

RUN WITH  
ENDURANCE

*THE LETTER TO THE HEBREW SAINTS*

**By Frank Jamerson**

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15591 N. State Rd. 9, Summitville, Indiana, 46070

*Spiritual "equipment" for the contest of life.*

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# Lesson 1

## Introduction and Chapter One

### Introduction:

#### A. Authorship:

1. Paul - "The oldest extant evidence on authorship of the Epistle comes from Clement of Alexandria... (c. A.D. 95). Clement said that it was written by Paul for Hebrews in the Hebrew language, and that it was translated into Greek by Luke for the Greeks" (Jesus Christ Today, Commentary by Neil R. Lightfoot).

Moses E. Lard said: "The simple fact that the Epistle is anonymous is presumptive evidence that it was written by Paul. For surely the author, whoever he was, had some valid reason for withholding his name from a portion of those for whose benefit the Epistle was written. But what other reason can be assigned for this extraordinary omission, that so well accords with all the known facts of the case, as that which was alleged by Clement, Origen, Eusebius, Augustine, and other Christian Fathers: viz., that Paul did not prefix his name to the Epistle, lest its appearance might prevent many of his Jewish brethren from reading it, and judging of it by its own merits? Certain it is, that no better reason than this has ever been assigned for the omission of the author's name; and it is moreover equally certain, that in the light of all history, this reason applies to no one else so well as to the Apostle Paul, against whom a very strong and general prejudice existed among both the converted and the unconverted Jews of that age" (Commentary, p. 17).

2. Barnabas: Tertullian believed that Barnabas wrote it. This was likely because Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus (Acts 4:36), was "the son of exhortation," and the book emphasizes exhortation, Hebrews 13:22.
3. Others: Luke - because of the literary style; Apollos - because he was an Alexandrian Jew and an eloquent man; others say Aquila, Silas, or Mark. Origen concluded: "Who wrote the Epistle God only knows certainly."

#### B. Addressed to Hebrews:

1. The word Hebrew first appears in Genesis 14:13 and means "one who passes over." "It seems to have been first given to Abraham by
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the Canaanites, because he had come from the region beyond the Euphrates” (Robert Milligan, Commentary on Hebrews, p. 27).

2. Jews who learned to speak the Greek language were called Hellenists. “They were still regarded and recognized as Jews and Israelites, but not as Hebrews; the mere use of a foreign language serving, as it would appear, to eliminate them in some measure from the native stock. And hence in the New Testament, the name Hebrew seems to have always some reference to language, as well as to the many other boasted rights and privileges of the seed of Abraham. See Acts 6:1; 2 Corinthians 11:22 and Philippians 3:5” (Milligan, p. 28).
3. The exact destination is not known. Palestine or Italy has been generally accepted. “They of Italy salute you” (13:24) seems to indicate Italians away from home sending greetings back to Italy.

### C. Date:

1. William Barclay said, “If we take the date as A.D. 80, we shall not be far wrong” (p. xix).
2. The more likely date is 65 - 68 A.D. “The allusions to the priesthood imply that the temple was still standing, but the removal of Jewish institutions was not too far distant, 12:27. Persecution was imminent, 10:32-36; 12:4. The epistle seems to fit best into the situation of the late sixties, when the church at Rome was fearing persecution and when the fall of the Jewish commonwealth was imminent” (The New Testament: A Survey, Merrill C. Tenney, p. 374).

### D. Outline and notes on chapter 1:

1. Qualification of God’s spokesman, 1:1-3.
  - a. At various times and in different ways (angel visits, dreams, visions, audible voices, inspiration by the Urim and Thummim) God spoke by the prophets.
  - b. In these last days, He speaks through His Son, Isaiah 2:1-4; Luke 24:46, 47; Acts 2:14-16.
  - c. The prophets were spokesmen for God; Jesus was the Son of God through whom all things that were created were made, Hebrews 11:3; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17.
  - d. The brightness of His glory - “The analogy may be stated thus: as the radiance of the Sun is to the Sun itself, so is Christ, the Son of God, to the Father. And hence we see the Father through the Son (John 14:9), just as we see the Sun itself through its effulgence”

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(Milligan, p. 57).

- e. The express image of His person - “The two retain their individual identities, but their essential nature is one. The Greek word ‘character’ (person) appearing only here in the New Testament, refers to an exact reproduction, as a statue of a person or as an impression made by a seal.... He does not exhibit the Father in certain respects but He is exactly like the Father, cf. John 14:9; Colossians 1:15. He possesses the very likeness of the divine nature” (Lightfoot, p. 55).
  - f. He upholds all things - “The idea is not that the Son like a weight lifter holds the universe up, but rather that He is responsible for its providential government. The thought is similarly expressed in Colossians 1:17, although there Christ is seen as the basic element that holds everything together, here as the power that consciously directs its destiny” (Lightfoot, p. 55, 56).
  - g. He purged our sins (10:1; Romans 8:3, 4) and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty, Ephesians 1:20-23; Revelation 3:21.
2. His superiority over angels, 1:4-14.
- a. To which angel did the Father say, “You are My Son; today I have begotten you”?
    - 1) He called the Son, God. (Begotten refers to the resurrection, Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33.)
    - 2) Firstborn (v. 6), indicates priority, not origin (Example: Exodus 4:22; Jeremiah 31:9; Psalm 89:20, 27).
  - b. To which angel did the Father say, “Sit at My right hand...”? (1:13; Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:41-46; Acts 2:34-36).
  - c. The Son’s reign is universal and eternal, 1:8; Daniel 7:14; Lk. 1:33.
  - d. Notice:
    - 1) The Father called the Son, God, and commanded angels to worship Him, 1:6-8.
    - 2) The Son claimed to be God, John 8:58.
    - 3) Thomas confessed Him as God, John 20:28.

NOTES OR QUESTIONS

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### **Chapter One Questions:**

1. Who is the probable author of this epistle, and who are some other possible authors?
2. What is the probable date, and what indicates it?
3. To whom was the book written?
4. What is the difference between a Hebrew and a Grecian (Hellenist)?
5. How did God speak to the fathers?
6. When did He speak through His Son?
7. List five things stated about the Son in verses 2, 3.
8. How does this show the Son's superiority over the prophets?
9. Give four statements from the Father that shows the superiority of the Son over angels.
10. Does the statement in verses 10, 11 refer to the Father or the Son?
11. When did Christ sit at the right hand of the Father?
12. To what two groups of the creation does this chapter show Jesus is superior?