

HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

Hebrews 1-7
Leader's guide

Hearing the Word Hebrews 1-7 Leaders Guide

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Nigel Barge, January 2019

Scripture Quotations taken from

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Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3rd edition, published by Inter Varsity Press
The *New Bible Commentary* 21st century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP
www.blueletterbible.org

Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading



LOOK – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
 - a) What questions does it raise - *Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?*
 - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
 - a) the surrounding text
 - b) the Book of the Bible
 - c) the whole Bible
 - d) the place in the Bible Story



LEARN – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



LISTEN – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



LIVE – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God, (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
 - a) His nature and character?
 - b) His grace*
 - c) Jesus / his salvation**
- 2) What should I do?

* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

** The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27)

Reading ‘Letters’ in the Bible

Whatever we read, we unconsciously adjust to its style. We don’t approach a newspaper, a car manual, a cookery book, a poem, a scientific report, a ‘txt msg’ and a Shakespeare play in the same way. We take into account why it was written and how the writer uses words. Since the Bible also has many styles – law, poetry, history, wisdom, prophecy, letters and visions – we need to allow for the style if we are to discern what God is saying. Hebrews is a ‘Letter’. To approach it correctly, keep in mind the following principles:

The New Testament contains letters written by the Apostles to various parts of the church of their day. They are part of the Word of God and as such they not only *were* authoritative for the church then, but they *are* authoritative for the church of all time.

Since this part of the Word of God is written *as a letter*, in the first instance it must be read as such. We need to take into account that letters are:

a) *Relational.* A letter is addressed to a particular person or group of people and its contents apply to them.

So in the Bible, we must first remember that Paul/James/Peter/John/Jude or the un-named writer-to-the-Hebrews) is addressing individuals or churches in the first century. It is only once we have grasped what they are saying to *them* that we may generalise as to what God might be saying to *us*.

Note well: the two will always be consistent.

b) *Occasional.* Letters are one side of a ‘conversation’ between two people. They refer to matters in which details of situations and people are assumed to be common knowledge. A third party reading a letter needs to ‘read between the lines’ to work out the other side of the story.

We have to try and understand the situation to which this Bible letter was written, so as to grasp how the writer was addressing *it*. Only then may we ask how God might apply this Word to our own circumstance.

c) *Dated.* Letters are written at a particular time and place, and within a particular culture. So in the Bible, the letters of the first century are expressed within the habits and traditions of that day. In discerning what God might be saying to us, now, we need to separate any instruction that is ‘time-bound’ from principles that are *timeless*.

d) *To be read as a whole.* When we open a letter from a friend nowadays, we read the whole thing. We recognise it is a single communication and its contents are thus all related.

So with letters in the Bible; every part must be viewed in the context of the whole letter. Thus, it is best practice to read a Bible letter *right through*, before analysing its parts.

Reading Hebrews

Who are ‘the Hebrews’?

Our English title suggests they were Jews. The title seems to be a much later addition to the text and may indicate a later editor’s view!

The OT is quoted extensively in the letter (35 quotations from the Septuagint (Greek) version). There are also 19 summaries of OT material and 13 references to OT names or topics. So it may have been a mixed audience of Jews and Gentiles who had come to faith in the Lord Jesus. The Jewish Christians may have been reluctant to leave Judaism behind and so lose the protection Judaism enjoyed under Roman law.

Some scholars feel they may have been a sub-group in a larger Christian community eg a house-church in a wider group of citywide house-churches.

The one thing we know for sure is that they were Christians! *see* 6:9-10; 10:39

Where did they live?

One clue comes in 13:24 where ‘those from Italy’ send their greetings to the readers. By mid-first century AD, Rome had a population of around one million, of whom 40,000 – 60,000 were Jews.

10:32-34 and 12:4 would fit the persecutions in Rome between AD49 and 64 *ie* between Claudius and Nero.

Who wrote it?

To quote Origen, ‘As to who wrote the epistle only God knows for sure’! 11:32 uses a masculine participle so the author was a male.

2:3-4 indicates secondary knowledge of the gospel message rather than reception by direct revelation so he was unlikely to have been one of the 12 apostles.

He was clearly well educated – fine grammar, vocabulary, style, rhetoric and philosophical knowledge – and was an expert in his use of the OT. He used religious symbols extensively.

He is a preacher with a pastor’s heart, tough and tender. It is widely agreed Hebrews starts off more like a *sermon* than a *letter*.

When did he write?

There are a number of definite references to Hebrews in *1 Clement*, an apocryphal letter dated around AD96 so it must have been written before then.

There is no reference to the Jerusalem Temple having been destroyed and it records High priest ARE selected 5:1 suggesting it was written before AD70.

If the ‘Timothy’ in 13:23 – released from prison – was the co-worker of Paul, then that would have been around the AD 50’s or early 60’s.

10:32-34 refers to persecution already faced. There was persecution in Rome, under Claudius AD49, under Nero AD64 and under Domitian AD91-95.

Background

Recent research by Dr Bruce W Winter on suffering under the Romans, generally, greatly helps our understanding of the pressures on Christians in NT times. The Christians reading this Letter had suffered much because of their faith (10:32) and understandably were very tempted to find ways of avoiding more agony.

1:2-3 proclaims the perpetual divinity of Jesus. But this was the same status granted to departed Roman emperors AD 14-68 (Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero). All new Caesars were given the title *pontifex maximus* of the Roman empire *ie* 'high priest'. To emperors, Jesus was a threat! The claim that Jesus' high priesthood meant Christians no longer needed to make sacrifices but did need to be loyal and obedient to Christ would be seen as a direct challenge to Roman peace and stability. 10:32-34 tells us Christians had already endured suffering and public humiliation. Another possible punishment lay ahead, namely exile to a harsh, desolate, isolated place, with a brutal climate, infertile land, polluted water supply, loss of citizenship and property. It was a fate greatly feared across the Roman Empire. Hebrews uses metaphorical phrases for exile: 'outside the camp', 'outside the gate' (13:11-14 and 13:12).

Jews had certain protections under Roman law, *eg* they were allowed to meet weekly; but Christians were not. All subjects in the Empire **except Jews** were required to offer sacrifices to the emperor in their temples. Christians generally were threatened with the death penalty for failure to bow to the Caesars. It was very tempting to shift into Judaism to avoid death or exile.

Why did he write it?

Recognising the dangers for his readers, he focusses on the unique person and work of Christ to motivate them to persevere in discipleship.

