

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Pay Closer Attention to God's Message

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-11, 14-18

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #11). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

- 1. The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
- 2. The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
- 3. The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Copy these instructions for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Be the first one to arrive. Make sure the meeting place is arranged for the group before they arrive.

“Hebrews” is one of the more complex books of the Bible to study and interpret. Therefore, we strongly suggest that you copy the summary of the book found as the first of the list of sessions online—immediately preceding this session. (**Hebrews: Call to Wholehearted Commitment—Introduction**). Prepare enough copies of that introduction for each participant. It will help them to understand better the theme and purpose of the book or letter to the Hebrews. It also includes a listing of the themes of all seven sessions in this Unit of study. It will hopefully help you and others who will be teaching this Unit by giving further guidance to your church on Hebrews.

Bible Study Leader:

Have your materials ready. Have a white board or large piece of paper available to record responses. If possible have some extra Bibles handy. If you are going to use any illustrative materials have them prepared beforehand.

From the final page of the session (page 25), make copies for each participant of the dictionary definitions of the word “sustain”. See the opening paragraphs of your **Bible Study Plan**.

Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross, *The Worship Hymnal* #233; CCLI #4533740 Public Domain

Alleluia, *The Worship Hymnal* #276; CCLI #16811

Be Still and Know, *The Worship Hymnal* #457; CCLI #583265

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, *The Worship Hymnal* #234; CCLI #2648981 Public Domain

The Wonderful Cross, *The Worship Hymnal* # 239; CCLI #3148435

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Pay Closer Attention to God's Message

Focal Text

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-11, 14-18

Background

Hebrews 1:1—2:18

Main Idea

We must pay closer attention to God's supreme revelation to us in his Son, who deserves our full loyalty.

Question to Explore

What place does Jesus have—and deserve—in your life?

Teaching Aim

To help the church consider the place Jesus has in their lives in relation to the teachings about Jesus in this passage.

Gathering together:

Sing one or all of the following:

Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross, *The Worship Hymnal* #233; CCLI #4533740 Public Domain

Alleluia, *The Worship Hymnal* #276; CCLI #16811

Be Still and Know, *The Worship Hymnal* #457; CCLI #583265

First thoughts:

Be Still

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." Psalm 46:10.

The context for this verse is this: Stop fighting and listen.

This psalm extols the virtues of God. He is always acting on the part of His children. We are admonished to wait and listen and give praise for what He is doing.

The application for today might well be a challenge for us to cease so much activity that we cannot listen? Are you fighting God's battles on your own? Do you run off in all directions instead of listening for God to be exalted? Are you too busy working for Him, battling sin for Him, that you have no time for praise? Then slow down and listen. The God of all creation is to be exalted in all the earth and you are to be doing it. Have you spent a few minutes getting yourself ready by listening to God?

We have an exciting series of lessons that we will study together over the next few weeks. They are lessons from the Book of Hebrews. We will study about Jesus who is the best representation of God we will ever have.

As you study the lesson today you need to turn off any phones, block out any distractions and listen. What you are going to be taught is straight from the Bible, which is God's Holy Word. Today God has a word for you, but you have to be listening to hear it.

"Be still and know". God wants to speak to you today. The Creator of this vast universe wants to commune with you today. He has a word for you.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Use this time to pray. Ask everyone to pray that they will receive a word from God. Ask each one to meditate for a few moments upon the Scripture read at the beginning of this time together.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Pay Closer Attention to God's Message

Focal Text

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-11, 14-18

Background

Hebrews 1:1—2:18

Main Idea

We must pay closer attention to God's supreme revelation to us in his Son, who deserves our full loyalty.

Question to Explore

What place does Jesus have—and deserve—in your life?

Teaching Aim

To help the church consider the place Jesus has in their lives in relation to the teachings about Jesus in this passage.

