



Introduction to Hebrews

We will be studying the book of Hebrews. As we go through this in-depth study, hopefully we will have a clearer picture of who Jesus is and what he has accomplished, in light of the Old Testament. The aim of Bible studies is for us to engage with the text of God's word itself. The goal is not to "answer" the bible study questions as quickly as possible, but for you to understand God's word and explore the text together. So, don't be afraid to ask questions, gently disagree with one another or raise issues from the text.

Introduction

As always, it is important to know the general context of the book of Hebrews before we take a closer look at the text.

Read Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:1-4, 5:11 – 6:3, 10:32-34, 13:18-25

- 1) Based on the passages, what can we learn about:
 - a. The author and the author's relationship to the recipients?
 - b. The spiritual maturity of the recipients?
 - c. The situation of the recipients?
 - d. The genre of the book? (Letter? Narrative? Historical lesson? Sermon? Poetry? Theological essay? Etc.) Try to justify your answer based on the passages.
 - e. The purpose of the book?

Launch Question

- 1) How important are words in a relationship? Why?

Hebrews 1:1-4 – God Speaks by His Son

Read Hebrews 1:1-4

- 2) What period of time is referred to by the phrase "in the past"? Who are "our ancestors"?



- 3) What are some examples of God speaking through the prophets and in various ways?
- 4) When is the "last days"? How did God speak to us "by his Son"?
- 5) What else did God do to/with his Son?
- 6) Write verses 1-2 in your own words.
- 7) What does it mean that the Son is the "radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being"? What does it say about the status and nature of the Son?
- 8) What did the Son do after providing "purification for sins"? What does that mean?
- 9) How does the Son "become" superior to the angels? (cf. Philippians 2:5-11)
- 10) Where can we listen to God speak today?

Application

- 11) How often do you listen to God speak by his Son through the Bible?
- 12) How can we encourage more Bible reading, especially through the "boring" parts?
- 13) What are some blessings that come from reading God's word?



God has always spoken to his people. In the Old Testament, he spoke to them in various ways and means. Some examples of this include God speaking to (1) Adam in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:16ff), (2) Moses through the burning bush (Ex 3:4ff), (3) Balaam through his donkey (Num 22:21ff), (4) king David through the prophet Nathan (2 Sam 12), (5) Israelites through the various prophets. All this culminates in God's climactic, final and decisive word through the person and work of Jesus Christ in these last days.

These "last days" refer to the time between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his coming. His resurrection is the beginning of the new creation, which signals the end of the current age. This age is in its "last days" (Acts 2:14-18). There is a finality about God's spoken word of Jesus Christ to us. So, today we do not look to impressions or promptings or dreams or casting of lots or fleeces for God to speak to us or to make major decisions in life. Those are highly subjective and human beings are prone to misinterpret many things in our lives. The only true objective spoken word to us by God today is Jesus Christ, and we can find that spoken word in the Scriptures.¹

This Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's being. In other words, he possesses all the qualities of God. He provided purification for sins and as a result of that, God exalted him to the highest place. Hebrews 1:3-4 then is the title verse for the entire book of Hebrews. The author goes on throughout Hebrews to talk about the unique and greater sonship of the Son (1:1 – 4:13), and this Son is also the greater high priest who has made the greater sacrifice (5:1 – 11:40).

As you go through this study of Hebrews, the author makes comparisons between who the Son is and what the Son has accomplished to what has come before in the Old Testament. He constantly emphasises the greater reality that is found in the Son, whereas things in the Old Testament are merely shadows pointing forward to God's Son. Therefore, let us not go back to the shadows, but instead, let us continue to stand firm in Jesus Christ, who is our greater high priest, and the greater Son.

¹ That is not to say that God cannot and will not speak today. God is able to do what he wishes. My point is that we do not make major decisions based *solely* on those things mentioned.