The author would appear to be addressing Jews by the very detailed references to the Old Testament – few Gentiles would have any background in this world. From inferences there was persecution of these Christians and this was so severe that some were contemplating return to the folds of Judaism

The themes he described would seek to bolster their determination to stand firm in their faith in Jesus and profession:

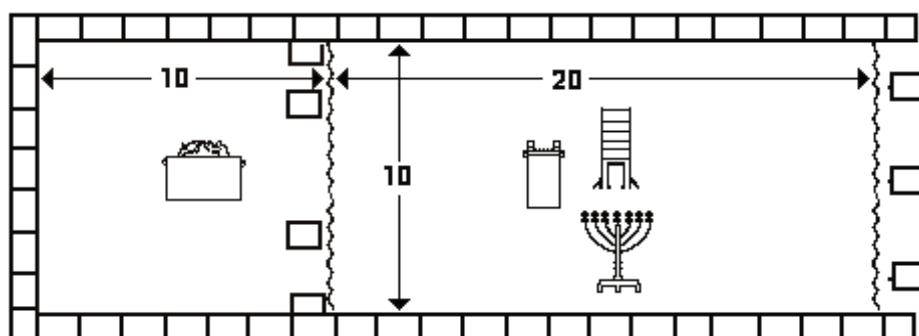
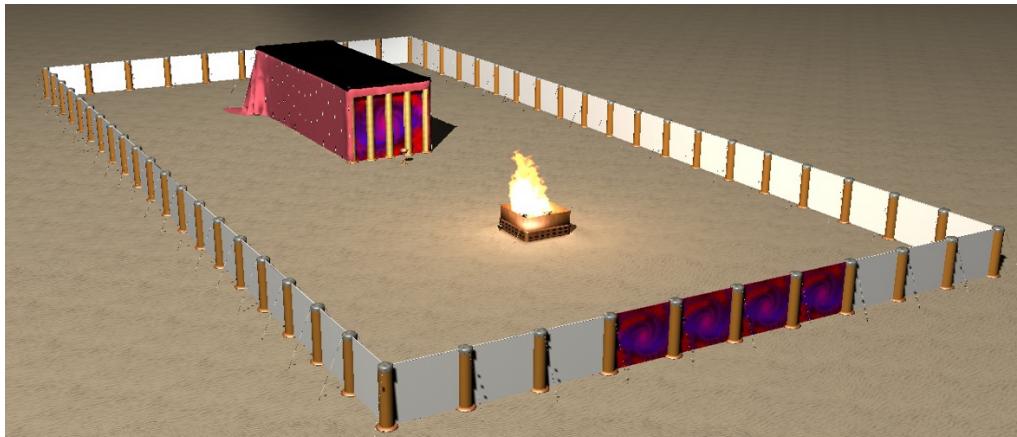
- 1) Jesus is divine
- 2) Jesus fulfils the Old Testament
- 3) Jesus enables us to pass through God judgement
- 4) Jesus is worth giving your life for.

This is the key and he begins with this. Jesus is God – the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His being sustain all things by his powerful Word (1:3)

The 7 studies in this booklet look at the first 7 chapters

Study	<i>Hebrews:</i>		Page
1	1: 1 – 2:4	Jesus is the divine saviour	9
2	2: 5 – 3:6	Jesus is our divine High Priest	15
3	3: 7 – 18	God must be believed	21
4	4: 1 – 13	Fellowship with God is our rest	26
5	4:14 – 5:10	Jesus, is our contact with Heaven	31
6	5:11 – 6:20	God is committed to His people	36
7	7: 1 – 28	Jesus is able and willing to save us	42
		Sharing the Word	48

The Tabernacle



Top – The layout of the tabernacle

Middle - The holiest place – only priests may enter

The holy of holies – the place where God's presence was manifested. It contained the Ark of the Covenant. One man, the high priest, entered once a year on the day of Atonement (Leviticus 16)

Bottom – The Ark of the Covenant within the holies of holies containing Moses staff, some manna from the wilderness, and the two tablets with the Law given to Moses on Mount Sinai

The lid, known as the mercy seat, had two cherubim on top.

The presence of God existed between them.

Background

Throughout history, God's servants have been his spokesmen. But now God has opted to send his own Son to deliver his final revelation to humanity.

Jews believed Moses occupied the highest place amongst the OT mediators. Jewish history associated angels with Moses in the giving of the law (Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19) This passage is full of OT references to show how Jesus is superior to angels. Angels are God's messengers, sent to serve (v14); but Jesus, God's Word, is the *message* as well as the *Messenger*.

2:1-4 is the first of three severe warnings. Others are 3:7-19 and 5:11-14.

Word list

1:1 *prophets* People through whom God spoke to his people.

1:2 *by his Son* literally '*in a Son*' or '*One who is Son*', ie referring to the *nature* of the agent of revelation.

1:6 *his firstborn* used here without limitation, descriptive of honour and glory.

1:10 *laid the foundations of the earth* figurative term for creation.

1:13 *footstool for your feet* custom of conquerors to put their heel on the neck of a defeated foe as token of complete subjection.

2:3 *ignore* neglect, same Greek word in Matthew 22:5 where invited guests made light of the king's invitation.

Bible Connections – see OT quotations in ch 1:

1:5 Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14

7 Psalm 104:4 v8 Psalm 45:6,7 v10 Psalm 102:25-27

9 *Jesus' life and ministry on earth* *see also* Philippians 2:7-9

12 *Jesus remaining the same, without end* *see* Hebrews 12:8

13 *Jesus sitting at God's right hand* *see* Psalm 110:1

2:4 *gifts of the Holy Spirit* *see* 1 Corinthians 12

LOOK

1) The Text

- 1 *When is ‘the past’?*
 Who were ‘the prophets’?
 What were the ‘various ways’?
- 2 *When were/are ‘the last days’?*
 When did he appoint His Son ‘heir’?
 What is the universe?
 How did he make the universe ‘through Him’?
- 3 *What does ‘the radiance of God’s glory mean’?*
 What does ‘the exact representation of His being’ mean?
 What are ‘all things’?
 What is ‘His Word’?
 Why ‘purification’ and not ‘forgiveness’?
 How did He provide ‘purification for our sins’?
 What does ‘the majesty’ mean?
- 4 *How did he ‘become’ greater than the angels? – Was He not always?*
 What name did He inherit?
- 5 *When did God say “your are my Son...”?*
- 6 *Why did God speak these words out?*
 What did ‘worship him’ mean?
- 7 *Why does He express detailed descriptions of Angels*
- 8 *‘Who says..’ about the son?*
 What is he saying about the son?
- 9 *What is the ‘oil of joy’?*
- 10 *What is it the beginning of?*
- 11 *Who will perish?*
- 12 *When will they be changed and into what?*
- 13 *What does it mean to ‘make someone a footstool’?*
- 14 *What is a ‘ministering spirit’?*
- 2:1 *What have ‘we heard’?*
 What could they drift away from?
- 2 *What was ‘the message spoken by angels’?*
 What is ‘it’s just punishment’?
- 3 *What is ‘this great salvation’?*
 When was it first announced by the Lord?

4 When did God testify to it by signs wonders etc.?

Where did he distribute it?

What surprises or confuses you?

5ff Why the focus on Angels at the start of the letter?

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

b) individual book,

9 for the joy set before him (Jesus) endured the cross (Hebrews 12:2)

c) whole Bible,

ch 1;

2 Various ways – a dream (Genesis 37:5) a voice, (1 Samuel 3:4); the Word of the Lord came to (Hosea 1:1), a vision (Micah 1:1)

Heir - parable of the tenants (Luke 20:14)

Universe – elemental spirits of... (Galatians 4:3; Colossians 2:8,20)

3 Word through Him all things were made (John 1:3)

6 Worship God alone (Exodus 20:3,4; Deuteronomy 6:16; Luke 4:8)

10 In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. (Gen 1:1)

12 New heaven and earth (2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1)

14 Inherit eternal life (Luke 10:25; 18:18)

Inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9,10; 15:50)

24 Signs, wonders miracles – by Jesus (Acts 2:22). Apostles (2:43), ‘waiters’! (Acts 5:5,6..8; 6,13)

Ch 2:

2 The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)

3 The Kingdom of Heaven has come near (Matt 4:17) the good news (Mk 1:15) the year of the Lord’s favour (Lk 4:19)

4 Gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38) signs and wonders (Acts 2:43)

e) Bible story

The promised Messiah has come. He was put to death for the sins of the World. He has fulfilled the Old Covenant. After His resurrection, He ascended to the right hand of the Father awaiting His second coming on earth in glory. In the interim, His believing church await amidst much adversity and persecution.

