

Hebrews

We don't know who wrote the book of Hebrews or who originally received it, but we do know that the writer was well known to those Christians who first received the letter (see Hebrews 13:22-24). The writer must not have been an apostle (including Paul) because he alluded to the eye witnesses in 2:3-4, and included himself as one who heard from them, not one of them. The oldest surviving suggestion of authorship we have is from Tertullian around 200 AD attributing the epistle to Barnabas. In later centuries the writing became traditionally attached to Paul's name, despite this author presenting himself as one who heard from others, while Paul always asserted direct revelation from Jesus for himself (Gal 1:11-12). Then there is the lack of a "signature" anywhere in the letter, which Paul included in all his letters (Gal 6:11, 2 Thess 3:17), and the language and illustrations are noticeably different in style than Paul's letters. Then too, Paul was particularly an apostle to the gentiles, and this writing especially appealed to Jewish believers.

The opening lines suggest an appeal especially for Christians of Jewish heritage (our fathers, 1:1) and the epilogue has a phrase, "word of exhortation" (13:22) that has roots in the synagogue (Acts 13:15).

The time of writing was probably in the 60s AD, considering the mention of Timothy being imprisoned in 13:23 and the indication that the temple was still functioning in Jerusalem (13:10, 9:6, 10:1-2).

The opening lines set the theme for the whole book, the supremacy of Jesus Christ. He is uniquely God's Son, and the message given by Jesus and through his chosen witnesses is superior to every previous message and messenger. His message is superior to that of the prophets (and consistent with them) and superior to the Law (2:1-4). Jesus is superior to every prior messenger, including all the angels who bore God's word. Don't miss that very strong emphasis in chapter 1 with numerous citations of scripture. Every angel mentioned in the Bible is commanded to worship Jesus (1:6), including the angel of the bush (Ex 3:1-2, Acts 7:30) who some, contrary to explicit teachings here and elsewhere, mistakenly identify with Jesus appearing to Moses. Angels have been the medium through which God spoke "directly" to Moses and others (Num 20:16) until Jesus came in the flesh.

Notice the strong affirmation in Hebrews that the Old Testament is God speaking, 1:5, 6, 7, 8, etc. The words of Scripture are the words of the Holy Spirit, 3:7, etc.

Note in 1:1-4 the various roles attributed to Jesus, including revelation, creation, divine representation, sustainer of the cosmos moment by moment, purifying sacrifice, and enthroned regent in heaven. No messenger (angel means messenger) is comparable. The verses that follow point up scriptural support for the assertions about Jesus in the prologue. The nature of angels and their mission in this world is describe in 1:14.

Besides being superior to every messenger (1:1-2:4), Hebrews continues by affirming that Jesus is the superior human with dominion over creation, 2:5-18, the one man who is what God designed man to be, citing both the creation account in Genesis 1:26ff and Psalm 8:4ff. Only Jesus has been worthy of dominion and glory, but he's made it possible for many others to share in his victory over sin and death and defeat of the devil himself. His divinity is essential and his humanity is essential for our hope of salvation.

Jesus is superior to all the angels, including the devil (2:14) and superior to every sinful human (2:5-14), and yet he is accessible to every one of us as a sympathetic high priest (2:17-18, 4:14-16).

The assertion that Jesus is a merciful, faithful, understanding, sympathetic, great high priest who is willing to give us his personal attention is remarkable, given that the whole 1st century (and really the previous century too) was marked by high priests like Annas, Caiaphas, and Ananias who are named in the New Testament and known for their corruption, selfishness, trampling on the poor, greed, and so forth. The Jews of the 1st century when this was written knew that their high priests were not at all like the description of Jesus. Jesus is a superior high priest, in every way... a theme recurring in chapters 5, 7-10.

Hebrews 3:1ff continues by affirming that Jesus is superior to Moses. Though Moses was great in his role for Israel and the tabernacle and the Law, Jesus has the superior position as Son and Heir over Moses as servant, and the house under consideration is the spiritual household of

God, “we are his house” in 3:6. “If indeed we hold fast...”

Hebrews has 5 major warnings woven into its structure. It’s full of affirmations about Jesus and faith, but also warns against falling away.

- 1) Hebrews 2:1-4, warning not to drift.
- 2) Hebrews 3:7ff, warning against hard hearts.
- 3) Hebrews 6:4-8, warning against falling away.
- 4) Hebrews 10:26-31, warning against choosing to sin.
- 5) Hebrews 12:25-29, warning against refusing Him who speaks from heaven.

