

Introduction

Title

The Biblical text nowhere includes the title “Epistle to the Hebrews.” The oldest manuscripts of the book (Ⲱ, B, C, D²) do, however, add the title “to the Hebrews” or begin the first verse with “To the Hebrews.” Later manuscripts show evidence of the title being enlarged to “The Epistle to the Hebrews” (Peshitta Syriac) and even “The Epistle to the Hebrews of Paul the Apostle” (Harclean Syriac, and similarly P² and L²). Other titles or introductory notes in the ancient manuscripts reference Timothy as the one through whom the epistle came, as written by Barnabas and sent to the Laodiceans or the Alexandrines and even as an epistle specifically directed against the heresies of Marcion.¹

The writer calls the book a “word of exhortation” (τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως, 13:22) and notes that he has written briefly, the Greek term ἐπέστειλα, *epesteila*, (“written”) being the word from which our English “epistle” is derived. Though there is no formal opening or greeting as is normally the case in epistles, Hebrews bears other characteristics of the 1st Century epistle: the author obviously knows the readers, is aware of their problems and issues, has mutual friends (Timothy, cp. 13:23), and closes with a typical salutation. We may safely conclude that Hebrews was written as an epistle by a leader of the followers of Yeshua to a group of believers who were not strangers to him, and who had reason to respect the author’s authority.

The Original Language of the Epistle

The earliest notice of the epistle is to be found in Eusebius,² itself a quote from Clement of Alexandria (who lived approx. 150-220 C.E.)

Thus Ignatius has done in the epistles which we have mentioned, and Clement in his epistle which is accepted by all, and which he wrote in the name of the church of Rome to the church of Corinth. In this epistle he gives many thoughts drawn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and also quotes verbally some of its expressions, thus showing most plainly that it is not a recent production. Wherefore it has seemed reasonable to reckon it with the other writings of the apostle. For as Paul had written to the Hebrews in his native tongue, some say that the evangelist Luke, others that this Clement himself, translated the epistle. The latter seems more probable....³

1 Brooke F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Text with Notes and Essays* (Eerdmans, 1973), p. xxviii. [Hereafter “Westcott, *Hebrews*”]

2 *Hist. Eccl.* vi.14.

3 Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 3:38.1-3.

This belief, that the epistle was originally written in Hebrew and later translated into Greek, was held fairly consistently by the medieval Western Church.

While some continue to hold this position, the majority of scholars today have come to the conclusion that the original letter was written in Greek, and that Clement was voicing an opinion for which he, in fact, had no material basis. No physical evidence of a Hebrew original exists (no manuscripts, not even scraps of such), and the Greek of the present text reads like an original composition, not a translation. For instance, the word order is very Greek and many Greek compounds used have no equivalent in Hebrew or Aramaic.

Still, it is possible that the original letter was written in a semitic language (Hebrew or Aramaic) and that the manuscripts we now have are copies of a very early translation into Greek. It is even possible that the author wrote two letters, one in Hebrew (or Aramaic) and the other in Greek, in order to accommodate both Hellenistic Jews (who would be fluent in Greek but possibly not in Hebrew) and Jerusalemites who may have received a letter in Greek with much suspicion. But remember, no physical evidence has yet been found to support the idea of a Hebrew original.

The bottom-line in this discussion, however, must be the recognition that God, in His infinite wisdom, superintended the text we now have (including the translation from Hebrew to Greek if this did, in fact happen) so that the inspired message is intact. We dare not (as some have) attempt to explain away difficulties in the text by suggesting that the supposed translator did not understand the original. Our view of inspiration must extend to the providential preservation of the text as well.

Date of the Epistle

The specifics which surround the Epistle to the Hebrews are cloaked in the silence of history. The author does not identify himself, nor does he specify who the readers are, their location, or the specific purpose of the epistle. Therefore, the date of the letter can be only estimated on the grounds of suggestive data. For instance, an epistle written by Clement of Rome, called 1Clement, shows clear literary dependence on Hebrews.

...for he, being the radiance of his majesty, is as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent. For so it is written: "He makes his angels winds and his ministers flames of fire." But of his Son the Master spoke thus: "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will give you the Gentiles for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession." And again he says to him: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." Who, then, are these enemies? Those who are wicked and resist his will. (1Clement 36:2-6, italics indicate parallels to Hebrews)

If 1Clement is dated to 95-6 CE (as it generally is), then that date would be the *terminus ad quem* for Hebrews. However, some scholars would place the writing of 1Clement early in 70 CE,¹ and if that is the case, then Hebrews could likewise be dated before the destruction.

