

A Study in the Book of Hebrews

(with suggested answers)

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Lesson 1: Hebrews 1:1-4

I. God has spoken to us (vs. 1, 2)

- 1.1. In the past, how did God speak and to whom? (See also Psalm 68:11; John 5:39; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21)

He spoke to the fathers by the prophets.

The Lord gave the word and a great company proclaimed it.

The Scriptures testify of Christ

All Scripture is inspired or God-breathed.

Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit

How did He speak to Moses? (Exodus 33:11)

Face to face

- 1.2. How did God speak in these last days; and to whom? (vs. 2) (See also John 1:1)
He spoke to us by His Son. Jesus Christ is the Word that was in the beginning.

Jesus Christ is God's final Word.

Think carefully through the following questions in order to get at the question of how God communicates with man.

What do John 8:28 and 12:50 tell us about what Jesus said and the source of His words? What do John 14:26; John 15:26 and John 16:13 tell us about what the Holy Spirit says? And finally, what is the source of the written Word?

2 Peter 1:21

In all of these cases, God the Father is the source with Jesus and the Holy Spirit repeating what they have received from God.

Based on these verses then, one can conclude that **God** is the source of both Jesus' words and the Holy Spirit's words. Both of them mediated God's Word to man.

Notice what Jesus says about His words in John 6:63. Look also at Hebrews 4:12. What characteristic does the Word have?

Jesus says that His words are life. The Word of God is alive and powerful

- 1.3. Consider some responses to the Word. (Exodus 20:19; Job 23:12; Isaiah 66:2; Jeremiah 15:16; James 1:22)

Do not let God speak to us!

I have treasured His words more than my necessary food.

God looks on those who tremble at his word.

Jeremiah ate them and they became the joy and rejoicing of his heart.

We are to be doers of the word and not just hearers.

Note also the king's response to Jeremiah's scroll in Jeremiah 36.

What should our response be?

Various answers but especially that we should listen and obey.

- 1.4. Describe the role of the Word in Salvation. (I Corinthians 15:1 & 2; James 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:15)

The gospel heard, believed and embraced brings salvation.

Receiving the word with meekness and having it implanted into our souls will save our souls.

The Scriptures are able to make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ.

- 1.5. What does Isaiah 55:11 add to our understanding of the power of the Word?
God's word will accomplish everything he has sent it out to do. Every purpose he had when he sent it will be accomplished.

- 1.6. Considering the fact that the God of the universe who made heaven and earth has spoken with words, think about and discuss the importance of words and reading for the Christian.

It's important to remember that God is the one who initiated the use of the word as a means of communicating truth. Without the ability to understand words and to read with understanding, we will not be able to hear from God. For this age He has chosen no other means of communication.

II. *Description of the Son (vs. 2-4)*

- 2.1 What appointment was He given? (See also Ephesians 1:18; Colossians 1:15-17)

He was appointed heir of all things. Ephesians 1:18 tells us that the saints are part of Jesus' inheritance. Think about that! He created everything and it was for Him that they were created.

Who appointed Him?

God the Father appointed him

- 2.2. What was Jesus' role in creation? (vs. 2) (Genesis 1:26 *notice the word 'us'*; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16)

He created everything. He is the Word that God used to create. There is nothing in existence that He did not make.

- 2.3. What is Jesus like as it relates to the image of God? (vs. 3) (See again Colossians 1:15-17; John 14:9)

Jesus is the brightness of God's glory and the exact impression of His person. Paul told the Colossians that he is the image of the invisible God. Jesus told His followers in John 14 that if they have seen Him, they have seen the father. So Jesus is what God would look like and be like if He were a human being.

Express image of His person means “He is the impress of his substance.” (God, of course, is not visible. He is spirit. But Jesus is the physical 'stamp' of God.)

2.4 According to Hebrews 1:3, now that creation exists, what is Jesus' role in creation? (See also Colossians 1:17)

Everything is upheld and sustained by the continuous active power of Jesus Christ.

See Hebrews 2:10: All things are **by** Him and **for** Him. (See Colossians 1:16)
He created for His own enjoyment.

2.5 What has He done with our sins? (vs. 3) Did He have help?
Purged is *catharsis*: cleansed or purified

He has completely and thoroughly cleansed us of our sins. In so doing, he finished the task completely and sat down at the right hand of God the Father.

2.6. He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. (vs. 3) What is the significance of the location and what is the significance of His position in that location?
(See also Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44; Ephesians 1:20, 21; Hebrews 10:12, 13)

Jesus Christ is God and as such has every right to the highest position in heaven. Because He is the Son, He sits at the Father's right hand. His seated position informs us that the task of the cross finished all that had to be done to cleanse us of our sins and to redeem us back to God.

2.7. He is much better than the angels. Why? (vs. 4)
By what means did He have a more excellent name than they?

By His inheritance He has been given a more excellent name than the angels.

Key Ideas

³⁵/₁₇ God speaks. He created the world through speech and has been speaking into the world at times through history.

³⁵/₁₇ His Son, the second person of the trinity, is the greatest message ever spoken into the world. He is The Word.

Digging Deeper

This section of each lesson will ask questions that will challenge you to dig deeper into the text as well as compare Scripture with Scripture to discern some insights that are not right out on the surface.

³⁵/₁₇ Do a study of acceptable and unacceptable responses to the Word in Scripture.

- ³⁵/₁₇ Make a list of metaphors used in Scripture to describe the Word. For example, the Word is a lamp; the Word is a hammer.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Study the power of the Word or the Gospel. What is the Word capable of? What does it mean that His Word will not return void?
- ³⁵/₁₇ I'm intrigued by the fact that Jesus and the Holy Spirit only spoke what they received of the Father. Try to write this out in a paragraph to explain it to a young person or a new Christian. What does it say about the God-head to realize that neither Christ nor the Holy Spirit speak their own Words but only what they received from God the Father?
- ³⁵/₁₇ Study the concept of the fact that Christ is at the right hand of God the Father. What does that position entail and what are the implications of the often repeated phrase "until He makes your enemies your footstool"?

Prompts for Meditation

This section of each lesson will contain statements and questions that are not so much to be answered directly but rather to stimulate thoughtful meditation.

- ³⁵/₁₇ Think about your reaction to the fact that the God who made the universe has spoken. Think about your response to that word. Are you more like the Israelites or like Moses?
- ³⁵/₁₇ Think about how great He is, how small you are and what an awesome and amazing privilege it is to hear from God through His Word.
- ³⁵/₁₇ If Christ is the heir of all things, consider the fact that you are part of His inheritance, and He is pleased with what He has received.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Think through the idea that it is the word of Christ that holds all of the universe together. It is an active holding. And what happens when He stops holding it together?
- ³⁵/₁₇ Think about what God must be like if Christ is the exact representation of His person.
- ³⁵/₁₇ Consider the fact that if you are in Christ, every one of your sins have been purged.
- ³⁵/₁₇ God has invested everything in "The Word", both spoken and written, rather than in the visual. Think through the implications of this in your life with respect to how much time you invest in listening and reading the Word compared to other forms of media. In the same vein, think about how the truth is to be distributed if God has invested so much in His Word.

Lesson 2: Hebrews 1:4-14

I. *The Son is better than the angels (vs. 4-14)*

- 1.1. What comparison does the author first use to compare how much better Christ is than the angels? (vs. 4)
He has a better name than they.
- 1.2. What is that name and how did He get it?
His name is Jesus which means Savior. In addition, the writer jumps right into verse 4 to say that He is called Son which is not actually a name, but that may be what the writer is referring to by saying that He had inherited a better name than the angels.
- 1.3. There are basically three comparisons of Jesus to angels to show He is greater than they.
 - a. He is the Son (vs. 5-7)
 - b. He is God (vs. 8-12)
 - c. He is Lord (vs. 13 – 14)
 - d. What are the angels' roles?
vs. 6 Worship the Son

vs. 7 Serve God

vs. 14 Minister to the saints

II. *A deeper look at what we learn about Jesus Christ in this passage*

- 2.1. He is referred to as “begotten” in verse 5. What does that mean?
(John 1:14, 18; John 3:16, 18; Acts 13:33; 1 John 4:9)

Begotten cannot mean “born” because even though Jesus was born in Bethlehem, His existence goes back before that. He has always been the eternal Son of God and He has been eternally begotten. This means that He shares the nature of God as a member of the trinity.
- 2.2. What day is “today” in verse 5?
John MacArthur says that the Second Person of the trinity became a Son when He took on the role of becoming man and living upon the earth. Today therefore would be the day of His birth in Bethlehem, or of His conception by the Holy Spirit. How that fits together with the previous point is difficult to work out. The second person of the trinity is eternally begotten, but he took on the role of son in His human conception and birth.
- 2.3. What characteristics of deity does God attribute to the Son?
 - a. God calls the Son, *God*. (vs 8)

b. List some others:
He laid the foundation of the earth. Verse 10
He will outlast creation. Verse 11
He never changes. Verse 12

c. Consider His love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. (vs. 9) (Daniel 9:24; Matthew 3:15; Psalm 145:17)

What is righteousness? Righteousness is purity of heart and a life that matches up with God's character. It is being and doing right.

d. The Son was God's communication to man, God's agent in creation and the sacrifice for sin. In being these things He was the *mediator* between God and man. How was He installed or initiated into that position? (vs. 1:9b)

God anointed Him into that position with “the oil of gladness.”