Jesus offers the superior Sabbath rest in 3:7-4:13, based in God’s work from the foundation of the world and linked to our faith in him (4:3, 9-10). Not a day of rest, or a year of rest, but the fulfillment of the Sabbath (4:9) that Jesus gives his followers (recall Matthew 11:28-30). Unbelief was the downfall of the wilderness generation of Israel (3:19), and the promised land wasn’t the rest for them that it might have been. Christians must be certain not to similarly disobey through lack of faith (4:6).

Psalm 95:7-11 is quoted in 3:8-11, and referenced repeatedly through 4:13. Hebrews has several similar expository lessons.

Hebrews 4:12-13 are memorably noteworthy, but don’t lose sight of the context. The author is applying the scriptures of the Old Testament to the enduring reality of Jesus fulfilling the work of God in our behalf, and applying them to Christian living, trusting God.

The high priest motif that was introduced in 2:17 is picked up again in 4:14 and through 5:10, where there is a sidetrack, and then resumed again in 7:1. Jesus, of the tribe of Judah, being chosen as high priest is a major theme of Hebrews. His character and understanding of our plight in the flesh is highlighted first, again at total odds with the experience of ancient Jews with ordinary high priests who were power hungry and selfish elitists.

In order for Jesus to be high priest he first had to be a man, as high priests are among men in 5:1. By the same token, that assertion affirms that Melchizedek was certainly a human being, else he could not have been a priest of God (more on Melchizedek in chapter 7). Jesus was chosen by God as was Aaron (5:4) but is greater than Aaron, since he is sinless.

Jesus prayers were heard (5:7) but he nevertheless suffered obediently and was made perfect, that is, complete. He was already perfect in the sense of sinless, but until he did all that the Father sent him to do he wasn't perfect in the sense of complete, fulfilled. Only that kind of perfection could save others (5:9).

5:11 sounds like the author is turning away from the topic of Melchizedek, but actually he returned to the theme in 6:20ff. Meanwhile, 5:11-6:12 chastens the Lord's people to be eager to learn, practice, and grow and be able to teach others the word of righteousness. Practicing what we do know of God's word is training to distinguish good and evil (5:14) and equipping for being able to teach others (5:12) which all Christians should aspire to do.

6:1-3 highlights some basic doctrines of the faith, which need to be learned, but are foundational and not the fullness of God's word. We have:

- 1) repentance from...
- 2) dead works
- 3) faith in God
- 4) baptisms
- 5) laying on of hands
- 6) resurrection
- 7) eternal judgment

Each of these of course is explicated in the Scriptures, and we need to learn them, but not think the basics are sufficient to Christian teaching and maturity. The foundation is laid to build upon it, not to be redone again and again.

6:4 flows right out of the previous admonition to grow up and practice God's will, by focusing on those who do stall out and fall away. This section is the 2nd great warning in Hebrews. These verses are written definitively about a fallen person who had previously come to Christ (6:4-6), not a superficial convert, but someone who really "got it," and then turned away. Such a person cannot be "restored to repentance" in v6 because they already know everything that motivates one to follow Christ. This doesn't conflict with Paul's teaching about severe discipline in 1 Corinthians 5:5 or 1 Timothy 1:20, rather it upholds the truth that gentle teaching will not suffice in such circumstances, and perhaps nothing will.

No scripture is cited in 6:7-8, but the prophets are echoed as in Isaiah 9:17-19 or Jeremiah 4:3-4 or Nahum 1:10.

Nevertheless, after a severe warning, the writer takes up again the theme of success in pursuing a life of faith in 6:9ff, as others have done before us. There is a great emphasis on hope in 6:11, 18-20. God is utterly trustworthy, and will do as he has said, fulfilling every promise, just as he fulfilled the promises to Abraham.

It is worth noting the context of the promise and oath cited in 6:14, which is Genesis 22:15-18, when Abraham had laid his son Isaac on the altar in obedience to God. It was a day of enormous consequences for Abraham and for all of us in God's plan of redemption, highlighted by God's binding himself with the oath noted here in Hebrews. That oath given almost 2000 years before Jesus was born is an assurance to us that God finishes what he starts, no matter how difficult or costly, and can be trusted to fulfill our hopes as well.