1 J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Westminster, 1976), pp. 327ff.

The earliest date for its composition is not so easily determined, however. The author describes himself as among those who have received the message of salvation second hand (2:3). His addressees have been believers for a considerable time (5:12). They have previously experienced persecution, reproach, and imprisonment (10:32-34). All of this indicates that some time had elapsed since their initial coming-to-faith in Yeshua (6:4).

Those who opt for a pre-70CE date rely primarily upon two things: 1) the manner in which the author refers to sacrifices in the present tense (9:6-10; 10:1-4) and 2) the lack of any mention of the Temple's destruction. However, these are not, in and of themselves, conclusive, since works written well after the destruction of the Temple also speak as though the Sanctuary still stood (Josephus, Clement of Rome, and the Mishnah).

While a pre-70 CE is possible, there are reasons to believe that the epistle was written a decade or so after the destruction. First is the persecution against the followers of Yeshua under Nero (64–68 CE), which was followed by 12 years of relative peace and prosperity, which ended with the persecutions under Domitian, the persecution that may have caused the exile of John to the isle of Patmos (Rev 1:9). History has shown the periods of peace and prosperity often mark a decline in religious fervor. Such a period of peace may have resulted in some "drifting away" from the gospel they had heard (2:1), or becoming hardened "by the deceitfulness of sin" (3:13), while others apparently were no longer attending services at the messianic synagogues (10:25). It seems reasonable that such references in our epistle may indicate that it was written during the years of peace and prosperity, while the reference to persecutions in the "former days" (10:28) may well refer to those endured under Nero.

Second, our author rebukes his readers for failing to learn the teachings of the Apostles (5:12), for by the time of his writing they should have been teachers but were still in need of being taught. This might well indicate a lapse of time from the era in which the Apostles taught.

Third, if he was writing his epistle after the destruction of the Temple, he would be offering to the Messianic believers a reasoned response to the question of how they could continue their life of faith without the Temple, much like the rabbis of the time gave themselves to formulate rabbinic Judaism as a viable preservation of the Jewish faith and community without the Temple and priesthood. Our author's argument is that those in Yeshua still had a "tabernacle" and a High Priest, and that the reality of the Temple and its services had come to fulfillment in the work of the ascended Messiah. Thus, "that which is growing old and ready to disappear" (8:13) could well reference the Temple services, which some sought to maintain even after the destruction.¹

Finally, one wonders why Paul and the other Apostles mention nothing about the heavenly High Priesthood of Messiah in their epistles, especially when this is such a central theme of Hebrews. The answer may be that the author of our epistle was writing at a time when the Temple and priesthood were a thing of the past, so that when he speaks of their having been set aside, he had the freedom to make such statements without incurring the wrath of the Jewish community and their leaders. Obviously Paul had no such freedom.

For these reasons, I favor putting the date of Hebrews a decade or so after

1 See the commentary on 8:13.

the destruction, somewhere between 80 and 85 CE.¹ But this dating can only be speculated. The best we can say with confidence is that the Epistle of Hebrews was written sometime between 60 and 95 CE.

The Author

A great deal of material has been generated over the issue of authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the early centuries authorship was foundational to the acceptance of a letter or book as canonical, i.e., authoritative. Books in which the author's identity was not clearly stated therefore lagged behind in being widely accepted. What is more, the early Church was hesitant to accept the work of someone who was not recognized as within the circle of apostles. Pseudepigraphic works (letters or books written by someone who falsely attributed them to one of the apostles or a close acquaintance of an apostle) were motivated by a desire to find credibility among the established, Christian communities.

PAUL – An early tradition attributed the Epistle of Hebrews to the Apostle Paul. P⁴⁶, a papyrus manuscript dated to c. 200 C.E., includes the Epistle to the Hebrews among Paul's other epistles. Eusebius, quoting a tradition apparently held by Clement and Origen, notes that he too was aware of a tradition that Hebrews was written by Paul in Hebrew or Aramaic:

...the Epistle is Paul's, and that it was written to Hebrews in the Hebrew language, and that Luke translated it with zealous care and published it to the Greeks; whence it is that the same complexion of style is found in the translation of the Epistle and in the Acts. [Further] that the [ordinary] phrase 'Paul an Apostle' was not placed at the head of the Epistle for good reason; for, he says, in writing to Hebrews who had formed a prejudice against him and viewed him with suspicion, he was wise not to repel them at the beginning by setting his name there.²

Most biblical scholars today dismiss Pauline authorship on the basis of style, language and content. For instance, Paul spends a good deal of time on the issues of circumcision, the Torah and the works of the Torah, justification, and sanctification (to name a few). These themes are not stressed in Hebrews. What is more, in an epistle which focuses on Jewish themes, it seems highly unlikely that Paul would, for example, avoid the issue of circumcision, something not mentioned at all in Hebrews. And, these issues of style and theme were also noticed by ancient authorities. Eusebius himself suggested that Hebrews was the work of Clement since it matched the style and theme of his first epistle.