{the Temple and its Old covenant sacrifices persist but will soon be destroyed (70 AD)}

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

Letter

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 'The past' is before the coming of Jesus Christ – 'BC'.

'The prophets' were the OT prophets - *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel etc.*

'Various ways' were vision, dreams, etc.

2 'These last days' are the after the coming of Jesus AD.

He appointed His Son 'heir' in eternity.

The Universe is all that the Lord created.

He made the Universe 'through Him' i.e. by His Word.

3 'The radiance of God's glory' is How we experience God's glory?

'The exact representation of His being' means that to experience Him is to experience God, Himself.

'All things' means every part of the physical world.

'His Word' is His powerful Son.

Purification is what Jesus achieved. Forgiveness is what we may receive if we are willing.

He provided 'purification for our sins' through his death on the cross.

'The majesty' means the supreme authority.

4 He 'became' has the meaning that he was demonstrated.

The name He inherited was Jesus, God the Son?

5 God said this in eternity but it was recorded by the Psalmist c 1000 BC.

6 God spoke these words out at the incarnation.

'Worship him' meant that he was God.

7 He made detailed descriptions of angels to show their eminence & power.

8 'God says (5)... about the son'.

He says the Son is God, righteous, exalted, joyful.

9 'Anointing with the oil of joy means it is the all-consuming emotion.

- 10 The beginning is the start of time / the creation.
- 11 The foundations of the earth (10).... will perish?
- 12 They be changed at the end of time into a new heaven and earth.
- 13 To 'make someone a footstool' means to subject them to your absolute power and authority.
- 14 (A ministering Spirit is one who serves the purposes of their master. In this case it is God.)

2:1 We have heard God speak through His Son, Jesus. (c.f. 1:2)
 They could drift away from believing what the Son has said.

2 'The message spoken by angels' was the giving of the Law at Sinai (?)
 The 'just punishment' of breaking the Law is death.

3 'This great salvation' is a gift of the grace of God from eternal death.
 It was first announced by the Lord at the beginning of his public ministry.

4 The signs and wonders were effected through those who heard (and believed) the message..
 He distributed it at Pentecost.

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

The angles are the greatest spiritual beings under God. Jesus is greater than them. (Therefore – Jesus is God)

4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

*Having spoken through men, God spoke directly through His Son, Jesus. After providing for the removal of man's sin, he returned to his reign in Heaven. (1-3)
 His Word, Jesus, is God the Son who even angels worship. (4-6).*

Acknowledge that He is God who rules over all He created, eternal and all powerful. (8-13)

He employs angels to serve those He graciously saves from eternal death. (14)

Initially, angels mediated the Law to us which showed how exacting and strict are God's standards .(1,2)

The salvation that Jesus brought though was endorsed by the Holy Spirit Himself. (3,4)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

MP (Unlike the angels), Jesus, God the Son, provided for forgiveness of sin.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

KV After Jesus had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of His majesty (3)

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

1,2 *God wants to communicate with mankind.*

b) His grace?

3 *Jesus provides forgiveness of sin.*

2:4 *God repeatedly testifies to His offer of salvation by signs, wonders, various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit.*

God distributes gifts according to His will.

c) Jesus and His salvation?

2 *God has ordained that Jesus rules over the world He created*

3 *Jesus is God.*

4 *Jesus is supreme over the hosts of Heaven.*

5 *Jesus is eternally the son who proceeds from the Father.*

6 *Angels worship Jesus/ God.*

8-13 *Jesus is the eternal, righteous, omnipotent God.*

2:3 *Jesus announced salvation.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

3 *Worship Jesus with thanksgiving as your saviour from sin*

5 *Recognise the facts! (i.e. For to which...?)*

14 *Note - God has commissioned the highest host of heaven to serve those who have been given salvation.*

2:1 *Pay careful attention to the Word of God guarding against drifting.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Jesus is our divine High Priest

Background

The writer now expands the argument for Christ's superiority over angels. There is OT evidence that the governance and administration of this world has been allocated to angelic powers, *eg* Michael who champions the people of Israel, but some are evil and hostile *eg* the angelic 'prince of Persia' and 'prince of Greece' (Daniel 10:20-21; 12:1). However Hebrews tells us the world to come has not been entrusted to angels but rather to the Son of God. Jesus must realise this sovereignty through the twin pathways of deep suffering and painful death.

9b-18 expand how Jesus suffered *with us* and *for us*, using three OT quotes.

v17 introduces the high-priestly ministry of Jesus on their behalf.

3:1-6 is startling to the Jewish Christian readers as the writer tells them Jesus is superior to Moses. To them Moses was saviour, leader, law-giver, patriarch, the greatest of the prophets, but the writer describes him as a 'servant in God's household' whereas Jesus is the son over God's house (v5-6).

Word list

7	<i>little</i>	in a temporal sense, i.e. 'for a little while'
9	<i>little</i>	here it is <i>little</i> in degree, rather than <i>little</i> in time
12	<i>congregation'</i>	Greek <i>ecclesia</i> , the church, the brothers of Christ
16	<i>Abraham's descendants</i>	i.e. the whole family of faith
17	<i>atonement</i>	the removal of man's sin and his resultant reconciliation with God

3:1 *apostle and high priest* ie combining roles of divine envoy and intercessor

Bible Connections – *see* OT quotations in ch 2:

6-8 Psalm 8:4-6	12 Psalm 22:22	13 Isaiah 8:17; Isaiah 8:18
9 <i>the humility of Christ</i>	<i>see</i> Philippians 2:6-8	
<i>Jesus crowned with glory and honour</i>	<i>see</i> Philippians 2:9	
10 <i>Our reconciliation to God is in Christ.</i>	<i>see</i> 2 Corinthians 5:19	
18 <i>Jesus is the one able to help us.</i>	<i>see</i> 4:15-16	
3:1 <i>holy brothers</i>		<i>see also</i> Colossians 1:2
3:7 <i>Moses faithful in God's house</i>		<i>see</i> Numbers 12:7

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 5 *Why is it ‘the world to come’ not ‘heaven’?*
- 6 *Why so general – not ‘the psalmist’?*
 Who does he mean – ‘the ‘son of man’?
- 7 *What does ‘made him lower than the angels’ mean?*
- 8 *How does ‘not been subject to Him’ manifest?*
- 9 *Who is everyone that he tasted death for?*
- 10 *How was Jesus ever ‘imperfect’?*
- 11 *What does being ‘made holy’ mean?*
- 12 *What does quoting this verse imply? – ‘I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises’?*
- 13 *What does this quote mean? – ‘I will put my trust in Him’?*
 What does this quote mean? ‘Here I am, and the children God has given me’?
- 14 *How might His death destroy the devil?*
 How are we held in slavery by our fear of death?
- 17 *For what reason did He have to be made like his brothers in every way?*
- 18 *How did he suffer / was he tempted?*
- 3:1 *Why is ‘therefore’ there?*
 What is the heavenly calling?
 Why ‘fix your thoughts on Jesus’?
- 2 *How was he faithful?*
- 3 *How was Jesus found to be worthy of great honour?*
- 5 *How did Moses testify to what would be said in the future?*
- 6 *What does it mean to be ‘son over’.*
 What happens if we don’t ‘hold on’?

