

ORCHARD ROAD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# BIBLE FOR ALL (BFA) MATERIAL FOR DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

**Dig Deeper Study Tools**

- Author's Purpose
- Context
- Structure
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- "Who am I"
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## Hebrews—Jesus Is Superior

**STUDY 1** (For Sermon on 04 May 2025)

**Hebrews 2:1-18** **Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Incarnate Son**

**STUDY 2** (For Sermon on 25 May 2025)

**Hebrews 3:7-19** **Hold Fast, Believe and Enter His Rest**

## Background

- Hebrews' author is unknown, likely a second-generation leader after the apostles (2:3)
- Recipients were not mentioned. They were likely Jewish, persecuted and discriminated against for their faith (10:32–34)
- Returning to Judaism, a legal religion in Rome, would spare them from persecution.
- Hence its warnings **not to fall away** (2:1–4; 3:12–4:13; 5:11–6:12; 10:26–39; 12:25–29)
- Instead, it's a call to **hold fast** to their faith in Jesus (3:6, 14; 4:14; 6:18; 10:23).
- It's likely a sermon in written form, described as a “word of exhortation” in 13:22. “Exhort” appears four times (3:13; 10:25; 13:19, 22) and “exhortation” three times (6:18; 12:5; 13:22)
- It was possibly written before the temple's destruction in AD 70. 12:4 could suggest a date before Nero martyred the Christians after Rome's great fire.
- It is laden with OT thoughts: “Thirty-five quotations from a Greek translation of the Old Testament and thirty-four allusions work to support the development of Hebrews' argument. In addition, the writer offers nineteen summaries of Old Testament material, and thirteen times he mentions an Old Testament name or topic, often without reference to a specific context.”<sup>1</sup>
- To help the readers step back and see God's sovereign hand amid their sufferings.

## Message

- Hebrews is also a “word of exhortation” because God is a speaking God.
- His voice is “living and active” (4:12).
- Today if we hear His voice, we must pay heed (3:15).
- As long as it is called ‘today’, we must “exhort one another” (3:13)
- To listen to God's voice in His Son is to read OT in light of its fulfillment in Jesus Christ (1:1-2).
- Otherwise, to revert to OT sacrifices and rituals would deny Christ.
- Given the temptation to return to Judaism, the writer reminds his persecuted readers of the faith of OT saints, their leaders, and the pattern in Jesus' life—suffering comes before glory.
- Its already-not-yet end-time perspective implies the reward promised, the heavenly city, still awaits the believers.
- The theological truths in Hebrews thus serve as the foundation to exhort believers not to fall away.
- The greatness of Christ and His work makes falling away foolish.
- ***Its call is to hold fast to Christ, the superior mediator of a better covenant.***

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<sup>1</sup> Guthrie, George H.. Hebrews (The NIV Application Commentary Book 15. Zondervan. Kindle Edition.)

## **Broad Outline Aligned to the Sermon Series:**

### **Hold Fast to Jesus, the Superior Mediator of a Better Covenant with:**

#### **A Better Revelation**

- 6 Apr Hold Fast, Jesus Is God's Final Word (1:1-4)
- 27 Apr Hold Fast, Jesus Is Superior to Angels (1:5-14)
- 4 May Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Incarnate Son (2:1-18)
- 11 May Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Builder of God's House (3:1-6)

#### **A Better Rest**

- 25 May Hold Fast, Believe and Enter His rest (3:7-19)
- 1 Jun Don't Doubt, Enter His Rest (4:1-13)

#### **A Better Representative**

- 8 Jun Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Perfect High Priest (4:14-5:10)
- 15 Jun Hold Fast, Mature in Jesus (5:11-6:3)
- 22 Jun Hold Fast, Don't Fall Away (6:4-12)
- 29 Jun Hold Fast, God is Unchangeable (6:13-20)
- 6 Jul Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Eternal High Priest (7:1-28)
- 20 Jul Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Inaugurator of the New Covenant (8:1-13)
- 27 Jul Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Anticipation of the Old Covenant (9:1-14)
- 3 Aug Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Mediator of the New Covenant (9:15-28)
- 10 Aug Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Perfect Sacrifice (10:1-18)
- 24 Aug Hold Fast, Jesus Is Faithful (10:19-25)
- 31 Aug Hold Fast, God Will Judge (10:26-34)

