

HEBREWS

Chapters 1-7





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EXPLORE THE BIBLE: Hebrews, Chapters 1-7

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➤ ABOUT THIS STUDY

CHRISTIANS CAN LOSE THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD. MAYBE YOU'RE ONE OF THEM.

Perhaps you're at a point when you're wondering if you can keep on trusting Him. Life has been tough, and hard times seem to be getting harder. Your circumstances are making you wonder if you need to step back from Jesus for a while.

The Book of Hebrews can give you the spiritual refreshment you need. It's a book that helps struggling Christians get a fresh perspective on Jesus, resulting in a fresh burst of courage to endure in faith.

Explore the Bible: Hebrews, Chapters 1-7 helps you know and apply the encouraging and empowering truth of God's Word by organizing each session in the following way:

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT: This page explains the original context of each passage and begins relating the primary themes to your life today.

EXPLORE THE TEXT: This section walks you through the Scripture, providing helpful commentary and encouraging thoughtful interaction with God through His Word.

OBEY THE TEXT: This section helps you apply the truths you have explored. It is not enough to know what the Bible says—God's Word has the power to change your life.

LEADER GUIDE: This final section provides optional discussion starters and suggested questions to help anyone lead a group in reviewing each section of the personal study.

➤ GROUP COMMITMENT

As you begin this study, it is important that everyone agree to key group values. Clearly establishing the purpose of your time together will foster healthy expectations and help ease any uncertainties. The goal is to ensure that everyone has a positive experience leading to spiritual growth and true community. Initial each value as you discuss the following with your group.

☐ PRIORITY

Life is busy but we value this time with one another and with God's Word. We choose to make being together a priority.

☐ PARTICIPATION

We are a group. Everyone is encouraged to participate. No one dominates.

☐ RESPECT

Everyone is given the right to his or her own opinions. All questions are encouraged and respected.

☐ TRUST

Each person will humbly seek truth through time in prayer and in the Bible. We will trust God as the loving authority in our lives.

☐ CONFIDENTIALITY

Anything said in our meetings will never be repeated outside of the group without permission from everyone involved. This is vital in creating an environment of trust and openness.

☐ SUPPORT

Everyone can count on anyone in this group. Permission is given to call upon each other at any time, especially in times of crisis. The group will provide care for every member.

☐ ACCOUNTABILITY

We agree to let the members of our group hold us accountable to commitments we make in the loving ways we decide upon. Questions are always welcome. Unsolicited advice, however, is not permitted.

I agree to all of the above

date

➤ GENERAL EDITOR



Dr. David Jeremiah serves as senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, California. He is the founder and host of Turning Point, committed to providing Christians with sound Bible teaching relevant to today's changing times through radio and television, the Internet, live events, and resource materials and books. A best-selling author, Dr. Jeremiah has written more than 40 books, including *What Are You Afraid Of?* and its companion small group study, and his study notes from over four decades have been compiled into *The Jeremiah Study Bible*.

Dr. Jeremiah's commitment to teaching the complete Word of God continues to make him a sought-after speaker and writer. His passion for reaching the lost and encouraging believers in their faith is demonstrated through his faithful communication of biblical truths.

A dedicated family man, Dr. Jeremiah and his wife, Donna, have 4 grown children and 11 grandchildren.



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SESSION 1

WHO IS JESUS?

As God's Son, Jesus revealed God finally and without equal.



HEBREWS 5:12

to understand.¹² For
ought to be teachers,
If you again the basic prin
You need milk, not
one who lives on milk
the message about right
an infant.¹⁴ But soli
for those who c
to distinguish between

ing against Regressi

Therefore, leaving the
age about the •Messi
not laying again
from dead wor
about ritual wash
the resurrection of the
ment.³ And we will do t
for it is impossible to re
who were once enligh
heavenly gift, became co
Spirit,⁵ tasted God's g
of the coming age,⁶ a
because,⁵ to their ov
ceiving the Son of God a
contempt.⁷ For ground t
that has often fallen on it
ion useful to those i
blessing from God
it is wor
will be bur
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► UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

PREPARE FOR YOUR GROUP EXPERIENCE WITH THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

There's a lot of talk about Jesus these days. But does anyone really know who they're talking about? The name of Jesus can be found everywhere from t-shirts and bumper stickers to celebrity speeches. It can be confusing, at best, to sort through all of the noise. So who is Jesus, really? And why does it matter? These same questions have been asked for 2000 years.

