
Fixing Our Eyes On Jesus



THE MESSAGE OF HEBREWS

SPRING 2022

Class Schedule

<i>Who Are You Listening To? (1:1-4)</i>	April 3, 2022
<i>He Lowers Himself to Elevate Us (1:5-2:18)</i>	April 10, 2022
<i>Consider Jesus (3:1-4:13)</i>	April 17, 2022
<i>He Sympathizes With Our Weaknesses (4:14-5:10)</i>	April 24, 2022
<i>Training the Power of Discernment (5:11-6:20)</i>	May 1, 2022
<i>King of Righteousness, King of Peace (7:1-28)</i>	May 8, 2022
<i>New High Priest, New Covenant (8:1-9:10)</i>	May 15, 2022
<i>Once for All (9:11-10:18)</i>	May 22, 2022
<i>Confidence, Full Assurance, Endurance (10:19-39)</i>	May 29, 2022
<i>Faithful God, Faithful People (11:1-40)</i>	June 5, 2022
<i>The Champion of Our Faith (12:1-17)</i>	June 12, 2022
<i>An Unshakable Kingdom (12:18-13:6)</i>	June 19, 2022
<i>The Same Yesterday and Today and Forever (13:7-25)</i>	June 26, 2022

Resources

Raymond Brown, *The Message of Hebrews—Christ Above All*

F.F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary of the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews*

George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*

Luke Timothy Johnson, *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*

L. David McClister, *A Commentary on Hebrews*

Michael Whitworth, *The Son’s Supremacy*

In 2007, Marty Pickup taught a class on Hebrews at Valrico Church of Christ in Valrico, FL. This resource was invaluable in preparation for this class and can be accessed in its entirety at valricococ.org.

In 2021, Brian Messerli taught a class on Hebrews at Palm Springs Drive Church of Christ in Altamonte Springs, FL and can be accessed in its entirety at psd.church.

In 2019, Erik Borlaug taught a class on Hebrews at Embry Hills Church of Christ in Atlanta, GA and can be accessed in its entirety at embryhills.com.

The **English Standard Version** (ESV) will be used as the basis of our study. Other versions of Scripture will be consulted and notated within our study.

Introduction to Hebrews

“Before you can hear it with your ears, hear it with theirs. Before you can understand it today, understand it back then.” Understanding the original historical context of Hebrews is critical for us to accurately discern the author’s original intent. Asking these five questions will provide a foundational understanding of Hebrews:

Who wrote it?

Scholars are all over the map when it comes to authorship. We cannot be absolutely certain who authored Hebrews. It appears that it was written from Italy¹. There is more evidence to suggest “ruling out” possibilities rather than a definite suggestion. Christian scholar, Origen, aptly and succinctly proposes that “only God knows certainly”. Traditionally, Paul has been a popular choice for authorship, however, there are several contextual clues that casts doubt on that proposition.

- 1) **Identification.** A definitive, Pauline signature, whether a salutation or valediction are conspicuously absent from Hebrews. In all of Paul’s letters, he makes it very clear to fully identify himself, particularly at his greeting and conclusion².
- 2) **Source.** The author appears to not be an eyewitness of Jesus Christ. The author’s claim to have heard the gospel from others, rather than directly from Jesus Christ, is the most convincing argument against Paul’s authorship³. By implication, this claim also suggests the rest of the apostles are also unlikely authors. Paul painstakingly defends his apostleship in most, if not all of his writings, by highlighting his revelation of the gospel was directly from Jesus Christ⁴. In fact, all of the apostles received the gospel message directly from Jesus Christ⁵.
- 3) **Style.** The stylistic approach of Hebrews, particularly argumentation and vocabulary, differ from Paul’s writings. One example is that Paul uses the title “Christ Jesus” about ninety times in his thirteen letters, but it is not used once in Hebrews⁶. One scholar proposes: “None of Paul’s others writings come close to the rhetorical finesse and stylistic polish of Hebrews. Indeed, Paul’s own philosophy of preaching runs completely counter to what we encounter in Hebrews. Paul refused to rely on well-crafted rhetoric (‘the loftiness of words or wisdom,’ 1 Cor 2:1), insisting that the response of his audience be based on their encounter with God’s power through the message; the author of Hebrews uses every

¹ Heb. 13:24

² 2 Thess. 3:17

³ Heb. 2:1-4

⁴ Gal. 1:12

⁵ Mt. 28:18-20, Lk. 24:44-49, Acts 1:1-11

⁶ Whitworth M., *The Son’s Supremacy*, 20.

rhetorical ornament in the handbooks and shows an astounding array of argumentative techniques”⁷.

Martin Luther appears to be one of the first to suggest Apollos as an alternative candidate to Paul for Hebrews authorship. Scripture describes Apollos with significant amount of detail, sounding “almost like a job description for the author of Hebrews”:

Acts 18:²⁴ Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. ²⁵ He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶ He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷ And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, ²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

Johnson hypothesizes an Apollos authorship⁸:

1. Apollos is a Jew, and Hebrews shows extensive knowledge of Judaism.
2. Apollos is from Alexandria, Egypt, a great center of learning and culture during the first century. Advanced studies in Judaism and Greco-Roman rhetoric could be pursued there under the tutelage of Philo, who resided also in Alexandria. Philo, a Greek philosopher, was a contemporary to Paul in the first century. Additionally, the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the OT, was produced in Alexandria. In Hebrews, the author exclusively quotes OT Scripture from the Septuagint⁹.
3. Apollos is learned in Scripture, and Hebrews is filled with intricate scriptural citations and allusions.
4. Apollos learned the Christian message from others, and Hebrews speaks of the message having been received from others.
5. Apollos proves from Scripture that Jesus is the Messiah, and so does Hebrews.
6. Apollos is eloquent and speaks with boldness over against the Jews; Hebrews is a fine example of rhetoric, is bold, and develops an extensive contrast between Jesus and Jewish figures and practices.
7. Apollos was a follower of John the Baptist, and Hebrews has a level of moral and religious rigor, especially concerning repentance.
8. Hebrews speaks of “teachings about baptisms” in the plural, which might be accounted for if Apollos had two baptisms together with instruction received from Aquila and Priscilla.
9. Hebrews’ reference to “those from Italy” would certainly fit Priscilla and Aquila, with whom Apollos had close contact.

⁷ deSilva, D.A., *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Foundation*, 787.

