

HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

Hebrews 8-13
Leader's guide

Hearing the Word Hebrews 8-13 Leaders Guide

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Nigel Barge, April 2022

Scripture Quotations taken from

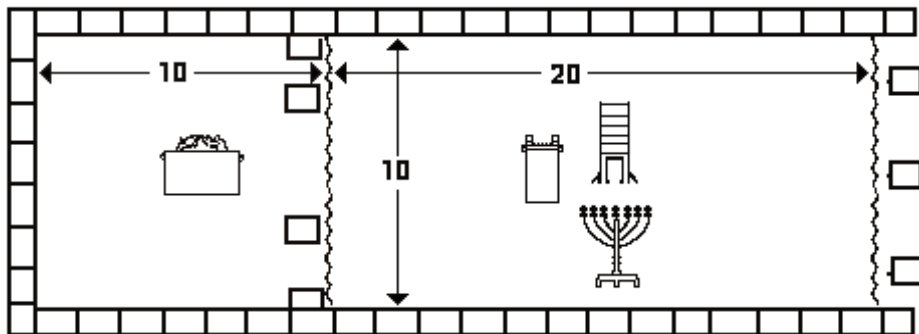
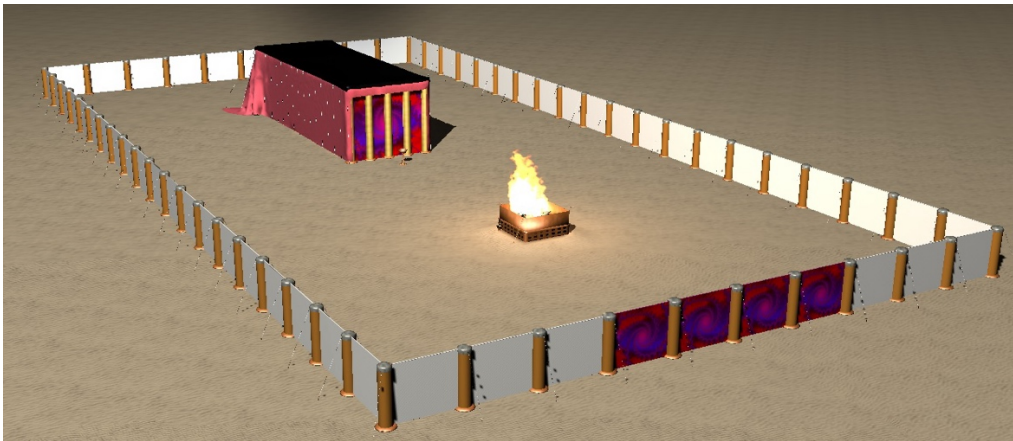
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Resources

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

The Tabernacle



Top – The lay out 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.

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 actual title, however, 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, plus 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 AD 49 and 64 *ie* between Claudius and Nero.

Who wrote it?

To quote the church historian, Origen, ‘As to who wrote the epistle only God knows for sure!’ The author was male, since 11:32 uses a masculine participle. 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, which happened in AD70, suggesting it was written before that event.

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 AD 49, under Nero, AD 64 and under Domitian, AD 91-95.

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. This, however, 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* (= 'high priest') of the Roman Empire. 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 shows 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 Christian and this was so severe that some were contemplating return to the folds of Judaism

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

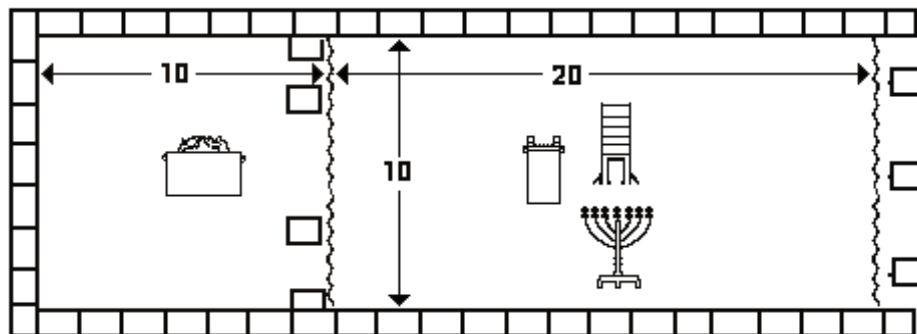
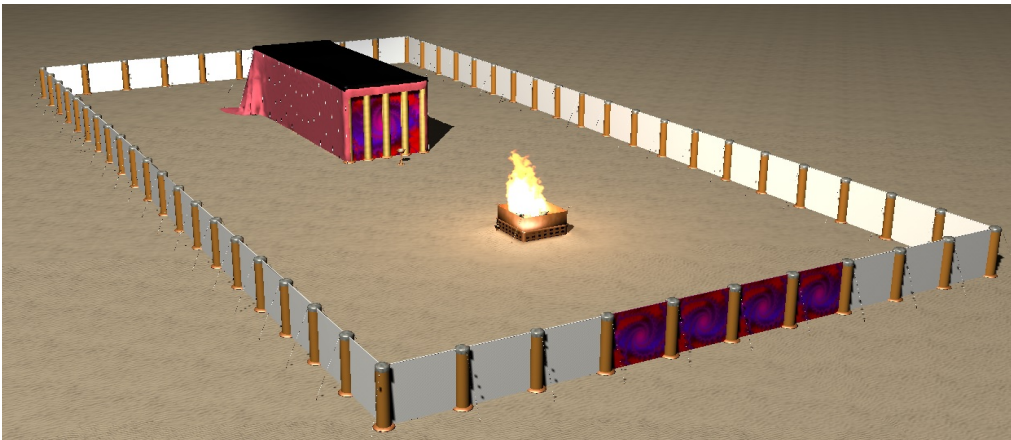
- 1) Jesus is divine
- 2) Jesus fulfils the Old Testament
- 3) Jesus enables us to pass through God judgement
- 4) Jesus is worth giving your life for.

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 second booklet look at the remaining 6 chapters

Study	<i>Hebrews:</i>		<i>Page</i>
8	8:1-13	Jesus has enabled man to know God.	4
9	9:1 – 10:18	Jesus cleanses from acts that lead to death.	9
10	10:19-39	God requires that His will is done.	15
11	11: 1-40	God makes us perfect through faith	21
12	12: 1-11	God disciplines His family	27
13	12:12-29	God is to be worshipped and obeyed	32
14	13: 1-25	Praise God through Jesus	37
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The Tabernacle



Top – The lay out 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.

Study 8

Hebrews 8:1-13

Jesus has enabled man to know God

Background

Ch7 had contrasted the imperfect Jerusalem priesthood with priesthood 'after the order of Melchizedek' i.e. *for ever*, without beginning, without end. Ch 8 develops this, for it applies to Jesus alone: He is the perfect priest.

