

(Hebrews) - Jesus Is Superior



- In your thinking—how does Jesus compare to Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed, Joseph Smith, or any other person in history who has had a significant influence in shaping world religions?

The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish followers of Jesus who were suffering for their faith. They were experiencing rejection and hostility from their Jewish countrymen. A number of them were reverting to Judaism. The writer of Hebrews stressed that Jesus is superior to Judaism and all other religions and their leaders. He is superior to the prophets, angels, Moses, the Old Testament priesthood, and the Old Testament Covenant. Jesus is the only Son of God. Jesus is the only Savior of the world. Why would they want to go back to their old life when Jesus is superior to all and the true Lord and Savior?

The Book of Hebrews is considered the most Christ-focused book in the Bible. It has been called the "Fifth Gospel." The four gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—describe Jesus' ministry *on earth*, while the Book of Hebrews describes Jesus' ministry *in heaven* at the Father's right hand.

Central Lesson:

Jesus is superior to all - faithfully follow Him.

Author: The author of the book is **ANONYMOUS**. No one knows for sure who wrote Hebrews. Bible experts have speculated and discussed the authorship for centuries, as far back as the early church Fathers in the 2nd century. The suggested names are Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, Luke, Silas, etc. Many doubt Paul as the author because (1) Paul always identified himself in his epistles, whereas Hebrews identified no author. (2) Paul was an eyewitness to the resurrected Jesus (Acts 9:5), but the writer of Hebrews refers to himself as one who had not seen Jesus but received his information from others who were eyewitnesses (Heb. 2:3). (3) The Greek used in Hebrews is the most eloquent in the entire New Testament and contains expressions and vocabulary not used by Paul in any of his other epistles. Tertullian (A.D. 155-220) suggested Barnabas as the author. Martin Luther (A.D. 1483-1546) thought it might be Apollos. Origen (A.D. 185-253) wrestled with the issue and finally said that only God knew who had written the book. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit is the author, so it doesn't matter who the human instrument was.

Date: Hebrews was written before A.D. **70**. The book refers to the temple sacrifices and ceremonies, which indicates it had to be before the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 by the Romans.

Title: The book was titled **HEBREWES** because it was written to Hebrew Christians.

Key Verses: Hebrews 1:**3-4**. *"³ The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the*

*mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. ⁴ This shows that the Son is far **greater** than the angels, just as the name God gave him is **greater** than their names."* NLT.

Key Chapter: Hebrew **11**, called "The Hall of Fame" or the faith chapter. It describes the heroes of faith who experienced hard times but believed in God when they had nothing to cling to but God's promise. The key verse in this chapter is Hebrews 11:6.

Key Words: **BETTER** (6:9; 7:19, 22; 8:6; 9:10, 23:10:34; 11:16, 26, 35, 40. **GREATER** (1:4; 6:13, 16; 7:7, 8; 9:11).

Outlines: *The Life Application Bible* outlines the book as:

I. The Superiority of Christ (1:1-10:18)

- A. Christ is greater than the angels (Chapters 1-2)
- B. Christ is greater than Moses (Chapters 3-4:13)
- C. Christ is greater than the Old Testament priesthood (Chapters 4:14-7:28)
- D. The new covenant is greater than the old (Chapters 8-10:18)

II. The Superiority of Faith (10:19-13:25)

Themes: (1) Jesus is Superior to All Others

Jesus is superior to everyone and everything. Christianity supersedes all other religions and will never be surpassed.

- Jesus is superior to the prophets (1:1-3).
- Jesus is superior to the angels (1:4-2:18).
- Jesus is superior to Moses (3:1-4:13).
- Jesus is superior to the Old Testament priesthood (4:14-7:28).
- Jesus and the New Covenant are superior to the Old Covenant (8:1-10:18).

(2) Five Warnings

- Pay more careful attention to the gospel message and don't drift away from it (2:1-4). "...*what makes us think we can escape if we ignore this great salvation...?*" (2:3 NLT).
- Do not harden your heart to the voice of God (3:7-4:13, especially verses 3:8, 13, 15; 4:7).
- Leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity (5:11-6:20).
- Don't reject salvation in Jesus Christ. God has provided no other provision for the forgiveness of sin and salvation (10:26-39).
- Don't live in disobedience to God's Word (12:14-29).

(3) Living the Christian Life Under the New Covenant

Because Israel continually violated the Old Covenant, God promised the coming of a *New Covenant* through the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31-34). Hebrews teaches (chapter 8-10:18) that Jesus brings in the New Covenant and **includes believing Gentiles**. It provides a new way to experience forgiveness - not through animal sacrifices but by faith in the shed blood of Jesus. The last section of the book of Hebrews (10:19-13:25) gives practical instructions on living the life of faith under the New Covenant.

Central Lesson: Jesus is superior to all - faithfully follow Him.

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.