

Lesson
37

Jesus Christ: “The Author and Finisher of Our Faith”

Hebrews

Purpose To remind class members that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to his commandments.

Preparation

1. Read, ponder, and pray about the following scriptures:
 - a. Hebrews 1–4. Paul testifies that Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of Heavenly Father, is our Savior.
 - b. Hebrews 5; 6:20; 7. Paul explains that the Melchizedek Priesthood is a part of the fulness of the gospel.
 - c. Hebrews 8:1–10:18. Paul teaches that the law of Moses was the old covenant between God and his children, while the gospel of Jesus Christ is the new covenant. The old covenant was a type, or pattern, of the new covenant, but only the new covenant has the power to save.
 - d. Hebrews 10:19–11:40. Paul exhorts the Saints to exercise faith in Jesus Christ so they may inherit a place in the kingdom of God.
2. Additional reading: Hebrews 6; 12–13; Bible Dictionary, “Pauline Epistles: Epistle to the Hebrews,” 746–47.
3. Suggestion for teaching: Be careful not to become a lecturer. Sometimes you will need to lecture briefly to present information, but lecturing loses its effectiveness when it is the only teaching method used. After you give information or explain a principle, be sure to provide opportunities for class members to respond and contribute. (See *Teaching—No Greater Call*, 126.)

Suggested Lesson Development

Attention Activity As appropriate, use the following activity or one of your own to begin the lesson. Describe the following situations, and ask class members to find a scripture that could be used in one of the situations. (A few scriptures are suggested in parentheses.)

1. A child you know just learned in Primary that Jesus Christ created the world and wants to know where this is explained in the scriptures. (Hebrews 1:2; John 1:1–3, 10; Ephesians 3:9; Mosiah 3:8)
2. A friend is having some personal problems and wonders how the Savior could care about her personally or understand what she is going through. (Hebrews 2:6–8, 18; 2 Nephi 1:15; Alma 7:11–12)
3. A nonmember friend wonders if it is really necessary for someone to have the priesthood to perform baptisms and other ordinances. (Hebrews 5:1, 4; Exodus 28:41; John 15:16)

Invite one or two class members to read the scriptures they have chosen for each situation. Point out that Paul's letter to the Hebrews contains scriptures that could be useful in each of the three situations. Invite class members to listen for these scriptures as you discuss the book of Hebrews.

Scripture Discussion and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, discuss how they apply to daily life. Encourage class members to share experiences that relate to the scriptural principles.

Explain that throughout his missionary journeys, Paul sought to convince the members of the Church that they should no longer practice the law of Moses. While the Jewish Christians had been taught that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, many of them still believed that obedience to the law of Moses was essential to their salvation. Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews to reemphasize that the law of Moses had been fulfilled in Christ.

1. Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of Heavenly Father, is our Savior.

Discuss Hebrews 1–4. Invite class members to read selected verses.

- What do we learn about Jesus Christ from Hebrews 1? (List class members' responses on the chalkboard. Answers may include those listed below.)
 - a. He created the world (verses 2, 10).
 - b. He is in the image of God the Father (verse 3).
 - c. He atoned for our sins (verse 3).
 - d. He is the Firstborn Son of God the Father (verses 5–6).
 - e. His glory and power are eternal and unchanging (verses 8, 12).
- Paul said that the Son of God, who was “made so much better than the angels” (Hebrews 1:4), had also been “made a little lower than the angels” (Hebrews 2:9). In what way was Jesus “made a little lower than the angels”? (See Mosiah 13:34–35. He came to earth as a mortal and was subject to pain and death.) Why was this necessary? (See Hebrews 2:9–10, 16–18; 4:15–16; see also Matthew 23:10–11.)
- Paul encouraged the Saints to live righteously so they could enter into God's rest (Hebrews 3:7–19; 4:1–11). What does it mean to enter into God's rest? (See D&C 84:23–24; 3 Nephi 27:19.) What did Paul explain about why some of the children of Israel in Moses' time were unable to enter into God's rest? (See Hebrews 3:7–11, 16–19; 4:1–2.) How can we help each other become worthy to enter into God's rest? (See Hebrews 3:13–14; 4:11; Alma 13:12–13, 16.)

2. The Melchizedek Priesthood is part of the fulness of the gospel.

Read and discuss selected verses from Hebrews 5; 6:20; 7.