In Exodus ch 25-26, God had given Moses very precise instructions (25:40) on how they were to make a tent or sanctuary where He would live among them (25:8a). The priests had to offer both gifts and sacrifices there, on the people's behalf, for them to be able to approach God. The writer to the Hebrews declares this was only temporary, a copy and shadow of reality as it is in heaven. (v5,13)

Jesus is the high priest of the New Covenant; and he himself is the Offering. Only one sacrifice was necessary (7:27) and he then 'sat down' (because his atoning work was completed) at the throne of the Father in heaven (8:1).

The people had been unfaithful to the old covenant. The new covenant is different (Romans 11:27; 2 Corinthians 3:3; Jeremiah 31:33-34)

Word list

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 <i>Majesty</i> | God the Father |
| 5 <i>sanctuary/ tabernacle</i> | A portable tent in the desert, with a particularly sacred end area, where God 'dwelt' among the Israelites; eventually brought to the Temple in Jerusalem, which was modelled on same layout. |
| 4 <i>..would not be a priest</i> | The Jewish priests were from the tribe of Levi, Jesus' lineage was the tribe of Judah. |
| 6 <i>covenant</i> | God's promises to his people and their obligations to him. |

Bible Connections

- | | |
|--|---|
| 8 <i>New covenant</i> | see Jeremiah 31:31-34 |
| 9 <i>Old covenant (at time of exodus from Egypt)</i> | see Exodus 24:1-8; Heb 9:18-20; Jeremiah 7:23 |
| <i>Unfaithful to covenant</i> | see Jeremiah 7:23-26; 11:6 |

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *What is 'such a High Priest'.*
Why does he need to put in 'the point of what we are saying...?'
Why the right hand?
Why 'the majesty'?
- 2 *What does 'serving in the sanctuary' mean for a high priest.*
What does 'the true tabernacle' mean?
- 3 *When is he talking about – 'If he was on earth?'*
- 5 *What was 'the mountain'?*
- 6 *What are 'the better promises'?*
What were the two covenants?
What was wrong with the first covenant?
- 8 *What fault did God find with the house of Israel?*
Why both Israel and Judah?
- 9 *How did they not remain faithful to the Old Covenant?*
- 10 *What does 'write it on their hearts' mean?*
Why only with the House of Israel?
- 11 *What does 'teaching a brother to know the Lord' mean?*
- 13 *When will the Old Covenant disappear?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 12 *Will the people still be wicked when they are forgiven?*

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 1 *Such a high priest meets our needs – one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners exalted above the Heavens. (7:26)*
- 4 *It is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe (7:14) {ie not Levi the tribe of the priests}.*

b) individual book,

- 1 *On the right had of His Majesty on high (1:3)*
- 6 *so he became superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.. (1:4)*

c) whole Bible,

- 1 on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Col 3:1)
- 5 When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mt Sinai He gave Him the two tablets of the Covenant Law (Exodus 31:18)
- 6 the New Covenant to gift of the Holy spirit and the forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38)
- 9 Moses replied “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test? (Exodus 17:2)
- 12 We know that when he appears we will be like Him for we will see Him as He is .(1 John 3:2b)

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 ‘Such a High Priest’ is ‘holy , blameless, pure set apart from sinners, exalted above the Heavens. (7:26)

He puts in ‘ the point of what we are saying...’ as he is about to repeat it in a succinct and clear way.

The right hand as he is the Majesty’s second in command / He is expresses the Majesty’s will.

‘The Majesty’ suggests His authority.

- 2 ‘Serving in the sanctuary’ means He is acting as a go between His people and God.

The tabernacle was a tent given by God that represents the reality, ‘the true tabernacle’ in Heaven(c.f. an acorn and an oak tree?)

- 4 *'If he was on earth' shows the contrast with the Levites in the tabernacle and Jesus who is in Heaven*
- 5 *'The mountain' was Mt Sinai*
- 6 *'The better promises are that of the forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit*

The OT – I will be your God if you obey Me / My Law

NT - I have kept My Law on your behalf. I will be your God if you believe in / trust me

The first covenant failed as we were incapable of keeping the Law.

- 8 *The fault God found with the house of Israel is that they did not obey His Law*

Israel and Judah as they were both the descendants of Jacob, heirs of the promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

- 9 *They did not remain faithful to the Old Covenant by disbelieving God and showing it by grumbling.*

- 10 *'Write it on their hearts' means it will be indelibly imprinted on their minds*

The House of Israel in this instance refers to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah

- 11 *'Teaching a brother to know the Lord' means that one can show another how to know / experience God/*

- 13 *Old Covenant disappears when a person believes in Jesus.*

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

People who believe in Him will be sinners saved by grace

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

Our high priests serves his Majesty in Heaven in the true sanctuary (1,2)

High priests offer gifts and sacrifices in the earthly tabernacles. However Jesus unlike his earthly counterpart has a superior ministry and covenant. (3-6)

God showed the need for a replacement covenant one which he would effect so that people could have contact with Him and know that he forgave their sins (7-13)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

MP Jesus is our High Priest of the New Covenant and is able to bring us to know God for ourselves.

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

Vs 1

We do have such a high priest, Jesus, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the majesty of Heaven.

LIVE

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

a) His nature and character?

1 God has made Himself accessible to mankind through Jesus .

5,6 God gave the details of the tabernacle at Mt Sinai an exact shadow of the reality in Heaven.

13 God nullified His first covenant with man

b) His grace?

*11 God enables / permits men to know Him
God forgives our wickedness*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

*1 Jesus is our High Priest.
Jesus' ministry for us as High Priest is in Heaven*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 Don't be satisfied with anything other than knowing God in Jesus for yourself

11 Note people are 'wicked' i.e. completely and hopelessly lost from God

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Jesus cleanses from acts that lead to death

Background

In 9:1-5 the author describes the wilderness/tent/Tabernacle, referring to the Exodus text (see previous Study) and in 9:6-10 he describes the ritual attached to it. His point is that these physical items and practices were *temporary*, a visible, earthly version of an invisible, heavenly reality.

Under the old system, only the High Priest could enter the Most Holy Place and only on one day of the year – the day of Atonement – when special sacrifices were made. V8 says the Holy Spirit was showing that people had no direct access to God.

9:11-14 declare that the only way to God is through Christ's perfect sacrifice, once offered and eternally valid.

9:15-22 show that Jesus is therefore the mediator of the new covenant. He is testator, executor, surety and mediator all the same time!

10:5-14 applies Psalm 40:6-8 to Jesus, with implications for the holiness of believers.

10:15-18 applies Jeremiah 31:33-34 to show there is no longer any need for sacrifices for sin.

Word list

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|--|
| 9: 2 | <i>consecrated bread</i> | 812 cakes, replaced each Sabbath; only priests may eat. |
| 5 | <i>Atonement cover</i> | or Mercy Seat |
| 12 | <i>redemption</i> | means 'to buy back' |
| 14 | <i>acts that lead to death</i> | actions and attitudes that pollute people and build barriers with God. |
| 16 | <i>a will</i> | Greek <i>diatheke</i> is the same word as covenant |
| 19 | <i>scroll</i> | ie the book of the Law (representing God, his commandments and covenant) |

Bible Connections –

- | | | |
|---------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 9:19-20 | <i>Mosaic covenant</i> | see Exodus 24:3-8 |
| 27-28 | <i>effect of Christ's death</i> | see also 1 Corinthians 15:22 |
| 10: 3 | <i>sacrifices as reminder of sins</i> | cf 8:12, Jeremiah 31:31-34 |
| 12 | <i>sat down at right hand of God</i> | see Psalm 110:1 |

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

9:2 Why the 'first room'?

