pay our debt of sin. His work accomplished what the Law and Sacrificial system could not do, but only pointed to the One; Christ is the One. He is the One who intercedes on our behalf. He is the One who not only saves us, but in Whom we trust and depend for all things in life and spirituality (4:14-16; 5:1-9; 7:25-28; 9:26-28; 10:10-14).

This Epistle of Hebrews also points to God’s provision for us now and in eternity to come. He is the God of the past, present, and future, He is our Maker and Builder and our Promise now and to come. We are His people, His pilgrims called into His rest. We must take our Christian faith seriously and never become lazy or conceited or apathetic, rather take what He gives, grow it, and give it back to Him continually (Psalm 95:7-11; Heb. 3:6-15; 4:6-8; 11:10; 13:14).

This Book is also a set of instructions to take, further develop, and deploy our faith by faithfulness by our spiritual growth in Christ. Faith is the essential and appropriate essence of a person of God. We are called to *live by faith* and we are given reasons and examples as well as supernatural help and support. Faith is our confidence and endurance in Christ who is the Object and reason for our faith. Thus with Christ’s empowerment, we can press on, endure whatever life

throws at us, and be better, stronger, and more mature in so doing. If we forsake our call in this, we insult Christ and miss His opportunities and become a blight to Him and His Church (Hab. 2:4; Heb. 10:32-39; 11). Our faith will lead to perfection of our spiritual maturity. As Christ was made *perfect*, meaning His “consecration,” it does not mean Jesus was *made* perfect, for He already was; He was always without sin. This means He finished His work of the cross—of life, death, and resurrection for the payment of our sins. He became our sacrifice and thus was qualified to redeem and save us. His incarnational role was finished—His work for our salvation that we could not by any means accomplish on our own. His righteousness finished the role that was set before Him and is put on us called “propitiation,” appeasing the righteous wrath of God as His work “conciliates” (makes peace with) God, who would condemn us for our sins. Now through Christ, we can also have “satisfaction,” our fullness and growth in Him (Heb. 2:5-11; 5:1-10; 9:9-12; 7:28; 10:1,14; 11:40; 12:23).

## Genre

The type of literature is similar to a Greek Epistle, or commonly known to us as a *personal letter*. But it is more than that; it is more like a *treatise*—an essay such as a letter like Romans. This also has a Jewish *midrash*—giving a homily while pointing to a precept of a text (Psalm 110) without always citing the text (how the Jews interpreted Scripture). This is also a Talmudic exposition of the law just like Paul gives, and then a commentary and explanation (Deut. 30:12, 13, 14; Rom. 10:5-21; Heb. 13:22). The words and precepts in this letter are real, personal, and not theoretical; this is not a discussion. Rather, it is a challenge to live a life of worth to the One who gave so much to us. This is a very passionate and persuasive letter and uses completed and brilliant logic to make his case, just like Philo and parts of the Dead Sea Scrolls do. Like Luke and Acts, the author gives a very polished Greek style and consequently must have been highly educated in rhetorical and literary skills. This is by far the most beautiful literary work in the New Testament.

The structure of this letter-essay gives the audience a set of contrasts in a rhetorical style, such as Christ is greater than the Angels, Moses, and the law as well as the Promised Land, because Christ is the Promise (Heb. 1:1-14; 2:1-18; 3:1-4:13). The role of Christ as High Priest was especially of value to the early Jewish Christian, and the author addresses this as Jesus being in the order of Melchizedek and thus, Christ is a New Covenant and is greater than the Old Testament Temple and priesthood (Heb. 4:14-7:28; 8). Then the author encourages them in the perseverance of their faith and spiritual growth and influences them not to go back to Judaism or have a weak Faith (Heb. 9:1-12:13). Then he closes the Epistle with the fact that as Christians, we have responsibility, he gives moral exhortations, and urges them to beware of apostasy (Heb. 13:1-17).



Some of the arguments of style here is a Jewish interpretative rule called the “gezerah shavah” where key words of one passage are linked to another. Thus, many Jews at that time, as today, do not take the plain or face value of a text as we do. Rather, they seek only its underlying meaning or what more it could be, and argue from those points. This is to exhort and encourage us to pay attention to God’s Word, including correct, godly teaching (2:5-11).

## Destination

The audience who received this Epistle was mostly Jewish Christians. They perhaps received Christ from one of the Apostles such as Paul (Heb. 2:3), and demonstrated the relationship community in communication of the Gospel, empowered by the Holy Spirit. These people had a special provision by the Apostles as confirmed by those who heard Christ firsthand, as they in some way sat at a masters feet and learned. We do this by sitting at the feet of our Lord with diligence, perseverance, and discipline. This was a model of discipleship too. They lived Christianity and His grace as it is free, but as with ours, their growth takes time and work to be the best for His highest. The Apostles bore witness to Christ and have told and written it all down for us so we can “hear” it too as this Epistle demonstrates very well. This witness helps us to know Him and then make Him known by our witness. Perhaps their struggle in this area set in motion the need for this letter to be written and sent. There is a responsibility implied to hear and to obey as the following passages testify (Acts 1:21-22; 10:39-41; 1 pet. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:15), when they and we did not, a stern warning in love and care was given.

