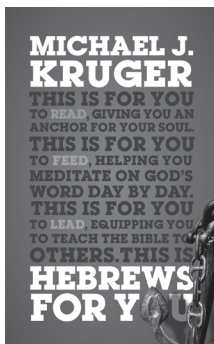




An anchor for the soul

Hebrews

by Michael J. Kruger



Hebrews For You

These studies are adapted from *Hebrews For You*. If you are reading *Hebrews For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *Hebrews For You*:

Study One → Ch 1	Study Five → Ch 6
Study Two → Ch 2-3	Study Six → Ch 7-9
Study Three → Ch 3-4	Study Seven → Ch 9-11
Study Four → Ch 4-5	Study Eight → Ch 11-13

Find out more about *Hebrews For You* at:
www.thegoodbook.com/for-you

Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul

The Good Book Guide to Hebrews

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Introduction: Good Book Guides

Every Bible-study group is different—yours may take place in a church building, in a home or in a cafe, on a train, over a leisurely mid-morning coffee or squashed into a 30-minute lunch break. Your group may include new Christians, mature Christians, non-Christians, moms and tots, students, businessmen or teens. That’s why we’ve designed these *Good Book Guides* to be flexible for use in many different situations.

Our aim in each session is to uncover the meaning of a passage, and see how it fits into the “big picture” of the Bible. But that can never be the end. We also need to appropriately apply what we have discovered to our lives. Let’s take a look at what is included:

- ↔ **Talkabout:** Most groups need to “break the ice” at the beginning of a session, and here’s the question that will do that. It’s designed to get people talking around a subject that will be covered in the course of the Bible study.
- ↓ **Investigate:** The Bible text for each session is broken up into manageable chunks, with questions that aim to help you understand what the passage is about. The **Leader’s Guide** contains **guidance for questions**, and sometimes ☑ additional “follow-up” questions.
- 🗉 **Explore more (optional):** These questions will help you connect what you have learned to other parts of the Bible, so you can begin to fit it all together like a jig-saw; or occasionally look at a part of the passage that’s not dealt with in detail in the main study.
- **Apply:** As you go through a Bible study, you’ll keep coming across **apply** sections. These are questions to get the group discussing what the Bible teaching means in practice for you and your church. 🗉 **Getting personal** is an opportunity for you to think, plan and pray about the changes that you personally may need to make as a result of what you have learned.
- ↑ **Pray:** We want to encourage prayer that is rooted in God’s word—in line with his concerns, purposes and promises. So each session ends with an opportunity to review the truths and challenges highlighted by the Bible study, and turn them into prayers of request and thanksgiving.

The **Leader’s Guide** and introduction provide historical background information, explanations of the Bible texts for each session, ideas for **optional extra** activities, and guidance on how best to help people uncover the truths of God’s word.

Why study Hebrews?

As you read the book of Hebrews, you very quickly become aware that its author just loves Jesus Christ. He thinks he is amazing, magnificent, extraordinary; he thinks he is all in all.

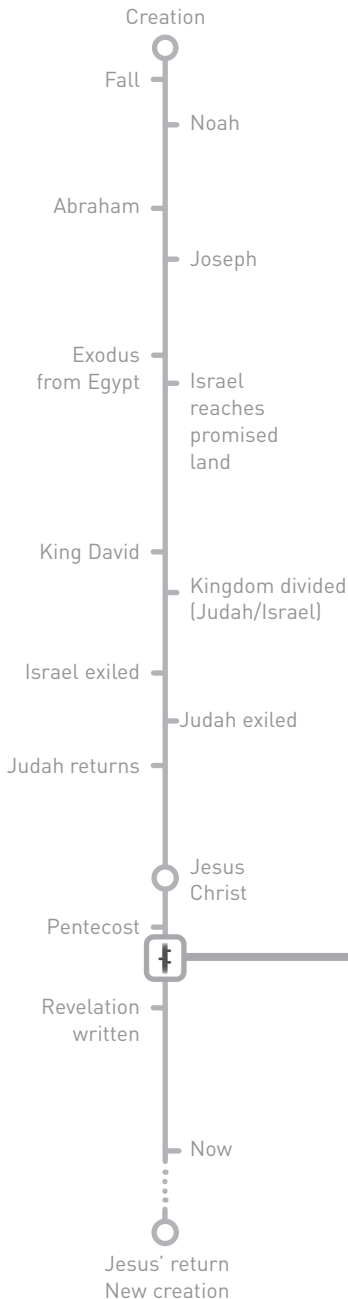
We all experience times when we stop feeling like that—when we are following Jesus out of duty instead of delight in how wonderful he is. At those times it is easy to look over at something else—some other person, situation, or way of living—and think, “That looks better.”

