

# The Book of Hebrews

RESOURCES

STUDY GUIDES BY SECTION



THE BOOK OF HEBREWS  
STUDY GUIDE 1.1  
Lesson 1: The Background and Purpose of Hebrews  
Section 1: Background

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

Introduction

I. Background

A. Authorship

1. Identity

2. Profile

B. Original Audience

1. Jewish

2. Hellenistic

3. Immature

4. Persecuted

5. Near Apostasy

C. Date

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Does the author of Hebrews identify himself?
2. Summarize the opinions expressed about the author of Hebrews during the patristic period, the medieval period, the reformation period, and today.

3. According to Eusebius, what did Origen (A.D. 185-254) say about the authorship of Hebrews?
4. What was the general opinion about the canonicity of Hebrews during the patristic period?
5. Was Hebrews included in the Marcionite Canon (A.D. 144)? In the Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170)?
6. Why do the majority of scholars reject the Pauline authorship of Hebrews today?
7. Describe the characteristics of the author of Hebrews.
8. How does the lesson describe the Greek language of the Book of Hebrews?
9. What was a "Hellenistic Jew"?
10. Describe the original audience of the Book of Hebrews.
11. Name the two key roman emperors that were probably in power during the period when Hebrews was written.
12. What is the probably earliest date that Hebrews was written? The latest date?
13. Describe the arguments given in the lesson for the earliest and latest probable dates for the writing of Hebrews.
14. According to the lesson, did the author of Hebrews warn the readers to continue to be faithful under persecution because he was afraid they might lose their salvation?

#### QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. What do you expect to gain personally from this course on Hebrews?
2. Does the fact that we are not sure who is the author of Hebrews affect your confidence in its authority? Explain.
3. Does the fact that some early Christians doubted the canonicity of Hebrews make you doubt its canonicity? Explain
4. According to Hebrews 5:12, the original audience of Hebrews was immature. What are some areas in your spiritual life where you sense a need to grow?
5. The original audience of Hebrews was persecuted for following Christ. Have you ever been persecuted for your faith in Christ? Explain.

6. The author of Hebrews wrote to exhort struggling Christians to reject false doctrine and remain faithful to Jesus. What false teachings have you faced, either in your own struggles with them, or in conversations with others? Explain.

## THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

### STUDY GUIDE 1.2

#### Lesson 1: The Background and Purpose of Hebrews

#### Section 2: Purpose

### OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

#### II. Purpose

##### A. Intensity of Exhortations

###### 1. Frequency

###### 2. Rhetorical Style

##### B. Goal of Exhortations

###### 1. Reject Local Teachings

###### 2. Remain Faithful to Jesus

#### Conclusions

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. According to the lesson, what was the purpose of the author in writing Hebrews?
2. When the author of Hebrews calls his book a "word of exhortation" (Hebrews 13:22), this was possibly a first-century technical designation for what, in contemporary terms?
3. What Greek verb forms are used to make exhortations in Hebrews?
4. What is the meaning of the Greek verb *parakaleō*? (related to "exhortation" as used in Hebrews)?
5. What term is used to describe the literary style of Hebrews? What does it mean?
6. Identify the meaning of the terms "synkrisis," "exempla," and "qol wahomer."
7. Describe the degree of religious freedom that the Christians had in the Roman Empire during the first century. How did this affect the Christians at the time?
8. What are the "Dead Sea Scrolls"?
9. Mention the topics dealt with in the Dead Sea Scrolls that are also addressed in the book of Hebrews.

10. What does the document found at Qumram, called "11QMelchizedek" or "The Midrash on Melchizedek" teach about Melchizedek?

11. Who was Melchizedek in the Old Testament?

12. Summarize the main argument of the author of Hebrews for remaining faithful to Jesus.

#### QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. Are there any teachings that sometimes confuse you about Jesus and the gospel, tempting you to abandon the Christian faith? Explain.

2. What are some of the teachings of Hebrews that help you resist the temptation to abandon the Christian faith?

3. If someone were to ask you why you still believe in Jesus and the gospel, when faced with so many other religious options, what would you say?

4. What is the most important thing you have learned in Lesson 1?

5. Read Hebrews 1:1-4.

What points made in this passage about the superiority of Jesus?

After reading Hebrews 1:1-4, what would you say to someone who argues that it doesn't matter which religion we believe in because all religions lead to the same God?

Have you ever been tempted to believe in another religion? How does Hebrews 1:1-4 help you remain faithful to Jesus?

