

JESUS IS BETTER

An In-Depth Study in Hebrews

Course Outline

We will be doing an in-depth study of the book of Hebrews. This course is intended to be around 12-14 weeks, depending on how much we are able to cover each week. Here are the proposed sessions:

Week	Passage	Topic
1	Hebrews 1:1-4	Introduction to Hebrews, God's Final Word in His Son
2	Hebrews 1:5 – 2:4	Jesus is Greater Than the Angels
3	Hebrews 2:5 – 3:6	Jesus' Sonship is Greater than Moses' Servanthood
4	Hebrews 3:7 – 4:13	Jesus' Rest is Better than Joshua's Rest
5	Hebrews 4:14 – 5:10	Jesus, Our Great Appointed High Priest
6	Hebrews 5:11 – 6:20	Exhortation to Persevere in Light of God's Promises
7	Hebrews 7:1-28	Jesus, The Better High Priest in the Order of Melchizedek
8	Hebrews 8:1-13	Jesus, The Greater High Priest of the New Covenant
9	Hebrews 9:1-28	Jesus' Sacrifice is Greater than the Temple's
10	Hebrews 10:1-39	Persevere On In Light of Jesus' Sacrifice
11	Hebrews 11:1-40	The Faith of the Ancients in Action
12	Hebrews 12:1-29	Running the Race with Perseverance
13	Hebrews 13:1-25	Concluding Words

Aims

The aim of this course is to help each participant become familiar with the theme, structure, and message of the book of Hebrews. It is also designed for the participants to interact and exegete the biblical text themselves. Participants are encouraged to ask questions, gently disagree with one another (including the teacher!) or raise issues from the biblical text.

Class Work and Homework

Throughout each class, we will be doing a number of exercises that are designed to help you engage and interact with the biblical text. Some of you may be unfamiliar with these methods and may be hesitant at first. You might take a longer time than usual at the start, and that is okay! All of us are



learning together. However, as you keep doing it every week, you will be more familiar and your pace will pick up before long.

You will also be given homework each week to be completed before the start of the next class. It will not be extensive, but the homework is designed get you to be more and more familiar with the book of Hebrews. While it is not compulsory, the more you time and effort you put into it, the more you will gain from this course.

Introduction to the Book of Hebrews

As with any book of the Bible, it is important to know the general context of the book before we take a closer look at the text. Issues such as authorship, genre, recipients, and the occasion of the book affect the way we exegete the biblical text. Without depending on secondary historical sources, how can we find out the authorship, purpose, and occasion of any book of the Bible?

Read Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:1-4, 5:11 – 6:3, 10:32-34, 13:18-25

The Author

There have been attempts to identify the author of Hebrews over the centuries. Early church fathers said that Paul was the author of Hebrews, others have said that it was Apollos. There are others who claim that it was Luke who wrote it. Still others claim that it was Priscilla, or Clement of Rome.

The Author's Relationship to the Recipients

The Spiritual Maturity and Situation of the Recipients

Genre of Hebrews

The Purpose

God's Final Word in His Son

Hebrews 1:1-4

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴ So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. ¹

- One Sentence – Main Clause/Verb?

The emphasis of v1-4

- "In the past" – When? "Our ancestors" – Who?

Examples of God speaking "at many times" and "in various ways"

- "These last days" – When?
- Spoken to us by his Son

¹ [*The New International Version*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Heb 1:1–4.

The importance of the historicity of Christianity

- The Son was appointed heir of all things and made the universe through him
- The Son is the “radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being”

The status and nature of the Son

- What did the Son do after providing “purification for sins”? What does that mean?
- The Son becoming “superior” to the angels? (cf. Philippians 2:5-11)

The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ in his Death and Resurrection

- “Sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven”?

Recurring Themes

Psalm 2

Psalm 110

God’s Speech/Message

Structure of Hebrews

- **Hebrews 1:1-4 – God has Spoken to Us in a Son Who is also High Priest**
- **Hebrews 1:5 – 4:13 – Jesus’ Greater Sonship**
 - Hebrews 1:5 – 2:4 – Jesus is Greater than the Angels
 - Hebrews 2:5 – 3:6 – Jesus’ Sonship is Greater than Moses’ Servanthood
 - Hebrews 3:7 – 4:13 – Jesus’ Rest is Better than Joshua’s Rest
- ***Transition Passage - Hebrews 4:14-16 – Jesus, the Son of God who is also High Priest***
- **Hebrews 5:1 – 10:39 – Jesus’ Greater Priesthood**
 - Hebrews 5:1 – 6:20 – Exhortation to Persevere in light of Jesus’ Priesthood
 - Hebrews 7:1-28 – Jesus is the Better High Priest in the order of Melchizedek
 - Hebrews 8:1-13 – Jesus is the Greater High Priest of the New Covenant
 - Hebrews 9:1-28 – Jesus’ Sacrifice is Greater than the Temple’s
 - Hebrews 10:1-39 – Persevere in light of Jesus’ Sacrifice
- **Hebrews 11 – Perseverance by Faith of the Ancients**
- **Hebrews 12:1-3 – Fix our Eyes Upon Jesus**
 - Hebrews 12:4-17 – Endure God’s Discipline as Sons
 - Hebrews 12:18-28 – We Come to a Better Mountain
- **Hebrews 13:1-25 – Concluding Exhortations**

God has Spoken to Us In His Son

God has always spoken to his people. In the Old Testament, he spoke to them in various ways and means. Some examples of this include God speaking to (1) Adam in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:16ff), (2) Moses through the burning bush (Ex 3:4ff), (3) Balaam through his donkey (Num 22:21ff), (4) king David through the prophet Nathan (2 Sam 12), (5) Israelites through the various prophets. All this culminates in God’s climactic, final, and decisive word through the person and work of Jesus Christ in these last days.

These “last days” refer to the time between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his coming. His resurrection is the beginning of the new creation, which signals the end of the current age. This age is in its “last days” (Acts 2:14-18). There is a finality about God’s spoken word of Jesus Christ to us. So, today we do not look to impressions or promptings or dreams or casting of lots or fleeces for God to speak to us or to make major decisions in life. Those are highly subjective and human beings are prone to misinterpret many things in our lives. The only true objective spoken word to us by God today is Jesus Christ, and we can find that spoken word in the Scriptures.²

This Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of God’s being. In other words, he possesses all the qualities of God. He provided purification for sins and as a result of that, God exalted him to the highest place. Hebrews 1:3-4 then is the title verse for the entire book of

² That is not to say that God cannot and will not speak today. God is able to do what he wishes. My point is that we do not make major decisions based *solely* on those things mentioned.

Hebrews. The Pastor goes on throughout Hebrews to talk about the unique and greater sonship of the Son (1:1 – 4:13), and this Son is also the greater high priest who has made the greater sacrifice (5:1 – 10:39).

As you go through this study of Hebrews, the Pastor makes comparisons between who the Son is and what the Son has accomplished to what has come before in the Old Testament. He constantly emphasises the greater reality that is found in the Son, whereas things in the Old Testament are merely shadows pointing forward to God's Son. Therefore, let us not go back to the shadows, but instead, let us continue to stand firm in Jesus Christ, who is our greater high priest, and the greater Son.

Homework

- Read Hebrews 1:1 – 4:16
- As you read that, highlight and mark any imperatives (commands) in the text. What patterns can you see?

- In Hebrews 1:5-14, indicate what Old Testament passages are quoted by the Pastor.
 - Take the time to read those OT passages and summarise them in one sentence.

- Read Hebrews 1:5-14 and summarise the Pastor's point