

I. Welcome

A. Good morning! Ohayogozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni. It is so good to be back here with you all to worship the Lord and get into His Word with all of you.

1. It's been a few weeks since I've been in the pulpit. My wife and I went away to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary and then we had a team from Calvary Chapel Bible Fellowship in Temecula, CA here with us to serve in various capacities; helping us out with our VBS, leading a concert in the park, filling in for some of our Sunday School teachers, and filling the pulpit for myself.
2. I enjoyed the time away and the word brought forth by our guests, but I am excited to get back into our regular study through God's Word.
3. *Welcome any new faces and those streaming online.*

B. Before we continue any further, let's go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School class.

1. *As well as the Bible English class (Second Service).*

C. It was over a month ago that we finished our study of the book of Philemon and normally would have moved on to the next book.

1. Our desire on Sunday mornings here at Calvary is to teach through the New Testament book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. That we may know and understand what God's Word says and how we may apply it to our lives.
2. We take that same approach when it comes to the Old Testament as we work through it during our mid-week study on Wednesday nights.
3. But I knew we had some guest speakers lined up and I didn't want to do our typically introduction and overview of a new book and then not come back to it a month later. So we put off starting the next book.

D. But today, we no longer have to wait. Today we get to start a new study, in a new book of the New Testament; the book of Hebrews. And I hope you all are as excited as I am for this study.

1. Now, I do want to forewarn you all, this book we are jumping into this morning is a book that has caused some confusion for some. You see, as the author writes, he assumes the reader has certain common knowledge about certain things that frankly many today may not completely understand.
 - a. We're going to be talking about a lot of historical things from the Old Testament as we make our way through Hebrews. Hebrews is probably the best commentary on the Old Testament and certainly is the best commentary on the Mosaic Law and the Levitical covenant. So we're going to be cross referencing a lot of OT material.
 - b. This book will also shake some of our systematic theologies and our views on certain things. Some people avoid reading this book

because it doesn't fit neatly into their own man-made theological systems they've created.

- c. Don't be afraid to be challenged. Come with an open mind and let the Word of God speak for itself. Don't try to twist what Hebrews says or dismiss what it says because it doesn't fit nicely into your own theological views. Embrace the tension that it brings and let the Lord work through it.
2. The book of Hebrews isn't like many of the other letters of the New Testament. It reads more like a sermon than it does a personal letter.
 - a. It has no opening greeting, nor introduction to it. It just jumps right into things.
 - b. It really is an exhortation, more so than a personal letter.
3. And while at times it reads much like a sermon it does end like a letter in that it shares a benediction, final exhortations, and farewells. It ends as many other books of the NT do; with an exhortation towards grace.
4. The book of Hebrews doesn't fit a lot of the patterns that other books of the NT do. It just reads a bit different than all the other epistles.

E. This morning, I want to do an overview of the book before we jump into our verse-by-verse study.

1. So, this morning will be a little more academic in nature. We're going to start our study of Hebrews by taking a look at things that will help set the stage for our study.
2. We're going to look at some background information that I hope will whet our appetite and pique our interest for studying this book.
3. We're going to look at things such as the author, the audience, the setting, the timing, and the overall theme of the book.
4. And my hope is that understanding all this background information will better prepare us to glean all the wonderful truths that God is wanting to speak to us through it.

F. Now, we're going to read through the first few verses of chapter 1 just to get some of God's Word in. But we're going to save the exposition of those verses until next week.

1. In order to get through the overview and the first three verses would require me to keep you here much longer than you are probably comfortable with. So, we'll just read the text, cover all the background information, and then start expounding on the text next week.
2. If you haven't done so yet, please open your Bible to the book of Hebrews. Once you are there, I want to invite you to rise to your feet in honor of God and His Word.
3. We're only going to read the first three verses. As I mentioned, the writer doesn't waste any time and jumps right into things. Follow along in your Bible as I read from mine. Hebrews 1:1 states: (*R & P*)

