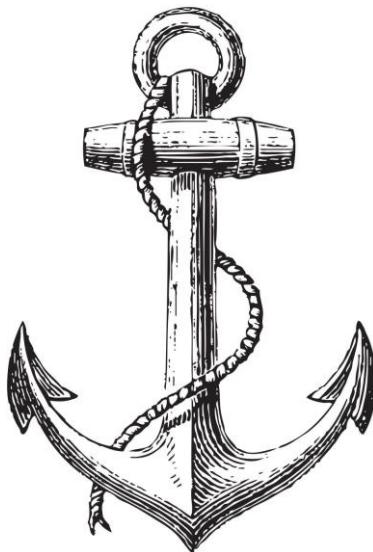


Christ, the Church's Anchor



By Kyle D. Rapinchuk



Christ, the Church's Anchor: Epistle to the Hebrews Discipleship Study

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Dear friend,

I'm excited you've decided to give this discipleship study a chance. Whether you're an unbeliever who's searching for answers or a new believer seeking some help in beginning your Christian journey or a seasoned believer looking to learn more about Jesus and how to become a disciple-maker, this study is for you. This study will guide you through the Epistle to the Hebrews over the course of twelve sessions. Since this study is designed for you to complete in the context of a community, we ask that you make a commitment to attend, prepare for, and participate in the study each week so that you and your group can all benefit from one another's insights. One thing we will see in Hebrews is a foundational belief for our study—Jesus changes everything! So we encourage you not only to participate but to prayerfully believe that encountering Jesus in John's gospel and through this group will change you.

In Christ,

Kyle Rapinchuk

Session 1: Introduction

What is the goal of this study?

This study proposes to walk through the Epistle to the Hebrews in community with an aim at answering certain core questions:

- Who is Jesus?
- Why is it good news that Jesus is our high priest?
- What is the church and why should it meet together?
- What is the rest that we await?
- What is faith and how do we live a life of faith?
- How do we persevere in faith?
- And more...

As we explore and answer these questions together, we pray that we will be shaped into a multiplying community that impacts our families, communities, and workplaces.

What is the design of this study?

We will meet for an hour each session. We want to be flexible during each session based on the quality of conversation. In order for this flexibility to be possible, however, participants need to be on-time and ready to go when the session starts.

Session Overview

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 5 minutes | Opening prayer, gospel & discipleship definition, Discipleship Group ?'s |
| 15 minutes | Observation: What do I see? |
| 20 minutes | Interpretation: What does it mean? |
| 20 minutes | Application: How do I apply this? |

Gospel Definition

The gospel is the story of Jesus as the resolution of the story of Israel and the whole world. God created mankind in His image to share in relationship with Him, yet we have rebelled against God and separated ourselves from Him. Yet God promised to send a redeemer who would be king and establish God's kingdom. After years of waiting, Jesus finally arrives to fulfill God's promise—Jesus, Israel's long-awaited Messiah, is shown to be both Lord and king of the whole world through His life, death, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Father.

Discipleship Definition

A disciple is a follower of Jesus who imitates Jesus by loving God, loving others, and making disciples. Disciples are characterized by keeping Jesus' commandments, abiding in Him and His Word through prayer, and thereby bearing much fruit.

Characteristics of a Disciple

- ❖ Follow
- ❖ Obey
- ❖ Abide
- ❖ Bear Fruit
- ❖ Love

Discipleship Group Questions

1. How have I demonstrated the characteristics of a disciple this week? How/where am I struggling?
2. How are you doing loving the people God has placed in your life?
3. How has God been speaking to you through your prayer and Scripture reading?¹

Introduction to Hebrews

The Epistle to the Hebrews proves a unique book in many respects. Although recent scholarship has some questions about authorship of certain books, perhaps no book in the New Testament has a more veiled and debated authorship. From Paul to Priscilla and Aquilla to Luke to Apollos, with other options suggested as well, no broad consensus on authorship has emerged. In some ways, the anonymity of the letter is helpful as it encourages readers to read the text carefully for meaning rather than the possible temptation to read *into* the text certain things we believe the author (if we knew who he/she² was) would want to say.