Fled for refuge in 6:18 evokes a recollection of the "cities of refuge" as in Deut. 4:41-42, 19:1ff. The city of refuge was directly tied to the service of the high priest.

Hope is our anchor, the line running up, not down, to the throne room of God where Jesus is. He's our rock, and ancient anchors were rocks. The theme of the Most Holy Place behind the curtain will be more fully developed in chapters 9-10, but we already have the assurance that our high priest, who listens to us and sympathizes with us, and helps us, in permanently in residence at God's throne for our sake.

Hebrews 7-10

These chapters center on the conclusion that Jesus is God's chosen high priest, with a covenant priesthood that is both brand new and older than the Law given at Sinai. Jesus has already been described as high priest in 2:14-18 and 4:14-5:10. After the interlude to warn believers to be diligent in learning a growing fruitfully in 5:11-6:12 the author had resumed the discussion of God's promises sealed with an oath. First the promise to Abraham on Mt. Moriah from Genesis 22 and then the promise of a high priest like Melchizedek from 6:20 through chapter 10.

Note the oath in 6:13ff and the oath in 7:20ff.

Setting aside all speculative interpretations, we can affirm from Hebrews 5:1 that Melchizedek was a man, approved by God. Because Abraham honored him with a tithe (a tenth of what he had) in Genesis 14:18-20, and Abraham was in turn blessed by Melchizedek, the conclusion is that he was great and that Abraham acknowledged him as a superior.

In a sort of top downward pyramid, if Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek, then Abraham's descendant Levi (really the tribe of Levi) can be considered to have honored Melchizedek, and all of Israel that paid tithes to Levi in turn pays homage to Melchizedek. Thus, his priesthood is earlier and greater. The great differences emphasized in Hebrews are that this priest also reigned as king, and that he was specifically qualified by God's approval to be a priest, rather than inheriting the office by virtue of being born in a particular family. The latter process did not produce righteous priests or any consistency from generation to generation.

The emphasis on Melchizedek as a shadow of Christ includes highlights of the titles and names in 7:2, which certainly apply both prophetically and actually to Jesus.

7:11 takes up the flawed nature of a dynastic priesthood, flaws the Jews of the 1st century saw firsthand. Nevertheless, to change to a different priesthood required a specific expression of God's will, which we have expressed in 2 ways. First we have the promise with an oath from Psalm 110:4 (it's worthwhile to turn and read that Psalm and see that is it altogether Messianic, beginning with David calling his future descendant "Lord" as highlighted by Jesus in Matthew 22:41-46). Second we have the promise of a new covenant from the days when the captivity and diaspora began in Jeremiah 31:31ff (Hebrews 8:8ff). Additional support comes from the integrity and superiority of Jesus versus the Levitical priests (7:11, 16, 23-28).

Included in the supporting arguments for the priesthood of Jesus is the assertion, familiar to those who know the Old Testament, that the real dwelling place of God, the true temple, is heavenly, not physically of the earth (8:1-2, 9:1ff).

Notice that the need for a new covenant was a human problem, 8:8, “he finds fault with them...” Fault with disobedient sinners, not with his own covenant commandments.

The New Covenant (8:8ff see Matthew 26:28, 2 Corinthians 3:1-11) isn't on tablets of stone stored in a golden box, but on human hearts made new by the blood of Jesus. It's a unifying covenant making all of God's people one people, and ratified in Jesus blood with people who know him, who have come to believe in him.

Forgetting sins (8:12) is the emphasis in chapters 9-10, with imagery from the tabernacle and sacrifices, and rituals of the law.

Items listed in the tabernacle in 9:1-5 are not listed so much by location as by relationship. The incense altar (9:4) was outside the curtain but its whole purpose was to send incense behind the curtain where the throne was above the ark. Aaron's rod and the jar of manna were not placed inside the ark of the covenant, but in proximity to it, before the Lord (Numbers 10, Ex 16:33-34). Ultimately, all of those items foreshadowed Jesus and his complete work. He is identified as the bread from heaven in John 6, he is the dead stick that came to life in his resurrection, proving his authority over all, etc.

The tabernacle/temple services are endlessly repeated, day after day, festival after festival, generation after generation, whereas Jesus once for all dealt with sin and sacrifice and redemption and sanctification (9:11-12ff).