A further consideration is the notice (2:3) that "the word" (presumably referring to salvation in Yeshua) was first proclaimed by "the Lord," and then given to the author by those who had heard Him. This appears to contradict Paul's strong position in Gal. 1:12ff that he did not receive the gospel from man, but directly from God. Paul heard the voice of Yeshua on the Damascus

1 See Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Epistle of the Hebrews* in *New Testament Commentary* (Baker, 1984), pp. 14–16.

2 Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. lxvi.

road (Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14). And Yeshua spoke with him afterward (Acts 18:9-10; 22:18-21). It seems almost impossible that Paul wrote the words in Hebrews 2:3.

Still, the KJV of 1611 followed the tradition of Pauline authorship, and printed the title "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews," a line which is still included in the KJV editions (though in some printings a marginal note alerts the reader to the question of authorship).

BARNABAS – Tertullian (an early church father, ca. 225 C.E.) suggested that Barnabas was the writer of Hebrews. He explained his reasons for holding this view: Barnabas was a Levite (Ac 4:36-37) and would thus be very acquainted with the priestly functions. He was from Cyprus where he learned Greek very well. Further more, he was familiar with the Christian community and their needs, and thus was in a perfect position to write Hebrews.

Until the early 4th century C.E., the Epistle of Barnabas and the Epistle to the Hebrews circulated together in some communities, and were thus reckoned as both by Barnabas, the companion of Paul in his first missionary journey (Ac 13). Furthermore, since the Epistle of Barnabas¹ has as its subject the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, some felt the two letters so similar in content as to warrant their singular authorship by Barnabas. (Codex Sinaiticus has both the Epistle of Barnabas and the Epistle of Hebrews at the end of the manuscript, after Revelation.) However, a comparison of the Epistle of Barnabas (dated between 70 C.E. and 132 C.E.) with Hebrews shows many differences, not the least of which is the consistent spiritualization of the Torah commandments in Barnabas which are, in Hebrews, accepted as divinely given, viable for the followers of Yeshua Who is the very goal of the Torah itself (cf. Rom 10:4).

APOLLOS – Martin Luther suggested that Apollos wrote Hebrews. He felt Apollos was a good candidate since he was knowledgeable in the Scriptures (Ac 18:24-26) and persuasive in his teaching abilities; he was from Alexandria where there was much Greek education, and where the Greek translation of the Tanach (Old Testament) was made and widely used; and, the church flourished in Alexandria. Since the Septuagint (abbreviated Lxx) was the "Bible of choice" in Alexandria, and since it is used in the quotes from the Tanach in Hebrews, Luther felt this added weight to his suggestion of Apollos.

But what deals a fatal blow to this suggestion is the simple fact that Clement of Alexandria ascribes the epistle to Paul. If Apollos were, in fact, the author, it seems highly unlikely a church leader from the same city would not have known it.

PRISCILLA – Some modern scholars have suggested that Priscilla, who together with her husband instructed Apollos (Ac 18:26), is a good candidate for the author of Hebrews. But 11:32 tells against this idea: the author uses a masculine participle when he refers to himself in the phrase "I do not have time to tell about Gideon...." The author could not, therefore, have been a woman.

1 Most scholars dismiss the idea that Barnabas, the companion of Paul, actually wrote this work. See Jay Curry Treat, "Barnabas, Epistle of" in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* [here after *ABD*] (Yale, 1992), 1.611-14.

CONCLUSION – The authorship of the Hebrews cannot be determined absolutely. What can be determined is that the author knew his readers, that he was acquainted with the problems they were facing, and that he felt some measure of authority in calling them to maintain the faith they had previously confessed. He recognizes the persecution which they had undergone, a persecution which appears more and more ominous in their future, and that some, no doubt because of persecution, had withdrawn from the public gathering for worship. Yet the author is separated from the community to which he writes (13:19), though reasons for his absence are unknown. It may be that he, along with others, were sent out on a mission (note the plural “us” in 13:18) or even that he or some of his group had been imprisoned (note the “release” of Timothy, 13:23).