Introduction to your personal study:

God has spoken dramatically to mankind through His Son Jesus Christ. The question all must answer is what will one do with the information one has received? This session lays the foundation for all that will be studied in this series. You will be shown the truth of the claim of God that Jesus supersedes all previous revelation. You will be challenged to follow through with your own commitment to Christ.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #11) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Hebrews is a sermon put into writing. It is a “**word of exhortation**” (13:22). The writer is urging his readers to persevere in their faith. A note of urgency permeates the letter.

Hebrews was written to a group of Christians who were, in a sense, trying to “go home again”. Some may have wanted to return to the Jewish religion they once had practiced or at least include some of the Law in their Christianity. Others may have wanted to remain in their own comfort zone rather than go forward with Christ. Some, perhaps, had found a comfortable place and were not moving out. They were of little use to the Kingdom of God and its mission to evangelize the world.

As you begin your study of Hebrews keep in mind that chapters one and two fit together. They are one literary unit that proceeds to show that Jesus Christ is superior over the Old Testament revelation and He is also superior to angels.

The author, on one thing, is clear in the epistle. It’s all about Jesus. It is not about any human being or any biblical character. It is not even about angels.

This lesson is the beginning of a series of lessons that point the wayward Hebrew Christian back to serving Christ. For that reason it is always a relevant book to study. Backsliding is an issue that must be confronted in every generation.

The date for this letter is disputed by scholars. This letter could have been written, between thirty to sixty years after Christ’s crucifixion. By that time the church was undergoing persecution. Rather than stand firm and move forward some were contemplating a return to Judaism where there would be less persecution.

Hebrews is a sermon based on the actual life circumstances of a local gathering of men and women. It addresses the privilege and the cost of discipleship. It is a pastoral response to the sagging faith of older and tired individuals who were in danger of relinquishing their Christian commitment.

1. Christ is Superior (Hebrews 1:1-4).

¹ In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² 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. ³ The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by the his powerful word. After he had provided purification for our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven. ⁴ So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

This letter does not begin with a salutation or greeting. The author launches into the work with a statement that compares with Genesis 1:1, ***“In the beginning, God created.”*** It begins with a statement of eternal truth. God who created the universe speaks to His people. He had spoken through prophets but now through His Son. Using the word “through” indicates to us that God was indwelling and superintending the writing of Holy Scripture...He no longer spoke through His angels. God spoke at many times and in various ways; there is variety and richness in God’s approach to man. The stately words of this introductory passage constitute the most beautiful passage in the New Testament. The two major emphases are: first, that God has spoken and second, that God has spoken for the final time” (**The Broadman Bible Commentary**, Vol. 12. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1972, p. 14).

The word “superior” is important to note in this passage. In using that to identify Jesus the author is saying that Jesus is greater or more excellent. The superiority of Jesus over all things physical and spiritual will be taken up in detail as you study Hebrews. In these beginning chapters the writer names each one and then in the chapters to follow he goes into detail.

The author first takes up the fact that Christ is superior to angels. Beginning with verse one and going through verse three the writer uses seven facts to stress Christ’s superiority over angels.

First, he writes that Jesus is the heir of all things.

Second, Jesus created the universe.

Third, He is the radiance of God’s glory. He shines out light from its source.

Fourth, He is special, He is just like His Father. He bears the very stamp of His Father’s nature. He is the image of God the Father. He reveals the Father to us. He is the exact likeness of the Son to the Father.

Fifth, His Word sustains all things. His Word is the glue that holds the universe together. The word “upholding” means not only sustaining the universe, but also moving it toward God’s ultimate purpose. The source of all authority is the voice of God. For the writer of Hebrews, Christ was God’s voice.

Sixth, He takes care of the sin problem of man. He purifies sinners. This He did on the cross.

Seventh, He now resides at the right hand of the majesty in heaven. He has finished the work He came to earth to do.

The word “God” is prominent in the letter. The author uses the word God seventy three times in this epistle. These words were written for an audience who would be familiar

with Jewish history. “The theology of this writer is thoroughly Hebraic – God is and God has spoken” (**The Broadman Bible Commentary**, p. 14).

