

# Continuing With Christ

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Preacher: Pastor Steve Hersey

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 2 : 30 ] It says, Did you catch that?

It was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. What does that mean? Don't mind.

What does that mean? That last part. It was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. Say that again?

Paul was not with him. Exactly. It says, It was confirmed unto us by those that were with him. So people will say, So it couldn't have been Paul because he was not with him.

It had to be some others who were telling them about who the Lord was and explaining all these things in Hebrews. Basically, they're saying that the people who are getting this were second generation Christians.

[ 3 : 38 ] They heard it from one of the apostles or somebody else who was there. They got saved. And now this person is writing to the Hebrews to help them. Take your Bible and go with me over to the book of Galatians.

Hold your finger there in Hebrews. Galatians chapter 1. And like I said, one of the differences in Hebrews is it doesn't declare who the author is.

Galatians, look at verse 1. Galatians 1.1. Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.

And who's writing it? Paul. Who's he writing to? Look at verse 2. And all the brethren which were with me unto the churches at Galatia.

So he tells us, Paul's writing it and he's writing to the churches at Galatia. And if you look through, if you will go to Ephesians and Philippians and the others, Paul, an apostle, writing to the church at Philippi, writing to the church at Ephesus.

[ 4 : 48 ] Hebrews does not do that. All of Paul's other letters did. Look down with me. You're still there in Galatians. Look at chapter 1. Look down with me at verse 17.

Beginning at verse 17. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me. But I went into Arabia and returned again unto Damascus.

Then, after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and abode with him fifteen days. And other of the apostles saw I none, save James, the Lord's brother.

So what is Paul saying when he writes the Galatians? I got my information straight from the Lord himself. He spent three years in Arabia and he says, that's where I learned about Jesus Christ.

That's where I learned about what God had planned for me, what he wanted me to do. He said, it wasn't until after that that I went to see Peter. And the only other person I saw in between that time was James.

[ 5 : 45 ] I saw no other apostles. So, when he says over in Hebrews, there in chapter 2, verse 3, when he says, was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, Paul's basically saying, that's not me.

Because I didn't get it from others. I got it straight from the Lord himself. So that's one of the objections. Different ones, like I said, have mentioned different ones to be the possible authors.

Martin Luther believed it was Apollos. What he based that on, I have no idea. And like I said, a lot of the others who said it was Silas or some of the others, there's no evidence in the book itself to say that those guys wrote it.

So, you want to say Paul wrote it? You want to say Apollos wrote it? You want to say somebody else wrote it? I'm going to agree with a guy, another church father, by the name of Origen. Origen lived around 225 A.D.

And he said this, but who wrote the epistle? God only knows certainly. He says God only knows. But, before we go too far with that, I want you to see something else.

[ 7 : 04 ] Or remember something else. Let's put it that way. Let's remember something else. We may not be able to put the writer's name with the book of Hebrews, but I can tell you who the author is.

What does it say in 2 Timothy 3.16? All scripture is given by inspiration of God.

So, I don't know who the human writer is, but I know who the author is. It was God himself. So, I don't know who the human writer is. There's still a lot of evidence that says Paul could have written it.

There's a lot of evidence that says that, you know, whoever it is. Go with me back to Galatians.

I'm trying to think how to word this. Go back to Galatians chapter 2. Look with me at verse 7. Galatians 2.7.

[ 8 : 08 ] So, what is Paul saying there?

Peter went to the Jews. Paul was sent to the Gentiles. Verse 8. God worked in Peter's life.

God worked in my life. Verse 9. And when James, Cephas, Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go to the heathen, and they to the circumcision.

So, Paul's saying, look. Peter went to the Jews. I went to the Gentiles. Both of us had the blessing of God upon us to do what God had called us to do.

But then, if you go to 1 Peter, you don't have to turn there. I'll just read this one to you. 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

[ 9 : 24 ] Now, what's so significant about that verse? Okay, Peter went to a bunch of different places and talked to a bunch of different people. When he says he went to the strangers scattered, Peter also ministered to Gentiles.

