

Hebrews

1. Prologue 1:1-4
 - a. If you knew nothing about Jesus, and you discovered this text for the first time, what would you learn about Jesus?
 - i. How did God speak through his prophets? Give some examples. What did they say?
 - ii. How did God speak through his Son? Give some examples.
 - iii. How is Jesus heir of all things? What things?
 - iv. What was his role in creation?
 - v. What else did he do?
 - vi. In what ways is Jesus unique? In what ways is Christ superior to the prophets?
 - b. If this section of Hebrews is a prologue, what themes can we expect to find in the remainder of the book?
 - i. What position does Jesus have? What does that position imply about Him?
 - ii. What is he like? (Verse 3) What is his nature? (Verses 8 & 9)
 - iii. What difference does it make for us to know these things?
 - iv. What encouragement do these things give us?
 - v. How does Jesus' position help us to commune with God? How can you approach Him?
 - vi. How are these words Good News?
2. The Superiority of Jesus
 - a. The greatness of Christ.
 - i. Superior to the Angels. 1: 4-14
 1. What are angels? What are their position and function?
 2. What arguments did the writer make to show that Jesus is superior to the angels?
 3. What Old Testament references did the writer quote to make his point? Why did he need these references to make his point?
 4. What did the prophets say about Jesus to show that he is superior to the angels?
 5. What does begotten mean?
 - ii. The Greatness of His salvation. 2:1-4
 1. What are the results of paying close attention to the Gospel? What are the results of drifting away from the Gospel?
 2. What can we do to be more attentive to the Gospel?
 3. Notice verse 2. What was the message "spoken by angels"? See examples of OT judgments noted in Numbers 16 and Joshua 7.
 4. What is the point of the argument in verse 2?
 5. Considering verse 3, what did Jesus say in announcing his salvation? How did the writer(s) confirm it? How was it confirmed to us?
 6. What does verse 3 indicate about the author(s)?
 - iii. Christ, the Perfect Man. 2:5-18
 1. According to this text, in what ways was Jesus made like us?
 2. How is He different?
 3. Review the OT quote in Psalm 8:4-6. How does it apply to mankind in general, but also to Christ?
 4. What conflict do you see between this text and Chapter 1? How can you resolve it?
 5. Review the OT quote in Psalm 22:22 and Isaiah 8:17, 18. How do these quotes indicate Christ's attitude toward us? How do they also refer to us as they apply to Him?

