

BGM BIBLE COLLEGE

New Testament Survey

LECTURE 26 BY PASTOR MUNAWAR KHURSHID

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THE EPISTLE

The author of this Epistle is known perhaps only in heaven. Many opinions and discussions have arisen concerning it. Possible authors include the Apostle Paul, Luke, Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla.

Some scholars hold that the Apostle Paul is the author.

Arguments against Pauline Authorship

1. Paul's name appeared not in this Epistle, whereas in all his other Epistles his name stand out at the beginning. Yet it may be said that since this Epistle was addressed unto Hebrew (Jewish) believers, the mention of his name might have become a stumbling-block unto them. It is possible that Paul withheld his identity, that those Jews who opposed him most fiercely might receive this Epistle without prejudice.
2. The style of the Epistle differed from that of Paul's other writings; nevertheless, since this Epistle was written unto a wholly different audience, a distinct manner of expression is natural.
3. The Epistle to the Hebrews contained the highest and most polished Greek in the New Testament. Paul's educational background was such that he was well able to write such refined Greek.
4. Paul was appointed an apostle unto the Gentiles, and this Epistle speaketh not of the Gentiles. Yet it was also within God's plan that Jewish believers be partakers of Paul's ministry; and if this were Paul's final Epistle, it would be fitting that Israel be addressed at the end ([Acts 15:9](#)).

Arguments in Favour of Pauline Authorship

1. The salutation followed the same pattern found in Paul's other thirteen Epistles.
2. The author is a master of the Greek tongue and of the Old Testament Scriptures—qualifications which Paul eminently possessed.
3. Peter, writing unto the Jews, declared that Paul also had written unto them ([2 Peter 3:15–16](#)). No other such Epistle exists in the New Testament save Hebrews; therefore, many suppose this to be Paul's letter.
4. The author possessed deep insight into both the Old and the New Covenants.
5. The Epistle was written from bonds ([Heb. 10:34](#)), and Paul was oft in imprisonment.
6. The author was a close companion of Timothy ([Heb. 13:23](#)), which also agreed with Paul.

THE RECIPIENTS OF THE EPISTLE

The Epistle was written unto Hebrew believers ([Heb. 3:1](#)).

From its contents we observe several things:

- It was written unto believers who were not newly converted ([Heb. 5:12](#)).
- It was written unto those who had endured much affliction ([Heb. 10:32](#)).
- It was written unto a great and established congregation ([Heb. 13:24](#)).

Many scholars believe it was first addressed unto the Church at Jerusalem, and afterward circulated among various congregations.

THE DATE OF WRITING

There is no full agreement concerning its date. Most scholars place it between A.D. 62 and 64. It was written after the worst cruelties of Nero, yet before bloodshed had begun ([Heb. 12:4](#)). It was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, for the Temple was yet standing and the sacrificial system still in operation.

THE PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE

The Epistle was written to aid Hebrew believers in understanding the great transition from the Old Covenant unto the New. It may well have been God's final earnest call unto the Jewish people before judgment, helping them to pass from Judaism unto Christianity, and to see that the things of old were but shadows, while the true substance is revealed in Christ.

The following contrasts show this transition:

Old Covenant	New Covenant
First Covenant—shadowy (Heb. 8:7–8)	Second Covenant—better (Heb. 8:8–13)
Symbolic (Heb. 9:13)	Better Covenant (Heb. 9:11)
Present time (Heb. 9:9)	Good things to come (Heb. 9:11)
Made with hands (Heb. 9:11)	Not made with hands—of God (Heb. 9:11)
Copies of heavenly things (Heb. 9:23)	Heavenly realities (Heb. 9:24)
Shadows (Heb. 10:1)	The true substance
Repeated sacrifices (Heb. 10:1)	One sacrifice once for all (Heb. 10:11–14)
Temporal	Eternal

WHY THE EPISTLE IS CALLED “THE EPISTLE OF BETTER THINGS”

The central message of the Epistle is the revelation of better and greater things. The Lord Jesus Christ is portrayed as superior, exalted, and the Mediator of a better covenant.

Christ is shown to be greater than:

- The prophets ([Heb. 1:1–3](#))

- The angels (**Heb. 1:4–14**)
- Moses
- Joshua
- Aaron
- Abraham (**Heb. 7:7**)
- The Law (**Heb. 7:19**)

The New Covenant is better than the Old (**Heb. 7:8–13**) because:

1. It bringeth a better revelation (**Heb. 1:1–4**).
2. It gives a better hope (**Heb. 7:19**).
3. It hath a better priesthood.
4. It rested upon a better covenant (**Heb. 8:6**).
5. It contained better promises (**Heb. 8:6**).
6. It is sealed with better blood.
7. It is established through a better sacrifice (**Heb. 9:23**).
8. It offered a better possession.
9. It pointed unto a better country (**Heb. 11:16**).