As the author previously emphasized, Jesus is an approachable high priest, not just a symbol of mediation but an actual mediator taking our needs and cares to the Father and making the Father known to us (9:15).

Note that Jesus' priestly service and self-sacrifice was for those who lived before the cross as well as after (9:15).

It may or may not be apparent in English Bibles, but the word rendered “covenant” in 9:15 and “will” in 9:16 is the same Greek word. A will is probated when the testator has died. So, Jesus died to bring his testament into force. A covenant in ancient times was also sealed with the symbolic death of animals, as an affirmation that those entering the covenant had

made a life and death commitment.

9:20 cites the passage in Ex 24:8 that Jesus alluded to in the last supper with his disciples.

Jesus has been shown in Hebrews superior to all angels/created spirits, and superior to sinful men, and superior to Moses and Joshua, and superior to the Levitical priests, with a superior covenant. Now we see his blood and sacrifice is better than all the other blood shed in sacrifices (9:14, 26, 10:4-5).

Note we live in “the end of the ages” (9:26, recall 1:2). Jesus came once to deal with sin, and will appear exactly once more for judgment and to bring his people home (9:27-28). If we know how to count to 2, we know there is exactly one more appearance of Christ ahead, when judgment will ensue and salvation is completed, contrary to what many folks believe these days.

Chapter 10 continues the interpretations of shadows from the tabernacle and law fulfilled in Jesus. Notice the words of Psalm 40:6-8 (Hebrews 10:5-7, quoted from the Septuagint Greek Old Testament) are put into the mouth of Jesus, “when Christ came into the world.” The Psalm was about 1,000 years old when Jesus was born, but still “when Christ came into the world, he said...” This is an example of the “already but not yet” way many prophecies and promises in the Bible are treated. The kingdom is here, but still coming. We are saved, and being saved, and will be saved. We are more than conquerors in Christ, and taking our stand against the devil and his schemes, etc.

God never was interested in sacrifices (10:5-10), but he understands human nature and our need to deal with spiritual affairs in tangible ways. In context, we should remember Psalm 110:3 (110:4 was quoted in 7:17, 21), where the Lord’s people offer themselves freely to his service. We have a woven tapestry of interconnected ideas from the references cited. God has always wanted hearts that trust him and willingly conform to his design purposes, not remedial sacrifices.

Once again, the finality of Jesus’ work in this world is noted in 10:12-13, with his exalted position as high priest and reigning king turning again to Psalm 110, this time verse 1.

We are perfected by Jesus sacrifice, 10:14, even while we are in process of being sanctified (made holy, set apart to God's use).

Note again that scriptures in Hebrews are attributed to the word of Christ (10:5ff) and the Holy Spirit (10:15). Citations in 10:15-17 link back to Jeremiah 31:31ff, quoted at length in 8:8ff.

With all that has been said about the superiority and sufficiency of Christ's work as high priest and the perfect sacrifice for sins, with him being king overall and at the same time our mediator, the theme of confidence is revisited in 10:19ff (recall 4:14-16). There is a new path to God's glory, personified in Jesus (10:20), the living way. We should approach the throne without fear (remember Esther 4:11 for the converse), knowing we are welcome. The connection of baptism into Christ and having a clean heart (by his blood) is alluded to in 10:22 (as also in 1 Peter 3:21 and Titus 3:5).

Firmness in faith is reiterated in 10:23, followed by the exhortation to meet together in order to stimulate each other to love and good works with encouragement (10:24-25). It's good to remember 10:25, but don't forget why in 10:24. "The Day" in v25 no doubt is the day of Jesus' return already mentioned several times in this epistle.

Hebrews 10:26 is the 4th great warning of the 5 in Hebrews. Recall,

- 1) Hebrews 2:1-4, warning not to drift.
- 2) Hebrews 3:7ff, warning against hard hearts.
- 3) Hebrews 6:4-8, warning against falling away.
- 4) Hebrews 10:26-31, warning against choosing to sin.
- 5) Hebrews 12:25-29, warning against refusing Him who speaks from heaven.

Jesus has provided the once for all sacrifice for sins, don't turn back to intentional sin after being cleansed. What else is there? All Christians struggle with sin, living in the flesh in this world, but choosing/preferring sin over Christ is disastrous. The warning is supported by brief quotations from Deuteronomy 32:35-36 in v30-31.

