

ENTERING THE HOLY OF HOLIES

Introduction to the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews

The book of Hebrews has 13 chapters, 303 verses, and 6,913 words in a King James Bible. The theme of this General Epistle is *"better things"* (Heb. 6:9). The author speaks of a number of *"better things,"* viz., *"a better hope," "a better testament," "a better covenant," "better sacrifices," "a better resurrection,"* and a *"better country."*

A number of study Bibles and plain King James Bibles speak of Paul as the writer (see above). The arguments for Pauline authorship are compelling in this writer's view. Although in his other epistles he identifies himself as the author in the opening word ("Paul..."), he does not do so in Hebrews. However it appears that Peter recognized Paul as the author since he mentioned that *"our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:15,16).* We know that Peter was writing unto *"the strangers scattered..."* – clearly the same people addressed in this epistle.

The ending of Hebrews sounds very like Paul's endings in his other epistles. He also mentions *"our brother Timothy" in 13:23.* As we know Timothy was Paul's convert, disciple, co-worker and companion. Finally, most of the early church fathers and Christian writers acknowledged Paul as the author. Of course the ultimate Author of this inspired epistle was none other than the Holy Spirit.

It could be that Hebrews was the first epistle written shortly after Paul's conversion. The very tenor of the book suggests that it was written early in the New Testament era to converts or "professors" from Judaism – some of whom seemed to be turning back or apostatizing. That is why it appears to be at least partially addressed to some who, initially at least, embraced the concept of Christianity but turned their backs on it later. (See Hebrews 4,6 & 10 for examples.)

It is obvious that Hebrews is not written to the Body of Christ or a local church or Gentile Christians, but to professing Hebrews. It is obviously a "transitional book" (as Matthew and Acts), and thus becomes a great stumbling block to many today, who are not Dispensationalists. Liberals, charismatics, neo-evangelicals, and others have great difficulty with Hebrews on this score. They cannot interpret it literally or it messes up their messed-up theology, and end up teaching that genuine believers can lose their salvation.

Hebrews is rich in spiritual instruction and blessing..."especially in its multi-dimensional exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is called "the brightness of His glory," and "the express image of His person" (1:3), "the captain of their salvation" (2:10), "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" (3:1), "a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle" (8:2), "the mediator of the new testament" (9:15), "the author and finisher of our faith" (12:2), and "that great shepherd of the sheep" (13:20), among many other titles and descriptions." - Dr. Henry Morris

It took me many years into the ministry before I attempted to expound this wonderful book, but it has been a wonderful journey for me and I hope it will be as well for you.

As you begin this spiritual journey into the blessed "Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews" may the Lord richly bless you as you explore the *"deep things of God". (1 Cor. 2:10)*

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