

## Hebrews Study Guide



Summer offers a change of pace. In some ways we may slow down— be outside more and enjoy God’s creation. Many small groups take a break during the summer. Yet, summer can be a time of intentional devotional life.

If you desire a way to go deeper into Scriptures this summer, we hope you will find this Hebrews Study Guide assists you parallel our summer sermon series, “Hebrews: Jesus is Better!” Using the Old Testament references, we explore the themes which the author of Hebrews uses to explore why Jesus is better than following rituals which are unable to fully satisfy our needs. You may want to gather a group—family or friends and discuss your answers together. (For your assistance in discussion, guides with filled in suggested answers are available at the Church Office window.) Peace be with you in the journey!

### **Week 1: June 25 “Jesus is Better”**

#### **Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-4**

To whom do you infer from Hebrews 1:1 that this letter or sermon addressed?

In 1:1-4 the author makes a distinction between God’s prophets and God’s Son. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?

Psalm 2:7 - To whom does this verse refer? What are the possibilities? Hint: there are at least three possible layers of meaning

2 Sam.7:14 and 1 Chron 17:13 record God’s words to David regarding his son. What is the significance of the circumstance? What analogy is the author of Hebrews drawing to Jesus?

The author of Hebrews uses an alternate reading from the Masoretic text of Deut. 32:43 “let all the angels worship him.” How does it alter or deepen the text to suggest that the angels and nations are rejoicing and worshipping God for God’s atonement of his land and his people?

How does Psalm 104:4 reinforce this point?

What is the context of Ps. 45? How does the author of Hebrews connect Psalm 45:6-7 with Jesus?

Ps. 102:25-27 refers to God’s everlasting nature in comparison with the created order. Yet the next verse, verse 28, speaks of “the children of your servants” in the same way. What does the author of Hebrews want the listener to think about human relationship to the created order?

What does Psalm 110:1 add to this argument?

According to Hebrews 1:14, what role do angels play in God’s salvation plan? What does that signify about humans?

**Week 2: July 2 “Our Help”**  
**Hebrews 2:5-11**

What is the theme of Psalm 8? In this context, how are we to understand the exaltation of humans in Ps. 8:4-6?

According to Philippians 2:6-11, how does the salvation story bring God glory?

In John 17:22, what is the purpose of Jesus giving his disciples glory? What is Jesus' motivation, according to 17:23?

According to Colossians 1:27, it is “Christ in you the hope of glory.” How is that glory accomplished in Hebrews 2:11?

In Hebrews 2:10, what is the goal of Jesus' suffering? What does that mean for our suffering?

**Week 3: July 9 “Greater than Moses”**  
**Hebrews 3:1-6**

In Hebrews 3:2, who appointed Jesus’ role as apostle and high priest? What does “apostle” mean?

According to Hebrews 5:5 what was Jesus sent to do?

According to Exodus 3:10, for what was Moses appointed and sent?

What does “God’s House” refer to in Hebrews 3:2?

What is the significance of the difference in words, “in” versus “over” in Hebrews 3:5-6?

Numbers 12:7 How did God speak to Moses? Why does God say he speaks this way to Moses?

According to John 6:32, how did the Israelites confuse Moses’ role to them?

In Hebrews 3:6, how does the author challenge their listeners to be faithful? What will be the result?

What comfort might that bring you in your situation?

**Week 4: July 23 “Jesus’ Work”**  
**Heb 4:1-13**

The story referred to in Psalm 95:8-11 is found in Exodus 15:22-25. What was the problem with the water there?

The place is named both “Massa” *testing* and “Meribah” *quarreling*. What does the author of Hebrews say in 4:2 was the problem which the Israelites had which caused them to test God and to quarrel with each other?

According to Hebrews 4:3, who has entered God’s rest?

According to Hebrews 4:6, why did the Israelites not enter “that rest”? What does “that rest” refer to?

How does the author argue to include his readers in his usage of the word “Today”?

According to Hebrews 4:10, “anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their work.” What kind of stress do you have that is making you anxious? How can you, by faith, rest this in God?

Hebrews 4:12 refers to the word of God as “alive and active.” How can God’s word help you to rest in God?

What does the author of Hebrews suggest that studying God’s word and learning to trust requires of us?

**Week 5: July 23 “Approach the Throne”**  
**Hebrews 4:14-5:10**

In the Apostle’s Creed what is the importance of the line, “ascended into heaven”? See Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 49, 50, and 51.

The symbolism of the priesthood relates to the Exodus. What does a priest represent in Numbers 8:15-19?

In the Old Testament, the terms *chief priest* and *high priest* are sometimes alternate translations of the same Hebrew phrase. According to 2 Chronicles 19:11, Leviticus 4:3-21 and Numbers 27:20, what are the functions of the high priestly role?

What is special about the death of a high priest according to Numbers 35:28? How is this to be understood as a symbolism of Jesus as high priest?

The author of Hebrews draws a parallel of Jesus with priests who are “subject to weakness” in Hebrews 5:2. Yet whereas human high priests did sin, Jesus did not sin. How are the temptations of Jesus to be understood in light of James 1:13-15? What can one do with temptation according to James 1:12 and Romans 12:2?

Temptations are suffering. How does Hebrews 5: 8 suggest Jesus benefitted by these sufferings?

Being “made perfect” is a process. How did Jesus’ suffering help this process?

