

## SUMMARY

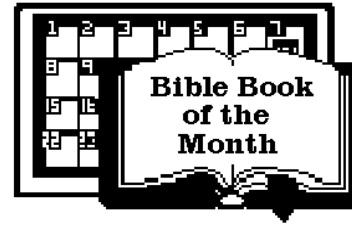
In our study of Hebrews we will not try to cover the entire book, but future lessons will zero in on certain chapters and studying how they manifest the superiority of

Christ and that His ministry in the New Covenant is "**BETTER**" than the 'shadows' found in the Old.

## QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of Greek does the Epistle to the Hebrews contain?
2. As much as being an "epistle", the book of Hebrews is also a .
3. Name at least one reason the book was probably written?
4. What is our key word for the book and how many times does it appear?
5. What is the basic "comparison" that is made throughout the book of Hebrews?
6. How had the prophets ministered to Israel?
7. Why was Christ superior to the Prophets "in his person?"
8. Name one way Christ was superior to the Old Testament Prophets in his work?
9. What name (or title) did Jesus wear that none other can wear in the same sense?
10. What does "firstborn" mean when applied in its symbolic meaning?
11. What three roles is Jesus pictured as fulfilling in the book of Hebrews?

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# Hebrews

Lesson #1

## *The "Better" Book of the Bible*

### Introduction

The book of the Hebrews is the riddle book of the New Testament. It contains the most perfect Greek of the Bible yet it stands without telling us who the author is. It is as much like a sermon as it is an epistle. In fact in the words of the author it is called a "word of exhortation" (or encouragement) in 13:22, which is what a sermon is called in Acts 13:15. [Barnabas was called "the son of exhortation" or son of encouragement.]

### Purpose

Why was the letter written? We see several things the author apparently wanted to accomplish. *First*, he wanted to encourage faltering Jewish Christians not to drift away from the message which they have heard (2:1; 5:12-14; 12:1-2). Some seemed about to forsake Christ and the Gospel and go back to the Law of Moses.

And *second*, he wanted to encourage them to grow in their faith and not become stagnant (5:12-6:1).

*Third*, they should be prepared to endure persecution.

### Exhortation

There are five great "exhortation" passages in the book where the writer exhorts them to hold to the Word that God has spoken through his Son (cf. Heb. 1:1-2). In turning away from Christ and the Gospel they were in danger of:

Drifting from the Word -- 2:1-4  
 Doubting the Word -- 3:7-4:13  
 Dullness toward the Word -- 5:11-6:20  
 Despising the Word -- 10:26-39  
 Defying the Word -- 12:14-29

Key Word: **BETTER**

The book of Hebrews can be called the "**BETTER**" Book of the New Testament. The word "better" occurs some 13 times and apply describes the New Covenant in relation to the Old. The Dupont company has a slogan, "Building better things through chemistry." The slogan of Hebrews could well be, "Building better things through the blood of Jesus."

## SUPERIOR TO THE PROPHETS

The epistle exalts the person and the work of Christ. The first three verses set forth this high and holy theme which is maintained throughout the entire book. Immediately it is demonstrated that Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets, men who were held in the highest esteem by the Jewish people and who had ministered in giving Israel God's Word.

Christ was superior to the prophets in his person because he was the very son of God, and the "express image" of the Father (1:3). This carried the idea of "the exact imprint." It means that Jesus Christ is "the exact representation of the very substance of God" (See Col. 2:9 and John 14:9).

Christ was superior to the prophets in his work. To begin with He is the Creator of the universe: for by Him, God "made the worlds" (Heb. 1:2). Not only did Christ create all things by His Word (John 1:1-5), but He also upholds all things by that same powerful Word (1:3). "And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist [hold together]" (Col. 1:17).

The word "upholding" (1:3) does not mean "holding up," as though the universe is a burden on the back of Jesus like Atlas is pictured holding up the world. But it means He is the God of Creation and providence who guides this universe on its course.

Christ is also the superior Prophet who declares God's Word. The contrast between Christ "The Prophet" and the other prophets of the Old Covenant are easy to see:

<b><i>Christ</i></b>	<b><i>The Prophets</i></b>
God the Son	Men called by God
One Son	Many prophets
A final and complete message	A fragmentary and incomplete message

Of course, both the Old Testament and the Gospel revelation came from God; but Jesus Christ was God's "last word" as far as revelation is concerned. Christ is the source, center, and end of everything that God has to say.

## SUPERIOR TO THE ANGELS

Hebrews 1:4-14 affirms that Christ is not only superior to the prophets, but also to the angels of heaven. Jesus wore a name no angel could wear, "son". As God and Creator He was to be worshipped (1:6), but no angel was to be. ("Firstborn" in the Bible does not mean "born first." It speaks of rank and honor. God made Solomon the firstborn (Ps. 89:27) even though Solomon is listed tenth in the official genealogy, I Chron. 3:1-5.)

Christ's superiority to angels is seen in that he was served by them (1:7), and that He is Creator (1:10-12). Christ stands sovereign with the angels as servants even to us (1:13-14).

## SUPERIOR PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING

Not only does Hebrews present Christ as superior to the Old Testament prophets, (with Christ God's Prophet today); but the Lord has a ministry as PRIEST. He "purged our sins" and this aspect of his ministry is detailed in chapters 7 - 10.

And also Christ reigns as KING. He has sat down at the place of honor "on the right hand of the majesty on high." This too proves is Deity, for no mere created being could ever sit on God's throne at His right hand!