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

This Epistle revealed the Lord Jesus Christ as the Great High Priest in the fullest and most complete manner (**Heb. 7:24–25**).

1. Christ, as High Priest, is merciful and faithful (**Heb. 2:17**).
2. He is the object of our whole attention (**Heb. 3:1**).
3. He hath passed into the heavens on our behalf (**Heb. 4:14**).
4. He is sinless and full of compassion (**Heb. 4:15**).
5. His priesthood is eternal (**Heb. 5:6**).
6. He is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek (**Heb. 5:9–11**).
7. He is the Forerunner (**Heb. 6:20**).
8. He is greater than Abraham (**Heb. 7:4**).
9. He is higher than the heavens.
10. In Him is no infirmity.
11. He sitteth at the right hand of God (**Heb. 8:1**).
12. He makes intercession for us (**Heb. 7:25**).
13. He offered Himself (**Heb. 10:12**).
14. He hath reconciled us unto the Father (**Heb. 10:19–22**).
15. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith (**Heb. 12:2**).

The Epistle to the Hebrews also contained the clearest definition of faith and its most vivid examples, especially in chapter 11, which is called the Chapter of Faith.

Examples of Faith

1. The Faith of God (v. 2).

Thus is set forth the faithfulness of God, who speaketh and it standeth fast, whose word is sure from everlasting.

2. The Faith of Abel (v. 4).

By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.

3. The Faith of Enoch (v. 5).

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him.

4. The Faith of Noah (v. 7).

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.

5. The Faith of Abraham (vv. 8–10).

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called, and went out, not knowing whither he went; and he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

6. The Faith of Sarah (v. 11).

Through faith Sarah received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age.

7. The Faith of Isaac (v. 20).

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

8. The Faith of Jacob (v. 21).

By faith Jacob blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

9. The Faith of Joseph (v. 22).

By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

10. The Faith of the Parents of Moses (v. 23).

By faith they hid Moses three months, for they saw he was a proper child; and they feared not the king's commandment.

11. The Faith of Moses (vv. 24–28).

By faith Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.

12. The Faith of Israel (vv. 29–30).

By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land; and by faith the walls of Jericho fell down.

13. The Faith of Rahab (v. 31).

By faith Rahab perished not with them that believed not, for she received the spies with peace.

14. The Faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the Prophets (vv. 32–35).

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

15. The Faith of the Persecuted Saints (vv. 35–40).

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; and others had trial of cruel mocking and scourging's; yet obtained a good report through faith.

The General Epistle of James

The Name of James

The name *James* is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew *Jacob*. This James is distinct from others of the same name mentioned in the New Testament.

1. James the Son of Zebedee (Matt. 4:21).

He was the brother of John, kin to the Lord Jesus, one of the three closest disciples, and the first of the Twelve to suffer martyrdom.

2. James the Son of Alphaeus (Mark 15:40–41).

Called “James the Less,” and counted among the Twelve. It is possible he was near of kin to Matthew, whose father also bare the name Alphaeus (**Matt. 9:9**).

The Author of the Epistle

The writer of this epistle is James, called the brother of our Lord (**Gal. 1:18–19**). He was not numbered among the Twelve (**Acts 1:13**). In the beginning, neither he nor the Lord's other brethren believed on Him (**John 7:3–5**). Yet, the Sermon on the Mount left a deep impress upon his soul, as his epistle plainly revealed.

He was not present at the crucifixion (**John 19:25–27**), but he was among the first who received the message of Christ's resurrection (**1 Cor. 15:7**). He continued steadfastly with the one hundred and twenty in prayer (**Acts 1:14**). Paul counted him among the apostles (**Gal. 1:18–19**).

In time he became the overseer of the church at Jerusalem (**Acts 12:17**), and took part in the decisions and decrees of the Jerusalem Council (**Acts 15:22–30**). He called himself the servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (**James 1:1**). Tradition declared he suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Jews around A.D. 62.

Date of Writing

Many scholars hold that this epistle was written in the earliest days of the spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles. It may well have preceded the Jerusalem Council, seeing James makes no mention of its decrees. Thus it is likely among the earliest writings of the New Testament, **dated between A.D. 45 and 50**.

