



THE VERDICT TEACHING SERIES

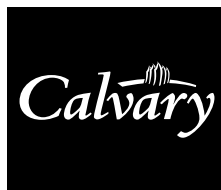
The Book of
HEBREWS

THE VERDICT
WITH PASTOR JOHN H. MUNRO



Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

HEBREWS 12:1B–2



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THE VERDICT

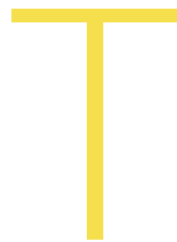
WITH PASTOR JOHN H. MUNRO

Thank you for listening to The Verdict

We hope you find this listening guide helpful as you follow along with Pastor John Munro in his current teaching series and continue your study in God's Word.

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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING TO THE VERDICT!

And welcome to our study of the book of Hebrews.

The first commentary I ever bought was on Hebrews. I was 17 years old and newly baptized. I was captivated by the book of Hebrews, although there was much I didn't understand. And there is still much which I find difficult to understand! It is not the easiest book in the New Testament, but it is one of the most rewarding.

We don't know who wrote the epistle of Hebrews. Some think it could have been Apollos or Silas or Barnabas, but the fact is we don't know. It was originally written to 1st century Hebrew Christians who were being persecuted for their faith, and some were being tempted to revert to Judaism.

So the underlying theme of Hebrews presents the superiority of our Lord Jesus Christ and encourages these brothers and sisters to persevere in their faith. This message remains relevant for followers of Christ today.

I trust you find this listening guide helpful as we continue to explore "this great salvation" and strengthen our faith! To replay programs, visit us at **calvarychurch.com/theverdict**.

Warmly in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Pastor John H. Munro

The Book of HEBREWS

Jesus: God's Final Word

Hebrews 1

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Jesus God's Final Word** (1:1–2) Parts 1 & 2
- **Jesus: God's Unique Son** (1:3–4) Parts 1 & 2
- **Jesus: Superior to the Angels** (1:5–14) Parts 1 & 2

IF THERE IS A GOD, HOW CAN HE BE KNOWN? Down through the centuries, mankind has tried by various means to find and know God. But left to ourselves, we can never know and understand God — any more than a grasshopper can know and understand the size of the universe!

But the true God is a God who is not silent. He is not a God who is remote, but rather a God who speaks to us — a God who has revealed Himself. In the beginning, God spoke creation into being. “And God said, Let there be light; and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). God’s revelation in the Old Testament “to our fathers by the prophets” (1) was fragmentary and incomplete. It was all God’s truth, but it was only part of God’s truth. The types, shadows, prophecies, and promises were all pointing to God’s full revelation — which is found in Jesus Christ, God’s Son, and the coming of a better covenant based on His perfect sacrifice.

Jesus is the unique Son of God. He provides a perfect picture, “the exact imprint” (3), of God the Father. He is preexistent and eternal, God incarnate. He existed before the creation of the world and through Him all things were made. “He upholds the universe by the word of His power” (3).

At the cross, Jesus Christ bore the judgment of sin, which we deserved. He died for our sins. His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation to the Father’s right hand is the demonstration, the declaration, the celebration of His perfect work of purification of sins. As we will see throughout our study of Hebrews, He is the true and perfect **Prophet** who reveals God’s truth. He is the perfect **Priest** and mediator, who has made a perfect sacrifice for your salvation. He is the perfect **King** and has all authority on heaven and earth.

This is why we worship our Lord Jesus Christ. This is why you should trust Him for forgiveness of your sins and choose to obey and follow Him.



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

What were some of the ways God spoke in the Old Testament?

What do we mean when we say that Jesus is God's final Word, His final revelation?

According to verses 1–4, why is Jesus unique? What do these descriptions tell us about Jesus?

Why is Jesus superior to the angels?

Do you know God through a relationship with Jesus Christ? How does this added knowledge of Christ deepen your faith?

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This Great Salvation

Hebrews 2

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- ***The Danger of Drifting*** (2:1–4) Parts 1 & 2
- ***Jesus Is Triumphant*** (2:5–9) Parts 1 & 2
- ***Salvation, Freedom, and Victory*** (2:10–18) Parts 1 & 2

FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION OF THE SUPREMACY and superiority of Jesus Christ in chapter 1, the writer of Hebrews addresses the “so what” at the beginning of chapter 2. The writer is moving from theology to practical living.

We are given a clear warning against the danger of spiritual drifting. God has revealed His truth in His Son, and that truth has the most serious and eternal consequences. There is a real danger that we may “drift away” (1) from the truth. That is, we may listen to the Word of God, superficially embrace it, but not pay close attention and obey it. See the writer’s crucial question: “How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?” (3). If God acted in judgment in the Old Testament, how much greater will the penalty be if we reject God’s Son, His full revelation — God Himself.

Verses 5–9 underscore the greatness of this salvation by emphasizing how Jesus is triumphant. Man was created by God in the image of God. God made man a little lower than the angels and placed him on earth with great dignity and a great destiny. What happened? The image of God in man has been shattered by sin. Man and creation are now characterized by imperfection and failure. In God’s grace, Jesus Christ comes to “taste death for everyone” (9) so that we may be saved. Jesus’ death was not a mistake, but rather essential for our restoration. And despite the fact that our present world is sad and broken, Christ’s triumph will be demonstrated to everyone on that great day when He returns.

Jesus is the only one who can lead us to salvation and free us from the fear of death. He is described as “the founder” of salvation (10). He is the captain, the champion, the pioneer, the leader, the pathfinder. People fear death because it is inescapable. We fear the unknown, the separation, the pain, and eternal punishment. The devil uses our fear of death to keep us

in bondage. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has rendered the devil powerless by eliminating the fear of death with the promise of eternal life. When you are following Jesus, there is no need to fear — He is victorious.



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

What does the writer mean when he warns: "How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?" Why is the word **neglect** significant? What does this say about careless intentions?

In verses 3b–4, the writer gives three reasons why this salvation is so great. What are those reasons?

What are some of the effects of the image of God being shattered in man? How do we see the fall reflected in our lives and creation?

Why does the certain future triumph of Jesus change our present perspective? Do you know God through a relationship with Jesus Christ? How does this added knowledge of Christ deepen your faith?

What does the writer mean when he describes Jesus as the **founder** (or captain) of our salvation? What's the picture?

Do you understand why you can rejoice in the victory of Jesus? Are you truly believing in the Lord Jesus Christ — and is this faith making a difference in your life?