⁸ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 43.

⁹ McClister, L.D., *A Commentary on Hebrews*, 10.

We cannot be 100% certain regarding authorship, however, I believe an argument for Apollos is reasonable, although I would not be dogmatic. “The church has benefited for almost two thousand years from this magisterial work without knowing with any more certainty than we do today who authored it.”¹⁰

When was it written?

Similar to authorship, date of composition is uncertain. It was cited by Clement of Rome in 96 AD. It is hard for me to believe that Hebrews was written after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, because if Hebrews was written after the temple was destroyed, it would naturally make sense for the author to inject this in to his running argument. Additionally, Hebrews speaks of pre-Christian Judaism worship as though it were still being performed rather than a past practice¹¹. Another contextual clue on dating Hebrews is that Christians were undergoing persecution but not martyrdom¹², which could reasonably align before the fall of Jerusalem, early in the Church’s existence. Conservatively, scholars can place the date between 45-90 AD, while it certainly can be argued the date more specifically falling between 45-60 AD. I understand the date to be before the fall of Jerusalem.

To whom was it written?

“To the Hebrews” was coined in the earliest manuscripts in the second century by Pantaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. Pre-Christian, Hellenistic Jews appear to be the primary audience, however, a specific geographical location is unclear. These Christians were at risk of falling away¹³. Contextual clues give us a better understanding of the social situation of the hearers:

1. They were Christians from others’ influence (2:3)
2. They appeared to be Christians for some time (5:11-14; 6:1-3)
3. They had already experienced some persecution and anticipated more, even death (10:32-35; 12:12-13; 13:13-14)
4. They have not yet suffered to the point of martyrdom (12:4)
5. Some among them had been imprisoned (10:34)
6. They were exposed to public abuse and insults (10:33)
7. Some had property/possessions confiscated (10:34)
8. They were capable of following and understanding Greco-Roman argumentation

In what style was it written?

While Hebrews is often considered a “letter”, it is more important to understand that Hebrews is meant to be heard as a sermon “rather than seen as a text, experienced as a whole in its unfolding rather than studied in separate segments.”¹⁴ By definition, Hebrews is not a typical letter, as it lacks distinctive greetings and thanksgivings that are accompanied in a letter-format. Hebrews

¹⁰ Trotter, A.H., *Interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 41.

¹¹ Heb. 7:27-28; 8:3-5; 9:7-8; 10:1-3; 13:10-11

¹² Heb. 12:4

¹³ Heb. 2:1-3; 3:12-14; 4:1, 11; 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:15, 25

¹⁴ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 43.

was written to be read aloud to an audience. The preacher characterizes his work as a “brief word of exhortation.”¹⁵ In Acts 13:15, the synagogue leader invites the audience to share “any word of exhortation”. Paul stands and preaches what we would classify as a sermon. No objections were raised by the actions of Paul, therefore, by implication, we can assume this sermon was a “word of exhortation”. Exhortation can be defined as *parakaleo*, meaning to “come along side of” someone else. *Parakaleo* is able to discern whether his audience needs to be rebuked, built up, or commended, key to an effective sermon.

There are four characteristics that indicate Hebrews should be considered a sermon rather than a letter¹⁶:

1. Throughout the sermon, the preacher uses first person plural grammar (we/us/our), a technique that allows the speaker to identify with the hearers while also asserting authority.
2. The preacher refers to “speaking and hearing” rather than “writing and reading”.¹⁷
3. There is an alternating argumentation and exhortation pattern that allows the preacher to make immediate application to the audience. (Ex: argumentation – 1:1-14, exhortation 2:1-4)
4. The preacher introduces and develops themes in a “wavelike, cumulative effect”.

“Reading Hebrews as a sermon instead of a letter may at first seem like a distinction without a real difference, but approaching the book as a sermon reinforces to our minds that this was originally addressed to a group of Christians who were experiencing a real crisis in their faith, and whose first need was not intellectual explanation but moral exhortation to persevere in the struggle they faced.”¹⁸

Greco-Roman cultural influences

Allusions to Greco-Roman culture are evident throughout the sermon. Athletic competition was an important aspect in Greco-Roman entertainment and culture. Hebrews speaks of training and constant practice of our intellect to discern good from evil¹⁹, clearly a reference to athletic practice. A complete picture of the Olympic games is considered at the conclusion of the sermon: a crowd of witnesses, the runners casting off weights and following the champion who runs ahead of them, and basking in the thrill of victory at the medal podium at the race’s conclusion²⁰.

Learning and education were also important to Greek society. The term *paideia* was an educational system in which the students received a broad learning scope, reaching what society considered to be the epitome of physical and educational achievement. *Paideia* connotes both discipline in the physical sense and education in the cultural sense, with Greek training demanding the preparation of the body as well as the mind. Hebrews utilizes the Greek thought of *mathein pathein*, “to learn is to suffer/to suffer is to learn” when referring to Jesus learning from suffering

¹⁵ Heb. 13:22

¹⁶ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 10.

¹⁷ Heb. 2:5; 5:11; 6:9; 8:1; 11:32

¹⁸ McClister, L.D., *A Commentary on Hebrews*, 58.

¹⁹ Heb. 5:14

²⁰ Heb. 12:1-3

(5:8).²¹ Hebrews combines athletic and educational imagery when “training”, “discipline”, and “endurance” are discussed in the concluding remarks²².

Honor and shame was influential in Greco-Roman culture. One’s reputation before the court of human opinion was important²³. Public affliction, imprisonment, and having one’s property taken by others are all definite forms of suffering that by the world’s standards reveal weakness and vulnerability, as well as shame²⁴. Hebrews links these experiences to shame. A present reality to the hearers was the potential source of ultimate shame in Greco-Roman society—death by crucifixion. Following Christ would link themselves to His shameful death. “His shame has spilled over onto their shame. Adherence to one who has suffered shamefully appears to lead to a life of equally shameful suffering. Such an experience of shame connected to real physical suffering can account for the loss of confidence and the temptation to ‘draw back’ from an initial commitment (10:35-39)”.²⁵ However, they are exhorted to despise the shame the same way Jesus did in order to share in the “glory and honor” to be given to them by God²⁶.

