

Dear Bible Study Leader,

“For the Word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword.”
—Hebrews 4:12

It is with joy, excitement, and yet with a bit of sorrow that I write you this letter. I feel that we have been on a beautiful journey through the Bible and now that journey is coming to an end. Some of you have been with us since the beginning, when we began our study in Genesis, and others have joined us along the way. What a privilege it has been to get into God’s Word and allow God’s Word to get into us. If you joined our study more recently, I would like to encourage you to go back and start with the first books of the Bible and study those with us. I firmly believe that, without having a firm foundation, you will especially have difficulty understanding this next book we will study, the book of Hebrews.

In these eighteen chapters in this guide, we will quickly survey the remaining books of the New Testament – the General Epistles and the one book of prophesy, the book of the Revelation. In all of the books, we will see the continued central theme of Jesus Christ and God’s eternal plan of redemption. These books will help us focus on our faith, and they will challenge and encourage us in our faith. What we learn exhorts us and strengthens us to remain steadfast in our relationship with our risen and soon-returning Lord.

There are so many profound and practical truths in these wonderful messages, and it is my prayer that, in this brief survey, these studies will encourage you to study God’s Word even more diligently. Remember, as we study these General Epistles and the book of the Revelation, the most important thing is to ask yourself and the group these three questions:

- What does it say? (Observation)
- What does it mean? (Interpretation)
- What does it mean to me and you? Or, what are we going to do with what we know? (Application)

As we finish our study of the Bible, I would like to remind you that God’s message of infinite love and salvation is for all people. God’s Word tells us that in heaven there will be *“a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb”* praising and worshipping God. To that end these studies are to help you to *“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”* Jesus said, *“Behold I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to - what he has done.”* Therefore we must display in our lives what we believe and we must be bold in sharing the Good News because *“God is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”* So, dear friends, be strong in the Lord and in His Word. (Revelation 7:9, 1 Peter 3:15, Revelation 22:12, and 2 Peter 3:9)

Dick Woodward
Pastor and Author of the Mini Bible College

LEADING THE BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Mini Bible College has prepared this devotionally practical survey of the General Epistles and the Book of the Revelation for you. Your role as leader is to guide your group through the study sessions and exercises, helping them to understand the truth, to discover the eternal principles, and, most importantly, to apply them to their lives. This is a survey study that will take 18 lessons to cover. This is the concluding study of the New Testament and is part of a strategic plan to provide you with the tools to be nurtured and grow personally and to help your church grow both spiritually and numerically.

To help you, we have provided the following tools:

- This Leader's Guide
- Report forms
- Audio of the New Testament Study of Hebrews to Revelation
- A study booklet on Hebrews to Revelation
- A set of workbooks for the students

Before class

- Personally start inviting people to come to this spiritual banquet. *"Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find." So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.* (Matthew 22:9-10)
- Prepare yourself in prayer for those who will attend. It would be best if both the husband and wife can attend together but if only one can or will come, it is better for one to come than none. If possible, pray for them by name. Only God can change the hearts of people, and prayer is the most powerful tool. *"Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up."* (Luke 18:1) If there is interest from women or men whose spouses do not wish to attend, consider starting a group just for the women and another one just for the men.
- Ask for help. Do not try to do everything yourself. Invite one or two people to help with music, singing, greeting, and keeping records.
- Review the lesson and understand the lesson objective.
- Become familiar with the material; listen, read, and study each lesson and memorize the Bible passages before class time.
- Be sure all materials are ready for each class.
- Make sure the meeting area is adequate and comfortable for the class.

During Class

(Remember to try to keep the class time to 1 1/2 hours.)

- Greet everyone as they arrive. Remember how nice it is when you are welcomed? Extend God's welcome to all. Have someone serve as the greeter and introduce people to one another if they are not already acquainted.
- Open with a time of worship and prayer, asking God to help you and each one understand and apply God's Word to your lives.

- Recite the memory verse.
- Listen to the audio lesson.
- Work through the workbook, inviting discussion with a focus on application. We trust that the questions will raise interesting discussion and understanding that will lead to application. If the group is large (more than 10), consider dividing it into smaller groups of three or four people to encourage discussion. Be sure to monitor the time and be careful that the conversation does not detract from the focus of the lesson and the study of God's Word.
- Thank all for coming and encourage attendance at the next class.
- Challenge the students to invite others to join the Bible study.
- Encourage the students to memorize the biblical passages of the lessons each week.

After Each Class

- Gather up all materials.
- Restore the meeting room to the proper order. Leave things more orderly than you found them.
- Fill out and file report forms, if required
- If you are meeting in someone's home, be sure to thank them for their hospitality.

Special Instructions for Teaching Auditory Learners – Non-Readers

It is important to remember that those who do not read and write will learn and retain information differently than those of us who are literate. The oral learners, even most of those who do know how to read, learn best from listening, discussing and telling what they have heard. Illiteracy was not an obstacle in Jesus' day and it should not be for us today. It is good to remember and even tell those in your class that most of the disciples and the majority of the people who first shared and spread the Gospel could not read or write.