5 What more detail is there to discuss?

6 What was 'the priests ministry'?

7 Why 'never without blood'?

What about the deliberate (as opposed to in ignorance) sins?

8 Why the Holy Spirit and not God?

9 What does it mean 'the present time'?

Why 'the conscience'?

10 What is 'the new order'?

11 Why is Jesus simply denoted as 'Christ' here?

What are 'the good things that are already here'?

12 What is eternal redemption?

14 How was Christ offered through the eternal Spirit?

15 What is a mediator?

Why are the covenant likened to human wills?

'Nearly everything'— what was not cleansed by the sprinkling of blood?

26 How was He able to offer Himself only once?

27 When will 'the second time' be for Christ's appearing?

What is 'salvation' from?

10:1 What good things are coming?

What does 'make perfect' mean?

5 Why does it say 'when Christ came into the world' when these words were first spoken by the Psalmist?

8 Who is 'He'?

10 What does 'make holy' mean? (c.f. make perfect? 10:1)

11 Why does he keep on offering sacrifices if they do not remove sin?

12 What does 'sitting down at the right hand of God' show?

13 Who are his enemies that will be made a footstool?

What surprises or confuses you?

9:7 *What about the deliberate (as opposed to in ignorance) sins?*

10:1 *How can the Law that condemned us to death be described as a shadow of something good?*

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

15 *mediator (8:6)*

b) individual book,

15 *Inherit what has been promised (6:12)*

c) whole Bible,

1 *construction of the tabernacle (Ex 40:1-3)*

7 *day of Atonement (Lev 16)*

10 *Jesus on Ceremonial washing (Mark 7:1ff)*

12 *redemption (Leviticus 25:24ff)*

14 *No one takes (my life) from me but I lay it down of my own accord (John 10:18)*

He is able to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

15 *one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 2:5)*

Inherit eternal life (Luke 10:25; Revelation 21:7)

15 *gave Himself as a ransom (Mark 10:45)*

22 *Your sins are forgiven... (Luke 5:20)*

24 *No-one shall see me and live. (Exodus 33:20)*

26 *It is finished (John 19:30)*

27 *... at the judgment (Luke 10:14)*

The Lord Himself will come down (and we will) meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16... 17)

saved from God's wrath against sin (Romans 5:9)

10:1 *The Law was put in charge to lead us to Christ. (Galatians 3:24)*

7 *My food is to do the will of Him who sent me. (John 4:34)*

10 *Be holy for I am Holy says the Lord. (1 Peter 1:6)*

12 *Christ is sat at the right hand of God (Colossians 1:3)*

d) Bible story
See study 8

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

Letter

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

2 *the separate rooms for Israel, priests and God Himself (Holy of Holies.)*

5 *More detail may have to do with the significance of the features.*

6 *'The priests ministry' is to present the sacrifices of the people to God.*

7 *'Never without blood' as the presence of sin before God meant death / a price had to be paid.*

8 *The Holy Spirit' is God.*

9 *'The present time' is the time when the Temple stands and the Old Covenant is being exercised.*

'The conscience' must be the part sensitive to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

10 *'The new order' is the New covenant sealed in the blood of Jesus*

11 *'Christ' indicates Jesus as the Jewish Messiah.*

'The good things that are already here'(to come?) are the forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

12 *Eternal redemption is the reclaiming of sinners who have believed in Him.*

14 *Christ offered Himself by giving through the eternal Spirit.*

15 *A mediator is a go between two estranged parties.*

The covenant is likened to human a will as both are put into effect through a death / sacrifice.

22 *'Nearly everything'— God Himself / His Ark does not need to be cleansed.*

26 *He was able to offer Himself only once as His death covered all sins.*

27 *'The second time' is at the end of time - for judgement and restoration.*

'Salvation' is from sin.

10:1 *'Good things' are Heaven.*

'Make perfect' means make righteous or holy.

5 *It was prophetic words of Jesus pointed to by the Psalmist.*

- 8 *'He' is the psalmist / the Holy Spirit (c.f. 10:15)*
- 10 *'Make holy' means acceptable to God (c.f. make perfect 10:1)*
- 11 *He keeps on offering sacrifices as that is commanded by God.*
- 12 *'Sitting at the right hand shows that he is the executor of the will of the God head.*
- 13 *His enemies are those who do not do His will*

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

9:7 *Deliberate sins are those that knowingly reject the will of God?*

10:1 *The Law is good in that it leads us to Christ.*

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

The old order of the tabernacle with only the high priest once a year entering God's presence in the Holy of Holies, showed the separation between God and man. All the sacrifices were ineffective (9:1-10)

Christ entered heaven on our behalf giving his own life blood and so cleansed us that we may serve God. Thus Christ mediates a new relationship between God and man by releasing us from all sin (9:11-14).

Like a will when someone dies, the Old Covenant was put into effect when the sacrifices died and their blood was shed. The shedding of blood is needed for forgiveness. (15-22)

Jesus however entered heaven, offered his own blood, once and for all for the sins of the people and he will appear at the end of time to receive those who wait for Him (23-27)

Trying to keep the Law by sacrifice of animals is ineffective. As prophesied, Jesus presented Himself as a sacrifice, making a New Covenant with man. Not needing to repeat it, He sat down at God's right hand, guaranteeing to us the forgiveness of our sins by His Spirit (10:1-18)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Unlike the Old Covenant, in the New, through Jesus, God gave us life so that we might live for Him.

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

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (14)

LIVE

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

a) His nature and character?

9:5 *The glory of God is revealed in His atonement*

8 *The Holy Spirit instructed the design of the tabernacle*

b) His grace?

9:14 *The blood of Jesus liberates us from death*

15 *Jesus gave His life as a ransom for us*

10:10 *Gods will makes us holy (10:10)*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

11 *The ministry of Jesus as High Priest is in Heaven*

24 *Christ appears for us in God's presence*

26 *Jesus did away with sin by His sacrifice on the cross*

27 *Jesus will reappear to bring those who wait for him to salvation.*

10:12 *God is satisfied with Jesus sacrifice – completely!*

14 *Jesus 'more than' fulfils the OT*

18 *Jesus' death means there is no longer any need for a sacrifice for our sin*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

8 *Treat the OT as God having written it!*

9 *Apply the OT as illustration for the present time.*

14 *Be free to serve God knowing that you are completely forgiven.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

God requires that His will is done

Background

The author now moves into a practical section concerning the reader's need to respond to the greatness of God. As was shown when the physical curtain at the entrance to the Most Holy Place in the Temple in Jerusalem was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51), there is now free access for repentant sinners to the Father on the grounds of the shed blood of his Son.

Notice the five pleas for action from his readers, each introduced by 'Let us' in 21-25.

