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## **Because Jesus: A Study In Hebrews**

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## **Thanks.**


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**For the joy that lay before  
him, Jesus endured the  
cross, despising the shame,  
and sat down at the right  
hand of the throne of God.**

HEBREWS 12:2



**Riverview  
exists to  
proclaim the  
liberating  
power of the  
Gospel as we  
grow, serve,  
and go.**

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# Introduction

**Better. Sufficient. Perfect.**

**This is the message of the book of Hebrews.**

Jesus Christ is a better mediator than the prophets or the angels, better than Moses, or Joshua, or Aaron. Jesus Christ alone is sufficient for salvation, surpassing the tabernacle, the sacrifices, and the High Priests of the ancient Jewish system of atonement. Jesus Christ is the perfect and sinless Messiah, the Savior of the world.

**Jesus Christ is better, because He is  
sufficient, and He is perfect.**

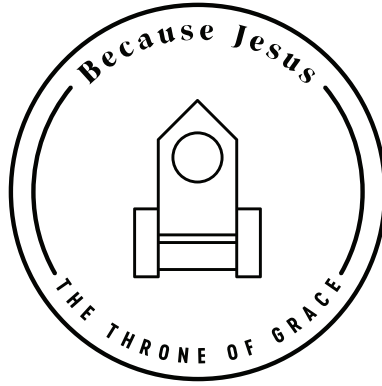
Because this is true, the unknown writer of Hebrews wrote a heartfelt plea to his Jewish friends filled with theology, instruction, and warning. His purpose in writing this powerful letter was to encourage his Jewish readers to avoid drifting from their faith by keeping their eyes fixed on Jesus.

Friends, just like the author of Hebrews I am convinced that Jesus Christ is better, that He is sufficient, and that He is perfect. My prayer for you as you study through Hebrews is that you would trust in Jesus alone to bear your sins, and then live your life in a way that points others to the better, sufficient, and perfect Savior, Jesus Christ.

For Christ,  
Pastor James Granger  
Riverview Church  
January 4, 2020







# Hebrews 1:1–2:4

WEEK ONE

Long ago God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe through him. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his nature, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. So he became superior to the angels, just as the name he inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did he ever say,

"You are my Son; today I have become your Father,"

or again,

"I will be his Father, and he will be my Son?"

Again, when he brings his firstborn into the world, he says,

"And let all God's angels worship him."

And about the angels he says:

"He makes his angels winds, and his servants a fiery flame," but to the Son:

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; this is why God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy beyond your companions."

## Hebrews 1:1-2:4

And:

“In the beginning, Lord, you established the earth,  
and the heavens are the works of your hands;  
they will perish, but you remain. They will all  
wear out like clothing; you will roll them up like a  
cloak, and they will be changed like clothing. But  
you are the same, and your years will never end.”

Now to which of the angels has he ever said:

“Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies  
your footstool?”

Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to  
serve those who are going to inherit salvation?  
For this reason, we must pay attention all the  
more to what we have heard, so that we will not  
drift away. For if the message spoken through  
angels was legally binding and every transgres-  
sion and disobedience received a just punishment,  
how will we escape if we neglect such a great  
salvation? This salvation had its beginning when  
it was spoken of by the Lord, and it was confirmed  
to us by those who heard him. At the same time,  
God also testified by signs and wonders, various  
miracles, and distributions of gifts from the Holy  
Spirit according to his will.

# Reflections

The book of Hebrews has a vastly different beginning from other New Testament letters. Unlike most of the others, the author does not identify himself in the introduction, nor is the specific audience known. Although it's apparent from the ending of Hebrews that this is a letter, when you read Hebrews from the beginning, it doesn't feel much like a letter. It reads instead more like a statement of doctrine, or maybe even a sermon. The content of Hebrews is at times dense and can be difficult to follow, especially to modern readers who may not have much knowledge of the Old Testament or Jewish history. It seems obvious that the original recipients of Hebrews were Jewish, which meant they were likely steeped in the history and tradition of the Old Testament, and therefore more familiar with the background behind the material being presented. For Christians today, the book of Hebrews represents an opportunity to engage with theologically rich and beautiful truths that are very much personally challenging and applicable to daily life.

The author begins with a reminder that, while God formerly spoke to His people through prophets and other means, He now speaks primarily through Jesus Himself. This powerful truth lies at the core of the entire book of Hebrews; God is neither silent nor absent, but rather He is present and knowable through the person and work of Jesus. Hebrews 1:3 says, "the Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his nature, sustaining all things by his powerful word." This means that when we see Jesus, we are seeing God Himself. When Jesus speaks, God Himself is speaking, because Jesus and God are one in the same. We also see in this verse that God's Word is to be revered because it powerfully sustains all things. This consistent theme will return throughout the book of Hebrews.

For the remainder of chapter one, the focus is on Jesus being "superior to the angels." For the Jewish reader this is a very significant testimony because angels so frequently served as agents of God throughout the Old Testament. In addition, the Jews understood that the law itself was given to Moses by angels. The writer of Hebrews affirms this truth in Hebrews 2:2, when he refers to the law as "the message spoken through angels." The angels were often God's mouthpiece. That's why this claim is so important, because if Jesus is somehow superior to the angels, that means He is an even greater agent and mouthpiece than the angels ever were. The author of Hebrews makes this case by citing exactly seven (a number

which represents perfection) different Old Testament prophecies that collectively exalt Jesus and make it clear that He is greater than even the angels. For an author writing to a Jewish audience, wanting to make the case for Jesus as Messiah, comparing Him favorably to angels is a perfect start.

At the beginning of chapter two, the writer of Hebrews challenges his readers with two steps of application: pay attention and don't drift. In Hebrews 2:1, it says that if Jesus is in fact superior to the angels, then "we must pay attention all the more to what we have heard, so that we will not drift away." This will be a consistent exhortation throughout Hebrews, that a Savior such as Jesus demands our full attention. We must listen to His Word, and we must do so "all the more." Why? Because otherwise, we're likely to drift away from Jesus. If Jesus is greater than the very angels whom God used to speak His word in the first place, how much more ought we pay attention to what we have heard, in order to make sure we don't drift from our faith?



## **The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his nature, sustaining all things by his powerful word.**

H E B R E W S 1 : 3

### **Old Testament References**

Psalms 2:7

2 Samuel 7:14

1 Chronicles 17:13

Deuteronomy 32:43

Psalms 97:7, 104:4, 110:1

## Other Verses

Psalm 2:7

Acts 7:37, 53

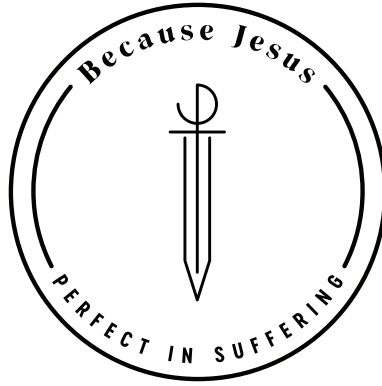
Galatians 3:19

## To Consider

- The writer states that “long ago God spoke” through prophets, but in these days “he has spoken to us by his Son” [1:1-2]. How does God primarily speak to us today? Consider 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 1:2, and John 1:14. [spoiler alert, it’s through the Bible!]
- What difference does it make to us today that Jesus is “heir of all things” and that God the Father made the universe through Him?
- Have you experienced seasons of drifting away? What are some of the warning signs or red flags in your life that indicate to you that you’ve started to “drift away?” What are some specific steps you can take to help you make sure you “pay attention” to the wisdom and truth of God’s Word?

## To Do

As we launch into a study of the book of Hebrews, it will be helpful to understand the context of the entire letter before you work your way through it by chapter and verse. To prepare for this study, try reading all of Hebrews this week to get an overview of the text you’ll be spending the next number of weeks studying. As you read, make a list of your biggest questions, your confusions, or anything else that stands out, and then watch for those questions to be addressed throughout the messages.



# Hebrews 2:5–18

WEEK TWO



## Hebrews 2:5-18

For he has not subjected to angels the world to come that we are talking about. But someone somewhere has testified:

“What is man that you remember him, or the son of man that you care for him? You made him lower than the angels for a short time; you crowned him with glory and honor and subjected everything under his feet.”

For in subjecting everything to him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. As it is, we do not yet see everything subjected to him. But we do see Jesus—made lower than the angels for a short time so that by God’s grace he might taste death for everyone—crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death.

For in bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was entirely appropriate that God—for whom and through whom all things exist—should make the source of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying:

I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; I will sing hymns to you in the congregation.

Again, I will trust in him. And again, Here I am with the children God gave me.

Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that through his death he might destroy the one holding the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death. For it is clear that he does not reach out to help angels, but to help Abraham’s offspring. Therefore, he had to be like his brothers and sisters in every way, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in matters pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. For since he himself has suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

# Reflections

Having established the powerful reality that Jesus is superior to angels at the beginning of the letter, the author of Hebrews now highlights the equally powerful reality that God the Father made Jesus lower than the angels for a short period of time so that Jesus could accomplish His work of salvation in the world. This is an amazing truth for two reasons. First, it shows God's immense love for His people; that He would allow Himself to be limited to the confines of a human body in order to die on the cross for the sins of all. Second, because the Jews would have known of the Old Testament prophecy that stated the Son of Man would become less than angels before being crowned with glory and honor (see Psalm 8:5-6) it demonstrates again to them that Jesus was the Messiah. In fact, the writer of Hebrews even goes so far as to say that God actually chose to allow Jesus to become less than the angels so that by God's grace [Jesus] might taste death. Truly amazing!