The Central Theme

The Epistle of James declared that Christianity is not a mere profession of the lips, nor faith a bare claim of the tongue, but must needs be manifested in a holy and righteous life. James contended for the perfect harmony of **faith and works**, teaching that living faith proved itself by godly deeds.

Notable Features of the Epistle of James

The Pastoral Heart of James

James speaketh as a shepherd of souls, urging that faith must needs be accompanied by works. He called the believers not only to hold fast the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, but to walk in that faith by righteous deeds.

Its Deep Harmony with the Sermon on the Mount

It appeared that James either stood present when the Lord delivered the Sermon on the Mount, or else received its teaching from one who heard it and was deeply moved thereby. Throughout this epistle we behold the practical exposition of that holy Sermon. As under Moses the Lord gave unto Israel the Law, even so under the Lord Jesus Christ did God reveal, upon the mount, the principles of the Kingdom of the New Covenant (**Matt. 5–7**).

Through James, God hath shown how the laws of that heavenly Kingdom are to be lived out within the Church.

Old Testament Examples

James frequently cited the saints of old as patterns of faith and works:

- **Abraham (James 2:21).**
- **Isaac (James 2:21).**
- **Rahab (James 2:25).**
- **Job (James 5:11).**
- **Elijah (James 5:17).**

The Imagery of the Tongue (James 3:1–12)

James declared that strife within the Church springe chiefly from the misuse of the tongue; therefore he pressed upon believers the need to bridle it.

The tongue is likened unto **a bridle** in a horse's mouth—small indeed, yet turning the whole body.

It is likened unto **a rudder** upon a great ship—little in size, yet steering the vessel whithersoever the governor willet.

It is likened unto **a fire**—a small spark that may set a whole forest aflame.

It is harder to tame than the wild beasts of the earth.

It is likened unto **the poison of serpents**, spreading death.

It is likened unto **a fountain**—if pure, it bringeth life; if corrupt, it bringeth death.

The First General Epistle of Peter

The Author

The writer of this epistle is **the Apostle Peter**, whose name appeared 210 times in the New Testament. Three names are used of him therein:

- **Simon**: the name given him by his parents, meaning *a tender shoot*.
- **Cephas**: the Aramaic name bestowed upon him by the Lord Jesus, meaning *a rock* (**John 1:41–42**).
- **Peter**: the Greek equivalent of *Cephas*, meaning *a small stone*.

The Background of the Epistle

This letter is written unto believers scattered abroad through persecution, who had fled from their habitations and were dispersed throughout various regions (**1 Pet. 1:1–2**).

Some interpreters suppose that the letter was addressed chiefly to Jewish believers; yet the greater weight of evidence showed that it was written unto both Jews and Gentiles, for:

- They were formerly in ignorance.
- They had been redeemed from vain traditions (**1 Pet. 1:18**).
- They were called out of darkness into His marvellous light (**1 Pet. 2:9**).
- Once they were not a people, but now are the people of God (**1 Pet. 2:10**).
- In times past they walked in lasciviousness, drunkenness, and idolatry (**1 Pet. 4:3–4**).

Thus the majority of scholars agree that this epistle was written unto **all believers**, whether of Jewish or Gentile background.

Date of Writing

The epistle was likely penned between **A.D. 63 and 65**, during the reign of Nero, when fierce hostility had arisen against the Church.

The Central Message of First Peter

Suffering with Christ unto Glory

The chief theme set forth by the Apostle Peter is this: *that they who suffer with Christ shall also be partakers of His glory*. The word *suffering* appeared in this epistle about sixteen times. The Churches unto whom he wrote were passing through fiery trials and persecutions (**1 Pet. 1:6–7**).

Peter's teaching Concerning Suffering

Peter declared that suffering for righteousness' sake is appointed unto the believer (**1 Pet. 2:19–21**).

Such sufferings are to be borne patiently, without rendering evil for evil (**1 Pet. 2:23**).

If a man suffer for his own faults, he hath no reward therein (**1 Pet. 2:20**).

To suffer for Christ is a blessing (**1 Pet. 3:13–17**).

Suffering joined the believer unto Christ, even in His own afflictions (**1 Pet. 4:1**).

Suffering proved the genuineness of faith, and prepared the believer for glory (**1 Pet. 4:12–14**).

Sufferings are according to the will of God, and are part of the Christian calling (**1 Pet. 4:19**). Therefore the believer hath no cause to fear, for an eternal glory is laid up for him (**1 Pet. 4:19**).

