Hebrews: A 13 Week Bible Study Guide

Keith Simons

Hebrews 11:1

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

King James Version (KJV)
Hebrews: a study guide

About the Book of Hebrews: its author, readers and date

People who study Bible books often begin with these subjects. I have chosen to end with these subjects because they are less important than the contents of the book.

The Book of Hebrews does not tell us its author’s name. It does not tell us where the original readers of the book lived. And its date does not appear in the book. We are trying to study the Bible, not people’s opinions about the Bible. It is possible to guess some of the answers, but the Bible does not tell us those answers clearly. So therefore, we do not believe that the answers are important for us to know.

However, it is important for us to understand that the Bible is God’s word (Hebrews 4:12). There were human authors, of course, and God allowed them to use their own skills, language and style. But in the end, the author of the Bible is God himself. There were original readerstoo, but God did not provide these books only for them. In fact, Hebrews 3:12 and Hebrews 4:1 show clearly that God provided these books especially for you. It is you that God intends to learn from these books! And Hebrews 3:13 contains a date. It is today that God wants you to learn from the Bible.

The author of Hebrews

But, as I have said, there was a human author. Many people have thought that he was Paul. The style of the book is sometimes like his style, but sometimes it seems different. So we cannot be sure.

Clearly, like Paul, the author knew his Bible well, and he was a good teacher. It seems very likely that the author was a Jewish Christian. By ‘Jewish’, we mean that his family came from the families of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is possible that his name is completely unknown to Christians today. Even at its beginning, the first Christian church had 3000 members, so there were always many leaders (Acts 2:41). We only know a few of their names.
The original readers of Hebrews

The book’s title is Hebrews, which means Jewish people. It is called that because the author probably wrote it originally for the benefit of Jewish Christians. Some of its subjects are especially important for them. We do not know where that group of Jewish Christians lived. However, Judea seems possible. The first Christian churches were in Judea and many Jewish people lived there.

The reason why the author wrote his book

The author knew his readers well. He wrote his book when he was living elsewhere. He wanted to return to them, but something was preventing his return. So he wrote this book as a long letter. And probably, another Christian offered to go and to take the book to the first readers. When the book arrived, they probably read it aloud in their church. And they made copies, so that other churches could read it, too.

The date of the book

A few verses (for example Hebrews 13:7) seem to show that the book’s date is several years after Christ’s death. The book says that Israel’s priests were still carrying out their work at God’s house called the temple. That work continued until an army from Rome destroyed the temple in the year 70 A.D. That is, about 40 years after Christ’s death. Clearly, the author wrote at some time between these two events. Anything more accurate than that would just be a guess.
Why the Book of Hebrews is so important

Lastly, we should think about the reasons why the Book of Hebrews is so important for Christians to study. There are many reasons, because it is a wonderful book. Here are some of the main ones:

(1) The Book of Hebrews declares powerfully who Jesus is. Chapter 1 shows us that he is God the Son. Hebrews 2:5-18 teaches that he became a man, for us.

(2) The Book of Hebrews shows us how to understand the Old Testament (the first part of the Bible). It teaches us that the whole Bible declares the same message. It is all about Jesus.

(3) The Book of Hebrews, especially in chapter 11, teaches the importance of faith (active belief and trust in God). And, especially in Hebrews 3:7 to 4:11, it warns us severely about an attitude of unbelief.

(4) The Book of Hebrews explains clearly the reasons for Jesus’ death (Hebrews 9:15). It teaches that God can forgive us only because of Jesus’ death. It tells us that Jesus’ death was the most important event ever.

(5) The Book of Hebrews shows us what Jesus is doing in heaven now (Hebrews 7:25). And it explains where Jesus is, now. He sits in the place of greatest honour in heaven, at God the Father’s right side. There he will remain until he returns to rule the world (Hebrews 1:13, Hebrews 9:28).

(6) The Book of Hebrews explains many of the reasons why God’s people suffer in this world. And Hebrews shows what their attitudes should be during their troubles.

(7) The Book of Hebrews shows us God’s plan for his people’s lives. He wants them to have the closest possible relationship with him (Hebrews 10:19-22). He is making his people perfect (Hebrews 11:40). So he wants Christians to develop and to become mature in their relationship with him (Hebrews 6:1).
Hebrews – a 13 week study guide

Week 1 – Hebrews chapter 1 – The importance of God’s Son

Read Hebrews chapter 1, then discuss these questions:

(1) How has God spoken to his people in the past? Compare Hebrews 1:1 with Psalm 19.

(2) What does Hebrews chapter 1 say about the relationship between God the Father and God the Son?

(3) What does Hebrews chapter 1 teach us about angels (God’s special servants from heaven)?

(4) What does Hebrews chapter 1 tell us that Jesus is doing now? And what does it say that Jesus will do in the future?
Week 2 – Hebrews chapter 2 – God with us

Read Hebrews chapter 2, then discuss these questions:

(1) How has God shown us that he wants to save us?


(3) What does Hebrews chapter 2 say about the relationship between Jesus and the people whom he saves?

(4) Why was it necessary for Jesus, God’s Son, to become a man?

(5) What does Hebrews chapter 2 say that Jesus has done to save his people? And what is he doing now to help them?
Week 3 – Hebrews chapter 3 – Moses and the people whom he led

*Read Hebrews chapter 3, then discuss these questions:*

(1) Why is Moses so important in the Bible? Why is Christ even more important than Moses?

(2) In this chapter, ‘unbelief’ does not mean sincere doubts. It means an attitude that people choose on purpose, not to allow God to rule their lives. What was the result of that attitude for the people that Moses led? Why is that attitude so dangerous?

(3) Read the whole of Psalm 95. What does that Psalm tell us that our attitude towards God should be?

