

BETTER

HEBREWS

November - December 2022 | Trinity Church Golden Grove

There's something in us that wants the best of things isn't there? The best work / life balance is driving many to change careers or reduce their work hours. Maybe it's the best education for our kids. The best investments. The better pair of shoes. The best fitness plan. The better paying job. The best house. The better piece of tech. The best way to retire and the better way to spend our time. What about the better way to live life, under God? This is what the author¹ of the New Testament book of Hebrews unpacks for us, with his simple, yet staggering claim that Jesus is better. The threads and patterns we have seen in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers - Rest, Priests, Sacrifices, Revelation, Messengers, Temple, Land and Works all come together in Jesus, showing us a better way of living our life under God. While Hebrews is a tricky book, with warnings and can be theologically tricky to navigate at times, know that the author writes to give us clarity and confidence in Jesus. Perhaps you can think of Hebrews like an anchor for our soul - it's been written to prevent us drifting away and to help us fall in love with Jesus all over again.

My prayer is that each of us would hear how superior Jesus is to all other things in this life and that you would be reminded how much better he is. Maybe this 'spark' of love has grown dim or is blowing towards something else. Maybe, you've never quite grasped just how wonderful Jesus is at all. Whatever the case, For 6 weeks we have the joy of looking deeper into Jesus and how the Bible claims he's the better way of doing life.

Luke Dahlenburg

¹ Most likely written in mid 60AD by someone who wasn't an apostle, but born an Israelite and knew his Old Testament really, really well

SERIES OUTLINE

Date	Talk Title	Passage	Preacher
6 November	Something Better	Hebrews 11	Peter
13 November	Jesus The Better Revelation	Hebrews 1:1-2:4	Luke
20 November	Jesus The Better Rest	Hebrews 3:16-4:16	Luke
27 November	Jesus The Better Sacrifice	Hebrews 9:11-28	Luke
4 December	<i>In House Carols</i>	<i>Luke 12:13-34</i>	<i>Luke</i>
11 December	Jesus The Better Priest	Hebrews 5:1-10	Steve
18 December	Jesus The Better One To Follow	Hebrews 12:1-3	Luke

TALK OVERVIEWS

Talk 1: Something Better, Hebrews 11

A stand alone talk. Peter will unpack Hebrews 11 as he looks into the concrete hope that faith gives us and why faith in Jesus is the better way to navigate life.

Talk 2: Jesus The Better Revelation, Hebrews 1:1-2:4

The Christian God isn't trying to play a cosmic game of hide and seek. He's a speaking God, communicating to people through his messengers, which, have long been prophets, angels and his law. The problem, with all these is that they aren't an extension of God's nature or character. However, when Jesus enters history, as the Son of God, a better revelation comes with him. Jesus has a superior name, message and character because he's the exact radiance of God's glory. Why would you want to go back an age of shadows when the perfect king is finally in front of you? So, pay attention that you see him for who he is (2:1-4)

Talk 3: Jesus The Better Rest, Hebrews 3:16-4:16

There is a repeated motif in the Old Testament of obedience and disobedience. Covenant faithfulness and then covenant rebellion. Of God's people being eager to listen to God, and then, quite happy to ignore him. This is seen in more clearly than in the book of Numbers. And it's this theme that the author picks up on in Hebrews 3-4, making the point that the problem isn't the news God gave them - it was filled with hope and joy (4:2) it's that they conclude their present troubles and conflict meant God wasn't on their side. Oh! If only they could see that God was all about leading them into his rest - a land and place where he would rule over them (Think back to Eden and how the promised land of milk and honey is to be a micro picture of this place). Sadly, they never got here. The great conflict in them raged on. And so their life is our example (4:11). When God speaks to us in Jesus, he reveals the rest-less parts of our life (weakness, sin,

rebellion, unbelief), judging and dividing our hearts with his word (4:12-13). Why does he do this? So that we would be given rest for our own weariness and weakness! That's why Jesus went into the very heart of heaven (4:14), as one who gets our weakness (4:15-15), so that he can give grace and mercy (respite in this life) as we journey on to the new creation, where he goes before, to give us eternal rest - something Joshua was never able to do (4:8-9).

