

BUT NOW JESUS!

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Study 1: Listen!

Read Hebrews 1:1-2:4

1. How did God speak in the past?
2. In these last days, how has God spoken to us?
3. Chapter 1 vs 2-3 contain many glorious truths about Jesus. Make a list, or draw a mind map. Take time to consider each of them.
4. *If this Jesus is the one by whom God has spoken, what should we do?*
5. The rest of chapter 1 uses Old Testament passages to show that Jesus is superior to angels. What are we told about Jesus from these verses?
6. So what's deal with the angels? See Galatians 3:19, Acts 7:53. What was the word that the Jews understood to be declared by angels?
7. What was the consequence of rejecting that word? (2:2; Deuteronomy 8:19-20)
8. If Jesus is superior to the angels, what is the writer saying about the word he brings? (2:3)

9. How did the word of great salvation come to the original readers?

10. What are they to do, and why? (2:1)

11. *How did the word of salvation come to you?*

12. *Are we in danger of neglecting this saving word and drifting away? What does this actually look like?*

13. *What is God telling us to do?*

14. *How can we help each other pay closer attention to the word?*

15. *Choose one thing about Jesus you have seen today. Who can you share this with?*

Before next week: Read Psalm 8

Study 2: Consider!

Read Hebrews 2:5-18

1. Verses 6-8 are quoting Psalm 8. In the original psalm, who is it talking about?
2. What reality does the writer to the Hebrews acknowledge in verse 8?
3. How does our writer understand the psalm being fulfilled in Jesus?
4. What's the connection between Jesus' suffering and glory?
5. How are we included in Jesus' glory?
6. What comfort is given in verses 14-15?
7. ***How can this truth help us when we are faced with death?***
8. What comfort is given in verse 18?
9. ***How can this truth help us when we face temptation?***

10. How could you use this passage to explain why it is essential for our salvation that Jesus become a man?

Read Hebrews 3:1-6

11. What does the writer tell us to do? (v1) What does this mean?

12. The writer compares Moses and Jesus. What is the same? What is different?

13. How can we be sure we belong to God's house? (v6)

14. Do you have confidence in your future because of Jesus' achievement, or are you still fearful? Why?

15. What might you be tempted to hold fast to or boast in, instead of the hope we have in Christ?

Before next week: Read Psalm 95

Study 3: Take Care!

Read Hebrews 3:7-4:13

1. What is the big lesson the writer wants us to learn from Israel's history?
2. What was the rest promised to Israel?
3. Why did some fail to enter? (v16-19)
4. What did the Israelite's disobedience reveal about their hearts?
5. What is the rest promised to us?
6. How do we enter into that rest? (3:14, 4:3; see also Matthew 11:25-30)
7. What warning does the writer give in 3:12-14?
8. ***What are some symptoms of a hardened, unbelieving heart?***
9. ***How can we be doing better at exhorting one another to keep our hearts soft towards God?***

10. What warning does the writer give in 4:1-2?

11. How can we help each other benefit from the good news we hear?

12. What does the writer urge us to do in 4:11?

13. What does "striving" look like?

14. How does the word of God help us in this striving? (4:12-13)

15. Sin may be deceitful (3:13), but nothing is hidden from God's sight (4:13). Does being completely known by God frighten or comfort you?

16. What lesson do you need to learn today from Israel's history?

Before next week: Read Psalm 110

Study 4: Hold Fast!

Read Hebrews 4:14-5:10

1. In this passage Jesus is being compared to Israel's high priests. Complete the table below to understand the comparison:

| | High Priest | Jesus |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Appointment | 5:1,4 | 5:5,6,10 |
| Job | 5:1,3 | 5:7,9 |
| Empathy | 5:2-3 | 4:15,5:8 |

2. What makes Jesus the better high priest?
3. Since Jesus is our great high priest, what should we do? (4:14,16)
4. *When you particularly feel in need of mercy and grace, do you have the confidence to draw near to God's throne? Why/why not?*
5. *What is the connection between holding fast our confession of faith and having confidence to approach God?*

Read Hebrews 5:11-6:20

6. The writer is going to say a lot more about Melchizedek and Jesus' priesthood, but first what criticism does he have of his readers? (5:11-13)