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Fix Your Eyes on Jesus

Hebrews 3

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Faithful Perseverance** (3:1–6) Parts 1 & 2
- **The Greatest Sin** (3:7–19) Parts 1 & 2

THROUGHOUT OUR STUDY, WE WILL FIND the writer of Hebrews challenging us about the reality and authenticity of our faith. Remember, Hebrews was originally written to Jewish professing Christians who were experiencing persecution and suffering. Possibly some were not true believers at all; others were wavering in their faith. The message to these 1st century readers (and to us) is — ***Don't abandon your faith in Jesus. Don't turn back. Persevere. Keep pressing on.***

At the beginning of Hebrews 3, the writer is asking us to “consider Jesus,” and he presents Jesus as superior to Moses. This was significant to Jewish believers because Moses was a great prophet, the writer of the first five books of the Old Testament, and the leader who had received the Ten Commandments. While both Jesus and Moses are faithful, Jesus is greater by far. Jesus is the “builder of the house,” the Son of God, and God incarnate, while Moses is a faithful servant of God. Jesus represents the new covenant of grace and truth, while Moses represents the old covenant of the Law. We are to fix our eyes not on Moses (or other religious leaders or philosophies) but on Jesus. We are “to hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope” (6).

If you have received Christ as your personal Savior, you are eternally secure and will never be lost (John 10:28). ***But the question is, are you truly saved?*** There is a huge difference between the ***profession of salvation*** (lip service) and ***true possession of salvation*** (demonstrated by a living faith that endures).

It is possible for people to hear the Word of God and to see the power of God, but to harden their hearts. In verses 16–19, the writer gives us a negative example of ancient Israel. In the wilderness, the people of God saw the words of God (9); they witnessed the deliverance from Egypt through the Red Sea; they received divine provision. Yet, they rebelled against the Lord and were characterized by unbelief and disobedience. Unbelief is the greatest sin. It forfeits blessing and brings judgment.

What happened to Israel can easily happen to any of us. Each one of us must take care that we do not have “an evil, unbelieving heart.” If we do, we “fall away from the living God” (12). Examine yourself for the warning signs of spiritual hardness heart: disinterest in worship and the Word of God, a critical, complaining spirit, and the toleration of sin. Believers who respond to the Word of God encourage others and are active within the body of Christ.



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

How would you explain the superiority of Jesus to Moses or any other contemporary religious figure?

Do you understand the difference between profession and possession of salvation?
How has your faith in Christ impacted your life?

What are some of the distractions in life that you may need to remove as you fix your eyes on Jesus?

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True Rest

Hebrews 4:1–13

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Enter the True Rest** (4:1–11) Parts 1 & 2
- **The Power of God's Word** (4:11–13) Parts 1 & 2

MUCH OF LIFE IS LIVED IN THE FAST LANE — to-do lists, deadlines, places to go, goals to accomplish. Stress, pressure, and tension are a way of life. All of us crave true rest.

The concept of rest is central in Hebrews 4. In this passage, the writer mentions three dimensions of rest: **(1) the Canaan rest** promised to God's ancient people, **(2) the Sabbath** or creation rest instituted by God, and **(3) a Promised rest** which is both a present reality to followers of Christ and a future promise.

The experience of true rest begins by trusting Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord (John 4:14). Jesus invites us to share His divine rest by coming to Him (Matthew 11:28–29). To experience this rest, we must rest from our own efforts. All our activity, all our work, all our best intentions, all of our religion and good deeds cannot attain this rest. Jesus Christ gives this true rest as a gift. The greater our trust in Christ, and the more we obey God's Word, the more we experience His rest and peace.

When your heart is hardened to the Word of God, and when you lean on your own understanding, you miss out on this great blessing of true rest, as exemplified by the unbelieving Israelites. Today if you hear God's voice, do not harden your heart (7). Trust Him. Claim His promises. The power of the living Word of God will transform your life.

As a follower of Christ, our present experience of this rest is but a foretaste (an appetizer) of a glorious, eternal rest that will never end. We must persevere despite the difficulties, the obstacles, and the temptations. What a future is ours in Christ!



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

Have you experienced the present reality of this rest as a follower of Christ?

Or are you still trying to live the Christian life in your own strength? Are there areas of your life that are not surrendered to the lordship of Christ?

Do you spend time daily in the Word of God? When have you been strengthened? When have you been convicted?



Let us then with confidence
draw near to the throne of grace,
that we may receive mercy
and find grace to help
in time of need.”

HEBREWS 4:16

The Book of HEBREWS

Our Great High Priest

Hebrews 4:14 – 5:10

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Our Great High Priest** (4:14 – 5:10) Parts 1 & 2

AN OLD TESTAMENT PRIEST SERVED as a kind of go-between for God (who is holy) and the people (who were sinful) (1). Based on God's instruction, the priesthood was based on a system of animal sacrifices. The forgiveness of sins was costly. Before there could be forgiveness, there had to be the shedding of blood. The priest had to be from the tribe of Levi (i.e. a descendant of Moses's brother, Aaron) and be a man of compassion, knowing the people's struggles and weaknesses (2). The high priest was himself a sinner, so he had not only to offer sacrifices for sins for others but also for himself (3).

Jesus Christ made the one perfect sacrifice for all time when He offered up Himself (7:26–27). Unlike the Old Testament high priests, Christ's sacrifice was not for His sins, but the sins of others. He was truly and genuinely human, and therefore is our perfect representative, well able to understand our suffering and temptation. He was tempted in all things as we are, yet (unlike the Old Testament priests) was without sin (15).

Jesus Christ came from God, perfectly completed the work of salvation, and returned to the presence of God. The Old Testament sacrificial system was abolished. Jesus stands supreme as the source of forgiveness and salvation. We don't need any human priest or saint or Mary to act as our mediator. We can come directly to God Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ.

He has passed through the heavens and is eternally alive in the presence of God, making intercession for us. He is there to help you, to give you mercy, to pour grace into your troubled heart, to strengthen you, to provide you with wisdom, to give you direction in your time of need.



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

Do you understand how Jesus Christ serves as our Great High Priest by making the perfect sacrifice and becoming the one and only mediator between God and us?

Are you encouraged by the fact that Jesus is the best priest ever? Just think — He knows you, and you can go to Him at any time.

Are you confused? In need? Overwhelmed with guilt? Living in despair? Facing an impossible situation? Here is your confidence: come to Jesus Christ and draw near to the throne of grace.