- What did Paul teach about how a man must receive and use priesthood authority? (See Hebrews 5:1–4.) Why must a priesthood holder be “called of God” rather than “[take] this honour unto himself”?
- What priesthood authority accompanied the law of Moses? (The Aaronic Priesthood, also called the Levitical, lesser, or preparatory priesthood. See D&C 84:25–27.) What priesthood authority does Jesus Christ hold? (See Hebrews 5:5–6; 6:20.) Explain that when Jesus came and fulfilled the

law of Moses, he also restored the Melchizedek Priesthood. Why was this necessary? (See Hebrews 7:11. The Aaronic Priesthood does not have the authority to perform all the ordinances necessary for salvation.)

“Neither the law of Moses nor the priesthood of Aaron which administered it was capable of bringing God’s children unto perfection. The Aaronic Priesthood is a lesser authority, and it administers the preparatory gospel only. The Melchizedek Priesthood, on the other hand, is the higher priesthood, commissioned to minister the gospel ordinances in their fulness and capable of purifying our lives so that we can again enter into the presence of the Lord” (*The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles* [Church Educational System manual, 1979], 385–86; see also D&C 107:18–20).

- Why do we call the greater priesthood the Melchizedek Priesthood? (See D&C 107:2–4.) How are members of the Church today blessed by having the Melchizedek Priesthood as well as the Aaronic Priesthood? How has the priesthood blessed your life?

3. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the new covenant between God and his children.

Read and discuss selected verses from Hebrews 8:1–10:18. Explain that Paul reminded the members of the Church that worship under the law of Moses had pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

- According to Hebrews 8:5, what did the Lord tell Moses to do while building the tabernacle to be used by the Israelites for worship? (Explain that the ceremonies in the tabernacle symbolized “heavenly things,” as outlined below.)

Ordinance in the tabernacle:	What it symbolized:
a. The priests offered animals as sacrifices to God (Hebrews 10:1–4, 11).	Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins (Hebrews 9:26–28; 10:4–12).
b. The priests placed blood from the sacrificed animals on the altar to symbolize the cleansing and purification of the people (Hebrews 9:6–7, 19–23).	Jesus’ blood, shed during the Atonement, cleanses and purifies us from sin (Hebrews 9:11–15).
c. The high priest went through the veil into the Holy of Holies (Hebrews 9:1–7).	Jesus, the great high priest, went through the veil into heaven itself (Hebrews 9:24).

- Paul explained that the law of Moses was the old covenant between God and his people (Hebrews 8:9; see also Galatians 3:24–25). What is the new covenant brought by Jesus Christ? (See Hebrews 8:6–8, 10–13. The fulness of the gospel.) Point out that the old covenant is described in the Old Testament of the Bible, while the new covenant is described in the New Testament.
- Why was the old covenant unable to make its participants perfect? (See Hebrews 10:1–4.) Why does the new covenant give us greater hope for perfection? (See Hebrews 10:9–18.)

4. Those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ will inherit a place in the kingdom of God.

Read and discuss selected verses from Hebrews 10:19–11:40. Point out that after Paul explained the ways in which the fulness of the gospel is a higher, more complete law that replaces the law of Moses, he exhorted the Saints to follow this “new and living way” by putting their faith in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:19–22).

- What is the first, or most basic, principle of the gospel? (See Articles of Faith 1:4.) What is faith? (See Hebrews 11:1; Alma 32:21; Ether 12:6.) How is faith more than belief? Why is faith in Jesus Christ essential to our salvation?
- Paul gave many examples of people who accomplished great things through faith in Jesus Christ. Whom did he mention? (See Hebrews 11:4–12, 17–34.) List on the chalkboard the names of those mentioned, and discuss how each person’s actions required faith.

You may want to put class members into small groups for this discussion. Assign each group to consider a few of the people mentioned in Hebrews 11. Give the groups a few minutes to discuss how the people’s actions required faith, and then have each group briefly present their conclusions to the class.

- Paul also taught that faith can help us during times of adversity or opposition (Hebrews 11:32–38). How has faith helped you deal with adversity? What other blessings have you (or someone you know) received by exercising faith in Jesus Christ?

Conclusion

Point out that we are blessed to live in a time when the fulness of the gospel is available. Testify that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to his commandments. Encourage class members to keep the covenants and commandments of the restored gospel.

Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or both of these ideas as part of the lesson.

1. God will keep his promises

- What does Hebrews 6:10–19 teach about God’s promises to His children? What does verse 15 teach about the relationship between enduring trials and receiving promises from God? (See also D&C 82:10.) What experiences have you had with God fulfilling his promises to you?

2. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” (Hebrews 12:6)

Have class members read Hebrews 12:5–11.

- How does the Lord chasten us? How is chastening from the Lord “for our profit”? (See Hebrews 12:10; D&C 61:8; 95:1; 101:5.) How can we use chastening as an opportunity to learn and grow? Invite class members to tell about times when the Lord has chastened them and what they have learned from the experience.