

STUDY

Hebrews Bible Study Questions and Answers (Free PDF)

Leader's Edition — with Answers

An 11-session walk through Hebrews, from the Son who is greater than angels to the call to run with endurance, with an answer key for leaders. Free to print, no sign-up.

An 11-session study of Hebrews for groups or solo reading.

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 (NIV)

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 (NIV)

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,

Hebrews 6:19 (NIV)

The study guide

SESSION 1 • HEBREWS 1:1-14

The Son Above All

God has spoken his final word in his Son, who made the universe, shines with God's glory, and is far greater than the angels.

1. How does Hebrews 1:1-2 compare the way God spoke before with the way he speaks now, and what does Hebrews 1:3 say about the Son?

God spoke long ago through the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken by his Son (Hebrews 1:1-2). The Son is heir of all things and the one through whom God made the universe (Hebrews 1:2). He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word (Hebrews 1:3). After he provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven (Hebrews 1:3).

2. Why does the writer stress that the Son is greater than the angels (Hebrews 1:4-6), and what does Hebrews 1:8 call him?

Many of the first readers honored angels as messengers of the law, so the writer shows that the Son is above them. He has a name better than theirs (Hebrews 1:4), and the angels are told to worship him (Hebrews 1:6). Hebrews 1:8 speaks to the Son as God. Believers have long read this as the plain teaching that Jesus is fully God as well as fully human, the one who created and rules all things.

3. If God has spoken most fully in Jesus, how does that shape the way you listen to him this week?

Leader's note: Let each person think of the ways God has spoken to them, through Scripture, prayer, and other believers. Ask where they may be listening to lesser voices. There is no wrong answer here. Close by reading Hebrews 1:1-3 aloud together.

SESSION 2 • HEBREWS 2:1-18

Do Not Drift

Because the Son is so great, we must pay careful attention. He became like us, shared our suffering, and broke the power of death.

1. What warning does Hebrews 2:1-3 give, and what did Jesus do in Hebrews 2:9?

The writer says we must pay the most careful attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away (Hebrews 2:1). He asks how we will escape if we ignore so great a salvation (Hebrews 2:3). Jesus was made lower than the angels for a little while, and he tasted death for everyone (Hebrews 2:9).

2. Why did Jesus share in our flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:14-15), and why did he have to be made like us in every way (Hebrews 2:17-18)?

Jesus shared in flesh and blood so that by his death he might destroy the one who holds the power of death, and free those held in slavery by their fear of it (Hebrews 2:14-15). He was made like his brothers and sisters in every way, so he could be a merciful and faithful high priest who makes atonement for sins (Hebrews 2:17). Because he suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

3. Where do you feel yourself drifting, and what small step could bring you back near?

Leader's note: Drifting is quiet and slow, so it is hard to see. Invite people to name a habit that has grown thin, such as prayer, church, or Scripture. Do not press for detail. Ask the group to pray that each person would draw near to the one who is not ashamed to call us his family (Hebrews 2:11).

SESSION 3 · HEBREWS 3:1-4:13

Greater Than Moses, and God's Rest

Jesus is faithful as a Son over God's house, as Moses was as a servant in it. The people who hardened their hearts in the wilderness are a warning, and a rest still waits for God's people.

1. How does Hebrews 3:1-6 compare Moses and Jesus, and what happened to the people who hardened their hearts (Hebrews 3:16-19)?

Moses was faithful as a servant in God's house, but Jesus is faithful as a son over God's house, and he is worthy of greater honor (Hebrews 3:2-6). The people who left Egypt heard God and rebelled. Their bodies fell in the wilderness, and they did not enter his rest because of unbelief (Hebrews 3:16-19). They serve as a warning not to harden our hearts (Hebrews 3:7-8).

2. What is the rest that still remains for the people of God (Hebrews 4:1-2, 4:8-11), and how is the word of God described in Hebrews 4:12-13?