The word “so” should not be overlooked. It connects verse 4 to the preceding verses. The results of His accomplishments demonstrated His superiority to angels.

The Bible is a book that tells human beings how to have a right relationship with God. Over and over the Old Testament spoke of the broken relationships between Israel and her King. God continued to work with His chosen people even if there was only a remnant. The prophets kept pointing to a coming Messiah, one who would sit on the throne of David forever. That was to be Jesus.

This first segment of the lesson emphasizes Jesus as one who is superior to the angels. Angels are created beings. God’s angels are messengers, warriors, and protectors. They were not created for man to worship.

2. Pay Closer Attention to What You Have Received. (Hebrews 2:1-4)

We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. “Therefore” connects these verses with chapter one. Because of what the author says about Jesus in chapter one he exhorts them to keep on going. This passage contains the first of many exhortations and is in the form of a challenge. ***“We must pay...careful attention.”*** “Must” denotes it as a moral necessity. It is not an option. The readers were to give attention with care. They were to focus.

The key words for consideration here are “drift” and “ignore”. Drifting away paints a picture of something slipping away. Most translations read “drift away.” Drift is found only here in the New Testament. Some translation read *to flow by*.

The word picture has been interpreted in two ways. First the believer may be standing by the side of a swift flowing river. Everything in the river is flowing quickly past. There is no attempt to jump in and retrieve anything. Secondly it might represent the believer in the river drifting past every opportunity without grasping hold. The river could represent opportunities for evangelism in which the believers are not grasping or participating.

No one is immune to drifting. Everyone at some point in life has let opportunities slip by. Therefore, the author includes himself in the admonition. “We” is in the passive voice. It is a subject which is not the actor but is acted upon. The author includes himself in the possibility of drifting.

² For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, ³ 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.

Next examine the word “ignore” or “neglect.” The readers were told not to neglect what they have, that is, salvation. You can only neglect what you have. They were believers. When you do not take care of something you are neglecting it. If a person has a garden but refuses to weed it and water it he is neglecting it. It bears little in the way of fruit. So it is with a Christian life that neglects all Christ did to give him salvation. It will not bear any fruit. There will be no effort made to evangelize others.

The river represents the evangelization of the world. The believers were standing by and taking no part or they are going with the flow. Either way they are not participating in the Great Commission.

Scholars give three possibilities as to whom this letter was written. It could have been Jews who heard the Gospel and refused it. Then, it might be to those who believed but did not mature. And, lastly, it might be those who have believed and did not hold fast to their profession of faith.

The Old Testament and the New Testament intersect at the cross. Christ, who was prophesied in the Old Testament came and fulfilled what was preached and written. The Old Testament Law was to be strictly adhered to by Israel. For any infraction there was a specific punishment. Punishment in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament was meant to bring repentance.

Verses two and three are good texts to verify that the author was writing to Christians. Probably the letter was written to Jewish Christians, but would have been read to Gentile Christians too.. The writing seems to reflect the tension Jewish Christians felt about their Jewish heritage and the forward movement of Christianity. The Jewish Christians were clinging to their Jewish past.

Different scholars give different dates for the writing of Hebrews that range from 60 to 90 A.D. If we take the writing of Hebrews to have been at least 30 years after Christ's crucifixion then there were those who would have come to Christ by the witness of others who had seen Him in the flesh. The Apostles had been with Jesus and testified firsthand what they had seen and heard. Their faith would have come like our faith, from a faithful witness who could give a first-hand account of being with Jesus.

If the date of writing was later than 60 or maybe even 90 A D. then some readers did not get their message directly from the Apostles. If more years had passed then the church was probably in its third or fourth generation. Over time, the Gospel had been confirmed by a multitude of signs, wonders, and various miracles. The Holy Spirit had given spiritual gifts to the church to validate the work. But, those who were eyewitness to Jesus' earthly ministries and teachings were gone.