26-31 gives a further warning about the seriousness of sin, the deliberate, intentional, and sustained turning away from Jesus and his saving work.

32-39 calls on the believers to persevere in the face of persecution. This might refer to limits set on Jews in Rome by Claudius in AD 41, or their expulsion in AD 49, or Nero's persecution later in AD 64 which led to martyrdom for some. Trusting faith is vital.

Word list

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|--|
| 19 | <i>Most Holy Place</i> | see Background in previous study |
| 21 | <i>House of God</i> | the community of God's people, not a physical building (3:6) |

Bible Connections

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 20 | <i>new and living way</i> | see also 4:14-16 |
| 30 | <i>'It is mine to avenge...'</i> | see Deuteronomy 32:35 |
| | <i>'It is a dreadful thing...'</i> | see Deuteronomy 32:36 |
| 37 | <i>Jesus is returning.</i> | see Habakkuk 2:3-4 |

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 20 *Why was the old way 'dead'?*
- 22 *What is 'assured faith'?*
- 22 *What are our hearts sprinkled with?*
Why do we have a guilty conscience?
What is 'pure water'?
- 23 *What is 'the hope we profess'?*
What is the promise?
- 24 *Why should we do 'good deeds'?*
- 25 *Why should we meet together?*
What is 'The Day' that approaches?
- 26 *What is 'the knowledge of the truth'?*
- 27 *What is 'the raging fire that will consume the enemies of God'?*
Who are 'the enemies of God'?
- 28 *How did anyone 'reject the Law of Moses'?*
- 29 *How is 'the son of God trampled underfoot'?*
How is the blood of the Covenant 'treated as an unholy thing'?
How is the Spirit of Grace insulted?
- 31 *What does 'falling into the hands of the living God' mean?*
- 32 *What does 'receiving the light' mean?*
- 34 *What are 'the better and lasting possessions'?*
- 35 *What does 'throwing away' your confidence 'mean'?*
- 36 *What is 'the will of God'?*
- 39 *When, how and why would someone be destroyed?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 26 *His 'we' seems to include the writer himself?*

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 22 *faith is being sure of what we hope for (11:1)*
sprinkled with blood (9:19,21)
- 29 *the blood of the covenant (9:20)*

35 confidence to enter the most Holy place (10:19)

b) individual book,

22 draw near to God (7:19; 10:1)

29 Jesus, the son of God (4:14)

c) whole Bible,

22 I was afraid because I was naked so I hid. (Genesis 3:10)

Against you, you only have I sinned (Psalm 51:4)

But you were washed you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11)

23 He who believes in me will live even though he dies (John 11:25)

24 It is by grace you have been saved... (Ephesians 2:8)

25 For where two or three are gathered in my name there I am (Matthew 18:20)

the day (1 Peter 2:12; 2 Peter 2:9; 3:7; 3:10; 3:12)

26 Not everyone who says to me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21)

God so loved the world that he gave His one and only son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)

27 lake of fire (Revelation 20:14,15)

28 testimony of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15)

29 the blood of the covenant (Ex 24:8)

sanctified (John 17:19; 1 Corinthians 7:14)

Spirit of grace (Zechariah 12:10) {only 2 places used}

31 My God, my God why have you forsaken me (Matthew 27:46)

32 I am the light of the world (John 8:12)

children of the light (1 Thessalonians 5:5)

..they hear the Word with joy then in a time of testing they fall away (Luke 8:13)

34 I was in prison and you came to visit me. (Matthew 25:36)

Store up treasure for yourself in heaven (Matthew 6:20)

35 reward (Matthew 6:1,2,4,5,6,16,18)

36 Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved' (Acts 16:31)

God's will in Christ Jesus is to be joyful always, to pray continually and give thanks in all circumstances (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

- 39 Destroyed – people of Noah’s day / Sodom & Gomorrah (Luke 17:27,29)
I have set before you life and death.... choose life (Deuteronomy 30:15)

d) Bible story
See study 9

LEARN

- 1) What kind of literature is this?

Letter

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

20 *The old way, the Law, was ‘dead’ in that it didn’t give life.*

22 *‘Assured faith is faith that believes you have received it.*

22 *Our hearts are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus*

We have a guilty conscience because we know that we have sinned against God.

‘Pure water’ is that which is received in the name of Jesus

23 *‘The hope we profess’ is that of drawing near to God by the blood of Jesus.*

The promise is that we will receive eternal life through believing in Jesus.

24 *We should do ‘good deeds’ as an expression of obedience to Jesus after the grace showed to us by Him.*

25 *We should meet together in the name of Jesus for He will manifest Himself amongst us.*

‘The Day’ that approaches is the day of judgement at the end of time.

26 *The truth is that ‘God so loved the world that he gave His one and only son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life’.*
(John 3:16)

27 *The raging fire is the lake that will consume the enemies of God on the day of judgement.*

‘The enemies of God’ are those who reject His grace and cling to their sin.

28 *People ‘reject the Law of Moses’ by blatantly, knowingly and deliberately contravening His Law.*

29 *The son of God is trampled underfoot when he is disbelieved.*

The blood of the Covenant ‘treated as an unholy thing’ when the death of Jesus is not recognised as the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16)

The Spirit of Grace is insulted when men try and work for their salvation.

31 *‘Falling into the hands of the living God’ means being subject to His judgement.*

32 *‘Receiving the light’ mean receiving the Gospel gladly.*

34 *‘The better and lasting possessions’ are heavenly reward.*

35 *‘The confidence’ is in the total sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus for us.*

36 *‘The will of God’ is essentially ‘to believe in the Lord Jesus’*

39 *Destruction will come after the day of judgement.*

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

26 *He is speaking of all who would claim the name of Christ – himself included. Though with the understanding that, just because you do so, does not mean that one belongs to Christ.*

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

Therefore, let us be totally confident in the way Jesus has brought us to God and trust Him. Let us encourage one another to stand in Him. (19-24)

Deliberate rejection of Jesus means death. Rejecting the Law was one thing but to reject the Son of God and His grace is far worse – the Lord will punish that severely. (26-31)

Remember in early days how you withstood persecution in anticipation of your heavenly reward? Hang on now and don’t throw it away. God will soon sort it all out. Trust in Jesus. He will save you – for sure! (32-39)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

MP *Believers in Jesus have to hold on to Him to the fact that they will be with Him in glory.*

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

v 36

KV *You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God you will receive what is promised.*

LIVE

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

a) His nature and character?

22 *God desires us to draw near to Him.*

27 *God will confine his enemies to be consumed in the raging fire.*

31 *The judgement of living God is to be dreaded.*

36 *God sets before us the prospect of receiving His promise – being with Him in glory.*

b) His grace?

29 *The Spirit of God offers us grace.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

19 *Jesus' blood allows us to enter the presence of God.*

30 *The Lord Jesus will judge His people.*

17 *Jesus will return 'in just a very little while.*

2) What should I do?