The promise of entering God's rest still stands (Hebrews 4:1). Joshua did not give the people final rest (Hebrews 4:8), so a Sabbath-rest remains for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9). Those who enter it rest from their works as God did from his (Hebrews 4:10). The word of God is alive and active, and it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). Everything is uncovered before the eyes of him to whom we must give account (Hebrews 4:13). Readers have understood the rest in different ways, some pointing to salvation now, others to the age to come, and many to both.

3. What is one way you can encourage someone today so that no one is hardened by sin's deceit (Hebrews 3:13)?

Leader's note: Hebrews 3:13 says to encourage one another daily. Ask each person to think of one name and one kind word or message they could send this week. Keep it practical and warm.

SESSION 4 · HEBREWS 4:14-5:10

A Great High Priest

Jesus is a high priest who knows our weakness, and he invites us to come boldly to the throne of grace.

1. What do Hebrews 4:14-16 say about Jesus as our high priest, and what does Hebrews 5:7-8 say about his suffering?

We have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God (Hebrews 4:14). He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, since he was tempted in every way and yet did not sin (Hebrews 4:15). In the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and cries with tears, and he learned obedience through what he suffered (Hebrews 5:7-8).

2. Why does the writer say a high priest must be called by God and able to deal gently with the weak (Hebrews 5:1-4), and how does Jesus fit this (Hebrews 5:5-6, 5:9-10)?

A high priest is chosen from among people, deals gently with the ignorant and wayward, and does not take the honor for himself (Hebrews 5:1-4). Christ did not exalt himself either. God called him, and appointed him a priest in the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:5-6, 5:10). Having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him (Hebrews 5:9).

3. What burden could you bring to the throne of grace today?

Leader's note: Hebrews 4:16 is an invitation. Let people name a burden without giving a long story. Take time to pray for each one, and remind the group that the throne is a throne of grace and not a place of shame.

SESSION 5 · HEBREWS 5:11-6:20

Growing Up and Holding Fast

The writer calls his readers to grow up in Christ, gives a sober warning, and then points to God's unbreakable promise as an anchor for the soul.

1. What does the writer say is wrong with his readers in Hebrews 5:11-14, and what does he say in Hebrews 6:4-6?

The readers had become slow to learn. They needed milk when they should have been teachers, and solid food is for the mature (Hebrews 5:11-14). The writer urges them to leave the elementary teachings and go on to maturity (Hebrews 6:1). Hebrews 6:4-6 speaks of those who have been enlightened, have tasted the heavenly gift, and shared in the Holy Spirit, and who then fall away. He says it is impossible to bring them back to repentance.

2. How do faithful readers understand Hebrews 6:4-6, and what does the writer say in Hebrews 6:9-12 and 6:17-19 to comfort his readers?

Faithful readers differ here. Some hold that this describes true believers who can fall away and be lost. Others hold that it describes people who took part in the life of the church and saw the truth but never truly trusted Christ. Others read it as a real warning that God uses to keep his people from falling. This guide does not settle the question. All can agree that the warning is serious and meant to wake us up. The writer is sure of better things for his readers (Hebrews 6:9), and God will not forget their love (Hebrews 6:10). He points them to Abraham, and to God's promise sworn by himself (Hebrews 6:13-18). We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure (Hebrews 6:19).

3. What is one step of growth you could take, and where do you need the anchor of hope?

Leader's note: This question can stir fear for some people, so go gently. Let them name where they want to grow and where they need to be held steady. If someone is troubled by the warning, encourage them to talk with a pastor after the session. Close by reading Hebrews 6:19-20 as a promise.

SESSION 6 · HEBREWS 7:1-28

The Priest Like Melchizedek

Jesus is a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. His priesthood does not end, and he lives to pray for those who come to God through him.