The letter continues with this same theme. In fact, the author argues that it actually makes sense for God to reduce Himself into a human body because that allowed the source of their salvation [Jesus] to become perfect through suffering. In other words, by becoming a human brother to the people He aimed to save, Jesus became the perfect sacrifice on their behalf. The writer says that Jesus shared in the flesh and blood of humans in order to destroy the devil and set people free from their fear of death. He again supports his assertions by referencing Old Testament prophecy, noting that the Psalmist foretold that the Messiah would one day proclaim God's name to His brothers and sisters (see Psalm 22:22). This continues to build the case for his Jewish audience that Jesus is surely the long-awaited Savior that the Jews have been anticipating for hundreds of years.

The author concludes chapter two with an encouragement. He notes that because Jesus suffered through temptation as a flesh-and-blood human being, He can help us when we ourselves face temptation. In fact, looking ahead to Hebrews 4:15, the author gets more specific. He says, "we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin." What a tremendous comfort! It's such an encouragement to know that not only does Jesus truly understand what it feels like when we face temptation, but He was also able to do so without

sin. In those moments when we are ready to succumb to temptation, we can take courage in the example of Jesus.



**For since He Himself has  
suffered when He was  
tempted, He is able to help  
those who are tempted.**

H E B R E W S 2 : 1 8

### Old Testament References

Psalm 8:4-6

Psalm 22:22

Isaiah 8:17-18

### Other Verses

John 1:1-17

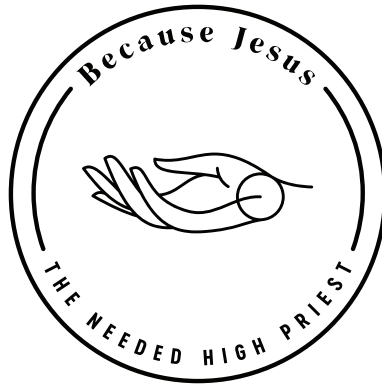
Philippians 2:5-11

## To Consider

- God is all knowing, omnipresent, and has no physical limitations or physical needs. Yet He willingly yielded all of that for our sake. How does the sacrifice Jesus made for you impact your willingness to live sacrificially?
- If it was by God's grace that Jesus tasted death on our behalf, what does that tell us about the severity of our sin?
- What are the temptations you face? Are you tempted by anger? Are your temptations financial? Sexual? How do you handle these? What difference does it make knowing that Jesus endured similar temptation without sinning?

# To Do

Make a list of specific temptations you face on a regular basis. For each temptation listed, write down one specific way you can stay away from tempting circumstances. Make a commitment to pray for God's help to endure these temptations without sinning. Find a close friend to confide in, and share these temptations with them. Ask them to join you in prayer to endure these challenges, and to help you remember God's grace when you do sin.



# Hebrews 3:1–19

WEEK THREE

Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession. He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was in all God's household. For Jesus is considered worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the builder has more honor than the house. Now every house is built by someone, but the one who built everything is God. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's household, as a testimony to what would be said in the future. But Christ was faithful as a Son over his household. And we are that household if we hold on to our confidence and the hope in which we boast.

## Hebrews 3:1-19

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers tested me, tried me, and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked to anger with that generation and said, 'They always go astray in their hearts, and they have not known my ways.' So I swore in my anger, 'They will not enter my rest.'"

Watch out, brothers and sisters, so that there won't be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage each other daily, while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception. For we have become participants in Christ if

we hold firmly until the end the reality that we had at the start. As it is said:

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

For who heard and rebelled? Wasn't it all who came out of Egypt under Moses? With whom was God angry for forty years? Wasn't it with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.



# Reflections

Chapter three begins with a call to action: consider Jesus. The author then presents a case as to why Jesus is worthy of our consideration. He says that because we are holy brothers and sisters of Jesus, we share in His holy calling. The author refers to Jesus as the apostle and high priest of our confession. This terminology would have been meaningful to a Jewish audience because in their tradition it was the high priest who heard their confessions. In other words, the high priest served as the mediator between God and His people. Describing Jesus as the high priest makes Him worthy of consideration for the readers of Hebrews.

Perhaps the most compelling reason the readers of Hebrews are encouraged to consider Jesus is the author's comparison of the faithfulness of Jesus to the faithfulness of Moses. Moses was one of the most revered heroic leaders in the entire Old Testament. God used Moses to save His people from their Egyptian enslavement. God chose to deliver the Ten Commandments through Moses. The writer of Hebrews says that Moses was faithful as a servant in all of God's household. It's difficult to imagine a person more highly regarded in Jewish history than Moses. And yet, as faithful as Moses was, the author of Hebrews says Jesus is considered more worthy of glory than Moses. Although Moses served faithfully in God's household, Jesus is the better Moses because He is the originator and builder of that very household. Ultimately, it's the reason we ought to consider Jesus, because in serving God's household faithfully, Moses was actually serving Jesus all along.

Once again, the author frames his case within Old Testament prophecy. Twice he quotes Psalm 95, which contains the warning to "not harden your hearts." This reference goes all the way back to the days when Moses was leading God's people through the wilderness and their hearts grew hard toward God. Through these verses the writer of Hebrews links Moses to Jesus. In the time of Moses, the Jews forgot that it was God who had saved them. Their hearts became hard. He warns his readers to avoid having history repeat itself. He urges them to "hold firmly" to Christ "until the end" and to be careful not to become "hardened by sin's deception" the way the Jews did in the time of Moses.

This is the message of Hebrews, that we'd consider Jesus and then never drift from our faith in Him. He is better than the angels. He is better than Moses. He is the sufficient mediator

between us and God. He is the perfect Savior, the most faithful servant in the household that He Himself built. Consider Jesus. He is worthy of glory. Watch out. Hear His voice. Do not harden your heart. Make sure your heart never turns away from the living God.



## Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

H E B R E W S 3 : 1 5

### Old Testament References

The book of Exodus

Deuteronomy 1:26-38

Psalms 95

### Other Verses

Matthew 5:43-48

2 Corinthians 13:5

2 Peter 1:5-10

## To Consider

- Is there an area in your life where your heart is hard toward God? Why? What would help to soften your heart?
- What are some ways you typically remind yourself to attend to things you might otherwise forget? Do you set an alarm? Tie a string around your finger? How can you apply those same strategies to help you avoid forgetting God's grace in your life?
- In the first-century world, being compared favorably to Moses was a big deal. Is there someone in our current culture whose name carries the same weight? Who do people hold in esteem today that don't hold a candle to who Jesus is?

## To Do

At the beginning of chapter three the author implores his readers to *consider Jesus*. Brainstorm some ideas on how you might be able to remind yourself to *consider Jesus* on a more regular basis. For the next week, commit to building a consistent rhythm into your life where you stop and *consider Jesus*, reminding yourself of His grace in your life and expressing gratitude for that grace.



# Hebrews 4:1–13

WEEK FOUR

## Hebrews 4:1-13

Therefore, since the promise to enter his rest remains, let us beware that none of you be found to have fallen short. For we also have received the good news just as they did. But the message they heard did not benefit them, since they were not united with those who heard it in faith. For we who have believed enter the rest, in keeping with what he has said,

“So I swore in my anger, ‘They will not enter my rest,’”

even though his works have been finished since the foundation of the world. For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in this way: “And on the seventh day God rested from all his works.” Again, in that passage he says, “They will never enter my rest.” Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news did not enter because of disobedience, he again specifies a certain day—today. He specified this speaking through David after such a long time:

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God’s people. For the person who has entered his rest has rested from

his own works, just as God did from his. Let us then make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. No creature is hidden from him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.

# Reflections

The primary focus in chapter four has to do with “entering the rest” of God. This idea has its origins in the very first chapters of Genesis, when after creating the earth in six days, “God rested from all His works” on the seventh day. Throughout the Old Testament, this “sabbath” rest became a picture of the present and future eternal rest a person experiences when they become a follower of Jesus. The writer of Hebrews alludes to this when he makes reference to Psalm 95, where God promises that those who have hard hearts “will not enter [God’s] rest.” This calls to mind the early generation of the Israelites, who, being sinful, were unable to enter the Promised Land, saying that those who disobeyed, “were unable to enter because of their unbelief.” The Jewish readers of the book of Hebrews would have understood the disobedience of their ancestors as a lesson to be remembered today. In fact, in chapter three those readers were warned to be careful not to allow anyone in their community to develop an “unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.”

In chapter four, the writer offers hope that the “promise to enter [God’s] rest remains” for those who have received and believed the Gospel. This is incredible news for anyone who has decided to follow Jesus! Why? The key verse is Hebrews 4:9, which says, “therefore, a sabbath rest remains for God’s people.” In other words, what’s in the past is in the past. What matters most is the present and the future. Not only does every believer in Jesus get to “rest from their works,” as God rested from His, an eternal rest awaits as well. “Today, if you hear His voice,” you can enter the promised eternal rest of God because of Jesus. Keeping with his earlier exhortation that his readers be careful so they “don’t drift away” from their belief in Jesus, the writer of Hebrews now urges his readers to “make every effort” (or “be diligent”) so that you can enter into God’s rest. Once you’ve accepted God’s gift of salvation, give your full attention to living a life of obedience to Jesus.

The author ends this section by affirming that the truths being communicated about entering the rest of God are rooted in the written Word of God. He states that God’s Word is living, effective, sharp, and penetrating. God’s Word evaluates the deepest parts of our souls. God is intimate with our thoughts and motives. God sees all, and knows all, and our lives are accountable to Him. All the more reason for us to give our full attention today to establishing our eternal future through faith in Jesus.