22 *Enter God's presence confident in the effect for you of the blood of Jesus.*

23 *Hold on tight to your hope in Jesus.*

24 *Think of how you may encourage others to love and serve in Jesus name.*

25 *Make meeting together in Jesus name a priority as you look to His return.*

26 *Resist the temptation to deliberately sin by remembering the consequences.*

28 *Always treat the sacrifice of Jesus reverently and seriously.*

30 *Fear the Lord.*

36 *Persevere anticipating His promise.*

37 *Expect the return of Jesus soon.*

God makes us perfect through faith

Background

The author shows how many ordinary and special people in the OT acted the way they did because they had faith in God's promises.

In v32 he runs out of time/space and resorts to listing the names of further heroes well known to his Jewish readers from the OT books of Judges, Samuel and Kings. No need to spell out their heroic actions: the intended audience of Hebrews would instantly recall them!

Word list and Bible Connections

1	<i>faith</i>	"The title deeds of things hoped for"
3	<i>creation</i>	see Genesis 1
4	<i>Abel & Cain</i>	see Genesis 4:4
5	<i>Enoch</i>	see Genesis 5:21-24
7	<i>Noah</i>	see Genesis 13-22
8ff	<i>Abraham</i>	see Genesis 12:1-4,8; 17:17-19; 22:1-10
9,20,21	<i>Isaac & Jacob</i>	see Genesis 27:27-29; 48:1,8-22
22	<i>Joseph</i>	see Genesis 50:24-25
23-29	<i>Moses</i>	see Exodus 2:2,10-11; 12:50-51; 14:21-3; 12:21-23; 14:21-23
30	<i>Jericho walls</i>	see Joshua 6:12-20
31	<i>Rahab</i>	see Joshua 2:1,9-14; 6:22-25
32	<i>Gideon, Barak,</i>	see Judges 6-8, 4-5,
	<i>Samson, Jephthah,</i>	see Judges 13-16, 11-12,
	<i>David, Samuel</i>	see 1 Samuel 16:1,13; 1:20
35	<i>women receiving back their dead</i>	see 1 Kings 17:7-24; 2 Kings 4:8-36; Luke 7:11-15

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *'Now' implies a follow on. How does it connect to the last passage?*
What is the faith that the writer talks of?
- 2 *Who were 'the ancients'?*
Who commended them?
- 4 *How and to whom does He still speak?*
- 6 *How does He reward those who seek Him?*
- 10 *What is the city he was looking for?*
What is the significance of the foundations?
- 13 *What does 'living by faith' mean?*
- 16 *Why is God not ashamed to be called their God?*
- 26 *How was Moses disgraced for the sake of Christ who had not yet been born?*
What was his reward?
- 27 *When did he see Him who is invisible'?*
- 31 *Who were the disobedient and how were they disobedient?*
- 35 *How might they "gain a better resurrection" by dying?*
- 40 *What 'better' had God prepared for us?*

What surprises or confuses you?

The examples of faith of 'the ancients' generally had positive results in this world. However the general examples (35-38) seem to suffer loss in this world. Why?

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 1 *Let us draw near to God in full assurance of faith (10:22)*
We have confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus (10:19)
- 40 *He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy (10:14)*

b) individual book,

- 3 *universe (1:2)*
- 16 *Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. (2:11)*
- 17 *This day have I begotten you (1:5; 5:5)*

40 *make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered (2:10)*
The Law made nothing perfect. (7:19)
The Law... can never....make perfect those who draw near to worship. (10:1)

c) whole Bible,

3 *God said Let there be ... (Genesis 1:3,6,9)*
Through (the Word) all things were made. (John 1:3)
universe (1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 4:10)
4 *Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:6)*
10 *I saw the Holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God. (Revelations 21:2)*
I am going to prepare a place for you (John 14:2)
13 *... as stranger in this world to abstain from sinful desires. (1 Pet 2:11)*
16 *For I am not ashamed of the Gospel. (Romans 1:16)*
17 *only begotten son (John 3:16)*
26 *(suffer) for my name's sake (Luke 21:17; Acts 9:16)*
40 *Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48)*

d) Bible story

See study 9

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

letter

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

1 *'The preceding section had spoken of drawing near to God through Jesus with full assurance of faith (10:22). Chapter 11 gives examples of predecessors who exhibited faith and how they did it.*

This faith is the belief in the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf giving us access to God (10:19,20)

2 *'The ancients' were their descendants right back to Abel, son of Adam and Eve .*

The Lord commended them.

- 4 As his acceptable offering is remembered by his descendants so he (and through him God) still speaks to them.
- 6 He rewards those who earnestly seek Him by revealing Himself through His Son, Jesus.
- 10 It is the Holy city, the new Jerusalem in Heaven that he was looking for
What is the significance of the foundations?
- 13 'Living by faith' means you don't see what God has promised you , but you continue to believe he will give it to you.
- 16 God is not ashamed to be called their God because they were continuing to believe in His promise of a city prepared for Him.
- 26 Moses was disgraced for the sake of Christ who had not yet been born as he had faith that God would send a deliverer / saviour.
His reward was in the life to come, in the holy city in heaven.
- 27 He saw by faith as he led the people of Israel, that God was with Him.
- 31 'The disobedient' means those who were not believing in the God of the Israelites i.e. the whole people of Jericho.
- 35 They might "gain a better resurrection" by being martyred for their faith in Jesus.
- 40 The 'something better' that God has prepared for us, is a place in Heaven

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

Those who died, the eternal impact is not yet known. The example of those who lived is a lesson to the living.

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

This faith in Jesus makes us confident of what he has promised giving us certainty that though we do not see it now, we shall do in God's time (1,2)

Our faith is in our creator. There are many examples of this from the fall onwards of how some have related to God by faith and that pleases Him (3-6)

There was a line of the children of faith from Noah to Abraham to Isaac, to Jacob, to Joseph, to Moses.(7-28)

It involved the whole people of Israel and even a non-Jewish prostitute. Rahab(29-31)

Examples of faith showed miraculous power and glorious hope in the face of suffering (32-38)

They showed faith, which we share, that God will make us perfect (39,40)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Faith in God is trusting in Him and being confident of being made perfect / fit for Heaven by Him

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

God had planned something better for us so that together with us would they be made perfect (39,40)

LIVE

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

a) His nature and character?

1 God commends His people for their faith

3 God created by His Word

4 God speaks well of offerings given in faith

6 God is pleased with faith

17 God tests our faith in Him

16 God is not ashamed to be called the God of those who believe he has prepared a better, heavenly city for them

39f God has planned that those who believe in Him will be made perfect

b) His grace?

4ff God requires of us nothing but faith in Him and actions that demonstrate it

c) Jesus and His salvation?