2.4. Who are the companions (fellows) mentioned in verse 9? (Does Hebrews 2:11 help?)

The people who He has saved to be his brothers and joint-heirs.

2.5. Describe Christ's work of creation and His relationship to it. (vs. 10-12)

Jesus Christ created and sustains His creation. He is outside of it and disconnected from it in the sense that His creation will grow old and will need to be folded up whereas He never grows old and He will continue to oversee the folding up phase and the next phase after that.

III. A Look at how Scripture is used in this Passage

3.1. Look up the writers references to the Old Testament and compare the wording between the two. Use 1:10-12 compared with Psalm 102:25-27 for example. Are they the same? To what do you attribute any differences?

There will be various answers depending on which passages and which versions are examined. The writers of the New Testament often do not quote the Old Testament word for word as we have them in our English Bible. They also may have been working from different manuscripts than our translators used.

3.2. Since all Scripture, including the book of Hebrews, is inspired by God, it's interesting to note how the Holy Spirit uses other Scriptures. Notice for example the second quote in verse 5. This comes from 2 Samuel 7:14.

In 2 Samuel, who is he talking about when he says, “He shall be My son”?

In the immediate context he is speaking about David

Who does the author of Hebrews say it refers to?

The author of Hebrews uses the reference as a reference to Jesus Christ.

Notice the second half of 2 Samuel 7:14. Could this refer to Christ? Why or why not?

The second half of the verse does not refer to Christ, because there was no sin in His life and there was no need for punishment. But the person the Psalmist is referring to needs punishment.

How do we know when the Old Testament reference to Christ stops and the parallel with David continues?

We need to pay careful attention to both the OT and NT contexts. Prophecies often point to two and sometimes three different scenarios. It's important to make sure that we only apply them in the way scripture applies them. If the writer of the Hebrews had not made this reference to the Christ, we would not be able to make that assumption.

Key Idea

³⁵/₁₇ Jesus Christ is greater than all because He is God.

Digging Deeper

³⁵/₁₇ Go through verses 8-13 and list each aspect of the deity of Christ you find there. Then use a concordance or computer search to find other passages that discuss the same attribute of Christ.

³⁵/₁₇ Look into the role of angels in the giving of the Law. (Galatians 3:19; Acts 7:53)

³⁵/₁₇ Look up some of the other scriptures quoted from the Old Testament. Study the Old Testament context to see where the prophetic piece picks up and where it leaves off.

Prompts for Meditation

³⁵/₁₇ Consider the word “gladness” in verse 9 as an attitude Christ had as he took on the responsibility of suffering for you.

³⁵/₁₇ Think about the changeableness of the world and all of the stuff going on in it compared to the unchanging nature of Christ and his lordship over that world.

³⁵/₁₇ Think about verse 14 as it relates to you.

³⁵/₁₇ Meditate on Christ's love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity. To what degree does your character conform to His? What can be done to close the gap?

Lesson 3: Hebrews 2:1-18

I. *Warning Against Negligence (verses 1-4)*

- 1.1 The author begins with the word *therefore* which ties what he is about to say with what has already been said. Since Jesus is God's communication to man, God's agent in creation, God's sustainer of creation and the sacrifice for sin; and since Jesus has a name and ministry greater than the angels, we should respond in a certain way. What is that certain way? (vs. 1)

We need to take heed to what we have heard. Take heed means to pay close attention and follow through with actions.

- 1.2. What things that we have heard is he referring to in verse 1?

He's in the process of comparing Jesus to the angels. Since what angels say must be taken seriously, then in an even greater way we need to pay attention to what Jesus has said, since He is the Son of God.

- 1.3. According to verse 1, what could happen if we don't pay attention to what we've heard? What are the characteristics of *drifting*?

We would be in danger of drifting away. Drifting happens by carelessness and lack of effort. When a person is drifting in a boat he is carried along by the currents without any effort to choose a destination and actively move toward it.

- 1.4 Note the comparison in verses 2 and 3 between what the Lord has said and what angels have proclaimed.

- a. How is the message of angels described?

It has proved steadfast.

- b. What is the result of neglecting what they said?

There was a just reward for every transgression and disobedience.

- c. *But*, Jesus was declared to be greater than the angels in Chapter 1 and therefore how should we respond to what He has taught?

We must give more heed to what He said than even what angels have said.

- d. What are the repercussions of not paying close attention?

We shall not escape the judgment of God upon us.

- 1.5. How was the word confirmed by those who heard? (vs 4)

Jesus' teaching was passed on by those who had heard it and their teaching was confirmed with signs and wonders.

Note: There is a natural human tendency to fall back into the way of thinking we came out of when we came to Christ. For the audience of this letter, the old way was Judaism. For us, it is likely something else. On the human side it takes perseverance, discipline and persistence to stay on track and keep moving forward and not fall back into our former way of thinking and believing. Over and over in this book you will see the author's challenge to be careful not to fall back into old patterns of thinking and believing. We'll point those out as we go along.

II. Man Made a Little Lower than Angels (verses 5-8)

2.1. Rather than angels, who has God put over his creation as well as the world to come? (vs. 5-6) (See also I Cor. 6:3)

God has put man over His creation as its caretaker and guardian. Man will even judge angels at some point.

2.2. What is:

God's focus on man? (vs. 6) God is mindful of him and takes care of him, even though he is nothing in comparison to God.

Man's position? (vs. 7) A little lower than the angels. Some translators say, "for a little while lower than the angels."

Man's crown? (vs. 7) He is crowned with glory and honor.

Man's dominion?

(as you consider this, also pay attention to the clarification in verse 8. Is it a matter of *what's* included in the dominion or a matter of *when*?)

God has put all things under his feet, but not yet.

2.3. How does this fit with Genesis 1 – 2 as far as man's assigned role is concerned? Man was placed in the garden and given the responsibility to care for it and tend it. There was work and responsibility. Man was given the responsibility of naming the animals as well. Naming is an advanced scientific function. When we name things, we are bringing them into our mental control so that we can think and speak about them.

III. The Son Becomes Man so that He can Bring Many Sons to Glory (verses 9-18)

3.1. Jesus was made lower than the angels. In other words he became a man. Consider that for a moment-God becoming man. Look at Philippians 2:7-9 and note the voluntary downward steps that Jesus Christ took from heaven to become a man.

3.2. It's difficult sometimes to know how the grammar of a verse fits together. In verse 9 it appears that "crowned with glory and honor is because of the suffering of death."

- 3.3. How does what Jesus is crowned with in verse 9 compare to what man was crowned with in verse 7?

It is the same. Man is crowned with glory and honor. When Jesus became man he is also crowned with glory and honor. Of course he is worthy of glory and honor without becoming a man, but I believe the point here is to show that especially in the original created order, man was the pinnacle of God's creation. Jesus, by becoming man became a member of that pinnacle. Although man had fallen, Jesus was not a fallen creature and so He is essentially the restored pinnacle.

- 3.4. By God's grace, the suffering of Christ in His death was for everyone. (John MacArthur rightly states: "Everyone who believes, that is. The death of Christ can only be applied in its efficacy to those who come to God repentantly in faith...") Why does the author say, "by the *grace* of God"?

He came and took his position as a man, a little lower than the angels, for the purpose of suffering and dying for the sins of mankind. Such an act is one of pure grace since we as His creatures do not deserve this kind of love and attention.

- 3.5. According to verse 10, what was fitting? That the founder of our salvation should be made perfect through suffering. ("Perfect" in verse 10 has the idea of completion, i.e. completing it's purpose or function. Jesus in His humanity needed to experience all of life apart from sin. This included the experience of suffering and death.)

- 3.6. What do you think it means in verse 11 that both He who sanctifies and the ones being sanctified are all of one?

Jesus is the one doing the sanctifying and people are the ones being sanctified. In this passage, God is showing the bond that exists between Jesus and the people He is saving. Christians are described as brothers of Christ, one with him and joint heirs with him. The new birth makes us partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:4)

- 3.7. What is the meaning of the word "sanctified"?

Sanctified means to set apart as holy. Just as we might set apart a vase for special occasions and not just use it to hold pencils or as a waste container, so God sets apart people for Himself. He basically says, "This one is my special possession to be used for My glory."

- 3.8. What are the terms used to describe us in relation to Christ? (1:9; 2:10; 2:11; 2:13)
Companions; sons; brothers; His children

- 3.9. Take a deeper look at 13b where He speaks of the children God has given to Him. What does Jesus say about the people God has given Him in the following verses: John 6:37; John 10:29; John 17: 6, 9, 12, 24?

John 6:37 All that have been given to Christ will come to him and will not be cast out.

John 10:29 They cannot be snatched from the Father's hand

John 17:6 Jesus gave them God's word

John 17:9 Jesus prays for them

John 17:12 Jesus keeps them so that none is lost

John 17:24 Jesus desires that they be with Him where He is.

- 3.10. Jesus also shared in flesh and blood and became like His brothers so that He could accomplish several things. Make a list of those things from verses 14 – 18.

Through death He might destroy the devil

Release those who are in bondage

Gives them aid

He is a high priest for them

He makes propitiation for them

- 3.11. According to verse 16 He does not give aid to angels, but to the seed of Abraham. Why do you think He gives aid to human beings but not angels?

Angels are stronger than man and did not fall. Man is the pinnacle of his creation.

