

Study Guide for the Week of February 4, 2007

This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. For 2007 the study guide is designed to help you read through the New Testament in a year. Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Sermon manuscripts are available at www.spwired.com.

Monday, February 5. Read Hebrews chapter 1. Today we begin this new book of the Bible which gets its name because it was written to Jewish Christians who were familiar with the Old Testament writings.

This first chapter reveals the emphasis of the whole book, that Jesus Christ is God's full and final revelation of himself. In this chapter the writer emphasizes that Jesus was superior to the prophets of the Old Testament as well to the angels. The writer of this book quotes Old Testament passages that point to Jesus' supremacy. Look at those quotes once more. What do they tell you about Jesus?

Tuesday, February 6. Read Hebrews chapter 2. This chapter focuses on how Jesus bridged the gap between humanity's sinfulness and God's purity. The writer of Hebrews wants us to know that as Jesus suffered his torture and death, he is able to identify with our suffering, sympathize with our suffering, and help with it. Reread verses 14 and 15. What does this passage tell you about Jesus' mission? In verse 17 the word "atonement" is used. When we break this word apart, at-one-ment, we see that it means Jesus work of bringing us at one with God. What was that work?

Wednesday, February 7. Read Hebrews chapter 3:1 to chapter 4:13. Starting with verse 12 there is a powerful section here on our need for one another. What does this tell you about how we are to care for one another? How can we help each other be obedient to God? What is the result of rebelling against God? Why is Sabbath rest emphasized here? How well do you follow God's command to rest?

Thursday, February 8 Read Hebrews 4:14 to chapter 6:12. In yesterday's reading Jesus is called our High Priest. In today's reading that theme is taken deeper. The Latin word for High Priest literally means, "bridge builder." After reading this section, why is this a good description of Jesus? Why is it important for us to know that Jesus was tempted in every way just like we are? Chapter 6 begins with the encouragement for followers of Christ to mature in their faith. What does that look like for you? In verse 4 it says it's impossible for those who have heard the good news of Jesus Christ and turned away to ever return. But what we must remember is that what is impossible for human being is possible for God (read Matthew 19:26).

Friday, February 9. Read Hebrews 6:13-20. The writer here is emphasizing the power of God's oath to us through our spiritual ancestor, Abraham. That promise was that his descendants would be more numerous than the stars in the sky, and that they would be blessed in order to bless the whole world. Then the author ties God's promises to the hope that we can live with. What is that hope? Do you live in the power of that hope?

Saturday, February 10. Read Hebrews chapter 7. Who is Melchizedek? Read Genesis 14:17-20 in the Old Testament. He was a priest whose name means King of Righteousness. He was also known as the King of Peace (Salem). He was a mysterious character that the ancient Hebrews imbued with many traits: the one who blessed Abraham, the father of the Hebrew people; the priest who inspired sacrifice; a priest who made a sacrifice once and for all. Melchizedek was a man deeply rooted in Jewish legend and the writer of Hebrews mentions him as a way to speak to his Jewish readers and explain more clearly who Jesus was and is. What meaning do you draw from this?

Sunday, February 11. Read Hebrews chapter 8. In the Old Testament the prophet Jeremiah said that one day God would replace the law with a "new covenant" (Read Jeremiah 31:31-34). The law told people what was good, but the law couldn't **make** anyone good. What was needed was a change from within rather than a command. When Jesus died on the cross the "new covenant" became a reality. God began to work in believers in a new way: God writes his laws on your heart (Hebrews 8:10) and followers are changed from the inside out; God becomes yours and you become his (Hebrews 8:10-11); The Holy Spirit takes up residence in your life and you are bonded to God; and God forgives you completely (Hebrews 8:12). This means that your sins are forgotten and you can look ahead to a new, better life.