# Therefore, a sabbath rest remains for God's people.

H E B R E W S 4 : 9

## Old Testament References

Genesis 2:2

Exodus 19:3-6

Psalms 95:7-8, 11

## Other Verses

Romans 12:1-2

Galatians 6:9

James 1:12

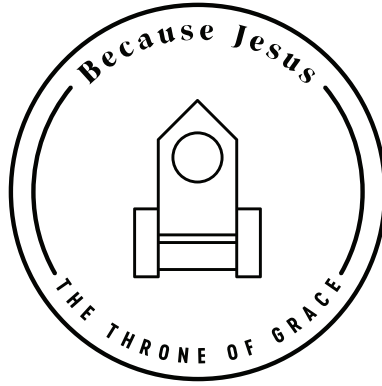
## To Consider

- Read Matthew 11:28-30. Have you found rest for your soul? Does the way you follow Jesus remove burden from your soul?
- Have you experienced a time when reading or hearing the truth of the Bible had a penetrating impact on your life? What were the specifics?
- Do you tend to have more “fear of man” or “fear of God?” How does remembering that (a) no creature is hidden from God and (b) we must give an account change your perspective?



# To Do

Assume you are 100% convinced that God's Word, the Bible, is living, effective, sharp, and penetrating. In addition, assume you believe the Bible is able to judge and influence your heart, your mind, and your soul. Now write down your specific plan for deeper interaction with the Bible. Make sure your plan is a "SMART" one. Is it specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound?



# Hebrews 4:14–5:10, 6:20–7:28

WEEK FIVE

## Hebrews 4:14–5:10

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens—Jesus the Son of God—let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed in matters pertaining to God for the people, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he is also clothed with weakness. Because of this, he must make an offering for his own sins as well as for the people. No one takes this honor on himself; instead, a person is called by God, just as Aaron was. In the same way, Christ did not exalt himself to become a high priest, but God who said to him,

“You are my Son; today I have become your Father,”

also says in another place,

“You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

During his earthly life, he offered prayers and appeals with loud cries and tears to the one who

was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was the Son, he learned obedience from what he suffered. After he was perfected, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, and he was declared by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

—

Jesus has entered there on our behalf as a forerunner, because he has become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

## Hebrews 6:20–7:28

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, met Abraham and blessed him as he returned from defeating the kings, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means king of righteousness, then also, king of Salem, meaning king of peace. Without father, mother, or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

Now consider how great this man was: even Abraham the patriarch gave a tenth of the plunder to him. The sons of Levi who receive the priestly office have a command according to the law to collect a tenth from the people—that is, from their brothers and sisters—though they have also descended from Abraham. But one without

○

this lineage collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. Without a doubt, the inferior is blessed by the superior. In the one case, men who will die receive a tenth, but in the other case, Scripture testifies that he lives. And in a sense Levi himself, who receives a tenth, has paid a tenth through Abraham, for he was still within his ancestor when Melchizedek met him. Now if perfection came through the Levitical priesthood [for on the basis of it the people received the law], what further need was there for another priest to appear, said to be according to the order of Melchizedek and not according to the order of Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must be a change of law as well. For the one these things are spoken about belonged to a different tribe. No one from it has served at the altar. Now it is evident that our Lord came from Judah, and Moses said nothing about that tribe concerning priests. And this becomes clearer if another priest like Melchizedek appears, who did not become a priest based on a legal regulation about physical descent but based on the power of an indestructible life. For it has been testified:

“You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

So the previous command is annulled because it was weak and unprofitable [for the law perfected

nothing], but a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God. None of this happened without an oath. For others became priests without an oath, but he became a priest with an oath made by the one who said to him:

“The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind, ‘You are a priest forever.’”

Because of this oath, Jesus has also become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Now many have become Levitical priests, since they are prevented by death from remaining in office. But because he remains forever, he holds his priesthood permanently. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, since he always lives to intercede for them.

For this is the kind of high priest we need: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He doesn’t need to offer sacrifices every day, as high priests do—first for their own sins, then for those of the people. He did this once for all time when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak, but the promise of the oath, which came after the law, appoints a Son, who has been perfected forever.

# Reflections

Thus far the author of Hebrews has made the case that Jesus is a better mouthpiece than the angels and a superior source of salvation than even the great hero Moses. Now he makes the case that Jesus is the greatest high priest, greater even than Melchizedek. He describes the role of the high priest, noting that the high priest is appointed by God to represent the people before God. The high priest is to be gentle and humble, and “must make an offering for his own sins as well as for the people.” The high priest must be considered perfect and clean himself before he is considered worthy to make sacrifices for the people. It was a tremendous honor for a man to serve as high priest on behalf of the people of God.

According to Hebrews, Melchizedek was the most highly revered high priest in the Jewish tradition. His name means “king of righteousness and peace.” The fact that the Bible doesn’t record much background about Melchizedek (we don’t know when he was born, or when he died, or his family history) only adds to his legend. Melchizedek was considered great in the eyes of the Jews because Abraham chose to give a tenth of his estate to Melchizedek. This was significant because it wasn’t until much later in history that the law required the people to give a tenth of what they owned to support the priestly office. That meant that Abraham held Melchizedek in such high regard that he gave a tenth even though he was not required to do so. How much esteem must Abraham have had for Melchizedek, to be compelled to such generosity toward him? And yet, Jesus was considered an even greater high priest. Why?

First, Jesus is a better high priest because the Bible says so. Three different times the writer of Hebrews recalls the prophecy from Psalm 110:4, which says of the Messiah, “you are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.” Second, Jesus is a better high priest because His sacrifice is permanent. All previous high priests were temporary, which meant once they died they would need to be replaced in their priestly role. Jesus overcame death, which means His ability to save us is complete, because He will always remain alive and present to intercede on our behalf. Third, Jesus is a better high priest because He is “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.” Like the high priests of old, Jesus was gentle and humble. Unlike all of the other high priests of old, He doesn’t need to make restitution for His own sins, because He lived a sinless life. He didn’t need to make Himself perfect and clean before God, because He was already clean. His sacrifice was suffi-

cient and perfect; therefore He is the greatest of all the high priests. As the writer of Hebrews states, “for the law appoints as high priests men who are weak, but the promise of the oath, which came after the law, appoints a Son, who has been perfected forever” (Hebrews 7:28).



**For the law appoints as  
high priests men who are  
weak, but the promise  
of the oath, which came  
after the law, appoints  
a Son, who has been  
perfected forever.**

H E B R E W S 7 : 2 8

### **Old Testament References**

Genesis 14

Exodus 32:22-24

Psalms 110:4

### **Other Verses**

Luke 22:31-32

Romans 8:15-17

Galatians 5:1

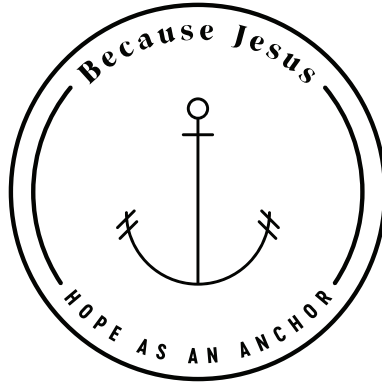


## To Consider

- The writer of Hebrews says, “although [Jesus] was the Son, He learned obedience from what He suffered.” How have you learned from suffering in your own life?
- The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus “always lives to intercede” on our behalf. Why is this significant? How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus is going before God with your name and your needs?
- As followers of Jesus, we’re called to obedience and yet our salvation is a free gift from God through His grace alone. How do these two realities (good works and freedom in Christ) work together in your own life?

## To Do

The writer of Hebrews instructs us to “approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.” Make a list of needs you have today. These could be material needs, relational needs, or spiritual needs. Take time to approach God in prayer to boldly share your needs, enjoy His presence, and thank Him for the grace and mercy He extends to you.



# Hebrews 5:11–6:19

WEEK SIX

## Hebrews 5:11–6:19

We have a great deal to say about this, and it is difficult to explain, since you have become too lazy to understand. Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God's revelation again. You need milk, not solid food. Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature—for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil.

Therefore, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God, teaching about ritual washings, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And we will do this if God permits. For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, who shared in the Holy Spirit, who tasted God's good word and the powers of the coming age, and who have fallen away. This is because, to their own harm, they are recrucifying the Son of God and holding him up to contempt. For the ground that drinks the rain that often falls on it and that produces vegetation useful to those for whom it is cultivated receives a blessing from God. But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and about to be cursed, and at the end will be burned. Even though we

are speaking this way, dearly loved friends, in your case we are confident of things that are better and that pertain to salvation. For God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you demonstrated for his name by serving the saints—and by continuing to serve them. Now we desire each of you to demonstrate the same diligence for the full assurance of your hope until the end, so that you won't become lazy but will be imitators of those who inherit the promises through faith and perseverance.

For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself:

“I will indeed bless you, and I will greatly multiply you.”

And so, after waiting patiently, Abraham obtained the promise. For people swear by something greater than themselves, and for them a confirming oath ends every dispute. Because God wanted to show his unchangeable purpose even more clearly to the heirs of the promise, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain.

# Reflections

Although we don't know many specific details about the people who received the letter of Hebrews, it seems apparent that they were struggling to maintain consistency and were drifting in their faith. The writer of Hebrews points to three warning signs that indicate potential backsliding:

- 1. Laziness.** As we mentioned at the beginning, the content of the letter to the Hebrews can be challenging. It takes work to explain these truths, and effort to understand, which is why the author laments the realization that his readers are prone to laziness, because laziness is an unwillingness to put forth the effort necessary to get the job done. It's a major red flag when a community of believers can be described as "too lazy to understand" the deeper truths of God's Word.
- 2. Unable to teach.** Imagine a person who enters high school without being able to read. At that education level, a person should not only be a proficient reader, but should also be able to teach a younger kid the basics of how to read. That's what happened to the recipients of Hebrews. Something stunted their growth. They should be capable of teaching God's Word to others, but instead it feels like they need to go back and start over. Another red flag.
- 3. Immaturity.** When a baby drinks only milk and doesn't eat solid food, it's completely appropriate. That's what babies do. They're reliant on someone else to feed them, until they're ready for solid food. The writer of Hebrews understands this. If the Word of God is spiritual food for the believer, it's perfectly understandable for people who are very new to the faith to start by drinking only milk, like infants do. However, the recipients of this letter aren't new to the faith. They ought to be eating solid food, but they're immature. They can't tell the difference between good and evil. They've drifted. They're not growing up. A third red flag.