Who is the seed of Abraham? (Galatians 3:15-29)

Believers in Christ are the seed and heirs according to the promise.

- 3.12. According to verse 17 what was necessary in order for Jesus to be a merciful and faithful high priest? In what ways was He made like us?
He was made like us in all ways except that He didn't sin.

- 3.13. According to verses 17 and 18 what ministries does Christ have as high priest?

He serves as intermediary between God and man and He makes propitiation.

- 3.14. Define "propitiation".

Atonement. He takes away our sin. He suffered the punishment of our sin so that God's justice would be satisfied.

Key Ideas

- ³⁵₁₇ There is no other salvation except through Christ. This is not just a Christian teaching. It is an absolute truth about the way things are. If we neglect this salvation, we are lost forever.
- ³⁵₁₇ God made man above all His creation in a position a little lower than the angels.
- ³⁵₁₇ Jesus stooped to this level to identify with us, be a priest for us and to bring many of us to glory with Him.
- ³⁵₁₇

Digging Deeper

- ³⁵₁₇ Do a study in the book of Hebrews on the communication of truth. Look up such words as hearing, heard; speak, spoken; word, etc.
- ³⁵₁₇ Study and think about the terms the Holy Spirit used to describe Jesus' fellows in 1:9; 2:10; 2:11; 2:13;

Prompts for Meditation

- ³⁵₁₇ Meditate on Psalm 8, a portion of which is quoted in Hebrews 2:6-8.
- ³⁵₁₇ Think about the fact that He is not ashamed to call you a brother. (2:11)
- ³⁵₁₇ Think about the fact that you were a gift to Christ from God. He is thankful for that gift and will take care of it and preserve it forever.
- ³⁵₁₇ According to the last few verses of Hebrews 2, what has qualified Christ to be a high priest for you? Think about the implications of those truths.

Lesson 4: Hebrews 3:1-19

I. *The Son is faithful over His own house (vs. 1-6)*

- 1.1. Notice the description given to those addressed in this chapter. Who are these people?

Holy brethren and partakers of the heavenly calling are Christians, those who have trusted in Christ and believed on Him.

- 1.2 What do you think the writer means by asking us to *consider* Jesus? How would you go about following that admonition?

Consider means to do some careful thinking about who Jesus is and what He came to do and how that relates to us. It requires that we take some time to think instead of just running around in our busy lives. We need to take time to think on these things.

- 1.3. Why is he called the apostle and high priest of our confession? (Think about the definition of 'apostle' and 'high priest'.)

He is God's "sent one" who came to bring us the message of the gospel. He is the one who serves as our high priest as a mediator between God and man.

- 1.4. Given the fact that Moses was faithful over his house, what are the author's two arguments for considering Christ worthy of more honor when both were faithful over their respective houses?

Christ is of more honor because He is the one who built the house. And then as a son in the house He is of more honor than Moses who is a servant.

- 1.5. What does he mean, "We are his house if we hold fast until the end"? See also Matthew 10:22; Colossians 1:21-23; Hebrews 10:38, 39

Perseverance is the evidence that we are truly his.

- 1.6. What two things are we are to hold fast to until the end? (v.6)

We are to hold fast our confidence and our hope of rejoicing firm until the end.

Note: This is another reference to what I think is a theme throughout this book. That is, we must not drift back into the philosophies or religious beliefs we may have come out of when we came to Christ. Trusting Christ is the only answer out there. Holding fast until the end is proof of our true conversion to Christ.

II. *The warning to stick with it. (vs. 7-15)*

2.1. Bringing in a quote from Psalm 95, the writer emphasizes the truth of the fact that we are His house if we continue to the end . This quote runs from verse 7 to 11 and is followed then by a warning to us.

a. What was the time period focused on by the Psalmist quoted in verses 7 & 8? This incident occurs during the time of the exodus and wilderness wanderings between Egypt and the Promised Land.

b. What was the warning given by the Psalmist to the people of his day?

Not to harden their hearts as their forefathers had done.

c. What events was he pointing back to in giving this warning?

He is pointing back to the time when the people murmured and complained about God's provisions for them as they wandered in the wilderness.

2.2. What is the warning in verse 12 and who is it addressed to? (Note that here again we have that warning not to depart or turn back.)

The warning in verse 12 is to be careful that we don't have an unbelieving heart as those people did. That warning was given to all of the readers of the Hebrews letter, including us.

2.3. Why does he equate an unbelieving heart with an evil heart?

Because unbelief is sin and therefore evil.

2.4. What is an important step in preventing this from happening? See verse 13 How can we put the “daily” aspect of this into practice?

It is important to encourage one another each day. Daily is difficult since we don't normally see one another daily. But whenever we are together we need to encourage steadfastness.

2.5. What does the deceitfulness of sin do to us? (vs. 13) What might be some precautions that would help us avoid this?

Sin hardens the heart. Mutual encouragement is helpful as is being in the Word and meditating on it and praying.

2.6. Verse 14 gives us another “perseverance” verse. According to this verse, what is the evidence of having become a partaker of Christ?

If we hold fast our confidence firm until the end.

III. The results of disobedience.(vs. 15-19)

3.1 What is the applicable day of the warning? Today

3.2 How many rebelled? (vs. 16) (See also 1 Corinthians 10:1-5)

All those who came out of Egypt.

3.3 What did God swear concerning those who were disobedient?

They would not enter his rest.

3.4 The reason they were barred from entering was because of **unbelief**.

Key Ideas

³⁵₁₇ We are challenged to focus on today. Today we are to have faith and not harden our hearts in the sin of unbelief.

Digging Deeper

³⁵₁₇ Hebrews 3:7 – 11 is quoting from Psalm 95. But the Psalmist is referring to an earlier incident. Go back and find the original passages to investigate what the people had done that had provoked God so.

³⁵₁₇ Do a study of the promises of God related to “Perseverance of the Saints” or what some people call “Eternal Security”.

³⁵₁₇ Look up some passages that encourage us to exhort one another and help one another along in the Christian life.

Prompts for Meditation

³⁵₁₇ Consider the fact that Christ was faithful over His house, whose house you are if you’ve been born again.

³⁵₁₇ Take some time to consider the warnings in this passage and seriously reflect on the faithfulness of your walk in light of them.

³⁵₁₇ In 3:12 he challenges us not to have a similar heart of unbelief. Look up 1 Cor 10:1-13. note the portion of the people who were “saved” in the exodus in verses 1-4. Then note the portion with whom God was not pleased. Meditate and pray about where you might fit if the assessment were being made today.

Lesson 5: Hebrews 3:16 – 4:13

I. *The Failure in the Wilderness – Hebrews 3:16 – 4:2*

1.1. Verses 16, 17, 18, and 19 each use a different word for the people's failure. List those words.

Rebelled, sinned, disobedience

1.2. How do you think these descriptions are related? How does the choice of different descriptions shed light on the subject from different angles?

Sin is sin, but it takes different forms. All sin is disobedience because God has given commandments and when we don't follow them, we are disobedient. It is also rebellion because we are insisting on another course of action other than what God has prescribed.

1.3. How many Israelites were the object of God's anger? Is there a lesson for us in this?

All those who came out of Egypt.

1.4. Is God angry with those outside of Christ today? Psalm 7:11; John 3:36

God is angry with wicked every day and the wrath of God abides on them. Who are the wicked? Those who have not received Christ and put their faith in him.

1.5. Why did the word they heard not profit them? Hebrews 4:2

It didn't profit them because it was not mixed with faith. We need to have not only intellectual assent to the truth, but there must be an embracing of the truth and an acceptance as applying to ourselves.

II. *An Old Testament Example*

2.1. Look at Numbers 14

a. Other than God, who else did they not believe?

Moses and Aaron, God's spokesmen.

b. So who did they side with?

They sided with Satan against God.

c. What were their complaints?

God had brought them out of a country where there was plenty of food and other comforts of life into a wilderness where they were hot and dry and hungry.

d. How were their complaints unfounded?

God had provided them with everything they needed. They forgot that they had been slaves under harsh conditions when in Egypt.

e. Do we ever have similar complaints?

God provides for us and yet we complain because everything isn't as we would like it to be.

2.2. Look at 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

a. According to verses 1-4 all of them had some things in common. What?

They all were under the cloud, all passed through the sea. All were one with Moses in the cloud and in the sea. All drank the same spiritual drink and ate the same spiritual food. And yet God was not pleased with most of them.

b. These things happened as examples to help us avoid 5 things. List them:

verse 6 lusting after evil things

verse 7 become idolaters

verse 8 sexual immorality

verse 9 tempt Christ

verse 10 complain

c. What's the warning at the end of the series in verse 12?

Take heed to yourself lest you fall. We are vulnerable in the same areas.

III. The Opportunity to Enter God's Rest is Available – Hebrews 4:3-13

Note: There are two aspects to the rest spoken of here. One aspect is the rest we will have in heaven. But there is also a rest that we are to enter into here and now. In the Old Testament illustration of the people of Israel, Egypt represents our lost condition. The wilderness wanderings represent a defeated, wandering, unfocused Christian experience and the Promised Land represents victorious Christian living and the rest spoken of here.

3.1. Verses 1, 6-8 tell us that a promise remains of entering that rest. The author's argument is that this still applies because David used the word "Today" long after the actual Promised Land journey had been completed.