Old Testament influences

Hebrews unquestionably utilizes Old Testament Scripture more than any New Testament writing to extrapolate meaning, interpretation, and commentary concerning the main actors in Scripture: God, His Son, and His people. “The writer of Hebrews appeals to the Old Testament more consistently than any other writer of the New Testament, thus becoming one of the first writers to establish meaning of the Old Testament for the church.”²⁷ Hebrews uses thirty-seven quotations, forty allusions, nineteen cases where Old Testament material is summarized, and thirteen where an Old Testament name or topic is referred to without reference to a specific context²⁸. Guthrie has broken down the Old Testament use in Hebrews in the following manner²⁹:

- **19 quotations & 15 allusions** – Psalms
- **9 quotations & 15 allusions** – Pentateuch (Quotations: three from Genesis, two from Exodus, four from Deuteronomy; Allusions: eight from Genesis, one from Exodus, two from Leviticus, two from Numbers, two from Deuteronomy)
- **3 quotations & 4 allusions** – Isaiah
- **2 quotations & 3 allusions** – Jeremiah
- **1 quotation** – Habakkuk, Haggai, Proverbs, and 2 Samuel
- **1 allusion** – Joshua, Proverbs and Job

Hebrews handles Scripture as voices of the prophets through whom God spoke in the past. And because many of his verbs of introduction are in the present tense, the hearer experience these voices as God’s speech to the present and not simply the past³⁰. The Holy Spirit bears witness

²¹ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 16.

²² Heb. 12:7-12

²³ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 16.

²⁴ Heb. 10:33

²⁵ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 37.

²⁶ Heb. 1:3; 2:7,9,10; 3:3; 5:5; 9:5; 13:21

²⁷ Thompson, J.W., *The Hermeneutics of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 229.

²⁸ Guthrie, G.H., “Hebrews”, in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 919.

²⁹ Guthrie, G.H., “Hebrews”, in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 921.

³⁰ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 23.

through the text “to us.”³¹ Scripture is not a collection of ancient texts that can throw light on the present through analogy, rather it is the voice of the living God, speaking directly and urgently to people here and now³². From beginning to end, Hebrews preaches the Old Testament, serving ultimately to “communicate a forceful message aimed at convincing the hearers/readers to respond by persevering in following Christ and standing with his church.”³³

Greco-Roman rhetorical influences

Hebrews utilizes a threefold rhetoric most notably implemented by Aristotle (*ethos, pathos, and logos*), resonating not only in Greco-Roman culture but also for all-time³⁴. “A mark of effective rhetoric is that it addresses the real situation of the hearers”³⁵

- 1) **Ethos** refers to the character of the one making the argument, that is if the speaker is reliable, demonstrates high moral character, and has a reputation for speaking the truth, this can go a long way towards moving an audience to hearing and responding favorably to the message. *Ethos* in Hebrews is suggested by not only the character of the preacher, but also that of God and Jesus Christ³⁶. Hebrews painstakingly shows that God is reliable and faithful to His promises, so we can trust and find security in Him. Hebrews also illustrates that Jesus has truly reached perfection, becoming the *source of eternal salvation*.
- 2) **Pathos** refers to the feelings of the hearers. Ancient speakers were keenly aware of the power of emotion within their audience. Hebrews develops *pathos* in such a way by appealing to the feelings of the hearers as a way of motivating their actions. Hope and fear are used throughout Hebrews. Positively, Hebrews appeals to the emotion of hope³⁷, while negatively, the emotion of fear is evoked³⁸.
- 3) **Logos** refers to reason or argumentation. Throughout the message of Hebrews, there is a reciprocating pattern between an argument followed by an exhortation. The major *logos* in Hebrews can be described in Hellenistic logic *a minore ad maius*, “from the lesser to the greater”, or in Hebrew argumentation *qal wehomer*, “the light and the heavy”. The argument can be constructed in the following manner: if such and such is the case with “x” (which is a small matter), then it must be even more the case with “y” (which is a greater matter)³⁹. It is critical for the preacher to establish the greater over the lesser, thus the heart of the argumentation of Hebrews is “the supremacy of the word spoken by God through the agency of his Son, Jesus Christ.”⁴⁰

³¹ Heb. 10:15

³² Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 23; Heb 4:12; 3:7.

³³ Guthrie, G.H., “Hebrews”, in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 923.

³⁴ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 14.

³⁵ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 33.

³⁶ Heb. 13:18; 13:23-24; 5:11-6:3; 4:13; 5:9

³⁷ Heb. 6:11; 10:23; 3:6; 6:18-19; 7:19; 11:1

³⁸ Heb. 4:1; 2:3; 10:31

³⁹ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 31.

⁴⁰ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 32.

Argumentation follows in this pattern:

- Although the *angels* are ministering spirits, *Jesus* is God's Son (1:1-14)
- Although *Moses* was a servant in God's house, *Jesus* is the Son and builder of the house (3:5-6)
- Although *Joshua* brought the people into the land, *Jesus Christ* is the one who enters God's rest (4:1-10,14)
- *Levitical priesthood* had to repeatedly offer sacrifices and rituals, but through His death and resurrection, *Jesus, the Great High Priest*, offers an enduring sacrifice (5-10)

Jesus Christ is greater and better than anything offered to us, therefore the salvation offered to us is greater and better⁴¹.

Main Themes

Themes to consider while studying Hebrews:

- 1) **Covenant.** The Old Testament speaks of the superiority of Jesus Christ—to angels, to Moses, the Mosaic covenant, the earthly tabernacle, and the Levitical priesthood. The purpose of the author's use of Old Testament Scripture is to argue the finality of the gospel by contrast with all that went before it, establishing the finality of Christianity by establishing the supremacy of Jesus Christ⁴². All roads lead to an end at Christ. Through Jesus Christ, a new *covenant* is ratified.
- 2) **Accessibility.** Jesus, our high priest, provides *accessibility* to God. Seated at the right hand of the Father, Jesus intercedes on our behalf, allowing us to boldly enter in to the inner sanctum and draw near to God. Through Jesus, access to God is available to mankind in a way that no human could have ever imagined. Jesus Christ perfects us, leading people to God without any barrier or interruption of access⁴³.
- 3) **Faithfulness.** *Faithfulness* is necessary to please God. Faith requires confidence in the unseen realities and trustworthy promises of God. In the same way that he was faithful to the Father, we follow our captain, the pioneer of our faith, Jesus Christ. Like the heroes of faith who lived as strangers and aliens on earth, seeking God's city, so also Christians have "no permanent city but seek a city that is to come". "The way to this city, however, is through the same path run by Jesus, being transformed by the experience of suffering as he was, into the maturity of God's beloved children, through the obedience of faith that progressively opens them to God's fearful freedom⁴⁴".
- 4) **Perseverance.** Such faith produces *perseverance*, which is necessary in the Christian life. "Holding fast" is important if we are to follow in Jesus' steps. We are to embrace the suffering Jesus endured and are warned against a lack of endurance in the face of our own suffering. Masterfully, Hebrews connects suffering, obedience, learning, and perfection.