The Second General Epistle of Peter

Authorship

Though some have disputed the authorship, yet the earliest fathers of the Church ascribed this epistle unto the Apostle Peter. Evidence within the letter confirmed this, for:

- The writer named himself *Simon Peter* (**2 Pet. 1:1**).
- He declared that he was present upon the holy mount at the Transfiguration (**2 Pet. 1:15–18**).
- He makes mention of a former epistle written by him (**2 Pet. 3:1**).
- He speaketh of his soon approaching death, even as the Lord had showed him (**2 Pet. 1:13–16**).

Thus it is evident that Peter wrote this epistle in the last days of his earthly pilgrimage.

The Burden of Peter's Heart

Peter was troubled concerning false teachers who had stealthily entered the Church (**2 Pet. 2:1–3**).

He feared lest the faith of believers should be overthrown (**2 Pet. 1:10**).

He lamented that false doctrines were creeping into the fellowship of the saints (**2 Pet. 2:1–3**).

He desired that believers might rightly understand the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (**2 Pet. 3:3–13**).

Date of Writing

This epistle was penned between **A.D. 65 and 66**, shortly before Peter's martyrdom.

The Central Message of Second Peter

The message of this epistle circleth round *the truth of sound doctrine*, in contrast with the corruption of false teachers.

The Portrait of the False Teachers (2 Peter 2)

Peter described them in solemn terms:

1. Bringers of damnable heresies.
2. Such as through feigned words make merchandise of men.
3. As brute beasts without understanding.
4. Spots and blemishes.
5. Seducers of unstable souls through covetousness.
6. Walkers in the way of Balaam.
7. Lovers of reward.

8. Wells without water.
9. Clouds carried by tempest.
10. Boasters of great swelling words.
11. Servants of corruption.

The Day of the Lord (2 Peter 3:3–13)

Peter revealed the solemn truths concerning the Day of the Lord:

- In the last days mockers shall arise.
- The earth shall be purged with fire.
- Destruction shall come upon the ungodly.
- Though it seem to tarry, that day shall surely come.
- It shall come as a thief in the night.
- The heavens and the earth shall be made new.
- Believers are not to fear, but to look for that day with holy conduct and godliness.

BACKGROUND:

THE EPISTLES OF SAINT JOHN THE APOSTLE

These three epistles were written by Saint John the Apostle. Though he introduced not his name within the letters, yet the language and manner of speech do plainly declare that they proceed from his hand; and the opening verses of the First Epistle bear close likeness unto the Gospel written by him (**1 John 1:1–3**).

PURPOSES OF THE THREE EPISTLES

I. THE FIRST EPISTLE

This is called *The Epistle of Love*. In it he contended earnestly against the heresy of **Gnosticism**, setting forth the truth of Christ's incarnation and the marks of true fellowship with God.

II. THE SECOND EPISTLE

This is called *The Epistle of Truth*. In it he exhorted unto love for the truth, steadfastness in the truth, and walking in the truth. It is the only book of the New Testament written unto *a woman and her children* (**2 John 1:1**).

Concerning the Identity of the Elect Lady

Various opinions have arisen:

Some hold that she represented the Church; others, that she was a woman who led a congregation within her house; yet most scholars receive her as a *real believer*, unto whom the letter was truly addressed. She was a faithful and obedient woman, one that ordered worship within her home, renowned for hospitality; her sister and nephews were likewise companions of Saint John. Saint John wrote unto her that she should beware of false teachers who came into her house to spread their pernicious doctrine.

III. THE THIRD EPISTLE

This also is *The Epistle of Truth*, yet emphasis is laid more upon **deeds than doctrine**. It is the shortest book of the New Testament. It is written unto a man named **Gaius**.

Concerning Gaius

He was converted through Saint John, a respected leader in the Church, sound in faith and in works, and well known for his hospitality. The purpose of the epistle was to commend Gaius for his faithfulness in hospitality, and to rebuke **Diotrephes**, who walked disorderly, rejected apostolic authority, and opposed the brethren.

DATE OF WRITING

These epistles were likely written from Ephesus between **A.D. 85 and 90**.

CENTRAL THEMES

The Theme of the First Epistle

The love of God manifested toward us through His Son.

The Theme of the Second Epistle

Love for the truth, and fidelity unto it.

The Theme of the Third Epistle

That love for the truth is proven by hospitality and by steadfastness in good works.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THESE EPISTLES

They are written **against Gnosticism**.

They affirm that **Jesus Christ came in the flesh**;

Saint John beareth witness that he *saw, heard, and handled* Him;

His **blood was shed**, and whosoever denied His incarnation is not of God.