#### **A Better Reward**

- 7 Sep Hold Fast, God Will Reward (10:35-39)
- 14 Sep Hold Fast, Live by Faith (11:1-7)
- 21 Sep Hold Fast, Learn from Abraham (11:8-19)
- 28 Sep Hold Fast, Conquer by Faith (11:20-40)
- 5 Oct Hold Fast, Look to Jesus (12:1-4)
- 12 Oct Hold Fast, Grow through God's Discipline (12:5-11)
- 19 Oct Hold Fast, Pursue Peace and Holiness (12:12-17)
- 26 Oct Hold Fast, Come in Awe (12:18-29)

#### **A Better Rededication**

- 2 Nov Hold Fast, Continue in Love (13:1-8)
- 9 Nov Hold Fast, Offer Up Your Lives (13:9-16)
- 23 Nov Hold Fast, Uphold the Gospel Work (13:17-25)

## **How to Read the Book of Hebrews in its Old Testament Context**

### **A. Look for Promises Fulfilled in Jesus.**

1. Jesus as the true Son of David—He is the Messiah, the kingdom OT promised is realised in Him. (1:2 // Ps 2:8, 1:5 // Ps 2:7, 2 Sam 7:14.)
2. Ps 110: 1, “Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool.’ ” fulfilled in Jesus Christ (See 1:2, 13; 8:1; 10:12–13; 12:2).
3. Jesus as the Great High Priest “sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (8:1; See Ps 110:4, “. . . ‘Forever, You are a priest like Melchizedek.’”)
4. Jesus as the Greater Moses and Joshua
  - a. Covenant Fulfilment of Jer 31:31-34 in 8:8-12, 10:15-18; Jesus as the Greater Moses
  - b. Land-Rest Fulfilment of Gen 12:1-3 in 3:12-4:13, Jesus as the Greater Joshua

### **B. Look for OT Events, Institutions, and Persons (Typology) Anticipating Jesus and Heavenly/Eternal Realities.**

1. The fulfilment is always greater than the type
2. In OT, God spoke through Israel His Son (Ex 4:22; Jer 31:9). Now, God has spoken finally and definitively in His Greater Son (1:1-2)
3. Jesus is pre-eminently the better king, priest, and prophet, bringing a better sacrifice, covenant, rest, and promise.
4. Warnings of earthly penalties for disobeying OT Laws anticipate eternal judgment for rejecting eternal salvation in Jesus (2:2-3)
5. Earthly priests and the tabernacle are copies of the heavenly ones (8:5, 9:11).
6. The blood of bulls and goats anticipates Christ’s sacrifice through the eternal Spirit (9:12-14, 23-24).
7. Believers are earthly exiles, looking to a heavenly home (11:13-16)

### **C. Look for End-Time Perspective—Already but Not Yet**

1. “We do not yet see everything subjected to” Jesus (2:8)
2. The present heavens will perish and be rolled up like a cloak (1:11–12).
3. The created things, the present heavens and earth, will be shaken and removed, and only God’s kingdom will remain (12:26–28).
4. Jesus will appear a second time for those awaiting salvation (9:8)
5. Believers are perfected in holiness for all time by Christ’s one offering (10:14)
  - a. Yet, for now, they must persevere in faith amid suffering (10:39-11:40).
  - b. They must pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord (12:4)
  - c. They’re members of the heavenly assembly (12:22-33)
  - d. They seek the city to come (13:14).

**5 May 2025**

**Study 1: Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Incarnate Son**

**Hebrews 2:1-18**

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**PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): READ, MARK, AND REFLECT**

Read the text throughout the week(s) before your group time.

<sup>1</sup> We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. <sup>2</sup> For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. <sup>4</sup> God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

<sup>5</sup> It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. <sup>6</sup> But there is a place where someone has testified:

“What is mankind that you are mindful of them,  
a son of man that you care for him?

<sup>7</sup> You made them a little lower than the angels;  
you crowned them with glory and honor

<sup>8</sup> and put everything under their feet.”

In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. <sup>9</sup> But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

<sup>10</sup> In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. <sup>11</sup> Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. <sup>12</sup>

He says,

“I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the assembly I will sing your praises.”

<sup>13</sup> And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again he says,

“Here am I, and the children God has given me.”