Remember, Peter up on top of the house there, and the sheep comes down with the different animals, and he has this conversation with God, and it goes back up, and he comes down, and there are men there waiting for him from Cornelius.

So Peter went to the Gentiles as well. But Peter's main job was to the Jews.

2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 15. 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 15. Notice what it says. 2 Peter 3 and verse 15.

An account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation even to our beloved brother Paul, also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you.

[ 10 : 35 ] He's saying Paul has written unto the Hebrews as well. So he's confirming that Paul wrote to them as well. So did Paul write Hebrews? Very possibly yes.

Do we know for sure? No. Does it matter? No. It is God's word. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. So, for 2 Peter, if you're still there, 2 Peter 121 says, For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Everything that we have in scripture came from the Holy Spirit. Everything we have in scripture came through God to us. He used other men to write it, but it all came from him.

Okay, second thing. Who are the recipients? Who are the ones that are being written to? Well, just as the writer is not named, neither really is who the recipients are.

Who is this book going to? It doesn't say to the church at Ephesus or Philippi or Glacier, whatever. It doesn't say that. But, since at least A.D. 175, it has always been put that this was to the Hebrews.

[ 11 : 57 ] It was written to the Hebrews. It was written to those of Jewish descent. How do we know that? Contents of the book has so many things in there.

Allusions to the Old Testament, quotations from the Old Testament. There's a lot of Old Testament in the book of Hebrews. So, whoever is writing this is trying to write to the Jewish people to let them know that Christ is better.

Christ has everything that they need. There's many references to the sacrificial system there. The Gentiles are not going to understand that sacrificial system.

They're not going to understand what's going on when they talk about the sacrifices and things that they did. But, a Jewish audience would understand immediately what he's talking about and what's going on there.

Remember, when Paul wrote to the Romans, Romans 1.16, For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

[ 13 : 03 ] So, they understood Jewish people needed to hear how Christ was better than the Old Testament. And we'll talk about that as we go along. Why they were able to say that.

Why they were able to write that. That Jesus Christ was better than the Old Testament they were under. How does a Jewish person get saved? Same way we do.

Not a trick question. Same way we do. Belief in Jesus Christ. And so, this writer to Hebrews is trying to set things for them to help them understand. God had a way of doing things in the Old Testament.

God gave us a better way when Jesus Christ came. The recipients were probably a house church of people who were committed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

They wanted to serve Him. Even in the heat of suffering, they were going to go through things. You're back in Hebrews. Go to Hebrews chapter 10. Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 32.

[ 14 : 14 ] Hebrews 10, 32 says, But call to remembrance the former days in which after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions, partly whilst I were made a gazing stock both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly whilst I became companions of them that were so used.

For ye had compassion on me and my bonds and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

You've gone through a whole lot of stuff. You've faced persecution. You've faced affliction. You've faced being made fun of and ridiculed. You've faced all kinds of things and yet he says you're standing by Jesus Christ.

You know, of course there are going to be some who are going to be discouraged. Of course there are going to be some who, you know, kind of under the pressure of everything are kind of going to pull back a little bit, come back a little bit.

but he says, look, you're going to get discouraged. You're going to get weary. There's going to be struggles. Don't concentrate on what's going on now.

[ 15 : 27 ] Keep your focus on what's happening in the future. Yes, you're facing these things but be ready for what God has for you. It's a challenge to the people that's receiving this to make a commitment to Jesus Christ and to serve him as best they can while they have time.

Hebrews chapter 5, verse 12, For when, for the time that ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God and are become such as have need of milk and not of strong meat.

For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are full age even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

What's he saying about their spiritual condition there? What? They're babies. They're not growing as they should and that's part of what this book is for is to help them grow in their Christian life.

He's saying, look, you should be growing but you're not. Here's a question for you that comes up regularly. Whose job is it to make sure that you grow?

[ 16 : 53 ] Exactly. Yours. The pastor is here to help you and to get people going in one direction to try to get you going the way you're supposed to be going.

But as some people point out, how many of you have at least two meals a day? Everybody, right? At least two. I've been with teenagers this week so I'm going to have four or five meals a day.

