



# HEBREWS

**APRIL 2020**

Read on your own or with others,  
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of this book. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to them than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Unlike the other letters of the New Testament, we do not know who wrote the book of Hebrews. We also do not know who it was written to. Yet, as the letter assumes that the readers are familiar with the Old Testament it is likely that the letter was written to Christians with a Jewish/Hebrew background.

These Christians were struggling with their faith. Under the pressure of persecution and other hardships they had begun to doubt that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Instead, they had begun to revert to the old ways of the Old Testament.

The whole book is a call to persevere in their faith in Jesus. The writer demonstrates that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament and that he is greater than all that has gone before.

## **OUTLINE**

### **JESUS IS GREATER THAN THE ANGELS (HEBREWS 1–2)**

Angels are powerful spiritual beings that held a fascination for the Jews. Their words carried weight with the original readers of this letter and this made it hard for them to move away from the rules of the Old Testament (Hebrews 2:2). Yet, as the author shows, Jesus is better than the angels, he is God's son.

Jesus is also greater than the angels in his humanity. In being born as a human being, the Son of God, in one sense, became lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:7). Yet, now as both God and man he is crowned in glory and honour (Hebrews 2:9). All this because of his great work in salvation.

### **JESUS IS GREATER THAN MOSES AND JOSHUA (HEBREWS 3:1–4:13)**

Two of the biggest names in the Old Testament are Moses and Joshua. God used Moses to bring Israel out of Egypt and Joshua to lead them into the promised land. The writer shows that Jesus is better than both Moses and Joshua, both in who he is and in what he does.

Several times the writer refers to Psalm 95 so it might be helpful to read that before reading this section.

### **JESUS IS GREATER THAN THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTS AND SACRIFICES (HEBREWS 4:14–10:18)**

In the Old Testament, God gave a very detailed system of priests and sacrifices. The priests came from the tribe of Levi and were descendants of Aaron. They were in charge of the temple sacrificial system. A big part of this involved sacrificing animals for the forgiveness of sin.

These sacrifices teach us important things concerning how God views sin and how he deals with sin. Yet, the writer clearly makes the point that the Old Testament priests and sacrifices were only pictures and they could not solve the problem of sin.

Instead, Jesus is the one all these pictures point to. He is the perfect priest, the perfect sacrifice and the one who once for all dealt with sin so that we can be forgiven and know God (Hebrews 9:11-12).

Through this section the writer speaks about a man from the Old Testament called Melchizedek. He mentions him as proof that Jesus did not need to be a descendant of Aaron to be a priest of God. He is found in the Old Testament in Genesis 14:17-20 and in Psalm 110.

### **KEEP FOCUSED ON JESUS (HEBREWS 10:19–13:25)**

Now that he has shown us that Jesus is the Messiah and the one who brings eternal hope, the writer applies this in a plea to keep trusting in Jesus.

We are urged to make sure we meet with other believers. We are taken through a gallery of faith. We are reminded of the Lord's love for his people, a love that treats them as children, including disciplining them. We are taken to see the glories of God's kingdom and the book ends with some straightforward instruction for the Christian life. All of this with one aim: that we might fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

# **ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK**

What do these books teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What do these books teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of these books make in your life? (Matthew 7:24-27)