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS  
STUDY GUIDE 2.1  
Lesson 2: Content and Structure  
Section 1: Recurring Content

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

Introduction

I. Recurring Content

A. Last Days in Jesus

B. Old Testament Support

1. Factual Backgrounds
2. Theological Outlooks
3. Moral Obligation
4. Eschatological Predictions
5. Dynastic Ideals

C. Exhortations to Persevere

1. Responses
2. Motivations

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the main purpose of the author in writing Hebrews?
2. What is "eschatology"?
3. Make sure you are familiar with the teaching of Hebrews 1:1-2. Note the explanation of the lesson about why these verses are important.
4. Describe the results of Israel's rebellion in the Old Testament. What countries did God use to exile the northern Israelites? To exile Judah? Israel suffered for five centuries under the tyranny of what nations?
5. What were the Jewish communities expecting during the time between the Old and New Testaments?

6. What did the Jewish people mean by the phrases "this age" and "the age to come"?
7. Into how many stages did the Jewish people divide history? In how many stages would the Messiah bring the last days, according to the author of Hebrews?
8. Explain in general terms how the author of Hebrews used the Old Testament. What theological concepts from the Old Testament did he refer to? Did he consider the moral obligations of the Old Testament still standards for God's people in New Testament times?
9. In whom are the Old Testament eschatological predictions fulfilled?
10. According to the lesson, the author of Hebrews expected his audience to apply his book in three areas. What are they?
11. How does the lesson respond to the concern that some passages in Hebrews sound like believers can lose their salvation? Explain how 1 John 2:19 helps answer this question.
12. According to the lesson, does the New Testament teach that those who have saving faith in Christ will endure to the end?

#### QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. What does Hebrews 1:1-2 mean to you personally? What does it tell you about the importance of focusing on Jesus and His revelation?
2. What can we learn from the fact that the Jewish people did not understand exactly how the Messiah would usher in the last days?
3. What can we learn from the importance that the author of Hebrews gave to the Old Testament? What has been your attitude toward the Old Testament? Has this lesson changed your attitude?
4. Do you consider all three areas when you make application of God's Word to your life (emotions, concepts, behavior)? Which area is weakest? How can you improve in that area?
5. Do you believe that you can lose your salvation? Did this lesson help you understand the teachings of Hebrews about this? Does 1 John 2:19 help? Explain.



THE BOOK OF HEBREWS  
STUDY GUIDE 2.2  
Lesson 2: Content and Structure  
Section 2: Rhetorical Structure

OUTLINE FOR TAKING NOTES

II. Rhetorical Structure

A. Angelic Revelations

B. Moses' Authority

C. Melchizedek's Priesthood

D. New Covenant

E. Practical Perseverance

Conclusion

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Note the five major divisions of the book of Hebrews and give a brief description of their contents.
2. How does the author of Hebrews deal with the problem of excessive honor given to angels as glorious creatures that bring divine revelation?
3. How does the author of Hebrews deal with the problem of the Jewish tendency to obey only what God had revealed through Moses?
4. How does the author of Hebrews deal with the Jewish teaching that Melchizedek was a heavenly figure who would appear in the last days to offer final atoning sacrifices and usher in the kingdom of God?
5. In what sense is Jesus' priesthood of the new covenant superior to the Levitical priesthood of the covenant with Moses?
6. In what sense is the new covenant founded on "better" promises (Hebrews 8:6) than the covenant with Moses?
7. Describe the contents of Hebrews 11.
8. Why did the Old Testament figures mentioned in Hebrews 11 not receive what had been promised?

9. In Hebrews 12:1-3, what is the analogy of the Christian life?
10. According to Hebrews 12:4-13, why should we endure hardship?
11. According to Hebrews 12:22-24, what kind of Jerusalem have we come to?

#### QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

1. Consider common teachings of other religions today. In what ways is Jesus superior to things they pretend to offer?
2. What does it mean to you personally that Jesus is our true high priest?
3. What benefits do you claim personally under the new covenant?
4. In what way do the faithful figures of the Old Testament mentioned in Hebrews 11 encourage you?
5. Does Hebrews 12:4-13 help you endure hardship? How?
6. What difference does it make to you that Hebrews 12:22-24 focuses on the heavenly Jerusalem instead of the earthly Jerusalem?
7. What is the most important thing you have learned in this lesson?
8. Read Hebrews 12:1-3 and answer the questions below:
  - Who are the "witnesses" mentioned in verse 1?
  - What are we told to "throw off" in verses 1 and 2?
  - What is the figure of the Christian life in Hebrews 12:1-3?
  - Where are we to fix our eyes as we live the Christian life?
  - What does this passage teach us about harmonizing our need to be responsible with our need to trust Christ?
  - What are some of the things these verses tell us about Jesus?
  - What is your conclusion, after considering what Jesus has done for us? How should this change our attitude, according to Hebrews 12:3?

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