



HEBREWS

"... he has spoken through his Son ..."

6 studies in Hebrews 1 - 6
for individuals, small groups & 1:1

Welcome to Hebrews

If you're using these studies in a **Bible Study Group**, try to make sure you've read the passage and done your preparation before you meet. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but also to the other members of your group.

If you're a **Bible Study Group Leader** please don't feel that your group needs to answer every question in every study. With such a wide variety of ages and personalities in our church, we have included a number of different types of questions, including some which reflect on the same points, just from slightly different perspectives. Please choose the questions most appropriate for your group.

If you're doing these studies **individually**, why not let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even as you go) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

Recommended Reading:

The Message of Hebrews. The Bible Speaks Today. Raymond Brown.
Hebrews: The Majestic Son. Peter Adam.

Recommended Watching:

Hebrews. The Bible Project. www.bible.com/videos/3115-hebrews

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1. Do you learn best by listening, watching, or doing?
2. Where do you think people tend to put their trust when life gets difficult or the future uncertain?
3. What are some of the ways that people say God speaks today?

Read Hebrews 1

4. From what you read in chapter 1, what issues in the church does the writer of the letter to the Hebrews seem to be addressing?
5. The author employs a number of quotations from the Old Testament to speak about Jesus. Why do you think he does this?
6. What does the author say about how God has spoken to his people in the past?

- 7.** How is God's way of speaking in Christ now different?

- 8.** In what ways do verses 1 - 4 suggest that a new and final era of salvation history has dawned with God's new way of speaking?

- 9.** From this passage, what would you say Jesus *has* done in the past?
What does Jesus continue to do now?

- 10.** Hebrews 1:5 includes a quotation from Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14. What do these passages teach us about who Jesus is and his place in salvation history?

- 11.** What is being taught about Jesus in verses 7 - 14?

- 12.** How does the rest of the chapter (5 - 14) expand upon and explain the opening verses (1 - 4)?

- 13.** Summarise the contrasts between Jesus and other things that the author makes in this chapter.

- 14.** What do we learn here of God's plans and purposes for his creation?

- 15.** Where are we tempted to turn for new messages from God today?

- 16.** How does Hebrews 1 help us guard against the desire for "new" and "fresh" messages from God today?

- 17.** What situations or hardships make it most difficult to persevere in the Christian faith?

- 18.** How does the author make the case for persevering with Jesus even if life as a follower of Jesus is difficult?

1. What gets in the way of you paying attention when you're supposed to?
2. If you could change one thing about the world that frustrates or bothers you, what would it be?

Read Hebrews 2:1 - 4

3. Bearing in mind who the author is writing to, what is "the message spoken through angels" (v 2)?
4. Why might the original readers of Hebrews have been tempted to drift back into the worship of Judaism?
5. How was the message of salvation:
 - "announced"
 - "confirmed"
 - "testified to"

Read Hebrews 2:5 - 18 & Psalm 8

6. What aspects of humanity's role in God's purposes comes into view here?
See Genesis 1:26 - 28

7. How does the author understand Psalm 8 to be fulfilled in Jesus?

8. In what ways do we currently not see everything subject to humans, and to Jesus, the human *par excellence*?

9. What do we learn about the relationship between Jesus and the rest of humanity in this section?

10. The word "perfect" in verse 10, carries the sense of "complete" when it is used of Jesus. How does this shape our understanding of Jesus' life and ministry?

- 11.** What does the author say had to happen in order for Jesus to die for us and restore us to our role and relationship with God?

- 12.** This passage teaches much about our salvation that we do not often immediately think of. What aspects of our salvation through Jesus' death are highlighted here?

- 13.** What do Christians today need to do to "pay attention ... so that we do not drift away"?

- 14.** What gets in the way of us paying attention like the author urges us to here?

- 15.** What aspect of Jesus' final rule over all creation, with everything under his feet, do you look forward to the most?

- 16.** What encouragement do you find in how Jesus' ministry is described here?

1. Can you recall a time when you were excited or passionate about something, only for that excitement to dwindle over time?

2. As a child or young adult, did you tend towards rebellion, or obedience?

Read Hebrews 3:1 - 19

3. Recall what we were told about Jesus in 2:5 - 18. How is chapter 3 an appropriate response to that?

4. Once again, we find the author making comparisons between Jesus and others. In what ways is Jesus contrasted with Moses here?

5. In what ways is Moses similar to Jesus?
Think about what he did, his role, his relationship with the people, etc.

- 6.** What conclusion is the author intending his readers reach about Moses and Jesus?

- 7.** What will the lives and worship of the readers look like once they understand this comparison?

- 8.** Under the new covenant, the author says we are God's house (v 6). But there is a condition imposed. How do we ensure we really are part of God's house?

- 9.** Verses 7 - 11 quote from Psalm 95, which in turn refers to an event recorded in Exodus 17:1 - 17. Why does the author think that Christian people could find themselves responding to God as the wilderness generation?

- 10.** What does this section (particularly verses 7 & 13) teach us about how God speaks through the Scriptures?

- 11.** What dangers do you see today where Christians might be:
- led “astray” (v 10)

 - “hardened” (v 13)
- 12.** How is the “rest” (v 11) in the promised land, a type or example, of the rest that is available to people today in Jesus?
- 13.** What does Hebrews say we need to do in order to enter that rest?
- 14.** What do you think it looks like to have a soft heart that turns towards God, rather than a hard one that turns away?
- 15.** Note that the instruction in verse 12 – 13 is in corporate terms. In what ways can we exercise this responsibility to each other?