He felt a great need to substantiate his claims and exhortations from Scripture, as seen by the many quotes in the epistle. This is even further seen from his use of the Tabernacle in his exposition of the priest and his office. The regulations of the Tabernacle are specifically outlined in the Torah, while those of the Temple were, for the most part, simply carried over from the Tabernacle, but were not specifically mentioned in the Scriptures.

The author is knowledgeable of more than the written Scriptures, however. The traditions of the Oral Torah (codified eventually in the Mishnah) are subtly interwoven into the author’s polemic. For instance, the notice regarding oaths as ending the dispute of almost everything (6:16; 7:20) suggests that he was aware of the debates reflected in the later Talmud regarding the high priority of taking an oath in a disputed litigation. Additionally, our author knows the process priests undergo as they enter their office, i.e., that it did not require an oath (7:21) as well as the daily routine of first sacrificing for the sins of the priest, and then for the sins of the people (7:27).

Perhaps more to the point is the description in 9:19 of Moses at Sinai. Here our author goes far beyond the Exodus account (Ex 24), adding calves and goats, water, scarlet wool, and hyssop to the sprinkling ceremony. For a writer who bases his arguments on the written Scripture, here is evidence that he also followed some traditions which most likely were part of an oral Midrash (perhaps based upon the 3 year cycle of Torah readings, in which Exodus 24 and Num 19 would occupy a similar Sabbath in the 2nd and 3rd years). He thus shows himself to be part of a Jewish community with specific theological traditions and interpretations of the biblical text.

The Purpose & Recipients of the Epistle

Seeking to ascertain the addressees of the epistle can be a great asset in the process of interpreting the author’s intention and meaning. But the only data we have for such an inquiry is the epistle itself, which offers us no specific information on this matter.

Primarily two opinions have been held regarding the destination to which the epistle was originally sent: 1) Palestine in general, and Jerusalem specifi-

cally,¹ and 2) Rome. The majority of modern scholars opt for the second option. But other locations have also been suggested, including "Samaria, Antioch, Corinth, Cyprus, Ephesus, Bithynia and Pontus, and Colossae."²

Those who consider Rome to be the destination of our epistle usually appeal to 13:24 in which greetings are sent from "those from Italy," which is thought therefore to indicate that they were sending greetings to those "back home," but such an inference is by no means certain. It is just as likely that "those from Italy" (for example, Aquila and Priscilla) were sending greetings to friends anywhere in the Mediterranean. Further appeals for a Roman destination is the fact (already mentioned) that Clement of Rome was familiar with the epistle, as well as the close affinities between Hebrews and 1 Peter, which was written from "Babylon," an obvious circumlocution for Rome.

But the destination of the epistle is not nearly as significant as is the ethnic identity of the group being addressed. They were obviously messianic believers since our author exhorts them to remain true to their confession of faith in Yeshua (4:14; 10:3). But much debate surrounds whether the community being addressed was primarily made up of ethnic Jewish believers, a mixed community of Jews and Gentiles, or primarily Gentile believers.

The tradition of the early commentators (which is still quite prevalent among modern Christian scholars) was that the recipients were "Jewish-Christians" who, from our author's perspective, had failed to distance themselves completely from Judaism and, as a result, were edging toward a relapse into Judaism and thus abandoning their faith in Yeshua as Messiah. The draw "back into Judaism" was thought to be a longing for the temple and its services, which would explain the emphasis upon the "heavenly Tabernacle" and the superiority of Messiah as the heavenly High Priest.

Modern scholars have suggested other motivations which were drawing these "Jewish-Christians" back into "Judaism." Since the author speaks of persecutions which his addressees have undergone, some have suggested that they were considering a return to "Judaism" in order to enjoy the protection it had as a *religio licita* (legitimate religion within Roman law). Others have suggested the draw of Hellenistic Jewish theology or the desire to identify with sectarian piety or belief known through specific halachic practices, or some combination of all of these.

This traditional view, that the purpose of the book was to rescue a community of "Jewish-Christians" from returning to "Judaism," sees the epistle as "a polemical or apologetic tract arguing for the superiority of Christianity to Judaism, its 'fleshly ordinances' (7:18; 9:10), and its 'diverse and strange teaching' (13:9)."³ But such a view falters by the simple fact that, while the author clearly argues for the superiority of Yeshua in all things, he never argues for His being the promised Messiah. In other words, he does not view the community he addresses as in danger of abandoning their belief that Yeshua of Nazareth is the true Messiah promised by the prophets.

