

The only thing that matters is that you are reading God's word regularly. While that is still true with this schedule, the goal with this one is to get a better understanding of the entire story of the bible. There is no substitute for reading God's word. Keep reading! My website is at <http://graceofourlord.wordpress.com>. I encourage you to get the actual reading plan I am currently following. You can get it from the same place I do - at [this link](#). They have some great guidance for the reading plan there as well, and they have it all in both PDF and in Kindle format!

December 2012						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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2 (Week 49)	3 Eph 2	4 Eph 3	5 Eph 4	6 Eph 5	7 Eph 6	8
9 (Week 50)	10 1 Peter 1	11 1 Peter 2	12 Hebrews 3	13 Hebrews 4	14 Hebrews 5	15
16 (Week 51)	17 Hebrews 6	18 Hebrews 7	19 Hebrews 8	20 Hebrews 9	21 Hebrews 10	22
23 (Week 52)	24 Hebrews 11	25 Rev 4	26 Rev 5	27 Rev 21	28 Rev 22	29
30	31	Notes:				

December Week 2 (Week 50) Summary

1 Peter 1, 1 Peter 2, and Hebrews 3, 4, and 5 - Click the chapter below to go to the ESV Bible passage for that chapter and read or listen.

1 Peter 1 - Peter opens this letter addressing Christians in the northern and eastern provinces of Turkey (such as Pontus, Cappadocia, and Bithynia) who had scattered because of persecution - and indeed still suffered such. It is notable that Peter now refers to Christians - Jew and Gentile - in terms formerly reserved only for the Jews (chosen, elect exiles of the dispersion,

etc.). Because of the blood of Jesus Christ, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, Christians were now the chosen ones, as Jesus made plain in [John 15:16-19](#). Peter is offering them comfort, as he reminds them that God in His mercy has caused us to be born again through the resurrection of His son, Jesus, for an imperishable inheritance of salvation.

His words of comfort urge them to realize that the persecution they are enduring will test the genuineness of their faith, but their love for Him and steadfastness will be rewarded by His grace. He reminds them of the promise of the prophets concerning Christ, who was "*foreknown before the foundation of the world*" - that they were ransomed by His blood and by His victory over death. Peter calls on them to not fall back on their old ways - the ways of their fathers - but to purify themselves in love for one another **and to be holy**.

This latter point is most important. People often try to excuse their sinful behavior by saying "God wants me to be happy." Sure, God wants us to rejoice in the hope that we have because of Jesus, but He is not nearly so focused on our personal happiness. He wants us to be holy! Peter reminds us in verses 15-16 (quoting [Leviticus 11:44](#)) "*...as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'*" Verses 24-25 are cited from [Isaiah 40:6-8](#), reminding us to trust in God, whose word endures forever.

[1 Peter 2](#) - Peter continues his admonishment to be holy in this letter, beginning by urging them to leave behind wickedness, thoughts and deeds of ill will toward others, and to study God's word. The reference to the Scriptures as spiritual milk is used in other passages such as [Hebrews 5:12](#) and [1 Corinthians 3:2](#). Verse 3's reference to having "tasted" that the Lord is good, is quoted from [Psalm 34:8](#) appropriately here, as the entire Psalm is about the Lord delivering the righteous who are suffering. He then describes them as a living stone "rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious," being built up as a spiritual house, with Jesus as the cornerstone ([Isaiah 28:16](#), [Psalm 118:22](#)).

He addresses Christians in verse 9, referring to them with terms that were reserved for Jews in the past - "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" ([Exodus 19:5-6](#), [Deuteronomy 7:6](#), [Isaiah 61:6](#)). Many of them were Gentiles. Peter then tells them they must abstain from passions of the flesh, and keep their actions among the Gentiles honorable, referring to unbelievers as "Gentiles." Living as a holy people, they must submit to the authority of those who rule, and by doing good amid their suffering and persecution they honor Jesus who suffered, "*but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*"

The last few verses of the chapter remind them of just how much Jesus suffered for us, and correspond to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 as follows:

[Verse 22 - Isaiah 53:9](#)