26 Christ, God's anointed one, was anticipated by His people 10000 years before his coming

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

3 note - a belief in the origin of the universe is an act of faith whatever you believe We put it in the creator

4,5,7,8 etc All these were acts of faith - an offering (4), timing of leaving this world, (5), where to stay, work etc. (8), having children (11), making sacrifices (17) giving gifts of inheritance (20) pronouncing blessings (21)

prophesying the future (22) response to a rulers edict (23), choice of identity, background, culture (25) receiving the Lord's protection (28), trusting his deliverance (29) overcoming an apparently insurmountable problem (30) choice of salvation (31)

32 note - for some faith in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ led to great victories in this world

35b note – others suffered in this world for their faith in Jesus

39,40 Trust God that He has prepared something far better for you than this world

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

God disciplines His family

Background

To describe the Christian life, the author uses the metaphor of a race: as runners strip for action, discarding anything that might slow them down; so believers need to relinquish sin, since that would hinder us living the Christian life. In order to do this, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus.

Roman crucifixion was such a horrific form of execution, it was never carried out on Roman citizens; it was reserved for the lowest of the low, e.g. slaves who had been recaptured after escaping. Jesus had done nothing to deserve the cross, or the *shame* of it, but endured it for our salvation. His subsequent resurrection and ascension showed God had overruled the earthly shame and honoured him.

Since believers are children of God in Christ, God disciplines us *as his children*. So when we experience opposition from the world, that does not mean God has abandoned us; rather, that He is disciplining us as a good father disciplines his children.

Word list

1	<i>witness</i>	<i>gk Martyrs</i> – commonly = a spectator. Used frequently in Acts as such (1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 5:32.)
		Came to be used as one who had given his life for the cause of Christ
	<i>cloud of</i>	i.e. the list of people in ch 11 who kept faith, and who still live, watching from heaven.
	<i>perseverance</i>	holding out, endurance, patience
4	<i>shedding of blood</i>	death c.f. of a sacrifice (9:22)
12	<i>strengthen feeble arms...</i>	<i>see</i> Isaiah 35:3f
	<i>level paths for your feet</i>	<i>see</i> Proverbs 4:26

Bible Connections

1	<i>Race metaphor:</i>	<i>see</i> Philippians 3:12-14
5	<i>Disciplines us as sons</i>	<i>see</i> Proverbs 3:11,12.

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *What is 'therefore' there for!*
What hinders us?
What is 'the race marked out for us'?
- 2 *What does 'author and 'perfector of our faith' mean?*
What was 'the joy set before him'?
What does 'throne' imply – Why not just 'sat down at right hand of God'?
- 4 *What is their 'struggle against sin'?*
What does he mean 'not resisted to the point of shedding blood'?
- 8 *What is the distinction between discipline of children and non-children by a father?*
- 9 *What does 'father of our spirits' mean?*
- 10 *What is God's holiness?*
- 11 *What is 'a harvest of peace and righteousness'?*
- 12 *What does he mean 'strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees'?*
Who are the lame?
- 13 *What does lameness mean in this setting?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 7 *Discipline is usually merited when the subject has done something wrong. God's discipline of us (hardship and opposition) does not appear to be the basis of merit?*

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 2 *with us they would be made perfect (11:40)*

b) individual book,

- 2 *joy (1:8,9; Ps 45:7)*
- 9 *my righteous one will live by faith (10:38; Hab 2:3,4)*
- 10 *without holiness no-one shall see the Lord (10:14)*

c) whole Bible,

- 2 *Jesus prayer so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. (17:3)*

From now on, the son of man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God. (Luke 22:69)

3 *While we were still sinners Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)*

5 *encouragement – positive word (Acts 4:36; 20:2; Rmns 15:4,5; Phil 2:1)*

7 *There is no one righteous not one All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:10,23)*

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

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

11 *Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. (Psalm 85:10)*

12 *Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. (Proverbs 4:26)*

d) Bible story

See study I

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

Letter

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

1 *‘Therefore’ i.e. since we have such a group watching us of people who have exemplified faith in the Lord God almighty ...*

All that would tempt us to disbelieve the Spirit of Jesus would hinder us.

‘The race marked out for us’ is the path of our lives that God has ordained.

2 *‘Perfection of our faith means that God initiates our faith in Jesus by revealing Himself to us.*

The joy set before him’ was the prospect His Fathers that His will was done and the inclusion of His church with Him in Heaven

The ‘throne’ implies that He had obeyed the Fathers will and authority.

4 *‘Struggle against sin is striving to believe His Word and obey His will.*

He means that they have not yet been put to death for their faith in Jesus

8 *A father is responsible for the discipline of his own children so he will punish them if they transgress.*

9 *‘Father of our spirits’ means our spiritual father i.e. not our physical father*

10 *God’s holiness is His perfect purity in every way.*

- 11 *'Peace and righteousness' are qualities of God's perfect holiness.*
12 *He means 'do not buckle and give in under the adversity and opposition. The lame are those who know that they are helpless in commending themselves to God.*
Lameness signifies helplessness/

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

We all sin and deserve death / God's judgement. In His mercy God adopts us as His children and determines to make us like Jesus

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

With these faithful predecessors in mind, take heart remembering Jesus' suffering for you (1-3)

See your trials as God's loving discipline of you as a Father to a son: He is working a making you fit for His perfect Heaven (4-11).

So hold on and stand firm. (12,13)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

MP *View adversity as a sign that God is making his children fit for Heaven.*

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 7**

KV *Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons.*

LIVE

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

a) His nature and character?

5 *The Lord is a disciplinarian of His children.*
The Lord loves his children.

7 *God is firm and resolute – He is prepared to let His children suffer so that they learn and grow.*

b) His grace?

3 *Jesus endured 'opposition from sinful men' in order to save them.*

c) Jesus and His salvation?

- 2 *Jesus is responsible for initiating and perfecting our faith.
Jesus' motivation in His mission on earth was joy.*
- 3 *Jesus is our example.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

- 1 *Actively and forcibly throw off sin.*
- 2 *Fix your eyes of Jesus.*
- 3 *Always look hard at who Jesus was and what He did for you.*
- 4 *Note – the 'shedding of blood' is a possibility for all followers of Jesus.*
- 5 *Remember - the Lord lovingly disciplines His children.*
- 7 *Look positively at adversity knowing God has allowed it to make you more like Jesus.*
- 11 *Note Gods purpose in your discipline – 'a harvest of righteousness and peace'*
- 12 *'Man up'!*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

God is to be worshipped and obeyed

Background

Vv18-20 remind us that Mt Sinai was so charged with God's holiness that certain death would strike down any human or animal that touched it!