3.2. According to verse 3, who enters into God's rest?

Those who believe.

3.3. Also in verse 3 we read that "the works were finished from the foundation of the world." (See also verse 10) What works of God were finished from the foundation of the world?

He finished creation on the 6th day and rested on the 7th day.

3.4. In verses 4 and 5, note the clear connection between the rest God entered on the seventh day and the fact that the people did not enter His rest. It is that same rest that God was enjoying that He wanted His people to join Him in.

God is resting. He is not worried, frustrated or anxious. He wants us to enter into His rest. By doing so we can enjoy that same sense of peace that He enjoys.

3.5. Verses 6 through 9 contain some very important logic. Make sure you can follow the reasoning he gives there:

It remains that some **must** enter the **rest**

and

Those who first heard it did not enter

therefore

He now designates another day called **today**

because

If Joshua had given them rest then another offer would not have been necessary.

Conclusion:

There remains a **rest** available for the **people** of God

3.6. From verse 10: “He who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.”

How thorough was God’s rest?

God's rest is thorough and complete.

What kinds of works would God want us to cease?

God would have us to cease from attempts to earn his favor, our vain attempts to make ourselves worthy of his love and mercy. He would have us cease from our worry and fretting when he has promised to be with us and to meet every need.

See Hebrews 6:1 and 9:14. What are dead works?

Also look at Titus 3:5, Romans 4:2, 5; Ephesians 2:9; Galatians 2:16

Dead works are works that are attempts at meriting God's favor. They can be religious rituals, abstentions from various foods or activities, abuses of the body to prove we are repentant, etc.

3.7. Consider the two “Let us...” admonitions in verses 1 and 11. Are these related?

How?

Yes. The first one is an admonition to fear and the second one is an admonition as to what to do to avoid what our fear had warned us about. We need to give diligence in entering the rest of God.

3.8. Diligence is required to enter that rest. It is not something that happens casually. How would you describe what diligence might look like in this context?

There are many descriptions that could be offered in answer to this question. However, diligence takes thought and action. We must focus on the goal of being in God's rest. Lack of rest lets us know we're not there. So we need to take steps to enter it. Prayer would be called for as would reviewing and claiming promises of God related to his promised salvation and care for us through life.

3.9. What is powerful enough to help us discern between our thoughts and motives?

The Word of God.

How does it do that?

It is able to probe and convict us down at the deepest level concerning our thoughts, motives and attitudes as they relate to living our lives for God's glory.

Key Ideas

³⁵/₁₇ A rest remains for the people of God. It is a rest that is to be entered by faith on a daily basis.

³⁵/₁₇ The rest consists of accepting God's work on our behalf and resting in the fact that striving to make ourselves acceptable to God is unnecessary and ineffective.

Digging Deeper

³⁵/₁₇ Do a thorough study of the promises God has given us. Compare these promises with those given to the Old Testament Israelites. Think about their rejection of those promises and consider your own response to the promises God has given you.

³⁵/₁₇ Study the 5 warnings given in I Corinthians 10 and find other verses related to each one that might be of help in defending yourself from following the same path.

Prompts for Meditation

³⁵/₁₇ Meditate on the promises which God has made to you. Is there faith mixed with these words in your heart?

³⁵/₁₇ Meditate on what resting with God in this life would look and feel like with the strivings and human attempts to please God finished.

Lesson 6: Hebrews 4:14 – 5:11

I. Introduction to this Section

In 3:1 we were told to consider Jesus Christ, the High Priest of our confession. Then we were warned of the dangers of not entering in to the rest that God has prepared and promised for us. Such failure represents disobedience and stubbornness on our part.

1.1. Since we have such a High Priest, what are we to do? (4:14) (There's that theme again.)

We are to hold fast onto our confession or profession.

1.2. Christ is our great High Priest. What's the significance of the fact that He has passed through the heavens? See I Corinthians 15:20; Colossians 1:15; See especially Hebrews 6:19

He is the first man resurrected from the dead never to die again. He successfully lived a righteous life in the flesh. Having died, been raised and now seated in heaven, He stands there as the first glorified human being. In that position He represents all of those who are or will be in him. He is like a down payment on the full plan of God.

1.3. In what ways is Christ able to sympathize with our weaknesses? How does that help us hold fast to our confession?

He is able to sympathize in that he was tempted in every way like we are yet did not fall. He understands our struggles, hurts and pains because he suffered all of that. Because we have his spirit in us, it helps us to know that it can be done with His power at work in us.

1.4. What are the two things we obtain by coming boldly to the throne of grace?

What is the distinction between the two and why is it important?

Mercy and grace. Mercy is the granting of favor and clemency when what we deserve is punishment. Grace is added favor and blessing that we don't deserve and haven't earned.

II. Qualifications of a High Priest (5:1-4)

2.1. In order for us to understand why a High Priest is necessary and why Christ fulfills that position perfectly, we must understand the qualifications of such a priest. Hebrews 5:1-4 give characteristics or qualifications for High Priest. What are they?

He is taken from among men; He represents them before God; he offers gifts and sacrifices to God for them; He has compassion on people because He also suffers the same frailties.

2.2. Was Christ also subject to weakness as verse 2 indicates? (Compare Hebrews 7:28)

Christ was subject to human weakness in the sense of being tired, feeling pain, hunger, etc. He was also weak in the sense that the temptations he experienced were real. However, He did not have the tendency to sin such as we have and therefore lived a sinless life.

III. Jesus as our High Priest (5:5-11)

3.1. What passages of Scripture does the author use to show that Christ was appointed by God as priest? (vs. 6)

Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 110:4

3.2. What were the characteristics of Christ's prayers during His life? (vs. 7)

His prayers were heartfelt and even involved tears. Because of His obedience, His prayers were heard and answered.

3.3. What do you think it means that Christ learned obedience and was thereby perfected? (As we've seen before, the word perfect means reaching the end for which a thing was designed; its purpose.)

A person does not know what it is to give up his own personal plan and obey someone else until he has done it. So when Christ obeyed God, He learned obedience and in that way He experienced the results of actually subjugating Himself as a human being to the will of God.

3.4. Jesus Christ is the cause, the personal, mediating cause of eternal salvation. He is the concrete and active cause of it. (vs.9) (Vine)

Salvation would not occur if weren't for Jesus Christ. He personally brings it. He personally mediates it to us.

Key Ideas

³⁵₁₇ Jesus Christ is our perfect high priest. He has been here and experienced the pain and challenges of life. He has endured temptation.

³⁵₁₇ The sacrifice He brought for His people was Himself and thus it was effective in accomplishing all its purposes.

Digging Deeper

³⁵₁₇ Read Leviticus 9, 16, 21 and 22 in order to get a better understanding of the Old Testament priesthood and the responsibilities and ceremonies involved.

³⁵₁₇ Think about how Jesus Christ as High Priest is similar and different in His office than these priests.

▲ Look up the word *begotten* as used in 5:5. Compare it to verses such as John 3:16. When God says in 5:5 "this day I have begotten you", what day is He speaking of. Look up the explanation given by different Christian traditions.

Prompts for Meditation

³⁵/₁₇ Think about what Christ suffered and how he was tempted like we are and now as a faithful priest intercedes for you at the right hand of God.

³⁵/₁₇ Think about the fact that Jesus Christ is in heaven as a glorified and resurrected man. He is said to be the first fruits. See I Corinthians 15:20-28.

Lesson 7: Hebrews 5:11-6:12

I. The Rebuke for Spiritual Immaturity (5:11-14)

1.1. Introduction to this section

The author wants to talk about Melchizedek to explain the priesthood of Jesus Christ. This he will get back to in 6:20 after this rebuke. The people have become dull of hearing. In what way may we be vulnerable to this same problem?

Sometimes we are just content to be superficial Christians. We don't want to get into the details of the Bible's teaching of doctrine and what actually is taking place in the salvation of man.

1.2. In his admonition what does the writer say his hearers ought to be able to do by now? (vs. 12)

They ought to be able to teach.

1.3. Instead, what have they come to need?

Instead, they have come to need milk, as a baby would. That milk consists of the basic or elementary principles of the world.

1.4. The basic principles or elementary principles they seem to need are to be left behind. See Question 2.1 below.

1.5. What is the characteristic of someone on milk? (vs. 13)

Usually young and unable to digest solid food. Christians who don't grow, stay on milk, sometimes their whole lives. They cling to the basics and don't go any deeper into the meat of the truth of God. God would have us move forward and not stay as babies.

1.6. List characteristics of the mature who use solid food. (vs. 14)

They are mature believers and have had their senses exercised to discern good and evil. It comes from practice.

II. The Challenge to Move On (6:1-8)

2.1. What are the elementary principles that are to be left behind? (vs. 1-3)

repentance from dead works, faith toward God, doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection from the dead, and eternal judgment.

2.2. It is impossible for people with certain characteristics to do something. (vs.4) What are those characteristics and what can't they do?

Those who were once enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift and become partakers of the Holy Spirit. If they fall away, they cannot be renewed to repentance.

Why?

Because they crucify again the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

- 2.3. Once enlightened, tasted, partakers of the Holy Spirit, etc. – Is this speaking of Christians or not? (See especially verse 9 in this connection.)
Verse 9 says that the writer is convinced of better things concerning these people, things that accompany salvation and so I believe that these are people who are close, but are not truly born again.