What surprises or confuses you?

- 9 *How could Jesus become lower than the angels and still be God?*

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

6 Do not drift way. For if the , message spoken by angels was binding and every violation and disobedience received it just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation. (2:1,2)

b) individual book,

10 Once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation (5:9)

3:1 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus the author and perfector of our faith (Heb 12:2)

c) whole Bible,

8 All authority on heaven and earth has been given to me. (Matt 28:18)

9 I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. (Acts 7:56)

We are convinced that one died for all therefore all died. (2Cor 4:14)

10 Through the Word/Jesus) all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made (John 1:3)

'Perfect' may mean finished / complete. (John 4:34)

11 sons of God / brothers of Jesus (Romans 8:17)

14 The Word became flesh (Jn 1:14)Tired as He was (John 4:6)... Jesus wept (Jonn 11:35)

There is no fear in love. Perfect love drive out fear. (1John4:18)

15 Triumphing over (the principalities and powers) by the cross (Col 2:15)

The devil — was thrown in the lake of burning sulphur (Rev 20:10)

17 In every way – He emptied Himself (Philippians 2:6-8) He was filled with the Spirit (Luke 3:22; 4:1)

Suffered when tempted (Luke 4:1-13; 22:40-44)

*3:2 'Appointed' - God so loved the world that He sent His son (John 3:16)
God's house (Geesisn 28:22)*

3 Jesus greater than Moses - Jesus (Luke 3:22) c.f. Moses (Nu 20:12)

d) Bible story

See study 1

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

Letter

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

5 *Why ‘the world to come’? - because he is lacing his letter with hope i.e. you have the prospect of life in eternal to still to come.*

6 *The emphasis is not on the human author but the Word of God. ‘The ‘son of man’ means He was a human being.*

7 *‘Lower than the angels’ means relative to God the Father – angel are Sinless; human beings are sinful. He identified with humans though he Himself was sinless.*

8 *‘Not been subject to Him’ manifests in the groaning of creation and in the sin of men.*

9 *‘Everyone’ is all human beings who would receive and acknowledge Him.*

10 *Jesus was ‘imperfect’ in as much as He was not yet a complete saviour.*

11 *Men are made holy as gift by the grace of Jesus.*

12 *This verse implies that Jesus is the author of the Psalms.*

13 *‘I will put my trust in Him’ means Jesus will put his trust in God His Father This means becoming a child of God is an act of His grace.*

14 *His death breaks the power of sin and so destroys the devil and his work. The fear of death/judgement is our fear. Jesus delivers us from the this promising us forgiveness and life.*

17 *He did this to destroy him who holds the power over death.*

18 *When He was tempted He suffered the pain of resisting the allure of sin.*

3:1 *Because Jesus is the faithful high priest making atonement for the sins of the people ‘therefore’ fix your eyes on Jesus – He is ‘the apostle and high priest we confess.*

The heavenly calling is to go to heaven through Jesus.

‘Fix your thoughts on Jesus’ because He is the key.

2 *He was faithful in that He trusted His Father.*

3 *Jesus was found to be worthy of greater honour than Moses in that he perfectly did the will of the Father.*

- 5 Moses gave the Law that Jesus would later fulfil. (Matthew 5:17)
- 6 A 'son over' means He rules / has authority over the house.
If we don't 'hold on' we shall receive just punishment c.f. (2:2)

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

In person He remained God the Son, but he emptied Himself of the power and the glory and became nothing (Phil 2:7) and so became 'less than the angels'.

4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

Jesus, having become a man, lower than the angels, has now been raised by God to be the supreme ruler of all things. (5-7)

At present we do not see this, but Jesus died for all to bring many to become sons of God, brothers of His, in Glory. (8-13)

He defeated the devil and atoned for the sins of His people by becoming totally a human being in every way (but sin). (14-18)

Therefore, trust Jesus completely and hold on tightly to Him who is God's fulfilment of the Law He gave to Moses, as the master of God's house. (3:1-6)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

MP *Jesus is the high priest sent from God who we are called to trust in.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

KV *Therefore holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus (3:1)*

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

10 *God is the author and sustainer of creation.*

3:4 *God is the builder of everything.*

b) His grace?

9 *Jesus came to die for us as an act of grace.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

3 Jesus (as God) is worthy of all our thoughts.

8 Jesus rules over everything.

10 Jesus has brought many sons to glory.

10 Jesus completed his mission / was made complete/perfect through His suffering.

11 Jesus is proud to call us brothers.

14 Jesus, in sharing our flesh, destroyed the devil and saved our lives.

18 Jesus can empathise with all our temptations.

3:3 Jesus is greater than Moses as a builder is greater than his house.

6 Jesus is full of faith as God son over all His affairs.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 Fix your thoughts of Jesus who, not only shared all your temptations but who destroyed the works of the devil.

6 Honour Jesus as a Son and so is greater the Law.

Hold on tightly to your hope in Jesus.

8 Note: - just because it may seem Jesus is not in control, he absolutely is!

11 As Jesus is not ashamed of you, you must not be ashamed of Him.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

God must be believed

Background

Failure to listen to, and respond in obedience to, the voice of God is taken very seriously by God.

The early church saw the death of Christ as the new exodus (Luke 9:31), he is the true Passover sacrificed for his people, (1 Cor 5:7b) and they are the ‘church in the wilderness’(Acts 7:38) etc

So the writer warns them not to be like the Israelites in the desert:

After the first exodus there was a whole string of complaints by the Israelites to Moses, *eg* about lack of water in Exodus 17:2,7, which stretched over 40 years of wandering. In Numbers 13 we read how the spies were sent from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land of Canaan but only Joshua and Caleb came back with a favourable report of this land promised to them. The unfavourable response of the others resulted in another 38 years of wandering until that generation had died out (Numbers 14:27ff) They did not enter the ‘rest’ of the earthly Canaan.

Hence the reference to Psalm 95 quoted here.

Unbelief is a sin and the writer warns them not to be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We are to encourage each other to persevere.

Word List

7	<i>today if you hear... i.e. ‘oh that you would ...’</i>	<i>n.b.</i> Repeated 3 times (3:7,15; 4:7)
7,9	<i>rebellion, testing</i>	equivalents of Meribah and Massah (Ex 17:7)
12	<i>turns away</i>	rebellion, Greek word is root of <i>apostasy</i>

Bible Connections – *see* OT quotations in ch 3:

7-11 Psalm 95:7b-11 15 Psalm 95:7b,8

7ff *Be warned from Israel’s history.* *see also* 1 Corinthians 10:1-5; Jude 5

14 *confidence in God through Christ* *see* Ephesians 3:12

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 7 *What does 'the Holy Spirit says' referring to the Psalms, mean?*
- 8 *When was 'the rebellion'?*
What was the time of resting?
- 9 *How did they 'test and try God'?*
- 10 *What does 'heart going astray mean'?*
What are 'His ways'?
- 11 *Why 'on oath'?*
What is 'his rest'?
- 12 *What does a 'sinful unbelieving heart' mean?*
- 13 *What does 'today' signify?*
How is sin deceitful?
- 14 *How might sin deceive us?*
What does 'share in Christ' mean?
What is 'the end'?
- 15 *How were their hearts hardened?*
- 17 *Why did they 'fall in the desert'?*
- 18 *What is the qualification to enter His rest?*
- 19 *What was their unbelief in?*

What surprises or confuses you?