Because of Jesus, it is not like that for us – we have come to 'Mount Zion,' (literally, the site of the Temple in Jerusalem, which also had barriers to entry because of the holiness of God) but here used metaphorically to mean the heavenly Jerusalem (Revelation 14:1)

Word list and Bible Connections

14	<i>peacemakers</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 5:9
	<i>Be holy</i>	<i>see</i> Leviticus 11:45; cf 1 Peter 1:15f
15	<i>root of bitterness</i>	<i>see</i> Deuteronomy 29:18
16	<i>Esau selling birth-right</i>	<i>see</i> Genesis25:34
18-20	<i>Mt Sinai too holy to touch</i>	<i>see</i> Exodus 19:16-23; 20:18-21 Deuteronomy 4:11f
21	<i>Moses trembling with fear</i>	<i>see</i> Deuteronomy 9:19
22	<i>have come to heavenly Jerusalem</i>	Greek verb is perfect tense, ?? <i>i.e</i> .our coming is ongoing
29	<i>God is a consuming fire.</i>	<i>see</i> Deuteronomy 4:24

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 14 *What does 'being holy' mean?*
- 15 *What is 'the grace of God' that people may miss?*
What is 'a bitter root'?
- 16 *How was Esau 'godless'?*
Why was sexual immorality and Esau's Godlessness mentioned together?
- 17 *Who was there 'no changing of mind' with?*
- 20 *What was commanded that they could not bear?*
- 23 *Who is 'the first born' and why is he given that name?*
What is the significance of having your 'names written in Heaven'?
Who were the righteous men made perfect?
How were they made perfect?
- 24 *What word did the 'blood of Abel' speak?*
- 25 *Who speaks and who has been refused in person?*
Who are they who refused Him?
- 26 *At what time did His voice shake the earth?*
- 28 *Why the present tense 'are receiving'?*
What are we thankful of?
How do we worship God acceptably?
- 29 *What does a 'consuming fire' imply*

What surprises or confuses you?

How can you be blamed for missing grace as it comes to those who don't deserve it?

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

- 16 *God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral (13:4)*

b) individual book,

- 15 *by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (2:9)*
- 23 *Mediator of the New Covenant (9:15)*

c) whole Bible,

- 14 *make every effort to add to your faith goodness and to goodness knowledge....to confirm your calling, to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him. (2 Peter 1:5, 10; 3:14)*
- 16 *the inheritance of his forefathers (Genesis 12:3; 15:5-7; 26:2,3; 28:13-15) godless (1 Timothy 4:7; 6:20; 2 Timothy 2:16) (only mentions in the NT)*
- 17 *Esau wept (Genesis 27:38)*
- 20 *The people trembled with fear. (Exodus 20:19)*
- 23 *the first born among the dead (Colossians 1:18) name written in the book of life (Revelation 20:15) Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. (Genesis 4:10)*
- 26 *When Jesus died 'the rocks shook and the earth spit (Matthew 27:51)*
- 28 *The kingdom of God has come near you , upon you (Luke 10:9; 11:20) those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion which cannot be shaken but endures forever. (Psalm 125:1)*

e) Bible story

See study 9

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

Letter

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

- 14 *Holiness is a gift that Jesus has won for us which echoes God's perfection. - In our fallen state, it is a reality that we strive towards.*
- 15 *'The grace of God' is a gift to us that we are then called to reflect in our dealings with others out of gratitude. 'A bitter root' is a problem in relationships which, if not dealt with, grows becoming more intractable.*
- 16 *Esau was 'godless' in that he did not value his heritage of the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Both Esau's Godlessness (his want to have a meal in place of his birth right) and sexual promiscuity are driven by desire with no thought of the consequences.*

- 17 There 'no changing of mind' with Jacob, his father.
- 20 The Lord had spoken the 10 commandments at Mt Sinai and the people trembled with fear.
- 23 Jesus is the first born – the first to be raised from the dead.
 'Names written in Heaven' are of those who will live with God.
 The righteous men made perfect were the followers of Jesus.
 They were made perfect by faith in Jesus.
- 24 The 'blood of Abel' spoke from the ground accusing Cain of murder.
- 25 Jesus speaks and He was refused in person.
 Those who refused Him were the people who rejected Him and the leaders who crucified Him.
- 26 Jesus shook the earth when He died.
- 28 The present tense is used because the Kingdom has come (but is yet to come in its fullness).
 We are thankful for the King, Jesus, and for His Kingdom.
 We worship God acceptably through faith with reverence and awe.
- 29 A 'consuming fire' implies that he is very dangerous if approached wrongly i.e. without faith in Jesus.

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

The grace of the gift of salvation is open to all who would receive it. No one deserves it but some accept the gift and others do not.

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

Try hard to be peaceful, holy, gracious, sexually proper and aware of God unlike Esau who despise God's promise; his birth right. (14-17)

You are not approaching the foreboding Mt Sinai and an impersonal, terrifying God (18-21)

Rather you come to Mt Sinai host of angels, the church, the righteous judge and the saints with their acceptable mediator Jesus Beware of refusing Him in this world for he will shake and judge the world to come (22-27).

So, as the Kingdom comes, let us treat God with reverent fear. (28,29)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Because the prospect of Heaven is secure, let us live thanking God for His supreme power and glory.

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

v 28

Since we are receiving a kingdom that can't be shaken, let's be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire

LIVE

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

a) His nature and character?

14 God cannot live with unholiness

23 God is the judge of all men

26 God's voice shook/ can shake the earth.

28 God is supremely powerful

b) His grace?

15 God offers his grace to all

28 God gives us His Kingdom

c) Jesus and His salvation?

24 Jesus is our mediator of God's New Covenant with us

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

14 Work hard at having good relations with all people

15 Don't let bitterness cause you to miss the grace of God to you

16 Cherish the inheritance God gives you

22 Lift your eyes and 'see' what God is preparing for you

24 note -The sprinkled blood of Abel condemned Cain / mankind. That of Jesus commends us to God

25 Do not turn away from Jesus

28 Be reverent in approaching God – (no 'big man upstairs!')

Be awestruck in approaching God

28 Be thankful to God that you are receiving an everlasting Kingdom

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Praise God through Jesus

Background

All the earlier teaching about the Person and Work of Christ, our great High Priest, is now shown to have massive and vital implications for living.

v11 Some offerings did not involve blood and the priests would eat the meat in the sanctuary. With the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, however, the blood was brought to the altar and the bodies of the animals were taken outside the camp and burned. The writer states Jesus died outside the city gate, which meant he was our sin offering, removing all our sins and guilt.

v12 shows again the superiority of Christ's sacrifice.

v20 has the only explicit reference in this letter to the resurrection of Jesus, though it is implicit throughout. The stress in this letter has been on the step *after* resurrection, namely His exaltation to God's right hand, where he *sits*, to show he has fulfilled his role as the Great High Priest.

Word list

10	<i>altar</i>	here it means a sacrifice
17	<i>keep watch</i>	the Greek word means 'losing sleep'
20	<i>word of exhortation</i>	the whole letter is a sermon

Bible Connections

1	<i>brotherly love</i>	see Ps 133:1; 1Thess4:9f; 1 John 3:16
5	<i>content with what you have</i>	see Luke 12:15; 1 Tim 3:3;-10 Matt 6:31-33
	<i>confidence in God's provision</i>	see Deuteronomy 31:6; Ps 118:6,7
7,17,24	<i>loyalty to leaders</i>	see 1 Corinthians 16:16
7	<i>the Word of God</i>	see 4:12
	<i>Jesus is always available</i>	see 1:12; 13:8; 7:24-25; Ps 102:27
11	<i>burning bodies of sacrifices</i>	see Leviticus 16:27
15	<i>our praise response through Jesus</i>	see Hosea 14:2
	<i>our helping-others response</i>	see James 1:27; 1 Peter 2:5; Romans 12:1
17	<i>Respect leaders so their work is a joy.</i>	see Philippians 2:16