1. What does Hebrews 7:1-3 say about Melchizedek, and what does Hebrews 7:11-19 say the old priesthood could not do?

Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth (Hebrews 7:1-2; Genesis 14:18-20). The writer notes that Scripture gives no family line for him, and that he resembles the Son of God (Hebrews 7:3). If perfection had come through the Levitical priesthood, there would be no need for another priest (Hebrews 7:11). The old law made nothing perfect, and a better hope is introduced, through which we draw near to God (Hebrews 7:19).

2. Why does it matter that Jesus lives forever and offered himself once for all (Hebrews 7:23-27)?

Priests before had to die, so there were many of them (Hebrews 7:23). Jesus lives forever and has a permanent priesthood, so he is able to save completely those who come to God through him (Hebrews 7:24-25). He is holy, blameless, and pure. He does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, for he sacrificed for sins once for all when he offered himself (Hebrews 7:26-27). He became a priest by the power of an indestructible life (Hebrews 7:16).

3. What comfort do you find in knowing Jesus always lives to intercede for you (Hebrews 7:25)?

Leader's note: Ask people to picture someone praying for them by name, all the time and without tiring. Let them sit quietly for a moment. Encourage the group to speak of their fears honestly, and to hear Hebrews 7:25 as good news for them.

SESSION 7 · HEBREWS 8:1-9:28**A Better Covenant**

Jesus serves in the true sanctuary in heaven. By his own blood he sealed a new covenant and dealt with sin once for all.

1. What does Hebrews 8:1-6 say about where Jesus serves, and what does the new covenant promise in Hebrews 8:10-12?

Jesus is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and he serves in the true tabernacle set up by the Lord (Hebrews 8:1-2). The earthly priests served in a copy and shadow of what is in heaven (Hebrews 8:5). The new covenant, quoted from Jeremiah, puts God's laws in our minds and writes them on our hearts. All will know him, and he will remember our sins no more (Hebrews 8:10-12).

2. What did Christ's blood do that the blood of animals could not (Hebrews 9:11-14, 9:22-26)?

Christ entered the Most Holy Place once for all, not by the blood of goats and calves but by his own blood, and he won eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:11-12). His blood cleanses our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God (Hebrews 9:14). Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22). He appeared once to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 9:26), and he will appear a second time to bring salvation to those waiting for him (Hebrews 9:28).

3. What would it mean to serve the living God with a cleansed conscience this week (Hebrews 9:14)?

Leader's note: A guilty conscience can feel like a heavy stone. Invite people to name it only in general terms if they wish. Then read Hebrews 8:12 and 9:14 slowly, and let the group sit with the promise before anyone speaks.

SESSION 8 · HEBREWS 10:1-39**One Sacrifice, One Life of Faith**

One offering has made us holy for all time. We can draw near with confidence, hold on to hope, and encourage one another until the day comes.

1. Why could the old sacrifices not take away sins (Hebrews 10:1-4), and what did Jesus do instead (Hebrews 10:10-14)?

The law was only a shadow of good things to come, and it could never make those who draw near perfect (Hebrews 10:1). Sacrifices were a yearly reminder of sin, since the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins (Hebrews 10:3-4). Jesus came to do God's will (Hebrews 10:7-9). We have been made holy through the sacrifice of his body once for all (Hebrews 10:10). Other priests stood day after day, but he sat down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 10:11-12). By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy (Hebrews 10:14).

2. What three calls does Hebrews 10:22-25 give, and how does the warning in Hebrews 10:26-31 relate to the encouragement in Hebrews 10:32-39?

The writer calls us to draw near to God with a sincere heart (Hebrews 10:22), to hold unswervingly to the hope we profess (Hebrews 10:23), and to spur one another on toward love and good deeds while not giving up meeting together (Hebrews 10:24-25). The warning about deliberate sin (Hebrews 10:26-31) is as serious as the one in chapter 6, and readers make the same distinctions about who it describes. It is followed at once by a reminder of how well they had endured before (Hebrews 10:32-34), and by a call not to throw away their confidence (Hebrews 10:35). He is sure that we are not those who shrink back and are destroyed, but those who believe and are saved (Hebrews 10:39).