1 This was the "common opinion of ancient commentators": Chrysostom, PG 63:9–14; Theodore of Mopsuestia, PG 66:952; Jerome *De vir. illust.* 5 (PL 23:617); Theodoret, PG 82:676. (Taken from Harold Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews in Hermeneia* (Fortress, 1989), p. 9, n. 68. [Hereafter, Attridge, *Hebrews*])

2 Ibid., p. 10.

3 Attridge, "Hebrews, Epistle to the" in ABC 3:104–111.

Nor does the author reprimand his readers for observing Torah commandments (washings, food regulations, etc.¹) and he does not take a negative view of sacrifices (9:8-15; 10:1-4). He rather wants them to understand the fuller sense of these rituals, i.e., as pointing to Yeshua Who would, in an ultimate sense, fulfill their eternal realities. He thus emphasizes a high “Christology” as a corrective to what appears to be an errant view of Yeshua’s divine nature which may have been gaining traction among the messianic group to which he writes his epistle.

Further, the traditional Christian view of our epistle fails to reckon with the fact, now well established in modern scholarship, that one simply cannot speak of a “normative Judaism” in the pre-destruction era but must admit of an array of multifaceted “Judaisms.” This being the case, the early followers of Yeshua saw themselves not outside of but within the circle of “Judaism.” It was not until the late 1st and on into the 2nd Centuries that the emerging Christian Church identified itself as “other” vis-à-vis the traditional synagogue.

It seems to me that the author was concerned, not with the “Jewishness” of the believing community to which he wrote, but rather that they were on the brink of being persuaded to follow teachings which he characterized as possessing serious error. This errant teaching was apparently one which, while recognizing that Yeshua was Messiah, nonetheless wavered on the issue of His deity and divine authority, considering rather that “legal Jewish status” (maintained by specific Torah observance) was the necessary requirement for retaining covenant status within the family of God. This would then be similar to “another Gospel” which Paul was combating in his Epistle to the Galatians, but with this difference: while Paul is primarily exhorting Gentile believers in his epistle to the Galatians (and their being persuaded to undergo “conversion” through proselytism), our author appears primarily to address ethnic Jews. What both epistles conclude, however, is that Yeshua as Messiah has made a full and sufficient atonement for sin, and that He alone is the avenue through which one may enter the family of God as a *bona fide* member of the covenant, whether Jew or Gentile. Thus, our author’s emphasis upon the deity of Yeshua is foundational for his soteriological arguments, for only the sacrifice and priestly work of an infinite, eternal Messiah could win eternal salvation for those who are His.

General Outline of the Epistle

1:1–4	Introduction & Opening Exhortation
1:5–2:18	Yeshua: Superior to Angels
3:1–4:13	Yeshua: Greater than Moses
4:14–7:28	Yeshua: the Great High Priest
8:1–10:18	Yeshua: Mediator of the New Covenant
10:19–12:29	Yeshua: Object of True Saving Faith
13:1–25	Concluding Exhortations & Salutation

¹ Christian commentators often refer to such Torah commandments as “Jewish ritual practices.”

*Expanded Outline of the Epistle***I. Introduction and Opening Exhortation, 1:1-4**

- A. The ultimate revelation of God in His Son, Yeshua, vv. 1-2
- B. The superior position of Yeshua:
 - 1. exact representation and glory of God, v. 3
 - 2. exalted position of Yeshua Who bears the Name, v. 4

II. Yeshua: Superior to Angels, 1:5–2:18

- A. Yeshua: the divine Son – superior to angels
 - 1. No angel ever given the place of the Son, 1:5
 - 2. Angels worship the Son and serve Him, 1:6–7
 - 3. The Son (Yeshua) is divine, eternal, righteous, Creator, 1:8–12
 - 4. The Son sits at the right hand of God as Sovereign and the angels are His servants 1:13–14
- B. Exhortation to acclaim Yeshua's sovereignty, 2:1–4
 - 1. Admonition not to drift away, i.e., fail to give Yeshua His rightful place, 2:1
 - 2. If the Torah, administered by angels, reveals God's unalterable authority, then the sovereignty of Yeshua must be given an even greater status, 2:2
 - a. The superior position of Yeshua was announced by God Himself, 2:3
 - b. The superior position of Yeshua was confirmed by many witnesses, as well as by signs and wonders, 2:3–4
- C. Yeshua is the quintessential Son of Man Who will rule the world to come, 2:5–9
 - 1. The world to come is not subjected to angels, 2:5
 - 2. Mankind was given the role of ruling the earth, 2:6–8
 - 3. Yeshua, by His incarnation, brings the fulfillment of mankind's created role to rule over the earth, 2:9
- D. The mystery and glory of Yeshua's incarnation, 2:10–18
 - 1. Yeshua, Who is the Creator, fully completed His role as Savior through the means of suffering, 2:10
 - 2. As such, He is able to bring many sons & daughters to glory, having identified with their humanity, 2:11
 - 3. Yeshua's identifying with mankind is prophesied (Ps 22:22; Is 8:7, 18), 2:12–13
 - 4. The incarnation was necessary for saving mankind since by His death He defeated Satan, 2:14–15
 - 5. As the incarnate One, He clearly came for the salvation of Abraham's seed, not for angels, and is able to be a merciful high priest, having endured victoriously the same temptations which come upon His brothers and sister, 2:16–18.