It becomes clear in the reading of Hebrews that the author is familiar with the community he addresses (see Heb 13:19). This familiarity helps explain how the author is aware of the crisis of faith that the community faces, yet the author does not clearly identify the causes and nature of the exact issue, as for example Paul sometimes does in Galatians or 1 Corinthians. Hebrews 13:7 suggests that those who first preached the gospel to this community became its first leaders, but despite years in the faith, the community is still needing “milk” when they should have moved on to “solid food” (Heb 5:12-14). Some commentators suggest a sort of irony or hyperbole here, since the author elsewhere addresses them with more confidence of their maturity (e.g., Heb 6:9ff³). Regardless, the faith community addressed in Hebrews is struggling with their faith, and the author seems intent on reminding them of certain foundational truths.

What are these foundational truths? There are many, too many to explore in an introduction, but a few seem to be more prominent than others, so we will briefly address these to get a sense of some of the major ideas we will encounter in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Jesus as the Eternal Son

From the outset of the letter, the author highlights that Jesus is one and the same as the Eternal Word/Son “through whom he created the world” (Heb 1:2). Moreover, Jesus is “the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature” (Heb 1:3). Though not explicitly taught as a doctrine, the Epistle to the Hebrews oozes trinitarian doctrine all over, reminding us that God the Father has eternally co-existed with His Son and His Spirit. These three persons are one in substance and equal in power and glory, hence why Jesus is the agent of creation, the exact imprint of the Father’s nature, and can and does uphold the universe by the word of His power.

Atonement and the New Covenant

Hebrews introduces the significance of Jesus’ work of atonement early in the letter. Already in chapter 2 the author ties the atonement to his emphasis on Jesus as the agent of creation. He

¹Use this question to transition from discipleship group questions into observation time.

²Although arguments for Priscilla are interesting, the masculine ending to the participle in 11:32 suggests a male author. Though that would not exclude the possibility of a woman writing anonymously as a man, it does make it less likely that the author is female.

³“Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation...”

writes, “For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering” (Heb 2:10). The author continues in chapter 2 with Jesus’ role in sanctification, destroying death, and making propitiation for the sins of humanity. Each of these ideas are a precursor to discussions later in the letter about the New Covenant (see esp. Heb 8) and redemption (esp. Heb 9). Jesus’ work not only as creator but as savior and redeemer through His suffering, death, burial, and resurrection play a central role in the author’s message in the letter.

Jesus as Great High Priest

The author does an amazing job of weaving in a myriad of Old Testament texts in support of his conclusions about Jesus, but no text gets as much attention as Psalm 110. The author particularly emphasizes Psalm 110 because of its claim that the Messiah is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek, not the typical Levitical priesthood. This allows the Messiah to be both the King who is promised from the line of Judah (through David), but also a priest, since he is a priest of a different order. Moreover, the use of Psalm 110 and the order of Melchizedek allows the author to tie in Abraham and his encounter with Melchizedek in Genesis 14. All of this has the benefit of deepening the community’s understanding of Jesus. Furthermore, it presents Jesus as our mediator, especially of the New Covenant and how man now relates to God (esp. Heb 7-8), and as one who can sympathize with our weaknesses, since he was tempted in every way as we are yet without sin (Heb 4:15).

Life of the Community of Faith

Having established the identity of Jesus and His role as redeemer, prophet, king, and high priest, the author concludes his letter with instructions for life in the community of faith. In light of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done, how do individual believers live faithfully in relationship with God and with one another in Christian community and fellowship (i.e., as the Church)? In the words of W. L. Lane, the author of Hebrews calls the people to “ultimate certainty and ultimate commitment,”⁴ expressed through exploring questions of life and death in connection with what we know of the God who “speaks, creates, covenants, pledges, calls and commits.”⁵ Consequently, we should remember that the theology taught in Hebrews is not for the purpose of expanding our minds and knowledge, but for the purpose of helping the Church to live faithfully in uncertain times.