II. Background Information

- A. So, if you've been with us for any length of time you know that I like to do these overviews of the books whenever we start a new one.
1. We usually spend a good amount of our time looking at the background information and then simply cover the greeting or opening of the letter. But Hebrews doesn't have a soft opening or greeting to cruise into.
 2. It jumps right into the thick of things and I decided after studying that there was no way I could do justice to the first three verses and fit in an overview. So, today we're just going to be doing the overview. Next week, we'll jump into the thick of it with the author in these first few verses. The title of our overview is "**Better than All the Rest**".
- B. For our overview, we'll start off with the same question we often start off with concerning the author. Who wrote the book of Hebrews?
1. The book of Hebrews isn't like any other book in the NT. It is the only book of the NT where the author of the book is unknown.
 2. Nowhere in the letter does the author identify themselves. Now, that isn't unique to the book of Hebrews. There are other books in the NT where the author doesn't specifically identify themselves.
 - a. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John don't specifically identify themselves within their accounts. But the early church knew that these were the men who wrote them and identified them as the authors of their gospel accounts.
 - b. The letters of 1, 2, and 3 John don't specifically identify John the Apostle as the author, but again, the early church knew John, and knew his letters, and clearly identified him as the author of these accounts. And he is universally accepted as being the author of these three epistles.
 - c. The book of Acts does not specifically identify Luke, but as you read through it, you can tell when Luke inserts himself into the account by the change of pronouns in Acts 16 where it goes from "they" to "we" when Luke joined Paul in Troas.
 3. So, with the books where the author does not identify themselves, we are forced to look to internal evidence within the book, or to external evidence regarding the early church and their traditions as to the identification of the author.
 4. Unfortunately for the book of Hebrews, the early church tradition is not united in their beliefs on who wrote the book of Hebrews.
 - a. Many in the church believed that Paul wrote this letter. In fact, the Eastern church accepted the book of Hebrews as one of the 14 epistles of Paul.
 - b. I have a copy of an early 1900 version of the King James Bible, and it reads at the header of Hebrews, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews". Now the headers in our Bibles are not part of the inspired word of God, they are added in by the editors, but suffice to

- say, the idea of Paul being the author has been supported by many scholars throughout the years.
5. However, there are some things within the book of Hebrews that cause for some doubt regarding Paul's authorship.
 - a. For one, if this is a letter from Paul, it would be the only letter of Paul's that does not open with a self-identification. Every other letter that is attributed to Paul opens up with the word "Paul" as a way to identify himself to his audience. Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon all start off with the same exact first word in each of those letters, "Paul". Hebrews has no such opening.
 - i. Now, some try to say that since Paul was identified as the Apostle to the Gentiles that he didn't want to name himself in a letter that was sent to Hebrews.
 - ii. Others say that because Paul was known as the Apostle to the Gentiles that it made some of the Jews look down upon Paul as if he was turning against his own people. And so, supporters of Paul's authorship will give this as a reason for why Paul doesn't identify himself in this particular letter sent to Jews.
 - iii. And maybe that is what happened. We can't say for certain.
 - b. Another thing that causes some to doubt Paul's authorship is based upon what is written in Hebrews 2:3. Hebrews 2:3 reads, "how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,". (Heb. 2:3)
 - i. Based upon this it seems as if the author and his audience were people who heard about the gospel message secondhand, through other eyewitnesses.
 - ii. They are what is termed second generation believers. People who came to faith not because they heard from the Lord firsthand, but who came to faith from hearing the message preached from others who had heard the Lord firsthand.
 - iii. If the author is someone who heard the gospel secondhand, then that would eliminate Paul as a candidate. Paul was very adamant in his letters that he heard from the Lord Himself and was called into ministry by the Lord.
 - iv. Jesus visited Paul upon the road to Damascus and spoke directly to him in Acts 9 declaring "**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?**" To which Paul replied, "Who are you, Lord?" and Jesus replied, "**I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.**" (Acts 9:4-5a)
 - v. And in Galatians Paul states, "I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Gal. 1:11-12)

- vi. It is very clear from his own writings that Paul did not receive the gospel from man, but through direct revelation from Christ. So the idea of the author being a second generation believer doesn't fit the description of Paul's conversion.
 - c. Some other scholars like to point out that the Greek in Hebrews is much more polished and refined than any of Paul's other letters.
 - i. To me, that doesn't mean Paul couldn't have written it, it just means that there are noticeable differences between the Greek in Paul's other letters and the letter of Hebrews. Paul was well educated and I'm sure he could put together a polished letter in Greek if he wanted to.
 - d. And then there is the content of this letter. It focuses upon things that frankly; Paul really didn't talk much about in any of his other letters.
 - i. Again, this doesn't mean Paul couldn't have written about new topics or new ideas. It just shows that there are noticeable differences in content.
6. If not Paul, then who else could have written the book of Hebrews you may wonder. Well, the list is quite long, and speculation seems to run all over the place. I'll give you some of the more prominent candidates and some of the reasons why they are listed.
- a. Some have associated the book of Hebrews with Apollos. We read about Apollos primarily in the book of Acts, but he is also mentioned in the book of 1 Corinthians and in Titus.
 - i. Apollos was a Jew and a native of Alexandria there along the western edge of the Nile Delta in Egypt. Alexandria was the cultural and educational center of the Hellenistic world and Apollos would have been raised in a context of both Greek and Jewish scholarship.
 - ii. He is described in the book of Acts as an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures. (**Acts 18:24**)
 - iii. He was a man fervent in spirit and one who boldly shared his faith and who "vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ." (**Acts 18:28**)
 - iv. Apollos fits the description of being a second-generation believer. He knew the ministry of John the Baptist but was not given the full picture until he met Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus who explained to him the way of God more accurately. (**Acts 18:26**)
 - v. It would also make sense to see Apollos as the author based upon his Hellenistic upbringing and his mastery of the Greek language and his understanding of the Scriptures.
 - vi. Since Apollos was known for vigorously refuting Jews and showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ, it would make sense to see him as the author of this book since the book