7. What signs of maturity is he wanting to see? (5:14, 6:1, 11-12)

8. What severe warning does he give? (6:4-6)

9. Ultimately, where is hope to be found? (6:18-20)

10. Why is it so important that our hope is in Jesus, not our own efforts?

11. Are you sometimes "dull of hearing" and "sluggish"? When does this happen?

12. How can we help each other be earnest in our growth to maturity?

Before next week: Read Genesis 14:17-20 and Jeremiah 31:31-34

Study 5: But now Jesus! (Part 1)

Read Hebrews 7:1-10

1. How does the writer show that Melchizedek is better than the descendants of Levi (the priests)?

The writer now returns to his point from chapter 5, that Jesus is a priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Read Hebrews 7:11-28

2. What does having a new order of priest say about the law? (v11-12, 18-19)

3. What is better about how Jesus became a priest? (v16, 20-22)

4. What is better about the term of Jesus' priesthood? (v23-25)

5. What is better about Jesus' own suitability? (v25-28)

Read Hebrews 8:1-13

6. What is better about the place where Jesus serves as priest? (v1-5)

7. What is better about the new covenant mediated by Jesus? (v7-13)

8. *Talk together about what it would have been like to live under the old covenant. (For example: trying to obey the law, never able to fully keep the law, regularly having to bring sacrifices for the priest to offer, helpless if the leadership or priesthood gets corrupted...)*

9. *Now talk together about the benefits and blessings we have with Jesus as our perfect high priest. (7:18, 25, 26; 8:10-12)*

10. *Suppose you have a friend who is burdened with guilt for some sin. They say they want to confess it to a priest. How could you use the truths from today's passages to lovingly help them?*

Before next week: Read Exodus 24:3-8 and Psalm 40

Study 6: But now Jesus! (Part 2)

Read Hebrews 9:1-28

1. What was the purpose of the tabernacle and its sacrificial system? (v1, 7, 10, 13, 22, 23)
2. What were its limitations? (v9-10, 24-25)
3. Where does Jesus enter with his sacrifice? (v12,24)
4. What is Jesus' sacrifice? (v12, 14)
5. How is Jesus' sacrifice better? (v14, 15, 26)
6. ***Look again at verse 14. Now think about the things you do for God. How do we know if we are performing "dead works" or "serving the living God"?***
7. How does the writer connect Jesus' first and second coming? (v27-28)
8. ***Do you feel ready for Jesus' return? Why/why not? What truths from this chapter help you to more eagerly wait for him?***

Read Hebrews 10:1-18

9. What is the writer emphasising about the old testament sacrificial system? (v1-4, 11)

10. What is so good about Jesus' sacrifice? (v8-10)

11. How can we be sure Jesus' sacrifice is enough? (v11-14)

12. What is the promise to us if we are trusting in Jesus' death on our behalf? (10, 14, 17-18)

13. Unlike the original readers, the old covenant with its laws and sacrifices is not likely to appeal to us! What are some ways we might try to add onto or replace the sacrifice of Jesus to secure our salvation?

14. Are there times when you feel unforgiven? How do these chapters reassure you?

15. Suppose you have a friend who asks you why Jesus had to die. How could you use the truths from this chapter to answer them?

Before next week: Read Hebrews 7:11-10:18

Study 7: Draw Near!

Read Hebrews 10:19-39

1. How does Jesus sacrificial death make it possible for us to draw near to God? (v19-22)
2. *What might be some reasons we do not draw near? How can we encourage one another to do so?*
3. What is the basis of our hope? (v23)
4. *What might be some reasons we waver in the confession of our hope? How can we encourage each other to hold fast?*
5. What are we to do in the light of Jesus' return (the Day)? (v24-25)
6. *What might be some reasons we neglect to meet to encourage one another?*
7. *Consider now how to stir up one another to love and good works. Get practical!*

8. Verses 26-31 contain a severe warning. Recalling what we learnt from chapters 7-10 about Jesus' sacrifice, why is there no hope for those who reject it?

9. *What does it look like to go on sinning deliberately? If we are stuck in some sinful habit, what should we do?*

10. Why does the writer use the recipients' own track record as an encouragement to press on? (v32-36)

11. *Are you struggling to endure? What encouragement do these verses have for you?*

12. The verses quoted from Haggai (v37-38) contain warning and encouragement. What response does the writer hope for?

13. *This whole section of Hebrews began back in chapter 4 verse 14. Read together Hebrews 4:14-16, then pray about the practical things you discussed in the study today.*

Before next week: Read Hebrews 11. Choose one of the people mentioned and look up their story.

