

The Message of Hebrews: Jesus is Greater!

David Feddes

Author of Hebrews: Unknown

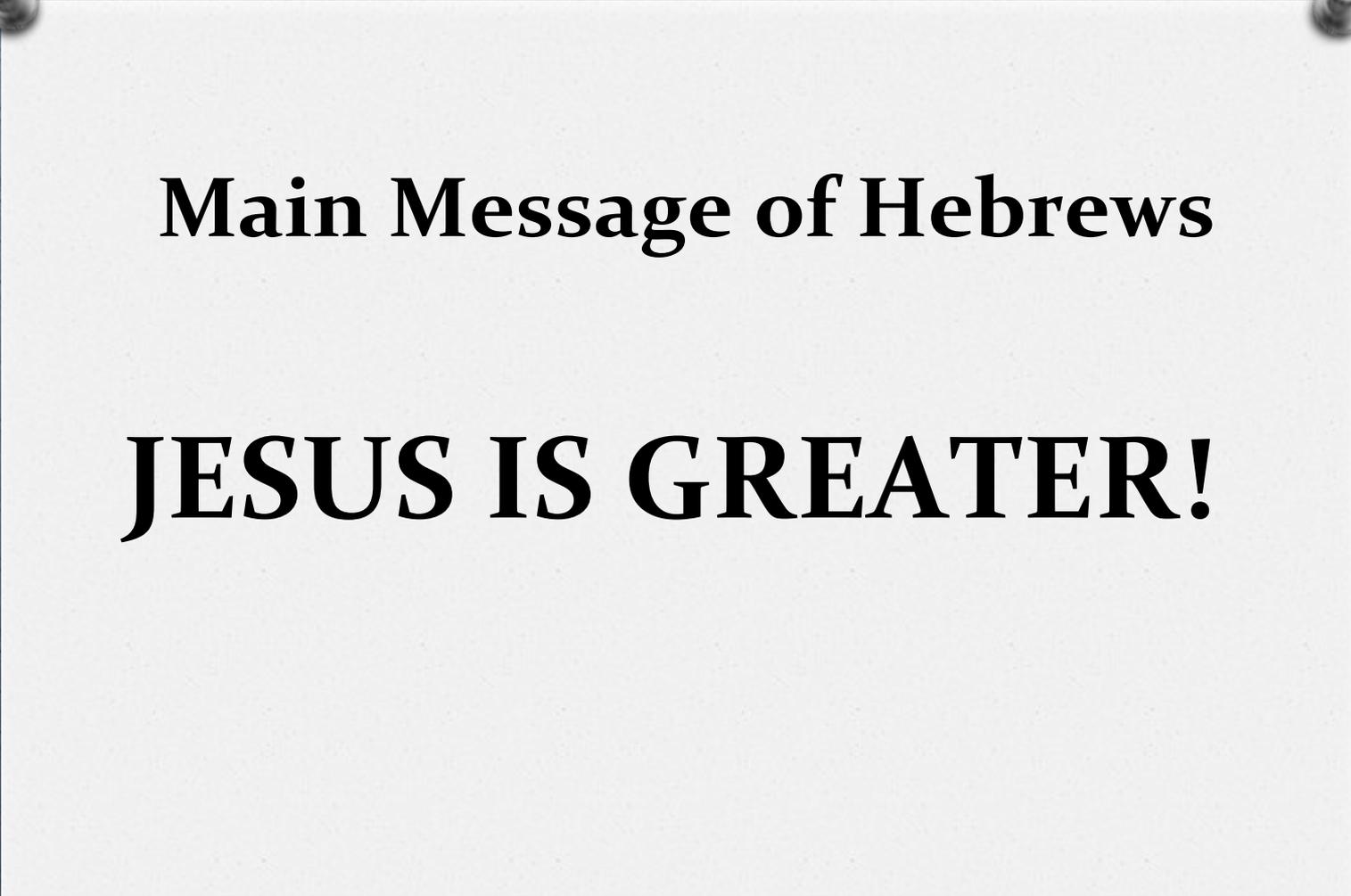
Author had deep knowledge of Old Testament and Jewish practices. Possible candidates:

- **Barnabas:** from priestly tribe of Levi (Acts 4:36), companion of Paul, widely respected. [Tertullian wrote in 200 about “an epistle to the Hebrews under the name of Barnabas”]
- **Apollos:** “a native of Alexandria... a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures” (Acts 19:24); familiar with Paul
- **Paul:** using a different secretary or style

Audience of Hebrews: Jewish believers facing big questions

“...a large number of priests became obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

- How highly should we regard Jesus?
- How much of salvation depends on Jesus, and how much on other things?
- Should we do temple rituals of the old covenant, or go entirely with the new?
- Is the new faith worth suffering for?



Main Message of Hebrews

JESUS IS GREATER!

Jesus is greater

- Greater than prophets (1:1-3)
- Greater than angels (1:4-2:18)
- Greater than Moses (3:1-6)
- Greater rest than Israel's land or Sabbath (3:7-4:13)
- Greater priest (4:14-7:28)
- Greater tabernacle (8:1-5; 9:1-6)
- Greater covenant (8:6-13)
- Greater sacrifice (9:7-10:25)

Jesus is greater

- Greater punishment for unbelief (recurring refrain)
- Greater era for faith (11:1-40)
- Greater city (11:10; 13:14)
- Greater insight in trials (12:1-14)
- Greater mountain (12:18-24)
- Greater meal and altar (13:9-10)

Greater than prophets (1:1-3)

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. (1:1-3)

Greater than angels (1:4-2:18)

So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs (1:4).

When God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God's angels worship him.” (1:6)

Greater than Moses (3:1-6)

Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself... Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house... But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house.
(3:3-6)

Greater rest than Jewish land or Jewish Sabbath (3:7-4:13)

Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? ... And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? (3:16, 18)

If Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God... Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest (4:8-11).

Greater priest (4:14-7:28)

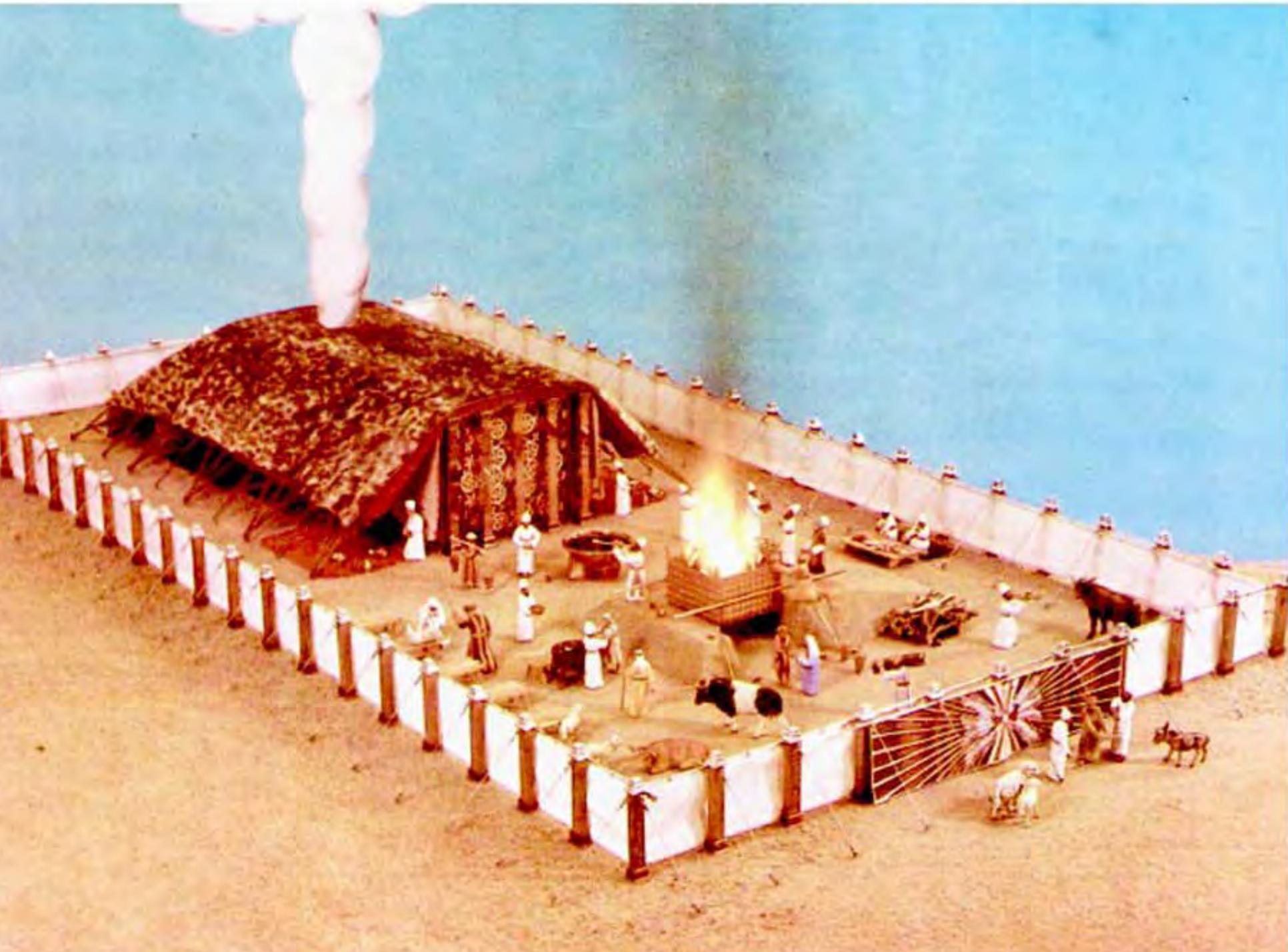
Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. (7:26-27)