What happens to those who do not enter his rest./ Why is it not mentioned?

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 11 *rest (4:3,5)*

b) individual book,

- 7 *the Holy Spirit ... says (10:15)*
- 11 *swear by Himself (6:13)*
- 14 *hold firmly (6:6)*

c) whole Bible,

7 the Holy Spirit says (Acts 21:11)

if anyone hears my voice and opens the door (Rev 3:20)

Give us today our daily bread .(Matt 6:11)

8 testing (Luke 8:13; Acts 20:19))

12 believe in your heart (Romans 10:9)

for what mortal has ever heard the voice of the living God (Deut. 5:26)

Turn from these worthless things to the living God. (Acts 14:5)

13 said much to encourage and strengthen believers (Acts 15:32)

d) Bible story

See study 1

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

Letter

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

7 'The Holy Spirit says..' means the Psalms were inspired word for word.

8 'The rebellion' was when the Hebrews revolted and pressed Moses to take them back to Egypt.

The time of testing was when they were travelling through the desert.

9 They 'tested and tried God' by not believing in Him.

10 'Heart going astray' means that they are not thinking of God.

'His ways' are believing in and trusting Him.

11 'On oath' means that it was irrevocable.

The time of resting was when they entered Canaan / the promised land.

12 A 'sinful unbelieving heart' is a mind that does not believe in God's Word.

13 'Today' signifies time before the final judgement.

Sin is deceit in that it leads one to disbelieve the Word of God and to ignore the consequences of disobeying it.

14 'Share in Christ' means to share in His status (sons) and glorious riches.

‘The end’ is the day of judgment.

15 ‘Their hearts were hardened as they disbelieved in the ‘Word of God’

17 They ‘fell in the desert’ means dying before reaching the promised land.

18 The qualification to enter His rest was to believe and trust in God’s Word.

19 Their unbelief was in God’s ability to save them and deliver them to the promised land,

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

Hell / non rest is not focused on as this is speaking exclusively to believers / those who inherit the rest.

4) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

As the Holy Spirit teaches us in the Bible, ‘Do not reject Gods Word as Israel did in the wilderness and died there. (7-11)

Instead avoid a sinful unbelieving heart and hold firmly to Jesus Christ to the end. (12-14)

Remember that these were Moses’ people that God swore would not enter his rest because of their unbelief. (16-19)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

(Like your forefathers in the desert), do not disbelieve and so separate yourself from God (and so forfeit His rest.)

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 12**

See to it brothers that none of you has a sinful unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God”

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

8 God actively tests and tries His people.

God speaks to His people through trials.

9 God acts for us to see,

10 God may be angry with a disbelieving / disobedient people.

12 Note - The Lord is 'the living God' - All others are 'dead'.

God cannot countenance an unbelieving heart

b) His grace?

14 All that is required of us is that we hold onto Him.

c) Jesus and His salvation?

14 Jesus the Messiah, shares all that He has with those who hold on to / believe in Him

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

7 Listen for God – He may be speaking and you are ignoring Him

8 Note it is possible to disbelieve and so resist God

12 Resolve to believe the living God

13 Constantly be an encourager of others thus nullifying sins deceitfulness (i.e. counter feelings of inferiority & inability)

15 Note - repetition is good!

16,17 Beware rebellion sin ... disobedience.

19 Beware unbelief – it will prohibit us from entering in to our inheritance in Christ

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Fellowship with God is our ‘rest’

Background

The writer turns again to the spiritual counterpart of the earthly Canaan, telling them they need to persevere and attain this goal of entering eternal rest in God’s new order. They need to appropriate the Gospel by faith. The ‘rest’ of God has been available since the end of creation.

The Word of God *must* be taken seriously, *must* be accepted in faith and *must* be put into daily practice.

Word list

4 *seventh day*

i.e. at the end of creation

8 *Joshua*

OT leader who led the people into the earthly Canaan

NB In Greek, Joshua and Jesus are the same word!

Bible Connections – *see* OT quotations in ch 4:

3 Psalm 95:11 4b Genesis 2:2 7b Psalm 95:7,8

4 *seventh day God rested* *see* Genesis 2:2

8 *God gave Israel the promised land.* *see* Joshua 21:43ff; 22:4

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *What is 'therefore' there for?*
When was the promise given?
How might you 'fall short' of the promise?
- 2 *What was the Gospel that they had preached to them?*
When was it preached?
How is it combined with faith
- 3 *Why is Gods oath on people not entering the rest like ('just as') our believing and entering.*
What is 'His work'?
- 4 *Why was it so circumspect i.e. 'somewhere' – not 'in the Psalms'?*
- 6 *Why only 'some will enter the rest'?*
- 7 *Why is he quoting Psalm 95:7,8 for the 3rd time?*
- 8 *When might it be construed that Joshua had given them rest?*
- 11 *How do we make every effort to 'enter that rest'?*
- 12 *Why 'for' the Word of God – how is it linked to the passage before?*
- 13 *How is 'the Word of God' linked to 'God's sight'?*
When will we all give 'account'?

What surprises or confuses you?

What is it 'the Gospel' if it predates and therefore doesn't name Jesus?

2) The Context

- a) surrounding passage,
- 7 *Today if you hear his voice do no harden your heart. (3:7,15)*
- b) individual book,
- 4 *It has been testified somewhere (2:6)*
- 14 *just as man is destined to die once and after that to face judgement (9:27)*
- c) whole Bible,
- 1 *I have come .. to bring them out of the land to a land flowing with milk and honey. (Exodus 3:8)*
- 2 *The Lord ...swore to your fathers to give you a land flowing with milk and*

honey (Exodus 13:5 — Genesis 15:18))

You have been saved by faith (Ephesians 2:8)

3 *.. on the 7th day God rested from all the work of creating that He had done (Genesis 2:2)*

4 *Jesus has spoken through Psalm 22:22.*

d) Bible story

See study 1

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

letter

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 *Disobedience and unbelief results in forfeit of God's rest, therefore*

The promise was given through Moses at the burning bush.

To 'fall short' of the promise' means you have not believed it.

2 *The Gospel that they had preached to them in the wilderness was ' If you trust / believe in the Lord, He will graciously sustain your life and take you to His promised land – flowing with milk and honey.*

It was preached to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob ... Moses.

It is combined with faith.

3 *It was because of unbelief that the Hebrews in the wilderness could not enter His rest . .*

'His work' was that of the creation of the world etc.

4 *The circumspection is because the whole of the Scriptures is the Word of God i.e. 'somewhere' in the Word of God.*

6 *Only 'some will enter the rest' as the others were 'disobedient'.*

7 *For the 3rd time because he is underlining the need for decision and action - NOW.*

8 *It was construed that Joshua had given them rest when they entered Canaan.*

11 *We make every effort to 'enter that rest' by striving to obey God.*

12 *'For' the Word of God refers to the warning 'today if you hear his voice,*

do not harden your heart. (3:7,15,4:7)

13 ‘The Word of God’ is God’s omnipotent response to his universal sight.
We will all give ‘account’ on the day of judgment

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

The ‘Gospel’ to the Hebrews was that God would graciously save them from death (somehow) if they believed / trusted in Him.

4) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

Unlike the Hebrews, we trust in God and enter His rest (1-3)

God rested on the 7th day after creation. Some will not. but some will enter his rest - according to their disobedience/ obedience. So today, do not harden your hearts (4-7)

God’s rest is more than just Canaan. Resolve to enter it. (8-11)

God’s Word will expose whether you are obeying / trusting in Him. (12,13)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Enter Gods rest by obeying / trusting in Him

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

Let us, therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no-one will fall by following their example of disobedience’ (11)

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

1 *God’s Word stands forever.*

3 *God is resting from His Work of creation.*

4 *God has spoken in the words of Genesis.*

- 7 *God is in charge of time.*
- 11 *God is at rest.*
- 12 *God's Word is irresistible.*
- 13 *God is omniscient.*
God will hold all to account.

- b) His grace?
- 2 *The Gospel of grace was always available.*
- 6,7 *God is graciously patient in setting a day called 'today' for judgement but then waiting to bring it about.*
- c) Jesus and His salvation?
- 3 *Jesus is speaking in the Psalms.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

- 1 *Be careful and honest: Answer the question - Are you saved?*
- 2 *Listen for the Gospel message.*
- 11 *Strive to enter God's rest.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Jesus is the contact with Heaven

Background

4:14 The high priest was the only priest who was allowed to go into the sanctuary in the Temple, once per year on the Day of Atonement. He made temporary atonement for the people's sins.

V14-16 reiterate how deeply Jesus identifies with us and is able to meet our every need because he has experienced them too.

5:1-10 compares the earthly high priests and Jesus. They need to sympathise with those they represent before God. They are called by God, not self-appointed (v4). The earthly high priest is still sinful himself, only Jesus is perfect and his priesthood is eternal.

Word list

4:14 *gone through the heavens* *or* gone into heaven

4:16 *let us then* Better translated 'Therefore let us'

4:16 *throne of grace* throne of God where He shows unmerited favour to those who approach in Jesus name.

used here as antitype for the mercy seat *see below*

5: 4 *Aaron* Brother of Moses, the first high priest

5:10 *Melchizedek* King of Salem (probably Jerusalem)

Bible Connections – *see* OT quotations in ch 4:14-5:10:

5:5 Psalm 2:7 5:6 Psalm 110:4

4:16 *throne of grace* *see also* Mercy seat Exodus 25:21,22; Hebrews 9:

5:6 *Melchizedek* *see* Genesis 14:18

5:7 *Jesus' 'loud cries and tears ...'* *see also* Mark 14:33b-36; John 12:27f

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

14 *What does 'therefore' mean?*

Why is he such a 'great High Priest'?

What is the faith that we profess?

15 *What are our weaknesses?*

What does 'tempted every way' mean?

16 *Why do we need grace and mercy?*

What is their 'time of need'?

5:1 *Why does God instruct and provide for gifts and sacrifices for sin?*

2 *On what way are they ignorant and going astray?*

4 *What honour?*

5 *When and where did God speak to Jesus?*

7 *Why does he describe them as the days of Jesus' life on earth?*

Who could save Him from death?

How was his 'reverent submission' heard?

8 *How did He 'learn obedience'?*

9 *How could the sinless one (4:15) be made perfect?*

10 *What does the 'order of Melchizedek' mean?*

What surprises or confuses you?

5:7 *loud cries .. to the one who could save him from death – but he didn't?*

a) 2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

10 *Melchizedek – without beginnings of day or end of life (7:3)*

14 *faith in the Gospel (4:2)*

b) individual book,

c) whole Bible,

4 *Aaron chosen by God, recognised by Moses (Exodus 28:1)*

5 *You are my son who I love. (Luke 3:22)*

7 *In the beginning was the Word ...and the Word became flesh.(Jn 1:1,14)
Before Abraham was born, I am. (John 8:58)*

8 He humbled Himself and became obedient to death (Philippians 2:8)
9 My food is to do the work of Him who sent me. (John 4:34)

d) Bible story?

See *Bible study 1*

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

Letter

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

14 'Therefore' i.e. since the promise of entering His rest still stands is open.
He was such a 'great High Priest' because He has already been able to go into heaven on our behalf
The faith that we profess is in the Gospel (4:2)

15 Our weaknesses re the areas in which we are tempted and give in
What does 'tempted every way' means every way!

16 We need grace and mercy because we are sinners and have earned nothing from God.
The 'time of need' of the Hebrews is persecution.

5:1 God instructs and provide for gifts / sacrifices for sin to set a context for the gift and sacrifice of His son which alone would pay the wages of sin.

2 They may be ignorant for they have not heard and going astray as they have been tempted by the devil.

4 The honour is that of being chosen as high priest.

5 God spoke to Jesus and called Him at His baptism.

7 He described them as the days of Jesus' life on earth because Jesus had already existed from all eternity.
The Father alone could save Him from death?
His 'reverent submission' heard by God the Father when He raised Him from death.

8 He 'learned obedience' by His humbling Himself and so depending on the Father. (Philippians 2:8)

9 He was made 'complete' when He completed His mission on earth.

10 The 'order of Melchizedek' is an eternal order founded in God Himself

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

5:7 He didn't save Him for the process of death but He did save Him from the result of death – by the resurrection.

4) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

Seek grace and mercy through your High Priest, Jesus. (4:14-16)

Jesus as a High priest was called by God. (5:1-6)

He suffered as a man but being totally obedient. He saved all who obey Him and so was included in the order of Melchizedek. (5:7-10)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

MP *Hold on to faith in Jesus whom God chose as the means for us to enter Heaven .*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

v 14

KV *Therefore, since we have such a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess*

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?,

5:4 God calls his servants.

5,10 God conferred on Jesus the glory of becoming the High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.

b) His grace?

16 God's throne is gracious.

c) Jesus and His salvation?

4:14 Jesus is our Saviour from death.

Jesus has entered heaven for us.

- 15 Jesus sympathises with your every weakness.
- 5:7 Jesus prayers involved loud cries and tears.
- 8 Jesus humbled Himself and ‘learned...’.
- 9 Jesus is the source of eternal salvation for humans.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

4: 10 Approach the throne of grace with confidence.

14 Hold on tight to the Saviour, the deliverer from death, Jesus.

- 5:7 Be reverently submissive to God the Father, like Jesus.
- 8 Let God teach you obedience through suffering.
- 9 Obey Jesus and receive His eternal salvation.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Study 6

Hebrews 5:11 – 6:20

God is committed to His people

Background

Before pressing on with further explanation of the ‘priestly order of Melchizedek’ the writer breaks off to address the serious problem of his readers’ immature spiritual development. Maturity is more than knowing facts; it is the ability to use that knowledge to solve situations and problems in relation to daily living.

He sees no point in repeatedly going over the basics again. The list covers orthodox Jewish beliefs and practices, which have acquired a new significance in a Christian context. He wants to move on to the serious material on high priesthood and looks for Christ to work in them.

The severe warning in 6:4-8 is very difficult to interpret! However he is confident of better things in their case and urges them to imitate the great heroes of the faith (*see ch11*) and also obtain the promises of God. He uses Abraham, the father of the faithful, as the great example of faith and perseverance. God’s word alone is sufficient, but He swears an oath to give us double assurance. He then brings them back to Jesus’ high priesthood saying their hope is securely anchored to Jesus who has delivered our salvation by shedding his blood.