6. If you had never been taught anything about salvation in Christ, what would you learn about it from this Hebrews text? What are the benefits of it listed there (verses 14-18)?
 7. From verses 14-18, why was it necessary for Christ to be made like us in order for Him to win salvation for us?
 8. Why does the author refer to Jesus as a priest in verse 17?
 9. How is verse 18 an encouragement to you?
 10. How was Jesus tempted?
 11. What does verse 18 reveal about the purpose for the "letter to" the Hebrews?
- iv. Christ, superior to Moses. 3:1-6
1. Who is the author writing to? How is the recipient described?
 2. What does it mean to "fix your thoughts on Jesus"? How is He described in verses 1 & 2?
 3. What was Moses' relationship to God? What is Jesus' relationship to God? How are these relationships the same, and how are they different?
 4. How are we God's house, as indicated in verse 6? Is that privilege conditional?
- v. Rest in Christ is superior to rest under Moses and Joshua. 3:7-4:14
1. Read the OT quotes and references included in this Hebrews text.
 2. Psalm 95: 7b-11 Ex. 17:1-7 Num 14:20-23, 26-35 Deut 6:13-19
 3. What warnings and promises do you see in these references?
 4. What should have given the Israelites in the wilderness reason for belief? (Heb 3:9)
 5. What should give us reason to believe?
 6. Notice the repetition in verses 3:7, 3:15, & 4:7. Considering these verses, how can we hear, or how have we heard God's voice?
 7. What were the consequences for the Israelites in the wilderness for disbelief?
 8. What did "entering God's rest" mean to Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness?
 9. What does "entering God's rest" mean to us, members of Christ's body, for now and for the future? What encouragement is there for persecuted and harassed Christians?
 10. What opens the entrance to God's rest, and what blocks it?
 11. Consider Heb 4:12-13. Since Hebrews was probably written before most of the other New Testament books, what did the writer of Hebrews mean when he referred to the "word of God?" (Note Heb 1:1-3)
 12. List the attributes of the "word of God."
 13. How do you see these attributes of God's word at work today?
- vi. Summary:
1. What evidence and what arguments has the Hebrews writer presented thus far?
 2. What is the writer's conclusion in verse 14? What has the writer of Hebrews said about Jesus in these first few chapters?
 3. How does the reference to Jesus, who is greater than the angels and greater than Moses, strengthen his argument and conclusion?
 4. How has Jesus been an example of belief to us?
 5. How is rest in Christ superior to rest under Moses and Joshua? How is it the same, and how is it different?
- vii. Christ the high priest in the order of Melchizedek is superior to Aaron. 4:14 to 5:10
1. Who was Melchizedek? Who were his contemporaries? (Gen 14:17-20)
 2. Who were other OT priests? (Ex 2:16-21, Ex 28:1-3, Ex 29:29-30)
 3. What were the duties of the priests in the order of Aaron? (Lev 16:3-34)
 4. Compare the priesthood of Aaron to priesthood of Jesus.
 - a. How are they similar, and how are they different?
 - b. Where did Aaron enter God's presence? Where did Jesus enter God's presence?
 - c. What was required of Aaron to enter God's presence?
 - d. What sacrifice did Aaron make, and what sacrifice did Jesus make?
 5. Compare the efficacy of Aaron's sacrifice and Jesus' sacrifice.

- a. How was Aaron able to sympathize with sinners, and how is it possible for Jesus, who was without sin, to be able to sympathize with sinners? How did he experience our sins?
 - b. What degree of access to God did people under Aaron's priesthood have, and what degree of access to God do we have through Jesus?
 - c. In what other ways does Jesus differ from Aaron? (Heb 5:4-10 & Ps 110:4)
 - d. What conclusion should the reader of Heb 4:14-5:10 make as a result of this comparison?
 - e. What is the basis for our confidence before "the throne of grace?"
6. Compare Heb 5:7-10 to Luke 22:39-46. What did Jesus achieve at Gethsemane?
- viii. The problem of spiritual immaturity and lack of understanding. 5:11 to 6:20
1. (Note that this section is parenthetical to the subject of Jesus, the high priest in the order of Melchizedek)
 2. What does this section have to do with the discussion about Jesus, the high priest in the order of Melchizedek?
 3. What are the "elementary truths of God's word?"
 4. What is the author's indictment? Considering the teachings we have studied so far, what did the readers not know?
 5. What is the "milk" and "solid food" referring to? Who is living on "milk," and who is living on "solid food?"
 6. Why is it necessary for us to move from "milk" to "solid food?" What is the warning about in this section?
 7. Who is described in Heb 6:4-6? "Enlightened", "tasted", "shared" are words describing them. In terms of what it takes to be a Christian, what is missing in these descriptions?
 8. What is Heb 6:7 & 9 symbolic of? How does this symbolism further describe these people? Consider Jesus' parable in Mark 4:3-9.
 9. What encouragement does the Hebrews author provide? Who should we imitate? (verse 12)
- ix. The priesthood of Melchizedek. Heb 6:13 to 7:28
1. Note the reference in Heb 6:13-14 to God's promise to Abraham in Gen 22:15-18.
 2. Heb 6:18 refers to "two unchangeable things." With respect to God's promises, what are they? What did God confirm with an oath? See Heb 5:6 & 6:13.
 3. What is the nature of God's purposes? How does that encourage you?
 4. What is the "anchor of the soul" that the author refers to in verse 19? What reason do we have to have confidence in this "anchor"? For an anchor to work, it must be connected to something that is immovable. What is the "anchor of the soul" connected to? See John 15 & 17:20-26.
 5. John 14:6 says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." How does this section in Hebrews (6:19-20) illustrate Jesus' words recorded in John 14?
 6. What is the author implying by the following phrases:
 7. "King of righteousness." (See Mark 10:17-18.)
 8. "King of Salem." (See John 14:27)
 9. "A high priest forever."
- x. All of Hebrews 7:3.
1. Why does the author refer to Abraham and Levi? What is the significance of "the tenth" in verses 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, & 9? What is the main point of the author's argument in Hebrews 7:1-10?
 2. Why is a priesthood other than Levi necessary? Note verses 7:18 & 19, and Acts 15:10.
 3. What change in priesthood is the Hebrews author referring to?
 4. What change in the law accompanied the change in the priesthood? Note the decision of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15.
 5. How did the author show that Jesus is of an order different from Aaron?