⁴¹ Heb. 1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24

⁴² Bruce, F.F., *The New International Commentary of the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 29.

⁴³ Bruce, F.F., *The New International Commentary of the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 29.

⁴⁴ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 59.

Words and Phrases

Repetition of words and phrases are a common rhetorical tool. While this list is in no way exhaustive, consider the following words and phrases while reading through Hebrews:

- “Better”
- “Great/Greater”
- “Perfect”
- “Eternal/Forever”
- “Let us”
- “Therefore”
- “Faith/Faithful”
- “Covenant”

With Jesus being the central focus of the sermon, Hebrews uses common titles we typically see in Scripture such as “Jesus”⁴⁵, “Christ”⁴⁶, “Jesus Christ”⁴⁷, “the Son”⁴⁸, “Son of God”⁴⁹, and “Lord”⁵⁰. However, the following are titles of Jesus that are either rarely used in the New Testament or unique to Hebrews:

- “heir” (1:2)
- “the firstborn” (1:6)
- “the great shepherd of the sheep” (13:20)
- “the pioneer, captain, champion” (2:10; 12:2)
- “perfecter” (12:2)
- “sanctifier” (2:11)
- “apostle” (3:1)
- “builder of God’s house” (3:3)
- “cause of salvation” (5:9)
- “forerunner” (6:20)
- “guarantor” (7:22)
- “minister” (8:2)
- “mediator” (8:6; 12:24)

These designations reveal two main emphases: “On one side, Jesus is the one who brings salvation to humanity from God (apostle, cause, sanctifier, shepherd, minister, builder, guarantor). On the other side, Jesus is also a human being who reaches first what all seek (heir, firstborn, pioneer, forerunner, perfecter). As the one who accomplishes both, he is preeminently the ‘mediator.’”⁵¹

Reading through Hebrews you will quickly notice sensory language. The *smell* of sacrifices is implied⁵², *touch* is indicated with contrasting Mount Sinai to Mount Zion⁵³, *taste* is metaphorical⁵⁴, and *bearing* of the listeners is frequently mentioned in Hebrews⁵⁵. Perhaps the most important, the

⁴⁵ Heb. 2:9; 3:1; 4:14; 6:20; 7:22; 10:19; 12:24

⁴⁶ Heb. 3:6, 14; 5:5; 6:1; 9:11, 14, 24, 28

⁴⁷ Heb. 10:10; 13:8, 21

⁴⁸ Heb. 1:2, 5, 8; 3:6; 5:5, 8; 7:28

⁴⁹ Heb. 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29

⁵⁰ Heb. 1:10; 2:3; 7:14; 13:20

⁵¹ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 49.

⁵² Heb. 13:10-16

⁵³ Heb. 12, 18, 20

⁵⁴ Heb. 5:12-14; 6:5

⁵⁵ Heb. 2:1; 3:7; 4:7; 5:11; 12:19

preacher appeals to the sense of *sight*, asking the readers to “behold”, “consider”, and “see”⁵⁶. Using oral discourse to portray visual scenes with word-pictures was a Greek rhetorical technique called *ekphrasis*, or description, and Hebrews uses this effectively, particularly in 9:1-5 and 12:18-24⁵⁷.

Outline of Hebrews

Introduction (1:1-3)

1. Jesus is better than angels (1:4-2:18)
 - a. *Warning Passage #1* (2:1-4)
2. Jesus is better than the Law of Moses (3:1-10:18)
 - b. *Warning Passage #2* (3:7-4:13)
 - c. *Warning Passage #3* (5:11-6:8)
3. Call to faith and endurance (10:19-12:29)
 - d. *Warning Passage #4* (10:26-31)
 - e. *Warning Passage #5* (12:25-29)

Conclusion (13:1-25)

Why was it written?

Is it worth it? Is it worth it to continue to follow King Jesus? Hebrews was originally written and preached to a group of Christians who were asking this exact question. “Hebrews is a sermon prepared in response to a crisis of faith.” They were in jeopardy of giving up on Jesus, drifting back to pre-Christian Judaism. Hebrews was written to encourage Jewish Christians to be faithful to Jesus Christ—to hold on to the One who is better. Their initial dedication to Christ is challenged and they stood at a crossroad of faith: either backtrack to Moses or double down on King Jesus.

Have you ever had a crisis of faith? Have you ever had events and circumstances in your life that caused you to doubt your loyalty to Jesus? Have you ever had moments where you feel like you are spiritually drifting away? While we may not be tempted to go back to the Old Law, the world offers so much on this side of eternity that easily distracts us from Jesus Christ. The sermon of Hebrews speaks this message to us today: a life without Jesus is no life at all. No matter what you are going through, enduring it with Jesus makes it infinitely better, for He is infinitely better⁵⁸. Hebrews invites us to consider, see, and behold Jesus, the pioneer, perfecter of our faith, standing as champion, the resurrected Savior. May God bless our study.

⁵⁶ Heb. 2:9; 3:1; 7:4; 12:2, 3; 12:21

⁵⁷ Johnson, L.T., *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*, 9.

⁵⁸ Whitworth M., *The Son's Supremacy*, 18.

Who Are You Listening To? (1:1-4)

Introduction Questions

1. Precise Hebrews authorship and date of composition is not 100% certain (see *Who wrote it? and When was it written?* in the introduction material). Do these uncertainties matter and why should we believe Hebrews is definitively Scripture?
2. In 13:22, the preacher appeals to the audience to “bear with my brief word of exhortation”. In Acts 13:15, the synagogue leader invites the audience to share “any word of exhortation”. Within the context of Hebrews and Acts 13, how would you define “word of exhortation”?
3. I believe that the author intended for the audience to receive and hear Hebrews as a sermon in letter format rather a true letter (see *In what style was it written?* in the introduction material). Why did the author write a sermon to his readers instead of a letter?
4. What do we know about the original audience (see *To whom was it written?* in the introduction material)?

