Wednesday Morning Senior Adults Bible Study — The Book of Hebrews
Hebrews 1
June 24, 2026

INTRODUCTION TO HEBREWS

Who wrote Hebrews? We don't know. The author never names himself, as Paul always did. In the church's earliest centuries, Paul, Apollos, Barnabas, Luke, and Clement of Rome were each suggested as the letter's author. We can rule out Paul and Luke; the Greek in which Hebrews is written is markedly different from their Greek styles. The writer was certainly a man—he uses the masculine form of the verb for "I do not have time" in 11:32. He was known by the people to whom he wrote (as is clear from personal notes like 13:19), knew Paul's coworker Timothy (13:23), was *not* himself an eyewitness of Jesus (2:3), was very familiar with the Old Testament scriptures, and wrote with an impressive mastery of Greek language and syntax. For these reasons, many today favor Apollos as the writer (he was a Jewish Christian, and "He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures", Acts 18:24). The church saw in this letter the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and teaching that was true to the teaching of the apostles, whoever the writer was.

What is this letter about? Hebrews is essentially a sermon (a "word of exhortation", 13:22) urging and warning Christians, especially Jewish Christians, to remain true to Jesus even in the face of persecution. (Notice references to persecution in 10:32-34, 12:4-13, 13:3, 13:13, 13:23. Also notice the frequent calls to perseverance in the faith in 6:4-12, 10:19-39, 12:1-3, etc.). The sermon reminds believers of the exaltation of Christ and his supremacy over Moses, the high priests descended from Aaron, and even angels, so that they will not give in to external pressure to return to (non-Christian) Judaism or to fall away from Christ.

Why is it called "Hebrews"? Though written to the church, this letter is called Hebrews because of its many references to the features and practices of Israel, especially under the Law of Moses (the tabernacle, sacrifices, high priesthood, etc.). Even with its strong connection to Jewish heritage, though, its message is thoroughly Christian.

When was it written? Probably around AD 63, before the Jerusalem temple was destroyed in AD 70; the writer would surely have mentioned that destruction and the accompanying end of sacrificial offerings, if it had already happened. It was also most likely written before AD 64, when Nero began to persecute Christians in Rome.

To whom was it written? It was written to Christians, especially Jewish Christians, in an unknown location. The most likely location is Rome, where there were many Jewish Christians; the earliest reference we have to this letter comes from Clement of Rome in AD 96, and the closing note that "Those from Italy send you their greetings" (13:24) *could* mean that those from Rome and its region who now live abroad send greetings back to their home city. But Rome is, at best, only an educated guess.

HEBREWS 1

From this chapter, list 3 ways God's Son is superior to angels:

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1:1-2 — How has the way God spoke with people in the past changed now?

1:2-3 — Notice what the writer says God's Son has done:

verse 2 — God appointed him as…
verse 2 — through the Son God made…
verse 3 — the Son upholds all things by…
verse 3 — he made…
verse 3 — after that, he sat down at the…

1:6 — What story does this remind you of? (Hint: Read Luke 2:8-14.)

1:8, 13 — What characteristic of God's Son is emphasized in these verses?

1:14 — What are angels?

...What do they do?

Food for Thought…

Why does it matter that Jesus is greater than angels? List one or two reasons:

What do the writer's frequent quotations from the Hebrew scriptures so early in his argument tell us about his audience and/or his purpose in this message?