

Slow Food Bible Studies

Hebrews (44 studies)

This study takes a single theme (the death of Christ and its significance) and follows it through Hebrews. The unknown writer is concerned that all Jewish readers, whose location is also not known for certain, should understand the greatness of Jesus and the reasons why his death and resurrection render the Jewish sacrificial system obsolete. This is also relevant to Christians who may not be fully convinced of the supreme value of Christ's death. For a sprinkling of commentaries see Raymond Brown *Christ Above All* (BST); F F Bruce *Hebrews* (New London 1965); Donald Guthrie *Hebrews* (Tyndale NT 1983); Joy Tetley *A Way into Hebrews* (Grove Books 8, 1998); Tom Wright *Hebrews for Everyone* (SPCK 2003); Steve Motyer *Discovering Hebrews* (Crossway Bible Guides 2005).

- 1:1-4** 'The really important thing about Jesus is that he is God's final word to us. The cross is of only incidental significance.' Is it? *Jn 1:1, 14; 1 Tim 2:5-6; Rev 1:5-6.*
- 1:5-14** Verse 9 contrasts strongly with Isaiah 53:1-6. Are two different Christs being portrayed? *Lam 1:12; Phil 2:6-11; Heb 2:9.*
- 2:1-4** How does the message of the Law contrast with the message of grace? *Ps 130:3-4; Gal 1:6; Eph 2:8-9.*
- 2:5-9** How is the reality of Christ's death emphasised? Why did he die? *Ps 22:14-18; Isa 53:5; Eph 1:7.*
- 2:10-18** Is the incarnation or the crucifixion more important in God's purpose for our salvation? *Ps 23:4; Lk 19:10; Gal 4:4.*
- 3:1-6** Why should I 'fix my eyes upon Jesus'? *Num 21:9; Ps 25:15; Jn 3:13-15.*
- 3:7-13** How does sin deceive and harden the heart, and what can anyone do about this? *Jer 17:9; 2 Cor 5:15; Jas 1:14-15.*
- 3:14-19** A major concern of Hebrews is the possibility of 'drifting away' from the faith. What part does the cross play in the 'confidence' that brought me to Christ in the first place? *Isa 30:15; Eph 3:12; Heb 4:16.*
- 4:1-10** Have we or haven't we entered into God's rest? *Jer 6:16; Mt 11:29; Rom 11:6.*
- 4:11-13** What happens when God's word applies the message of the cross to my life? *Jer 23:29; Rev 1:16-18; Rev 12:11.*
- 4:14 -5:3** The high priesthood of Christ is a theme unique to Hebrews (see already 2:17, 3:1). What is the high priest's single most important task, and how in this passage does Jesus compare and contrast with Old Testament high priests? *Mt 1:21; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Jn 3:5.*
- 5:4-10** In what sense was Jesus 'made perfect' by what he went through in Gethsemane and on the Cross? *Ps 22:24; Lk 22:41-44 with Mk 14:34; Jn 19:30; Phil 2:8.*