Talk 4: Jesus The Better Sacrifice, Hebrews 9:11-28

At this point in Hebrews the writer is deep in making the claim that Jesus is the better way to God (Priest, temple, word, revelation, prophet) and now he touches on why Jesus is the better sacrifice for sin. Hebrews 9 is all about contrasts and how we need to get the order right - the earthly is a picture of the heavenly. Not the other way around. So, the issue is all about the better place he went to, (9:11-12), as the better sacrifice, (9:12,14), by using his better blood (9:14) to clean us in a better, deeper place - consciences (9:14) so that we can now be motivated to do better works from a better basis - acceptance and forgiveness - not for salvation or grace. So much better, is that Jesus didn't stay dead! He took our sins to the grave, like a secret, left it there when he rose, and gave us a new way to do life under God (called a covenant). The best part? He will come back after making sure the place is ready for us, bringing salvation to all those waiting for him (9:28).

Talk 5: Jesus The Better Priest, Hebrews 5:1-10

Steve Davies will look at how priests are the mediators between humanity and God, and that humans have always recognised a distance that we need to bridge. It turns out that Jesus is the better priest not only because he was obedient in a way that we can't be, but that his obedience is exactly what we need to have a better way of approaching God.

Talk 6: Jesus The Better One To Follow, Hebrews 12:1-3

A dense few verses! But, the better one to follow isn't found in those listed in Hebrews 11. As great examples of Godliness, they are simply fellow runners, who start with us, but, the better one to follow is the pace setter himself - Jesus. That's the trick - if we compare ourselves to the people in the race, it's a recipe for disaster. Why? No one else is the source and perfecter of our faith. They are encouragers. We are to keep them close to ourselves and meet with them (10:25, being hospitable 13:2) but, it's the joy of Jesus, who is the better one to follow. He went to the Cross, knows all about shame and pain, and now, sits down, finishing what God started in Genesis 3, to bring about a salvation for us. Fix your eyes on him. It's simple and he's so much better.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

We will keep using the Swedish Method of Bible Study for our Hebrew series. However, I've also included a few question² for each week to help you start, end or unpack the passage in more detail. Small print for each week are available from the welcome desk.

Talk 1: Hebrews 11

1. In what ways do you see your heart being drawn away from the city of God?
2. How does the faithfulness of Abraham, and all of the saints who died in faith before you, give you hope and encouragement in your current situation?

Talk 2: Hebrews 1:1-2:4

1. To what other places do you sometimes turn to hear God "speak" besides Jesus and the prophets?
2. What characteristics of Jesus stood out to you from this passage? How did those encourage you?
3. What are some steps you might need to take to keep yourself from drifting away and missing the message of salvation in Jesus?

Talk 3: Hebrews 3:16-4:16

1. What things are you distracted by today that are keeping you from Jesus? What attributes of Jesus in this text could pull your focus back upon him?
2. What does it mean to you to know that you are in the same people of God as Moses?
3. How does this passage help you see that effort and striving are good and necessary parts of the Christian life? What are some ways in which you can "fight" for your faith today?

Talk 4: Hebrews 9:11-28

1. What aspects of your "inheritance" in Christ are you most looking forward to? How are some of those blessings present in your life already?
2. In what ways might you have underplayed the seriousness of your sin, or the seriousness of God's holiness?
3. How would looking forward to the second coming affect your life in the present?

Talk 5: Hebrews 5:1-10

1. In what ways have you tried to represent yourself before God, rather than letting Jesus do that?
2. What keeps you from being sure of your standing with God? How does this passage help?
3. How are you encouraged today by the fact that Jesus took on human flesh and suffered like us?

Talk 6: Hebrews 12:1-3

1. Do you think you are ready if serious persecution comes your way? What can you do today to help yourself be prepared to suffer?
2. How's the Christian race going for you? How are you encouraged by Jesus' example?
3. What are some things that hinder your running today that you need to put aside, even if they are not sinful?

² Question taken from Michael Kruger's book *Hebrews For You, The Good Book, 2021*