Once the author of Hebrews has shined a light on the spiritual deficiency in this community, he calls for a course correction. He says, "let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity." In other words, "grow up!" You've already been given new life in Christ, and that's never going to change. Now go do something with it. Be diligent. Put in the effort.

Stop being lazy and immature, and dig into some solid food. The effort it takes to understand the deeper truths of God's Word is worth it. Through it you'll grow in your own faith and discernment and be able to teach others to do the same.



## Therefore, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity.

H E B R E W S 6 : 1

### Old Testament References

Genesis 17

Genesis 22:17

Psalms 119

### Other Verses

2 Timothy 2:1-2

2 Timothy 3:16-17

2 Peter 1:16-21

## To Consider

1. Where are you prone to laziness? How is this an opportunity for you to grow in maturity?
2. Do you feel equipped to teach others from the Bible? How could you grow in this area?
3. Assuming the Bible is our source of solid food, how much have you been eating? Do you make regular time to digest the Bible so you can grow in your ability to “distinguish between good and evil?”

# To Do

Identify a person or two with whom you would like to study the Bible. Perhaps it's a roommate, or someone on your ministry team. Maybe you'd like to teach some basic Bible lessons to your family, to help move your kids toward "solid food." Make a plan to initiate with these people with the goal of gathering for Bible study. Make sure your plan includes a day, time, place, and what portion of the Bible you plan to study.



# Hebrews 8:1–13

WEEK SEVEN



## Hebrews 8:1-13

Now the main point of what is being said is this: We have this kind of high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary and the true tabernacle that was set up by the Lord and not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore, it was necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. Now if he were on earth, he wouldn't be a priest, since there are those offering the gifts prescribed by the law. These serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was warned when he was about to complete the tabernacle. For God said,

“Be careful that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain.”

But Jesus has now obtained a superior ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been established on better promises.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second one.

But finding fault with his people, he says:

“See, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of

the land of Egypt. I showed no concern for them, says the Lord, because they did not continue in my covenant. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And each person will not teach his fellow citizen, and each his brother or sister, saying, “Know the Lord,” because they will all know me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will forgive their wrongdoing, and I will never again remember their sins.

By saying a new covenant, he has declared that the first is obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old is about to pass away.

# Reflections

The central message of the book of Hebrews is that Jesus Christ is better. As incredible and prominent as the angels were in the Old Testament, Jesus is an even better mouthpiece than they were. As heroic and revered as Moses was, Jesus is even better as a leader, and He is far superior to save. As esteemed and significant Melchizedek was as high priest, Jesus is an even better intermediary, because He is perfect and permanent and Melchizedek was not. We have “this kind of high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” Our Savior Jesus Christ is seated in the heavens next to the throne of the King of Kings with full access to the God of the universe. Does it get any better than that? It does!

While the fact that Jesus is the best intermediary is a great thing, it becomes even greater when we consider that the arrival of Jesus means that the original covenant between God and His people is now a thing of the past. The old covenant (or agreement) that God had with the Jews was flawed and imperfect because it was dependent on flawed and imperfect humans, who couldn't possibly uphold every one of the 613 Old Testament commands. Not only that, the old covenant was always meant to be temporary. For these reasons, Jesus represents a far better covenant. According to the letter of Hebrews He introduces a superior ministry, mediates a better covenant, and authors better promises. By living a life of perfect obedience to His Father in Heaven, Jesus ushered in a new covenant that is superior in every way to the old one. This new covenant is a permanent one, because the One who authored it is eternally enthroned in Heaven.

To demonstrate this, the author of Hebrews cites [in full!] God's promise from Jeremiah 31. “The days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.” This ancient promise has been fulfilled through Jesus. The old, flawed covenant has been replaced by a better, sufficient one. According to Jeremiah, this new covenant is better because God Himself is the agent of the covenant, in the form of Jesus. He Himself will speak directly to the minds and hearts of His people. He Himself will be the one to teach His people. He will provide permanent forgiveness. How is this all possible? Because Jesus is better.



# **The days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.**

H E B R E W S 8 : 8

## **Old Testament References**

Exodus 25:40

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Jeremiah 31:31-34

## **Other Verses**

Matthew 5:17-20

John 17:3

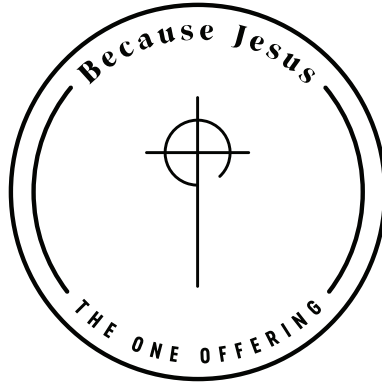
Galatians 3:20

## **To Consider**

- Consider Jesus, who has accomplished in full every single promise He's ever made. Are you a person who keeps promises? What are some covenants you've made in your life? How have those turned out?
- How does it impact you knowing that you have direct access to Jesus, who sits at the right hand of the throne of God? How can you take full advantage of that access, through prayer and through the truth of God's word?
- What are some of the "better promises" that have been authored by Jesus? Do you have a one that is especially impactful to you?

# To Do

Identify a promise of Jesus from the Bible that holds great meaning in your life. Maybe you're thankful for God's faithfulness [1 John 1:9], or perhaps it's His heart for the lost [1 Timothy 2:3-4] that impresses you most. Whatever promise you chose, write it down on a note card or in your phone and carry that truth with you every day for the next week. Set an alarm on your phone to remind you to stop and read God's promise at least once each day, with the goal of having the promise memorized by the end of the week.



# Hebrews 9:1–28

WEEK EIGHT

Now the first covenant also had regulations for ministry and an earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was set up, and in the first room, which is called the holy place, were the lampstand, the table, and the presentation loaves. Behind the second curtain was a tent called the most holy place. It had the gold altar of incense and the ark of the covenant, covered with gold on all sides, in which was a gold jar containing the manna, Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. The cherubim of glory were above the ark overshadowing the mercy seat. It is not possible to speak about these things in detail right now.

## Hebrews 9:1-28

With these things prepared like this, the priests enter the first room repeatedly, performing their ministry. But the high priest alone enters the second room, and he does that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit was making it clear that the way into the most holy place had not yet been disclosed while the first tabernacle was still standing. This is a symbol for the present time, during which gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the worshiper's conscience. They are physical regulations and only deal with food, drink, and various washings imposed until the time of the new order.

But Christ has appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come. In the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands (that is, not of this creation), he entered the most holy place once for all time, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow, sprinkling those who are defiled, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works so that we can serve the living God?

Therefore, he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, because a death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. Where a will exists, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will is valid only when people die, since it is never in effect while the one who made it is living. That is why even the first covenant was inaugurated with blood. For when every command had been proclaimed by Moses to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and



○  
sprinkled the scroll itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant that God has ordained for you. In the same way, he sprinkled the tabernacle and all the articles of worship with blood. According to the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Therefore, it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves to be purified with better sacrifices than these. For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with hands (only a model of the true one) but into heaven itself, so that he might now appear in the presence of God for us. He did not do this to offer himself many times, as the high priest enters the sanctuary yearly with the blood of another. Otherwise, he would have had to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. But now he has appeared one time, at the end of the ages, for the removal of sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for people to die once— and after this, judgment— so also Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

# Reflections

In chapter nine the author of Hebrews continues to build the case for his Jewish readers to consider giving their full attention to Jesus the Messiah. So far, he has established Jesus as better than the angels, better than Moses, and better than the great high priest Melchizedek. Not only that, he has established the new covenant of Jesus as better than the flawed old covenant, which is now obsolete. Now he aims to establish that the “sanctuary” of the new covenant is better than the sanctuary that was associated with the old covenant.

When God established the original covenant (or agreement) with His people, there were specific temple regulations and practices that went along with it. The sanctuary (or “Holy of Holies”) was an inner room of the temple that contained the Ark of the Covenant. It was where God lived. The writer of Hebrews describes this “most holy place” in detail, making note of the “gold altar of incense,” a “gold jar containing manna,” the “cherubim of glory,” and many other breathtaking elements. He then gives five reasons why the Heavenly sanctuary of Jesus is superior to the earthly sanctuary of the old covenant:

1. The old earthly sanctuary was made by the hands of men. The new heavenly sanctuary is not of this creation, which means it stands outside of the constraints of time.
2. The old earthly sanctuary was satisfied by the sacrificial blood of goats and calves, and those sacrifices were inadequate. The blood of an animal will not eternally atone for the sins of man, and so the sacrifice had to be repeated over and over. “How much more will the blood of Christ cleanse our consciences from dead works so that we can serve the living God?”
3. The old earthly sanctuary was “only a model” (or a forerunner) of the true sanctuary. The new Heavenly sanctuary is the real deal, because it’s Heaven itself.
4. The old earthly sanctuary was not accessible to people. Only the high priest was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies, and only once every year. The new Heavenly sanctuary is always accessible to all of God’s children.
5. The old earthly sanctuary was temporary. The new Heavenly sanctuary is permanent and eternal. Jesus doesn’t have to come back to make new sacrifices every year. The sins of men have been satisfied once for all by the shed blood of Jesus.

For the Jews of the Old Testament, there was no place more revered or holy than the sanctuary. That's why it was referred to as the Holy of Holies, to emphasize the sacred nature of that space. Although it was made by the hands of men, it was conceived and ordained by God and was the place where the people were able to encounter God. The fact that Jesus has established a Heavenly sanctuary that is better in every way than the old earthly one makes for a compelling case for Jesus the Messiah. The fact that our eternal future is secure in Christ is the best news of all!