Greater tabernacle (8:1-5; 9:1-6)

We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.... They [the priests] serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven.... (8:1-6)

Through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places (9:11)





Greater covenant (8:6-13)

Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant. (7:20-22)

Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.(8:6-7)

Greater sacrifice

(9:7-10:25)

He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. (9:26)

We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all** (10:10).



Reality replaces shadow

It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. ... he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves (9:23-10:1).

Once for all

He sacrificed for their sins **once for all** when he offered himself (7:27).

He entered the Most Holy Place **once for all** by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption (9:12).

But now he has appeared **once for all** at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself (9:26)

We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all** (10:10).

Greater punishment

For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? (2:2-3)

Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? (10:28-29)

Greater era for faith (11:1-40)

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. (11:39-40)

Greater city (11:10; 13:14)

Abraham was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (11:10).

Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. (13:12-14)

Greater insight in trials (12:1-14)

Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered (5:8). Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross... Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart (12:2-3). Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons (12:7). God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness (12:10).

Greater mountain (12:18-24)

You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm... or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them... But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God... to thousands of angels, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven... to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.

Greater meal and altar

It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them. We have an altar [the cross] from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat (13:9-10).

Jesus is greater

- Greater than prophets (1:1-3)
- Greater than angels (1:4-2:18)
- Greater than Moses (3:1-6)
- Greater rest than Israel's land or Sabbath (3:7-4:13)
- Greater priest (4:14-7:28)
- Greater tabernacle (8:1-5; 9:1-6)
- Greater covenant (8:6-13)
- Greater sacrifice (9:7-10:25)

Jesus is greater

- Greater punishment for unbelief (recurring refrain)
- Greater era for faith (11:1-40)
- Greater city (11:10; 13:14)
- Greater insight in trials (12:1-14)
- Greater mountain (12:18-24)
- Greater meal and altar (13:9-10)

Jesus fulfills and surpasses Old Testament Scripture

Prophets, angels, Abraham, Moses, Aaron, Sabbath, promised land, priests, tabernacle, temple, Holy of Holies, sacrifices, oaths, covenants, heroic faith, brave suffering, Mount Sinai, promises, punishments, feast, altar, city of Jerusalem

JESUS IS GREATER!

All-sufficient, unchanging anchor

You remain the same, and your years will never end" (1:12).

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure... He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek. (6:19-20)

He is able to save completely... because he always lives (7:25).

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (13:8).