Thinking Through the Text

5. The seventy-two Greek words in 1:1-4 complete a single sentence built around “God spoke” and “Jesus sat”. As the introduction to his sermon, what is the preacher attempting to establish as God’s main message to his people?
6. How did God speak in the past “at many times (portions)” and “in many ways”?
7. How does God speak to us today? What does the preacher suggest with “last days”?
8. List the seven descriptions of Jesus. What can you conclude from these descriptions?

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Thinking Through the Text

5. The seventy-two Greek words in 1:1-4 complete a single sentence built around “God spoke” and “Jesus sat”. As the introduction to his sermon, what is the preacher attempting to establish as God’s main message to his people?
6. How did God speak in the past “at many times (portions)” and “in many ways”?
7. How does God speak to us today? What does the preacher suggest with “last days”?
8. List the seven descriptions of Jesus. What can you conclude from these descriptions?

He Lowers Himself to Elevate Us (1:4-2:18)

Greater (1:4-14)

1. The preacher's first undertaking is to convince the audience that Jesus is greater than the angels (1:4-14). Why did the Son's superiority to the angels need to be argued in the first place? (Deut. 33:2; Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2)

2. Given their historical significance in Judaism, how might the original Jewish audience viewed angels? (Gen. 3:24; Gen. 16:7-13; Exod. 3:2-4; Num. 22:22-35; Judg. 6:11-23; 13:3-23; 2 Kgs 19:35)

3. What about Jesus might suggest that he was lower than the angels?

4. What does it mean by the *name* Jesus has inherited is more excellent than angels?

5. A common, first century rhetorical technique called "a string of pearls" or "chain quotations" is implemented in 1:4-14. Give a brief description of each quotation in its original context and explain why you think it was used in the preacher's main argument: the Son is better than angels.
 - i. Ps. 2:7

 - ii. 2 Sam. 7:14

 - iii. Deut. 32:43

 - iv. Ps. 104:4

 - v. Ps. 45:6-7

 - vi. Ps. 102:25-27

 - vii. Ps. 110:1

The Warning (2:1-4)

6. How does the preacher bridge the theological argument (1:4-14) with the first warning passage in his sermon (2:1-4)?
7. What are some ways we can drift away from the Gospel message? How can we avoid drifting?

The Why (2:5-13)

8. The preacher uses Ps. 8 to comment on man's place in the *world to come*. Given the context of this psalm, is it about mankind, the Messiah, or both? Based upon the author's argument, what is suggested regarding man's place in the *kingdom that cannot be shaken*? In 2:8-9, what do we "not yet see" and what do "we see"?
9. How did Jesus bring many sons and daughters to glory? For a couple minutes, meditate on the fact that Jesus is *not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters*.

The Blessings (2:14-18)

10. Based on 2:16, who are the beneficiaries of these blessings?
11. Because Jesus *shared in flesh and blood* and was *made like his brothers in every respect*, he chose to identify with us. Based on 2:14-18, list the blessings that are given to us, his brothers.

Consider Jesus (3:1-4:13)

Consider (3:1-6)

1. In this section, the preacher invites listeners to consider Jesus and his superiority to Moses. Based on 3:1-6, what are some similarities and differences between Jesus and Moses? Why is it important for the preacher to compare Jesus and Moses?
2. What is the function of a priest? An apostle? How does Jesus meet the requirements of priest and apostle? (see 2:14-18)
3. Review the following OT passages: Deut. 34:10-12; Exod. 34:29-35; Num. 12. How was Moses regarded not only in the history of Judaism but also in the eyes of Yahweh?
4. What is implied in the concluding sentence of this section: “And we are his house *if* indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope”?

Guarding Hearts (3:7-19)

5. In the exhortation section (3:7-4:13), the preacher appeals to the example of Israel in the wilderness from Psalm 95, where he extrapolates present day application (the preacher takes the word “today” in this psalm literally). What significant event in Israel’s history is the preacher alluding to in this Psalm (Exod. 17:1-7)? Why would this story resonate with the original audience? Does this story resonate with you?

6. Based on the original audience's circumstances, what are some ways their hearts could be hardened by sin's deception? How can we avoid an evil, unbelieving heart?

7. Consider the series of rhetorical questions (3:16-18). What are three ways the author describes Israel's unfaithfulness? Based on the context, what was the primary reason they were unable to enter "his rest"?

Rest (4:1-10)

8. The exhortation now moves from Israel's past failures to the present-day New Testament church. The OT does refer to the Promised Land as rest (Deut. 12:9; 1 Kgs. 8:56). What "rest" is the author referring to? (think of David's location when he writes Psalm 95).

9. Define "united by faith" in the context it was used in 4:2.

10. Was Canaan truly a land of rest? Why or why not?

Powerful Words (4:11-13)

11. The wilderness generation was unable to enter the rest because of the hardening their hearts. They were unable to believe God was true to his word, not willing to faithfully trust God's powerful words. List 5 truths implied about the word of God.

12. How does the word of God prepare us today for future entrance into his Sabbath rest?

He Sympathizes With Our Weaknesses (4:14-5:10)

He Sympathizes (4:14-16)

1. The high priest was never referred to as the *great* high priest. What might the author be suggesting by calling Jesus the *great* high priest?
2. “Sympathize” or *sympatheo* in Greek, conveys the idea “to suffer with”. Why is Jesus qualified to sympathize with our weaknesses? (2:18; Is. 53:4). Can you think of specific situations in his life when he experienced the “human condition”?
3. According to 4:14 and 4:16, what two things are made possible by Jesus’ priesthood?
4. What makes the throne of God appear inaccessible (Ps. 9:4, 7-8; Is. 6:1-6)? With Jesus sitting at the right hand, how does the author in 4:16 describe God’s throne?

Called by God (5:1-4)

5. The original, Jewish audience would never have anticipated the king of Israel to also reside as the high priest. Was there ever a time in Israel’s history when kings attempted to hold both offices? What was the result? (1 Sam. 13:8-14; 2 Chr. 26:16-21)
6. Why would a 1st century, Jewish audience have difficulty believing that Jesus was the “great high priest”?

7. What is the role of a priest? What are two qualifications that a priest must meet?

Priest Forever (5:5-10)

8. What qualifies Jesus to be our high priest?

a.

b.

c.