III. Yeshua: Superior to Moses & Joshua, 3:1–4:13

- A. Exhortation: give attention to Yeshua, 3:1
 - 1. He is the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, 3:1
 - 2. He faithfully completed His mission even as Moses was faithful in his duties, 3:2

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- 3. He was counted worthy of greater glory than Moses, 3:3–5
 - 4. Messiah is faithful over His house, i.e., His people, 3:6
 - a. His people are characterized by persevering to the end
 - b. The generation of Israel who did not persevere (quote from Ps 95), 3:7–11
 - c. Exhortation to persevere to the end, 3:12–19
 - B. Exhortation to be faithful to Messiah, 4:1–13
 - 1. entering into the rest proclaimed in the gospel, 4:1–2
 - 2. true faith in Messiah means entering into His rest, 4:3–6
 - 3. the Sabbath rest proclaimed in the gospel is both present and future, 4:7–11
 - a. The Bible (the written word) is able to penetrate the innermost being, revealing what is truly in one's heart, 4:12
 - b. Nothing is hidden from Yeshua, 4:13
 - IV. Yeshua: Superior to Aaron as High Priest, 4:14–7:28**
 - A. Yeshua is superior to Aaron because:
 - 1. He has perfect and complete access to the Father, 4:14
 - 2. He perfectly fitted to be our High Priest because of He is the incarnate Son of God, 4:15
 - 3. Therefore, we can be confident that we are fully represented before the throne of God's grace, 4:16
 - B. The qualifications for a High Priest, 5:1–4
 - 1. Must be one from among those he represent, 5:1–2
 - 2. Must offer sacrifices for the people and for himself, 5:3
 - 3. Must be appointed by God, 5:4
 - C. Yeshua is fully qualified to be a High Priest, 5:5–10
 - 1. Appointed by God, after the order of Melchizedek (proven from Ps 2:6; 110:4), 5:5–6
 - 2. Lived and suffered as a man; learned obedience, 5:7–9
 - 3. Fulfilled the archetype of Melchizedek, 5:10
 - D. Believers in Yeshua must lay hold of the assured salvation accomplished by Yeshua's propitiation, 5:11–6:20
 - 1. The recipients of the epistle have not progressed in their understanding of important, biblical truths, 5:11–14
 - 2. Exhortation to grow in spiritual understanding, 6:1–8
 - a. the intent of the author to help deepen his readers understanding, 6:1–3
 - b. those who have forsaken Yeshua are destined for destruction, 6:4–8
 - 3. Encouragement regarding the true faith of the readers, 6:9–12
 - E. The promises of God are sure and give unshakable assurance to those who have true, saving faith, 6:13–20
 - 1. The Abrahamic covenant and God's oath, 6:13–15
 - 2. The certainty of God's oath and promise, 6:16–17
 - 3. All believers are heirs of the promise and thus have a sure and certain hope of eternal salvation, 6:18–20
 - F. Yeshua: High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek, 7:1–28
 - 1. Melchizedek's High Priesthood superior to that of Aaron, 7:1–17
 - a. historical record regarding Melchizedek (Gen 14), 7:1–3
 - b. Abraham, forefather of Levi, gave Melchizedek a tithe, thus Melchizedek is superior to Levi, 7:4–10

