

Lessons from Hebrews Chapters 1-6

Chapter 1

1. Jesus as the Ultimate Revelation (Hebrews 1:1–2)

- **Progressive Revelation:** God spoke in times past through the prophets, but He has now spoken definitively through His Son, the "appointed heir of all things".
- **The Word Made Flesh:** SDA teaching emphasizes that Jesus is not merely a high-ranking created being or a prophet, but the exact representation of God's character and the one through whom the universe was framed.

2. Creator and Sustainer (Hebrews 1:2–3)

- **Co-Creator:** Christ is identified as the active Creator of the worlds and the sustainer of all things by the word of His power.
- **Bridge to the Sanctuary:** SDA commentary notes the swift transition in verse 3 from Christ's role as Creator/Sustainer to His role as Savior who purged our sins and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. This directly connects to His heavenly high-priestly ministry.

3. Superiority Over Angels (Hebrews 1:4–14)

- **Not a Created Being:** The chapter contrasts Christ with angels. In Jewish traditions of the era, angels held an exalted position of reverence; Hebrews establishes that Jesus is the Son—the one whom angels are commanded to worship.
- **Ministering Spirits:** Angels are described as "ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation" (Hebrews 1:14), reinforcing that worship and supreme authority belong exclusively to Jesus as God.

4. Christ's Substitutionary Sacrifice and Law (Hebrews 1 & EGW Notes)

- Ellen G. White emphasizes that in becoming man's substitute and bearing the curse, Christ pledged to uphold the honor of the Father's law and completely vindicate its binding claims.
- His anointing with the "oil of gladness" (Hebrews 1:9) represents His divine equipping and the deep joy found in righteousness versus the sorrow of lawlessness.

Chapter 2

1. The Warning Against Drifting (Hebrews 2:1–4)

- **The Danger of Neglect:** Believers are warned to pay earnest attention to the gospel message so they do not "drift away". In SDA Sabbath School studies, drifting is described as a silent, unforced process—like a boat slipping past a mooring when the anchor isn't held firm.
- **A Greater Accountability:** If breaking the Old Covenant (mediated through angels) brought strict punishment, ignoring the full and final revelation spoken by Jesus and confirmed by eyewitnesses carries a far graver spiritual risk.

2. Jesus Made "Lower than the Angels" in Humanity (Hebrews 2:5–9)

- **Taking on Weakness:** Jesus voluntarily stepped down from His heavenly glory to become fully human—temporarily lower than the angels—so He could represent fallen humanity.
- **Tasting Death for All:** By the grace of God, Jesus experienced real, substitutionary death for every person, breaking the finality of the grave.

3. The Kinsman-Redeemer and Elder Brother (Hebrews 2:10–13)

- **The Concept of Family:** Jesus and those He sanctifies share a common source ("all have one Father").
- **Not Ashamed to Call Us Brethren:** Drawing on Old Testament imagery (like the *Go'el* or kinsman-redeemer and the Year of Jubilee), Christ willingly steps into our ruined estate to free, rescue, and adopt us into the family of God.

4. Destroying the Devil and Freeing Us from Fear (Hebrews 2:14–15)

- **Defeating Satan:** By partaking in flesh and blood, Christ used His death to break the power of Satan, who wielded the fear of death as a weapon of bondage.
- **Liberation from Guilt:** SDA theology emphasizes that the cross strips away the terror of the second death for believers, offering genuine freedom from the guilt of sin.

5. Our Merciful and Faithful High Priest (Hebrews 2:16–18)

- **Sympathy in Temptation:** Because Jesus walked through genuine human suffering and was tempted in all points like we are (yet without sin), He is uniquely qualified to understand our struggles.
- **A Present Help:** He acts as a compassionate intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary, ready to aid and comfort those who are currently being tempted or tested

Chapter 3

1. Jesus is Superior to Moses (Hebrews 3:1–6):

- The author addresses Jewish-Christian believers who were tempted to slip back into traditional Judaism.
- Moses was deeply revered as a faithful servant in God's house, but Jesus is honored as the **Son** and the **Builder** of the house.
- Because Jesus is Creator and divine, loyalty to Him supersedes even the highest human leader in Old Testament history.

2. Christ as Apostle and High Priest (Hebrews 3:1):

- Jesus is uniquely designated as both "Apostle" (sent from God to reveal the Father's character and truth) and "High Priest" (representing humanity in the heavenly sanctuary).
- SDA theology links this directly to Christ's intercessory work and the heavenly sanctuary message, emphasizing that believers have a living mediator rather than an earthly ritual system.

3. **The Danger of Unbelief and a Hardened Heart (Hebrews 3:7–11, 15):**
 - Quoting Psalm 95, the chapter warns against repeating the tragedy of the ancient Israelites in the wilderness.
 - Despite witnessing God's miraculous deliverance from Egypt, the wilderness generation hardened their hearts through murmuring, doubt, and disobedience, causing them to forfeit the Promised Land.
4. **The Deceitfulness of Sin (Hebrews 3:12–13):**
 - Sin is portrayed as progressive and deceptive. It slowly blinds the conscience and numbs spiritual sensitivity.
 - Spiritual survival is not meant to be a solo effort; believers are commanded to **exhort (encourage) one another daily** so that no one falls away into apostasy.
5. **Perseverance as Evidence of Faith (Hebrews 3:14):**
 - SDA teaching emphasizes that holding "the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" does not mean earning salvation by works. Instead, a life of continuing, loyal obedience is the natural, grace-empowered fruit of a genuine, living relationship with Christ