[Verse 23 - Isaiah 53:7](#)

[Verse 24 - Isaiah 53:12, 5](#)

[Verse 25 - Isaiah 53:6](#)

[Hebrews 3](#) - This chapter by the Hebrew writer is the only place in Scripture that Jesus is called an apostle. Remember that an apostle is another word for a messenger, one who is sent (or more correctly, one who is commissioned, so that the messenger has the authority of the one who sent him). Jesus said in [John 12:49](#). *"For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me his commandment—what to say and what to speak."* The writer continues that Jesus was faithful to Him that appointed Him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. But Moses was faithful as a servant. Note that the writer says that Jesus *is* faithful over God's house as a son - and we are that house. But verse 6 reminds that we must persevere (hold fast) in the Christian life.

Verses 7-11 are quoted from [Psalm 95:7-11](#), We are warned as benefactors of the new covenant to not do as those who fell away in the old covenant. We need the fellowship of our Christian brothers and sisters, so that we *"...exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."*

[Hebrews 4](#) - The Hebrew writer continues the theme he began in chapter 3 of the rest that was prepared by God for us - *"his works were finished from the foundation of the world."* "Rest" here for us is entrance into heaven. They received "good news" in the old covenant, but the message did not benefit them because they were not faithful in their belief. The point that the writer is making in the first few verses is that the promise is ours to forfeit - just as it was theirs (verse 11). Verse 12's reference to the word of God as "living" is not in the sense of [John 1:1](#), but that of [1 Peter 1:23](#) and others that refer to it as such.

Coffman says a lot about verse 12 that seems right on the mark: *"The word 'active' shows that the word does not lie inert and dead but at all times carries within itself the mighty power of its divine author. Rather than trying to find subtle differences in the meaning of such words as 'soul' and 'spirit,' it is perhaps just as well to view this verse as a heaping together of powerful terms for the purpose of showing the utmost ability of the word of God to penetrate the complex inward nature of man, to convict him of sin, to expose his hidden motives, and to judge the very nature of life itself....The passage presents God's word as totally different from the word of men, making it infinite in power, all-seeing in discernment, and able to pierce or penetrate any human subterfuge."*

And just so, verse 13 tells the reader that there is nobody that can hide from Him - we are all "naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

Verses 14-16 pick back up on [Chapter 3's reference](#) to Jesus as our high priest - a subject to which the writer speaks much about in this epistle - and points out that he is not one that is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses. The Lord experienced temptation *"in every respect,"* it says. So we can approach our Father through Him **with confidence** (verse 16) *"that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* What a reassuring passage! We often speak of someone "being there" for us. Jesus truly is!

[Hebrews 5](#) - The Hebrew writer continues on the subject of Jesus as our high priest. To understand the context of this writing, we should remember that many of the Christians this letter

was written to were Jews or Gentiles that had first aspired to Judaism before becoming Christians. Much of their persecution would not be happening to them if they had not become followers of Christ; and their lives would be much easier if they turned back to Judaism. Secondly, the high priest was an attractive and important part of that faith they had previously known. Coffman's summary as follows is well put:

"Without doubt, the earthly splendor of the Jewish high priest was a factor of seductive influence on Christians, especially those of Jewish background. His rich robes, the extravagantly ornate breastplate, the unique privilege of entering the Holy of Holies on the day of atonement, his status as judge and president of the Sanhedrin, his dramatic influence as the official representative of the Jewish nation, more especially at a time when they had no king, the traditional descent of the office from the sons of Aaron and reaching all the way back to the Exodus, and the grudging respect paid to the office, even by Roman conquerors - all these things and many others elevated the Jewish high priest to a position of isolated splendor in the eyes of the people."

The writer is letting them know that they still have a high priest - but a better one now! Jesus is their high priest and intercedes for us now, and he is fully qualified - and was appointed as such by God (verses 5-6)! But they should know this by now, and the writer rebukes them, warning them not to fall back into their old ways. By now, he says, they should be teaching others, but they need teaching again themselves. They "...need milk, not solid food" (verse 12) - meaning they have to get back to the first principles of Christianity before they can move forward with maturity.