4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders, and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Just because the Apostles were gone did not mean God's voice was silenced. He still testified by a multitude of methods. The question is how can a person who has witnessed the new birth and seen what God can do intentionally turn his/her back to the task of passing that glorious gift on to the next generation.

In these first two sections we learn that God has not been silent. He reveals Himself and His plan for mankind. He spoke in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. His ultimate revelation was His Son Jesus. Failure to heed the Word of God is a serious matter.

3. Pay Closer Attention to God's Final Word Which Came from Jesus (Hebrews 2:5-11).

⁵ It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. ⁶ 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? ⁷ You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor ⁸ and put everything under their feet."

The author picks up the teaching that Jesus is superior to angels. Here the writer discusses Jesus' relationship to man. Man was God's glorious creation and Jesus became part of that creation. (See Philippians 2:7-8). Man has his fulfillment in Christ. The author is quoting from Psalm 8:4-6 in Hebrews 2:6b-8. God created man to be the keeper of His earth. What an awesome responsibility. Angels will serve the heirs of salvation. They will not rule in the world to come. Men will rule with Christ.

Three things are stated as part of God's divine purpose for man:

1. Man is made a little lower than the angels. There was a point in time when God did this. That time is not defined.
2. Man is crowned with glory and honor. The man in Psalm 8 is crowned king of nature.
3. Man has everything put under his feet.

The term "man" not only refers to the human race, it refers to Christ also.

⁸In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. ⁹ 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.

“Man” was made keeper of God’s earthly creation. Genesis 3 lets us know that man forfeited that responsibility. Even with sin in play God did not rescind this decree. It will be restored in the future.

Read Genesis Chapters 1 and 2, and Psalm 8 and you will discover life and humanity as it was intended. ***Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them***” is not found in Psalm 8. It is only implied.

The triumph of man began with the humiliation of Christ. Jesus was made in the likeness of man. Being incarnate He too was created a little lower than the angels. But, only for the time He spent as a man. His life and the death He suffered enabled Him to sense what all humans experience. What the first Adam lost to sin the second Adam (Jesus) retrieved at the Cross.

Jesus was crowned with honor and continues to be crowned with honor. This was the result of the suffering and death on the cross. . . . ***by the grace of God*** is in some manuscripts translated “apart from God” referring to His incarnation. Do not forget that his death was part of God’s plan. It covered “everyone.”

10 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. 11 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.

Jesus was a pioneer. He went first. He suffered death to make perfect or complete the salvation of men. “Perfect” meant to be complete, mature, equipped for the assigned task” (see Ephesians 4:12). Here it means Jesus completely carried out the purpose of God. The author of Hebrews uses “perfect” three times to describe Jesus (cf. Hebrews 2:10; 5:9, 7:28) and three times to describe His followers (cf. Hebrews 10:14;11:40; 12:23). ([The Superiority of the New Covenant: Hebrews](#), internet) He who is holy made people holy. All are now in the same family. All are brothers and sisters with each other and Christ. Christianity is a family. God is Father and Jesus is Son. Believers are brothers and sisters.

14 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---¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by fear of death.

Jesus shared our humanity. Deity became flesh and blood. This is a vital Christian truth. The Old Testament does not offer the glorious future found in the New Testament. Much is spoken of *sheol* or the grave. Death was feared. The future for a Hebrew was sought in his progeny. He would live through his children.

The reason for such fear was Satan. He deceived mankind beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Jesus broke the power of sin and death when He took our sin upon Himself on the cross. From death to resurrection Christ was victorious over sin and Satan.

16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.

The following statement is very important: Man was God's crowning achievement not angels. It is man, of all creation, who was formed to have a personal relationship with Him. It was not the angels. Angels serve Him but their service is of a different nature than that of humans. Despite all the stories and beliefs regarding angels, no person (human) was, is, or ever will be an "angel". We will not become angels in heaven. In fact, an alternate reading of the Psalm regarding God creating man a little lower than the angels... would be a little lower than God. In any case the scripture pointedly distinguishes between "humans" and "angels". The next verse (below) makes clear that Jesus did not step down from Heaven to become one of His created angels. He stepped down to become fully human.

