

About Hebrews:

- Once considered to have been written by the apostle Paul, biblical scholars over the centuries have concluded that Paul may not have been the letter's author after all. Numerous possible authors have been considered, but in the end its writer remains unknown.
- Similarly, while the intended recipients of the letter may have been specific Jewish Christians, they, too, remain unknown. It is clear, though, that they had suffered persecution for their faith in the past (10:32–34) and, at the time of this letter, were tempted to turn back to their Jewish faith and practices.
- Based on its style and content, scholars think that Hebrews may have been a sermon which was intended to be heard rather than read by its recipients.
- It is believed that Hebrews was written between 60–80 A.D.

➤ Read Hebrews 1:1–4.

In these four verses the writer of Hebrews begins the theme of Jesus' superiority, a theme he will carry throughout the entire letter.

1. Hebrews begins with a basic fact: "God spoke" (vv. 1, 2). Through whom did God reveal truth about himself to his people "in the past" (v. 1), that is, in Old Testament times? (v. 1)
2. God's message was delivered "at many times and in various ways" (v. 1) through various people throughout Old Testament history. What, or rather who, was consistently at the core of this message? (Is. 7:14; 9:6–7; 59:20; Jer. 23:5–6; Mic. 5:2, 4)
3. What are some ways the message of the Old Testament prophets is inferior to God's revelation "in these last days" (v. 2)? (Mt. 13:16–17; 1 Pet. 1:10–12)

Prophets

The Old Testament prophets were messengers, ordinary men called by God to deliver his words of instruction, warning, and promise to the people of their day.

Prophecy

"... no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

2 Peter 1:20–21

"In these last days" (v. 2)

This phrase refers to the Messianic age in which God speaks through his Son, bringing to fulfillment the revelation of himself which he began through the Old Testament prophets.

- c. "...the one who reflects God's glory shares his nature. ...No difference can be made between the nature of the Father and the nature of the Son."³ From your knowledge of Scripture, how was God's nature or character seen through his Son?

*"The Exact
Representation of
His Being"*

The original Greek word translated here as "exact representation" is "character," a reference to the exact impression left by an engraving tool or stamp upon metal, such as on a coin. The idea is that the Son bears in himself the very essence, or character, of the Father.

6. Why is the Son superior to all the prophets who preceded him?
Mt. 5:17

Lk. 24:27

Jn. 14:9b-11

2 Cor. 1:20

Col 1:13-20

7. What did Jesus do before "he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven" (v. 3b)? (v. 3b)
8. "A priest's job is to make purification for human sin from the human side by offering a sacrifice to God on humanity's behalf."⁴
- a. How did the ultimate high priest, the Son, accomplish this purification? (7:27; 10:10)

- b. What is his ongoing mission? (7:24–26)
- c. What has his priestly sacrifice accomplished for us? (Col. 1:21–22; 1 Thess. 5:9–10)
9. With his work complete, the Son sits down “at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (v. 3b). What does this honored position say about him? (Ps. 110:1; Eph. 1:19b–23)
10. Read verse 4. The Son’s exalted position as divine Prophet, Priest, and King “in itself marks Him out as being superior to the angels – a superiority which is further shown by the title which He bears.”⁵
- a. The writer of Hebrews has not yet used the name “Jesus.” What name is it, then, that is “superior” (v. 4) to that of the angels? (v. 2; 1:5)
 - b. Why does it matter for us that Jesus is the One who is superior to all who preceded him?

Angels

Angels are created spiritual beings who serve as God’s messengers and act according to his will.

¹ Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. Leon Morris, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983), 66-67.

² Kenneth L. Barker, ed., *NIV Study Bible*, 10th Anniversary ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 1858n1:2-3.

³ Guthrie, 71.

⁴ J. Ramsey Michaels, *Hebrews*, in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary*, ed. Philip W. Comfort (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2009), 330.

⁵ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), 8.