6. The basis for Aaron's priesthood was his ancestry. What are the bases for Jesus' priesthood? What is the oath of God regarding Jesus' priesthood? Why is it significant in the author's argument? See Numbers 23:19.
 7. Why is the priesthood of Jesus better than Aaron's? List the reasons found in verses 19, 22-28?
 8. Note the phrase (7:19), "by which we draw near to God." What does this phrase mean to you?
- xii. Christ the high priest of the New Covenant. Heb 8:1-10:18
 1. Allegory – The veiled presentation, in a figurative story, of a meaning metaphorically implied but not expressly stated. A prolonged metaphor, in which typically a series of actions are symbolic of other actions, as in Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*. (Webster)
 2. In these sections consider how the OT accounts of the Tabernacle, OT Law, and OT sacrifices are allegorical to the greater reality of the work and ministry of Christ. Note the phrases "shadow of what is in heaven," Heb 8:5, and "shadow of good things that are coming," Heb 10:1.
 - xiii. The New Covenant vs. the Old. Heb 8:1-9
 1. What is the "true tabernacle" in verse 2?
 2. How does it compare with the one set up by Moses? See Ex 25, noting verse 40. Why did God warn Moses to set up the tabernacle according to the pattern shown to him?
 3. In what way was the tabernacle a "shadow of what is in heaven?"
 4. Heb 8:8-12 is a quote from Jer 31:31-34. How does Jeremiah's promise imply that the Old Covenant would some day be obsolete?
 5. The Old Covenant is summarized in Ex 24:3-8. Compare the provisions of the Old Covenant and what is promised in Jer 31:31-34? What is different and what is similar?
 6. In Heb 8:7, the author implies that the Old Covenant was faulty. If God gave it to Moses, how could it be faulty? Where was the fault? How was it faulty or inadequate? Why is a New Covenant necessary?
 - xiv. The better covenant explained. Heb 8:10-13
 1. What is the meaning of the promise in Heb 8:10 (Jer 31:33), "I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts?" In what way does this promise differ from the Old Covenant? See II Cor 3:4-18.
 2. Why is it necessary under the New Covenant to change the Old Covenant order of Aaron's priesthood to the priesthood of Jesus?
 3. What are the benefits of Jeremiah's prophesy?
 4. Why is the Old Covenant obsolete?
 - xv. The new sanctuary and the perfect sacrifice. Heb 9:1-28
 1. Describe the arrangement and priestly duties of the tabernacle given in Heb 9:1-7.
 2. How do these verses illustrate the limitations of the Old Covenant?
 3. Compare Heb 9:8 to 8:1 & 2. In these verses, what is permanent, and what is temporary? To what does "the way" in 9:8 refer?
 4. How does the tabernacle of the Old Covenant illustrate the "true tabernacle" in Heb 8:2 and 9:11? Also note Heb 9:24, "copy of the true [sanctuary]."
 5. What comparisons did the Hebrews author make to demonstrate the efficacy of the New Covenant sacrifice?
 - xvi. Compare Heb 9:9 to 9:14. Considering Heb 9:15, in what way is the New Covenant more effective in clearing the conscience than the Old?
 1. Note Heb 9:15. What is the reason that Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant? What is the benefit for us that he is our mediator?
 2. What are Christ's priestly duties in Heb 9:15-28? What is the relationship of these duties and the salvation he brings in Heb 9:28? Note Heb 9:22.