Conclusion

The Epistle to the Hebrews provides a rich exploration of important theological truths about who Jesus is, what He has done, and what He continues to do. Likewise, it can help us today, as it helped the Church in the first century, learn to live faithfully as God’s people in a challenging world. Lane summarizes these ideas well: “Hebrews is a scriptural gift to be appreciated especially when God’s people find themselves prone to discouragement or distraction from any cause. It is a gift the church sorely needs.”⁶ We agree, and we hope that our time together in this book is indeed a gift that we come to realize we need. Finally, as the title of this study suggests, we believe that Jesus Christ is, as Hebrews 6:19 states, “a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain...” Christ is an anchor for the soul, an anchor for the Church, that holds us fast in the heavenly places even when the waves of earth

⁴W.L. Lane, “Hebrews, Letter to the,” in *The IVP Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), 479.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

toss us violently in every direction. Take heart, have faith, for in Christ, our hope is anchored in the heavens, in a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Heb 12:28).

Recommended Resources

- *Christ, the Church's Anchor* Discipleship Study Curriculum
- *ESV Scripture Journal: Hebrews* (or a journal or notebook) to record insights while reading and studying together
- Books
 - ❖ Tom Wright, *Hebrews for Everyone* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004).
 - ❖ George H. Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998).
 - ❖ Richard Bauckham et al., *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

Prayer

- Pray for yourself and the other participants in this study that it will draw us close to the Triune God and to one another in community.

Weekly Challenge

Commitment Statement: I understand that my involvement in this study is not only about me, but also about those who are in this study with me. Therefore, to love my neighbor well, I will commit to:

- Making attendance each week a priority.
- Coming to each meeting prepared by having read the assigned chapters.
- Participating by asking questions, talking in conversation time, sharing during discipleship question time, and sharing prayer requests.

Signature

Before Session 2 next week, please complete the reading and observation questions at the beginning of Session 2.

Session 2: Hebrews 1

Each week we recommend a 6-day reading program that will prepare you for the Discipleship Study on Day 7.

Observation: What Do I See?

<i>Day 1: Read Hebrews 1</i>	
<i>Day 2: Read Colossians 1 & John 1:1-18</i>	
<i>Day 3: Read Psalms 2 & 2 Samuel 7:1-17</i>	
<i>Day 4: Read Psalms 104</i>	
<i>Day 5: Read Psalms 45</i>	
<i>Day 6: Read Hebrews 1</i>	

Interpretation: What Does it Mean?

How is the way that God has spoken through His Son different than the way He has spoken through His prophets (v. 1-2)?

How does the statement “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature” (v. 3) parallel Colossians 1 and John 1?

What does it mean that the Son “upholds the universe by the word of his power” (v. 3)?

Why do you think the author quotes seven different passages with almost no additional comment in vv. 5-13?

With which of these quoted Old Testament passages are you most familiar? Least familiar?

What impression do you get about what the author is trying to prove in chapter 1?

Application: How Do I Apply It?

How does chapter 1 give us confidence for living the Christian life?

What is your comfort level with the Old Testament? Were you familiar with any of the passages quoted? Did you look them up? If so, did you understand the context in which they were used? How could you build more confidence in the Old Testament Scriptures?

What other applications can you think of related to the teaching of these chapters?

Weekly Challenge

Take some time to consider what passages you would point to in the Old Testament to support that Jesus is the Messiah.

Before Session 3 next week, please complete the reading and observation questions at the beginning of Session 3.

Session 3: Hebrews 2

Each week we recommend a 6-day reading program that will prepare you for the Discipleship Study on Day 7.

Observation: What Do I See?

<i>Day 1: Read Hebrews 2</i>	
<i>Day 2: Read Psalms 8, 110</i>	
<i>Day 3: Read Psalms 22</i>	
<i>Day 4: Read Isaiah 52:13-53:12</i>	
<i>Day 5: Read Matthew 27:24-56</i>	
<i>Day 6: Read Hebrews 2</i>	

Interpretation: What Does it Mean?

