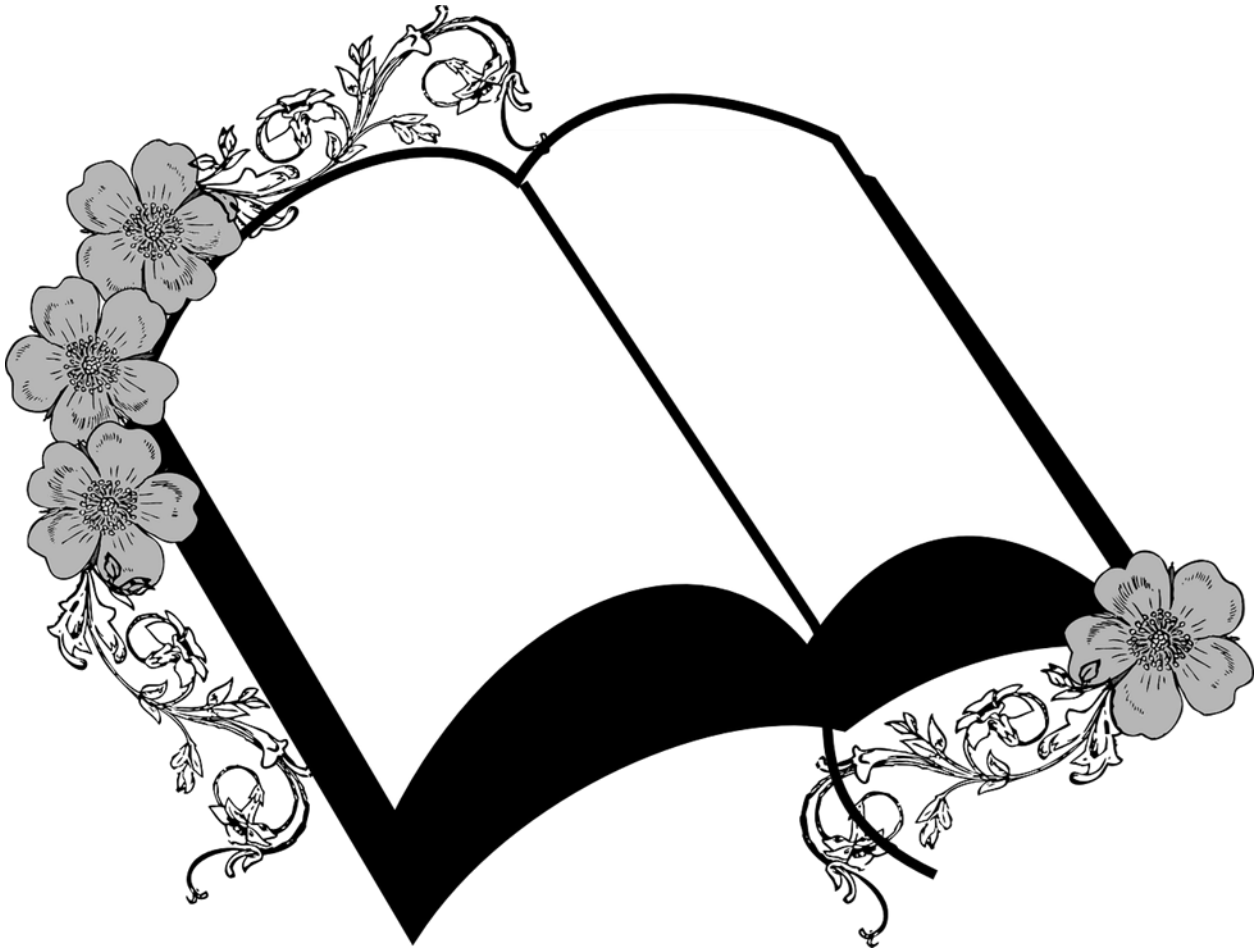


The Book of Hebrews

Study Guide



JESUS IS BETTER!

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

THEME: The Supremacy of Jesus Christ Over the Law of Moses.

WHO WROTE THE BOOK?

1. Authorship is not declared in the book.
2. Inspired by the Holy Spirit – the identity of the inspired writer is unimportant.

WHY WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?

1. Major purpose – to prevent apostasy on the part of Hebrew Christians.
2. To emphasize the Supremacy of Christianity over Judaism
3. The way of Christ: The Better Way.
4. Key word – BETTER. High Priest, covenant, sacrifice, etc.

IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK.

1. Shows proper relationship between the Old and New Testament.
2. Explains more fully certain Old Testament passages.
3. Contains sublime descriptions of the dignity and glory of Christ.
4. Shows the excellence of Christ's sacrifice.
5. Demonstrates the superiority of Christ's gospel.
6. Contains important exhortations.
7. Is of superior literary style.
8. One must think "Jewish." How did the Jews think? What did this letter mean to them when they read it?

WHEN WRITTEN? Prior to AD 70

THE WORD "BETTER" USED 13X IN 12 VERSES.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Heb. 1:4 | 5. Heb. 9:23 |
| 2. Heb. 6:9 | 6. Heb. 10:34 |
| 3. Heb. 7:7,19, 22 | 7. Heb. 11:16, 35, 40 |
| 4. Heb. 8:6 (x2) | 8. Heb. 12:24 |

JESUS IS:

1. Better than the Old Testament prophets – Heb. 1:1-3
2. Better than the angels – Heb. 1:4-2:18
3. Better than Moses – Heb. 3:1-4:13
4. Better than Aaron – Heb. 4:16-8:6

BRIEF OUTLINE OF HEBREWS:

1. Heb. 1:1 – 4:13. Christ, the Better Minister.
2. Heb. 4:14 – 10:18. Christ, the Better High Priest.
3. Heb. 10:19 – 13:25. Christ, the Better Way.

CHAPTER THEMES:

1. Heb. 1:1-4 – Supremacy of Christ.
2. Heb. 2:1-4 – The Great Salvation.
3. Heb. 3:7-8 – Harden Not Your Heart.
4. Heb. 4:14-16 – The High Priest Who Understands Our Problems.
5. Heb. 5:12-14 – You Ought to Be Teachers.
6. Heb. 6:4-6 – The Danger of Departing from the Faith.
7. Heb. 7:11-12 – The Change of Priesthood / Change of the Law.
8. Heb. 8:5-6 – Following the Pattern.
9. Heb. 9:15-17 – Writing A New Will.
10. Heb. 10:24-31 – Willful Sin

11. Heb. 11 – Challenged by the Faith of Heroes from the Past.
12. Heb. 12:1-7 – Looking to the Future.
13. Heb. 13 – Practical Christianity.

OLD COVENANT SACRIFICES VS NEW COVENANT SACRIFICES:

Moses (Old Covenant)

1. Daily. Heb. 7:27; 10:11
2. Repeatedly. Heb. 10:11
3. Shadow. Heb. 8:5, 10:1; Col. 2:17
4. Copy, pattern. Heb. 8:5; 9:23-24
5. Faulty / Temporal. Heb. 8:7; 9:1-18; 10:9

Christ (New Covenant)

1. Once for all. Heb. 9:26
2. Once for all. Heb. 10:10; 9:12
3. True. Heb. 8:2; 9:24
4. Better. Heb. 1:4; 7:19-22
5. Flawless / Eternal. Heb. 9:12-

WARNINGS:

1. Against Drifting. Heb. 2:1-4
2. Against Departing. Heb. 3:12-15
3. Against Disobedience. Heb. 4:11-13
4. Against Dullness. Heb. 5:11-6:6
5. Against Despising. Heb. 10:26-39
6. Against Defying. Heb. 12:25-29

SUMMARY OF THE BOOK

“The covenant of Jesus is better because it is perfect. In His covenant He serves as the better priest who offers a better sacrifice of His own blood. He is the perfect Son through whom we, by following, can have our sins forgiven and become sons of God so that we might partake of the better promises.” Warren Wilcox

CHAPTER ONE

The author gives no introduction and goes right into the theme of the entire epistle: Jesus is Greater! God revealed His will in many ways and at different times through the Old Testament prophets. None of those prophets received the complete revelation of God's will. In these last days (the Christian Dispensation), God has spoken exclusively through His Son. The revelation given through Christ supersedes that of the Old Testament prophets. In this, Jesus is shown to be the greater. Greater even than the angels of God.

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. Jesus is greater than the prophets. Heb 1:1-4
2. Jesus is greater than the angels. Heb 1:5-14

QUESTIONS:

1. How did God speak in the past? How does He speak today?
2. List 7 things that describe the Christ in vss. 2-3. Consider the meaning of each.

What do they prove in these verses?

3. Observe the contrast between Christ and Angels. List 5 points in vss. 5-14 which demonstrate that Christ is superior to the angels.
4. What conclusions can we draw from this chapter concerning Christ, the prophets, and angels?