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Spiritual Maturity and Authenticity

Hebrews 5:11 – 6:20

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Moving Toward Maturity** (5:11 – 6:3) Parts 1 & 2
- **Don't Go Back** (6:4–12) Parts 1 & 2
- **The Anchor Holds** (6:13–20) Parts 1 & 2

THE WRITER HAS JUST BEGUN TO EXPLAIN the high priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 5:11, he states that it is hard for him to explain these truths because his readers have become “dull of hearing” — spiritually lazy and immature, unable to understand spiritual truths.

The problem of spiritual immaturity is a very real one. It is natural for babies to drink milk. But many Christians have never moved beyond the milk stage. They are still on the spiritual bottle — unable to understand, digest, and apply the Word of God by themselves. Can you handle the meat of the Word? Are you able to study the Bible on your own?

When we sin, we think we are exercising our freedom, but the reality is the very opposite. The solid food of the Word leads to maturity (14). Spiritual maturity is the result of the continual personal application of God's Word to our lives, resulting in wise decisions being made. Spiritual maturity, like our physical growth, takes practice and requires us to spend time in God's Word.

The writer then follows with a warning and a challenge (4–12). He warns against having an inauthentic faith: people who have said they believe and appear to be saved, but ultimately fall away because they were not authentic followers of Christ. True saving faith results in spiritual growth and progress (7–8). And those who love God demonstrate their love by serving and loving others (9–10). The challenge is for authentic believers to press on, not to be lazy or “sluggish,” to continue growing in their faith, and have unwavering confidence in Christ. “Realize the full assurance of hope until the end” (11).

How can we have this confidence? Why should we anchor our hope in Christ?

Because God always keeps His promises. The writer gives the example of God's promise to Abraham — that through him there would be a great nation (15). Years go by, and Abraham

and Sarah are far too old to have children, yet they believe the promises of God. And finally, there is a miracle — Isaac is born. God’s promises are unbreakable and unchangeable. He has emphasized the trustworthiness of His Word and bound it to His character (17–18). He has given His promise, and He has made an oath, and “it is impossible for God to lie” (18).

Finally, the triumph of Jesus gives us a secure hope — “a steadfast anchor of the soul” (19). Jesus goes ahead of us, right into the very presence of God.



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

Where are you spiritually? Have you placed your trust in Jesus Christ as Lord?

Have you made progress beyond the basics? What are some ways you have deepened in your faith?

Does your faith go beyond mere knowledge to real possession of salvation? Do you see God at work in your life?

On what do you base your life decisions? How do you react in the storms of life?

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Drawing Near to God

Hebrews 7

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- ***Drawing Near to God*** (7:1–28) *Parts 1 & 2*

HOW EASY IS IT FOR YOU TO HAVE A MEETING WITH GOD? In the Old Testament, access into the presence of God was next to impossible. But now, followers of Jesus Christ are encouraged to draw near to God. We don't come to God through a human priest or elaborate rituals. At any time, you can come for help directly into the very presence of God through our great High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ.

As the writer continues to encourage his readers, he references the Melchizedek priesthood, referring to a somewhat enigmatic figure encountered by Abraham in Genesis 14 as a “type” or illustration of Jesus Christ. Melchizedek is called a “king of righteousness,” appointed by God, without genealogy — there is no record of his birth or death. Abraham recognized the superiority of Melchizedek by giving him a tithe. Since the Levi priesthood descended from Abraham, this also demonstrates that the Melchizedek priesthood is superior to the Levi priesthood. Consider how each of these elements foreshadows Christ.

The writer explains that there has been a radical change in the priesthood — in other words, a radical change in how people come to God. He points out that the Law and the Levitical priesthood (the old ways, the old system) has been “set aside” “because of its weakness and uselessness” (18). The Law told the individual what to do but could not give the individual the power to obey. The Levitical system covered sin through ritual sacrifice but could not take our sins away (10:4).

Christ's priesthood is identified as “a better covenant” (22), guaranteed by the very character and the oath of God. Christ's divine appointment as high priest, as mediator and intercessor, is permanent. It will never be disrupted because He lives forever. His power is limitless and endless. Unlike human priests, who made sacrifices over and over for themselves and others, Jesus is perfect (26), and His sacrifice is once and for all (27).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the spotless and sinless Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world; He is the perfect priest offering up the perfect sacrifice for all time. See Hebrews 7:28.

Now that perfection has come in Jesus Christ, the types and shadows of the old covenant and the old priesthood have been entirely abolished. Draw near to God through our Lord Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest.



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

How is the writer's reference to Melchizedek helpful to you in understanding why Christ is a superior high priest?

What are some of the differences between the old system and the "new covenant" of Jesus Christ?

Do you understand how you can draw near to God through faith in Jesus Christ?

What impact does this have on your faith and your attitude in your personal relationship with God?

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The New Covenant

Hebrews 8

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **The New Covenant** (8:1–13) Parts 1 & 2

UNDER THE OLD COVENANT, ACCESS TO GOD was through the Levitical priesthood, the tabernacle/temple worship, and the rituals and sacrifices. With our Lord Jesus Christ, the new covenant has come, and all of that has now gone (7:18–19).

Jesus' earthly ministry and His sacrificial work are perfectly accomplished. Now He has taken His seat "at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven" (1), and He ministers in heaven, interceding for us. The gifts and sacrifices of the high priests in the Old Testament cannot compare to the sacrifice of our Great High Priest who offered up Himself and did this once for all (7:27).

Jesus is the mediator of a better, new covenant established on "better promises" (6). The old covenant in the Old Testament was a two-party covenant contingent on the obedience of the people. But being sinful, we are unable to keep the Law perfectly. The new covenant is a one-party covenant based entirely on the grace of God and what God will do. Isn't that encouraging?

There are three promises of the new covenant of God's grace:

1. **God's laws are written on our minds and hearts** (10a). The old covenant was an externally imposed law; the new covenant is written upon our hearts and minds. As we place our trust in Jesus Christ, God gives us a new nature that knows and loves God's will. And He gives us His indwelling Spirit to enable us to do His will.
2. **We will have an intimate knowledge of God in our personal experience** (10b–11). As followers of Jesus Christ, we have an unconditional and direct relationship with God. We are not dependent on any human priest or mediator. Through personal trust in Jesus Christ, each one of us can now know the Lord.
3. **We will receive mercy and complete forgiveness of our sins** (12). The animal sacrifices of the old covenant could never actually remove the guilt of sin; they covered the sin as an

acceptable atonement. But now God has promised He will remember our sins no more; the grace of God extends complete forgiveness.