9. Hebrews utilizes the Greek thought of *mathein pathen*, “to learn is to suffer/to suffer is to learn” when referring to Jesus learning from suffering. How did Jesus learn “obedience through what he suffered”?

10. If Jesus was perfect, sinless, without any flaws, why did he have to be made perfect? What was the catalyst that led to his perfection?

Training the Power of Discernment (5:11-6:20)

Growth (5:11-6:3)

1. Until this section, he has warned the audience of potential dangers (“pay much closer attention” 2:1; “consider Jesus” 3:1; “do not harden your hearts” 3:8; “take care” 3:12; “let us fear” 4:1; “strive to enter that rest” 4:11; “hold fast to our confession” 4:14). The author interrupts his main argument, that Jesus is the great high priest, to directly address a specific, past failure. How do you know if you are “dull of hearing” (2 Tim. 3; 4:1-4; Isa. 5:20)?

2. What are some practical ways we can train the power of discernment to distinguish good from evil?

3. What are the 6 basic principles or “elementary doctrine of Christ”? In your own words, explain these principles.
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.

Impossibility (6:4-8)

4. The author describes that he is speaking about someone who was once “enlightened”, “tasted the heavenly gift”, “shared in the Holy Spirit”, “tasted the goodness of the word of God”, and “tasted the powers of the age to come”. Of whom is the preacher speaking about?

5. What does the preacher mean by those who have “fallen away”? Is the preacher convinced this is the situation that the audience has reached in their spiritual lives (Heb. 3:12; 4:11; 10:26-27)?

6. In the immediate context, what does the author mean by “impossible” (Heb. 6:18; 10:4; 11:6)? Why is it impossible to restore those who have fallen away again to repentance (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12)?

Better Things (6:9-12)

7. Although it was necessary to warn the audience of spiritual consequences they faced if they continued down the path of spiritual immaturity, he commends their participation in “better things”. What things were they involved with that belonged to salvation (Heb. 6:10; 10:32-34)?
8. How do we develop and possess “the full assurance of hope until the end”?

Certain Promises (6:13-20)

9. Compare and contrast the example of the Israelites in the wilderness in Ch. 4-5 versus Abraham in Ch. 6. What do we know about the oath made to Abraham (Gen. 15:7-21)? What does this tell us about the faithfulness of God?
10. What do we know about the faithfulness of Abraham (Rom. 4:18-25; Heb. 11:8-19; James 2:21-23)? Did he ever fully experience the promises?
11. Swearing by an oath is a prominent point in this sermon (Heb. 3:11; 5:6,10, Ps. 110:4; 6:13-14). Why did God need to swear by an oath?
12. The author argues that the Christian’s refuge is in “two unchangeable things”. What are those two unchangeable things?
13. What are some characteristics of an anchor? How does an anchor compare to our hope set before us? Who are we anchoring up to?

King of Righteousness, King of Peace (7:1-28)

King of Righteousness & Peace (7:1-10)

1. Other than Hebrews, Melchizedek is only mentioned in Gen. 14:17-20 and Ps. 110:4. In your own words and looking at their immediate context, summarize these two passages.
 - a) Gen. 14:
 - b) Ps. 110:
2. Jesus' priesthood is after the "order of Melchizedek". Define "order".
3. Define the title "Melchizedek". How does his title indicate an obvious parallel to Jesus (Ps. 45:6-7; Isa. 9:6-7; Isa. 11:6-10)?
4. What are two major characteristics of Melchizedek's priesthood that differ from the Levitical priesthood?
5. Melchizedek's superiority over Abraham and the Levitical priesthood is emphasized in 7:4-10. The author invites the audience to "see how great this man was". What are three reasons why Melchizedek was great?

Indestructible Life (7:11-19)

6. Why was perfection not attainable under the law (Gal. 2:16; 3:10-13; Rom. 3:20, 28)? If the law and Levitical priesthood were able to perfect us, then what would that imply about a new covenant and priesthood?

7. If the law was imperfect, what would that suggest about the Levitical priesthood? Why? If God was appointing a new order of priest, not from the tribe of Levi, what does this imply about the old covenant?
8. What enables Jesus to be priest forever (Rom. 6:9)? How is this an improvement over the Levitical priesthood?
9. In Heb. 7:18-19, the preacher uses a common, Greek sentence structure: “on the one hand...but on the other hand”. When Greek writers used this phrase, the emphasis was always on “the other hand”. In the climactic point in this section, what is the author specifically trying to emphasize about the forever priest and the new covenant (2:14-18; 4:14-16; 5:7-10; 6:19-20)?

Permanent Priesthood (7:20-28)

10. How can we be certain that the new covenant and the new priesthood are permanent?
11. What is the role of a guarantor (Gen. 43:1-14; Heb. 6:19)? How is Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant?
12. According to 7:25, why are we able to “draw near to God through him”?
13. List five characteristics of our high priest (7:26).
14. What are three unique truths that elevate Jesus’ priesthood over the Levitical priesthood (7:27-28)?

New High Priest, New Covenant (8:1-9:10)

Copies & Shadows (8:1-6)

1. Jesus, our high priest, is depicted in 8:1 sitting in the heavenly tabernacle. What is he sitting on and why is he sitting rather than standing (Heb. 1:1-4; Heb. 7:27; Zech. 6:13; Jer. 30:21)? How does this compare with a Levitical high priest ministering in the tabernacle?
2. Describe general characteristics of a copy and shadow. What does the author imply when he defines the Mosaic system, specifically the tabernacle, as a “copy and shadow of the heavenly things”?
3. As “minister in the holy places” why is Christ’s ministry much more excellent than the old ministry?

New Covenant (8:7-13)

4. Define covenant (Deut. 29:10-15; Gen.15:7-21). What are some modern-day examples of a covenant?
5. What was wrong with the first covenant and why was it considered to be faulty (Heb. 7:11, 19; 8:9; 10:4)?

6. Jer. 31:31-34, a prophecy of the new covenant, is the longest Old Testament quotation in the New Testament. List characteristics of the new covenant. After considering the blessings of the new covenant, why does the author omit the curses of the new covenant? After enumerating the blessings of the new covenant, why is the first covenant considered to be obsolete?