The author identifies several means by which we know the truth of the gospel: declared first by the Lord; attested to us by those who heard; God bore witness through signs, wonders, and miracles; and the Holy Spirit gave gifts. Where do we find evidence of each of these? What is the author saying about how these relate to verses 1-3?

After reading Psalms 8, how does the author's interpretation of that psalm here differ from and/or deepen your initial understanding of the psalm?

What is the relationship between subjection of the world and the suffering and death of Jesus?

Why does the author in verse 10 say it is "fitting" that the creator would bring redemption through suffering?

What do the three scriptural quotes in verses 12-13 aim to teach the reader?

How does Jesus' death destroy the devil, who has the power of death?

Thus far in the letter, why does the author of Hebrews say the Son of God had to become man?

What does it mean "to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (v. 17)?

Application: How Do I Apply It?

What does it look like to "pay much closer attention to what we have heard" (v. 1)?

What does it look like to "neglect such a great salvation" (v. 3)? How can we avoid such neglect?

How can verses 14-18 give us confidence in the face of temptation and suffering? How can it help us, or others we encounter, who fear suffering or death?

What other applications can you think of related to the teaching of these chapters?

Weekly Challenge

As you encounter challenges, trials, temptations, and suffering this week (or throughout the whole study), write them down in a journal and then take time to pray about some of the things revealed here in Hebrews 2:

- ❖ God, help me trust that Jesus understands what I am going through. May this realization give me peace.
- ❖ God, Jesus suffered and resisted temptation. Help me, too, resist the temptation I am facing.
- ❖ God, help me live in hope because Jesus has destroyed the power of the death and the one who had that power (the Devil).
- ❖ God, continue to deliver me from the fear of death and the lifelong slavery that I was bound to in fear and sin. Give me confidence through Jesus and his suffering, death, and resurrection.

Before Session 4 next week, please complete the reading and observation questions at the beginning of Session 4.

Session 4: Hebrews 3:1-4:13

Each week we recommend a 6-day reading program that will prepare you for the Discipleship Study on Day 7.

Observation: What Do I See?

<i>Day 1: Read Hebrews 3</i>	
<i>Day 2: Read Hebrews 4:1-13</i>	
<i>Day 3: Read Numbers 12</i>	
<i>Day 4: Read Numbers 20:1-13</i>	
<i>Day 5: Read Psalms 95</i>	
<i>Day 6: Read Hebrews 3:1-4:13</i>	

Interpretation: What Does it Mean?

What does the author mean in 3:1 by saying we “share in a heavenly calling”?

What is the importance of the distinction that Moses was faithful as a servant, but Jesus is faithful as a son (3:5-6)? How does Numbers 12 help answer this question?

How does “holding fast our confidence” (3:6) relate to the warning not to harden our hearts as in the rebellion (3:7ff.)?

What is the significance of repeating “do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion” in 3:8, 3:15, and 4:7? What is the significance of repeating “they shall not enter my rest” in 3:11, 4:3, and 4:5?

What is the central cause/reason for not entering God’s rest? How does this compare with the reason Moses will not enter God’s rest as stated in Numbers 20?

What is the Sabbath rest that awaits the people of God (4:9)?

Hebrews 4:12 is often quoted, but almost never in the context that it appears here. How does this verse strike you differently in this context than how and when it is normally quoted?

Application: How Do I Apply It?

What are some of the ways we act upon our desire for rest? What activities provide you the most physical, spiritual, and emotional rest? What might Hebrews 3-4 say about how to find rest in the present when our ultimate rest is in the future?

What does Hebrews 3-4 teach us about how to remain faithful instead of disbelieving and disobedient?

The author of Hebrews repeatedly references Psalm 95 in this section for the purpose of illustrating a point. Are there any psalms you find yourself returning to often? What stands out about them? How have they been encouraging or challenging to you?

What other applications can you think of related to the teaching of these chapters?

Weekly Challenge

Hebrews 3-4 address faith and rest alongside unbelief, disobedience, and hardening of hearts. In 4:7, the author quotes the Psalm 95: “Today, if you hear his voice...” Each day this week, write down how you are hearing God’s voice *that day* (today), then spend some time at the end of the day praying about what God is saying.