2. The establishment of the Melchizedek Priesthood (Ps 110:4) would not have been necessary if the Levitical Priesthood were able to bring perfection, 7:11–17
 - a. Yeshua must be of a different priesthood since He is not descended from Levi but from Judah, 7:11–14
 - b. Yeshua is a priest, not by physical lineage, but by divine appointment established with an oath (Ps 110:4), 7:15–17
3. Yeshua's heavenly High Priesthood superior to the Levitical, earthly Priesthood, 7:18–28
 - a. The Torah laws governing the earthly Priesthood do not apply to the heavenly Priesthood, 7:18
 - b. The heavenly Priesthood is superior to the earthly, for Yeshua is able to establish a better covenant, 7:19–22
 - c. The earthly priesthood was constantly changing because priests died, but Yeshua lives forever and thus His priesthood is permanent, 7:23–24
 - d. Thus, the outcome of Yeshua's High Priestly intercession is the complete salvation of all who are His, 7:25
 - e. Yeshua's priesthood is superior because He offered Himself once for all time, 7:26–27
 - f. The Levitical priests were weak, i.e., unable to effect complete salvation, but Yeshua, the Son of God is perfect, and thus able to effect eternal salvation for His people, 7:28

V. Yeshua: Mediator of the New Covenant, 8:1–10:18

- A. Yeshua is our heavenly High Priest
 1. He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, 8:1
 2. He is a minister in the true tabernacle, 8:2
 3. He offers both offerings and sacrifices, 8:3
- B. Heavenly (Yeshua) and earthly (Aaron) priesthoods compared, 8:4–7
 1. Torah requires earthly priests to have a specific lineage from Aaron (which Yeshua does not have), 8:4
 2. Earthly priests and their service are a shadow of the heavenly Priest and His service, 8:5
 - a. God's instructions to Moses on Sinai
 - b. Quote from Ex 25:40
 3. Yeshua's ministry is superior to that of Aaron, 8:6–7
 - a. because He is mediator of a better covenant
 - b. because the better covenant rests on better promises
 - c. Aaronic priesthood unable to establish the better covenant:
 - 1) if the earthly priests could have established the better covenant, there would be no need for a second priesthood
 - 2) the promise of the better covenant requires a superior priesthood
- C. Extended quote from Jer 31:31–34 (the New Covenant) as proof of the need for the superior priesthood of Yeshua, 8:8–12
- D. To establish the New Covenant requires the ministry of the heavenly Priest, and thus the earthly service of the priests has run its course, 8:13
- E. The service of the earthly Mishkan, 9:1–10
 1. description of the Mishkan proper, 9:1–2
 2. description of the most holy place on Yom Kippur, , 9:3–5
 3. Daily vs. Yom Kippur activity in the Mishkan, 9:6–7

4. Midrash: the significance of the double-compartment Mishkan, 9:8–14
 - a. outer = earthly; inner = heavenly
 - b. inner sanctuary is not disclosed while the outer stands, 9:8
 - c. outer sanctuary could not perfect the conscience, 9:9–10
 - d. Messiah entered the inner (heavenly) sanctuary, 9:11–14
 - 1) heavenly is greater and more perfect, 9:11
 - 2) sacrifice is superior, 9:12
 - a) entered with His own blood
 - b) entered once for all time
 - c) obtained eternal redemption
 - 3) earthly sacrifices brought ceremonial purity, 9:13
 - 4) heavenly sacrifice purifies the conscience, 9:14
5. Yeshua's death secures an eternal inheritance, 9:15–28
 - a. He is the mediator of the new covenant, 9:15
 - 1) Messiah's death for sinners was the focal point of faith for those who lived before His coming
 - 2) The promise of redemption rests upon Yeshua's vicarious atonement.
 - b. The essential elements of a covenant, 9:16–17
 - 1) a death ratifies a covenant
 - 2) death must be borne by the one making the covenant
 - c. First covenant marked by sacrifice, 9:18–20
 - d. Earthly Mishkan marked by blood / sacrifice, 9:21
 - e. Shedding of blood required for forgiveness, 9:22
 - f. Earthly Mishkan reveals the heavenly Mishkan, 9:23–26
 - 1) both sanctified with blood
 - 2) heavenly sacrifice better than the earthly
 - a) Messiah appeared in the heavenly Mishkan, not made with hands, to intercede for us.
 - b) Messiah's sacrifice is once for all time, never to be repeated
 - g. Yeshua, like other men, died only once, and will come a second time, but without reference to death, 9:27–28
- F. Yeshua's superior sacrifice necessary to establish the New Covenant, 10:1–18
 1. The Torah prescribes on-going sacrifices, which proves that the earthly service of the Mishkan did not perfectly cleanse those who brought sacrifices, 10:1–3
 2. The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin, 10:4–10
 - a) Quote from Ps 40:6–7
 - b) Application of the Quote:
 - 1) first (earthly) Mishkan supplanted by the second Mishkan (heavenly), 9:8–9
 - 2) Yeshua's sacrifice is complete (He sat down) and thus is once for all time, 9:10–12
 - 3) His session (being seated) remains until His enemies are subdued (Quote Ps 110:1), 9:13
 3. Yeshua's once-for-all-time offering is the means by which the New Covenant will be fulfilled, 9:14–18

- a) Quote: Jer 31:33–34 – emphasizing forgiveness of sins
- b) where sins are forgiven, there no longer requires a sacrifice for them.