Something to Think About: What does vs. 14 teach us about angels and mankind?

CHAPTER TWO

The first four verses of chapter two finish the thoughts of the previous chapter. It concludes the discussion on the superiority of Jesus over prophets and angels and therefore we need to give a more earnest heed to the word of Christ. The second division of the chapter quotes Psalm 8 and deals with mankind's place in the scheme of things. He is lower than the angels yet over the natural creation. The last part of this chapter shows Jesus was made in the likeness of men, so that he could open up a way for man's salvation. It shows Jesus as the captain of our salvation and a merciful and faithful high priest who makes reconciliation for all.

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. We must heed the words of Christ. 2:1-4
2. Man's position. Hebrews 2:5-8
3. Jesus is the captain of our salvation. 2:9-18

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we avoid drifting away?
2. How did God remove all excuse for unbelief and neglect of salvation?
3. What does Psalm 8:4-6 (Heb. 2:6-8) reveal about the creation of man?
4. In what ways is Jesus the captain (author, creator) of our salvation.
5. List 8 reasons Jesus was made lower than the angels.

CHAPTER THREE

Having demonstrated the superiority of Jesus over angels and prophets and shown Jesus to be our faithful high priest today, the writer then reveals the superiority of Jesus over Moses. He proceeds to draw a comparison of the present danger of apostasy regarding the Hebrew Christians and the apostasy and unbelief of the Hebrews who came out of Egyptian bondage. Unbelief brought about by hardship led to the demise of that generation and unbelief brought about by hardship was a threat to these Hebrew Christians as well.

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. Jesus is greater than Moses. Hebrews 3:1-6
2. The danger of departure from God. Hebrews 3:7-19

QUESTIONS:

1. What is first stated as the author compares Jesus to Moses?
2. What two illustrations demonstrate that Jesus is greater than Moses?
3. How can we prevent having “an evil heart of unbelief”?
4. How can we hold fast the beginning of our confidence as a Christian today?
5. How does this chapter refute the doctrine of “once-saved, always-saved.”?

CHAPTER FOUR

The Hebrews writer begins with the first of four admonitions: the need to fear because of the possibility of coming short of the rest that remains for the children of God. This admonition is needed because unbelief or disobedience to God's word will keep one out of heaven, even as it kept all but two of the Israelites from the Promised Land. So, just as God rested from his labors in creation, so one day the faithful child of God can rest from his/her labors. Thus, the admonition for the faithful child of God to continue in his/her labors. The word of God (Christ) is then depicted as a two-edged sword who discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. He is also depicted as an all-seeing eye that sees all our actions. Thus, the need for a third admonition: Hold fast to the Christian Faith. Christ is also a sympathetic high priest who suffered just as humanity has suffered, yet without sin. Knowing this, the Christian is encouraged to come boldly before His throne of Grace.

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. Labor to Enter into Rest. Hebrew 4:1-11
2. Christ, the Living Word, and Sympathetic High Priest. Hebrews 4:12-16

QUESTIONS:

1. From what did God rest on the seventh day?
2. What is the rest that remains for the children of God?
3. There are four admonitions and / or encouragements beginning with the phrase, "Let us..." What is the significance of each of these?
4. Why is Christ a fitting High Priest for us today?

CHAPTER FIVE

The Hebrews writer draws a comparison between Christ as high priest and the Aaronic priesthood. Just as God had called Aaron to be the High Priest/ Mediator who would understand the infirmities of those who came to him for intercession, God made Christ to be the eternal High Priest as described at the end of the previous chapter. The priesthood of Aaron lasted until the end of the law of Moses and the priesthood of Christ is eternal. The priesthood of Christ is older than and thus superseded the priesthood of Aaron. This is a concept that the readers should have been able to understand but needed to be reproved for their dullness of hearing.

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. Christ is the Author of Eternal Salvation. Hebrews 5:1-9
2. The Rebuke for Dullness of Hearing. Hebrews 5:10-14

NOTE: Melchizedek is mentioned in Genesis 14:17-24 and Psalm 110. In Genesis 14, Abraham pays tithes to Melchizedek as the Priest of God. Hebrews 7 develops this further.

QUESTIONS:

1. What were the qualifications and duties of the High Priest under the Law of Moses?
2. The High Priest had to first make a sacrifice for his own sin. How does that differentiate him from Christ?
3. What did Jesus “learn” and how did He “learn” it while living as a man?
4. The lesson He “learned” made Him perfect thus enabling Him to do what for man today?
5. What is the significance of the word “ought” in verse 12?