The old system was external, outward, and ritualistic — a copy foreshadowing what was to come. The new system — the new covenant — is internal, spiritual, and personal. Therefore, don't live under the old covenant mentality, still under the Law and always focusing on a checklist with a legalistic mindset. With Jesus, the new covenant has come!



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

Do you understand the key differences between the old covenant and the new covenant?

How is God's grace central to the new covenant?

Do you ever find yourself being drawn to rituals or checklists in an effort to be good and somehow earn forgiveness? Do you have a formal, ritualistic relationship with God, or have you surrendered to Jesus Christ?

Isn't it mind-blowing to realize that the God of the universe wants to have a personal relationship with you? Are you regularly reading His Word and reaching out to Him in prayer to grow in your relationship?

Reflect on how God chooses to remember our sins no more. How can we, as followers of Christ, demonstrate the love and grace of God to others?

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The Perfect Sacrifice PART 1

Hebrews 9

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Israel's Holiest Day** (9:1–10) Parts 1 & 2
- **Eternal Redemption** (9:11–14) Parts 1 & 2
- **The Perfect Sacrifice** (9:15–28) Parts 1 & 2

UNDER THE OLD COVENANT, ACCESS TO GOD WAS DIFFICULT and restricted. The Lord gave specific instructions regarding the layout, furniture, and rituals within the tabernacle, and later the temple for worship. The relative placement of the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies and the priests' responsibilities reinforced the fact that sinful people could not directly come to God.

The tabernacle and the offerings were “symbolic for the present age” (9), yet they could not give the worshiper a clear conscience (9). The rituals were earthly, imperfect, inadequate, and the cleansing of sin was only partial and limited (4). It was all temporary, in force only “until the time of reformation” (10), that is, the time of a new covenant.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross was perfect. The shedding of Jesus' blood brings the old covenant sacrifices to an end, definitively dealing with sin once and for all. God is eternally satisfied with this payment, and this price never needs to be paid again. It is an “eternal redemption” (12) — valid for all eternity. Total cleansing and full salvation flow from Christ's perfect sacrifice for all who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, including the people who lived and died under the old covenant system (16).

The writer further emphasizes the extent of this full salvation by describing Christ's three appearances within this new covenant. Consider:

- At Christ's first appearance on Calvary's cross, He saves us from the **penalty** of sin (24–26).
- At His present appearing before the throne of God for us, He is saving us from the **power** of sin by serving as our Great High Priest (23–24).
- When He returns, He will deliver us from the very **presence** of sin by saving us from God's final judgment (27–28).



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

What aspects of tabernacle worship and the Day of Atonement did you find to be the most helpful in understanding the old covenant? Do you understand the purpose of God's overall design?

When our Savior died on the cross, the veil separating the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom. Do you understand how His sacrifice precipitated a dramatic change in our access to God?

What made the sacrifice of Jesus so perfect? How was His sacrifice superior to the animal sacrifices of the old covenant?

Have you experienced the total spiritual cleansing and the clear conscience that come from trusting in Jesus Christ as your Savior?

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The Perfect Sacrifice PART 2

Hebrews 10

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **An Unrepeatable Sacrifice** (10:1–18) Parts 1 & 2
- **Privileges and Penalties** (10:19–39) Parts 1 & 2

THE BIBLE CLEARLY TEACHES THAT JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY TO GOD. But in our pluralistic society with many different ideas, religions, philosophies, and viewpoints, this can put followers of Jesus on a collision course. What is so special about Jesus and His way that substantiates the claim that He is the only way of salvation?

Since chapter 7, the writer presented the superiority of Christ's high priestly ministry and discussing the nature and implications of His perfect sacrifice. In chapter 10, the writer builds to a climax, presenting the profound truth that Christ's sacrifice is the final, unrepeatable sacrifice.

The writer contrasts Christ's sacrifice with the Old Testament sacrifices. He explains that the Old Testament Law and sacrifices were "a shadow" of the ultimate reality to come (1). Now that Christ has come, why would anyone want to rely on these mere copies of the original? The animal sacrifices were offered daily, emphasizing the system was inadequate (1–4). Christ's sacrifice offered one sacrifice "for all time" (12). God is perfectly satisfied, and there is no need for continued sacrifices (9). The Old Testament sacrifices only covered sin. They could never take sin away (4, 11). Christ's sacrifice provides access directly to God and complete cleansing (14). The debt of our sins has been completely paid.

The writer then gives a number of practical exhortations about the implications of how we are to live as followers of Jesus, given our understanding of who He is and what He has done. We can now "draw near" to God with confidence based on our faith in the work of Jesus Christ (19–22) and the promises of God (23). And we are to encourage one another with love, "not neglecting to meet together" as the body of Christ (24–25).

For those who continue to sin after receiving the knowledge of the truth — those who profess Christ but do not actually possess salvation — there will be certain judgment because they are rejecting the only sacrifice that can save them (26–31).

True believers are encouraged to stand strong and persevere despite difficult circumstances. If we continue to press on, we will have a great reward (35–36). The writer encourages us to endure in light of Christ’s return (37) and reminds us that those who shrink back and lack faith will be judged (39).



