

## Hebrews (author: unknown, date: before AD 70)

**Purpose:** “To exhort the brothers, washed with pure water and partaking of the altar, that Christ is their High Priest and all-sufficient sacrifice for sin.” (TLSB, 2102)

**Theme:** “Christ is greater than any angel, priest, or old covenant institution; thus each reader, rather than leaving such a great salvation, is summoned to hold on by faith to the true rest found in Christ and to encourage others in the church to persevere.” (ESV Study Bible, 2358)

### Key points (from ESV Study Bible, 2358):

1. Jesus is fully God and fully man. (1:1-14; 2:5-18)
2. Jesus as Son of God reveals God the Father, is the agent of creation, and sustains all creation. (1:1-14)
3. Jesus serves as the eternal high priest, who as a man sympathizes with human weaknesses, and yet who offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin. (1:3; 2:10-18; 4:15-16; 9:11-10:19)
4. Jesus is superior to angels, to Moses and the Mosaic covenant, and to the earthly tabernacle and its priesthood. (1:4-2:18; 3:1-6; 5:1-10; 7:1-10:18; 8:1-13)
5. All humanity faces eternal judgment for sin. (4:12-13; 9:27-28; 10:26-31)
6. Faith is necessary to please God and to participate in his eternal salvation promises. Faith requires conviction about the unseen realities of God and his promises. Such faith produces perseverance. (4:2-3; 6:1, 12; 10:22, 38-39; 11:1-40)
7. Perseverance is necessary in the Christian life, and thus church participants are warned against a lack of endurance. (2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:12; 10:19-39; 12:1-29)



8. God's promises are trustworthy, including his promise of eternal salvation. (6:13-20)
9. With the advent of Jesus Christ, the last days have begun, though they await consummation at his return. (1:2; 2:5; 4:9-11; 9:9-28; 12:22-29)

**Outline (from Middendorf & Schuler, *Called By the Gospel*, 283)**

- I. Jesus is Greater Than the Angels (1:1-2:18)
- II. Jesus is Greater Than Moses (3:1-6)
- III. Jesus Gives A Superior Sabbath Rest (3:7-4:13)
- IV. Jesus is the Great High Priest (4:14-6:12)
- V. Jesus is of the Order of Melchizedek (6:13-7:28)
- VI. Jesus is the High Priest of a New Covenant (8:1-13)
- VII. Jesus Fulfills the Earthly Tabernacle/Temple (9:1-10)
- VIII. The Sacrifice of Jesus is "Once for All" (9:11-10:18)
- IX. Exhortation to Approach (10:19-39)
- X. Roll Call of the Faithful (11:1-40)
- XI. "Run the Race" (12:1-13:25)

**Two Difficult Sections: 6:4-6:** "The 'falling away' here is not simply a falling into sin due to fear or the weakness of our human nature. Instead, it describes outright apostasy and a complete renunciation of the faith by one who once believed. It is the repeated hardening of one's own hear against God and God's will...obstinate unbelief, the "unforgivable sin" against the Holy Spirit spoke of by Jesus (Mark 3:28-29)." (Ibid., 285) Also, the "impossible" aspect applies to the ability of the person, not God.