Before Session 5 next week, please complete the reading and observation questions at the beginning of Session 5.

Session 5: Hebrews 4:14-6:20

Each week we recommend a 6-day reading program that will prepare you for the Discipleship Study on Day 7.

Observation: What Do I See?

<i>Day 1: Read Hebrews 4:14- 5:10</i>	
<i>Day 2: Read Hebrews 5:11- 6:20</i>	
<i>Day 3: Read Psalms 2, 110</i>	
<i>Day 4: Read Genesis 22</i>	
<i>Day 5: Read Mark 14:32-50</i>	
<i>Day 6: Read Hebrews 4:14- 6:20</i>	

Interpretation: What Does it Mean?

How does the fact that Jesus was tempted as we are yet without sin give us confidence to draw near to the throne of grace?

How is the author's use of Psalms 2 and 110 (4:5-6) different from his use of the same texts in Hebrews 1:5 and 1:13?

This week we read from Mark 14 about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, which is certainly one example of how "Jesus offered up prayers and supplications" (5:7). What other occasions can you think of in which Jesus offered up prayers for others?

What does the author mean by saying Jesus was "made perfect" (5:9) when Jesus was of course already perfect?

Why is Jesus' priesthood of a different order (Melchizedek) than the normal order of the priesthood (Aaron and the Levites)?

Debates about eternal security (whether or not we can lose our salvation) often center on Hebrews 6:1-2 (and also later in 10:19-39). What have you been taught about eternal security? How does this passage confirm or challenge those views? How might this discussion relate to the previous context of immature versus mature believers?

How does the author's use of Genesis 22 deepen our understanding of God's truthfulness and constancy?

Our study's name, "Christ, the Church's Anchor," is rooted in 6:19—"we have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul..." What is this anchor? How does it hold us fast? What is the significance of the claim that it enters into the "inner place behind the curtain" (v. 20)?

Application: How Do I Apply It?

What are some of the teachings or practices that we experience today that demonstrate a dependence on milk instead of solid food (5:11-14)?

What other things in life do we put our hope in? In what or whom do we often anchor our lives instead of Christ? How do we anchor ourselves in Christ?

What other applications can you think of related to the teaching of these chapters?

Weekly Challenge

Take survey this week of what practices you engage in that help you move on toward maturity, towards solid food instead of milk. What other steps could you take to deepen your maturity in your relationship with Christ? How can you include other people in that endeavor?

Before Session 6 next week, please complete the reading and observation questions at the beginning of Session 6.

Session 6: Hebrews 7-8

Each week we recommend a 6-day reading program that will prepare you for the Discipleship Study on Day 7.

Observation: What Do I See?

<i>Day 1: Read Hebrews 7</i>	
<i>Day 2: Read Hebrews 8</i>	
<i>Day 3: Read Genesis 14</i>	
<i>Day 4: Read Jeremiah 31:31-34</i>	
<i>Day 5: Read Ezekiel 36:22-38</i>	
<i>Day 6: Read Hebrews 7-8</i>	

Interpretation: What Does it Mean?

What does it mean that Melchizedek is “without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God...” (7:3)?

Why is Melchizedek greater than Abraham according to the author of Hebrews? What does this mean for the Levitical priesthood?

Why was it necessary for Jesus to be a priest of a different order than the Old Testament Levitical priesthood?

What is the better hope by which we draw near to God (7:19)?

What is this better covenant of which Jesus is the guarantor (7:22)?

What is the significance of Jesus' eternal priesthood?

What does it mean that both the Tabernacle and the priesthood are copies and shadows of heavenly things (8:5)?

Which of the promises in the New Covenant seem most directly related to the author's argument thus far?

What does it mean that Jesus makes the "first covenant obsolete" (8:13)?

Application: How Do I Apply It?

What are some ways we can intentionally practice the Christian life in light of Jesus' priesthood?

Which of the promises of the New Covenant resonate with you the most? How can you better meditate on that truth in your daily walk with Christ?

