

# INTRODUCTION TO Hebrews

## READ ALONG

- 07/09-07/10 Hebrews 1-6
- 07/13-07/15 Hebrews 7-13

## WHERE IS IT IN THE BIBLE?

- 55. 2 TIMOTHY
- 56. TITUS
- 57. PHILEMON
- 58. HEBREWS**
- 59. JAMES
- 60. 1 PETER
- 61. 2 PETER

## OCCASION

Since the author sends greetings to the church from people who were originally from Italy, it is likely that the church addressed in the book was also in Italy, probably in Rome. The members of the church were facing increasingly intense persecution including public ridicule (10:33), confiscation of their property (13:34), and imprisonment (13:3, 23). Very soon, many would be martyred in the persecution perpetrated by Nero after the great fire of Rome in the mid-60s. Some were considering leaving the church to return to the Jewish synagogue where they would enjoy special protections under Roman law that Christians did not have. The book urges the members of the church to continue to confess Jesus as the Lord and Messiah (10:23), to continue to assemble with other believers for worship (10:24), and to recognize that Christianity is superior to a Christ-less Judaism in every way. Although the author warns of the dreaded consequences of abandoning the Christian faith (6:4-8; 10:26-31; 12:25-29), he is optimistic that the members of the church will remain faithful even in the face of persecution (6:9-12; 10:39; 11:40; 12:3).

## KEY THEMES

- Christianity has far more to offer than Judaism since: 1) Jesus is superior to the OT prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua, and the high priest, 2) Jesus's death is superior to animal sacrifices, 3) The new covenant is superior to the Old Covenant
- Believers should be encouraged by the examples of those who persevered in their faith even in their suffering: 1) Their own earlier sufferings (10:32-36), 2) The suffering of the OT saints (11:33-38), 3) The sufferings of Jesus (12:1-3)

## BOOK BASICS



**DATE**  
c. AD 65



**TYPE**  
Sermon



**AUTHOR**  
Unknown

Although many English versions title this book "The Epistle to the Hebrews," this title was not original. The earliest title was simply "To the Hebrews." The author described the book as a "message of exhortation" (13:22), a description used of a synagogue sermon in Acts 13:15. He also prefers to refer to himself as "speaking" or talking (2:5; 5:11; 6:9; 8:1; 9:5; 11:32) and only rarely as writing (13:22). The book also lacks the normal introduction of a letter that included the identification of the author, recipients, and a letter greeting. Only the conclusion of the book sounds like a letter (13:22-25) so the author probably preached his sermon, transcribed it, and sent it by courier to the church after adding a conclusion

As early as the mid-second century, some Christians writers asserted that the Apostle Paul wrote the book and our earliest surviving manuscripts of the book place it among the letters of Paul. However, the contents of the book do not identify Paul as the author as was his normal custom (cf. Rom 1:1) and the title "Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews" is a later addition. Some have suggested that Luke or Apollos wrote the book. Although we cannot tell the identity of the author for certain, this does not hinder our ability to interpret the book.

## BASIC STRUCTURE

13 CHAPTERS