The writer of Hebrews set out to help troubled Christians see Jesus as the Son of God, the only way to eternal life and earthly fulfillment. Jesus wasn't merely one of the many voices through whom God spoke to His creation. He spoke as God's Son. That relationship makes Him superior to the prophets and the angels. He alone was the full revelation of God to all people everywhere.

His nature, His involvement in creating and nurturing the universe, His death on the cross for our purification, and His exaltation demonstrate that God the Father and God the Son are equally God. Shaped by such a powerful perspective, we can share with confidence God's life-changing message of redemption.

In the Book of Hebrews, Jesus is the centerpiece of Christianity—the Son of God, our High Priest, the Source and Perfecter of our faith—and the list could go on. The writer addressed a variety of questions reinforcing Christ's superiority in the lives of His followers. As you explore the Book of Hebrews, make careful note of who Jesus is and hold tightly to your faith in the exalted Christ.

CHALLENGE

Be aware of the various opinions about Jesus in today's culture. Search the Book of Hebrews and the rest of God's Word for the truth.



"NEVER HAS THE BIBLICAL JESUS BEEN DRAGGED THROUGH THE MUD LIKE HE IS IN THIS CURRENT CULTURE."

—David Jeremiah

➤ HEBREWS 1:1-4

- 1** Long ago God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times and in different ways.
- 2** In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe through Him.
- 3** The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of His nature, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.
- 4** So He became higher in rank than the angels, just as the name He inherited is superior to theirs.

Think About It

After reading Hebrews 1:1-4, circle the various descriptions of Jesus.

In your own words, explain how the descriptions in these verses impact your relationship with Jesus.

➤ ABOUT THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

AUTHOR

The writer of Hebrews didn't identify himself, and Bible scholars haven't been able to determine who wrote it. Though we don't know the writer's identity, his spiritual maturity is evident within his writing. His writing reflected a devoted Christian leader who displayed passionate concern about believers considering retreat from Christianity.

AUDIENCE

Concerning the Christians to whom the Book of Hebrews was addressed, we can discern from the comparisons drawn in the text to key components of Judaism that they were believers, primarily from a Jewish background, who didn't have a clear understanding of who Jesus was. The persecution they were experiencing had caused them to reconsider their commitment to Christ, even being tempted to return to their traditional Jewish roots. Perhaps some of their friends and family members had been mistreated because of Christ. Or maybe they had experienced hard times themselves at the hands of adversaries of the gospel.

The strain of persecution apparently had been tempting them to consider an escape route. They still wanted to worship God, but they didn't want to live with the risk of more persecution. Details within the text suggest some were leaning toward returning to Judaism as an alternative. In their decision to embrace a safer way to serve God, they began distancing themselves from other Christians. The writer wanted them to work through any disillusionment by staying focused on Jesus and His superiority in their lives. Ultimately, they needed to be reminded of who He is.

PURPOSE

The writer of Hebrews made a passionate effort to persuade Christ-followers to maintain their faith in Jesus. He urged them to affirm the superiority of Christ above everything and everyone they had read about in the Old Testament. Then he encouraged them to consider God's perspective in their decision to possibly walk away from faith in Christ. Seeing themselves through God's eyes, they would surely understand why He would hold them accountable for misguided acts of disobedience and rebellion. Finally, he challenged them to hold fast to the gospel, no matter the circumstances.



► EXPLORE THE TEXT

GOD SPEAKS (*Read Hebrews 1:1-2a.*)

Hebrews begins with a comparison between how God spoke in the “former days”—the Old Testament times—and how He has spoken in the “latter days”—after the incarnation of Christ. The writer isn’t pushing the Old Testament to the side as if it’s no longer relevant. The Bible is a cohesive whole with God’s Son at the center.

The Christ-followers receiving this letter appeared to be struggling with the temptation to return to Old Testament Judaism. If that was the case, it would stand to reason that the writer would point to the Old Testament prophets. He used what was familiar to them as the starting point for his case for Christ.