Keep Your Distance (9:1-10)

7. Paradoxically, the tabernacle allowed people to live in God's presence but also separated them from his holiness at the same time. How would you describe access to God under the old covenant? Why was this the case?
8. Why does the author examine the Old Testament tabernacle rather than the temple in order to demonstrate the old covenant's inadequacies? Was the tabernacle structure designed by God to last forever (Jer. 3:16-17)?
9. In the old arrangement, what limitations were placed on gifts and sacrifices and how does this compare to the new arrangement (Ps. 51:10, 16-17; Micah 6:6-9; Rom. 8:1; 1 Pet. 3:21)?

Once For All (9:11-10:18)

Once For All (9:11-14)

1. Compare and contrast the tabernacle under the old relationship (9:1-10) versus the tabernacle under the new relationship.
2. Define conscience. What was incomplete regarding forgiveness offered under the old relationship (Heb. 8:12; 9:9-10; 9:14; 10:1-4)?

Mediator of a New Covenant (9:15-22)

3. Given what you know about covenants (e.g. Gen 15), what qualifies Jesus to be mediator of a new covenant? Who is he mediating on behalf of? What are the characteristics of the new covenant?
4. What was absolutely necessary to confirm the new covenant? Forgiveness (Mt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7)?

The Perfect Sacrifice (9:23-28)

5. What makes Jesus the better sacrifice?
6. When did Christ enter into the holy place not made with hands?
7. How many times does man die? How many times is man judged? How many times is Christ offered?

8. Based on the immediate context (cf. 9:26-28), what are we needing deliverance from (1 Cor. 15:54-57; Rom. 6:8-13; 23)?

9. To those who have joined themselves to Christ, what are they eagerly waiting for (Rom. 8:23-25; Phil 3:20-21)?

Do Your Will (10:1-10)

10. What was the primary purpose of Jesus coming into the world, dwelling with humanity, and becoming humanity (Mt. 20:28; Jn. 6:51; 10:10; 12:27; 1 Tim. 1:15)? How devoted was Jesus to this task (1 Pt. 2:24)?

For All Time (10:11-18)

11. How many sacrifices were required under the old relationship? New relationship? What task was completed, never to be required again under the new relationship?

12. Compare the Levitical priests “standing” versus Christ “sitting” (cf. Heb. 1:3; 8:1). What is implied with “standing” and “sitting”?

The following chart is an excellent summary of the similarities & differences of the old and new systems¹:

Common Features	Old	New
High priests	Replaced because of death (7:23)	One high priest who lives eternally (7:24)
The holy place	Earthly tabernacle (9:1)	Heaven itself (9:24)
Blood (sacrificial death)	Of animals, not human (9:25)	Of Christ, human (9:12)
Sacrifices	Offered repeatedly, yearly (9:25)	Offered once (9:26), eternal (9:12)
Effect	Outward cleansing (9:9,13)	Cleanses the conscience (9:14)

¹ McClister, L.D., *A Commentary on Hebrews*, 327.

Confidence, Full Assurance, Endurance (10:19-39)

Confidence & Assurance (10:19-25)

1. The important verbal signpost, “therefore” is inserted in 10:19, signifying major shift in the sermon, moving from the deep, “meaty” argumentation of 7:1-10:18 to the exhortation that continues until the end of the sermon (moving from “here is what is true” in 7:1-10:18, to “here is how we should live” in 10:19-13:25). What two conclusions (“we have” statements, cf. 10:19 & 21) are suggested based upon the argumentation section?

2. List the three “let us” statements (cf. 10:22-24). Explain in your own words what each of these statements mean.
 - i.

 - ii.

 - iii.

3. What are we drawing near to God with (Ps. 51:6, 10; Joel 2:12-13)? Consider how this corresponds with the new covenant/relationship mentioned in Hebrews 8-10.

4. Given what you know about the immediate context and the circumstances the original audience were facing, what was the author’s original intended use for Heb. 10:25? When has a Christian violated this exhortation?

A Fearful Thing (10:26-31)

5. In the context of the message of Hebrews as a whole, what does he mean by “sinning deliberately” (cf. 6:4-8; Num. 15:30-31)?

6. What are consequences of sinning deliberately? Compared to the old covenant, how would you categorize the severity of sinning deliberately under the new covenant?

7. Based upon Heb. 5:11-6:3 and the immediate context, what are some practical ways we can prevent the early stages of sinning deliberately?

No Shrinking Back (10:32-39)

8. What kind of difficulties did the original audience already endure? How would reminding a brother or sister of past spiritual success help to encourage perseverance?

9. When confidence is united with obedience to “the will of God” (cf. 10:36), what is produced?

10. “Hebrews does not allow for a neutral space into which the listeners can retreat” (Koester, 468). Compare and contrast “shrinking back” (cf. 2:1, 3:12, 6:6, 4:1) versus perseverance?

Faithful God, Faithful People (11:1-40)

1. In your opinion, why does the preacher place the chapter of faith precisely in this section of the sermon?
2. List word or phrases that are repeated throughout this chapter.
3. Hebrews 11 is arguably one of the most familiar chapters in all of Scripture. What is something that you have never thought of or noticed before within this chapter?
4. Compare the following translations of 11:1. Which translation best defines faith?
 - a. Now faith is the _____ of things hoped for, the _____ of things not seen. (ESV)
 - b. Now faith is the _____ of what is hoped for, the _____ of what is not seen. (HCSB)
 - c. Now faith is _____ in what we hope for and _____ about what we do not see. (NIV)
 - d. Now faith is the _____ of things hoped for, the _____ of things not seen. (NKJV)

5. What does the author suggest by “commended” (cf. 11:2, 4, 5, 39)? What did those who did not receive God’s approval lack (cf. 3:16-4:3)?

6. The author states the following:

- a. “By faith we *understand* that the universe was created by the word of God...” (11:3)
- b. “By faith...since she (Sarah) *considered* him faithful who had promised.” (11:11)
- c. “By faith...he (Abraham) *considered* that God was able...” (11:19)

Is Biblical faith a “blind leap of faith”? Based on these verses, what does the preacher imply as an essential component to Biblical faith? Can you think of other ingredients necessary for Biblical faith?

7. Given the tone and language implemented in 11:6, how important is faith? If someone wants to draw near to God, what *must* a person believe?

8. All of these characters of faith not only lived by faith, they also died in faith. Even though they were unable to fully experience promises, they were able to “see and welcome them from afar”. Based on 11:13-16, what are characteristics of faithful people?