Chapter 4

1. **The Sabbath as a Symbol of Finished Salvation:**

The seventh-day Sabbath (Genesis 2:2) is a memorial of God's completed work of creation. In Hebrews 4, entering God's rest (*katapausis*) means abandoning self-righteousness, legalism, and human effort to earn salvation, and instead resting completely on what Jesus Christ has already accomplished on the cross.
2. **The Greek Word *Sabbatismos* (Hebrews 4:9):**

Adventist scholars emphasize verse 9: "*There remains therefore a Sabbath rest (sabbatismos) for the people of God.*" Unlike *katapausis* (general rest), the use of *sabbatismos* explicitly points to the observance of the weekly Sabbath rest as a living symbol of trusting God as Creator and Redeemer.
3. **Faith vs. Unbelief (The Warning from Israel):**

The ancient Israelites failed to enter the Promised Land (and God's spiritual rest) because of **unbelief and disobedience**, not just external moral failures. The lesson for believers today is that true faith results in obedience and heart-surrender to God, rather than relying on one's own works.
4. **Ceasing from Our Own Works:**

Just as God rested on the seventh day of creation, keeping the Sabbath and resting in Christ means stopping our own frantic attempts to save ourselves. Sabbath-keeping in Adventism is viewed not as a work to earn salvation, but as a weekly celebration of the grace that has already saved us.
5. **Jesus as our Sympathetic High Priest (Hebrews 4:14–16):**

The chapter concludes by pointing to Jesus—our great High Priest who was tempted in every way yet without sin. Believers are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of grace to find mercy and timely help in times of need

Chapter 5

1. The Qualifications of a True High Priest (Verses 1–4)

- **Chosen by God:** An earthly high priest (like Aaron) was not self-appointed, nor did they grab the honor out of ambition; they were called and established by God.
- **Shared Humanity:** A priest had to be taken from among men so he could relate to human weakness and deal gently with the ignorant and wayward.
- **Offerings for Sin:** Earthly priests had to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people *and* for themselves because they were sinners too.

2. Christ Fulfills and Surpasses the Priesthood (Verses 5–10)

- **Divine Appointment:** Jesus did not glorify Himself. The Father appointed Him, linking His eternal Sonship ("Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee") to His priestly office ("a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek").
- **Humanity and Suffering:** Unlike the Aaronic priests, Jesus was sinless. However, He fully shared our human nature.
- **Learning Obedience through Suffering:** In SDA commentary, Jesus "learning obedience" (v. 8) does not mean He was previously disobedient as God. Instead, as the Sovereign Ruler of the universe who was obeyed by all, He stepped into human flesh and experienced the full weight of submission, temptation, and suffering on our behalf.
- **The Gethsemane Prayers:** His loud cries and tears in Gethsemane (v. 7) show the reality of His human struggle and His total reliance on the Father who saved Him from the second death through resurrection. He became the **source of eternal salvation**.
- **The Order of Melchizedek:** This introduces a superior, non-Levitical, eternal priesthood that prepares the reader for Christ's ministry in the true heavenly sanctuary.

3. The Danger of Spiritual Immaturity (Verses 11–14)

- **Dull of Hearing:** The author pauses his deep explanation of Melchizedek because the Jewish-background believers had become sluggish ("dull of hearing"). Under pressure and persecution, they were drifting or tempted to slide back into old Jewish rituals instead of moving forward in faith.
- **Stuck on Milk:** By the time they should have been mature enough to teach others, they regressed and needed "milk" (elementary truths) rather than "solid food" (deep truths about Christ's high-priestly ministry).
- **Training Spiritual Senses:** SDA teaching emphasizes that spiritual growth is not passive. "Solid food" belongs to the mature who use constant practice, prayer, and obedience to the Word of God to train their senses to distinguish good from evil

Chapter 6

1. Moving from Elementary Doctrines to Maturity (Hebrews 6:1–3)

- **The Call to Grow:** The writer urges believers not to stay stuck on spiritual "milk" (basic foundational teachings), such as repentance from dead works, faith in God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection, and eternal judgment.
- **SDA Application:** Christian life is a continuous journey. Believers must build upon foundational biblical truths rather than treating them as empty rituals or remaining spiritually stagnant.

2. The Warning Against Apostasy (Hebrews 6:4–8)

- **The Peril of Falling Away:** The chapter contains a sobering warning about those who were once enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, and shared in the Holy Spirit, yet wilfully turn away.
- **SDA Application:** Seventh-day Adventists view this as a genuine caution against hardening the heart and walking away from God's grace. However, rather than driving people to despair, the passage is understood as an urgent call to active diligence, faith, and clinging to Christ before the conscience becomes completely desensitized.

3. Better Things and Fruitfulness (Hebrews 6:9–12)

- **Confidence in God's People:** The writer quickly pivots from the warning to express confidence that "better things" accompany salvation for those who are labouring in love for God's name.
- **SDA Application:** God notices acts of service and ministry to others. Believers are encouraged not to grow lazy, but to show patient diligence until the end.

4. Jesus as the Anchor of the Soul (Hebrews 6:13–20)

- **The Unchangeable Promise:** The chapter highlights God's promise and oath to Abraham, showing that God's character provides an unbreakable guarantee.
- **The Sanctuary Context:** Hebrews 6:19–20 famously describes hope as an "anchor of the soul," entering "behind the veil".
- **SDA Sanctuary Theology:** In Seventh-day Adventist sanctuary doctrine, Jesus's entry "within the veil" points to His high-priestly ministry in heaven. While some early/historical SDA discussions debated the exact apartment of the sanctuary referenced here (the daily ministry in the holy place vs. the Day of Atonement), the overarching practical lesson is clear: Jesus has gone ahead as our **Forerunner**, securing direct, confident access to the Father