17 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.

This is a key verse. This is why Jesus is superior and better than any of His creation. Jesus who was fully God became "**fully human**". In order for His atonement to work he had to fully understand mankind. He was as human as any He had created. In order for sin to be atoned for and death to be defeated this was a must.

18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Jesus became flesh and blood to save His flesh and blood creations. Mankind was held captive by the devil, they were those who were slaves to the devil because they feared death. Jesus came for mankind, not for angels. In order for Jesus to do this He had to become fully human in every way. His position would be that of high priest to make atonement for the sins of the people.

He was tempted as any man, therefore, he is able to help those who are tempted. In the original language "tempted" means He was continually tempted with a view toward destruction.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Lead the church to know and understand that Christ and Christianity are superior to the prophets and the Law. All that Jesus experienced was for you and me.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Pay Closer Attention to God's Message

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-11, 14-18

Background

Hebrews 1:1—2:18

Main Idea

We must pay closer attention to God's supreme revelation to us in his Son, who deserves our full loyalty.

Question to Explore

What place does Jesus have—and deserve—in your life?

Teaching Aim

To help the church consider the place Jesus has in their lives in relation to the teachings about Jesus in this passage.

Connect with Life:

Let the group think for a moment about this declaration: The fires of evangelism are fueled by the fire of a believer's relationship with Jesus.

Guide the Study:

Begin the session with prayer. Ask God to open hearts and minds to the truths of the Scripture being studied today.

Introduction.

Explain to the group: The study today is intended to spotlight the role of Jesus as the preeminent example of God's revelation of Himself. He is far superior to the prophets and to angels. Therefore, a believer should not turn back from the relationship with Christ that redeemed his/her soul from sin.

Hebrews is a sermon put into writing. It contains exhortations and challenges. As with other Scripture it urges the readers to continue in the faith accepted and believed.

1. Pay Closer Attention to the Message that States Christ is Superior (Hebrews 1:1-4).

Ask: How did you hear about Jesus? Let them brainstorm that for a few minutes. Put their answers on a board or on paper.

Now ask: What is more important? Is it the bearer of information concerning Jesus or is it Jesus? Encourage answers. Give time for thinking.

Ask someone to read Hebrews 1:1-4 aloud.

Notice the letter does not begin with a salutation as do other epistles in the New Testament. The writer launches right in with a biblical statement coming straight from Genesis in the Old Testament. "In the beginning, God created" (Genesis 1:1).

Continue: The eternal truth is, God who created the universe and all in it speaks to His people. He previously spoke through the prophets and angels, now He speaks through His Son. The word "through" indicates He was indwelling and superintending the writing of Holy Scripture.

Ask: What does "superior" mean in the context of this passage? It identifies Jesus is greater and more excellent.

Say: Notice in verse three the writer uses seven facts to stress Christ's superiority over angels. (Use a white board or large piece of paper to list these.)

Ask: What is the first? Jesus is the heir of all things.

Then what is second? Jesus created the universe.

Question the group: What is third? He shines out light from its source. He radiates light.

Add, Now what is fourth? He bears the image of His Father and reveals the Father to us.

Ask: What is fifth? His Word sustains all things.

At this point, have someone (a child?) hand out the sheets with the choices of dictionary definitions of the word “sustain”.

Question them: Which definition or definitions do you think best fits the word “sustain” as the writer of Hebrews used it in verse 3? Remember that he already has reminded us that Jesus created the universe and everything in it.

Ask: Now, What is sixth? He takes care of the sin problem of man. He purifies sinners.

Continue with this question: How did He do that?

Finally, ask: What is seventh? He resides at the right hand of God in heaven.

Comment: The last fact lets us know that our salvation has been completed.

Emphasize: The revelation of God that we have from Christ is superior to the prophets and to the angels.