3. What is the purpose of the second coming of Christ? What was the purpose of his first coming? See John 12:27-33 and Mark 13: 24-27.
4. In summary, how does Heb 9 support the position that one objective of the Hebrews author was to persuade the readers to persevere in the presence of persecution and opposition?
5. In what ways has our study of Hebrews encouraged you to persevere in your faith in Christ?

xvii. The new covenant is complete, perfect, and at work. Heb 10:1-18

1. What repetition of ideas do you observe in Heb 10 that you also encountered in Heb 8 & 9? What new information is added to the repeated ideas in Heb 10:1-10?
2. Consider Heb 10:5-7. Did Jesus literally quote these words as suggested by Heb 10:5? What is their actual source? See Psalm 40:6-8. In what way does this Hebrews text refer to the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus? Note Luke 22:19-20 & 42.
3. Why did the Hebrews author quote Jeremiah 31 a second time in Chapter 10 after quoting it in Chapter 8? What new idea did he present in Heb 10 using this quote?
4. How do you interpret "perfect" and "holy" found in Heb 10:1 & 14? What privilege do we have to claim these conditions before God?
5. What is the difference between "perfection" and "holiness"? Note Heb 10:14.
6. What are the reasons that Christ's sacrifice is complete, perfect, and at work? What are the bases for this claim?

3. Elements of the Life of Faith

- a. Description of the life of faith. Heb 10:19-25
 - i. In what ways does the Hebrews author continue to use the analogy of the Old Testament tabernacle in this section?
 - ii. What gives us confidence to approach God?
 - iii. What conditions are specified for us to be able to approach Him?
 - iv. How can we meet these specifications?
- b. Explain the paradox of boldness (confidence) and reverence in approaching God. Why can we be bold? and why is reverence required? How do these work together? See Heb 4:14-16.
 - i. What must you see in another person for you to be confident that he or she can deliver what is promised? Considering Heb 10:23, what gives you confidence to hold on to the Christian faith?
 - ii. How can we implement the encouragement of Heb 10:24-25?
 - iii. What are the benefits of meeting together?
 - iv. How does Christian brotherhood encourage us?
 - v. What is the relationship between meeting together and performing good deeds?
 - vi. What should be the main characteristic of Christian brotherhood? See Heb 10:24 and John 13:34-35.
 - vii. What are the opportunities for evangelism using the small group experience?
 - viii. How have you experienced these principles in the context of a small (koinonia) group?
 - ix. What contrast do you see between Heb 10:22 and 10:25?
- c. Description of those who turn away. Heb 10:26-39
 - i. How does the Hebrews author make his warning clear about turning away from Christian hope?
 - ii. Considering one of the author's main objectives in writing Hebrews, to what does "give up meeting together" refer?
 - iii. What other examples does the Hebrews author make for not persevering with Christian hope?
- d. Hebrews 10:32-34 suggests that looking back at how God works in us and in others is an encouragement for us to hold on to Christian hope.
 - i. Why is that an encouragement?
- e. Looking back, what examples can you share with the group about how God works in your life and in others to encourage us to hold on to Christian hope?
 - i. What additional positive encouragement does the author provide in Heb 10:35-39?
- f. Considering Heb 10:39, "... we... are those who believe and are saved," what is the significance of the author's statement?