- 5:11-14** Am I giving myself, and those I may be called to teach in the faith, suitably 'solid' food? What does being 'skilled in the word of righteousness' involve? *1 Cor 3:1-2; 1 Tim 1:5, 4:16, 6:20.*
- 6:1-8** Does this passage teach that if I sin after becoming a Christian, I cannot repent all over again and come back to Christ? *Jn 15:1-6; Acts 8:9-24; 1 Jn 1:8-9.*
- 6:9-12** Is salvation by works after all? *Gal 3:1-3; Phil 2:12-13; 2 Pet 1:3-5.*
- 6:13-20** What arguments does the writer use to show that God's promises can be trusted? Why is the 'curtain' referred to? *Mk 15:37-38; 2 Cor 1:20a.*
- 7:1-10** Abraham acknowledged the greatness of Melchisedek. Does my life show a similar awareness of the greatness of Christ? *Gen 14:17-20; Ps 110:4; Rev 1:5-6.*
- 7:11-19** How does the priesthood of Jesus introduce 'a better hope'? *Zech 9:11-12; Acts 13:39; 1 Pet 3:18.*
- 7:20-28** In what ways does Jesus 'meet our need'? *Mt 11:28; Rom 8:34; 1 Jn 2:1b-2.*
- 8:1-6** Is there any earthly 'copy' I am substituting for the heavenly reality that God has provided for me in Christ? *Jn 2:19-21; 1 Cor 11:25; Gal 3:15-18.*
- 8:7-13** 'The old covenant and the new covenant are the same covenant, but the old was external, whereas the new is to be internal.' True or false? *Exod 24:7; Rom 8:4; Gal 3:21; Tit 2:14.*
- 9:1-10** What does the central item, of furniture in the Most Holy Place, the ark of the covenant, tell us about what God is like? Why is it, even so, just an illustration? *Mt 27:50-51; Col 2:17; Heb 9:22.*
- 9:11-14** How can I have a clear conscience? *Ezek 36:25-26; Acts 24:16; 1 Pet 3:21; 1 Jn 1:7.*
- 9:15-22** Why is forgiveness impossible without the shedding of blood? *Lev 17:11; Isa 53:10; 1 Pet 1:18-20.*
- 10:1-10** Why was it so important for Christ to have a body? *1 Sam 15:22; Rom 12:1; Heb 1:3.*
- 10:11-18** What happens at the service of Holy Communion/Eucharist? *Isa 34:1; Jn 19:30; 1 Cor 11:23-26; 1 Cor 15:25.* Tom Wright is worth quoting here: 'When as Christians we look for assurance that we have been truly forgiven, we don't look – or we shouldn't look – at anything we do, at anything the church does, at anything Christian ministers, clergy, priests or whoever do. We look back to the event outside Jerusalem on that dark Friday afternoon, and thank God for what was accomplished fully and finally on our behalf.'
- 10:19-25** Consider the immense and wonderful privilege of prayer. What are the practical implications of this 'confidence' that we have? *Ps 66:18; Jn 13:10; Heb 3:13.*
- 10:26-31** Am I harbouring any deliberate intention which could bring me into the dangers described here? *Isa 57:17; Lk 12:47-48; 1 Cor 3:5.* Most of the Bible's warnings about judgment apply to unbelievers; but sometimes (as frequently in Heb, and also in the teaching of Jesus himself) there is an uncompromising warning aimed at believing servants of Christ.

- 10:32-39** Am I discouraged by opposition? *Lk 21:19; 1 Pet 1:4-6, 4:12.*
- 11:1-6** Is my faith just based on my faith? *Ps 33:6, 9; Rom 4:17; 1 Cor 4:18.*
- 11:7-12** What factors do the faith of Noah, of Abraham and Sarah, and my faith, have in common? *Rom 4:13-25.* In 11:11 some versions have Abraham as the subject, others Sarah. Either way, they both showed faith.
- 11:13-22** Is faith just believing something to be true (eg that Jesus died for me and rose again)? *Rom 10:9; Jas 2:21; 1 Pet 1:17-19, 2:11.*
- 11:23-31** How does the life of Moses illustrate the power of faith? *1 Pet 1:8; Rev 15:3, 7:14.*
- 11:32-40** Have I been led to expect that if I live faithfully as a believer, God will spare me great suffering? *Jn 15:20; Heb 10:32; Rev 21:4.*
- 12:1-3** How does the shame of the cross help me to run the Christian race? *Ps 2:6; 1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 2:11-13.*
- 12:4-11** If I'm experiencing discouraging times, has God turned against me because I'm not holy enough? *Job 1:20-21, 5:17-18, 42:10; Rom 8:28-30.*
- 12:12-17** If Jesus has won access for me into the Holiest by his death, surely no extra effort of mine can qualify me for standing in God's presence? *Isa 35:1-10; Mt 5:8; 2 Cor 13:5.*
- 12:18-24** Can I come 'just as I am'? *Isa 61:10; Mt 22:10-12; Rev 22:14-15.*
- 12:25-29** What has God warned that he will do, and why should we be thankful? *Isa 65:17; 2 Pet 3:10-13; Rev 6:12-17.*
- 13:1-8** Were the standards required of God's people higher in the past than they are now? *Prov 5:15-23; Rom 12:10; 1 Tim 6:10.*
- 13:9-16** What sacrifices does God accept? *Ps 51:16; Prov 21:3; Zech 3:1-10.*
- 13:17-25** How can I be sure that my relationship with God is eternally secure? *Isa 50:7; Mt 26:28; Jn 10:27-28.*
- Review** *Either, How would you explain to a group of Jews that their religious aspirations have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ?*
- Or, What pictures, metaphors and symbols do you personally find most dynamic in conveying the significance of Christ's death?*