What other applications can you think of related to the teaching of these chapters?

Weekly Challenge

The New Covenant makes numerous promises for Israel and Judah that the New Testament then clearly attributes to the Church. Prayerfully contemplate each of the following this week to see what God may be laying on your heart.

- ❖ Put my laws in their minds
- ❖ Write the laws on their hearts
- ❖ I will be their God
- ❖ They will be My people
- ❖ They shall all know Me
- ❖ I will be merciful toward their iniquities
- ❖ I will remember their sins no more

Before Session 7 next week, please complete the reading and observation questions at the beginning of Session 7.

Session 7: Hebrews 9

Each week we recommend a 6-day reading program that will prepare you for the Discipleship Study on Day 7.

Observation: What Do I See?

<i>Day 1: Read Hebrews 9</i>	
<i>Day 2: Read Exodus 37</i>	
<i>Day 3: Read Leviticus 16</i>	
<i>Day 4: Read Leviticus 23:26-32</i>	
<i>Day 5: Read Hebrews 4:14-5:10</i>	
<i>Day 6: Read Hebrews 9</i>	

Interpretation: What Does it Mean?

What does the author of Hebrews highlight in 9:1-10 about the Tabernacle and the sacrifice offered by the High Priest?

What is the “greater and more perfect tent” (9:11)?

What does it mean to “purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (9:14)?

What is the “promised eternal inheritance” referenced in 9:15?

What do you make of the emphasis on “will” in 9:16-17?

How does Jesus as both the High Priest and the sacrifice differ from the High Priest in the Old Testament sacrificial system?

How is Jesus' sacrifice different than those found in Leviticus?

Why is there no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood (9:22)?

What do verses 27-28 teach us about death, judgment, and the second coming of Jesus?

Application: How Do I Apply It?

Many aspects of this passage would likely push people away or confuse them. How can we communicate the good news of Hebrews 9 in our culture that knows little to nothing of ritual sacrifice?

What other teachings of Christianity might prove offensive?

Are there roles in our current society that could be analogous to the role of the High Priest in the Old Testament?

What other applications can you think of related to the teaching of these chapters?

Weekly Challenge

What places do you go to meet with God? Consider the differences between your routine/place and that of the Israelites at the Tabernacle (and later the Temple). What aspects of the Tabernacle/Temple worship would appeal to you? What aspects of your own routine/place appeal to you?

Before Session 8 next week, please complete the reading and observation questions at the beginning of Session 8.

Session 8: Hebrews 10

Each week we recommend a 6-day reading program that will prepare you for the Discipleship Study on Day 7.

Observation: What Do I See?

Day 1: Read Hebrews 10:1-18	
Day 2: Read Hebrews 10:19-39	
Day 3: Read Psalms 40	
Day 4: Read Deuteronomy 32:1-5, 34-43	
Day 5: Read Hebrews 6:1-12	
Day 6: Read Hebrews 10	

Interpretation: What Does it Mean?

In what way is the law a “shadow” of the good things to come instead of its “true form” (v. 1)?

If it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, why was this central to God’s sacrificial system in the Old Testament era (v. 4)?

What role does the quotation from Psalm 40:6-8 play in this passage?

What differences does the author point out between Jesus’ sacrifice and those of the Mosaic Covenant (see esp. vv. 8-14)?

How has the author demonstrated thus far in the letter that Jesus is the fulfillment of the New Covenant hope from Jeremiah 31, which is quoted here in 10:15-17 (see also Heb 8:8-12)?

What gives us confidence to enter the holy place (v. 19)? How is this different than the High Priest in the Old Testament?

What does the author mean by saying that Jesus' flesh is "the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain" (v. 20)?

The confidence in this new way in vv. 19-21 leads the author to some big claims about the Church and its local gatherings. What does he claim about the Church in verses 22-25? What might this look like? How does your local church live this out?

What does it mean to spurn the Son of god and profane the blood of the covenant (v. 29)?

How do verses 26-31 relate to Hebrews 6:1-12? Do these two passages seem to speak to the same audience and the same issues? Why or why not?