CHAPTER SIX

The chapter begins by expressing their need to grow and move on from the simple first principles of the Christian faith unto spiritual maturity. A failure to so move on could lead to spiritual stagnation, eventually leading many to fall away from the Christian faith. He encourages his readers to faithful endurance stating his confidence in their steadfast character. He further exhorts them with the idea of hope in the promises of God. A hope that is exemplified by the faith of Abraham. A hope buttressed by God's own immutable character. A hope that serves to anchor the soul in a turbulent world of doubt and fear.

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. The First Principle of Faith. 6:1-3
2. The Danger of Apostasy. 6:4-8
3. The Basis for Hope. 6:9-20

QUESTIONS:

1. List 6 foundational principles of the Christian faith.
2. List 5 blessing lost by those who fall away.
3. What is the condition of those who have fallen away and continue in their sins?
4. Upon what two immutable things does our hope lie?
5. Our hope is compared to what? To where does it reach?

CHAPTER SEVEN

The writer now returns to his thesis concerning Melchisedec. Melchisedec was the king of Salem (Jerusalem) and a priest of God. He did not receive his priesthood through ancestry, but by appointment from God. Abraham (and Levi through him) paid tithes to Melchisedec from the spoil taken during the rescue of his nephew Lot.

The writer is using the example of Melchisedec to show that a change in priesthood from the Levitical priesthood to the priesthood of Christ was actually a change back to an older and superior priesthood. With the change in priesthood there would be of necessity and a change in law. The point of this was to show that Jesus, our new high priest is greater than the priesthood of Aaron under the Levitical system.

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. The Superiority of Melchisedec. 7:1-10
2. A Change in Priesthood and Law. 7:11-18
3. The Superiority of Jesus as Priest. 7:19-28

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it significant that Melchizedek was without descent / genealogy?
2. Why is Melchizedek greater than both Abraham and Levi?
3. Why was there a need for a change in the priesthood?
4. List 8 qualities of the priesthood of Jesus. "vss. 20-28"
5. How does a recognition that Jesus' priesthood is greater than the Levitical priesthood help develop the main theme of the book of Hebrews?

CHAPTER EIGHT

Having established the superiority of Christ's priesthood, the writer now begins to explain that the true Tabernacle of God is not an earthly dwelling place but rather that it is in heaven where God and Christ dwell. The Levitical priesthood offered earthly sacrifices, while Christ in heaven offers spiritual sacrifices as he intercedes for man. This true Tabernacle is without fault as compared to the old. This figure represents how the New Covenant is superior to the Old Covenant because it is based upon better promises. He quotes from Jeremiah 31:31-34, to show that this transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant has always been God's design. Therefore, the New Covenant has replaced the Old Covenant.

Note: "Shadow" is defined by Thayer as, "an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object."

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. The True Tabernacle. 8: 1-7
2. The New Covenant. 8: 8-13

QUESTIONS:

1. Where is the "true tabernacle" of God?
2. In what way was the Old Covenant a "shadow" of heavenly things?
3. What was the "fault" with the Old Covenant?
4. What are some of the "better promises" under the New Covenant?
5. What is the primary difference, in essence, between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant?

CHAPTER NINE

In the previous chapter we were introduced to the true Tabernacle as opposed to the earthly Tabernacle. In this chapter, the author continues with that thought by comparing and contrasting the divine services in both the earthly Tabernacle and the true Tabernacle. The earthly Tabernacle no longer suffices today because its services only look forward to Christ's service in the true Tabernacle. The true Tabernacle, the New Covenant, and Christ's high priesthood all took effect at his death, thus signaling the end of the earthly tabernacle, Old Covenant, and Levitical priesthood. Jesus' once for all sacrifice satisfied every aspect of the Old Covenant and its various sacrifices. This all serves to demonstrate the superiority of the New Covenant and its divine service in the true Tabernacle.

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. Divine Service in the Earthly Tabernacle. 9:1-10
2. Divine Service in the True Tabernacle. 9:11-28

QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean that the earthly Tabernacle is but a figure of the true Tabernacle?
2. What were the limitations of the earthly Tabernacle and its services?
3. Compare and contrast Christ's service in the true Tabernacle with the high priest's service in the earthly Tabernacle?
4. When did the New Covenant/ Testament take effect?
5. What appointment does the Hebrews writer say that all men must meet?