2. Pay Closer Attention to What You Have Received (Hebrews 2:1-4).

Ask for a volunteer to read Hebrews 2:1-4.

Say: the first two key words in this passage are “drift” and “ignore”.

For clarity tell the group “drift” is sometimes translated “drift away” or “flow by”. The picture being painted in words is this: either the readers are pictured as being on the bank and the water goes by or they are in the river and drifting by.

Ask: Who do you think is immune to “drifting by”?

Tell them the author uses “we” to include himself.

State: The next important word is “ignore” or “neglect”. These words were written to believers. One cannot ignore or neglect something now one’s own.

Ask: What are they neglecting? Their salvation.

Remind the group: Salvation comes with responsibilities one of which is to witness and carry the Gospel to others. The group to whom this letter was written apparently were not doing this.

Have the group read verse 3 again.

Now ask: How did this group receive the Gospel? It came down through each generation beginning with the Apostles' witness.

Again ask: What does verse 4 say? The testimony of God about Himself has been done through signs, wonders, and various miracles and gifts.

Question: How well are you doing in witnessing and evangelizing others you know?

3. Pay Closer Attention to God's Final Word Which Came from Jesus (Hebrews 2:5-11).

Have someone ready to read the passage.

Ask: Why is Jesus called "the pioneer of their salvation"? He is the firstborn of many who will be saved.

Comment: A believer's salvation is perfect. Perfect means it is complete, mature, and equipped for the assigned task of God. The author of Hebrews uses "perfect" three times to describe Jesus and three times to describe His followers.

Ask: Using these verses how would you describe the family of God? Holy. Perfect. Brothers and sisters to Christ and in Christ.

Say: Read verses 14 & 17 and tell why Jesus had to come to earth as He did? He had to be flesh and blood in order to break the power of sin. Only by becoming human could He fully understand mankind.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Remind the group: The people to whom this letter was written had become very comfortable in their Christian lifestyle. They were not moving forward with the Gospel as was the command of Christ. Never let your comfort zone be the place you intend to stay. There are too many who need Christ and God needs you to tell the Gospel.

Ask the group to comment on how they see the study session could apply to their lives today.

Further, encourage the church to suggest specific ways they could change their own lifestyle to conform more closely to what Jesus expects of His followers.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Pay Closer Attention to God's Message

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-11, 14-18

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Application on next page

Facing Giants with Courage

Have one in the group read aloud 1 Samuel 17:32-51.

Introduce the application time by saying: This is one of the most famous stories in the Bible. It is a story of extraordinary faith and courage. Have members of the group share facts about David.

Ask: Who are the two principle characters in this story? David and Goliath

Then ask: Which one was the bully?

Say bullies taunt, and brag, and intimidate. Goliath did all of these things.

Ask: Who was afraid of him? Saul and all his army.

Then ask: Who was not afraid of him? A little shepherd boy named David.

Point out that David was not afraid because he trusted God and he had experience defeating wild animals that preyed upon the flocks he watched.

Let someone in the group tell why David refused Saul's armor.

Ask someone to tell how David defeated Goliath.

Say to the group that everyone faces giants as one lives out his/her life. It is important to be prepared as David was by trusting in God. It takes the inner strength that comes from God to have the courage to stand firm and defeat your giants.

Ask: What are some giants you have already faced?

Close with prayer that God will give courage to each one in the group.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Pay Closer Attention to God's Message*****Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-11, 14-18****Beginning the Service:**

Welcome any new guests who have come today.

Stand and read Philippians 3:13-16

Pray for God to open hearts and minds to the Scripture.

Sing one or more of the following or other songs of your choice:

Be Still and Know, *The Worship Hymnal* #457; CCLI #583265

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, *The Worship Hymnal* #234; CCLI #2648981
Public Domain

The Wonderful Cross, *The Worship Hymnal* # 239; CCLI #3148435

Offering:

Tell the group how today's offering will be used.