Fiery judgment, vengeance, and destruction in 10:27, 30, 39 will be revisited in 12:29. These are binary choices, either choose life in Christ or experience judgment and fiery destruction.

As with previous warnings, the writer takes a conciliatory tone, encouraging the readers to continue in better things. We can't live by past good works, but we can reflect on them and be assured (10:32-39).

Notice the quotation of Habakkuk 2:3-4 in 10:37-38, and recall Paul's use of the same passage in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11.

Several times in Hebrews the saints of God are called to endurance, as also in the other scriptures. Living in the world as a follower of Jesus means we will be tested, sometimes with great difficulties. Nevertheless, the outcome is worth it all, 10:39.

Hebrews 11-13

The confidence that comes from faith was the topic in 10:19-25, then an interlude of warning against persistence in sin in 26-31, then a reminder of past experiences in faith in 10:32-39, leading into the treatise on faith in chapter 11.

Faith is not blind belief. The writer of Hebrews has given support to all of his teachings thus far with connections to eye witnesses, prophetic words in fulfillment, and experiences of believers. Faith, grounded in understanding something of what God has said and done, gives us assurance and conviction so that we will not shrink back and be destroyed (11:1, 10:39).

Considering the origin of the universe, 11:3, everyone's convictions are based on faith, whether a creationist or a mechanistic uniformitarian atheist, or any other faith system. Trusting God we understand his statements about the creation to be trustworthy and true, that all the physical cosmos was brought forth by his word (Genesis 1, Isaiah 45:18ff, Psalm 148, John 1, etc). Faith in God, including faith in his character, is necessary for pleasing God (v6).

Note that Abel's sacrifice is described here as better than Cain's. That's a comment on quality, not a determination that Cain was disobedient to a set standard. Abel gave his best, as indicated in Genesis 4:4, while Cain brought "an offering," Genesis 4:3. Both gave by choice (remember too the point made in Hebrews 10:5-10), not a specific requirement, and Abel's offering was "more excellent," appropriate because of his faith.

The list of people and actions undertaken in faith has numerous insightful snippets.

Enoch must have been quite a remarkable man, living in very challenging times.

Noah by his faith and works not only saved his family but condemned the world, reminiscent of 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 and 1 Peter 4:17-19.

Abraham, the father of the faithful (Romans 4:16) gets the longest treatment, 11:8-19, seconded by Moses, 11:23-28.

Sacrifices typified those who walked in faith, including being displaced strangers in this world (11:9-10, 13-16, 25-26, 38).

Sarah's faith should not be overlooked (11:11).

People dying in faith without fully seeing what they've hoped for yet fulfilled (11:13) is still the norm.

11:13-16 are intended to describe not just those patriarchs who lived in tents, but all who are in the tent of flesh living in anticipation of the City of God.

Abraham's reasoning about Isaac is particularly important (11:19) as it connects to what God did with his own son.

Faith is attributed to the reasons for real world decisions and actions and sacrifices by the folks listed, but there is always a forward looking aspect to faith, not a momentary aspiration for comfort or ease. That forward looking faith is beneficial for those who come after.

Rahab's faith (11:31) wasn't based on direct information, but on the same stories everyone around her had heard of how God had helped Israel. By faith she welcomed the spies, her people in disobedient unbelief chose defiance. She had no specific command, yet she chose the right path by faith based on what she had heard.

Some people by faith escaped the sword (11:34) while others by faith

were killed with the sword (11:37). We see that played out in Acts 12 with the apostles James and Peter, one executed and the other miraculously freed. Both were living by faith, and trusting the promises of God.

Note the last phrase of chapter 11, “apart from us they should not be made perfect.” Hebrews tells us that Jesus has been made perfect (2:10, 5:9, 7:28); and that the law and sacrifices made no one perfect (7:19, 9:9, 10:1); but that Jesus’ sacrifice does make the sanctified perfect (10:14). So here, the Old Testament faithful, from creation to Christ, including those before the Law and those under the Law, could on be made perfect together with us, which is to say, as in 10:14, by the sacrifice of Christ. We’ll see “the spirits” of those who have been perfected mentioned again in 12:23, “the spirits of the righteous made perfect,” in the presence of God and the great assembly Christians participate in. The premise of 11:40 is tied back to the previous statements about perfection, especially in 10:14, and seen in the fruition of 12:23, which results from the defeat of death and the devil in 2:14.

