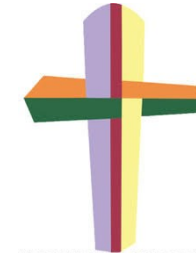


Kidderminster East reads Hebrews



KIDDERMINSTER EAST PARISH
Five Churches One Parish One Lord

Lent 2021

Notice that it says “Hebrews” and not “Hebrew”!! You’ll be completely correct if you start from the left and work to the right!

Many people use Lent as a time for doing special things in connection with their Christian life, and so here is one option among many; to read through the book of Hebrews.

I have set out a few verses for each day, with a box to tick when you’ve read them, and a brief title for the passage. Let’s pray that we’ll see more of Jesus as we read.

I’ve put a few notes on other pages which I hope you’ll find helpful.

David Hildred.

Wed 17.2	Hebrews 1:1-4		The superiority of Jesus
Thu 18.2	1:5-14		Jesus is greater than the angels
Fri 19.2	2:1-9		so we must listen to Jesus carefully
Sat 20.2	2:10-18		Jesus became one of us
Sun 21.2	spare!		

Here are some background notes to help us get into the letter:

1. We don't know who wrote the letter - it could have been Paul, but other suggestions also include Luke, Barnabas, Priscilla and Apollos - we don't know.
2. We don't know exactly to whom it was written, but a good guess is that they are a group of Christians in Rome who used to be Jews.
3. What is clear is that the writer and the readers know each other very well.
4. These Jewish Christians seem to be in danger of falling back into Jewish customs and lifestyle, so missing the impact of what Jesus has done for them.
5. And so the main point of the letter is that Jesus and everything about Christianity is better than the Old Testament Jewish ways.

Let's keep praying that we shall see more of Jesus!

Mon 22.2	Hebrews 3:1-6		Jesus is greater than Moses
Tue 23.2	3:7-19		so we must listen carefully to Jesus
Wed 24.2	4:1-5		The Israelites missed the promise of rest
Thu 25.2	4:6-13		Jesus is greater than Joshua - we may enter that rest
Fri 26.2	4:14 - 5:3		Jesus is the greatest High Priest
Sat 27.2	5:4-10		The way that Jesus is the High Priest
Sun 28.2	free!		

You've got to the end, and there are still a few days left of Lent. What about using this last week to read through the whole of the letter again, but a little more quickly than we have done in the last few weeks?

When we get to Maundy Thursday and Good Friday you could perhaps go back to those passages that help you think about the sacrifice that Jesus made for us.

The Saturday before Easter can have a sense of waiting about it. Is there a passage that reminds you of the expectation of things to come?

On Easter Sunday you could choose the verses that sum up for you that Jesus is the best, the highest, the most supreme, the greatest, and so on.

Mon 29.3	Hebrews chapters 1-6		Why not take these three days to read through the whole letter again
Tue 30.3	chapters 7-10		
Wed 31.3	chapters 11-13		
Thu 1.4	Maundy Thursday		
Fri 2.4	Good Friday		
Sat 3.4			
Sun 4.4	Easter Sunday!		

During the first part of the letter the writer has tried to make sure that his readers understand that Jesus is “simply the best”, as he is far superior to all that has gone before, and that it really is a case of “Jesus, high over all”. He wants them to know that “by faith” all of God’s promises can now be received by them because of what Jesus has done.

In this week’s readings, at the end of the letter, the writer is saying something like, “So all of this is going to make a difference to the way you live”. It could be said that the first part of the letter is the theological bit and this is the practical bit, but I wouldn’t want to make the distinction too clear cut; each bit needs the other.

As you read these passages, do still ask yourself, “What does this passage tell me about Jesus?”, but also ask, “What difference should I be seeing in my life?”

Mon 22.3	Hebrews 12:1-6		We must keep focused on Jesus
Tue 23.3	12:7-13		We must keep ourselves in training
Wed 24.3	12:14-29		This is all so deadly serious
Thu 25.3	13:1-6		Every area of our lives will be influenced by Jesus
Fri 26.3	13:7-16		Ours is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving
Sat 27.3	13:17-25		A request for prayer and a blessing for you
Sun 28.3	you’ve done it!		