**And just as it is appointed  
for people to die once—  
and after this, judgment—  
so also Christ, having  
been offered once to bear  
the sins of many, will  
appear a second time, not  
to bear sin, but to bring  
salvation to those who  
are waiting for Him.**

H E B R E W S 9 : 2 7 - 2 8

### **Old Testament References**

Exodus 25-30, 35-40

Leviticus 16

Leviticus 17:11

## Other Verses

Romans 5:6-11

1 Peter 3:18

Revelation 15:1-5

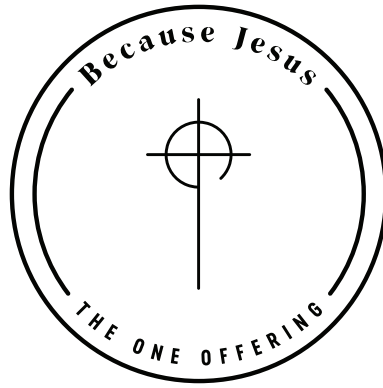
## To Consider

- Using the words of Hebrews, describe the sanctuary of the Old Testament. Why was it so significant in the life of the Old Testament Jewish community? How was that sanctuary a foreshadow of the present and future sanctuary of Jesus?
- As the Israelites waited for the high priest to reappear each year on the Day of Atonement, we now wait for Christ to reappear to finish His work of salvation. How can you increase your level of anticipation for the glorious future that awaits? What step can you take toward being less focused on the temporal and more focused on the eternal?
- Does Jesus have your full attention? What distractions do you face?

## To Do

Make a list of people in your life who, as far as you know, do not yet have a relationship with Jesus. Take some time each day this week to pray for each of these people by name. Ask God to provide you (or someone else) an opportunity to share the Gospel with them, so that they might decide to trust in Jesus and someday join you in the Heavenly sanctuary with Jesus.





# Hebrews 10:1–18

WEEK NINE

## Hebrews 10:1-18

“Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the reality itself of those things, it can never perfect the worshipers by the same sacrifices they continually offer year after year. Otherwise, wouldn’t they have stopped being offered, since the worshipers, purified once and for all, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in the sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year after year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, as he was coming into the world, he said:

“You did not desire sacrifice and offering, but you prepared a body for me. You did not delight in whole burnt offerings and sin offerings. Then I said, ‘See—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, O God.’”

After he says above,

“You did not desire or delight in sacrifices and offerings, whole burnt offerings and sin offerings”

[which are offered according to the law], he then says,

“See, I have come to do your will.”

He takes away the first to establish the second. By this will, we have been sanctified through the

offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time. Every priest stands day after day ministering and offering the same sacrifices time after time, which can never take away sins. But this man, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. He is now waiting until his enemies are made his footstool. For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are sanctified. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. For after he says:

This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, the Lord says, I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds, and I will never again remember their sins and their lawless acts. Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.



# Reflections

It appears that the readers of this letter were followers of Jesus who weren't living as though they were truly convinced that Jesus was worth following. This seems to be the purpose the author had in writing the letter, to convince his readers to follow Jesus wholeheartedly. The author's strategy for presenting truth to his readers is a brilliant one. He knew that the most compelling case he could present would be to convince his Jewish readers that Jesus was the fulfillment of every single inch of the covenant that God had promised for hundreds of years. And so, piece-by-piece and step-by-step, he has set about doing just that. He has shown that Jesus is the better Moses and better than the high priest Melchizedek. In chapter eight he explained why the new covenant of Jesus was better than the old covenant. In chapter nine he showed why the Heavenly sanctuary of Jesus was superior to the earthly sanctuary of old. Now in chapter ten he argues that Jesus is a superior sacrifice. He offers three reasons why this is true:

1. The old way of sacrifice doesn't work. The author says, "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." In contrast, the sacrifice of Jesus actually covers our sin, because the sinless Jesus is truly sufficient to cover sinful man.
2. The old way of sacrifice was temporary. The author says, "in the sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year after year," meaning that the ritual sacrifice of burnt offerings only served as a stopgap. In contrast, the sacrifice of Jesus is permanent. "But [Jesus], after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God." The eternal, perfect Jesus died once for all. As He died on the cross He declared, "it is finished!"
3. The old way of sacrifice was merely a forerunner to the future sacrifice of Jesus. The author says, "the law has only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the reality itself of those things." It was always God's plan to sacrificially save sinners through the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. The entire covenant, sanctuary, and sacrificial system of old was merely a "shadow" of the truly good thing, Jesus, that was coming.

Once again, in order to further convince his Jewish audience, the author cements his case by citing the prophecy of old. He points his readers to the messianic Psalm 40, which says, "You did not desire sacrifice and offering, but you prepared a body for me." Ultimately, God's

desire is not for us to make burnt offerings for our sin. Instead, He gave us His own body, and in doing so He fulfilled every single inch of the covenant God had promised to the Jews for hundreds of years.



**Since the law has only  
a shadow of the good  
things to come, and  
not the reality itself of  
those things, it can never  
perfect the worshipers  
by the same sacrifices  
they continually offer  
year after year.**

H E B R E W S 10:1

### **Old Testament References**

Leviticus 1-10

Psalms 40:6-8

Jeremiah 31:33-34

### **Other Verses**

John 6:47-58

Acts 1:6-11

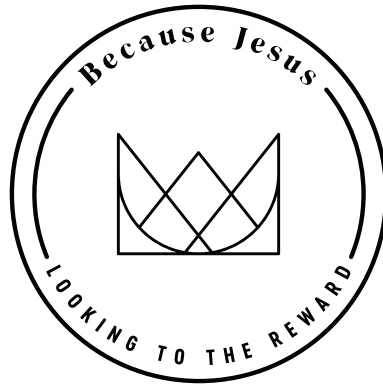
James 1:19-27

## To Consider

- Have you had seasons in your life when you didn't live as though what you believed was true? Why do you think this happens? How do you handle these areas of your life?
- Are you tempted to believe you are saved by your works, rather than by God's grace through the sacrificial blood of Jesus?
- What are you thankful for? How does God's generosity toward you inspire more gratitude and generosity in your life?

## To Do

Make a list of areas in your life where your words or actions don't line up with what you say you believe. As you reflect on these areas, give some consideration as to why you make the choices you make. Are you struggling to trust God? Are you dealing with sin? Do you need someone to walk alongside you? Take some time to pray over your list, asking God to show you how you can move forward in a healthier way.



# Hebrews 10:19–39

WEEK TEN

## Hebrews 10:19–39

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus—he has inaugurated for us a new and living way through the curtain [that is, through his flesh]—and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water. Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. And let us watch out for one another to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching. For if we deliberately go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire about to consume the adversaries. Anyone who disregarded the law of Moses died without mercy, based on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think one will deserve who has trampled on the Son of God, who has regarded as profane the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know the one who has said,

“Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay,”  
and again,

“The Lord will judge his people.”

It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Remember the earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to taunts and afflictions, and at other times you were companions of those who were treated that way. For you sympathized with the prisoners and accepted with joy the confiscation of your possessions, because you know that you yourselves have a better and enduring possession. So don't throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you need endurance, so that after you have done God's will, you may receive what was promised.

For yet in “a very little while,  
the Coming One will come and not delay.  
But my righteous one will live by faith;  
and if he draws back,  
I have no pleasure in him.”

But we are not those who draw back and are destroyed, but those who have faith and are saved.

# Reflections

The middle of chapter ten represents a turning point in the book of Hebrews. Up until this point, the author has pieced together a compelling case for his Jewish audience. His argument is pretty simple: consider Jesus. He wisely anchors the evidence for his case in the truth and in the roots of Old Testament Jewish tradition and prophecy. Because Jesus is better than the angels, because Jesus is better than Moses, and because Jesus is better than the high priest Melchizadek, He's worthy of our consideration. Because Jesus represents the better covenant, the better sanctuary, and the better sacrifice, He's worthy of our consideration.

Consider Jesus. He is the Messiah. He has fulfilled the promises of the prophets. His sacrifice covers all our sins "once for all," so that we might be saved into a glorious eternal future with God. Now, in chapter ten, the writer begins to give his readers their marching orders. He says, "therefore, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God..." In other words, now that you've considered Jesus, and now that (hopefully) you're convinced that you are truly free from sin because of Jesus, here are four things I want you to do:

- 1. Draw near.** Knowing that your heart has been washed clean by the blood of Jesus, and having been baptized by faith in the name of Jesus, draw near to God. You are free to approach the living God! You can do this with confidence because you've considered Jesus and you're convinced you are saved by grace through faith.
- 2. Hold on.** Cling tightly to the hope you have in Christ, knowing that over and over again He has kept His promises. Through the distractions and storms of life hold on firmly and confidently knowing that your confession of Jesus as Savior has cemented your place in eternity.
- 3. Watch out.** You're not alone in your walk with Christ, and you shouldn't try to do it alone. Keep an eye on one another. Watch out for each other. Make sure your words and actions are an encouragement to the other people in your faith community.

**4. Do not neglect.** Sometimes we grow weary. We stop connecting with other followers of Jesus. We try to make it on our own. Don't let this happen! Make sure you are not neglecting to gather together. You need each other. Be an encouragement to one another!

In his final instruction, the author urges his readers to do these things “all the more as you see the day approaching.” Time is short. The return of Jesus is near. Since He is the Messiah, enter the sanctuary with boldness! Again, as with the earlier sections in Hebrews, the writer anchors his case in the truth of the Old Testament prophets. He quotes from Isaiah and Habakkuk, through whom God promised that “the Coming One (Jesus) will come and not delay.” Jesus is coming back. If you have faith in Him you are saved. In the meantime, until the days of His return, “let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, let us hold on to the confession of our hope, and let us watch out for one another, not neglecting to gather together.”