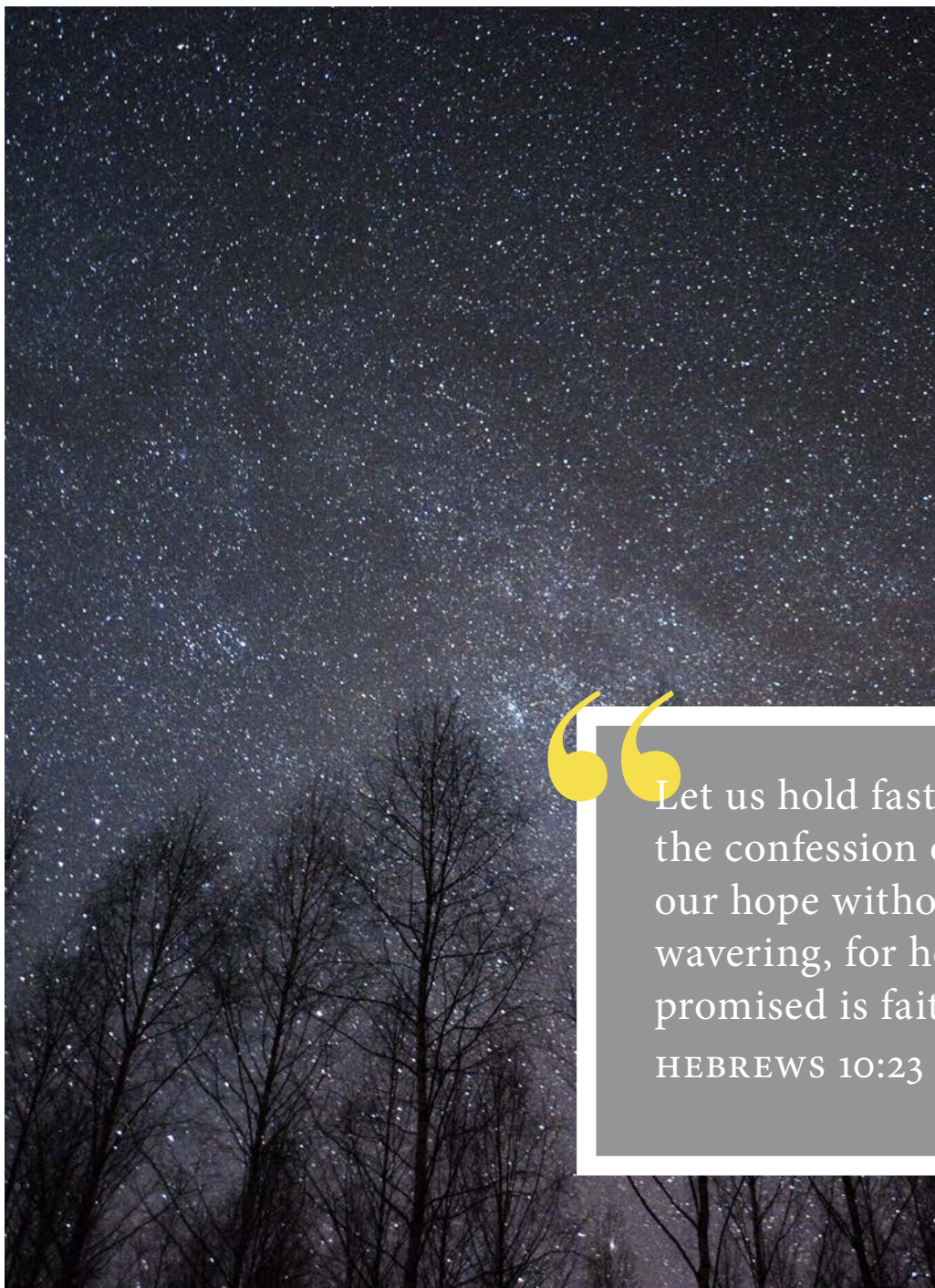
YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

What are you depending on to get to heaven? Your work or Christ’s work? All religions other than Christianity are based on requirements, work, and actions that are never done. Do you see the difference in relying on the perfect work of Christ?

What would you say to someone who argues that there are many ways to God?

Are you drawing near to God in your daily life through prayer and study of God’s Word? Are you approaching God with joyful confidence and reverent boldness based on your acceptance in Christ?

As you better understand the nature of the implications of Christ’s perfect work, are you encouraged? Do you have this hope, this endurance to persevere in your faith?



Let us hold fast
the confession of
our hope without
wavering, for he who
promised is faithful.”

HEBREWS 10:23

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The Character of Faith

Hebrews 11:1–3

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Faith: Seeing the Invisible** (11:1–3) Parts 1 & 2

WHAT IS FAITH? We talk about faith, sing about faith, tell others they are to have faith. But what is faith? And what does it mean to live by faith? In the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13 is the great chapter on love; Hebrews 11 is the great chapter on faith.

“Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (1). Faith is like having the title deed of a piece of property you have never seen. Our title deed is signed by Almighty God, and He can be trusted. That’s faith: laying hold of what God has promised — believing God.

The person who has faith believes in future realities such as the Lord’s return, the resurrection of our bodies, and heaven itself. In this way, faith brings the future into the present. The person of faith bases his or her life not on visible things but invisible things. Faith sees what others do not see (11:13, 27 & 2 Corinthians 4:18).

“Without faith it is impossible to please God” (6). Faith is not just one way of pleasing God; it is the only way. Why does faith please God? God receives all the glory. If we could save ourselves through our own efforts there would be no need for faith. Because we cannot save ourselves, God sends Jesus Christ into this world to be our Savior. Those who are saved, those who please God, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and receive God’s provision for salvation (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Faith is an initial decisive act. We are saved through faith when we place our trust in Jesus Christ. But faith is also a continuing attitude, a way of life. It is hearing the Word of God, believing the Word of God, and obeying the Word of God. Faith is the response of our whole person (intellect, emotion, and will) to our Lord Jesus Christ. This faith, true saving faith, is a wholehearted commitment and transforms our whole being.

And as we are shown in chapter 11 — the great Hall of Faith — faith is for ordinary people. These people experienced failure and were sometimes disobedient, but they trusted God and so pleased God.



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

Are you a person of faith? Do you know what it is to see the invisible?

Have you made a wholehearted commitment to Jesus Christ? Are you trusting in Him for your salvation?

Do you understand the role of faith? We are saved through faith. Faith is the channel by which we receive God's salvation. Faith itself does not save us — Christ does.

If someone asked, would you be able to speak about your conversion — your initial act of faith — but also your continuing faith as demonstrated in your way of life?

The Book of HEBREWS

Examples of Living by Faith PART 1

Hebrews 11:4–22

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Faith: Believing the Eternal** (11:4–7) Parts 1 & 2
- **Faith: Doing the Impossible** (11:8–22) Parts 1 & 2

Abel: **The Worship of Faith** *Refer to Genesis 4:1–8*
Cain and Abel had the same parents. One was a man of faith; the other was a man of unbelief. Both men came to worship God. But Cain's heart was not right. In contrast, Abel worshiped God with humble obedience in accordance with God's revelation.

Enoch: Walking with God *Refer to Genesis 5:21–24*

Enoch knew about having a personal and intimate relationship with the living God. God took Enoch right up to heaven without dying. Can you imagine this fellowship? The walk of faith pleases God: spending time in God's presence, listening to His Word, following wherever He leads. And like Enoch, one day the Lord will rapture all true followers of Jesus. A whole generation of Christians will not die! Faith is always rewarded.

Noah: Taking Action *Refer to Genesis 6–9*

God gave Noah one of the great challenges of human history — building a huge ark when there was no rain. Yet “by faith,” Noah saw the eternal. He did not live his life by society's norms, but by the Word of God. Noah took action in the middle of corruption and sin, and his obedience was a witness to others.