(4) Why does Hebrews chapter 3 emphasise the word ‘today’?
Read Hebrews chapter 4, then discuss these questions:

(1) What does Hebrews chapter 4 say about the Sabbath (the weekly day for rest)? And what does the chapter mean by ‘God’s rest’?

(2) Why are some people unable to benefit from God’s promises and from his good news? Who are these people? What wrong attitude do they have?

(3) What attitude should people have towards God? How can we receive the benefit of the promises in his word (the Bible)?

(4) Compare Hebrews 4:15 with 1 Peter 2:21-24. Why is it important to us that Jesus never carried out any evil deed?

(5) What does Hebrews 4:16 teach about prayer?
Week 5 – Hebrews chapter 5 – Reasons to make progress in our knowledge of Christ

**Read Hebrews chapter 5, then discuss these questions:**

(1) What was the work of Israel’s chief priests? How is Christ’s work as our chief priest similar to their work?

(2) Read Psalm 110. Then read Mark 12:35-37 and Acts 2:29-36. Discuss how these passages use Psalm 110. Psalm 110 describes a king who was also priest. Discuss why its message was so important for Jesus and the first Christians.

(3) Compare Hebrews 5:7 with Mark 14:32-42. What do these passages tell us about the nature of Jesus’ prayers?

(4) Explain why Christians need to develop and to become mature in their relationship with God.
Read Hebrews chapter 6, then discuss these questions:

(1) What do Christians believe about the subjects in Hebrews 6:1-2?

(2) Sometimes a person who understands clearly about Christ refuses to serve God. Why is that behaviour terrible? If God gives that person another opportunity to trust him, what should that person do?

(3) Read 1 Corinthians chapter 13. Explain what Hebrews 6:10-12 says about faith (active belief and trust in God), hope, and love. Then read what Galatians 5:22-23 says about love, kindness, and patience.

(4) Explain why a Christian’s hope in God is certain. What has God done to give his people confidence that his promises are certain?
Week 7 – Hebrews chapter 7 – Christ, the only priest that we need

**Read Hebrews chapter 7, then discuss these questions:**

(1) Read Genesis 14:18-20. How was Melchizedek different from Israel’s priests? And how was he similar to Christ?

(2) How does Hebrews chapter 7 show us that Christ was greater than Israel’s priests? What facts does the author give in order to prove that?

(3) Read Hebrews 7:24-35. Why is it so important for us that Jesus is alive now? What work is Jesus doing now as our chief priest?

(4) Read Hebrews 7:27. Why was Jesus’ death the most important event in history? How can we benefit from it now?
Read Hebrews chapter 8, then discuss these questions:

(1) Why did God provide copies on earth of things that are in heaven? What can we learn from those copies?

(2) Hebrews chapter 8 refers to two covenants (peace agreements) between God and his people. What was the first covenant? What happened when people were not loyal to it?


Week 9 – Hebrews chapter 9 – The purpose of Christ’s death

Read Hebrews chapter 9, then discuss these questions:

(1) Why did God not allow Israel’s priests to enter the inner room of the temple (God’s house)? What special arrangements were necessary on the one day each year when the chief priest entered it?

(2) When did Jesus enter the most holy place in heaven? Why did he enter there, and what was the result?


(4) Why is Christ’s death the perfect sacrifice (gift that God considers valuable)?
Read Hebrews chapter 10, then discuss these questions:

(1) Explain how Christ has completed the work to forgive his people’s wrong deeds. What is the evidence that this has happened?

(2) Who can have the closest relationship with God? What is the nature of that relationship? What did Christ do to make that possible? What must we do to receive it?

(3) Holy means ‘separate for God’. Read 1 Peter 2:9-10. Explain how Christians are God’s ‘holy nation’. How can we become more holy?

Week 11 – Hebrews chapter 11 – Faith

**Read Hebrews 11:1-22, then discuss these questions:**

(1) In the Bible, faith means active belief and trust in God. Why is it necessary to trust as well as to believe? Why does faith need to be active? Why is it impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6)?

(2) Discuss the life of Abraham. How did Abraham show faith? What was the result of his faith? Read Romans 4:13-22 and discuss the relationship between Abraham’s faith and God’s promises to him.

(3) **Read Hebrews 11:23-40**, then read Hebrews 11:13-16 again. Why are God’s people strangers and foreigners in this world? Where is their real home? And what is the city that God has prepared for them (Hebrews 11:16 and Hebrews 12:22-24)?
Read Hebrews chapter 12, then discuss these questions:

(1) Why do we call God ‘our Father’? Who has the right to call God ‘Father’? In what ways does God act as a father does? What lessons would we like God to teach us?


(3) Read Hebrews 12:22-24 again. Why is it important for Christians to know that God has prepared a home for them? Who are the citizens of the New Jerusalem? Why is the blood of Jesus important in the description of this city?

(4) What does Hebrews 12:26-28 tell us about troubles in this world? How severe will those troubles be, and where else will they affect? Is there anywhere that cannot suffer from these troubles? How can we be safe?
Read Hebrews chapter 13, then discuss these questions:

(1) How should Christians behave towards other Christians? How should Christians behave towards strangers? In what practical ways can we show God’s love to people who are not Christians?

(2) What three instructions does Hebrews chapter 13 give about church leaders? What is the correct attitude for church members to have towards their leaders? And what is the correct attitude for leaders towards the members?

(3) ‘Jesus suffered shame so that Christians do not have to suffer shame.’ Why is that statement wrong? How should Christians behave when their enemies are cruel to them?

(4) Why should Christians praise God? Why should they pray for each other?

(5) Read Hebrews 13:9. How can we protect ourselves from people who teach wrong things about God?

(6) Read Hebrews 13:8. Try to learn that verse. What change has Jesus made in your life? Or, what change will you ask him to make in your life?