



September 4/5, 2010

Hebrews 5 - 10

"A Savior is Better Than a System"

Pastor Gary Hamrick

It's important to remember that Hebrews is a book about comparisons; comparing Jesus as infinitely superior to anyone or anything else so people will choose Jesus above anyone or anything else. Key words in Hebrews include: *"better"* (11x), *"superior"* (4x), and *"greater"* (7x). So far we've seen that Jesus is better than: 1. The Prophets (Chapter 1) 2. Angels (Chapters 1-2) 3. Moses (Chapter 3) 4. Joshua (Chapter 4). It's not that those things or people are bad - they are good - it's just that Jesus is better! Remember... "Good is the enemy of Best." So don't settle for anything less than Jesus!

Hebrews chapters 5-10 are some of the most difficult chapters to understand, especially if you know little or nothing about Old Testament Jewish history or the sacrificial system that involved priests, animal sacrifices, and the Temple. If we are confused about these things, it's understandable, after all, this book is not called *Gentiles*, it's called Hebrews.

This book was originally written to Jews, so they would have understood all this terminology. But to our Gentile ears, these things sounds foreign. Pastor Gary's desire is to help us understand the treasure that is found in these chapters, so there won't be anything lost in the translation.

In the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, we read about a System. In the New Testament, from Matthew to Revelation, we read about a Savior. Technically, the entire Bible is about a Savior. As Pastor William Graham Scroggie¹ said, "If you cut the Bible anywhere, it bleeds." However, practically speaking, the way you approached God in the Old Testament was through a System of rules, regulations, and sacrifices. And the way you approached God in the New Testament through eternity, is through a Savior (Jesus), who supersedes the System. The problem is the writer is writing to people who

¹ Early 20th Century British pastor.

were prone to revert back to their old way of doing things and would think that the System was better than the Savior. After all, if that's all you've ever known - you approach God through a System by obeying rules and slaughtering animals - and now you've been introduced to a whole new way of approaching God, what else would you revert back to?

Don't think that the System didn't serve its purpose. Before Christ died for our sins on the cross, there was only one way that God had prescribed to be "saved", and that was through the sacrificial system outlined in the Old Testament. God required a "*life for a life.*" He would accept an innocent animal without defect in exchange for your not-so-innocent life. The animal would be slaughtered at the Temple by the head of the household on behalf of his family, and then a priest who would offer it on the altar of sacrifice, catching its blood in a bowl. Once a year, the high priest would take the blood into the Holiest chamber of the Temple on behalf of all the people. Some of those details are summarized right here in [Hebrews 9:1-10](#) and [Hebrews 10:1-10](#).

In our study today, we'll see that it's in these chapters that we find the basic reasons why Jesus is a better high priest. We'll also look at Aaron and the high priests and the Law and Sacrifices.

Aaron and the High Priests (Hebrews 5-9)

1. The OT High Priests used the blood of bulls and goats; Jesus gave his own blood.
2. They went into the Holy of Holies once a year; Jesus went in once, so to speak, for all time.
3. They died and were replaced by other men; Jesus died, rose again, and lives forever as a permanent priest.
4. They provided atonement temporarily; Jesus provided atonement eternally.
5. Their work was never done; Jesus sat down at the right hand of Majesty because his work was finished.
6. The purpose of the sacrifices was to provide a temporary atonement and to serve as a regular reminder of sin.

The Law and Sacrifices (Hebrews 10)

7. The purpose of the Law, with all of its rules and regulations, was to:
 - a. Explain God's righteous standard.
 - b. Expose sin in us.
 - c. Express our need for a Savior.
8. **Galatians 3:24** - *"So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith."* (NIV)
9. Unfortunately, the law had the opposite effect with many Jews.
 - a. Instead of realizing how incapable they were of attaining the righteous standard of God and accepting Jesus as the Way, they just kept striving more and more to be "good people," which took them deeper and deeper into the chasm of futility. They thought, not unlike many today, that...
 - i. "If I just do this and stop doing that, then God will accept me."
 - ii. "If I just obey this rule and follow that rule, God will love me."
10. Man's efforts are never enough and will never be enough to ease or satisfy a guilty conscience.
11. Many believe God allowed the Temple to be destroyed so that people would turn to a Savior and not a System.
12. God has stripped away all the things that people have relied on with the hope that they would turn to the Savior.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Hebrews 4:14-5:5, 7:23-28, 8:6** to provide an overview for this study.
3. Pastor Gary quoted an old saying, which says, "Good is often the enemy of best."
 - a. Allow the people in your group to share about times in their life when they've allowed "good" to get in the way of God's best.
4. Spend time talking about the things people do or rely on to ease their guilty conscience.
 - a. How effective do you think most people believe these things to be?
 - b. How long does the "feeling" last?

5. Why do you think a lot of people believe God that “grades on the scale”?
6. Spend time talking about different Systems of religion?
7. Do people you know think that “being a good person” or “being a religious person” or a “good Methodist” or a good Catholic” is really the right answer?
 - a. Where do you think this view of the relationship between God and man comes from?
8. Do you often think to yourself, “If I do this and don’t do that” or “If I don’t do this and stop doing that,” then God will accept me?
9. Read and discuss [Hebrews 9:27-28](#).
10. Pastor Gary said the purpose of the Old Testament Sacrificial System was to provide temporary atonement and to serve as a regular reminder of sin.
 - a. Read [John 16:7-9](#).
 - b. Do you sense the Holy Spirit doing the work of convicting and convincing of sin in your life?
 - c. What are some examples you can share that would show the Spirit’s work in your life.
11. Review and discuss the purpose for the Law. (#7 above)
12. Read and discuss [Matthew 23:23-25](#).
 - a. Are there examples in your life that demonstrate there was a time in your life when you thought that being a “rule follower” was the way to find favor with God?
13. Allow time for people to share their testimony about how the Lord brought them from religion (or no religious background) to relationship and from a System to a Savior.
14. Close your time with prayer and allow the Holy Spirit to minister to each person; reminding them that Jesus is the only way to find forgiveness for sin, as well as a relationship with God; that they would see the futility in following a system or any kind of religion; that they would bring good news to lost people who are in bondage to systems and religions.