But the book of Hebrews shows us that *Jesus* is better.

The book, which has an unnamed author, was likely written in the early AD 60s. It is a letter to the “Hebrews”—which is just another name for the Jewish people. The audience is primarily Jewish Christians who grew up in Judaism but have believed in Jesus. They have embraced him as the Messiah but are thinking about turning back to the old ways: animal sacrifices and worship at the temple.

So our author gives them—and us—a doctrinal anchor: a clear, detailed understanding of why Jesus is better than anything else. He includes six warnings, which follow the same simple theme: don’t drift away. The book is designed to keep us walking with him on the right path—the path to life.

Before embarking on this journey, you should know that the book of Hebrews is not a light appetizer. It is more like a porterhouse steak. The author talks a lot about how Jesus’ sacrifice is superior to the sacrifices made in the Old Testament—requiring us to think hard about the structure and complexity of the old covenant system. It’s meaty stuff. But it’s wonderful stuff. The book of Hebrews ranges across the Old Testament and shows us how Christ fulfilled it all. As you will see in each of these eight studies, he is the crescendo of God’s work on earth. My prayer for you is that, in a fresh and new way, as you read Hebrews you will fall in love with Christ all over again.



BIBLE TIMELINE

Where does the letter to the Hebrews fit into the whole story of God's word?

HEBREWS AD 60s

- c AD 30 — Jesus dies
- c AD 48 — Paul's ministry begins
- AD 60s — Hebrews is written
- AD 70 — Temple in Jerusalem is destroyed

1

Hebrews 1:1-14

JESUS IN ALL HIS GLORY



talkabout

1. Do you think people in our world today expect to hear from God? If they do, how do they think he will speak?



investigate

▶ Read Hebrews 1:1-4

2. The first two verses tell us twice that God has spoken. What are the differences between the way God spoke in verse 1 and the way he spoke in verse 2?

DICTIONARY

Heir (v 2): inheritor.

Radiance (v 3): brightness.

Imprint (v 3): exact likeness.

Purification (v 3): cleansing.

3. What do verses 2-3 tell us about the Son's power?

4. What do these verses tell us about how the Son reveals God?



getting personal

Do you ever wish God would reveal himself more clearly? In Jesus, God has given you a clearer, fuller revelation of himself than he gave to the Old Testament prophets—even Moses or Elijah. We have seen more than they ever imagined, because we are witnesses to the glory of Christ revealed on earth.

Given that this is true, what will you do next time you are seeking God's guidance? What about when you are talking to someone about how we know God exists?

5. What do these verses tell us about what the Son came to do?



apply

6. We think of Jesus as our Savior from sin. But these verses remind us that he is also the sovereign King of everything. How will it change our lives if we remember this?



investigate

7. What is the comparison in verse 4?





getting personal

It seems as though the audience of this letter has begun to honor and venerate angels so that they took the place of Jesus for them. This may seem irrelevant to us at first, but in fact it doesn't matter what the particular distraction is.

What impresses you? What do you prize above other things? Is there anything you tend to think would make your life just right?

Think back to these answers as you read the rest of Hebrews 1, and examine your heart. Is there any way in which you are too easily pleased by the things of the world? How do they compare to Christ?

▶ Read Hebrews 1:5-14

8. In verses 5-6, how do we know that Jesus is better than angels?

DICTIONARY

Begotten (v 5): become the father of.

Scepter (v 8): a symbol of royal power.

Anointed (v 9): in ancient times, oil was smeared or poured onto a person's head (especially a king's) as a sign of honor or celebration.

Perish (v 11): die.

Garment (v 11): piece of clothing.

Ministering (v 14): serving.



explore more

optional

Verses 5-6 could make it seem as though there was a time when Jesus was not the Son, and then a point when he became the Son. If God can say, "Today I have begotten you" and call Jesus his "firstborn," doesn't that imply that Jesus is secondary or inferior to the Father?

Nothing could be further from the truth. The Son shares in the same eternal, divine nature as the Father. He has always been the Son.

▶ Read Acts 13:32-33 and Romans 1:4

What, for Paul, is the key event that declares Jesus to be God's Son?

9. What is the Son's role in verse 8?

10. What role do the angels have, meanwhile (v 7, 14)?

11. Re-read verses 7-14. How else do we see Jesus' superiority?

 **apply**

12. What do we tend to value the most—and how do those things compare to Jesus? How will this comparison change the way you think about or act toward those things?

 **pray**

Make a list of all the ways in which Jesus is described in this chapter—the roles and qualities he has and the things he has done.

Pray through your list together, worshiping Jesus for all that he is.