How does Jesus “being able to “sympathize with our weakness” help us with our suffering?

How does Jesus’ mindset in Luke 23:34 inform our understanding of what gentleness looks like regarding those who are, in Hebrews 5:2, “ignorant and going astray”?

How does this knowledge give you confidence to approach God’s throne of grace, according to Hebrews 4:16?

**Week 6: August 6 “Confident Christianity”**  
**Hebrews 7:11-28**

According to the Law of Moses, could Jesus have been a Levitical priest? See Hebrews 7:14. To what order of priests does Jesus belong?

What does the author of Hebrews argue is the basis for the order of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:16?

According to Psalm 110:4 (quoted in Hebrews 7:17), God made an oath. How is this priesthood different from the Levitical priesthood? (see also, Hebrews 17:24.)

What are the implications of a changed priesthood, according to Hebrews 7:12?

Hebrews 7:28 says, that Jesus, the Son, did not start perfect but “has been made perfect forever.” What made him perfect? (see Hebrews 5:8-9)

How does this make Jesus’ priesthood stronger than the Levitical priesthood (see Hebrews 7:25, 28)?

The word “completely” in Hebrews 7:25 suggests length of time and type of salvation. How are we to understand our challenges in light of Christ completed work?



**Week 7: August 13 “A Foretaste of Things to Come”**

**Hebrews 9:1-15**

[Questions taken with thanks from Maggie Noll’s *Women’s Bible Study: The Book of Hebrews*, 2009]

From Hebrews 9:1-5 what is your impression of worship as it was regulated under the old covenant? What sense do you get of God? How complicated does the system seem?

Are there elements (presumably in modified form) that you could see implemented in our worship at Woody Nook?

Read Leviticus 16:1-17. What do you learn about the Holy Place?

Why did the high priest have to bring a blood sacrifice when entering the Holy of Holies (Lev. 16:15, 16)?

What do you think this was meant to teach the Israelites (Hebrews 9:6-8)?

Why weren’t the sacrifices of the old covenant able to “perfect the conscience of the worshiper” (Hebrews 9:9, 10)?

How is Christ's priesthood different, both in terms of what he did and what this accomplished (Hebrews 9:11-12)? Note: "The writer's mention of redemption recalls the slave market. The word he uses depicts the release or liberation of the captive. The imagery has a rich Old Testament background (Leviticus 25:48; Numbers 18:16; Psalm 111:9; 130:7)." (Raymond Brown, *The Message of Hebrews*, Interscience Press, 1982, p. 156)

What did the blood and ashes of animals accomplish for the Israelites (Hebrews 9:13)?

How does verse 15 summarize who Christ has become, what he has accomplished for us, and the means by which it was done?

## **Week 8: August 27 “Living By Faith”**

### **Hebrews 10:19-25**

[Questions taken with thanks from Maggie Noll’s *Women’s Bible Study: The Book of Hebrews*, 2009]

The Greek word translated “shadow” implies something pale, that is, not sharp or distinct. What do you think are the good things to come (Hebrews 10:1) of which the law is only a shadow?

How do we know that the law was unable to make perfect those who worshiped under the old covenant (10:2)? Remember, to make “perfect” is to help someone become and do what God intended.

What then was the only purpose of the annual sacrifices (Hebrews 10:4)?

Hebrews 10:5-7 is a quotation from Psalm 40. What does the Psalm mean when it says that the sacrifices were neither desired (verse 5) nor pleasing to God (verse 8)?

The writer of Hebrews tells us that these words from Psalm 40 express what Jesus said when he came into the world (verse 7). What was the Father’s will for Jesus? (See also 10:10.)

How is Jesus’ obedience different from sacrifice and offerings?

What confidence do believers now have as a result of what Christ has accomplished (10:19)?

What does the writer mean by calling Christ's body "the curtain" (verse 20)? What might this mean in the context of Matthew 27:51?

The "house of God" was a Jewish expression for the Temple. What do you think it means in 10:21 (See Hebrews 3:6)?

"Therefore" (verse 19) and "since" (verse 19, 21) indicate that verse 19-21 are the basis for the strong words which follow in verses 22-25. How should we relate to God according to 10:22, 23?

## **Week 9: September 3 “Following Jesus”**

### **Hebrews 12:1-13:13**

[Questions taken with thanks from Maggie Noll’s *Women’s Bible Study: The Book of Hebrews*, 2009]

What does it mean to you that a “cloud of witnesses” is watching you run the race “set before” you?

What might be the weights and sin that could have hindered first-century Hebrew Christians? Note that the writer uses “sin” in the singular, i.e. “the sin.”

Who should be our inspiration in running the race with perseverance or “patiently” (Hebrews 12:2-3)? Is it significant that the writer uses his human name rather than divine title?

Though believers had suffered for their faith, they had not been martyred. Having made this point, the writer chides them for forgetting the words of Proverbs 3:11-12. What does Hebrews 12:5 identify as common reactions to God’s discipline?

According to Hebrews 12:10-12, why does God discipline us?

Read Matthew 25:31-40. What is the most important thing you learn about showing hospitality and remembering those in prison?

The author has stressed putting off heavy weights and sin (12:1) and pursuing peace and holiness (12:14). What examples does he single out for mention in 13:4,5?

How should we be willing to follow Christ, according to Hebrews 13:13? Bring your life in prayer before God as we wrap up this study.