Abraham: Doing the Impossible *Refer to Genesis 12–25*

When God called Abraham, he left his home in Ur, his future, all he had known, and set out for a place he did not know (8). The life of faith is a step-by-step trust in God; it is a faith that moves.

In Genesis 12:1–3, God promised Abraham He would make him a great nation and that in Abraham, all the families of the earth would be blessed. Decades passed, and there was no child. Abraham foolishly tried his own devices but then claimed the promise and waited on God, despite the physical impossibilities. God's waiting room is a difficult place to be! But like Abraham, we are to stay the course and experience a faith that waits.

After years of waiting, Isaac, the promised child, is born. God calls Abraham to take his son and offer him as a burnt offering. Given God's previous promises, how could this be? Yet Abraham recognized the problem was God's. He believed that God could raise the dead and trusted God to do the impossible.

Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob all died in faith. They lived as pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land. They claimed the promises of God, and in their lifetime they did not personally receive them all, yet they finished well (13).

Living by faith means trusting God and claiming His promises and seeing Him do the impossible in your life. This does not mean that life is problem-free. As you live a life of faith, you will be tested. Real faith is sacrificial, acknowledging that everything belongs to God. Real faith is obedience, trusting God even when it doesn't make sense to you. And real faith defeats death (17–22). It enabled these heroes of the faith to look beyond the grave — just as we look ahead to eternal life — and claim the promises of God in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

How did Abel's sacrifice demonstrate true faith? Are you worshiping by faith?

What do you think about Enoch walking with God? Do you spend time with God, in prayer, and in His Word?

What demonstration in your life is there that you are living by faith?

Have you ever been in God's waiting room? How did you respond?

Think back to some of the most challenging situations in your life. Perhaps you are facing a difficult situation today. Are you trusting God for the impossible?

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Examples of Living by Faith PART 2

Hebrews 11:23–40

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Faith: Determining the Priorities** (11:23–29) Parts 1 & 2
- **Faith: Conquering the Opposition** (11:30–40) Parts 1 & 2

Moses: Making Wise Decisions Based on the Priorities of Faith

In each of these pictures in the life of Moses, decisions are made in faith based on the priorities and promises of God.

When faced with a direct conflict between Pharaoh's law and God's law, Moses' parents do what is right and leave the consequences to God (23). Instead of enjoying the pleasures of the palace in Egypt, Moses chooses to take a stand for the people of God, rejecting a life of compromise and demonstrating his personal faith in God (24–26). He leaves the familiar to move with God, choosing to follow the invisible, Almighty God over any earthly king (27).

Moses accepts the Word of God and gives Passover instructions to the people, believing God will deliver the people of Israel from slavery (28). He leads the people through the Red Sea, choosing to trust the power of God over human might (29). The greatest barriers in the world are nothing when God is at work!

Jericho: Conquering the Opposition

When the children of Israel marched into the promised land, their first obstacle was Jericho. The specific instructions given to Joshua by God seemed bizarre. But the faith which pleases God obeys the Word of God even when it is totally against conventional thinking. This faith is bold and courageous! When God's Word is obeyed, miracles take place — walls come tumbling down.

Two Israelite spies hid in the house of a prostitute named Rahab, who believed in the one true God. The fact that Rahab was a prostitute is a reminder that none of these people of faith was perfect. This hall of fame also includes a drunkard, a liar, a womanizer, an adulterer, a murderer, and more. All of us have sinned. But these men and women are all commended because their trust was in God.

In verses 32–35a, the writer gives other examples — all ordinary, imperfect people who were called by God, had faith in God, and by faith accomplished extraordinary tasks and overcame unbelievable obstacles.

While it is true that faith conquers the opposition, this does not mean that God’s people do not suffer. In verses 35b–40, the writer of Hebrews gives us many examples of people of faith who endured great suffering and “of whom the world was not worthy.” Followers of Christ will always face opposition. But God sustains believers through their suffering and apparent defeats as we surrender to His will and sovereign purposes. As followers of Christ, we are not promised a life free of problems, but we are promised a love that will never end and the glorious joy of following Jesus.



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

How do you determine your priorities? Is your faith in God involved?

Have you ever made a deliberate personal decision to refuse sin and make a godly choice?

Do you find yourself sometimes reacting out of fear? Does it encourage you to remember that God is greater than anything we face?

How do you react to opposition in your life? Does your trust in God help you endure and overcome?

The Book of HEBREWS

Running the Race

Hebrews 12:1–11

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Running the Race** (12:1–4) Parts 1 & 2
- **Disciplined** (12:5–11) Parts 1 & 2

WHEN WE BEGIN TO FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST, we enter a race, the Christian race. We don't decide the course, the rules of the race or the length of the race. And we don't know what lies on the road ahead. But in all cases, we are to "run with endurance the race that is set before us" (1). So how do we accomplish this? How do we endure?

Others who have run the race are a great inspiration; "We are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" (1). The picture is of a stadium full of people cheering you to the finish line. This cloud of witnesses primarily refers to the men and women in the Hall of Faith of chapter 11, but think of other Christ-followers who have run or are running who are great sources of inspiration: parents, grandparents, friends, Sunday School teachers, pastors.

If you are serious about running the Christian race, anything that will distract you must be discarded, which includes excess baggage and "sin which clings so closely" (1). Sin entangles us; it trips us up. When we confess these sins to the Lord and obtain His forgiveness, we will run much faster and much more joyfully!

Our goal is Jesus. He is "the founder and perfecter of our faith" (2). Our faith depends on Jesus. He is our perfect example and inspiration. No one ever suffered like Jesus. "He endured the cross" (2) and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice redemption. He is the One from whom we draw our strength and encouragement. The writer of Hebrews has brilliantly reminded us of the supremacy and uniqueness of Jesus, God's final Word, and our Great High Priest, and we are to keep "looking to Jesus" (2).

Yet, how do we respond when we encounter setbacks and temptation? Why does God sometimes allow hardship and suffering to come into our lives? In verses 5–9, we are reminded that when we are saved, we become children of God. He loves us and deals with us as sons, and no one is exempt (6–8). Though it may be painful to experience, discipline is a sign of

our Heavenly Father's love, and the purpose of His discipline is always for our good (10). Our Heavenly Father wants to strengthen us and to produce holiness and righteousness in our lives (10–11).



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

Have you begun the Christian race? Have you found running the Christian race difficult? What has surprised you during the time you have followed Christ? What has encouraged you?

Are there any distractions that you need to remove as you run? What sins or situations have tripped you over the last few months?