- is written to Jews in order to tell them all about how Jesus is the answer to what the Jews have been waiting for.
 - vii. The fact that there are parts of Hebrews that do sound like they came from Paul doesn't necessarily eliminate Apollos, since we know that Apollos and Paul worked together in ministry and spent time together, as Paul sent Apollos to deliver the letter of Titus.
 - viii. Though it would seem Apollos is a likely candidate there are not many, if any, early church fathers that credited Apollos with writing this book. And this becomes a difficult barrier to overcome. Just because the description of him and his ministry fits what we see and read in the book of Hebrews doesn't mean he wrote it.
- b. Another prominent candidate is Barnabas, the Son of Encouragement.
- i. Barnabas was a Jew born on the island nation of Cyprus. He was a Levite according to Acts 4:36 (**Acts 4:36**)
 - ii. This of course is something that is interesting to consider seeing as how the author of Hebrews is extremely familiar with Levitical law and the work of the priests. As a Levite, Barnabas would be very familiar with the Levitical laws pertaining to the priesthood.
 - iii. Barnabas obviously had very close ties with Paul the Apostle, and they partnered together in ministry early on. This could perhaps explain some of the portions of Hebrews that have a Pauline-like characteristic to them.
 - iv. There is mention at the end of Hebrews of Timothy being freed and the author potentially joining with Timothy in a trip to see the recipients of this letter. (**Heb. 13:23**).
 - v. It's believed that Timothy got saved during Paul's first missionary journey into Timothy's hometown of Lystra. Seeing as how Paul and Barnabas worked together on their first missionary journey means that Barnabas would have known Timothy as well and very well could have partnered up with Timothy later on.
 - vi. Another reason why Barnabas gets a lot of attention as a possible candidate is because some of the early church fathers actually credited Barnabas with the writing of Hebrews.
 - vii. Tertullian, who was known as the father of Latin theology was a Christian writer of the late second and early third century. He quoted from the book of Hebrews and assigned the quotation to an epistle by Barnabas.
 - viii. The view that Barnabas wrote Hebrews was referred to at a later time by Jerome and reappeared again by a few other writers of the fourth century.
 - ix. This in no way proves Barnabas was the author, but it does give some reason to list him as a viable candidate.