- i. Why is he so confident? See II Tim 1:12.
 - ii. How can we be so sure?
 - iii. Examples of the life of faith. Heb 11:1-40
- g. Consider Psalm 44:1-5 to guide an approach to study Hebrews 11.
 - i. What are the benefits of remembering and looking back at what the Lord has accomplished through His people? What are the consequences for not doing so? Why should we study the history of faith?
 - ii. How did the Hebrews author define faith in verse 1? How did he define faith in the rest of the chapter?
 - iii. Referring to verses 13 & 39, what did all of the people listed in this chapter have in common? For what were they commended? What were they all promised? What advantage do we have that they did not have?
 - iv. In each case how is their faith an example for us? And what relationship do we have to these witnesses?
 - 1. Abel – Gen 4:1-16
 - 2. Enoch – Gen 5:18-24
 - 3. Noah – Gen 5:28-32; 6:5-18; 9:8-17
 - 4. The call of Abraham & the promised land– Gen 12:1-7
 - 5. God’s covenant with Abraham – Gen 15:1-7; 17:1-8
 - 6. Abraham’s test – Gen 22:1-19
 - 7. Isaac’s blessing – Gen 27:1-40
 - 8. Jacob’s blessing – Gen 49:1-33
 - 9. Joseph – Gen 50:24-26
 - 10. Moses’ parents – Ex 2:1-4
 - 11. Moses identification with Israel – Ex 2:11-15
 - 12. Moses & the Passover – Ex 12:1-14
 - 13. Moses passing through the Red Sea – Ex 14:15-31
 - 14. Joshua & the walls of Jericho – Josh 6:1-5; 15-20
 - 15. Rahab – Josh 2:1-21
 - 16. Gideon – Judges 6-8
 - 17. Barak – Judges 4
 - 18. Samson – Judges 13-16
 - 19. Jephthah – Judges 11
 - 20. David – I Samuel 17
 - 21. Samuel – I Samuel 16:1-13
 - v. The prophets –
 - 1. Considering this list of ancient examples of faith:
 - 2. Which one or ones do you identify with?
 - 3. Which one or ones encourage you the most?
 - 4. What is it about their faithfulness that inspires you to persevere?
 - 5. What change in your life do these examples call you to make?
 - vi. What contemporary examples have defined faith for you? What is their story? And how did it affect you?
 - 1. What conclusions can we make about the nature of faith from all of Hebrews 11? What aspect of faith is common to all these examples to define and encourage your faith? What central truths about God are associated these faith examples?
- h. What is the author’s conclusion in Hebrews 12:1?
- i. To which witnesses does the author refer in Hebrews 12:1?
- j. Considering the realities of life:
 - i. What discourages you in your faith?
 - ii. What opposition to faith do you endure?
 - iii. What are the things “that [hinder] and the sin that so easily entangles us”?
 - iv. What causes you to “grow weary” or tempts you to “lose heart”?