The Champion of Our Faith (12:1-17)

Fixing our Eyes on Jesus (12:1-3)

1. The imagery of a race is vividly depicted in this chapter (cf. Acts 20:24, 2 Tim. 4:7-8, 1 Cor. 9:24-27). Carefully examine the text and describe the scene with as much detail as you can.
2. Describe the type of race and how we are to run this race. What is the difference between “weight” and “sin” (cf. 5:11-14 & 6:4-8)?
3. Why are the “spectators” referred to as “so great a cloud of *witnesses*” (cf. 11:2, 4, 5, 13, 26, 39, 40) ?
4. Jesus is depicted as the founder (can be translated as “champion”, “pioneer”) and perfecter of *our* faith. Given what we know about faith in the previous chapter, how does Jesus champion and perfect our faith?
5. What was the “joy set before” Jesus (Jn. 16:20-24; 17:13)? What does it mean that Jesus “despised the shame” of the cross (“despised” can be translated as “disregarded”)?

Enduring Discipline (12:4-11)

6. The preacher has previously described the familial relationship with God through Jesus Christ (cf. 3:1, 6; 2:10-13). Given what you know about the context of Proverbs, what is the main point of this quotation in Prov. 3:11-12?

7. “Discipline” (*paideia*) can be translated as “education” or “training”. What are the risks of not receiving *paideia*? Benefits?

Response to Discipline (12:12-17)

8. What should our response be to discipline (cf. 12:12-13)?

9. What is a “root of bitterness” (Deut. 29:18-21; 1 Cor. 5:6;)? How was this warning specifically pertinent to the original hearers situation? In what ways can we become a “root of bitterness” (2 Tim. 2:14-19)?

10. How can we act like Esau with our inheritance today (Heb. 10:35)?

An Unshakable Kingdom (12:18-13:6)

1. Compare and contrast the scene at Sinai with Zion.
 - a) Sinai (12:18-21):

 - b) Zion (12:22-24):

2. Based upon their request of Moses, what appears to be the most intimidating part of the Israelite's Mt. Sinai experience? (cf. Exod. 19:9-15; 20:18-19)? What are they asking of Moses, and how does that compare to Jesus (cf. 12:24, 3:1-6)?

3. Accessibility to God is an important theme throughout Hebrews, reaching its apex in this section. Consider the following alluding to the nearness of God:
 - a) "draw near to the throne of grace" (4:16)
 - b) "draw near to God through" Christ (7:25)
 - c) The law could not "make perfect those who draw near (10:1)
 - d) "draw near with a true heart" (10:19-22)
 - e) Whoever "draws near to God" must believe he exists (11:6)

Why do you think it is important for us to have access to God?

4. How is Abel's blood described in Gen. 4:10-11? What are similarities between the blood of Abel and the blood of Christ? Differences?

5. The author points to a prophecy in Hag. 2:6, building a “then vs. now” statement around the idea of shaking. What do you visualize with shaking?

6. Originally, this prophecy in Haggai would look forward to the time when God would *shake* the universe to free his people from captivity. Viewing OT prophecy through the new lens that Jesus and his work was the fulfillment of everything to which the OT pointed, how was/will this be fulfilled? What phrase does the author pull out of the prophecy to make it clear that this prophecy had not yet seen complete fulfillment?

7. What will remain that cannot be shaken after the “yet once more” removal of the things that are shaken (cf. Dan 2:44; 7:14; 7:18)?

8. List the two “let us” statements in 12:28. Why does the author end this section reminding his audience that “God is a consuming fire” (cf. Deut. 4:24)?

9. Whenever a NT author presents a list, usually the first on the list is the key item and can serve as a summary of all the others. What is the key item on this list in 13:1-6?

10. After listing exhortations in 13:1-5, the conclusion in 13:6 summarizes the attitude of the person who relies on the Lord (Ps. 118:6). Why was it important to remind the original audience of this divine truth?

The Same Yesterday and Today and Forever (13:1-25)

1. A casual reading of Hebrews 13 may at first appear disconnected and unrelated to the preceding chapters. How might this chapter connect to the complete message of Hebrews, particularly 12:28-29?
2. Whenever a NT author presents a list, usually the first on the list is the key concept and can serve as a summary of all the others. What is the key thought in 13:1-6?
3. After listing exhortations in 13:1-5, the conclusion in 13:6 summarizes the attitude of someone who relies on the Lord (Ps. 118:6). Why was it important to remind the original audience of this truth?
4. There is an obvious emphasis in the chapter to consider leaders in the church (cf. 13:7, 17, 24). Given what you know about the original audience's present-day circumstances, why is it important to have good leadership?
5. What three imperatives should the audience consider regarding their leaders (cf. 13:7-8)?

6. What does the preacher want the audience to “remember” (cf. 2:3-4) and why is this necessary (cf. 13:8-9)?

7. Leadership implies that there are followers. Where does Jesus’ leadership lead us to (cf. 13:10-14)? In the OT, who and what are left “outside the camp”?

8. What are characteristics of acceptable worship to God (cf. 13:15-16)? Define worship.

9. What responsibilities do we have towards elders of our church family (cf. 13:17-19)?

10. The author’s final prayer (cf. 13:20-21) contains key concepts and phrases that are throughout the message of Hebrews. From the information in the prayer, what encouragement and blessings can we receive through Jesus Christ?

Resources

Raymond Brown, *The Message of Hebrews—Christ Above All*

F.F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary of the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews*

George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*

Luke Timothy Johnson, *The New Testament Library: Hebrews – A Commentary*

L. David McClister, *A Commentary on Hebrews*

Michael Whitworth, *The Son’s Supremacy*

In 2007, Marty Pickup taught a class on Hebrews at Valrico Church of Christ in Valrico, FL. This resource was invaluable in preparation for this class and can be accessed in its entirety at valricococ.org.

In 2021, Brian Messerli taught a class on Hebrews at Palm Springs Drive Church of Christ in Altamonte Springs, FL and can be accessed in its entirety at psd.church.

In 2019, Erik Borlaug taught a class on Hebrews at Embry Hills Church of Christ in Atlanta, GA and can be accessed in its entirety at embryhills.com.

The **English Standard Version** (ESV) will be used as the basis of our study. Other versions of Scripture will be consulted and notated within our study.