*Notes and Questions*

<sup>14</sup> Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—<sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. <sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. <sup>17</sup> For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.  
(NIV 2011)

### Old Testament Scriptural citations in Hebrews 2:1-18

| vv. 1-18 | Old Testament Text cited  |
|----------|---|
| v.6-7    | <p><b>Ps 8:4-6</b> <i>what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?<br/>You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor.<br/>You made them rulers over the works of your hands;<br/>you put everything under their feet:</i></p> |
| v.12     | <p><b>Ps 22:22</b> I will tell your name to my brothers;<br/>inside the assembly I will praise you.</p>   |
| v. 13a   | <p><b>Is 8:17</b> I will wait for the LORD,<br/>who is hiding his face from the descendants of Jacob.<br/>I will put my trust in him.</p>   |
| v. 13b   | <p><b>Is 8:18</b> Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion</p>  |

## **PREPARE TO SHARE (INDIVIDUAL): LOOK BACK**

What has God been teaching you in the last few weeks?

Who has God laid on your heart to pray for?

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## **GROUP: SHARE AND PRAY**

Take note of one another's prayer concerns.

Come together to pray for each other, the church, and the world (see this month's prayer bulletin).

## **GROUP: WORSHIP TOGETHER**

Prepare your hearts to meet God and one another in His Word through worshipping together.

## GROUP: STUDY 1

Read Hebrews 2:1-18

### OBSERVATION



**What do you notice as you read this passage?**

(The answers for this *observation* segment are usually straightforward, drawn directly from what you can see in the text given.)

1. Given how Christ is superior to all of God's previous revelation through angels (Heb 1; 2:2), list the danger the Hebrew Christians would face if they neglected this message. (vv.1-4)
2. To whom did God subject the world to come, making this salvation message delivered by God through the Lord Jesus so significant? (vv.5-8) (*Hint: See v.9 and notice to whom the author applied the citation from Psalm 8.*)
3. List what the incarnation and suffering of Christ have accomplished. (vv.9-13)

### Comments

Heb. 1 has established Jesus, the One who is superior to angels, as God's final word to us.

Heb. 2 underscores the superiority of Jesus to the Angels as the incarnate Son, and hence the severity of neglecting this message. The greatness of this message is heightened by how this message is a revelation spoken by the Lord Jesus, confirmed by his apostles, and testified by God and the Holy Spirit through signs and wonders.

Hebrews 2 further underscores the message's greatness by explaining God's decreed will is for the world to come to be subjected to Christ. And Christ's incarnation and atoning death are the path for Christ to be exalted.

The greatness of God's revelation in Christ brings severe judgment for those who had drifted away as warned by vv.1-4. This warning is echoed in Hebrews 6:4-6.



4. What is further accomplished through Jesus being made like us in every way? (vv.14-18)

It does not mean Christians can lose their salvation. They will not. Genuine Christians will be brought to repentance. Heb 12:5-8 implies God will discipline genuine believers who stray from Him. This may come through rebuke, trials, and earthly judgments. The purpose of God's discipline is always to restore the offender.

## INTERPRETATION



### **What is the meaning and significance of your observations?**

(This segment requires you to reflect on what you have observed in the earlier segment)

5. Heb 2:3 implies that we cannot escape if we ignore so great a salvation. Elaborate on what you think are the consequences of neglecting this great salvation. *(Try to support your answers with references from other parts of this Epistle.)*
6. What does it mean for Jesus to be made perfect as the source of our salvation in v.10? *(Isn't Jesus the perfect God-man? Note how the same verse also affirms His deity as the Lord God through whom and for whom all things are created. Consider how this question with Heb. 13:8 reminds us that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Use this question to reflect on who Jesus truly is and His role in saving us.)*

However, the repeated warnings in Hebrews 3-4 that come right after this text concerning those who had hardened their hearts in unbelief, who will not enter God's eternal rest but come under His wrath, suggest the prospect of eternal damnation is in view. This explains the severity of the repeated warnings throughout this epistle. Persistent drifting without repentance suggests having a hardened and unsaved heart.

It is therefore paramount for believers to hold fast and not drift away from the message of Christ.

We can host fast because in taking on our "flesh and blood" to suffer and die for us, He became our High Priest and defeated death and the devil, offering us

7. Sum up how this text shows the greatness of our salvation by i) the way it was delivered to us (2:1-4), ii) the sacrifice required (2:7-10, 14, 17), and iii) its chief outcomes as decreed by God (2:5, 8-18).

hope and help in our temptations.