Can you identify situations in your life when God may have been disciplining you? How have you responded to God's discipline? Over time, have you seen a difference in your life and faith?

The Book of HEBREWS

Seek His Unshakeable Kingdom

Hebrews 12:12–29

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Pursuing Peace and Holiness** (12:12–17) Parts 1 & 2
- **An Unshakeable Kingdom** (12:18–29) Parts 1 & 2

RUNNING THE CHRISTIAN RACE REQUIRES EFFORT. We are to strive for harmonious relationships and peace with others, particularly with other followers of Christ (14). And it's not always easy!

We live in an aggressive world of disharmony, disunity, and division. We are to pursue peace “with everyone” (14). Sometimes it is impossible to live at peace, but we are to do all we can to maintain that harmony. You are responsible for your side of the peace process.

None of us is naturally holy. The only holy person who has ever walked this earth is our Lord Jesus Christ. But in the wonder of accepting Jesus Christ as Lord, not only are our sins forgiven, but we receive His holiness as a gift of grace. As followers of Christ, we are now meant to be set apart and strive to live out this holiness in our daily lives (14).

It is possible to be a dabbler in the Christian faith, to intellectually understand God's grace, but not personally to experience it. In this way, those who fail “to obtain the grace of God” become bitter and critical (see Ephesians 4:31–32). To be strong, to run straight, reject all bitterness and immorality, illustrated by the Old Testament reference to Esau. He lost his birthright because he only wanted to satisfy his physical appetite (16).

Despite the potential challenges and pitfalls, we have powerful motivation to endure. In verses 18–29, the writer of Hebrews reminds us of the vivid contrast between the old and new covenant. He uses the picture of God's revelation of the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai to represent the terror of the Law (18–21). Sinful people were distanced from a holy God. No one could come near to God and live.

But Mount Zion, the location of the temple in Jerusalem, represents the new covenant of grace and God's approachability through our Lord Jesus Christ (22–24). We are to come with confidence into the very dwelling place of God. No longer are we bound by the legalistic bondage of the Law. We are to rejoice in the freedom and the joy of grace!

And if judgment followed those who ignored God's voice in the old covenant, those who now ignore Jesus Christ will experience even more severe judgment (25). Quoting the prophet Haggai (Haggai 2:6), the writer emphasizes that while God shook the earth at Sinai, there is going to be a more extensive shaking "yet once more" involving not just the earth but also the heavens (26–27). Only the Kingdom of God and those who are in it will remain. Endure and seek first this unshakeable kingdom. We are to give thanks and worship our awesome and holy God (28–29).



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

Are you actively striving for and preserving peace in your family? With your brothers and sisters in Christ? With your colleagues? With your friends and neighbors?

Is there some unholy habit, thought, or action in your life which you need to confess and remove?

Do you see the stark contrast between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion in the various words and pictures presented by the writer of Hebrews? Do you understand the point he is making about the old and new covenants?

Are you in God's unshakeable kingdom? Are you enjoying the freedom of grace?

The Book of HEBREWS

Love in Practice

Hebrews 13:1–6

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Love and Marriage** (13:1–4) Parts 1 & 2
- **Never Satisfied** (13:5–6) Parts 1 & 2

WE HAVE LEARNED SOME PROFOUND DOCTRINE in our study of the first 12 chapters of Hebrews. But New Testament Christianity is a faith not only to be understood but lived and experienced in every area of our lives. In this final chapter, the writer of Hebrews concludes with several specific exhortations that characterize those who run the Christian race with endurance, looking to Jesus.

Love of God and Others (1–5)

Before we can love one another, we must first receive the love of God in our own hearts (1 John 4:19–21). And the more we love Christ, the more we will love our brothers and sisters in Christ. This “brotherly love” (1) for all those in the family of God is not only a sign to the world that we are true believers, but it is also a sign to ourselves that we are authentic followers of Christ (1 John 3:14–15, 34–35).

Verse 2 encourages us to love strangers. Showing hospitality is a practical way to show love and is encouraged throughout the New Testament. We are also to love those in particular need (3). Persecuted Christian prisoners are specifically mentioned, but there is a broader principle to show compassion to all who are in need: the disabled, the marginalized, the hurting, the elderly, orphans, single parents, widows, and others.

Often viewed as disposable in our society, marriage is recognized as a public and holy covenant. It should be approached seriously as an exclusive relationship and a permanent commitment. Notice God’s judgment on the sexually immoral (4–5).

Contentment of the Soul (5–6)

Followers of Christ are to love God and to love others. We are not to love money or things. Money may buy you the good life, but it will not buy you eternal life. For followers of Jesus, contentment is more than being satisfied with what we have. Contentment is living

independently of outward circumstances and situations. It is living in dependence upon God: trusting in His presence, His provision, and His protection. Discontentment breeds impatience, complaining, greed, and envy and is ultimately rooted in a lack of faith.



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

Do you see the love of God reflected in your love for others? Are you demonstrating this love to those outside your immediate circle?

Do you find it a challenge to be content? Have you ever thought of contentment in terms of your faith in God?

Are you worried about your future? How do the promises of the Lord's presence, provision, and protection impact your perspective?

The Book of HEBREWS

True Worship

Hebrews 13:7–25

Listen or replay these messages online or by podcast:

- **Follow the Leader** (13:7–8, 17–19) *Parts 1 & 2*
- **True Worship** (13:9–25) *Parts 1 & 2*

Responsibilities of Leaders and Congregations (7–8, 17–18)

The church belongs to Jesus Christ, who has all authority (Matthew 16:18, 28:18). Leaders must communicate the Word of God and lead by example (7). “Keeping watch” conjures up the image of a shepherd caring for his sheep. Leaders must have a deep love for people and will be held accountable for keeping watch over our souls (17). The congregation must remember and pray for their leaders, honor them as they follow their examples of faith, and submit to their leadership as those called by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). While leadership is essential, our trust is in Jesus Christ. Human leaders fail. But Jesus Christ “is the same yesterday and today and forever” (8).

Practice True Worship (9–24)

There is always the tendency, particularly for those young in the faith, to be susceptible to false teaching or the latest fads (“diverse and strange teachings”) (9). Jesus Christ never changes, and the truths about Him do not change. We receive salvation; we experience spiritual cleansing; and our hearts are “strengthened” by the grace of God flowing from the cross of Christ, not from following legalistic duties or religious ritualism. Christianity without a cross is a false message. True worship is biblical.