Word list

6: 1 <i>foundation</i>	used metaphorically here, refers to elementary truths <i>i.e.</i> antithesis to maturity
	<i>acts that lead to death</i> or useless rituals of ineffective Levitical sacrifices(OT)
6:2 <i>baptisms</i>	plural Greek word used refers to ceremonial washings
6:4 <i>once . . .</i>	Greek aorist tense indicates something that is never repeated <i>of 9:7,26; 10:2; 12:26</i>
<i>tasted</i>	In Greek this signifies holding something in common with someone else
6:6 <i>repentance</i>	Greek <i>metanoia</i> the initial repentance to salvation (<i>metamellomai</i> is used in NT for repentance which leads to restoration to fellowship)
6:20 <i>curtain</i>	separated the sanctuary area with the ark of the covenant from the rest of the temple

Bible Connections

6:13 *God’s promise to Abraham*

see Genesis 22:15-18

6:20 *sanctuary behind the curtain*

see Leviticus 16:2

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

5:11 *What do they have much to say about?*

12 *Why should they be teachers?*

What are the elementary truths?

13 *What is the teaching about righteousness?*

14 *What particular good and evil are they thinking of?*

6:1 *What acts lead to death?*

What is 'faith in God'?

2 *What 'instructions about baptisms'?*

What 'instruction about laying on of hands'?

4 *What does 'tasting the heavenly gift' mean?*

How did they share in the Spirit?

5 *What is 'the goodness of God's Word'?*

6 *What are the powers of the coming age?*

How would they 'be crucifying the son of God again'?

8 *What is 'the land'?*

9 *What are 'the better thingsthat accompany salvation'?*

11 *What does 'making your hope sure' mean?*

12 *What has been promised?*

13 *Why did God want to 'swear'?*

14 *What does 'bless you' mean?*

15 *How can he be described as 'righteous'?*

When did Abraham receive 'many descendants'?

What was promised?

16 *Why does swearing by someone great put an end to all argument?*

17 *Who are the heirs of what was promised?*

18 *What are the two things God did?*

What have we fled from?

What is the hope which we have been offered?

19 *What is the soul?*

Where is the inner sanctuary?

What is the curtain?

20 *When did Jesus go before us?
What is the order of Melchizedek?*

What surprises or confuses you?

4 *How can a person taste the heavenly gift but not receive it?*

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

b) individual book,

9 *hope sure (11:1)*

c) whole Bible,

5:13 *a righteousness that is by faith from first to last (Romans 1:17)*

6:2 *laying on of hands (Acts 8:18; 1 Timothy 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:6)*

8 *the parable of the sower (Luke 8:11-15)*

10 *love for His people is love for Him (Mathew 25:40)*

11 *repent ... and you will receive the – gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38)*

15 *Abrahams death (Genesis 25:1-11)*

Isaac and Sarah barren (Genesis 25:21)

19 *God drove the man out and placed .. cherubim and a flaming sword (Genesis 3:24)*

d) Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

See study 1

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

Letter

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

5:11 *They had much to say about Jesus being of the order of Melchizedek*

12 *They should be teachers of others due to the amount of teaching they themselves had received.*

The elementary truths are - in repentance from acts that lead to death, of faith in God, instructions about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgement.

13 The teaching about righteousness is that it comes by putting your faith in God / Jesus.

They are referring to good and evil as described in the Scriptures.

6:1 Acts that lead to death are those which disbelief in Jesus and deny that He is the Christ.

‘Faith in God’ means belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Note this is plural?.

Instructions about laying on of hands re its importance(?)

4 ‘Tasting the heavenly gift’ means witnessing and acknowledging that God is at work.

They ‘shared in the Spirit’ by seeing him and being involved in His work all around.

5 ‘the goodness of God’s Word’ is its power to effect God’s will

6 The powers of the coming age are those to bring new birth in the life of a believer.

If Jesus had died for their sins and then been rejected, then He would have to die for their sins again.

8 ‘The land’ are lives that receive the Word of God

9 Better things that accompany salvation are faith, hope and love.

11 ‘Making your hope sure’ means displaying the fruit of the Spirit

12 The Holy Spirit has been promised?

13 God wanted to ‘swear’ to underline to mankind that this is the most important thing they will ever hear.

14 ‘bless you’ here meant ‘to bestow His favour’?

15 Abraham received ‘many descendants’ by faith – it was sometime after his death.

The Promise was lands, many descendants, all nations blessed

16 Swearing by someone greater means they have the power to judge and enforce it.

17 The heirs of what was promised are those who believe.

18 The two things God did was that He made a promise and then swore He would keep it.

We have fled from sin and death.

The hope is the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit

19 *The soul is our earthly existence(?)*
'The inner sanctuary' is the nearer presence of God where no sin exists.
The curtain separates God's holy presence and sinful mankind.

20 *Jesus went in before us, after His death on the cross and resurrection?*
Melchizedek is an eternal priestly order that exists in Heaven.

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

4 *We may have tasted (4) but if we have not received the base of the Christian faith (1,2) God will not permit us to progress(3) into Christ ,*

4) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.
You are stunted as Christians as you don't seem to have grasped the basics, discerning good and evil. (5:11-13)
By God's grace, let us determine to press on and grow. (6:1-3)
It is impossible for those who have experienced and rejected the Spirit , Word and power of Jesus, to be restored thus crucifying Jesus again. Fruitlessness will be judged. (4-8)
We are confident that this is not you as your deeds show it. So persevere and, with patience and faith, you will inherit what has been promised. (9-11)
God is absolutely committed to the heirs of this and we are totally secure in our access to heaven with Jesus, high priest in the order of Melchizedek. (13-20)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?
As God is to you, we want you to be totally committed to Him receiving the sure hope of Heaven

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?
We want each of you to show the same diligence to the very end to make your hope sure (6:11)

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

6:3 *God is sovereign, permitting all things.*

10 *God is just - He remembers your work and love for Him.*

11 *God is trustworthy - totally committed to keeping his Word to you.*

15 *God is utterly true to his Word.*

18 *God cannot lie.*

b) His grace?

6:4 *The experience of God / Heaven is a gift*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

6:1 *Elementary teachings about Jesus are the very basis of a hope of Heaven
Jesus always gives access to God*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

5:11 *Be willing to be forthright when speaking of attention to God's Word!*

13 *Note - the key teaching in the Christian Gospel is about righteousness*

14 *Note – a diagnostic sign of maturity in Christian teaching is to distinguish good from evil.*

6:1 *Strive to mature in your Christian faith.*

1,2 *Note – elementary teaching about Christian faith repentance from acts of evil, faith in God, instruction about baptisms, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement.*

Note - those who have experienced Christ and have turned away, cannot be brought back to repentance.

6 *Note - conversion to Christ involves entering into the crucifixion of Jesus.*

7-9 *Note – repentance to Christ / salvation produces 'fruit'.*

10,11 *Note - Work for God / love for Him shows the hope that we have in Jesus.*

6:11 *Be totally committed to preserve in your hop in Jesus to the very end.*

12 *Imitate those who through faith receive the grace of God.*

19/20 *Depend totally on Jesus to provide access to the presence of God.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Jesus is able and willing to save us

Background

There are just two references to Melchizedek in the OT:

In Genesis 14 Abraham returns from defeating four kings who had invaded from the east and taken his nephew, Lot, among the captives. Melchizedek the King of Salem came out to meet him. He blessed Abraham and was given a tenth of the plunder. No mention is made of his genealogy and it reports that 'like the son of God, he remains a priest forever' (7:3).