**But we are not those  
who draw back and are  
destroyed, but those who  
have faith and are saved.**

H E B R E W S 10 : 39

### Old Testament References

Deuteronomy 32:35-36

Isaiah 26:20

Habakkuk 2:3-4



## Other Verses

Romans 15

Ephesians 4:1-29

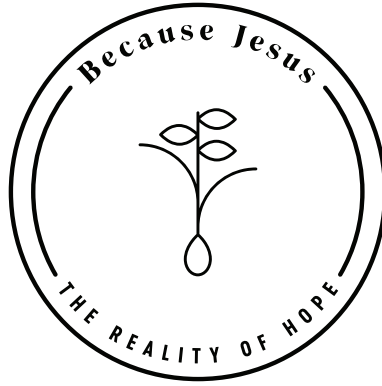
1 Thessalonians 5:11

## To Consider

- Have you gotten out of the habit of gathering together with other Christ followers? What step can you take to reverse that trend?
- Are you able to approach the God of the universe with confidence? Why or why not? What holds you back? How do the truths and promises in Hebrews encourage you to be more bold?
- Who has been an encouragement in your life? What specifically did that person do or say that was encouraging? If you get a chance, reach out to that person and thank them for their influence in your life.

## To Do

Think of someone you'd like to encourage. Start by spending some time in prayer for that person, that God's grace and truth would be known to them. Make a commitment to intentionally say or do something to encourage that person once a week for the next month. You might send them a text, or call them on the phone, or you might even try a handwritten note of encouragement. Make sure that person knows they're appreciated and prayed for.



# Hebrews 11:1–40

WEEK ELEVEN

Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen. For by it our ancestors won God's approval.

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was approved as a righteous man, because God approved his gifts, and even though he is dead, he still speaks through his faith.

## Hebrews 11:1–40

By faith Enoch was taken away, and so he did not experience death. "He was not to be found because God took him away." For before he was taken away, he was approved as one who pleased God. Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and set out for a place that he was going to

receive as an inheritance. He went out, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he stayed as a foreigner in the land of promise, living in tents as did Isaac and Jacob, coheirs of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

By faith even Sarah herself, when she was unable to have children, received power to conceive offspring, even though she was past the age, since she considered that the one who had promised was faithful. Therefore, from one man—in fact, from one as good as dead—came offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and as innumerable as the grains of sand along the seashore.

These all died in faith, although they had not received the things that were promised. But they saw them from a distance, greeted them, and confessed that they were foreigners and temporary residents on the earth. Now those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they were thinking about where they came from, they would have had an opportunity to return. But they now desire a better place—a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. He received the promises and

yet he was offering his one and only son, the one to whom it had been said,

“Your offspring will be traced through Isaac.”

He considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead; therefore, he received him back, figuratively speaking.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and “he worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.” By faith Joseph, as he was nearing the end of his life, mentioned the exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions concerning his bones.

By faith Moses, after he was born, was hidden by his parents for three months, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they didn’t fear the king’s edict. By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter and chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of sin. For he considered reproach for the sake of Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, since he was looking ahead to the reward. By faith he left Egypt behind, not being afraid of the king’s anger, for Moses persevered as one who sees him who is invisible. By faith he instituted the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch the Israelites. By faith they crossed the Red Sea as though they were on dry land. When the Egyptians attempted to do this, they were drowned.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after being marched around by the Israelites for seven days. By faith Rahab the prostitute welcomed the spies in peace and didn't perish with those who disobeyed.

And what more can I say? Time is too short for me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the raging of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength in weakness, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead, raised to life again. Other people were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and mistreated. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and on mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground. All these were approved through their faith, but they did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect without us.

# Reflections

Chapter eleven is one of the most well-known chapters in the entire Bible. It is sometimes referred to as the “Hall of Faith” because it contains the names of a bunch of Old Testament heroes along with brief snippets of each of their stories that highlight their uncanny faith. From Abraham to Moses to David, the author of Hebrews walks his readers through the Old Testament narrative, detailing the rich history of God’s relationship with the Jewish people. This chapter would have meant so much to a group of young Jewish Christians who were struggling to find their faith in the midst of significant persecution and adversity. They would have been reminded that theirs wasn’t the first time that God’s people had endured suffering, giving them confidence that God’s will would prevail in the present day just as it had in the past.

Before he walks his readers through their history, the writer of Hebrews provides a clear definition of what faith actually is. He says, “faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.” The idea is that, as humans, we often don’t know what’s going to happen in the future, and we can’t always see the “why” behind our present circumstances. God’s viewpoint is very different. He knows all and sees all, and not only that, He’s in control of it all. Where we’re limited, God is not. This causes a gap for us between our limited, earthly understanding, and God’s all-knowing, Heavenly understanding of what is happening and why things happen.

Because we cannot see and understand God’s plan, there are lots of things we try to do in order to fill that gap. Some people choose doubt. Others choose self-reliance, or anger, or busyness, or addiction. Faith is the decision to choose to trust the God who sees what we cannot. Faith is choosing to place our hope in Jesus rather than ourselves. As it is written in the Proverbs:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight. Don’t be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil.” [Proverbs 3:5-6]

At the end of chapter eleven the writer of Hebrews encourages his readers. He says, “all these [heroes of the faith] were approved through their faith, but they did not receive what was

promised, since God had provided something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect without us.”

What a powerful reminder! For hundreds of years the Jewish people have been waiting and hoping for the promised Messiah, and did not get to see Him. It’s the very definition of faith, to place your trust in God even when His plan and His promise is still unseen. The writer reminds his readers that God has given them something that their ancestors never got to see, Jesus the Christ. This is something to be grateful for. If your ancestors, who never got the chance to see Jesus, were able to demonstrate faith in the midst of trials, how much more ought you, who have seen Jesus, be able to endure your own trials by faith?



**Now faith is the reality  
of what is hoped for, the  
proof of what is not seen.  
For by it our ancestors  
won God’s approval.**

HEBREWS 11:1

### **Old Testament References**

Where to start?!? Try Genesis and Exodus.

Genesis 5:21-24

Genesis 22:1-10

Exodus 2:10

### **Other Verses**

Acts 13:13-41

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

1 Peter 4:12-13

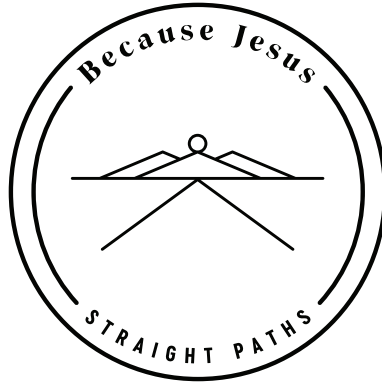


## To Consider

- What is faith? Why is faith important for Christians? What are some misunderstandings about faith?
- Describe your own faith. In what ways do you find it challenging to believe in (or hope for) something or someone you cannot see?
- What kind of adversity have you faced? What about persecution? How does faith make a difference?

## To Do

Pick one person from Hebrews 11 whose story of faith interests you. Take some time this week to find their story in the Bible and to study their life. Try to understand why this person is considered to be a person of faith, and also areas where their faith may have been lacking. Identify some things about that person's life that you might want to emulate, and write down some specific next steps you'd like to take.



# Hebrews 12:1–13

WEEK TWELVE

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, so that you won't grow weary and give up. In struggling against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons:

## Hebrews 12:1-13

“My son, do not take the Lord's discipline lightly or lose heart when you are reproved by him, for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and punishes every son he receives.”

Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline—which all receive—then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had human fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn't we submit even more to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but he does it for our benefit, so that we can share his

holiness. No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Therefore, strengthen your tired hands and weakened knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated but healed instead.

# Reflections

Chapter twelve begins with additional marching orders for the readers of Hebrews. Having recalled [back in chapter eleven] the faithfulness of the Jewish saints of old, the author now asks his readers to be inspired by that faithfulness in the way they live their lives going forward. Specifically, he exhorts them to persevere, resist sin, and accept God's discipline in their lives:

1. To persevere is to persist in doing something in spite of the difficulty involved. Imagine you are running a marathon, an event that requires a ton of perseverance to complete. As you're running you scan the crowd, and see Serena Williams, Jack Nicklaus, Usain Bolt, and dozens of other world-class athletes cheering you on. At the same time, imagine that Jesus Himself is standing at the finish line, waiting to embrace you and congratulate you for finishing the race. This is the picture painted by the author of Hebrews as he urges his readers to persevere. He makes it clear that hindrances, hostility, and sin are a normal part of the Christian life, which is why perseverance is a crucial quality to develop. It's fun and encouraging to imagine the "cloud of witnesses" (Abraham, Moses, David, etc.) from Jewish history in the crowd cheering you on as you run.
2. To resist sin means you put effort into opposing the presence of sin in your life. The problem is, it's easy for us to get tangled up in sin, because most of the time when we sin, we gain some kind of short-term satisfaction. That's why we need to resist sin, because sin has power and there is effort needed to keep it at bay. The writer points to Jesus as the example in this, noting that Jesus shed His very blood on behalf of our sins. He then challenges his readers, saying, "in struggling against sin, you have not yet [like Jesus] resisted to the point of shedding your blood." In this life sin will always be a struggle, which is why the instruction to resist sin is important.
3. To accept God's discipline means that we yield to God when He uses circumstances or correction to train us to follow Him more closely. This is important because we have a tendency to believe that we must avoid any negative or uncomfortable experience. This passage says something very different.

