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Hebrews: Introduction/Overview

The story of Jesus:

- Who is He?
- What did He come to do?
- How did He accomplish His mission?
- How are we to respond to Him?

Hebrews 12:2 ESV

Let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Who wrote the book of Hebrews?

Romans 1:1-7

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God . . . to all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.

James 1:1

*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion.*

1 Peter 1:1-2

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.*

1. He knew the Old Testament extremely well.

2. He knew the recipients extremely well.

Hebrews 6:10

For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.

Hebrews 5:11-14

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 10:32-34

But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

Hebrews 13:18-19, 23

Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon.

Who was the book written to?

- **The target audience was Jewish believers.**

Hebrews 12:24

and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

- **They had experienced persecution.**

Hebrews 10:32-39; 12:4

But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

- **They show disturbing signs of immaturity.**

Hebrews 5:11-6:1

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

The Theme: Jesus is absolutely supreme!!

His Authority is Supreme

- **He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things (1:1-3)**

Hebrews 1:1-3

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

- **He is greater than heaven's best (1:4-2:18)**

Hebrews 1:4-9

having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? Or again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire." But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

- **He is greater than earth's best (3:1-6)**

Hebrews 3:3-6

For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

His effectiveness is supreme.

- **Jesus made the rituals of the Old Testament obsolete (5:1-10:39)**

His intimacy is supreme.

- **He comes to our aid (2:18)**

Hebrews 2:18

For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

- **He sympathizes with our weaknesses (4:14-16)**

Hebrews 4:14-16

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- **He will never leave us (13:5b-6)**

Hebrews 13:5-6

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"