THE PORTRAIT OF CHRIST IN THESE EPISTLES

- The Son of God
- Our Advocate with the Father
- The Propitiation for our sins
- The Holy One
- The Christ

MARKS OF THOSE WHO ARE BORN OF GOD

- They keep the Word of God
- They walk in righteousness
- They do not continue in sin
- They love the brethren
- They believe on the Son of God

- They overcome the world
- They keep themselves from evil

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE

It is held that the writer of this epistle is **Jude, the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ**. In the beginning he believed not on the Lord (John 7:3–5). At times he journeyed with Him (John 2:12). He stood not by the cross at the hour of the Crucifixion (John 19:25–27). Yet after the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, he believed (John 20:17). He was present in the upper room with the hundred and twenty, continuing steadfastly in prayer (Acts 1:14). He counted not himself among the apostles (Jude 17).

DATE OF WRITING

This epistle was written between **A.D. 66 and 80**.

THE CENTRAL THEME

The principal message of the Book of Jude is **a solemn warning against false ministers and corrupt doctrines**.

THE FIVEFOLD MESSAGE OF THE EPISTLE

1. **The True Faith is a Conflict**
It is a holy contest for which we must earnestly contend.
2. **Beware of False Ministers**
Vigilance concerning deceivers is necessary.
3. **Discern the Marks of False Teachers**
Their characteristics are clearly revealed.
4. **Judgment Awaited Them**
Divine condemnation is certain.
5. **Their Moral and Spiritual Condition**
They are dreamers, defilers of the flesh, despisers of dominion, speakers against dignities, brute beasts, shepherds feeding themselves, clouds without water, trees whose fruit withered—twice dead, raging waves of the sea, wandering stars, murmurs, complainers, boasters, flatterers, mockers, sensual, dividers, and void of the Spirit.

PARALLELS WITH THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

The Epistle of Jude beareth deep resemblance unto **2 Peter**. Saint Peter foretold the coming of false teachers; Jude declared that they **are already entered in**.

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES OF THE UNGODLY (JUDE 11)

- **Cain**
- **Balaam**
- **Korah**

UNIQUE DETAILS FOUND ONLY IN THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

- The dispute concerning **the body of Moses** (Jude 9)
- The prophecy of **Enoch** (Jude 14–15)

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

THE NATURE OF THE BOOK

This book is filled with mysteries, written in rich and abundant symbolism. Its author is **Saint John the Apostle**, who also wrote the Gospel according to John and the three epistles. He received this vision while exiled on the isle of Patmos (**Revelation 1:9**), likely writing the book afterward, for he saith, *and “I was in the isle that is called Patmos.”* He was banished during the reign of Emperor Domitian. Patmos is a small island near Asia Minor.

Many suppose it to be *the Revelation of John the Divine*; yet it is indeed **the Revelation of Jesus Christ**, for *Revelation* signified an unveiling of hidden things. This book unveiled the majesty, glory, and sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even as we speak of *the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John*, yet the Gospel is not theirs but Christ’s, written through them.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is as a door, opening unto the mysteries of God. Through it we behold things to come. In former times God revealed Himself by diverse means—by His voice, through His angels, by the prophets, and lastly by His Son. In this Revelation the Lord Jesus Christ makes known His glory, authority, and dominion.

TITLES OF CHRIST REVEALED IN THIS BOOK

Among the many titles by which He manifested Himself are these:

The First Begotten of the Dead;

The Prince of the kings of the earth;

The Lord God which is, and which was, and which is to come;

Alpha and Omega;

He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand;

He that walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

He that hath the sharp two-edged sword;

The Son of God;

He that opened and no man shuttled, and shuttled and no man opened;

The Lion of the tribe of Judah;

The Lamb as it had been slain;

Lord of lords;

King of kings;

The Bright and Morning Star;

The Beginning and the End.

DATE OF WRITING

The book was likely written about **A.D. 95**.

THE FOURFOLD PORTRAIT OF CHRIST IN REVELATION

1. As the High Priest (**Revelation 1:12–20**)
2. As the Lamb of God (**Revelation 5:6–14; 19:1–5**)
3. As King of kings and Lord of lords (**Revelation 19:11–18**)
4. As the Bridegroom (**Revelation 21:9–27; 22:17**)

THE PURPOSE OF WRITING

The book was written **in obedience to the Lord's command (Revelation 1:10–11)**. Its purpose is to **show His servants things which must shortly come to pass**, and to comfort and strengthen the faithful (**Revelation 1:1**). It contained admonition, commendation, and warning unto the **seven churches of Asia (Revelation 1:20–3:22)**.

