

GOSPEL of *Grace*
FELLOWSHIP

Hebrews
Jesus Christ,
Our Intercessor at the Throne
by Dana Burkinshaw
August 26, 2020

F - L - I - G - H - T

F – The author of the book of Hebrews is unknown. A number of people have been suggested, such as Paul, Luke, Clement, Barnabas, Apollos, and others, but it still remains a mystery. Whoever wrote Hebrews knew Greek, was steeped in the OT Scriptures, had a well-organized mind capable of ordering numerous details to produce a well-reasoned argument, and was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship ggf.church 1

F - L - I - G - H - T

F – The date of composition is uncertain. It's probable that Hebrews was written before AD 70 because it does not mention the destruction of the Jewish temple or refer to empire-wide Christian persecution. In a document that is so heavily Jewish, it would be remarkable to make no mention of the temple's destruction.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship ggf.church 2

F - L - I - G - H - T

L – The book of Hebrews takes us on a journey of mystery, wonder, revelation, and faith. Although we don't know who penned it, this well-written letter reveals an author who wanted Jewish believers to continue in the grace of Jesus Christ – and Jewish unbelievers to embrace it – rather than try to escape persecution by bowing to the rites and rituals of Judaism.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship ggf.church 3

F - L - I - G - H - T

L – Hebrews is basically a sermon about Jesus. It begins by exalting Jesus' greatness, then goes on to explain what he did on our behalf as the ultimate High Priest, ending with a challenge to embrace his finished work on the cross. The overarching theme of Hebrews is the superiority of Jesus Christ – a matter with both doctrinal and practical applications.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship ggf.church 4

F - L - I - G - H - T

I – **Doctrinal:** Christ is better than anything else (1-10)

- Prophets (1:1-3)
- Angels (1:4-2:18)
- Moses (3)
- Joshua (4:1-13)
- Levitical priests (4:14-7:28)
- Tabernacle (8:1-5)
- Old Covenant (8:6-9:22)

Gospel of Grace Fellowship ggf.church 5

F - L - I - G - H - T

I – Sacrifices (9:23-10:39)
Practical (11-13)
Faith (11)
Hope (12)
Love (13:1-7)

Gospel of Grace Fellowship ggf.church 6

F - L - I - G - H - T

G – One of the most prevalent images in the book of Hebrews is Jesus as the great High Priest who has ushered in the new covenant: *“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin”* (4:14-15).

Gospel of Grace Fellowship ggf.church 7

F - L - I - G - H - T

G – What a marvelous passage! We all need God’s mercy and grace—and lots of it—and that’s what the new covenant provides. Because of what Jesus did for us in giving himself as our atoning sacrifice, we don’t have to come before God with fear and trembling, shaking in our boots because of our sin. We can come boldly before his throne and ask for his help.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship ggf.church 8

F - L - I - G - H - T

H – Because little is known about the author of Hebrews or the date it was written, the history around it is fuzzy at best—though that hasn’t stopped people from guessing who wrote it. Around AD 200, Tertullian held that **Barnabas** was the author. More than 1000 years later, Martin Luther posited that **Apollos** was the author. He reasoned that Apollos was a good speaker and knew his OT, which made him as good a candidate as any.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship ggf.church 9

F - L - I - G - H - T

H – For centuries after Jerome and Augustine weighed in on the subject (in the 4th Century), the prevailing opinion about the writer of Hebrews was that it was **Paul**. But modern NT scholars point out that Hebrews does not have the hallmarks of Paul’s writings: Paul typically opened with a greeting of grace and peace to whomever he was writing, but this book doesn’t have that greeting.

Gospel of Grace Fellowship ggf.church 10

F - L - I - G - H - T

H – Also missing is Paul’s standard ending, where he signed with his own hand and made comments to specific people. Hebrews doesn’t mention its author or its audience. The most important consideration is that the author of Hebrews put himself in the category of those who heard the gospel **secondhand** (2:3)—whereas Paul said he had received the gospel **directly** from Jesus himself (Gal. 1:11-12).

Gospel of Grace Fellowship ggf.church 11

F - L - I - G - H - T

T - Jesus is a better messenger than God's angels. The author of Hebrews knew that some Jews might equate Jesus with angels or even categorize him as inferior to them, so he made it clear that Jesus had *"become so much better than the angels"* (1:4), which means we don't need to pray to a guardian angel or any other envoy or go-between.

F - L - I - G - H - T

T - Jesus is a better moderator than Moses. A great man of God, Moses stood in the gap between the Lord and his people, moderating the covenant he had made with them through the law. Yet Moses was just a member of the household of faith, whereas Jesus is its architect and builder (3:3).

F - L - I - G - H - T

T - Jesus is a better mediator than any Jewish priest. Under the old covenant, a priest's job was to act as the mediator between man and God. Jesus was and is the perfect Mediator between man and God. As a man he identifies with our weakness and our need for forgiveness. As the perfect, holy God, he was able to make the ultimate atoning sacrifice for our sins. Now he lives forever as the one true Mediator, interceding on our behalf.

F - L - I - G - H - T

T - Stay focused on following Jesus. Don't let anything keep you from running your race—attitudes, habits, relationships, anything that keeps you from *"looking unto Jesus"* (12:2), who is the goal and the prize all in one.