Psalm 110:4 indicates order of the Melchizedek priesthood was known in the Psalmist's day.

Agricultural produce was tithed and allocated to the priests (tribe of Levi) in Israel. By 1st century AD they probably did the administration themselves. The Levites were receiving the tithes from fellow-Israelites, who were children of Abraham, *like themselves*. Abraham however has accepted the superiority of Melchizedek by paying tithes *to him*.

The Aaronic priesthood was never designed to usher in the age of fulfilment. The priests died but the Christian's high priest is immortal.

Word list

1 <i>Melchizedek</i>	means 'king of righteousness'
<i>Salem</i>	Means peace.

Bible Connections – see OT quotations in ch 7:

17 & 24 Psalm 110:4

12 *change of the law* *see Galatians 3:24f*

25 *Jesus intercedes for us.* *see Rom 8:33f; Is 53:12; Luke 22:32 John 17*

27 *Jesus' one sacrifice is sufficient.* *see Isaiah 53:10; Mark 10:45*

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Which Melchizedek – are there others?!*
 - Where is Salem?*
 - Why ‘God most high’?*
 - Which Kings?*
- 2 *Why did Abraham give him a tenth?*
- 3 *If he had no lineage, where did he come from?*
- 6 *Which promises did he have?*
- 7 *Who is greater than who?*
- 8 *What does it mean that Melchizedek is declared to be living?*
- 10 *How was he in the body of his ancestor?*
- 11 *How - as Melchizedek came before Levi*
- 12 *Why – ‘a change of Law with the change of priesthood’?*
- 13 *Which tribe did Melchizedek belong to?*
- 16 *What is an indestructible life?*
- 19 *How do you draw near to God?*
- 26 *What are our needs?*
- 27 *Why does Jesus not need to offer sacrifices for His own sins?*
- 28 *What oath?*
How was the son ‘made perfect’?

What surprises or confuses you?

Melchizedek is immortal (7:3) and yet God alone is immortal - Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

2) The Context

- a) surrounding passage,
- 4 *the promises were ‘to bless him and give him many descendants’ (6:14)*
- b) individual book,
- 24 *Jesus the son of God, the creator of the universe (1:2)*
- c) whole Bible,
- 1 *We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1)*

2 'God most high' (Genesis 14:18,19, 20,22) only 4 other references in OT and 1 here in NT
He will be called ...mighty God ... Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

3 God alone is immortal (1 Timothy 6:16)

4 ... of all that you give me I will give you a tenth (Genesis 28:22)
A tithe of everything from the land....belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord (Leviticus 28:30)

7 The lesser is blessed by the greater. (Genesis 47:7)

11 For if a law had been given hat could impart life, the righteousness would certainly have come by the Law (Galatians 3:21)

14 You, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6)

19 Jesus the light of the World (John 8:12) God lives in unapproachable light (1 Tim 6:16) Dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:11)

26 (Jesus) has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility (between man and God). (Ephesians 2:14)

27 God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

28 You are my Son in whom I am well pleased. (Luke 3:22)

d) Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

See study 1

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

Letter

2) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

1 *Melchizedek is one of many appearances in the OT of the immortal God. Salem is not a place in the created order rather than an eternal state of peace with God.*
'God most high' is a title used predominantly in this story underlining that He alone is God.

The kings were Kerdoloamer King of Elam, Tidal, king of Goiim, Amraphel, King of Shinar, Ariaoch king of Ellasar.

2 *Abraham gave him a tenth as that was the standard offering that expressed submission (?)*

- 3 *He had no lineage as he was eternal.*
- 6 *The promises God gave Abraham were ‘to bless him and give him many descendants’ (6:14)*
- 7 *Melchizedek was greater than Abraham.*
- 8 *Melchizedek is ‘living’ as he is eternal (without beginning of days or end of life (3))*
- 10 *Levi was directly descended from Abraham so had a physical /genetic link.*
- 12 *The priests are connected to and implement the Law. So when the Law changes, so must the priesthood.*
- 13 *Melchizedek appears to belong to the tribe of Judah*
- 16 *An indestructible life is an immortal one.*
- 19 *We draw near to God who lives in unapproachable light in Christ the light of the world.*
- 26 *Our needs are the removal of our sin which is a barrier to God.*
- 27 *Jesus doesn’t need to offer sacrifices for His own sins as He is without sin*
- 28 *The oath is the one appointing Jesus High Priest in the order of Melchizedek. (7:17,21,22)*
He was made (declared) perfect/

3) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?

Melchizedek is a theophany – an appearance of The Lord

4) Give an overall ‘picture’ of the passage in a few sentences.

Melchizedek, King of righteousness and King of peace received a tithe from Abraham. He like the Son of God, was an eternal priest. (1-4a)

Tithes are received by the greater from the lesser. For example, by the Levites from their people. However, Levites, descendant of Abraham gave a tithe through their ancestor, Abraham, to Melchizedek. How great he must be! (4b-10)

The Levitical priesthood never delivered perfection under the Law. Melchizedek was of a different tribe. The Lord, descended from Judah and like Melchizedek, was a priest not of regulations but of an indestructible life. (11-16)

Jesus, by God’s Word was a priest ordained by Him on oath for ever - permanently! So He is always able to bring us to God (17-25)

Such a perfect High priest appointed by God, sacrificed Himself for His peoples sins, once and for all (26-28)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Because Jesus is God's eternal perfect High priest, He is permanently able to bring His people to God.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage?

v 25

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

LIVE

1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

1 *God is most high – there is none higher!*

3 *Melchizedek is immortal. God alone is immortal. Therefore Melchizedek is God.*

7 *Melchizedek is greater than Abraham, the father of the Hebrews. There is no man greater than Abraham. Therefore ,Melchizedek is divine.*

11 *God requires perfection for fellowship*

25 *God is COMPLETELY able to save us and is ALWAYS willing to do it in Jesus.*

b) His grace?

27 *All your sins have been paid for by Jesus (past present and future).*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

13 *'He, of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe', is Melchizedek. It goes in "Our Lord is descended from Judah..." The inference is that Melchizedek is Jesus.*

17,21,24 *Jesus is a priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

22 *Jesus guarantees a new / perfect (covenant. (19)*

25 *Trust Jesus to permanently bring you to God.*

26 *Jesus meets ALL our needs.*

28 *Jesus is our perfect saviour.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

- 4 *Think of God's greatness.*
- 11 *Do not waste your time trying to attain perfection through the Law – it is impossible.*
- 19 *Seek in Jesus to draw near to God.*
- 25 *Trust in and depend on Jesus at **ALL** times, forever.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Sharing the Word

Use

'Hearing the Word' can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

Preparing for a group

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers. *

Format

- a. LOOK - Any questions? (If answer is known or not!)
Relevant cross references in rest of the Bible?
- b. LEARN - Answers to questions?
- c. LISTEN - Key verse and Main Point?
- d. LIVE - What does it show about God /His grace/ Jesus?
What should I do

n.b. Leave plenty of time for the LIVE section!

By also eating together and a time of prayer, you will have shared something of the life of the early church! (Acts 2:42-47)

Remember!

As we gather round God's Word -

- a) Listen to the views of others.
- b) Make room for the novice. (They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'.)
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others, especially 'seekers', in your time together.

* The **process** is explained and practiced in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**

<https://hearingtheword.org.uk>

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