2.4. This shows how close people can be to true faith and not have it. (See 3:14)

2.5 What do you think is the meaning of the metaphor used in verses 7-8.

The blessings of God fall in the form of rain and sunshine on the soil. Some soil brings forth good things and some does not. People are similar. The Word of God comes and falls on the soil of the heart, but some are hardened and unresponsive. Others respond in faith.

III. Evidence of True Faith (6:9-12)

- 3.1. What are the characteristics mentioned in verses 9-12 that make the author confident of “better things” about them?
Their work and labor of love that they have shown by ministering to the saints.

These better things are things that accompany **salvation**.

- 3.2. What is the author's desire for them? (vs. 11-12)
That they would show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end and not become sluggish but imitate those who are faithful.

We see once again the challenge to keep pressing forward and not to fall back and give up. This thread of admonition continues throughout the book. Persistence and continuing until the end is the evidence of true saving faith.

IV. God's Promise is Sure (6:12-6:20)

- 4.1. The goal is endurance. What should we do to avoid slothfulness or sluggishness? (vs. 12)
Imitate the faithful, such as Abraham whom he highlights next.

4.2. Example is Abraham

- a. How did God confirm His promise to Abraham? (vs. 13-14) (Gen 22:17)
God confirmed the promise to Abraham with an oath.

b. What was the result of Abraham's patient waiting? (Heb 6:15)

He obtained the promise.

4.3. God's Promise Secured

a. What are people's highest form of confirmation of a promise? (vs. 16)

An oath

b. What did God do to confirm his promise? (vs. 17)

God confirmed it with an oath.

c. His purpose was to show the heirs of the promise his unchangeable purpose.

Using an oath was a means of emphasizing and underlining the fact that he had an unchangeable purpose.

Short Digression

A. Who are the heirs of the promise? (Galatians 3:29)

Those who belong to Christ.

B. To whom were the promises made? (Galatians 3:16)

Abraham and his Seed.

C. Were the promises made before or after the law came in? (Galatians 3:17)

The promises were made **before** the law.

D. The law and its provisions cannot annul the promises. (Galatians 3:17)

This is an important point. No matter what the law requires, it cannot annul the promise and the promises were made **unconditionally** to Abraham and his Seed.

E. Therefore the curse that came through the law has no bearing whatsoever on the promises of God and have no legal jurisdiction over us.

Back to the main line of thinking from Hebrews.

d. God has shown himself trustworthy by two immutable things. (Heb 6:18)

1. God's promise

2. God's oath

e. What word picture is used to describe a person coming to Christ for salvation described in verse 18?

It's a picture of someone fleeing for refuge, taking hold of a rope attached to a firmly anchored and secure foundation.

4.4. What makes this hope an anchor? (i.e. who is the anchor and where is it anchored?) (Heb 6:18-20)

Jesus Christ has entered once and for all behind the veil in the “temple” of heaven in the most holy place. There he has entered for us as our representative and substitute and therefore it is as firm a foundation as can be.

Key Ideas

- ³⁵₁₇ We need to keep progressing. Stagnation is deadly.
- ³⁵₁₇ Because of the certainty of the promise, we have hope.
- ³⁵₁₇ That hope is anchored behind the veil in the holy of holies in heaven where Christ is now seated. He is a man there demonstrating that other men will follow.

Digging Deeper

- ³⁵₁₇ Make a study of the evidences for truly knowing Christ in 1 John 2
- ³⁵₁₇ In I Peter 2:2 Peter tells us to desire the sincere milk of the word, whereas the author of Hebrews appears to say that the meat of the word would be better. Explain the apparent discrepancy.

Prompts for Meditation

- ⤴ Consider whether you are a milk or solid food person in the Christian life. What can you do to grow stronger?
- ⤴ Think through why it's not good to rehash elementary principles all of the time.
- ⤴ Consider the implications of the fact that God’s purposes have never changed. Prov 19:21; Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; James 1:17
- ⤴ Read through the first six chapters of Hebrews and look for the challenges to endure to the end.
- ⤴ Read through the words to the hymn, The Solid Rock and note the allusions to our Hebrews study today.
- ⤴ Consider the impact of words like fled, refuge and lay hold in verse 6:18. How are these descriptions true and important to you?
- ⤴ Think through the implications of the fact that Jesus is our forerunner. 6:20.

Lesson 8: Hebrews 6:20-7:28

I. Importance of Melchizedek picture of Christ

1.1. He introduces the topic in 5:9-10

1.2. What does he say in verse 5:11 and following that indicates that this is an important concept?

He says it is hard to explain because the people have become dull of hearing. They should be teachers by now, but they are still needing milk. The author longs to go on to this truth, but they may not grasp it.

1.3. Throughout the first several chapters the writer indicates that Jesus Christ is better.

a. Better than the angels - Hebrews 1

b. Better than Moses - Hebrews 3

c. And now, Jesus is a better High Priest, Hebrews 5 and following.

II. Characteristics of Melchizedek Priesthood

Read the background passages in Genesis 14:18-20; Psalm 110:4

2.1. What did Melchizedek do to Abraham when he met him? (7:1)

He blessed him

2.2. What does that imply about Melchizedek compared to Abraham? (7:7)

He is greater because the lesser is blessed by the greater.

2.3. What did Abraham do to Melchizedek? (7:2)

Abraham gave him a tenth of all he possessed.

2.4. What is the significance of the tithes paid?

a. Which tribe was ordained as the priests in Israel?

The tribe of Levi

b. The people of Israel were supposed to pay them tithes. (7:5; Numbers 18:21)

c. In essence who paid tithes to whom in the contact with Melchizedek?

(7:9, 10)

In essence Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek because Levi was in Abraham.

d. How could that be? Levi hadn't been born yet.

Levi was in Abraham at the time so even though he hadn't been born, the picture of Melchizedek receiving from Levi is made by the author.

e. Who then is the greater – Levi or Melchizedek? (See also 7:7)

Melchizedek is greater.

2.5. What is the significance that Melchizedek is without father or mother or genealogy?

- a. He is a priest **forever**, similar to the Son of God (7:3)
- b. The one who has no death record received tithes from those who died. (7:8)

III. The significance of the comparison (7:11ff)

3.1. It implies that perfection (teleosis) could not be attained through the O.T. Priesthood. (7:11) Why is this a valid conclusion based on the argument in verse 11?

Because if perfection had been achieved through the Levitical priesthood, there would have been no need for another.

3.2. What does verse 12 tell you results if there is a change in priesthood?

If the priesthood is being changed then there must necessarily be a change in the law.

3.3. Why was Christ not eligible for priesthood based on the law? (vs. 14) What tribe were priests supposed to come from?

Jesus was from the tribe of Judah and the priests of the O.T. came from Levi.

3.4. This is supported by the fact that the new priest, Christ, is priest on the basis of **an endless life**. (7:16)

3.5. Why was the former commandment set aside? (7:18-19)

a. weakness

b. unprofitableness

The law made nothing perfect. Under the new covenant there is a better hope and the reality of drawing near to God.

3.6 The Old Testament priests were not inaugurated with an **oath** whereas the new priesthood was. (7:20,21)

3.7. Because of this, Jesus is the surety of a **better** covenant. (7:22)

3.8. Why were there many former priests? (7:23) Because death prevented them from continuing and so there always had to be new ones.

3.9 There had been many priests, but Jesus represents an unchangeable priesthood because he is alive forever (like Melchizedek in type). Therefore, what is he able to do?

Save to the uttermost

those who come to God through Him

because He ever lives to make intercession for us.

3.10 What made Him fitting for us? (vs. 26-27)

- a. holy
- b. harmless
- c. undefiled
- d. separate from sinners
- e. higher than the heavens
- f. does not need to sacrifice for his own sins

3.11. Why was there no need to offer sacrifices daily like the O.T. Priests? (7:27)

Because he sacrificed himself once for all. His atonement was sufficient for all time.

3.12. The law appointed men who had weaknesses. The oath making Jesus Christ a priest appointed the Son who has been made perfect forever.

Key Ideas

³⁵₁₇ The declaration of Christ's priesthood proves there has been a change in the law.

³⁵₁₇ His priesthood is of a different order.

³⁵₁₇ The old way of the old covenant is over.

Digging Deeper:

³⁵₁₇ Levi was in Abraham so to speak when Abraham paid tithes. Levi therefore paid the tithes. A similar thing happened when Adam sinned. He represented us in that sin. Similarly Christ represented His people when he obeyed and died in their place. Study these passages.

Prompts for Meditation

³⁵/₁₇ Consider the fact that there was a need for a new priesthood because perfection did not come from the Old Testament priesthood. Think of the implications under the new arrangement.

³⁵/₁₇ Think about the fact that Christ's effectiveness is rooted in an “endless life”.

³⁵/₁₇ Think about the better hope that we have in Christ. Better than what? Why? How?

Lesson 9: Hebrews 8 The New Covenant is Better than the Old

I. The new vs. the old (8:1-6)

- 1.1. How does the author describe the tabernacle where Christ is seated?
It's the true tabernacle that God made and not man. It is in the heavens.
- 1.2. Why would Jesus not be a priest if he were on earth?
He was of the wrong tribe.
- 1.3. Every priest has to have something to offer. What does Christ offer?
He offers himself
- 1.4. He has obtained a more excellent ministry because...
He is the mediator of a better covenant based on better promises.