Praying for the World:

Ask: Does anyone have a special person who is serving God for whom they want the group to pray? If no one responds have a person's name ready along with a brief description of that person or family and how and where they are serving.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Let's Do What We Know to Do Philippians 3:13-16

In our Bible study, we concentrated on the need to remain faithful to the basics of our faith in Christ. Those passages focused on strong warnings against “straying” or “floating” away from following our Saviour. For the next few minutes let's concentrate on the positive side of this teaching. We have studied what we should not do. Now let's conclude our time together with a brief study of what we should do. For that view, we will turn to a few verses from Paul's letter to the Christians in the town of Philippi. In chapter 3, as we have divided up the letter, Paul says the following in verses 13 to 16.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded and if anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, Let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.
(King James Version)

Eugene Peterson in **The Message** interprets the Greek language in this way:

I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out to me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running and I'm not turning back. So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet. Now that we're on the right track, let's stay on it. Stick with me friends. Keep track of those you see running this same course, headed for this same goal.

1. Don't Make Excuses.

People give many excuses for not carrying their Christian life into the public arena. None of them will stand the scrutiny of God. It is vital that every believer make every effort to carry the Gospel to the lost. We are not to moan about what we cannot do. Let's do what we know to do. That is all God asks of you and me.

There are three guiding principles found in this passage: (Elmer Towns)

1. Learn from the past.
2. Live the present with purpose.
3. Be future goal oriented.

Jesus said to the rich young ruler, "This one thing you lack." Now Paul instructs his readers "this one thing I do". What a difference between the two. The young man could not leave his riches behind. He had excuses. Paul left everything behind. He had confidence. Peter Marshall said, "Never let the past be so dear as to limit the future."¹

2. Make Sure You Are in the Game.

This passage is a very popular one for preachers. On the Sermon Central website there are 366 sermons on it. A softball coach encouraged his team by saying, "You will never hit anything if you never swing at the ball". Paul is admonishing his readers to get moving. You are ready. Do not wait until you have all that you want or need, get going, "hit something." Losing is automatic in life, but winning is a choice and a journey

1. If you do not show up, you lose.
2. If you do not try, you lose.
3. If you do not risk, you do not gain.
4. If you do not sow, you do not reap.²

"Satan's deadliest trick for keeping you and me from doing what God wants us to do is to distract us by getting us to do many "good church things."³ Stay focused. Make the main thing the main thing. Find out what it will take to win your community for Christ and plan everything you do around that one thing. In this passage the focus is upon his part in bringing others to have eternal life. It is so easy to get sidetracked with other issues in the church and in life that we miss the important point, the main goal. So Paul directs them back to the main thing. He wanted to reach the goal of heaven and eternal life with Christ and he wanted all others to do the same.

You cannot do that without Christ. In fact you cannot do anything without Christ. But, with Christ, all things are possible. The Christian who gives up has not read and taken this verse to heart. What is your motivation for pressing onward? It is Christ.

¹ Sermon Central, Jerry Shirley.

² Sermon Central, Elmer Towns.

³ Sermon Central. Jimmie Davis.

3. Be Positive.

Philippians 4:13, King James Version. ***I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.***

Sylvan Learning, a school for tutoring students says that the worst four letter word is “can’t”. This was not in Paul’s vocabulary. “I can” is his rallying cry. How about you and me? Is our motto “yes we can” or “no we can’t”?

Christ has bestowed upon you spiritual gifts. They are for use. They are for the building up of the church body. The strength of the church is then used to carry the battle to the enemy and save souls from an eternity without God. You prepare and then you proceed to evangelize those around you.

When you learned to crawl you did not stay on the blanket. When you learned to walk, you put aside crawling. When you learned to run, you did it as often as you could. Every time you learned something new you practiced it. You were proud the first time you rode a bike or drove a car. Be the same in your Christian walk. You do those things you have learned to do and keep on doing them.

Conclusion.

Paul said that there was a goal in his life. He had a future with Christ. He was going to achieve it with concentrated devotion. Prayer for him was crucial.