- v. How can we “throw off” these things?
- vi. How can this “great cloud of witnesses” empower us to “run with perseverance”?
- vii. What great example is missing from this list? (See Chapter 12)
- k. Christ, the supreme example. Heb 12:1-4
 - i. How can we “fix our eyes on Jesus”?
 - ii. Where can we find his image?
 - iii. What can we see?
 - iv. What distracts our vision of him?
 - v. How did the Hebrews author describe him?
- l. Describe Jesus’ perseverance.
 - i. In what ways is Jesus different from the author’s list of examples in Hebrews 11? In what ways are these examples like him?
 - ii. What has the Hebrews author already taught us about him in the first 10 chapters?
 - iii. What change in your life does Jesus’ example call you to make? What things are the sources of power for us to do so? (See Phil. 1:3-6)
- m. The Father’s tough love. Heb 12:5-13
 - 1. This text implies there is a relationship between suffering and being a child of God. Consider and comment on the following references.
 - ii. Heb 2:10, 11.
 - 1. Phil 1:29, 30.
 - 2. Phil 3:10, 11.
 - 3. Rom 8:17
 - 4. James 5:10, 11.
 - 5. II Cor 1:3-11.
 - 6. Col 1:24-29.
 - 7. I Peter 1:11.
 - 8. I Peter 4:12-19
 - iii. Which of the above texts refer to the Lord’s discipline, and which do not?
 - iv. The Hebrews author used a contrast to earthly fathers. What is the point of this contrast?
 - v. What are the sources of suffering? For example, see Job 1:6-12. Are there other examples?
 - vi. When suffering, in what ways are we likely to be tempted? See Prov 3:11, 12.
 - vii. How has suffering helped you to become a stronger Christian?
 - viii. How has your experience in suffering been a comfort to others?
 - ix. What have you learned through suffering?
 - x. Is there a difference between a rebuke from the Lord and suffering that is common to almost everyone? How can you recognize the difference?
 - xi. In what ways can Heb 12:1-13 be an encouragement to those who are suffering?
 - xii. In what ways can the examples of Hebrews 11 be an encouragement to those who are suffering?
 - xiii. Christian conduct under the new covenant. Heb 12:14-29
 - xiv. What do you make of Heb 12:14, which says, “...without holiness no one will see the Lord.” How can you obtain holiness? (Heb 12:10) What is holiness?
 - xv. What is bitterness? Where do bitter roots come from? What can grow from a bitter root? What feeds a bitter root? What are the consequences of bitterness?
 - xvi. What are the sources of bitterness?
 - xvii. Why is Esau used as an example? What adjective did the Hebrews author use to describe him? See Gen 25:27-34 & 27:30-41. What was the source of his bitterness? How could he have avoided it?
 - xviii. What is the antidote for bitterness? What contemporary examples can you think of who have resisted bitterness? How have they done it?
 - xix. How does this discussion of bitterness and holiness fit into the Hebrew author’s objective to encourage and to warn those who are tempted to give up in their faith?

- xx. The Hebrews author makes a contrast between verses 18-21 (see Ex 19 as a reference) and verses 22-24. Considering the main objectives of the Hebrews author, what is the point of this contrast? What is better than what?
- xxi. What warning do you see in verse 25? For reference see Ex 19:14-19.
- xxii. What do you suggest in order to implement the conclusion in verse 28?
- xxiii. Be thankful. For what? How should persecuted Christians be thankful?
- xxiv. Worship God acceptably. What is acceptable worship? (See John 4:22-24)
- xxv. Worship God with reverence and awe.
- xxvi. In what way is God a "consuming fire"? (See Deut 4:21-40) How does this OT text help you answer question 9 above?

n. The Christian life in daily practice. Heb 13:1-19

- i. Make a list of commands given in verses 1- 19.
- ii. Why are these commands important?
- iii. Which commands are given with commentary? Why is the commentary necessary?
- iv. How can we implement these commands? What opportunities do we have to do so?
- v. How can our obedience to these commands affect the growth of the church?
- vi. How can our obedience to these commands glorify Jesus and reveal his character to a watching world?
- vii. Commands have the potential to be a burden. But in Mat 11:28-30, Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
- viii. How are following these commands easier than ignoring them?
- ix. What is the implication of ignoring these commands? What are the consequences of ignoring these commands? What are the benefits of following them?
- x. Will following these commands cause God to love us more? Why? Or why not?
- xi. Where is the source of power to follow these commands? See Heb 13:20 & 21.
- xii. What do these commands have to do with the author's purpose in writing Hebrews?
- xiii. How do they exhort, and how do they warn us?
- xiv. How does the author's prayer for us in 13:20 & 21 comfort you and give you confidence to follow these commands?

4. Personal Epilogue. Heb 13:20-25

- a. Consider Heb 13:20 & 21. If you knew nothing about the Gospel from any other source, and only had these Bible verses,
 - i. What would you know about Jesus?
 - ii. What would you know about God?
 - iii. What would you know about how to please God?
 - iv. What clues do you find in Heb 13:18-25:
 - v. For the purpose of the Hebrews document?
 - vi. For the identity of the author?