3. How does meeting with other believers help you hold on to hope, and what makes it hard?

Leader's note: Some people find church attendance hard because of hurt, schedules, or shame. Let them be honest. Avoid scolding. Ask what would make gathering easier and how the group could spur each other on in a specific way.

SESSION 9 · HEBREWS 11:1-40

By Faith

Faith trusts what God has promised before it sees it. From Abel to Rahab, God's people lived as strangers looking for a better country.

1. How does Hebrews 11:1 describe faith, and which men and women does the chapter name?

Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1). The chapter names Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Rahab, along with many unnamed men and women (Hebrews 11:4-31, 11:32-38). Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him (Hebrews 11:6).

2. Why does the writer say the people of faith saw the promises only from a distance (Hebrews 11:13-16), and what does Hebrews 11:39-40 add?

Abraham looked ahead to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10). They admitted they were foreigners and strangers on earth, and longed for a better country, a heavenly one (Hebrews 11:13-16). Some were delivered, and others were tortured, mocked, and killed, yet all were commended for their faith (Hebrews 11:33-39). None received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us, so that together we would be made perfect (Hebrews 11:39-40).

3. What promise of God are you waiting on, and what would it look like to trust him with it?

Leader's note: Let people speak of unanswered prayer without rushing to fix it. Hebrews 11 includes both rescue and loss. Ask each person to name a promise they are holding onto, and pray that God would keep them steady.

SESSION 10 · HEBREWS 12:1-29

Run the Race

Surrounded by witnesses, we are called to throw off what hinders, fix our eyes on Jesus, and accept the Father's loving discipline.

1. What does Hebrews 12:1-3 tell us to do, and what does Hebrews 12:5-11 say about discipline?

Since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, we are to throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and run with perseverance the race marked out for us (Hebrews 12:1). We are to fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2). The Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he treats us as his children (Hebrews 12:5-8).

2. Why does the writer point to Jesus in Hebrews 12:2-3, and what does discipline produce (Hebrews 12:10-11)?

Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before him, and he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2). We are told to consider him so that we do not grow weary and lose heart (Hebrews 12:3). No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but later it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those trained by it (Hebrews 12:11). We have come to Mount Zion and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant (Hebrews 12:22-24), so we worship with reverence and awe (Hebrews 12:28-29).

3. What is one thing that slows you down in the race, and what would it look like to lay it aside?

Leader's note: Keep this kind. Discipline is not punishment for its own sake, so do not let anyone use it to explain another person's pain. Ask about a weight, a habit, or a fear. Pray for strength for tired hands and weak knees (Hebrews 12:12).

SESSION 11 · HEBREWS 13:1-25

Living Out the Faith

The letter ends with practical love, honest contentment, and worship outside the camp. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

1. What practical commands does Hebrews 13:1-6 give, and what does Hebrews 13:8 say about Jesus?

The writer tells us to keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters, to show hospitality to strangers, and to remember those in prison and those who are mistreated (Hebrews 13:1-3). Marriage is to be honored by all (Hebrews 13:4). We are to keep our lives free from the love of money and be content, for God has said he will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5-6). Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

2. What does it mean to go to Jesus outside the camp (Hebrews 13:12-14), and what sacrifices does Hebrews 13:15-16 say please God?

Jesus suffered outside the city gate to make people holy through his own blood, so we go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore (Hebrews 13:12-13). Here we do not have a lasting city, but we look for the city that is to come (Hebrews 13:14). The sacrifices that please God are praise, doing good, and sharing with others (Hebrews 13:15-16). The writer ends with a prayer for the God of peace to equip his readers with everything good for doing his will (Hebrews 13:20-21).

3. Where could you show hospitality or generosity this week, and what would help you be content?

Leader's note: Let each person pick one command from Hebrews 13:1-6 and think of a small way to live it. Close by praying the blessing in Hebrews 13:20-21 over one another.