- x. We don't know when Barnabas joined the church in Jerusalem. Some speculate that he may have been in Jerusalem during the days of Jesus and therefore couldn't fit the description of being a second generation believer. But we can't say for sure when he moved from Cyprus to Jerusalem. So this is ambiguous.
 - c. There are others suggested as well. Some speculate that the book was written by Dr. Luke who wrote the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.
 - i. Some theorize that the content is from Paul, but authored by Luke. That basically Luke wrote down a sermon that Paul gave at one time and then turned it into a letter to be sent to the Hebrews.
 - ii. Or that Paul wrote it in Hebrew and then Dr. Luke translated it into Greek and sent it out without a signature. It's an interesting theory and would seem to fit with some parameters of the book.
 - d. Silas, Paul's missionary partner during his second and third missionary journeys is listed by some as a potential candidate. Philip the evangelist is suggested by others and even Priscilla and Aquila are suggested based upon their connection to Rome and the mention of Italians sending greetings at the end of Hebrews.
 - e. All of these are possibilities and there is no way to know for certain. Many like to simply agree with the third century theologian Origen who is credited with writing, "Who it was who really wrote the epistle, God only knows."
7. But I'd like to suggest a different conclusion. Ultimately, we believe and trust that God is the author of the book of Hebrews.
- a. We believe what it says in 2 Peter about how "prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (**2 Pt. 1:21**)
 - b. We trust that God inspired a holy and godly person to sit down and pen these words for us to read. We believe that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (**2 Tim. 3:16-17**)
 - c. Who actually penned the book isn't nearly as important as understanding and trusting that this is God's word to us. That God inspired someone to write these words for us. What we're going to be studying over the next several months is God-breathed, it is God's message to us.
 - d. And because we know that this **is God's Word, we can trust it**, we can depend upon it, we can build our lives upon it. We can take the truths from this book and apply them to our lives knowing that God intended these words to be read by us, to be believed by us, and to be put into practice by us.
 - e. While we may not know who penned these words, we know that these words are from the Lord and that is good enough for me.
- C. As you can imagine when it comes to identifying the recipients of this letter we are once again left wandering.
1. Obviously this was a letter written to Hebrews, to the Jews. But which Jews? From which area?
 2. Many presume that it must be Jerusalem, but internal evidence may lead us to believe contrary to this.
 - a. As mentioned already both the author and the recipients seem to be in the same boat as second-generation believers. People who didn't hear Jesus first-hand, but who heard the gospel from others who had received it from the Lord. (**Heb. 2:3**)
 - b. That would probably eliminate the idea of this being to any Jews in the area of Jerusalem and more than likely even Jews from Galilee in the northern regions of Israel.
 - c. Also, within the book there is mention of the recipients ministering to the saints as a labor of love in chapter 6 verse 10. (**Heb. 6:10**)
 - i. This phraseology was often used in reference to providing financial gifts for the poor saints in Jerusalem. If that be the case, then obviously the recipients of this letter couldn't be the Jews who lived in Jerusalem. More than likely they were a group of Jews who were sending support to Jerusalem.
 3. There is one geographical mention within the book of Hebrews that may point to a possible group of recipients.
 - a. I alluded to it earlier, but at the end of the book the author writes in his farewell, "Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints. Those from *Italy* greet you." (**Heb. 13:24**)
 - b. Now, I guess this could be understood in a couple different ways.
 - i. It could be that the author is in Italy, and he is simply saying those with him in Italy send their greetings to the recipients of the letter.
 - ii. Or, it could be that the author has people with him from Italy in an unknown place and that he is writing to people in Italy, perhaps the church in Rome, who would be glad to hear about their fellow countrymen's greetings.
 - iii. We do know that there were a number of Jews who were run out of Rome and that Paul met up with some of them when he went to Corinth. Acts 18 tells us that when Paul entered Corinth, he met Aquila and his wife Priscilla who had recently come from Italy after the then emperor of Rome Claudius had commanded that all the Jews depart from Rome. (**Acts 18:2**)
 - iv. So it could be that there were some Jews with the author who had previously lived in Italy and the author is writing to acknowledge them and perhaps encourage a potential remnant in Rome or

those who were once in Rome, but had fled to some of the surrounding areas of the city within Italy.