But I have at least two. Okay? And suppose as a Christian I come to church on Sunday, I come to church on Wednesday.

I have two meals a week. How's that going to do for my growth? How's that going to do for my nourishment? No. You've got to get in the Word yourself and be doing things.

So make sure that you get in the Word. Like many Christians, the original recipients were living below their capacity. Do you think that sometimes Christians do that because they don't want to take on more responsibilities?

[ 18 : 00 ] Oh yeah. Yeah. They don't want more responsibility. They don't want to do extra things. We'll talk about that as we go along in this study too. yeah. So. A lot of Christians today do that same thing.

They don't put the time and effort in to study the Word for itself so that they can grow themselves. You know, he was convinced that most of his readers are going to be genuine Christians.

Some were not, but he's convinced that most of them probably are, those who are going to be reading this book. But he gives them a strong warning about turning away from the Lord.

He gives them a strong warning about make sure you get in the Word for yourself and learn it. Number three. Yep. Number three. The date. The date. Again, the author's not specified, the recipients are not specified, and the date is not necessarily specified.

But, we can kind of narrow it down. Again, go back to Hebrews chapter 2 verse 3. Hebrews 2, 3. What does it say again? It says, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation that at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?

[ 19 : 26 ] Okay, so we're learning from those who were with Jesus. They're now teaching us. So again, it's a second generation of Christians that are learning. They're learning from those who are eyewitnesses.

They're learning from those who were probably part of the original leaders of the church, but many of them probably are dead by now. Matter of fact, in chapter 13, chapter 13 of Hebrews, verse 7, it says, remember them which have the rule over you who have spoken unto you the word of the Lord whose faith follow considering the end of their conversation.

learn from those who told you, remember what they told you, especially considering the end of their conversation. Remember, conversation a lot of times in the Bible is used for the idea of your life.

He says, learn from their lives what they have done, and many of them probably had already passed, but remember what they taught you. So he's saying, look, you've seen these guys, Jesus died in his early 30s.

These guys would have continued on, so they should have been growing from that time on. So when was Hebrews written?

[ 20 : 51 ] Well, some people say the earliest would have been around AD 60. That would have had that second generation in place and teaching and writing this book. Others will say, well, maybe it's the early 90s that it was written.

How do they come up with that idea? Well, actually, remember I mentioned a guy named Clement of Rome? Clement actually quotes from the book of Hebrews in some things that he wrote in AD 96.

He actually quotes the book of Hebrews as part of that. So, could have been as late as 90. Go back to Hebrews chapter 10. Look with me at verse 11.

Hebrews chapter 10, verse 11. It says, And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oft times the same sacrifices which can never take away sins.

Okay? So he's making reference to the fact that the sacrificial system is still in place. Okay? What does that mean?

[ 22 : 03 ] Well, remember what happened to Jerusalem in AD 70? Rome leveled it. They took everything and just did away with it.

Remember why the wailing wall, that one wall in Jerusalem is so important where people go there to pray? it's the only thing left standing from that temple back then.

And so they go there. But because of what Rome did, because they were made to scatter, they were made to go everywhere, there was no more sacrifice after AD 70.

So therefore, let's bring it back to AD 70. Two more things. Something happened in Rome in AD 64.

64. Rome burned. And Nero blamed the Christians for that burning of Rome. And when he did that, persecution came to the Christians.

[ 23 : 05 ] Then, Nero died in AD 68. So that four-year period in there. So, Jerusalem actually started to rise up against Rome in 67 AD.

So most people believe this book was written somewhere between 64 and 68 AD. Based on those different historical things that happened. So, we have a book probably written by Paul, not 100% sure, as we gave.

We have recipients that because of what the book says, we believe were Hebrews, Jews, and the time was between 64 and 68 AD.

Probably around 67. Next week, and we're running out of time already anyway, next week we'll look at three more things about the book. And one of them has to do with the theme of the book.

The fact that Christ is superior. Christ is supreme. And we'll look at that next week. Let's have a word of prayer. Father, thank you for this time, Lord, to look at your word.