In His wisdom, God spoke to the forefathers of the Old Testament through the prophets. God raised up prophets at different times to speak for Him. Moses prophesied at a specific time in history. So did Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Malachi, and all the other prophets. John the Baptist took on the prophetic role in the New Testament, preparing the way for the coming Messiah. God called the prophets to proclaim His Word at just the right time for the people who needed to hear and apply it in their situations.

Each of these prophets preached God’s Word in different ways. Some of them spoke through thundering sermons and gripping stories. Other prophets used piercing word pictures and remarkable miracles as they delivered God’s message. Still others spoke to God’s people with careful insights and courageous wisdom. Through a variety of approaches and styles, they delivered God’s message.

What do verses 1-2a teach about God's desire and ability to communicate with His people?

The writer went on to make a confident declaration: What God said through the prophets long ago couldn't be considered His final word. On the contrary, God continued to speak. When the writer mentioned "these last days," he had in mind the arrival of Jesus. God spoke through Jesus in a way that rose high above the messages of the prophets. God Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, was now speaking. There was no middle-man.

GOD REVEALED

(Read Hebrews 1:2b-4.)

The writer of Hebrews went on to explain why Jesus surpassed the prophets as God's complete revelation to the world. He described Jesus as God's heir. God owned all things in the universe. Like a king in a royal court, the God of the universe appointed His own Son to inherit everything He had created, both in heaven and on earth. Jesus was more than an heir. He was involved in the creation of everything. The Father made everything that's eternal as well as everything that's temporary through His Son. With that affirmation, the writer of Hebrews nailed down the eternal truth that Jesus existed before the universe was created.

Along with inheriting everything created, Jesus also radiates God's glory (see Col. 1:15). He alone shines with the splendor of God's presence in the world. However, He doesn't serve as radiance in the way the moon reflects light from the sun. Instead, the Son emanates the glory of the Father because He is God.

Bible Skill:
Dig deeper using other Scripture to better understand a passage

Read these passages in your Bible:

- Genesis 1:26
- Colossians 1:15-18
- John 1:1-4

How do these verses deepen your understanding of what Hebrews 1 reveals about Jesus' eternal existence?

The writer of Hebrews shows us something else about Jesus that reinforced His superiority. Copy machines produce duplicates of the original document. Look closely, and you can probably tell the difference between the original document and the copy. That's not the case with Jesus. He's the exact expression of God. In other words, the Son is the original—exactly like the Father. Because He's the original, He exhibits the fullness of God's divine nature. Therefore, He guides and upholds all of creation. He carries out His sustaining work in the universe in a way that shows that He's God. He utters His powerful word to nourish and direct His creation.

Directing us to observe Christ's work in history, the writer points us to the cross. The crucified Christ made complete the purification for our sins. Now the risen Lord has been exalted on high. He has taken His seat at the right hand of the Father in majesty. When He sat down in that exalted place, it was a declaration of His completed work that was necessary for our salvation and demonstrates His equality with the Father. His powerful reign is limitless.



The writer of Hebrews presented troubled Christians with warranted reasons for staying true to Christ as they faced potential persecution. Having already shown Jesus' superiority to the prophets, he directed them to realize that Jesus reigned over the angels, who enjoyed a position of high rank in God's kingdom. Like the prophets, angels also would've been viewed as messengers sent from God. Jesus reigned supreme over them for one undeniable reason: He alone bore God's matchless name. God, the Son, inherited the name of God, the Father. Therefore, He is God.

Have you ever felt persecuted for your faith?

In what ways did that persecution challenge your beliefs?

**Key Doctrine:
Scripture and Jesus**

All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation. See Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:27; John 5:39.

➤ OBEY THE TEXT

Jesus is the full revelation of God to humanity. Through Him, we can understand God's character and the gospel message. As God reveals Himself to us, we can share that truth with others.

How has God revealed Himself to you recently?

What actions are you taking as a result?

How can you help your group create an environment that fosters the open sharing of truths God reveals?



MEMORIZE

"In these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son"
(Hebrews 1:2a).

Use the space provided to make observations and record prayer requests during the group experience for this session.

MY THOUGHTS

Record insights and questions from the group experience.

MY RESPONSE

Note specific ways you will put into practice the truth explored this week.

MY PRAYERS

List specific prayer needs and answers to remember this week.