- c. The idea that the author is writing to Jews in Italy bears additional weight when considering what is written in Hebrews 10.
 - i. Early on in their walk, the recipients of the letter had endured some struggles with sufferings and were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while they became companions of those who were so treated; they had compassion on the author who happened to be in chains at the time and they had their goods plundered from them. (**Heb. 10:34a**)
 - ii. The description in Hebrews seems to correlate with what happened in Rome in the year 49AD. As the number of Christian Jews grew in Rome, they often came across other Jews who rejected the message they were preaching regarding Jesus as the Messiah. The unbelieving Jews would cause all sorts of disturbances and problems whenever they encountered these Christian Jews.
 - iii. According to secular history it is recorded that agitations from the Jews kept causing problems for Rome.
 - iv. A statement in historical records simply reads, "Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome." Chrestus is believed by many historians to be referring to Christ.
 - v. The Jews were kicked out of Rome because certain Jews kept causing problems every time they heard someone talk about Jesus Christ. So, the emperor decided to have them removed from Rome. They were forced to leave their homes and possessions behind, and their goods were plundered by the Romans.
 - vi. If what is mentioned in Hebrews 10 is talking about the same event then that would make for a very strong case that the author is writing to Jews who lived in Rome, or who had at one time lived in Rome and are now living in Italy outside of the city of Rome.
 - d. This idea of the author writing to Jews in Italy bears the most weight and potential internal evidence, but even with that, scholars are divided as to the location of this group of Jews the author writes to.
- D. Moving on, we can look to the timing of the letter. This too is difficult to pin down without knowing who the author is and who he is writing to.
1. One piece of evidence that does help is the mentioning of Timothy being released from prison in Hebrews 13:23 where it reads "Know that our brother Timothy has been set free." (**Heb. 13:23**)
 2. Paul was imprisoned in Rome during the years 60-62AD and according to the books of Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, Timothy was with Paul at that time.
3. If the author is Paul and he is writing as a free man. The only possible timeframe based upon the Scriptures and the book of Acts would be during the later part of the year 62 AD after Paul was released from prison.
 4. We know that Paul offered to send Timothy to Philippi in order to find out about how things were going there. So he must not have been a prisoner at that time. Paul wrote the book of Philippi in either late 61 or early 62 AD.
 5. Paul's first letter to Timothy is believed to have been written around 63-64 AD. So the only window where Timothy could have been imprisoned according to the book of Acts was late 62AD to 63AD.
 6. Now this imprisonment of Timothy could be speaking of a timeframe that is not covered by the book of Acts. The book of Acts stops after Paul's release from prison in the year 62AD and so it is possible that this could be referring to a later date. But no later than 69/70AD.
 7. We know that the city of Jerusalem was taken, and the temple destroyed in the year 70AD and there is mention by the author of Hebrews about sacrifices still taking place. All temple sacrifices had come to an end by the year 70 AD.
 8. So, the writing of the book of Hebrews probably took place in the mid 60's of the first century. Probably somewhere between 63-68AD.
- E. Now let's get to the setting and the reason for why the author wrote this book.
1. The book of Hebrews really is about making a choice. My Life Application Bible commentary did a great job of summarizing the idea of Hebrews as a series of choices between bad, good, better, and best.
 - a. When faced with the choice between something good or something bad, only a foolish or misguided person would choose "bad". Good should win every single time.
 - b. At the next level, however, choices become more difficult—deciding between good and better. Again, in this case, the logical choice would seem to be "better", but the choice is not as clear-cut as in the former situation: the differences between the two options may seem insignificant, the reason for choosing what purports to be "better" may be unconvincing, and staying with the familiar "good" may feel comfortable and convenient. Thus, faced with keeping the good or moving up to better, many people stick with what they have, because, after all, it's not "bad".
 - c. The next choice is even more difficult—deciding between better and best. Again, the obvious choice should be "best" every time, but many miss what is best and settle, instead, for "better" or simply "good". For them it is better to stay with what they know.
 - d. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews had to convince the readers to settle for nothing less than God's very best for their lives.