So Jesus became far superior to the angels as the incarnate Son, who also became our mediator and high priest.

### **BIG IDEA**



What is the main message of the passage?  
(Sum up the main idea and supporting ideas)

### **APPLICATION**



Why did the Holy Spirit give us this text?  
(Considering the big idea and the Holy Spirit's intent helps us make applications faithful to the text.)

8. In what ways do you think Christians today can fail to pay attention to God's word? What are the attitudes behind someone who is drifting away?

9. What counsel would you give to a drifting Christian?
10. What does it mean for you in your trial and temptation that Jesus has been made like us in every way and is now our great high priest?
11. And what practical steps can we take to anchor ourselves to Jesus?

**GROUP: DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS**

**(IN PREPARATION FOR 18 MAY MISSION SUNDAY MESSAGE)**

Remember Christ's commission in Matt 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them (*the eleven disciples*) and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The risen Christ now sits at God's right hand (Heb 1:3), reigning with absolute authority in heaven and on earth. With this same authority He spoke of in Matt. 28:18, He commissioned His disciples to make disciples of all nations to obey Him in all things. Hence, Christ's call to be His disciples is also a call to join Him in His mission; mission is an integral part of our following Jesus, our discipleship. This is to fulfil God's decree for all things to be ultimately subjected to Christ, as Heb. 2:5, 8 imply.

Moreover, Heb. 2:14 says, since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity. To fulfil God's mission, He was made like us in every way (Heb. 2:17), taking on human flesh and suffering, even facing and experiencing death for us.

In commissioning His disciples to join in His mission, Christ is sending us to reach those we wouldn't normally reach, to become like those Christ is reaching (1 Cor. 9:22).

**Considering Christ's example and sacrifices to reach and save us, share as a group one of the following questions:**

**1. What steps can you take to join Christ in His mission?**

**2. What can your DG do to reach those Christ is reaching?**

As a DG, thank God for the great salvation He has given us through His Son. Pray that we will be a constant reminder to one another to hold fast to Christ and join Him in His mission. Begin by taking time as a DG to

- Pray for believers you know who are drifting from God.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Pray also for loved ones who have yet to open their hearts to Christ.

**25 May 2025**

**Study 2: Hold Fast, Believe and Enter His Rest**

**Hebrews 3:7-19**

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**PREPARE (INDIVIDUAL): READ, MARK, AND REFLECT**

Read the text throughout the week(s) before your group time.

<sup>7</sup> So, as the Holy Spirit says:

“Today, if you hear his voice,  
<sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts  
as you did in the rebellion,  
during the time of testing in the wilderness,  
<sup>9</sup> where your ancestors tested and tried me,  
though for forty years they saw what I did.  
<sup>10</sup> That is why I was angry with that generation;  
I said, ‘Their hearts are always going astray,  
and they have not known my ways.’  
<sup>11</sup> So I declared on oath in my anger,  
‘They shall never enter my rest.’ ”

<sup>12</sup> See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

<sup>13</sup> But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. <sup>14</sup> We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. <sup>15</sup> As has just been said:

“Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts  
as you did in the rebellion.”

<sup>16</sup> Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? <sup>17</sup> And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup> And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? <sup>19</sup> So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

(NIV 2011)

*Notes and Questions*

## **PREPARE TO SHARE (INDIVIDUAL): LOOK BACK**

What has God been teaching you in the last few weeks?

Who has God laid on your heart to pray for?

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## **GROUP: SHARE AND PRAY**

Take note of one another's prayer concerns.

Come together to pray for each other, the church, and the world (see this month's prayer bulletin).

## **GROUP: WORSHIP TOGETHER**

Prepare your hearts to meet God and one another in His Word through worshipping together.

## GROUP: STUDY 2

Immediate Context: A Summary of Hebrews 3:1-6

### Hold Fast, Jesus Is the Builder of God's House

Hebrews 1 and 2 call us to pay attention to the message of Christ because He is superior to the angels. He incarnated to become like us, suffered, and died to free us from death and the devil.