The call of Jesus is for His people to identify unreservedly with Him in His reproach, shame, and suffering (13–14). We are to take up our cross and follow Him. Worship exalts Christ as the Savior of the world. It involves an ongoing sacrifice of praise (15) and good deeds and practical acts (16), demonstrating our love for God and others.

And to those who have identified with the perfect sacrifice of Jesus, to those whose hearts have been “strengthened by grace”, to those who are offering up their sacrifices of praise and good works, God’s peace flows (20)—and we are equipped to do His will (21).

“Grace be with all of you” (25)

Grace is God’s undeserved kindness toward us, demonstrated in the new covenant through our Lord Jesus Christ. God’s grace is always available to those who draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, finding mercy and grace and strength in our time of need (4:16). He pours out His blessings on those who worship Him. He pours out grace upon grace upon grace — again and again and again.



YOUR STUDY & PERSONAL RESPONSE

Who are the spiritual leaders in your life? Are you encouraging and praying for them?

What is biblical worship?

What key truths have you better understood as a result of our study in Hebrews? Are you better able to articulate the supremacy of Christ and why He is the only way of salvation?

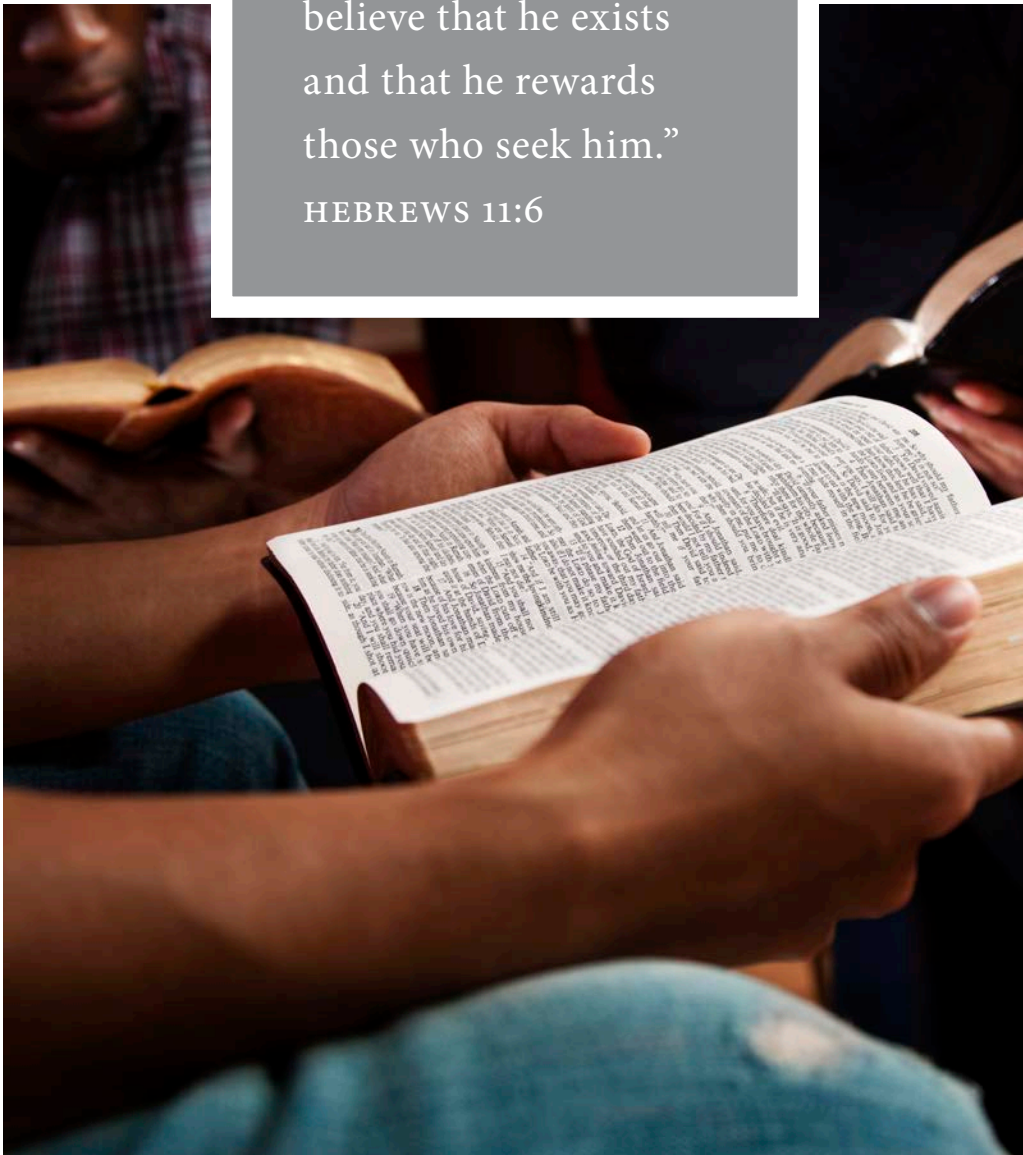
Do you have a better understanding of the blessings of the new covenant in Jesus Christ and the grace of God?

What is your verdict? How are you responding?



And without faith
it is impossible to please
him, for whoever would
draw near to God must
believe that he exists
and that he rewards
those who seek him.”

HEBREWS 11:6



THE VERDICT

WITH PASTOR JOHN H. MUNRO

"Where the Gospel is preached, the lives of men and women and boys and girls are transformed. Through His death and resurrection, Christ gives us peace with God, present power for living, and future hope for eternal life." — PASTOR JOHN H. MUNRO



John H. Munro

The Verdict is a daily and weekly radio program featuring the expository Bible teaching of Pastor John H. Munro.

Born and raised in Scotland, John graduated from the University of Edinburgh and practiced law in Scotland before God called him to full-time ministry. He and his wife, Gudny, moved to Texas, where he attended Dallas Theological Seminary.

For more than 30 years, John has dedicated his life to pastoral ministry, preaching and teaching the Word of God. He has served as Senior Pastor in Kalamazoo, MI, Pittsburgh, PA, and Halifax, Nova Scotia. Since February 2006, he has served as Senior Pastor at Calvary Church in Charlotte, NC.

Each day on The Verdict, listeners are challenged to turn to the Bible and render a "verdict" as they consider their personal response to the truth of God's Word. John Munro presents a clear examination of Scripture, offering insight and application for all backgrounds, from those unfamiliar with the Gospel to mature believers following Christ.

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FOR THE WORD OF GOD AND FOR THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

REVELATION 1:9