- e. As Jews they had it good. They were God's chosen people. And for some that seemed to be enough. We read of people in the New Testament that walked around thinking they were good to go simply because they were the offspring of Abraham. They were "good".
 - f. But there was something better for them than simply being an offspring of Abraham. God also gave them a covenant they could participate in. If they would follow God's Laws and keep His Word and His commandments then God would be their God, and they would be His people. It certainly was better to live under the covenantal agreement with God than to simply live your life however you pleased thinking that it didn't really matter anyways.
 - g. And a number of Jews followed the Law to the best of their ability. And they had made it into a nice system that worked for them. They had figured out ways to stretch God's Law and even when they inevitably fell short of God's mark of perfection, they could simply go and offer up an animal sacrifice as a way to cover up their sin.
 - h. But God had something else for His people. Something that was better than "better" it was God's very best. And many of the recipients of this letter had tasted and experienced God's best. But when things became challenging, some were being drawn back to their old ways. They were beginning to think that maybe it's better just to go back to what they used to do.
 - i. This is the issue that the author of Hebrews is facing. He is trying to show them that **settling for less than God's best is foolishness.**
2. The book of Hebrews is written to a group of Christian Jews to encourage and exhort them in their faith.
 3. These Jewish Christians were not novices, they weren't new believers or new converts but have seemingly been walking with the Lord for some time.
 - a. This is understood by the author's rebuke and challenge towards them that they should be teachers by now, but unfortunately still need someone to teach them the basic principles of the oracles of God as described in Hebrews 5:12. (**Heb. 5:12**)
 4. As mentioned earlier, this group has successfully endured hardships in the past that came as a result of their stand for the gospel (**Heb. 10:32**)
 5. But as of late have become dull of hearing and their hearts are becoming hard and they are being tempted to depart from their faith and their relationship with the living God. (**Heb. 3:12**)
 6. They have been experiencing a new wave of persecutions coming against them which the author describes as discipline from the Lord.
 - a. He writes to them, "My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." (**Heb. 12:5-6**)
7. These Jewish believers were seemingly on the verge of lapsing back into Judaism and the Law as a means of avoiding persecution that was being directed at them as Christians. They were willing to surrender God's best for what they thought was "better".
 8. The author writes to them to exhort them to persevere in the faith and to remind them about the superiority and the supremacy of Christ.
 - a. As the author writes, he stacks Jesus up against all sorts of things to show His supremacy and His superiority over everything and anything they could desire from their old life in Judaism.
 - b. The author discusses how Jesus is better than the prophets who spoke to their fathers in various ways throughout their history. The prophets were simply men who were given revelation by God, but Jesus Christ is Himself the revelation of God and He speaks with authority over all.
 - c. He discusses how Jesus is better than all the angels of God. Angels were simply servants and messengers. But Jesus is the very Son of God and the angels were commanded to worship Him.
 - d. He talks about how Jesus is better than Moses. Moses was used by God to build a house, but as the Son of God Jesus is the owner of the house. Moses served Jesus and was used to build a house for Christ.
 - e. The author talks about how Jesus is better than Joshua. Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, but he never brought them into the rest that God promised. Jesus is greater than Joshua because He offers to them an opportunity to rest from their unending fruitless works of the Law.
 - f. The author spends a great amount of time detailing how Jesus is greater than Aaron and every other high priest who served at the tabernacle or temple. Jesus is our great High Priest who comes not from the flawed line of Aaron, but from the majestic line of Melchizedek.
 - g. The author speaks of how Jesus is greater than the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Through Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek, it proved that Abraham was the lesser of the two. And since Jesus comes through the line of Melchizedek which has no beginning and no end, Jesus is therefore greater than Abraham and everyone who came through him.
 - h. Jesus offers a better hope through which we may draw near to God. The old system was weak and unprofitable. The law couldn't make anything perfect, but through faith in Christ we have the promise of God that He will perfect us and complete the work He began in us.
 - i. Jesus is the surety of a better covenant. The old covenant was flawed and needed to be replaced. Jesus offers a new covenant; a covenant founded upon His broken body, His shed blood, and His

resurrection. A new covenant that doesn't force us to keep the law, but allows us to experience the amazing grace of God.

- j. Jesus is superior to the tabernacle and earthly sanctuary. Those things were just shadows of the heavenly sanctuary that Jesus has entered into and prepared for us. The tabernacle was made specifically to be shadows and representations of the real deal that Jesus rules over in heaven.
 - k. Jesus is the better sacrifice. The animal sacrifices of the old Jewish system were never able to remove sin permanently. They could only cover up sin temporarily.
 - i. The priests would have to offer up sacrifices day by day and year by year as a way to try and cover up their sin. But these sacrifices were insufficient. It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away our sins. (**Heb 10:4**)
 - ii. In contrast to the priests offering up animals sacrifices, Jesus offered up His own perfect spotless life as a sacrifice once and for all. And according to Hebrews 10:14 through that one offering Jesus has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. (**Heb. 10:14**)
 - l. Anything and everything these Jewish believers could possibly be drawn back to in the old ways of Judaism was inferior to Christ. All those things they did through the Law were just shadows and pictures pointing to the reality of Christ.
 - m. Why would anyone ever leave the reality of God to serve the shadows of temporary inferior things? It makes no sense and that is the message of Hebrews.
 - n. Jesus is better than everything. He is the best, there is nothing greater and there is no one greater.
9. And this is something I think we need to be reminded of as well. We may not be drawn back into legalism or in danger of turning to the Law, but many people today are tempted to return to their old life, whatever that may have been for you.
- a. Maybe it isn't legalism and following the Law of Moses like these people here in the book of Hebrews, but maybe there are things that you once did prior to your relationship with the Lord that still seem to have a certain draw upon your heart. Maybe you feel that tug to go back to the way of doing things before you came to faith in Christ or before you took your relationship with God seriously.
 - b. Let me tell you as the author of Hebrews tells his audience. You're going to regret it. **In Christ you have God's very best.** There is nothing that could be better or more valuable than your relationship and your walk with Jesus Christ.
 - c. Don't be fooled. Don't be tempted to go back to the old ways. Keep the faith, and keep pushing forward in the love and grace of God.

- d. He will see you through, He will complete the work He began in You. He will never leave you nor forsake you.
- e. In Christ you are a son or daughter of the king, and eternity in heaven awaits all of us who will not give up and continue to trust in the grace and love and mercy and power of Christ. Amen? Amen.