II. The New Covenant

- 2.1. Why is there a need for a new covenant? (verse 7)
If the first had been faultless there would be no need, so apparently it had faults.
- 2.2. What was the problem with the old covenant according to verse 9?

The people did not continue in it. They failed to keep it.
- 2.3. List the benefits of the New Covenant given in verses 10-12

Put laws in mind and write them on the heart.
God promises to be their God.
They will not need to be taught to know the Lord.
He will be merciful to their unrighteousness.
He will forgive their sins.
- 2.4. The first covenant is old, obsolete and on the way out. (verse 13)

This discussion of the Old vs. the New Covenants is an extremely important one. It is not just a theoretical discussion related to something that has no bearing on us. So before we go on to chapter 9 we will do a New Testament study of the two covenants. Even as Christians, we have a tendency to old covenant thinking. Let's look first at some of these tendencies and then compare the two covenants.

III. Ways in which we have a tendency to adopt old covenant tendencies.

- ³⁵/₁₇ We start to think that we can fully keep God's commandments without divine help, without the need for grace.

- ³⁵₁₇ This results in (or maybe from) lowering the standard and minimizing our failure to comply in order to feel good about how well we're doing. We so want to earn God's approval.
- ³⁵₁₇ We tend to give weight to the minor applications and trivialize the major. (Matt 23:23)
- ³⁵₁₇ We create human rules and traditions. (Mark 7:8; Colossians 2:20ff)
- ³⁵₁₇ We sometimes elevate the law above the clear word of God. (Acts 10:14)
- ³⁵₁₇ We think we can be saved by law-keeping or at least become mature or suppress the flesh by law-keeping. (Galatians 3; Colossians 2:20ff)
- ³⁵₁₇ All of this boosts our pride and promotes judgmental attitudes toward others and actually moves us away from the gospel.

IV. Study comparison between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant

Law, Old Covenant, Flesh	New Covenant, Grace, Faith, Spirit
<p>Heb 7:11, 18; 8:7 It had faults and was weak.</p>	<p>Heb 7:19; 22; 8:6 A better hope, better promises</p>
<p>2 Cor 3:3-11 tablets of stone based on the "letter" glorious</p>	<p>2 Cor 3:3-11; 17, 18 table of the heart based on the spirit more glorious</p>
<p>Galatians 3:9-11; 4:9-10; 4:23-30 law brings a curse slave flesh</p>	<p>Gal 3:9, 18; 4:7; 4:30; 5:1 blessing son spirit</p>
<p>Col 2:14-23 requirements opposed to us shadow cannot bring victory</p>	<p>Col 2:14-23 Substance accomplishes its aim</p>
<p>Romans 7:4-12 death carnal</p>	<p>Romans 7:4-12; 8:4 life spiritual</p>

Romans 9:32; 10:4, 5
works

Romans 10:8
faith

Heb 13:20, 21
makes complete and enables to do God's
will.

Key Ideas

³⁵₁₇ The New Covenant has replaced the old. It is based on better promises. The are promises not conditional on man's ability to keep them.

Lesson 10: Hebrews 9 – 10:18 Old and New Covenant Compared

I. The Earthly and Heavenly Sanctuary and Service Compared (9:1-10)

- 1.1. The first covenant had items for worship and procedures for worship. List some of those things: (vs. 1-7)

Lampstand, table, and show bread. Also behind the veil the gold censer and the ark of the covenant. In the ark was the pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded and the covenant. Above the ark was the gold cherubim.

The priest went into the first part daily, but into the second part only once a year.

- 1.2. What was the Holy Spirit signifying by this? (vs. 8)

The way into the Holiest Place was not yet open and clear because the tabernacle was still standing.

- 1.3. What could NOT be accomplished through these practices? (vs. 9)

It could not make perfect with respect to our consciences.

- 1.4. How do the sanctuary and offerings of the New Covenant compare to the old? (vs. 11-12)

Christ came with a greater and more perfect tabernacle and with his own blood, rather than the blood of bulls and goats.

- 1.5. What does the New Covenant accomplish (vs. 13—15)

It cleanses the conscience from dead works in order to serve the living God. It provides an eternal inheritance for those who are called.

II. Death Required in Both Covenants (9:16-28)

- 2.1. Why is a death necessary for a “testament”? What is the illustration he is using? A testament is like a will. We sometimes say “a last will and testament.” In order for that sort of testament to be needed someone must have died.

- 2.2. Under the old covenant, what all had to be purified with blood? (vs. 19-22)

Nearly everything including the book, the people, the tabernacle.

- 2.3. Under the new covenant, the heavenly realities needed a better sacrifice. (vs. 23)

Because there is no remission of sins without the shedding of blood, the realities in heaven needed a better sacrifice, that is the sacrifice of Christ.

- 2.4. Christ does not need to suffer often because he was able to do something. What was that, specifically, in verse 26?

He was able to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Multiple sacrifices are not needed because his was completely and totally effective.

2.5 What are the serious personal implications from verse 27?

Everyone will die once. Following that death comes the judgment. We don't get "do overs".

2.6 What does it mean that he *bore* peoples' sins? (vs. 28)

He bore our sins in his body on the cross. (1 Peter 2:24) He became sin for us. Once he became sin, that sin was nailed to the cross and crucified there once and for all.

2.7 According to the promise of His coming in verse 28, He will come without something and for a particular purpose. Describe this great happening that we can look forward to.

When He comes back it will be apart from sin. The sin is gone because he is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He is also on the other side of death and so He no longer will be tempted with sin Himself as He was in the first advent.

III. Animal Sacrifices Not Sufficient (10:1-4)

3.1. In verse 1 the law is described as the Shadow and not the real substance. What do you think that means?

The law and the ceremonies of the Old Covenant were pictures of what was going to transpire when Messiah actually arrived and began to carry out the promises of the New Covenant.

3.2. What could these sacrifices NOT do? (vs. 1)

They could not make the worshippers perfect.

3.3. If these sacrifices could have made them perfect, what two results would have come about? (vs. 2)

They would have ceased to be offered and the worshippers, once purified, would have no more consciousness of sins.

3.4. Rather than doing this, they were actually a continual **reminder** of sins. (vs. 3)

IV. Christ's Sacrifice Sufficient (10:5-18)

4.1. According to verses 5 and 6, what did God NOT desire? In other words, what was not really in God's ultimate will?

He did not desire sacrifice and offering and had no pleasure in offerings and sacrifices.

4.2. Rather, Jesus came to do what? (vs. 7)

He came to fulfill God's will. Those former sacrifices and offerings were a shadow. Jesus came to be the reality of what God was really doing.

4.3. According to verse 9, by saying this, Jesus takes away the first in order to establish the second. Takes away the first what? ...to establish the second what? He is taking away the first commandment and the law to establish the new covenant.

4.4. Based on this will, what has happened to us believers once for all? (vs. 10)

Because of this, believers have been sanctified once for all. That means they have been set apart as holy to the Lord, once for all.

4.5. Jumping down to verse 14, what does it say happened to those who were sanctified?

Those who are sanctified have been perfected forever.

4.6. Now go back and look at verse 1. The old covenant could not make the people perfect. But the second covenant does. And if it does, what two things should happen? (See vs. 2)

The new covenant was able to accomplish what the old covenant could not. Therefore the sacrifices should be ended which they are, because Jesus Christ is only offered once. Second, his followers should be released from the consciousness of sins.

4.7 What are your thoughts on the idea that our consciousness of sin should be gone.

This is a tough conclusion to come to because we, just like the O.T. Believers seem to constantly remind ourselves of our sinfulness. But I think what God is trying to tell us here is that sin has been so thoroughly dealt with that we should not carry that constant weight. This doesn't mean we should be careless then and live sinful lives, but it does mean that Jesus Christ bore our sins and they are gone!

4.8 Consider verse 12 *one sacrifice, forever, sat down*. These are important expressions. What is the implication?

These phrases demonstrate the fact that Jesus died once. No more work for our salvation or forgiveness is necessary.

4.9. The New Covenant consists of writing God's laws where?

On our hearts

.... and in forgiving all **trespasses**. (vs. 16-18)

4.10. He concludes this section by saying that where there is “remission” there is no more offering for sins. Remission means that the sins were put away as though they had never been committed.

Key Ideas

³⁵₁₇ This section is key to the entire message of the gospel.

³⁵₁₇ What the old covenant could not do, Christ has done.

³⁵₁₇ It is clearly taught here that if the old covenant had been effective, two results would have obtained: 1) Sacrifices would have ceased and 2) guilty conscience would be gone because the sin issue had been solved.

³⁵₁₇ What the old covenant could not do, the new covenant has done.

Digging Deeper

⤴ Read Exodus 26-30 which describes the original tabernacle.

⤴ Think through the significance of the fact that when Jesus died, the veil in temple was torn from top to bottom.

Prompts for Meditation

⤴ Consider the fact that the priest could go into the holiest place only once a year and now believers in Christ are invited in at will.

⤴ Take additional time to think about the fact that the old rituals could not make the comer perfect. See Hebrews 9:9; Hebrews 10:1-4 And yet what those could not do, the sacrifice of Christ accomplished.

⤴ It's interesting to me that the heavenly originals needed purification as well, albeit with better sacrifices. See Hebrews 9:23

⤴ Meditate on the fact that it is appointed for each of us to die once and then a judgment follows. Is that a threatening thought to you?