CHAPTER TEN

This chapter begins by showing how the Law of Moses was merely a shadow of the Law of Christ. The offerings in the first (shadow) tabernacle were insufficient for the full and complete remission of sins. The True tabernacle, with Christ serving as its High Priest, was superior in that our high priest is without sin and His sacrifice was once-for-all. Under the old sacrificial system sins were remembered year by year, but now no remembrance of sin remains. This perfect sacrifice ended the need for further sacrifice. With the perfect sacrifice being made and sins no longer remembered, Christians can draw closer to God than ever before. This however does not mean that the Christian cannot be lost. The Christian who turns away from God in willful disobedience will be lost. He warns those Hebrew Christians (and us today) that the consequence of apostasy is a fearful thing! He then offers them the admonition to be patient and steadfast in the time of trial. He reminds them of their past faithfulness and expresses confidence in their faith.

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. The Superiority of the True Tabernacle. 10:1-25
2. Consequences of Apostasy. 10:26-31
4. The Need for Patience. 10:32-39

QUESTIONS:

1. Why were animal sacrifices not sufficient?
2. In coming to do the will of God, what has Jesus done?
3. What distinguishes Christ's sacrifice from those of OT priests?
4. What three-fold exhortation is given in Hebrews 10:22-24?
5. According to verses Hebrews 10:35-39, what three things do we need to receive the promise of God?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

This chapter has been called Faith's "Hall of Fame" and such it is! Faith is one thing above all others that would be able to sustain these Hebrew Christians through their trials and afflictions. Faith in the promises of God is based on evidence, especially the evidence clearly seen in how God has always delivered His faithful ones throughout history. He examines faith in the lives of the patriarchs, who had great confidence and faith in God and established Israel as God's own special people and how He preserved that people through famine and their time of slavery. He demonstrates how the faith of the early leaders of Israel brought the nation into the promised land. He reminds them how that through faith the prophets, though persecuted, overcame such and triumphed in the Lord, although many did not live to see it!

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. Faith Defined. 11:1-3, 6
2. Faith Exemplified. 11:4-40

QUESTIONS:

1. What is faith as defined in this chapter?
2. What did these "heroes of the faith" look forward to receiving?
3. How was it "through faith" that each of these "heroes of the faith" achieved success?
4. What did the ones mentioned in this chapter obtain? And what did they not? Why?
5. What does it mean that, "they without us should not be made perfect."?

CHAPTER TWELVE

Those faithful men and women of old who were steadfast in the faith serve as a “cloud of witnesses” to those living in the First Century as well as to those living today. They testify to the victory of faith. Jesus is the greatest example of those whose faith never wavered. He goes on to remind them that the trials and afflictions they were currently enduring were no different than what was endured by the “cloud of witnesses” and that they should view the chastisement of the Lord as a symbol of God’s love. Just like a father chastens his children, God our father chastens us. Using the example of Esau, he also warned of the dangers of becoming bitter under this chastisement. The rest of the chapter draws a comparison between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion, where Sinai represents the Old Covenant with its physical requirements and Zion represents the New Covenant which is spiritual in nature.

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. The Cloud of Witnesses. 12:1-4
2. The Chastisement of the Lord. 12:5-17
3. Mount Sinai and Mount Zion Contrasted. 12:18-29

QUESTIONS:

1. How are we to run the race of faith?
2. What can the chastening of the Lord accomplish?
3. What two-fold exhortation is given in verse 14?
4. How does bitterness toward God come about?
5. List three reasons we should not refuse Him who speaks from heaven:

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

This chapter begins with an exhortation to practice brotherly love in the form of hospitality. Due to the distress Hebrew Christians were facing, many needed material help from their brethren. He reminds them that holy living based upon sound doctrine is the only way to acceptably serve God. He exhorts them to both remember and obey those who rule over them in the faith, i.e. the elders in the church. He closes with requests for prayers on his behalf and with an exhortation toward their continued growth.

MAIN POINTS IN THIS CHAPTER:

1. Brotherly Love and Holiness. 13:1-17
2. Closing Remarks. 13:18-25

QUESTIONS:

1. List five moral exhortations given in verse 1-5:
2. Why can we say that the Lord is our helper?
3. List several religious exhortations given in this chapter.
4. What does the author pray for on behalf of his readers?
5. What is the final appeal made to his brethren?