Using the example of a loving human father, the writer shows us that properly exercised discipline, while never enjoyable, can be very fruitful in our lives. He argues that if we would respect a human father for loving their child enough to discipline them, how much more should we accept God's discipline, since He is our Heavenly Father who desires to grow us in righteousness? As it says in Proverbs, "the Lord disciplines the one He loves."

This sounds like a lot of work! Thankfully, by dying for our sins, Jesus has already done the most important work on our behalf. Unfortunately, while we're still here on this earth, we're bound to face our share of struggles, hindrances, and sinful habits. The writer of Hebrews finishes this section with some words of encouragement: "Therefore, strengthen your tired hands and weakened knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated but healed instead."



**For the joy that lay before  
Him, He endured the cross,  
despising the shame, and  
sat down at the right hand  
of the throne of God.**

H E B R E W S 1 2 : 2

### Old Testament Reference

Proverbs 3:11-12

### Other Verses

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

1 Timothy 4:6-16

1 Peter 4:12-16

## To Consider

- Do you get discouraged? Why? What is a cause of weariness in your life? Is there a truth to remember from this passage that could make a difference?
- What is the sin that easily entangles you? How much do you struggle to resist that sin? How do we depend on God while also putting forth the effort to resist sin in our lives?
- Have you ever been in a season where you felt like God was disciplining you? Did you see that as a good thing? Did it produce the fruit of righteousness in your life?

## To Do

Make a list of people who have inspired you toward endurance in your faith in Jesus. Next to each of these names, write down something specific about that person that made an impression on you. Take a few minutes to pray for these friends, thanking God for their influence in your life. Consider ways you could have similar influence in the life of someone else.



# Hebrews 12:14–13:6

WEEK THIRTEEN



## Hebrews 12:14–13:6

Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness—without it no one will see the Lord. Make sure that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no root of bitterness springs up, causing trouble and defiling many. And make sure that there isn't any immoral or irreverent person like Esau, who sold his birthright in exchange for a single meal. For you know that later, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, even though he sought it with tears, because he didn't find any opportunity for repentance.

For you have not come to what could be touched, to a blazing fire, to darkness, gloom, and storm, to the blast of a trumpet, and the sound of words. Those who heard it begged that not another word be spoken to them, for they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned." The appearance was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God (the heavenly Jerusalem), to myriads of angels, a festive gathering, to the assembly of the firstborn whose names have been written in heaven, to a Judge, who is God of all, to the spirits of righteous people made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which says better things than the blood of Abel.

See to it that you do not reject the one who speaks. For if they did not escape when they rejected him who warned them on earth, even less will we if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven. His voice shook the earth at that time, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” This expression, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what is not shaken might remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

Let brotherly love continue. Don’t neglect to show hospitality, for by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing it. Remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and the mistreated, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily. Marriage is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers. Keep your life free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for he himself has said, “I will never leave you or abandon you.” Therefore, we may boldly say,

“The Lord is my helper;

I will not be afraid.

What can man do to me?”

# Reflections

God is so great and so big that in order to approach Him, an intermediary is needed. In fact, as the writer of Hebrews reminds us, Moses and others who saw God apart from an intermediary were generally terrified. Animals who drew too close had to be stoned to death. Under the old covenant, high priests were assigned to serve as intermediaries on behalf of the people before God. One of the beautiful realities of the new covenant is that Jesus continues to intercede on our behalf so that we can approach God without fear. This is God's grace toward us, which is why we must "see to it that [we] do not reject the one who speaks." To that end, in this section of Hebrews the author issues three warnings:

- 1. Unholiness.** If holiness is the state of complete devotion to God, then unholiness represents a devotion to sinful or wicked things. The writer of Hebrews says that without holiness, "no one will see the Lord," and also reminds his readers of the immorality and unrepentance of Esau as an example of unholiness.
- 2. Apostasy.** When a person abandons their beliefs, they're considered apostate. The author of Hebrews warns against apostasy when he instructs his readers to make sure "that no root of bitterness springs up." This is a reference to Deuteronomy 29:18-19, which says, "be sure there is no root among you bearing poisonous and bitter fruit. When someone hears the words of this oath, he may consider himself exempt, thinking, 'I will have peace even though I follow my own stubborn heart.'" In other words, the root of bitterness describes a person who has transferred their loyalty and devotion from God back to themselves. The writer of Hebrews warns against this kind of apostasy.
- 3. Irreverence.** Irreverence is simply a lack of respect, or the absence of appropriate reverence. Again, the writer of Hebrews refers to Esau, who demonstrated a callous and irreverent heart when he was willing to trade his birthright for a bowl of soup. A person who is irreverent toward God lacks understanding of how truly awesome and powerful God is. He will once more "shake not only the earth but the heavens," and He is a "consuming fire."

Instead of rejecting God through unholiness, apostasy, and irreverence, the writer of Hebrews implores his readers to respond to God's majesty by choosing to love one another in very practical ways. Namely:

- Hebrews 12:14 – “pursue peace with everyone, and holiness”
- Hebrews 13:1 – “let brotherly love continue”
- Hebrews 13:2 – “don’t neglect to show hospitality”
- Hebrews 13:3 – “remember those in prison”
- Hebrews 13:4 – “marriage is to be honored by all”

The author follows these challenges by instructing his readers to “keep your life free from the love of money” and to “be satisfied with what you have.” This series of commands is consistent with the theme of the entire book of Hebrews, that the Jewish readers of this letter would stop drifting in their faith, and instead live their lives with a faithfulness befitting the sacrifice Jesus made on their behalf. When we live by these same commands today, we honor our great God by living in a way that is peculiar and different from the world. As we endeavor to continue “considering Jesus” and how we might live in obedience to Him, we can apply this list to our lives and the Christian community that we interact with.



## The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?

HEBREWS 13:6

### Old Testament References

Exodus 19:12

Deuteronomy 9:19

Deuteronomy 31:6

Haggai 2:6

## Other Verses

John 13

Romans 12:13-21

James 1:27

1 Peter 4:8-9

## To Consider

- What is your definition of hospitality? What opportunities will you have this week to show God's Love through hospitality?
- Why is it a struggle for people in our culture to "keep the marriage bed undefiled?" Why is it important for Christians to take this command seriously?
- What does it mean for you to "remember those in prison?" What's a specific way you can apply this command in your life?

## To Do

Take some time to prayerfully reflect on the relationships in your life, asking God to show you any roots of bitterness you may have toward another person. If there are people toward whom you do have bitterness, commit to praying for them by name each day for the next week. Determine any steps you might choose to take to pursue peace in those relationships.



# Hebrews 13:7–19

WEEK FOURTEEN

## Hebrews 13:7-19

Remember your leaders who have spoken God's word to you. As you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Don't be led astray by various kinds of strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be established by grace and not by food regulations, since those who observe them have not benefited. We have an altar from which those who worship at the tabernacle do not have a right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the most holy place by the high priest as a sin offering are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus also suffered outside the gate, so that he might sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp, bearing his disgrace. For we do not have an enduring city here; instead, we seek the one to come. Therefore, through him let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Don't neglect to do what is good and to share, for God is pleased with such sacrifices. Obey your leaders and submit to them, since they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. Pray for us, for we are convinced that we have a clear conscience, wanting to conduct ourselves honorably in everything. And I urge you all the more to pray that I may be restored to you very soon.

# Reflections

Respect for leadership is a concept that appears to be losing momentum in today's world. The church is no exception. To that end, the author of Hebrews provides six very practical commands for Christians to consider regarding leaders in their faith community:

- **Remember** the leaders who have preached the word of God faithfully in your life. It can be easy to forget how much time and effort goes into proclaiming the truth of the Bible in a clear and compelling fashion. Don't take that for granted. Remember those leaders.
- **Carefully observe** the way your leaders live. Pay close attention. What do you notice? What can be learned from their example?
- **Imitate** the faith of the leaders in your community. We know from earlier in Hebrews that "faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen." How do your leaders handle adversity? Doubt? What do they say or do, or how do they think, that is worthy of imitation?
- **Obey and submit** to the wisdom and instruction your leaders provide. To obey means you comply with the wishes of another, while to submit means you yield to the will of another. The author of Hebrews reminds his readers that, as was the case with the high priests of old, the leaders in a Christian church community have been entrusted by God to care for the people.
- **Pray** for your leaders. While there are, of course, exceptions ("don't be led astray..."), your leaders generally really do want to live honorably and make wise decisions. Pray for them!

Sandwiched between these instructions about spiritual leadership is a review of some of the specific encouragements and warnings the author has already covered in his letter. He starts with the simple and powerful truth that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever," exhorting his readers not to stray from their faith. He reminds his readers that the Jewish sacrificial practices of the old covenant have been replaced and made better because



Jesus “suffered outside the gate” on our behalf. Finally, he celebrates the reality that for those who are followers of Jesus, all that is “required” is for us to call on the name of Jesus in praise.



## **Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**

H E B R E W S 13 : 8

### **Old Testament References**

Exodus 29:14

Isaiah 62:6

Micah 3:10

### **Other Verses**

1 Timothy 5:1-2

1 Peter 5:1-14

Titus 2:1-15

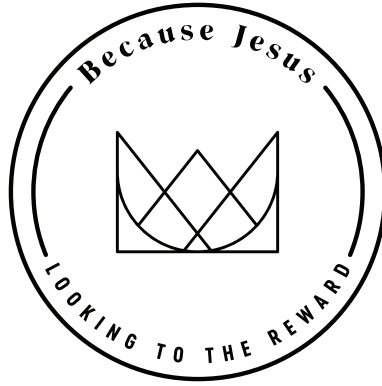
## **To Consider**

- Who are some Christian leaders you have carefully observed? What qualities have you been able to imitate?
- How do you respond when you hear the words “obey” and “submit” to your leaders? Why is it important for Christians to take these commands seriously?
- The author says we should not neglect the practice of “offering up to God a sacrifice of praise.” Is this a practice you’ve neglected? How can you be more active in praising God this week?