VI. Yeshua: Object of True Saving Faith, 10:19–12:29

- A. Yeshua enters the most holy place in heaven for us, 10:19–21
- B. We may have confidence and full assurance that His sacrifice on our behalf has been accepted, 10:22
- C. Exhortation: remain firm in your faith in Yeshua, 10:23–25
 - 1. Do not waver; Yeshua is faithful to His word
 - 2. Do not forsake assembling with others of like faith but encourage each other.
- D. Yeshua: the only object of saving faith, 10:26–31
 - 1. Apart from His sacrifice, there remains no other sacrifice for sins, but only sure judgment, 10:26–27
 - 2. Torah requires death in regard to sin, and anyone who disregards the Torah is condemned to death, 10:28
 - 3. Denying Yeshua is an even more severe transgression against God, 10:29–31
- E. Exhortation: Consider how God has already sustained you through trials and persecutions, 10:32–39
 - 1. you endured suffering, humiliation, tribulations, 10:32
 - 2. you identified with others who were being mistreated, 10:33–34
 - 3. do not throw away your confidence but endure that you might receive the promises [Quote: Hab 2:3–4], 10:35–38
 - 4. the author's confidence: we have true, enduring faith, 10:39
- F. The Character of Faith, 11:1–31
 - 1. General definition of faith, 11:1–3
 - 2. Pre-flood: Abel, Enoch, 11:4–5
 - 3. Statement: without faith it is impossible to please God, 11:6
 - 4. Flood and Post-flood: Noah, Abraham, Sarah, 11:7–12
 - 5. Statement: all of these were looking for the promise, 11:13–16
 - 6. Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, 11:17–22
 - 7. In Egypt: Moses, Rahab, 11:23–31
 - 8. Judges and United Monarchy: Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, prophets, 11:32–40
- G. Exhortation: Strengthen your faith, 12:1–29
 - 1. Even as the faithful of old focused on the promise, so we too must focus upon the promise, i.e., upon Yeshua, 12:1–3
 - a. He is the author and perfecter of faith
 - b. He endured the cross in order to obtain the joy set before Him
 - c. He sat down (completed His work)
 - d. set your hopes and eyes upon Him
 - 2. Consider your current struggles as God's tool to train you in faith, 12:4–13
 - a. discipline is proof of the Father's love and of being a genuine child of His, 11:4–8
 - b. if we respected our earthly fathers when they disciplined us, how much more should we respect our heavenly Father!, 11:9–10
 - c. discipline or training may be difficult to endure, but it brings lasting benefits, 12:10–13

H. Exhortation to persevere in faith, 12:14–29

1. Pursue sanctification, both individual and corporate, 12:14–17
2. Deepen your fear of God, 12:18–24
 - a. Comparison of Sinai and Yeshua's ekklesia
 - b. if Sinai brought fear of God, how much more the person of Yeshua
3. Recognize Yeshua as God's Messiah and Voice, 12:25–29

VII. Concluding Exhortations and Salutation, 13:1–25

A. Show love to each other, 13:1–4

1. to fellow believers: hospitality, aid and kindness
2. to one's spouse: fidelity, faithfulness, morality

B. Do not be entangled in materialism, 13:5–8

1. be free from the love of money; God will supply your needs, 13:5–6
 - a. Quote: Deut 31:6; Josh 1:5
 - b. Quote: Ps 118:6
2. Walk in the footsteps of your leaders, 13:7
3. Yeshua, Who never changes, is the ultimate model to follow, 13:8

C. Do not be carried away by strange teachings, 13:9

D. Be confident of Yeshua's effectual intercession in the heavenly Mishkan, 13:10–14

E. Offer up sacrifices through Yeshua, our High Priest, 13:15–16

1. sacrifices of praise, the fruit of lips
2. do the mitzvot and sharing with those in need

F. Obey your leaders and submit to their leading, 13:17

G. Pray for us, 13:18–19

H. Salutation, 13:20–25