In Hebrews 3:1-6, again, believers are called to **fix their thoughts on Jesus (the imperative to carefully consider, contemplate, observe, and understand)**, because Jesus is their Apostle and High Priest who saved and granted them access to God. Jesus is the prophet God has promised through Moses in Deut. 18:15,18. However, He is superior to Moses. Moses was a faithful servant, Jesus is the incarnate Son and the Builder of God's house, thus deserving greater honour. Believers are part of this house if we hold fast our faith in Jesus to the end. He is the immovable foundation upon which our lives should be built. We are called to be faithful to Him.

Today's text further explains the consequence of being unfaithful, of drifting from Him, to reinforce the exhortation to hold fast to Jesus.

Read Hebrews 3:7-19

### Old Testament Scriptures cited in Hebrews 3:7-19

| vv. 7-19        | Old Testament Text cited   |
|-----------------|--|
| v.7-11;<br>v.15 | <p><b>Psalms 95: 7-11</b></p> <p>7 For he is our God,<br/>and we are the people of his pasture<br/>and the sheep of his hand.<br/>[Today] if you will hear his voice:<br/>8 "Do not harden your heart as at Meribah,<br/>as in the day of Massah in the wilderness,<br/>9 when your ancestors tried me.<br/>They put me to the test,<br/>even though they had seen my work.<br/>10 For forty years I loathed that generation,<br/>and said, 'They are a people whose heart wanders.<br/>And my ways they do not know.'<br/>11 Therefore I swore in my anger,<br/>'They shall surely not enter into my rest.' "</p> |

## OBSERVATION



### What do you notice as you read this passage?

(The answers for this *observation segment* are usually straightforward, drawn directly from what you can see in the text given.)

1. God has spoken to us definitively in His Son. What are those who have heard the Holy Spirit's message being warned against? (Vv.7-8)
2. What did the Israelites do to provoke God in the wilderness? What was God's response? (vv. 8-11) (You can find the background of vv.8-11 in Exod 17:1-7 and Num 14:34-35)
3. What does Hebrews 3:12-13 say the readers should do to guard against falling away from God through hardened hearts?
4. What response was called for from v.14 if the readers were true partners having a share in Christ?

## Comments

Notice the Holy Spirit was speaking through an OT scripture in Psalm 95. Notice also the citation begins with 'Today, if you hear his voice' even though it was a written word hundreds of years before their time. Consider how this tells you about how God still speaks today to us through His word. Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you as a DG as you study this text together.

It will be helpful for you to read Heb. 4:1-13 as well, which completes this segment on entering God's rest.

Ultimately realised that God's rest refers to the eternal life that is in Christ Jesus. It has a present and future dimension.

The life in Christ we now experience anticipates an eternity in His presence. This is the rest we are privileged to enjoy, now and forever.

This text is, therefore, a *call for all believers to persevere in our faith in Christ. (Note that our perseverance is not a*



5. What deprives or prevents people from entering God's rest? (vv.11, 18-19)

*condition for our union with Christ, rather it is our response to Christ saving grace and it is sustained by His grace that preserves us. Our perseverance validates the authenticity of our faith in Christ.)*

## INTERPRETATION



### **What is the meaning and significance of your observations?**

(This segment requires you to reflect on what you have observed in the earlier segment)

6. What will produce a hardened heart in the believers? (See vv.7-10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19.)

7. According to the author, what will enable believers to persevere in steadfast faith? Reflect on these verses in 2:1-2, 7-8, 10, 12-14; and jot down what you've gleaned.

8. What does entering God's rest mean? (See 4:3-11 and also Gen 2:3, Heb. 11:16, 13:14) *(The text in Heb. 4 helps to round up our study on entering God's rest. Note that we do not have any BFA in Jun to cover Heb. 4.)*

### **BIG IDEA**



**What is the main message of the passage?**

(Sum up the main idea and supporting ideas)

### **APPLICATION**



**Why did the Holy Spirit give us this text?**

(Considering the big idea and the Holy Spirit's intent helps us make applications faithful to the text.)

9. What are one or two things you can do in the coming week to soften your heart for the Lord?

10. How can you find frequent encouragement for your walk in the Lord? Or what can you do to regularly encourage someone spiritually?

11. What will help you to find rest in Christ for your soul?

**GROUP: DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS**

As a DG, praise and worship God for granting us His rest in Jesus. Commit one another's care into His hands, asking Him to help us persevere to the end of our Christian journey. Pray that we may be a support for one another, and for those who need spiritual help and encouragement.