Lesson 12: Hebrews 10:19-25 – Response in Faith

I. The foundation of our response (10:19-21)

1.1. Having **boldness** (10:19)

a. What is the basis of that boldness?

The sin question has been settled, the way into the holy of holies has been opened. Therefore we can have boldness.

b. What is the symbolism of the veil and His flesh all about?

The veil in the temple is a symbol of the flesh of Christ that once “torn” makes access to the Holiest Place open and available.

c. Is the boldness presumed or commanded?

Presumed.

d. The boldness is required to enter where?

Christ is our forerunner there, (Hebrews 9:24) and Christ’s presence there is an anchor for our soul (6:19).

The holiest place where only the High Priest could go only once a year. Now we can all go as often as we desire.

1.2. Having a **high priest** (10:21)

How does having such a high priest increase our confidence?

(For study and meditation, look up the references to high priest within the book of Hebrews.)

He is a high priest who was successful in dealing permanently with our sin. He is priest who has proven himself faithful. He understands our infirmities and was tested in all ways just like we are but was successful in avoiding sin.

II. First Response – Let us draw near (10:22)

2.1. Draw near to what? (See also James 4:8)

Draw near to God. We do not need to be afraid of him. There needs to be a reverential awe or fear in that sense, but not in the “afraid” sense.

2.2. What are the descriptors of our drawing near?

True **heart**

A sincere and undivided heart

Full **assurance of faith**

Hearts **sprinkled from an evil conscience**

Here's the discussion of the conscience again. Our consciences have been cleansed.

Bodies **washed with pure water**

Not baptism but cleansing of the Word. See Eph 5:25; Titus 3:5

III. Next response – Let us hold fast the confession (10:23)

3.1. What is the foundation for holding fast?

The fact that he who promised is faithful.

3.2. This seems to be a theme in Hebrews as we have mentioned before.

See 2:1; 3:7; 3:14; 4:14; 6:11; 7:25

3.3. Basically the author repeatedly encourages and exhorts his readers to stick with it. Do you ever feel like you need that kind of repeated exhortation?

IV. Final response – Let us consider one another (10:24-25)

4.1. In considering one another, what is the goal?

a. Provoke or stir up **love and good works**.

b. Not forsaking **the assembly together**

c. Exhort **one another daily**.

4.2. This requires serious reflection on our part.

a. What conditions must be in place for us to be able to fulfill this command?

We need to have love for one another within the body. We need to see each other often and learn to communicate with one another. We need to assemble together much more rather than much less.

b. What are some steps we could take in our church to make this kind of interaction more likely?

Answers will vary depending on the church and perspective of the participants.

4.3. Study carefully some of the other “one anothers” in Scripture that require a vibrant body life.

Romans 12:10, 16, 25

2 Cor 13:11

Galatians 5:13
Eph 5:19;21
1 Thess 3:12 4:18;5:11; 5:15
1 Peter 4:8, 9, 10

Eph 4:2; 32
Col 3:16
James 5:16

Key Ideas

- ³⁵₁₇ Because of the previous truth, we can and should have boldness to enter the throne room of God.
- ³⁵₁₇ We should hang on to our confession and help others do the same.
- ³⁵₁₇ It's all based not on emotional feelings but the anchor of truth.

Prompts for Meditation

- ⤴ Consider the old system where the offerings could not take away sin, “but this man” accomplished everything. See Hebrews 10:11-14
- ⤴ Think about the fact that the Old Covenant depended upon obedience without strength, whereas in the New Covenant all that is needed is provided by God.
- ⤴ Consider the invitation to draw near. Hebrews 10:19-22

Lesson 13: Hebrews 10:26-39 – Exhortation Not to Fall Back

I. The judgment on those who fall back. (10:26-31)

1.1. In the context of the message, what does it mean to sin willfully?

It's in the context of meeting together and exhorting one another because "The Day" is approaching. So we should not sin against one another and against God knowing all that He has done for us and the promises he has made. It involves a turning away from the gospel that has provided for our forgiveness.

1.2. Why would there be no more sacrifice for sins?

There is no other way of salvation than that of through Christ and if we turn away from him, there is no where else to go.

1.3. If Christ is not the answer, what alternatives are available? (vs. 27 & 29)

There are none except a fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation.

1.4. What is a person guilty of when he rejects the solution Christ provides?
(vs. 29)

He is guilty of trampling Christ underfoot and considering the blood of Christ to be a common thing and insulting the Spirit of Grace.

II. Exhortation based on former faithfulness (10:32-38)

2.1. What are some of the evidences the people had made a good start?

They endured struggling, had compassion on the author and accepted the plundering of their goods.

2.2. Why does he ask them to recall this? (See vs. 33 & 35)

So that they do not cast away their confidence.

2.3. What are the results of perseverance?

There is a reward at the end. Those who persevere receive it.

2.4. God has no pleasure in what? (See also Luke 9:62)

God has no pleasure in those who draw back and don't continue forward.

III. Assurance possible (10:39)

See verse 39 as a word of encouragement. Note that true believing results in the saving of the soul and prevents the falling back to perdition. Recall that after a similar warning passage in chapter 6, the author exhibits confidence in better things of his readers -- things that accompany salvation. Those who are truly saved do not quit, give up or fall away. They persevere until the end. So keep persevering! Persevering does not keep u saved. The fact or reality of salvation produces perseverance.

Lesson 14: Hebrews 11 – The Necessity of Faith

I. What is faith? (Verse 1)

Substance = confidence, assurance, giving substance to

Evidence = proof or proving

These are for things hoped for and NOT seen. Romans 8:24 says that hope that is seen is not hope.

II. What is the result? (Verse 2)

The result was that they received a good testimony.

III. Faith is essential because without it what's impossible? (Verse 6)

It is impossible to please God.

What are the two essential beliefs one must have?

He must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who diligently seek him.

IV. After listing a series of people of faith, the writer summarizes in verse 13.

They died in **faith**.

Had they received the promises? No

Having seen them afar off they were **assured**, they **embraced** them and **confessed that they were strangers**.

V. Another summary is given in verse 39.

What did they all obtain?

They all received a good testimony.

How does that relate to verse 2?

That is what verse 2 says. The testimony is the testimony of God about those who have faith.

Had they received the promises? They had not received the promises.

VI. Now back to verse 3 and the survey of people of faith. For each of these write out

1)What they believed without seeing, 2) How they acted on it, 3)What testimony resulted? I've given you the "who" with the verse number in parenthesis.

We(3) We understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God

Abel(4) Offered a more excellent sacrifice. God testified concerning his gifts.

Enoch(5) He was taken away. He had the testimony that he was righteous.

Noah(7) He believed a flood was coming and prepared an ark to save his household. He became an heir of righteousness.

Abraham(8) He obeyed and went to the country where God told him to go. By faith he dwelt in that land always looking for his eternal city.

Sarah(11) She conceived a child and considered Him faithful who had made the promise.

Abraham(17) He offered up Isaac and believed that God would raise him from the dead if necessary because God had promised.

Isaac(20) He blessed Jacob and Esau concerning future things.

Jacob(21) Blessed his children and worshiped.

Joseph(22) Believed that the children of Israel would leave Egypt and made plans for his bones knowing that the release was certain.

Moses(23-28) Moses was hidden by his parents. He refused to be called Pharaoh's son and left Egypt.

Israelites(29-30) By faith they crossed the red sea and by faith the walls of Jericho fell down.

Rahab(31) Rahab believed God and was spared when Jericho fell.

Lesson 15: Hebrews 12 – Appeal for Endurance in the Race

I. Help for the Race

1.1 Surrounded by witnesses – those who have testified—is a motivation for persevering

See 11:2; 11:4 (twice in this verse); 11:6; 11:39

(I don't believe these witnesses are watching us. They are witnesses of God's faithfulness and the reward of persevering.)

In the previous chapter we learned that those of faith receive a testimony. The witness of God toward their life and character and the testimony of others about their life and character. Having lived a life of faith, these people are witnesses of God's faithfulness toward them. Since we have these sorts of people as examples to us, there are things we should do to emulate them.

1.2 Proper Preparation and Attitude

a. Lay aside every **weight**.

b. Also lay aside **sin that besets us**.

c. Run the race with **patience**

(Notice that it is the race that is set before us. Not someone else's race.)

d. Keep your eyes on **Jesus** who finished His race successfully

1.3. Example of Jesus

a. He Himself is the **author** and **finisher** of faith.

b. He saw the **joy** of a successful completion.

c. As a result He **embraced** the cross.

d. He **despised** (looked down upon, scorned) the shame.

e. He concluded His race with triumph.

1.4. What are we to consider as we look at Him and His example? (vs. 3-4)

a. Consider the **hostility** He endured from sinners.

b. Consider that you have not resisted to **blood** in striving against sin.

II. God's Discipline

2.1. Don't forget the exhortation regarding chastening. (vs. 5-11)

a. Do not **despise** it. (vs. 5)

b. Do not be **discouraged** by it. (vs. 5)

c. Because God disciplines those He **loves**. (vs. 6)

Discipline means instruct, train or educate. (The word “chasten” in this passage is the word for child discipline. The word “scourge” in verse 6 means “whip” and is the only place in this passage where that word is used.)

d. God disciplines for our profit that we may partake in His **holiness**. (vs. 10).

e. According to verse 14, without holiness we won't **see God**.

f. Chastening yields the peaceable fruit of **righteousness** to those who are trained by it. (vs. 11) Trained is the word from which we get our word “gymnasium”.