LOOK

1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

- 1 *Why does he exhort them to 'keep on' loving?*
- 2 *Why might they 'forget to entertain strangers'?*
What does 'entertain' mean?
- 3 *Where were these folk imprisoned / suffering?*
- 4 *How will God judge the immoral?*
- 5 *Why is contentment with our 'lot' linked to God not leaving us?*
- 6 *What is 'man' trying to do to them'?*
- 7 *Who were the leaders who spoke the word of God to them?*
What was the outcome of their way of life/
What was the nature of their faith?
- 8 *Why is Jesus being 'the same', a consolation to them?*
- 9 *What kind of strange teachings might they be being subjected to?*
How are hearts 'strengthened by grace'.
- 10 *What altar do you have?*
- 11 *Why is Jesus 'suffering outside the camp' so important?*
- 13 *How do we bear the disgrace he bore?*
- 14 *What does an enduring city represent*
- 15 *What is 'a sacrifice of praise'.*
- 16 *What does he mean 'sacrifices'.*
How can God be pleased with anything but the blood of Jesus?
- 17 *When will leaders give account?*
- 18 *What does he have a clear conscience with respect to?*
- 19 *Why does he need to be 'restored' to them?*
- 20-22 *What is the essence of his exhortation?*
- 21 *What is pleasing to God?*
- 25 *What does 'Grace be with you all' mean?*

What surprises or confuses you?

- 15 *Why is the believer still encouraged to offer a 'sacrifice' all be it 'of praise'?*

2) The Context

a) surrounding passage,

14 But you have come to Mt Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God (12:22)

b) individual book,

7 Imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised (6:12)

14 We have come to Mount Zion, to the Heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God (12:22)

c) whole Bible,

1 Love another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another (John 13:34)

3 I was in prison, you came to visit me. (Matthew 25:36)

You shall not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14)

The sexually immoral will not enter the kingdom of God. (1Cor 6:9)

5 For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1Timothy 6:10)

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matt 28:20)

7 I became your father through the Gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me (1Corinthians 4:15,16)

9 Christ cancelled the written codetherefore do not let anyone judge you be what you eat...(Colossians 2:14...16)

Carrying his own cross Jesus went out to the place of the skull (which in Aramaic is called "Golgotha" (John 19:17)

16 This is my Son whom I love. With Him I am well pleased (Matt 3:17)

17 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established (Romans 13:1)

20 The God of peace (Romans 15:33; 16:29; Philippians 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23)
I am the good shepherd (John 10:11)

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

25 Grace be with you (Colossians 4:18; 1Tim 6:2; 2Tim 4:22; Titus 3:15)

d) Bible story

See study 9

LEARN

1) What kind of literature is this?

Letter

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

- 1 *He exhorts them to 'keep on' loving' their brothers because they are obviously tempted not to.*
- 2 *They 'forget' to entertain strangers if they lose sight of the fact that God is watching them / it may be Him!*
 Entertain' means offer hospitality
- 3 *They must have been local to them(?)*
- 4 *On the day of judgement at the end of time, God will judge the immoral.*
- 5 *The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is ultimately infinitely more valuable than any of the world's treasures.*
- 6 *Man trying to imprison and ill treat them. (3)*
- 7 *The leaders were the people who first told them about Jesus.*
 The outcome of their way of life was peace with God and contentment with their lot.
 The nature of their faith was steadfast trust in Jesus.
- 8 *They are being encouraged to consider their leaders and their way of life (trusting in Jesus) So they are being told nothing changes with Jesus ...*
- 9 *Because it follows on from verse 8, it must be about Jesus / His Gospel not changing as the years have progressed .*
 Our hearts are 'strengthened by grace' as we put our trust in Jesus.
- 10 *Our altar is the cross of Jesus.*
- 11 *It is so important because it was the prescription for the sin offering in the Old Testament and Jesus was that sin offering in the New Covenant*
- 13 *We bear the disgrace he bore as we put our faith in Him and so identify with Him.*
- 14 *The enduring city represents 'the heavenly Jerusalem'*
- 15 *A 'sacrifice of praise' is the acceptable offering of a grateful, faithful heart*
- 16 *He mean 'sacrifices' as our gifts / offerings to the Lord*
 God is pleased with these sacrifices as a response to receiving the gift of faith in the blood of Jesus.
- 17 *Leaders will give an account on the day of judgement.*

- 18 He has a clear conscience with respect to challenges to his authority in leadership
- 19 He need to be 'restored' to them as perhaps he is in in prison as Timothy has been (23)
- 20-22 the essence of his exhortation is to stand firm in their faith in Jesus
- 21 Faith in Jesus and the consequential loving of neighbours is pleasing to God.
- 25 "Grace be with you all" imparts the blessing of Jesus that enables us to appreciate all the God has given to us in Him.

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

A sacrifice then meant an offering of the life of a living being. (Now it has come to mean the giving of something that cost the donor and he loses by giving it.)

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

Be kind hospitable and generous. Don't be sexually immoral. Don't be greedy for money. Remember God is with you – always (1-6)

Imitate you original leaders in their faith in the never changing Jesus (7,8)

Avoid false teaching about ceremonial foods and be confident about Jesus death for you. (9,10)

Jesus made His atoning sacrifice for us. So be prepared to suffer with Him for the sure hope that is set before us (11-14)

Let's praise Him and please Him by doing good to others (15,16)

Obey your leaders authority and pray for us as we stand with them, and for my return to you. (17-19)

May God help you in these things for the glory of Jesus. (20,21)

Please take this letter seriously. I hope to come with Timothy to see you. Greet you church I my name. The Italians send you greetings too. (22-24)

Grace be with you all (25)

LISTEN

1) What is the lesson or the main point?

Worship God through Jesus and let it show by doing good and sharing with others.

2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? **v 15,16**

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise – the fruit of lips that confess his name . And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

LIVE

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

a) His nature and character?

2 *God sends his messengers amongst us*

5 *God has committed Himself never to leave us.*

15/16 *God is to be worshipped through Jesus*

20 *God is a God of peace*

b) His grace?

9 *God strengthens us by Grace not by Law*

21 *God equips us with everything for doing His will*

God works in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ

c) Jesus and His salvation?

8 *Jesus Christ (and His Gospel) is unchanging.*

12 *Jesus sufferedto make the people holy through His own blood.*

16 *Praise offered through Jesus pleases God.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 *Persist in loving one another.*

2 *Entertain strangers.*

3 *Remember/ identify with those who suffer for Jesus sake.*

4 *Guard fidelity in marriage.*

5 *Avoid love of money.*

6 *Be content with what you have.*

7 *Imitate your leaders faith in Jesus.*

- 9 *Avoid fads in teaching.*
- 13 *Be prepared to share in the disgrace of Jesus.*
- 15 *Praise Jesus continually.*
- 15/16 *Show your love for Jesus by doing good and sharing with others.*
- 17 *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority.*
- 18 *Pray for your leaders.*
- 22 *Bear with/ obey the exhortations of Scripture.*
- 25 *Receive the grace of God.*

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'**

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