To whom was Hebrews written? Traditionally this Epistle was to *those in Italy* from 13:24, but careful exegeses and historical research may show otherwise. They were perhaps a church or set of churches in Asia Minor (making them the same audience of Revelation) or the Macedonian area of Philippi. This is where the Jews were at this time outside of Judea as they were kicked out of Rome under Claudius in 49 A.D. (Acts 18:2). Rome is also a valid contender for this letter, as the phrase, *those in Italy* (Heb. 13:24) seems to refer to the author’s vantage from where he was writing *from*, not *to*. This is only if Jews were there in hiding like the early Christians. Also, like Romans, this may have been a “circular letter” and went to all these destinations (Heb. 10:32-34; 13:24). Whoever these people were, they were Jews and were schooled in Greek language, knew their culture and history well, and thus could follow the complicated Jewish logic and draw from the “types and shadows” of the Old Testament that looked forward to Christ, such as the priestly and sacrificial system to the New Testament and the Person and work of Christ fulfilling these. They also read the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint (LXX), and lived in Greek culture as well as Hellenistic. These were Jewish Christians whose faith was wavering under persecution and who had shown little spiritual growth to prepare for it. They were being pressured by family and Jewish cultural and rabbinic pressure as well as

losing assets and family members to force them to abandon this new faith and return to their family and synagogue (Heb. 10:34; 13:23).

Remember your call to imitate the faith of our forerunners and build anew upon Christ as our LORD!

## **Outline of the Epistle of Hebrews**

### **Theme: The Permanence, Sufficiency, Pre-eminence and Superiority of Jesus Christ!**

#### **Chapter 1: Jesus is Supreme!**

- Prologue: God has spoken through His Son and this is His last and best Word. (1:1-4)
- God's shadows of Christ to the Prophets (1:1)
- Christ is Superior to the Prophets (1:1-4)
- God's Revelation in "Sonship" (1:2-4)
- Christ is Superior to the Angels (1:5–2:18)
- Christ the King is testified to us by the Scriptures (1:5-14)
- Christ's future work is demonstrated from the Old Testament (1:5-14)
- Christ is Superior to the Old Covenant (1:5—7:28)

#### **Chapter 2: Do not neglect or ignore your Faith!**

- A warning not to drift away from Christ (2:1-4)
- Christ is demonstrated by His humanity (2:5-18)
- Christ is praised above the Angels (2:5-9)
- Exhibition of Psalm 8:4–6 (2:5–9)
- Christ's suffering was necessary for His Work (2:10-18)
- Christ is identified with Humanity (2:10-13)
- Christ delivers the elect (2:14-16)
- Christ is our Merciful High Priest Who save us (2:17-18)

#### **Chapter 3: Christ is Superior and calls us to faithfulness**

- Christ is faithful like Moses (3:1-2)
- Christ is the Building; Moses is the builder. (3:3-4)
- Christ is Lord while Moses is the Servant (3:5-6a)
- The second warning: do not neglect your faithfulness (3:6a–4:13)
- The call to enter Christ's salvation and rest (3:7—4:13)
- Exhibition of Psalm 95:7–11 (3:7—4:13)
- A warning against unbelief, Israel's failure, and an urging not to imitate the unfaithfulness of their forefathers in the wilderness (3:12–4:11)

#### **Chapter 4: God offers us rest; do not miss out!**

- A word of warning against not trusting in Christ or you may miss God's rest (4:1-13)
- The essential manner of Faith (4:3-11)
- The Penetration of God's Word as it contains the words of God and points to His throne of grace (4:12-13)
- Christ is Superior to Aaron and the high priests (4:14–7:28)
- Christ is our sympathetic and Great High Priest (4:14-16)
- Exhibition of Psalm 110:4 (4:14—7:28)

#### **Chapter 5: The exhortation to spiritual maturity**

- The priesthood of Aaron (5:1-5)
- The Priesthood of Christ; His qualifications as LORD (5:6-10)
- A warning not to become spiritually lazy, as Christian immaturity is a big problem (5:11–6:8)
- The call to our Christian formation and a warning when we refuse (5:11-14)

#### **Chapter 6: The certainty of God's promise**

- More encouragement to press on to the maturity of our faith (6:1-3)
- A Warning against apostasy (6:4-8)
- A reminder of God's Promises (6:9-20)

#### **Chapter 7: Christ the Greater Priest who is superior to the Old Testament priestly order**

- Christ is ordained in the priesthood order of Melchizedek (7:1-28)
- The importance of Melchizedek (7:1-10)
- Christ's Priesthood supersedes the old priesthood (7:11-19)
- Melchizedek's order supersedes the Levitical priesthood (7:11-28)

