

# THE STAND

## SMALL GROUP STUDY HEBREWS INTRODUCTION



### Why an INTRODUCTION?

To really understand the Truth in Hebrews we must understand the origin of the book. The intended audience and setting are very important when studying the book of Hebrews. Make sure to take time to understand the background and share some of the highlights with your group. As you go through the study, continually remember the audience and context of the writers message.

### Author and Time

Hebrews was written around 65AD before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. While the book never reveals the name of it's author, we learn some significant things about him that will help us understand Hebrews. The author of Hebrews was well versed in Jewish culture. He had a good understanding of Jewish life, including the sacrificial system, the priesthood and the Law. He also had a vast knowledge of Old Testament scripture and its fulfillment in the coming Messiah. It was likely the author was a devoted Jew who decided to follow Christ, but we do not learn if the author ever spent time with Jesus while he was present on earth. The writer completely understood Jesus' role throughout history and is able to communicate this like no one had done until this point.

### Audience

The most important thing to acknowledge when studying Hebrews is the intended audience. Hebrews was written to Jews who had accepted Christ. These

people are called Messianic Jews. For a Jew, accepting Jesus would have meant a completely new way of life. They were immediately faced with some hard questions. Customs and laws they had grown up with seemed to be changed. They needed someone to show them how Christ fulfilled the customs and laws they followed. At the time Hebrews was written some may have even begun to question their faith in Christ. After all, He had been absent in body for close to fifty years and returning to the standard way of Jewish living might have seemed like the right thing to do.

### Purpose

The writer wants to encourage these Messianic Jews to stand for Christ. In order to stand for Christ, the audience must get a clear picture of His person, His supremacy and His purpose. This encouragement and teaching came at a good time as these new Christians were being persuaded and even persecuted by their non-believing Jewish neighbors. The author plans to address key issues that show how Christ came to fulfill everything in the Law and the Prophets, not abolish it.

Dealing with these traditional Jewish concepts and ways of thinking would be very important to these new Christians. With all the persecution, they may be persuaded to return to their old ways of Judaism. They also needed answers so they could be an effective witness for Christ in their Jewish communities.

### Summary

Messianic Jews of the day were the minority in their community. These new believers were living side by side with people who supported Jesus' death. They were trying to figure out how to live out their new faith.

*They had to take a stand.*

We must also take a stand. True Christ-followers are the minority in our culture and every day believers are persuaded to return to the world's way of life.

### W Messianic Jew

The term Messianic Jew is used for a Jewish person who has become a follower of Christ. God did not abolish the Jews, but completed the revelation He had previously given to this people through Jesus. These were Jews that believed Jesus was the Messiah, therefore, they are called Messianic Jews. There are Messianic Jews today that are proud of their heritage, but accept Christ as their salvation and final sacrifice.