Study 8: Have Faith!

Read Hebrews 11:1-12:2

1. The people named in this honour roll lived over hundreds of years, in different places and circumstances. What do they have in common?
2. Choose a few individuals named and look up their stories. How did they demonstrate their faith?
3. What challenges did these heroes of old experience as they lived in faith?
4. What reason does the writer give for why these men and women did not receive all that was promised? (11:39-40)
5. ***Some people today would say that if you just have enough faith, God will bless you with health, wealth and happiness. What does this passage say about that?***
6. The writer creates the image of these heroes of faith surrounding us as a cloud of witnesses. What does he urge us to therefore do? (12:1)

7. *What does this look like in practice?*

8. Given that we live after the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, what is different about our faith compared to the old testament believers? (12:2)

9. What do we still hope for that we do not yet see?

10. *When talking about your faith, how could you use the definition given in 11:1 to tell someone about Jesus?*

Before next week: Read Exodus 19:10-20

Study 9: Be Grateful!

Read Hebrews 12:1-17

1. What did Jesus have to endure? (v2-3)
2. How does considering Jesus motivate us to endure? (v1-4)
3. What is the connection between discipline and endurance? (v7)
4. Who does God discipline? (v5-8)
5. What are the results of God's discipline? (v10-11)
6. *Some people feel that when things get tough or they face opposition it is because God is angry with them or punishing them. How do these verses help us have a different perspective?*
7. How does the writer urge us to respond when it's tough to be a Christian? (v12-14)
8. What attitudes and behaviours do we need to guard against? (v15-17)
9. *When the Christian life is hard and we face opposition, we can respond in various ways, including giving up or gritting our teeth and pushing on but harbouring bitterness. How can we help each other instead to look to Jesus and seek his grace?*

10. Do you treasure holiness and righteousness so much that you appreciate the Lord's discipline?

Read Hebrews 12:18-29

11. What did the Israelites experience when they came before God at Mt Sinai? (v18-21)

12. What happened if they refused to listen to God then?

13. What does the writer say we have come to? (v22-24)

Recall what the heroes of faith were looking forward to (11:10,16)

14. What is better about the kingdom we belong to? (v26-28)

15. What does he call us to do in response? (v24, 28)

16. Why do you think he reminds us that our God is a consuming fire?

17. How does gratitude for all God has done for us shape our worship of him?

18. The letter began with God speaking and a call to listen. Here we are again told not to refuse him who is speaking. How good a listener are you? How can we help each other to keep listening to God?

Before next week: Read Psalm 118

Study 10: Do Good!

This chapter outlines various practical responses to the new covenant we have in Jesus (ie: the doctrine of the last 12 chapters!) This is what it would look like to offer to God grateful, reverent, acceptable worship.

Read Hebrews 13:1-19

1. What would brotherly love look like for the Hebrews? (v1-3)

2. ***What does it look like for us? Tell each other about opportunities you know of for expressing our love practically.***

3. How does sexual purity honour God? (v4)

4. How does greed dishonour God? (v5-6)

5. ***How can we be keeping each other accountable in these areas of life?***

6. How are we to treat the leaders of our church? (v7, 17-18)

7. ***What does this look like in practice?***

8. Verses 8-16 seem to be addressing a particular issue for the original readers: being pressured to participate in Jewish animal sacrifices. The writer reminds them one last time that Jesus' sacrifice is the one that matters.
What sacrifices can we offer that are pleasing to God? (v15,16)

Read Hebrews 13:20-24

9. What does this final prayer highlight about God?

10. What does the writer pray for?

11. Who gets the glory?

12. The writer describes his letter as a brief word of exhortation. Look back over the various exhortations we have heard in our study of Hebrews. Which continues to challenge you personally the most? Which do we need to hear as a church?

**Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
the great shepherd of the sheep,
by the blood of the eternal covenant,
equip us with everything good that we may do his will,
working in us that which is pleasing in his sight,
through Jesus Christ,
to whom be glory forever and ever.**

Amen