Look closely at verses 37-38 and track down their cross-references. What do you notice about the author's use of the Old Testament here? How does this relate to his use of the Old Testament elsewhere in the letter? What conclusions do you draw from his use of these texts (both manner and content)?

Application: How Do I Apply It?

The author exhorts the Church and its local gatherings to certain practices in verses 22-25. What can you do in your local church to live these truths out more faithfully?

The author claims that a belief in a better and more abiding promise leads to certain action in verse 34. What is the action he names? What other practices would be evidence of this kind of faith in God's promise?

What other applications can you think of related to the teaching of these chapters?

Weekly Challenge

Prayerfully consider one practice you could enact to better serve your local church in the ways the author of Hebrews exhorts.

Before Session 9 next week, please complete the reading and observation questions at the beginning of Session 9.

Session 9: Hebrews 11

Each week we recommend a 6-day reading program that will prepare you for the Discipleship Study on Day 7.

Observation: What Do I See?

<i>Day 1: Read Hebrews 11</i>	
<i>Day 2: Read Genesis 6</i>	
<i>Day 3: Read Genesis 12:1-9; 15:1-6; 20:1-7</i>	
<i>Day 4: Read Genesis 22</i>	
<i>Day 5: Read Exodus 14 or 15</i>	
<i>Day 6: Read Hebrews 11</i>	

Interpretation: What Does it Mean?

The author of Hebrews calls faith “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (v. 1). How do people normally define faith? How does the author of Hebrews’ definition differ from our typical usage? Why might that matter?

What is the nature of faith or some of its characteristics in the lives of Abel, Enoch, and Noah (vv. 4-7)?

What is the nature of faith or some of its characteristics in the life of Abraham (vv. 8-22)?

What is the nature of faith or some of its characteristics in the life of Moses (vv. 23-29)?

What is the nature of faith or some of its characteristics in the lives of Rahab, the judges, David, or Samuel and the prophets (vv. 30-38)?

Application: How Do I Apply It?

Which Old Testament character's faith would you have added to this list?

Who do you know in your own life who demonstrates this kind of faith?

How does viewing the faith of others impact our own faith?

What other ways can we cultivate our own faith?

What other applications can you think of related to the teaching of these chapters?

Weekly Challenge

Re-read the story of a favorite biblical figure and note aspects of their faith (or faithlessness) that could be beneficial in cultivating your own faith.

Before Session 10 next week, please complete the reading and observation questions at the beginning of Session 10.

Session 10: Hebrews 12

Each week we recommend a 6-day reading program that will prepare you for the Discipleship Study on Day 7.

Observation: What Do I See?

<i>Day 1: Read Hebrews 12</i>	
<i>Day 2: Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 4</i>	
<i>Day 3: Read Proverbs 3:11-12; Job 5:17; Psalms 94:12-15</i>	
<i>Day 4: Read Exodus 19</i>	
<i>Day 5: Read Revelation 21</i>	
<i>Day 6: Read Hebrews 12</i>	

Interpretation: What Does it Mean?

Is there a difference between the *weight* we are to lay aside and the *sin* that clings so closely (v. 1)?

How does viewing life as an endurance race affect how we live and view this life (v. 1)?

What does it mean that Jesus is the “founder and perfecter of our faith” (v. 2)?

What is the “joy” of verse 2?

Look closely at verses 5-6 and track down their cross-references. What do you notice about the author’s use of the Old Testament here? How does this relate to his use of the Old Testament elsewhere in the letter (see esp. 10:37-38)? What conclusions do you draw from his use of these texts (both manner and content)?

What does the author mean by *discipline* in verses 5-11? What are its benefits?

What does it mean that Jesus' sprinkled blood "speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (v. 24)?

What does it mean that we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken (v. 28)? Why is this cause for gratefulness?

Application: How Do I Apply It?

Verses 5-11 speak of the benefits of godly discipline, but what other kinds of ungodly discipline do we see in this world? What dangers come from improper discipline? How can we enact proper, godly discipline instead of ungodly discipline?