The “great cloud of witnesses” in 12:1 is those people who’ve lived and died in faith, as a great example for us, and motivation to press forward unencumbered by sin and the cares of this world, “looking to Jesus” who established and perfected our faith (“finisher” or “perfecter” in v2 is from the same word as “perfect” in 11:40 and the verses listed above). Our faith is finished/perfected in Christ, as also is the faith of those who’ve gone before. Consider him, whose faith led him through the path of suffering and humiliation into glory at the right hand of God. Be like Jesus.

Hebrews 12:3-17 casts all suffering and hardship in this world as discipline that ultimately is for our benefit, even if the good result isn’t immediately apparent. Faith calls for patience in suffering for a good harvest (12:11), trusting God for the outcome, as those in chapter 11 did, and especially as Jesus did.

12:12-13 paraphrase Isaiah 35:3 and Proverbs 4:26. v15 references Deut. 29:18.

Esau’s failure in 12:17 wasn’t that he wasn’t allowed to repent, but that he didn’t personally change, and had no means to change the outcome of his dealings with Jacob or his father’s blessing. He did weep, not in contrition seeking God’s approval, but in regret for what had happened.

See Genesis 25:34, 27:38, 41, and 2 Corinthians 7:10.

The example of Esau's failure leads into the 5th warning in Hebrews 12:18-29. There is a contrast between Mt. Sinai, Exodus 19-20, and Mt. Zion, the city of God. Note that God's city is a reality, not a future geographic renewal on earth. Mt. Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem are already God's city, and our participation in the heavenly city is already in progress, looking forward to even more when we're out of the flesh, and finally when resurrected to be with the Lord forever. The Mt. Sinai experience was awesome and terrifying, and we ought to be full of awe when we consider what God has opened to us through Jesus Christ (remember 10:19ff). This is the great assembly (church) that incorporates the faithful of all ages, along with the holy angels. Note the "spirits" in 23, those now made perfect in Jesus along with us (from 11:40) to participate in the great assembly (church) of the firstborn, those dedicated to God whose names are written in the Book of Life. Several of the things mentioned in 22-24 have already been discussed in the previous chapters of Hebrews.

Sharing in the city of God makes it imperative that we listen to God, to the Holy Spirit, to Jesus Christ. The citation from Haggai 2:6 in v26 is a prophecy about Jesus coming to the temple, which he did, as the prelude to divine settlement of all accounts, removing what isn't permanent so that the truly durable will remain (as also in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15). Our response to sharing in the city of God, already and even more so in his time, ought to be gratitude and worship, 12:28.

Consuming fire, 12:29, as in Deuteronomy 4:24, 9:3. God's presence is often associated with fierce fire. We must be remade through Jesus of stuff that endures to be able to stand in his presence.

Hebrews 13 follows the warning to listen with some specific instructions about brotherly love, hospitality, mercy toward prisoners, faithfulness in marriage, and contentment with material goods. God is with us, what do we have to fear?

13:7 and 17 deal with leaders among the faithful, both those who first taught us and demonstrated a life of faith, who are to be imitated, and those who live and lead in the church who are to be submitted to in cooperation that makes their service pleasant and joyful.

The writer has laid out a theme of divine persistence in this epistle, and that consistency from creation to judgment is summed up in 13:8. You can count on the Lord, that's been shown by what he's already done.

The book of Hebrews has been all about the superiority of Christ; 13:9-16 makes application in terms of not going back to the shadow when the substance is here, and living lives worthy of Jesus' sacrifice. In v14 we're lined up with the folks in 11:10, already participating in the heavenly city of 12:22ff, but not yet wholly there.

Acceptable worship in 12:28 amounts in large measure to 13:15-16, continual verbal acknowledgment of the Lord's name, and doing good, and sharing.

Prayer for one another, and for those doing the work of evangelism, is always called for, v18.

Note the presumptions of the prayer/benediction in 13:20-21: who Jesus is, what God has done and is doing, what we need to do God's will and where it comes from, and the nature of the covenant and its ratification.

The nature/intent of Hebrews is stated in 13:22, a "word of exhortation." The writer and recipients knew Timothy, and we have no other record of Timothy being a prisoner.

The letter may have been written from Italy.

References in 13:10-11 tell us that the temple was still standing and priests still sacrificing, so the book was written before 70 AD.