During this week’s readings we come across one of the less well known characters in the Bible, and yet the writer clearly thinks it is vital to mention him; Melchizedek. At the end of last week we read the quote of Psalm 110:4 which mentions him, but now we go into more detail, picking up the story in Genesis 14:18.

Before we get tangled up in the details and pronunciations, let’s remember that what the writer is aiming for all the way through this letter is to convince his readers that Jesus is the greatest, the best, the completer of God’s purposes.

His readers believed that all priests had to be descended from Levi (one of the 12 sons of Jacob), the most famous of whom was Aaron (Moses’ brother) who was around at the time of the giving of the 10 commandments (the law).

The writer points out that there is a different strand of priesthood, one that existed before Levi was born. Jesus is declared to be a priest of that greater order, which doesn’t depend on being born into the right family; it depends on God’s declaration.

Let’s keep praying we’ll understand more about Jesus!

Mon 1.3	Hebrews 5:11 - 6:3		We must grow in our Christian faith
Tue 2.3	6:4-12		A serious warning
Wed 3.3	6:13-20		Our Christian life is based upon the firm promises of God
Thu 4.3	7:1-10		A mysterious Old Testament character who is very great
Fri 5.3	7:11-19		Jesus shares the greatness of this character
Sat 6.3	7:20-28		Jesus is able to do the job completely
Sun 7.3	take a break!		

This week we read about covenants. A covenant is an agreement, almost a contract, between God and man, but with the important difference from normal human agreements: it is not negotiated with God, it is a set of one-sided promises, from God to man.

Covenants are brought into effect by “middle men” (mediators), such as the Old Testament priests and high priests, through their ministry in the Temple.

Can you guess the theme of the writer? It goes like this: the new covenant is better than the old; the new mediator (Jesus) is better than the old (priests); his ministry is better, his temple (in heaven) is better.

It’s all about the earthly physical system of Old Testament religion and practices being superseded by the heavenly spiritual work of sacrifice that Jesus did on the cross.

Get the message? Jesus is the best - so don’t go harping back to Old Testament ways. Let’s keep praying for insight.

Mon 8.3	Hebrews 8:1-6		Jesus is a high priest in the heavenly temple, not an earthly one
Tue 9.3	8:7-13		Jesus brings a new set of promises (covenant)
Wed 10.3	9:1-10		The Old Testament priests could never do the job completely
Thu 11.3	9:11-15		The blood of Jesus gets the job done
Fri 12.3	9:16-28		The job need never again be repeated
Sat 13.3	10:1-7		The Old Testament sacrifices could never do the job
Sun 14.3	catch up!		

The covenant is summed up in our readings this week in the following way: Jesus makes the ultimate sacrifice (this is God’s side of the “bargain”), and because of that we are made holy (this is the effect of the covenant), all of which we can have access to by expressing faith in Jesus.

We will be reading through that great chapter on “faith”. It’s a long chapter, but if you keep your eye on the big picture you’ll see that faith is about believing in God’s promises and living in such a way that shows you believe in his promises. It’s not about having an easy life just because you believe in God - in fact for some of the people written about it is completely the opposite.

The great theme running through the letter comes out in these passages too: Jesus is the best. It’s because of our faith in Jesus that we are made holy and have access to God (right into the symbolic “Holiest of Holy Places”) and that we receive the substance of his promises to his people.

Remember to pray to see Jesus when you read.

Mon 15.3	Hebrews 10:8-18		The sacrifice of Jesus has a wonderful effect for us
Tue 16.3	10:19-25		Let’s make use of this open access to God
Wed 17.3	10:26-39		We must not ignore what Jesus has done for us
Thu 18.3	11:1-12		Here begins a list of those commended for their faith
Fri 19.3	11:13-22		Their faith pointed them to the future
Sat 20.3	11:23-40		With them we now receive the fulfilled promises
Sun 21.3	nearly there!		