Verse 15 warns against a root of bitterness. What causes these roots of bitterness to grow? How do we avoid bitterness and find the peace and holiness as we exhorted to do in verse 14?

What are ways that we “refuse him who is speaking” (v. 25)? What practices would help us hear the voice of the one who is speaking?

How do we offer God “acceptable worship” (v. 28)?

What other applications can you think of related to the teaching of these chapters?

Weekly Challenge

Take personal inventory of the weight and sin that is holding your back and find ways to be accountable to setting it aside that you may run the race faithfully.

Before Session 11 next week, please complete the reading and observation questions at the beginning of Session 11.

Session 11: Hebrews 13

Each week we recommend a 6-day reading program that will prepare you for the Discipleship Study on Day 7.

Observation: What Do I See?

<i>Day 1: Read Hebrews 13</i>	
<i>Day 2: Read Genesis 18:1-15</i>	
<i>Day 3: Read Romans 11:33-12:8</i>	
<i>Day 4: Read Romans 12:9-21</i>	
<i>Day 5: Read Psalms 50</i>	
<i>Day 6: Read Hebrews 13</i>	

Interpretation: What Does it Mean?

Why do you think the author places verse 8 about Jesus where he does? What does it say about the verse(s) before and/or after?

How does verse 8 relate to other key points in the letter (e.g., Heb 6:19)?

What does the author mean by his references to “outside the camp” in verses 11-13?

What does the author mean by “sacrifice of praise” (v. 15)?

Re-read Hebrews 11:14-16 and 12:22-24 and compare them to 13:14. What does the author tell us about this city that is to come? What hopes arise from reflection on this city?

What does the author highlight in his final greetings? What might this suggest about the purpose of his letter?

How do the author's final exhortations relate to the main points of his letter?

Application: How Do I Apply It?

In what ways can we show hospitality to strangers in our own culture (v. 2)?

What does it look like to obey and submit to leaders in the church (v. 17)?

What stands out to you most in the benediction (vv. 21-22)?

What other applications can you think of related to the teaching of these chapters?

Weekly Challenge

Hebrews 13:18 calls the initial readers to pray for the author and his fellow workers. Identify 1-2 spiritual leaders in your life and commit to pray for them each day next week.

Before Session 12 next week, please complete the reading and observation questions at the beginning of Session 12.

Session 12: Conclusion & Next Steps

Each week we recommend a 6-day reading program that will prepare you for the Discipleship Study on Day 7.

Observation: What Do I See?

<i>Day 1: Read Hebrews 1-2</i>	
<i>Day 2: Read Hebrews 3-4</i>	
<i>Day 3: Read Hebrews 5-7</i>	
<i>Day 4: Read Hebrews 8-9</i>	
<i>Day 5: Read Hebrews 10-11</i>	
<i>Day 6: Read Hebrews 12-13</i>	

Interpretation: What Does it Mean?

What truths stood out to you most as you re-read the letter this week?

What questions do you still have about the Epistle to the Hebrews?

Application: How Do I Apply It?

How has this study impacted you?

How has this study helped you articulate the importance of Jesus—who He is, what He has done, and what He is still doing?

How has this study impacted your understanding and practice of discipleship?

What is your next step of obedience?

Weekly Challenge

Make a decision on your next step. Write it down and share that commitment with someone else who will keep you accountable to take that step.

Possible Next Steps

- ☐ Repent and follow Jesus
- ☐ Be baptized
- ☐ Disciple someone else
- ☐ Lead your own small group, whether prayer or Bible study
- ☐ Get involved in a local church

My next step is: _____

Congratulations on completing the 12-session “Christ, the Church’s Anchor Discipleship Study” based on the Epistle to the Hebrews. I trust that your time in God’s Word and in this group has changed you. I pray that you better understand who Jesus is, what the gospel and discipleship are, and you are committed to becoming a disciple-maker. May the Father grant you peace and eternal life in Christ and fellowship with Him through the Holy Spirit as you continue on this journey of faith and discipleship.

In Christ,

Kyle Rapinchuk

