

# HEBREWS

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## Lesson 1: Introduction

## Hebrews Chapters 1-2

Hebrews is a great book that will speak to our hearts about the priestly nature of Christ and his constant intercession for us.

As we examine Hebrews, I find myself wondering how many of us have been dealing with—or in the past dealt with—a feeling of drifting along? Perhaps there is a condition in our lives for which we lack direction, focus, purpose, and we have a sense that perhaps God has overlooked us. Or perhaps it seems that all that we hold dear has been taken from us, and hope is a distant reality.

I must confess that there have been times like these in my life, and I suspect the same is true in yours. It is during times like these that we sometimes realize that all the things that we have put our trust in, or were secure in, prove to be of only fleeting value. Maybe it was a career that is now over, or a friend that has moved away or died, or a life that for whatever reason has changed dramatically. Perhaps we have discovered, as Solomon pointed out, that material possessions and fulfilled desires don't actually bring peace or fulfillment; and, instead, a void fills our heart.

I think that it is times like these that test our faith the most. And it is times like these that can lead to a condition known as apostasy or back-sliding. This is the condition that the writer of Hebrews is addressing. You may ask why, and how, are the conditions above tied to apostasy or back-sliding. The answer is because, during our times of uncertainty and sojourns in the spiritual desert, Satan tests our faith and attempts to lead us astray with faulty doctrine or outright lies. Simply consider Christ's journey in the wilderness or Elijah's hiding in the cave; and you will readily see that Satan tried to use both of those events to pervert God's truth and to lead these men astray.

It was the same during the years following Christ's death and resurrection. Those who followed Christ were subjected to great persecution by the Roman government, and those of the Jewish faith who converted to Christianity also suffered at the hands of the Jews. There were tremendous pressures on their faith, severe testing of doctrine, and a fear among many Christians based on faulty doctrine. So great was the false teaching and persecution that many were tempted to revert back to their old ways, i.e., to back-slide. Many more were tempted to alter God's doctrine to fit within the Jewish and Gentile ways of the day, i.e., apostasy (meaning to fall away, to stray; to teach a lie for the truth).

The writer of Hebrews addresses some of these issues of bad doctrine; e.g., that angels are more significant than Christ, for example; and he sets the record straight on the significance of Christ's role as the High Priest—something the Jews would have definitely understood. For us today, we can learn a great deal about the Savior who loves us so much that he was willing to die for us, and even today is interceding for us. In the course of our study, we will learn about the power of God's Word; and the power of Christ and the difference that his presence makes in our lives each and every day.

I encourage all of you to be diligent with your study of this book, and be diligent as well in prayer. We are entering a time in human history of great uncertainty. As such, we need to be armed with God's Word, and on guard that our adversary, Satan, doesn't take advantage of these uncertain times to mislead us into believing lies for truth. Don't let him make you think for one moment that Christ has forgotten you, or that your life has no purpose or direction, or that faulty doctrine which is pleasing to our ears is the answer. He has a plan for each of us, and His word tells us. We need to be faithful in searching out and waiting for that plan according to his timetable. I hope that you will enjoy studying this book as much I have. It's a book that is full of the promise of hope for each of us.

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*Read Hebrews Chapters 1 and 2; then consider the following:*

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1. Can you think of a time in your life when life seemed out of focus, or when you were tempted to re-think your faith?
  
2. Do you recall a time when Satan tried to bend the truth in a way that you almost believed?
  
3. Do you think that it is easy today for people to be misled about the truth, given the society that we live in? Would this have been as true during the days of the early church?
  
4. In the days prior to Christ, and for a time afterward, the Jews actually worshipped angels. At a minimum, they lifted angels up as being extremely noteworthy, given their presence at the giving of the Law and various visits throughout the Old Testament. Do we see anything like that today? In those days some Christians were tempted to follow them in that worship. Do we see that today?
  
5. Look up the following verses. (I know that there are a lot of them, but it will teach you a lot as well.) Jot down what each tells you about angels:
  - a. Hebrews 1:6
  
  - b. Hebrews 1:14
  
  - c. Matthew 22:30
  
  - d. Psalm 103:20
  
  - e. 2 Thessalonians 1:7
  
  - f. 2 Samuel 14:20
  
  - g. 2 Kings 6:17
  
  - h. Luke 24:4
  
  - i. Daniel 6:22
  
  - j. Psalm 91:11-12
  
  - k. Daniel 10:13
  
  - l. Acts 8:26
  
  - m. 1 Timothy 5:21