In many ways, auditory learners have a greater capacity to learn what they hear than we who must write something down to remember it. Take the time, therefore, to allow your students to hear the lessons, pausing the message and even going back to listen again to a portion if it was not understood, and then allow them to respond to questions. When auditory learners can "story back"—tell in their own words what they have heard and learned— it indicates that they have properly grasped the principle. Therefore, use the study questions to guide the discussion time as they will help in the learning process. Ask the questions aloud and encourage all to participate. This will lead them into a deeper understanding of God's principles and a stronger relationship with His Son, Jesus the Christ.

The Mysterious Masterpiece

Chapter 1

Audio Lesson New Testament #73



Objective: To understand the background and importance of the book of Hebrews



In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

—Hebrews 1:1-3

The book of Hebrews is a mysterious masterpiece. Bible scholars do not know who wrote it or who the Hebrews were to whom it was written, but we do know that they were Jewish Christians who were suffering persecution. The author of Hebrews offers much-needed assurance of salvation, encouragement, and exhortation to believe.

A few scholars say that Paul is the author, but many others disagree. Paul's letters always start with his name, but Hebrews does not. Paul often quoted from the Hebrew Old Testament, but the author of Hebrews quoted from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Also, the author of Hebrews did not focus on justification by faith, which Paul always emphasized. Unlike Paul, this author does not claim to have personally seen Jesus Christ.

Knowing the identities of the human authors of the books of the Bible is not critical, because ultimately it was God who authored the books. Rather, the important questions to ask about any book of the Bible are: What does the book say? What does it mean? What does it mean to me?

Hebrews is a masterpiece in content. More than any other book, it ties together the Old and New Testaments. It contains an argument from beginning to end. It shows that Jesus is the Messiah who was prophesied in the Old Testament, the Lord as revealed in the New Testament, and the coming King of Kings.

Three key words help us to understand the argument in Hebrews: **Better, believe, and beware.** Because Jesus Christ is God's Son, He is better than the prophets, the angels, the priesthood, the covenants, the tabernacle, everything. No more sacrifices need to be made, because Jesus' death fulfilled them all. And through believing in Christ's finished work on the cross, we can experience salvation.



Choose the best answer.

1. True or **False**: We know that the author of the Book of Hebrews was an apostle.
2. **True** or False: Hebrews deals extensively with who Jesus is.
3. True or **False**: The intended audience was Greek believers.
4. **True** or False: The identity of the author does not matter, because the book of Hebrews was written through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Choose all answers that apply.

5. Why do scholars believe Paul was not the author of Hebrews?
 - a. The book starts with his name.
 - b. Paul often quoted from the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint.
 - c. Hebrews does not focus on justification by faith.**
 - d. Paul mentioned the author of Hebrews in his letter to Timothy.
6. What did the author of Hebrews offer to his readers?
 - a. Money from a collection he had gathered from other Christians
 - b. Advice on marriage
 - c. Assurance of their faith**
 - d. Counsel to elders and deacons
7. When the author quoted from the Old Testament, he wrote, “God said” instead of “Moses said” or “David said.” Why?
 - a. He got confused.
 - b. He thought he would sound more spiritual if he wrote “God said”.
 - c. He could not remember who said it and did not want to look it up.
 - d. He wanted to show that the important thing was that God said it.**

8. Why is Hebrews a masterpiece in content?
 - a. Because its theology is easy to understand.
 - b. Everything Paul wrote was a masterpiece.
 - c. It is a thorough, systematic argument about Jesus as the Christ.**
 - d. Scholars consider the author to be the best writer in the Bible.

9. How does the book of Hebrews present Jesus theologically?
 - a. He was a good man and moral teacher.
 - b. He is the Messiah.**
 - c. He was a healer and miracle worker.
 - d. He is the King of kings who will return someday.**

10. Why is the book of Hebrews important?
 - a. It links the Old and New Testaments.**
 - b. It addresses everything we need to know about suffering.
 - c. It explains why we should still make sacrifices to God.
 - d. It talks at length about the importance of angels.

11. What is the most important thing to remember about Hebrews?
 - a. The human author's identity
 - b. The application of its truth to our lives**
 - c. The original audience
 - d. The author's reliance on the Greek translation of the Old Testament

12. What should we look for as we study each book of the Bible?
 - a. Examples of good works we must do
 - b. Ways to sin more effectively
 - c. Reasons why man is worthy to be saved
 - d. Jesus the Christ**



When we study a book of the Bible, what are the first three questions we should ask about it? Why do you think these questions are important? Which is the most important?

Why was it necessary to explain that Jesus is better than certain things?



Praise God for Hebrews, a book to encourage us in our faith. Thank God for speaking to us through His Son. Thank God that Jesus is better and higher than anyone or anything that came before Him or since Him. Ask God to help you grow in your relationship with Him as you know and understand who Jesus is through this study.



Going Deeper

1. Give three reasons that this book is referred to as “The Mysterious Masterpiece.” _____

2. Give three reasons that scholars believe Paul did not write the book of Hebrews, and explain which of these reasons is the strongest argument. _____

3. Based on the content of this book, give a profile of the people to whom it was written. _____

4. Relate to and apply at least three ways the third and fourth chapters of Hebrews give meaningful commentary on the fourteenth chapter of the book of Numbers. _____

5. Show how the argument of the book of Hebrews uses the three words *better*, *believe* and *beware*. _____

6. How does the book of Hebrews show us that it doesn't matter who wrote a book or a passage of the Bible, but rather, the important thing is that it is the Word of God? _____

7. According to the author of this book, name eight things that are inferior to Jesus. _____