1. Describe your ideal rest.
2. If you asked people, "Why did Jesus live and die?" what responses might you hear?
3. How do you feel when you read the stories of disobedience in the Old Testament?

Read Hebrews 4:1 - 13

4. What rest were the people of God looking forward to in Joshua's day?
5. What is the rest that is available to people today?
6. In John 5:17 Jesus says, "My Father is always at his work to this very day." How does this help us understand "rest" since verse 4 tells us that "God rested from all his works"?

- 7.** What do you think the author means when he says the wilderness generation “had the gospel preached” to them (v 2)?

- 8.** From what the author of Hebrews has said so far in his book, what kind of faith makes the gospel of value to us?

- 9.** Psalm 95 is quoted in verse 3 and verse 7. What is the significance of the word “Today” for us?

- 10.** The author uses the present tense to speak of we who “enter that rest.” In Matthew 11:28 - 30 Jesus also makes an offer of rest that can be enjoyed in the present. How does this shape our understanding of the rest that is promised to God’s people?

- 11.** Having reminded his readers of the promise of rest that still stands, why do you think the author then turns his attention to the “word of God” (v 12 - 13)?

- 12.** How does the word of God reveal the condition of your heart?

- 13.** What does the author want his readers to learn from the example of Old Covenant Israel?

- 14.** How do you currently experience the rest that comes to you through Jesus?

- 15.** What gets in the way of you enjoying the rest that can be yours in Christ?

- 16.** Why do we allow ourselves to exchange the enjoyment of this rest for other things?

- 17.** Think of a friend who's not a Christian. How could you explain the "rest" that can be theirs through faith in Jesus?

- 1.** Can you recall a time when you interceded on someone's behalf?
What was the issue you were seeking to address?
What was the outcome?

- 2.** Describe an occasion when you were chosen for a particular role or task. Did you want the role for which you were chosen?

- 3.** What do people rely on to give them confidence before God?

Read Hebrews 4:14 - 5:10

- 4.** What do we learn here about Jesus' role and his ministry?

- 5.** What aspects of Jesus' incarnational life enable him to "empathize with our weaknesses" (v 15)?

6. The letter to the Hebrews has spoken of Jesus as our high priest on two previous occasions. What aspect of Jesus' ministry is captured in the following passages?

- 2:17

- 3:1

- 4:14

7. How is Jesus' high priestly ministry an encouragement to hold firmly to the faith?

8. What are the similarities between Jesus' high priestly ministry and the ministry of the priests of the old covenant?

9. In what ways is Jesus' ministry superior to that of the priests in the old covenant?

10. What basis can Christians have for confidence before God?

- 11.** What do you think the author means when he speaks of Jesus having “learned obedience from what he suffered” (v 8)?

- 12.** Psalm 110, quoted in verse 6, speaks of a king in David’s line as “a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek” (See Genesis 14:18 - 20). If Jesus is the king in David’s line, what does this tell us about his ministry?

- 13.** Since the description of Jesus as “made perfect” in verse 8 carries the sense of “complete” or “fulfilled” how does this help us understand Jesus’ work and ministry?

- 14.** How would you explain the high priestly role of Jesus to a friend who was interested in Jesus but not a Christian?

- 15.** When is the assurance of Jesus’ ongoing priestly ministry the most encouraging to you?

- 16.** How do the quotations from Psalm 2 & Psalm 110 help us understand the role of the Father in the Son’s ministry?

Don't be Unfruitful!

Hebrews 5:11 – 6:20

1. What is your favourite food?
Has your preference changed as you have grown older?
2. When someone makes you a promise, what makes you more likely or less likely to trust their word?
3. What do you think a “mature Christian” looks like?

Read Hebrews 5:11 - 6:20

4. What problems in the lives of his Christian readers is the author trying to address?
5. Why do Christians sometimes need to be taught “elementary truths of God’s word all over again” (5:12)?
6. What gets in the way of us moving on to “solid food” (5:13)?

7. How does “solid food” help us become “mature” in Christ?

8. How does Gods’ person demonstrate their maturity according to this section?

The experience of this group of people pictured in verses 4 – 6 has generated much debate! On the one hand, the Bible speaks very clearly about the perseverance of those who are Christ’s people. ie Jesus’ words in John 10:28; “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.” And on the other, there are passages such as this, or 1 Corinthians 10:6 – 12, that give us warnings to persevere lest we fall away. It is partly through the warning of passages such as Hebrews 6, that the Spirit enables Christ’s people to persevere. The author is not saying that the efficacy of Jesus’ sacrifice stretches only back into the past and is not sufficient for any future sin. He is arguing that once someone rejects Jesus and his substitutionary death, there is nowhere left to turn. There will be some who appear to us to be Christians, but demonstrate their lost state by turning their backs on Jesus and the offer of forgiveness he makes.

9. What questions does the author want us to ask ourselves as we read 6:4 – 8?

10. Why is the author “convinced of better things” (6:9) regarding his readers?

- 11.** In what ways is it problematic to attempt to apply this passage to situations where it seems to us that someone has abandoned their faith in Jesus?
- 12.** Why do you think the author uses such strong language in verse 6, “crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace”?
- 13.** What is the meaning of the metaphor about unfruitfulness in 5:7 - 8?
- 14.** How could be assured “of better things” (6:9) in our own case?
- 15.** In this section, how many different ways does the author urge Christian people to press on to maturity?

16. It seems that part of the danger for the Hebrews was the apparent similarity between much of old covenant Judaism and Christianity. Thus, they imagined they could keep a foot in both camps. Where do we see a similar danger for Christians today who imagine that faith in Christ can simply be added to existing or common beliefs.

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