So in love God puts us through child training in order to make us more like himself. He wants us to share in his holiness because without it we won't see God. If we are trained and exercised by God's disciplinary regime, then the peaceable fruit of righteousness results.

III. Our Response (vs. 12-17)

3.1. How are we to respond? (vs. 12-17)

Straighten up! Don't be discouraged. (vs. 5). Instead of feeling all droopy and defeated, straighten up, stand tall and move forward.

Make straight paths for your feet. In this way your lameness, your struggles and temptations and weaknesses won't get worse.

Pursue **peace** and **holiness**. (vs. 14)

Watch out for others also. (see also 4:1; 10:24 and Jude 22, 23)

He especially points out bitterness, sexual immorality and the profane (worldly, godless, unholy).

3.2. How can we respond this way? -- A comparison of two approaches

What are the characteristics of the mountain to which we have NOT come?
(vs. 18-21)

It's a mountain that we may not touch. It is dark and terrifying.

What are the characteristics of the mountain to which we HAVE come?
(vs. 22-24)

He describes it as Mount Zion, the city of the living God. He calls it the heavenly Jerusalem, a great company of angels and the church of the first born and to God

the judge of all and to spirits of just men made perfect. In this place is Jesus and the blood He shed as the perfect sacrifice.

IV. One more warning (vs. 25)

See also Heb 2:2,3; Heb 6:4 ff; Heb 10;

There is no other offer of salvation. This is it. There is an unshakeable kingdom coming and therefore we should focus on the promise of that kingdom and the way of salvation the king provides. (See also 2 Peter 3:10-13)

Lesson 16: Hebrews 13—Miscellaneous Teachings and Conclusion

I. Consideration for Others (Verses 1-3)

1.1. What do you think he means by brotherly love?

Love for one another as children of God. It's a benevolent love that looks to meet needs and lift up others.

1.2. And what does it imply to say, "Let it continue?"

He's assuming it's already in progress

1.3. Verse 2 actually says, Don't neglect *philoxenia*.

Philo = brotherly love

Xenia = strangers (for example xenophobia = fear of foreigners)

See also Romans 12:13; 1 Tim 3:2; 1 Tim 5:10; Titus 1:8; 1 Pet 4:9

God would have us reach out to strangers in a loving and kind way in order to meet their needs. We shouldn't be inwardly exclusive in our love and care.

1.4 What is to be our attitude toward prisoners and those mistreated? How are we doing with that?

We are to care for them because we too are embodied and understand the hardships of life. Therefore we should be caring and attentive to others, especially those in prison and those mistreated for one reason or another

II. Moral Purity (Verse 4)

2.1. Verse 4 might better be worded, "Let marriage be honored..."

2.2. There are two aspects to this issue – both positive and negative. On the negative side God will judge both **fornicators** and **adulterers**.

Both of these words speak to sexual activity and relationships outside of God's design of sex within marriage between one man and one woman.

2.3. On the positive side, God wants marriage and the marriage bed to honored and pure. In 1 Tim 4:3 Paul says that one of the signs of false doctrine in the last days is the forbidding of marriage.

The Christian message never belittles or demeans marriage or sexuality. Both were created and instituted by God for the good of mankind.

III. Contentment (Verses 5-6)

3.1. In our lives we are to avoid **Covetousness** and to be **Content**.

3.2. What is the promise that should be able to help us to avoid these things?

He will never leave us nor forsake us.

IV. Attitude toward our leadership (Verses 7 & 17)

4.1. What do these verses tell us we should do with respect to our leaders?

We should remember them, follow their pattern of their faith paying attention to the outcome of their conduct. Verse 17 tells us we should obey them because their responsibility is to watch out for our souls and will have to give an account of us and our response to them.

V. Doctrinal Stability (Verse 9)

God desires that we not be carried about by every wind of doctrine. (Eph 4:14)
To this end God has given us His Word and pastors and teachers for our edification.

Notice that we are to be established by grace and not by rules about various foods.
See also Col 2:20-23

VI. God's Call to Come Outside (Verses 10-16)

6.1. What is the significance of the fact that the sacrifices were burned outside the camp? See Ex 29:14; Lev 4:16-21

Outside the camp was a place of impurity. That is where things that were unclean were taken, things such as garbage, dead animals and excrement.

6.2. What is the significance of the fact that Jesus suffered outside the camp?
Jesus was taking His place among the cast-off rubbish of mankind.

6.3. Finally, what is the significance of what is being asked of us in verse 13?

We are to go to him there. We are to give up our obsession with being the best and chief and the well-liked and be willing to suffer with Him as one of the cast-offs of the world. 1 Corinthians 4:9-13

6.4. What kind of sacrifices are we to offer God in these verses?
Praise and thanksgiving are supposed to be the sacrifices that come from our lips to God. Just thinking it is not enough. In the corporate worship of the church there should be abundant opportunity to offer these kinds of sacrifices.

VII. Final Thoughts (Verses 18-25)

7.1. What is the basis for the author's request for prayer? Does that have any implication for us?

He says that he has a clear conscience and has a desire to live honorably.

7.2. In his benediction the author asks God to do something significant:

a. Equip them for what? **Every good work.**

Why is this equipping necessary?

Because we don't have it naturally.

b. Working *what* in them?

Working in them what is pleasing to God. In other words God is at work in us to work out that which is pleasing to Him. We are unable to do it apart from that work of God.

c. *Through* what means?

Through Jesus Christ. We have no merit to receive this assistance from God to have worked in us those things that are pleasing to Him other than through what Jesus Christ did on the cross for us.

Summary

I think it would be helpful as we conclude our study of this book to state some of the key principles we've gained from the study and then list the passages that demonstrate these principles. As we do this, we need to remember the primary audience for this book was Jewish Christians living in the first century. We as Gentile believers of the 21st century need to consider the applications that fit our situation.

Principle 1.

Jesus Christ is the final communication of God with man. His sacrifice accomplished everything for us and grants us forgiveness, sanctification and rest. He is the reality of what the Old Testament pictures.

Passages:

Hebrews 1 – Christ, the Final Word, is better than the Angels

Hebrews 2:14-18 Releases from bondage

Hebrews 3:1-5 Christ greater than Moses

Hebrews 5 Christ is the great High Priest; see also chapter 7

Hebrews 8 Christ's Priesthood and Covenant are better than the old

Hebrews 8 New Covenant actually solves the problem – renews the person and gives the Holy Spirit plus the internal motivation to walk in God's ways.

Hebrews 9 The true tabernacle in heaven better than the earthly one

Hebrews 9:26, 27 Christ bore our sin and thus put away sin.

Hebrews 10 Christ's sacrifice able to perfect us and cleanse our conscience, unlike the Old Covenant or any man-made legal system

Principle 2.

Looking anywhere else is futile and endangers your eternal soul. For Hebrews readers it means not returning to Judaism. For us it means not returning to the world or religious works as a means of being saved or growing in the Christian life.

Passages:

Hebrews 2:1-4 Be careful not to drift. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

Hebrews 3:6-12 Don't harden your hearts like O.T. Israel did.

Hebrews 6:4 – 8 It's impossible to renew repentance if you reject the only hope of salvation there is.

Hebrews 10:26 -31 How much worse if you trample on the blood of Christ

Hebrews 12:25 Don't refuse him who speaks for if they did not escape, how shall you?

Principle 3.

We as individuals must be careful to make progress and not give up the ground we've covered. Persevere to the end.

Passages:

Hebrews 4:1-11 Don't fail to enter the rest that has been prepared for you.

Hebrews 4:14 Hold fast your profession

Hebrews 5:12-14 You ought to be teachers by now.

Hebrews 6:1-3 Don't keep laying the foundation of elementary principles.

Hebrews 6:11-12 Show same diligence to the end – the oath to Abraham shows the provision has been made for perseverance.

Hebrews 9:28 To those who eagerly look for him will he appear the second time.

Hebrews 10:23 Hold fast our confession

Hebrews 10:35-36 Do not cast away your confidence. You have need of endurance

Hebrews 11 Consider the testimony of and about those individuals of faith and imitate them.

Hebrews 12:1-2 Run the race patiently and without baggage.

Hebrews 12:3 Consider Jesus lest you become weary

Hebrews 12:7-14 Look on discipline as a good sign and don't be discouraged by it. Pick yourself up and keep going.

Principle 4.

We are responsible to others in the body to enable them to make progress and not fall back either.

Passages:

Hebrews 3:12, 13 Beware lest there be any among you with heart of unbelief. Exhort one another today.

Hebrews 4:1 Let us fear lest any of us come short of the rest we are entitled to.

Hebrews 10:24-25 Consider one another to stimulate toward love a good works. Do not forsake assembling together.

Hebrews 12:15-17 Look carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God.

Key Words in the Book:

Consider: 3:1; 7:4; 10:24; 12:3; 3:7

Perfect (Perfection): 2:10; 5:9; 6:1; 7:11; 7:19; 7:28; 9:9; 9:11; 10:1; 10:14; 11:40; 12:23

Better (New): 1:4; 6:9; 7:7; 7:19; 7:22; 8:6; 8:8; 8:13; 9:15; 9:23; 10:20; 10:34; 11:16; 11:35; 11:50; 12:24