## To Do

Find out the names of the pastors and other key leaders in your church community. Make a commitment to pray for them by name each day this week. Pray specifically for each person on your list to have a clear conscience, and to be able to conduct themselves honorably in everything they do. You might also send them a quick message, asking them how they specifically would like to be prayed for.





# Hebrews 13:20–25

WEEK FIFTEEN

Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus—the great Shepherd of the sheep—through the blood of the everlasting covenant, equip you with everything good to do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Brothers and sisters, I urge you to receive this message of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. Be aware that our brother Timothy has been released. If he comes soon enough, he will be with me when I see you. Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who are from Italy send you greetings. Grace be with you all.

## Hebrews 13:20–25

# Reflections

Appropriately, the letter to the Hebrews ends with a prayer, some final instructions, and a farewell.

The author's prayer for his readers is filled with truth:

- He appeals to the “God of peace,” an Old Testament name for God that once again connects his readers to their Jewish roots.
- He reminds his readers that God raised Jesus from the dead, fulfilling His promise to save His people, asking Him to prepare this group of Jewish Christians to live their lives in a manner that brings glory to Christ.
- He asks God to equip his readers with the ability to accomplish God's will and to live their lives in a manner that's pleasing to God.
- He acknowledges that all eternal glory belongs to Jesus.

The author's final instruction to his readers is pretty simple: Take heed of the contents of this letter you've received. You've drifted in your faith, and a course correction is needed. Finding strength from the roots of your Jewish tradition, move forward with a sincere faith and eyes fixed on Jesus as you go.

The author's farewell includes a prayer, some final instructions, an exchange of greetings, and information about possible visits from Timothy and perhaps the author himself. As an aside, the ending of the book of Hebrews is the strongest indication that, despite the fact that it mostly reads like a sermon or a theological paper, Hebrews is indeed a letter written to a specific community of faith.

# Epilogue

As a reader of this study guide, my prayer for you is that you also would “receive this message of exhortation.” Like the readers of Hebrews, we Christians today have a tendency to drift. When you *do* find yourself drifting, it’s important to be reminded of the roots of your faith. Dig deeply into the truth of God’s Word, the Bible, and believe the promises and keep the commands that are found within. Most of all, don’t take your eyes off of Jesus. He’s the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior. He’s our example of how to live. He is better. He is sufficient. He is perfect.

Remember Him.

For Christ,  
Pastor James Granger



**Brothers and sisters, I  
urge you to receive this  
message of exhortation.**

HEBREWS 13:22

## Old Testament References

Judges 6:24

Isaiah 9:6

Zechariah 9:10

## Other Verses

John 10:1-10

Romans 16

Ephesians 4:11-16

## To Consider

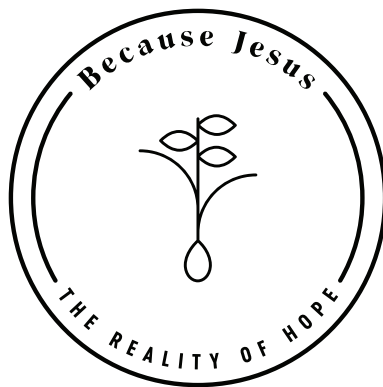
- Have you received the “message of exhortation” from the book of Hebrews? How are you going to think or live differently in response to what you’ve read?

## To Do

Now that you’ve finished the book of Hebrews, take some time to reflect. Consider rereading the book in its entirety, or perhaps review the notes you’ve taken in this study guide. Write down a few truths you would like to remember. Make a commitment to spend some time in prayer this week, asking God to give you the strength and wisdom needed to apply these truths in your life. Talk to people in your life, whether your spouse, your roommate, or those in your Life Group, about the specific next steps you’d like to take.







# Reading Plan

In studying through a book of the Bible, it's important to take time to actually read through the text for yourself. While we'll be walking through the text during weekend services, we'd encourage you to also look at the text on your own and spend some time reading through this letter to the Hebrews.

Since we know it can be difficult to make time for everything in our schedules, we've put together this reading plan as an option for you. For five days each week we've portioned out the passage we'll be studying that weekend along with an Old Testament passage that is referenced or related. Feel free to read just Hebrews, read both, or read at a completely different pace, we'd just encourage you to find time to get into the Bible.

## **week one**

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 1:1-4  
○ Numbers 12:6-8
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 1:5-8  
○ Psalm 89:26-29
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 1:9-12  
○ Psalm 102:25-28
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 1:13-14  
○ Genesis 19:16-17
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 2:1-4  
○ Numbers 15:27-31

## **week 2**

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 2:5-8  
○ Psalm 8:1-9
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 2:9-10  
○ Psalm 21:3-5
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 2:11-12  
○ Psalm 22:22-31
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 2:13-15  
○ Isaiah 8:16-18
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 2:16-18  
○ Isaiah 41:8-10

## **week 3**

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 3:1-3  
○ 1 Samuel 12:6-7
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 3:4-6  
○ Psalm 119:33-40
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 3:7-11  
○ Psalm 95:7-11
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 3:12-14  
○ Isaiah 44:18-20
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 3:15-19  
○ Deuteronomy 1:34-40

## **week 4**

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 4:1-2  
○ Psalm 95:7-8
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 4:3-4  
○ Genesis 2:1-3
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 4:5-7  
○ Isaiah 49:8-10
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 4:8-11  
○ Exodus 20:11; 31:17
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 4:12-13  
○ Jeremiah 23:29-32

## week 5

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 4:14-16  
○ Isaiah 53:1-3
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 5:1-10  
○ Leviticus 16:1-6
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 6:20-7:10  
○ Genesis 14:17-20
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 7:11-22  
○ Micah 5:1-6
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 2:23-28  
○ Psalm 16:1-11

## week 6

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 5:11-14  
○ Genesis 3:22-24
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 6:1-3  
○ Psalm 34:1-7
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 6:4-8  
○ Isaiah 5:1-7
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 6:9-12  
○ Proverbs 19:10-17
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 6:13-19  
○ Proverbs 19:20-21

## week 7

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 8:1-2  
○ Exodus 33:7-11
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 8:3-4  
○ Leviticus 14:19-20
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 8:5-6  
○ Exodus 25:31-40
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 8:7-9  
○ Jeremiah 31:31-34
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 8:10-13  
○ Isaiah 54:13-15

## week 8

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 9:1-5  
○ Leviticus 24:5-9
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 9:6-10  
○ Leviticus 16:15, 34
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 9:11-14  
○ Numbers 19:2, 17, 18
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 9:15-22  
○ 2 Chronicles 29:20-24
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 9:23-28  
○ Isaiah 53:1-12

## **week 9**

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 10:1-4  
○ Leviticus 16:20-22
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 10:5-7  
○ Psalm 40:6-8
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 10:8-10  
○ Leviticus 1
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 10:11-15  
○ Numbers 28:1-8
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 10:16-18  
○ Jeremiah 31:33-34

## **week 10**

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 10:19-25  
○ Zechariah 6:11-13
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 10:26-29  
○ Numbers 35:30-35
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 10:30-31  
○ Psalm 50:1-6
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 10:32-36  
○ Deuteronomy 32:35-36
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 10:37-39  
○ Habbakuk 2:2-5

## **week 11**

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 11:1-10  
○ Genesis 4:1-10
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 11:11-16  
○ Psalm 39:12-13
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 11:17-22  
○ Genesis 22:1-10
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 11:23-31  
○ Exodus 12:21-30
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 11:32-40  
○ Jeremiah 20:2, 37:15

## **week 12**

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 12:1-2  
○ Lamentations 3:25-26
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 12:3-4  
○ Isaiah 40:31
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 12:5-6  
○ Proverbs 3:11-12
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 12:7-11  
○ 2 Samuel 7:14-17
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 12:12-13  
○ Isaiah 35:1-4

### **week 13**

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 12:14-17  
○ Deuteronomy 29:16-19
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 12:18-24  
○ Exodus 19:18, 20:18
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 12:25-29  
○ Haggai 2:6; 2:21
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 13:1-3  
○ Genesis 18:3; 19:2
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 13:4-6  
○ Psalm 37:25-26

### **week 14**

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 13:7-9  
○ Jude 8-13
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 13:10-14  
○ Exodus 29:14
- day 3 ○ Hebrews 2:15-16  
○ Psalm 107:22; 116:17
- day 4 ○ Hebrews 2:17  
○ Ezekiel 3:16-21
- day 5 ○ Hebrews 2:18-19  
○ Philemon 17-22

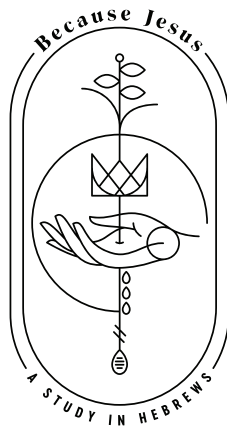
### **week 15**

- day 1 ○ Hebrews 13:20-21  
○ Isaiah 63:11-14
- day 2 ○ Hebrews 13:22-25  
○ Psalm 136:1-3
- day 3 ○ Mark 16:1-8  
○ Daniel 7:9-10
- day 4 ○ Matthew 28:1-10  
○ Daniel 10:2-6
- day 5 ○ John 20:1-29  
○ Genesis 2:7-8

# Notes







This book has corresponding messages that were taught at Riverview Church in early 2020. Visit [rivchurch.com](http://rivchurch.com) or download Riverview Church's app by searching "rivchurch" in your App Store to view the message videos.

A digital version of this book, Life Group conversation starters, and other resources can be viewed and downloaded by visiting [rivchurch.com/becausejesus](http://rivchurch.com/becausejesus).