Remember a key is prayer. Prayer is basic – it is not an extra. Talking to God and listening to God makes your walk much easier.

Call to Commitment:

Lay every excuse on the altar today. Take “I cannot” out of your Christian vocabulary and replace with “I can”. Make Philippians 4:13 your motto and guide. Let us say it together: ***I can do everything through him who gives me strength*** (RSV). Let’s say it one more time: ***I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*** Pray for God to give you courage to stand for your faith.

Concluding the Service:

You can only speak first-hand about Jesus if you personally know Him. Now is the time to come to Jesus for salvation. This is an invitation from God just for you. Will you accept Him as your Saviour today? Those of us who already know Jesus as our God, Saviour, and Lord need to pray that God will grant us even this week to live completely in His will. Let’s conclude today’s worship with this thought from the Hebrew hymn book, the Book of Psalms:

***57 You are my portion, Lord;
I have promised to obey your words.
58 I have sought your face with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to your promise.
59 I have considered my ways
and have turned my steps to your statutes.
60 I will hasten and not delay
to obey your commands.***

Psalms 119:57-60

Copy for each participant in the Bible Study Time

sus·tain  (sə-ˈstān')

tr.v. **sus·tained, sus·tain·ing, sus·tains**

1. To keep in existence; maintain.
2. To supply with necessities or nourishment; provide for.
3. To support from below; keep from falling or sinking; prop.
4. To support the spirits, vitality, or resolution of; encourage.
5. To bear up under; withstand: can't sustain the blistering heat.
6. To experience or suffer: sustained a fatal injury.
7. To affirm the validity of: The judge has sustained the prosecutor's objection.
8. To prove or corroborate; confirm.
9. To keep up (a joke or assumed role, for example) competently.

sustain (səˈsteɪn)

vb (tr)

1. to hold up under; withstand: to sustain great provocation.
2. to undergo (an injury, loss, etc); suffer: to sustain a broken arm.
3. to maintain or prolong: to sustain a discussion.
4. to support physically from below
5. to provide for or give support to, esp by supplying necessities: to sustain one's family; to sustain a charity.
6. to keep up the vitality or courage of
7. to uphold or affirm the justice or validity of: to sustain a decision.
8. to establish the truth of; confirm

n

9. (Music, other) *music* the prolongation of a note, by playing technique or electronics

+++++

v.t.

1. to support, hold, or bear up from below; bear the weight of.
2. to bear (a burden, charge, etc.).
3. to undergo or suffer (injury, loss, etc.).
4. to endure without giving way or yielding.
5. to keep (a person, the spirits, etc.) from giving way, as under trial or affliction.
6. to keep up or keep going, as an action or process; maintain: to sustain a conversation.
7. to supply with food, drink, and other necessities of life.
8. to provide for by furnishing means or funds.
9. to support by aid or approval.
10. to uphold as valid, just, or correct: The judge sustained the lawyer's objection.
11. to confirm or corroborate.

[1250–1300; < Anglo-French *sustenir*, Old French « Latin *sustinēre* to uphold = *sus-* [SUS-](#) + *-tinēre*, comb. form of *tenēre* to hold]

Copy for use during the Bible Study

Hebrews 1:1-4

The author first takes up the fact that Christ is superior to angels. Beginning with verse one and going through verse three the writer uses seven facts to stress Christ's superiority over angels.

First, he writes that Jesus is the heir of all things.

Second, Jesus created the universe.

Third, He is the radiance of God's glory. He shines out light from its source.

Fourth, He is special, He is just like His Father. He bears the very stamp of His Father's nature. He is the image of God the Father. He reveals the Father to us.

Fifth, His Word sustains all things. His Word is the glue that holds the universe together. The word "upholding" means not only sustaining the universe, but also moving it toward God's ultimate purpose.

Sixth, He takes care of the sin problem of man. He purifies sinners. This He did on the cross.

Seventh, He now resides at the right hand of the majesty in heaven. He has finished the work He came to earth to do.