#### **Chapter 8: Christ is our new Sanctuary and new Covenant**

- Christ is superior to the old covenant and ministry (8:1–10:18)
- Christ made this new Covenant by His Sacrificial Work (8:1—10:18)
- Exhibition of Jeremiah 31:31–34 (8:1—10:18)
- Christ is a superior Covenant (8:7-13)
- The old covenant is insufficient (8:7-9)
- The New Covenant is sufficient and effectual (8:10-13)

#### **Chapter 9: Christ is a Better Perfect Sanctuary**

- The old, earthly sanctuary is imperfect and merely points to Christ (9:1–10)
- Christ is the better heavenly Sacrifice (9:11—10:18)
- The shedding of Christ's Blood was necessary (9:13-22)
- Christ is the purification of God's Work for our Heavenly Sanctuary (9:23-28)

### **Chapter 10:** The Permanence of Christ and His Sacrifice

- The insufficiency of the Levitical sacrificial system (10:1-9)
- Exhibition of Psalm 40:6–8 (10:1–10)
- The sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice (10:10-18)
- The Practical Outworking of Christ's Superiority (10:19–13:17)
- Our call to follow Jesus faithfully and with perseverance to enter His rest; He is our New Sanctuary (10:19-31)
- Hold fast and draw near to Christ with hope and confidence (10:19-22)
- Our call to empower one another in love (10:24-25)
- A warning to not fall away to sin or from peer pressure (10:26-31)
- Our call to learn from and endure persecution (10:32-39)
- Exhibition of Habakkuk 2:3–4 (10:32—12:3)
- Our call to be encouraged and to encourage others, to persevere and grow our faith no matter what are our circumstances are (10:32—12:3)

### **Chapter 11:** The hall of fame of Faith and its excellent examples

- Examples of people of faith, so we can respond with a life of faith too (11:1-40)
- The Faith of Abel to Noah, and our call to imitate their faith (11:4-7)
- The Faith of the Patriarchs, and our call to imitate their faith (11:8-22)
- The Faith of Moses, and our call to imitate his faith (11:23-29)
- The Faith of the people of in Israel after Moses, and our call to imitate their faith (11:30-40)

### **Chapter 12:** Motivations and warnings to endure faith and learn from discipline (12:1-29)

- Jesus is our supreme example (12:1–3)
- Exhibition of Proverbs 3:11–12 (12:4–13)
- Discipline is evidence of our Sonship in Christ (12:5-11)
- Encouragement to persevere in faith and in hardship, as things are never as difficult as they seem (12:4–13)
- We are called to grow in Christ to pursue our spiritual formation (12:12-17)
- Discipline is necessary for our sanctification, and growth in Christ (12:12-17)

- Our call to Holy Living (12:14–17)
- A warning not to deny Christ or our faith and growth in Him (12:18-29)
- Exhibition of Exodus 19:10–23 (12:18–24)
- The tremendous Holiness of our LORD God of Heaven (12:25-29)

### **Chapter 13: Epilogue and Benediction**

- Precepts for authentic Christian living (13:1–17)
- The love for other Christians (13:1-6)
- The call to have respect, to submit and provide for leaders, and our call to encourage and imitate their faith (13:7-17)
- Our call to resist false doctrine (13:9-15)
- The call for prayer (13:18–21)
- Personal Remarks (13:22–23)
- Final Greetings, exhortations, and benediction (13:24–25)

### **References and Resources used:**

1. Richard J Krejcir. Into Thy Word. "Into Thy Word Bible Study Method." Writers Club Press. 2000.
2. *The Works of Justin*
3. *The Works of Josephus*
4. *The Works of Eusebius*
5. *The Works of Early Church Fathers*
6. William Lane, Hebrews, Two Volumes, WBC, Word, 1991
7. F.F. Bruce, The Epistle of Hebrews, rev, NICNT, Eerdmans, 1990
8. Warren Wiersbe. With the Word. Oliver Nelson. 1991.
9. D.A. Hagner, Hebrews, GNC, Harper & Row, 1983
10. John Calvin, Commentary on the Epistle of Hebrews, reprint Eerdmans 1989
11. Halley's Bible Handbook. Regency. 1927.
12. New Geneva Study Bible. Thomas Nelson. 1995.
13. Sturgeon's Devotional Bible. Baker Books. 1964.
14. Jerome H Smith, Ed. The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge. Thomas Nelson. 1992.
15. R.C. Sproul. Essential Truths of the Christian Faith. Tyndale. 1992.
16. Expositors Bible Commentary, I, II, Hebrews. Zondervan. 1994.
17. Craig S. Keener. The IVP Bible Background Commentary. Inter Varsity Press. 1993.
18. Research at the Scholarly Archives at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA; Years of study & teaching notes; Seminary notes; Prayer  
Richard Joseph Krejcir is the Director of *Into Thy Word Ministries*, a missions and discipling ministry. He is also the theologian in residence at the Francis Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development.