



Growth Group Studies // Term 4, 2022

Week	Title
One	Hebrews 8:1-13 – A Greater Covenant
Two	Hebrews 9:1-28 – A Greater Sacrifice
Three	Hebrew 10:1-18 – A Greater Perfection
Four	Hebrew 10:19-39 – A Greater Perseverance
Five	Hebrews 11:1 – 12:3 – A Greater Faith
Six	Hebrews 12:4-13 – A Greater Discipline
Seven	Hebrews 12:14-29 – A Greater Inheritance
Eight	Hebrews 13:1-6 – A Greater Worship (Part 1)
Nine	Hebrews 13:7-25 – A Greater Worship (Part 2)

Overview of Hebrews

WHAT IS IT? (GENRE)

Hebrews is a sermon-letter that weaves together biblical quotations, explanations, and exhortations.

Hebrews describes itself as a “word of exhortation” (13:22b); a phrase used to describe sermons in the first century (Acts 13:15). Hebrews also has been “written” (13:22c), bearing the marks of a letter (13:23-25).

WHO WROTE IT? (AUTHOR)

Hebrews does not record the author’s name.

We can deduce that the author was associated with the apostolic crowd (13:23) but probably not an apostle themselves (2:3).

WHO RECEIVED IT? (AUDIENCE)

Hebrews does not record the audience’s name.

We can deduce that the audience had previously received the Christian message (2:1, 3) and has suffered for their faith (10:32-34). By the time of the letter being written, they were at risk of turning away from Christ (2:1, 3:12, 6:6, 10:35) and perhaps falling back into Old Covenant worship.

WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN? (DATING)

Hebrews does not record the writing date.

It was first referred to outside the bible in Clement of Rome’s letter to the Corinthian churches (c. 96 AD). Some have postulated that the letter may have been written before the temple was destroyed in 70AD (10:2).

HOW DOES IT FIT TOGETHER? (STRUCTURE)

Hebrews shows the greatness of Jesus from many different angles! Below is a proposed structure:

1:1-4	Introduction
1:5-2:18	Jesus is greater than the angels
3:1-4:13	Jesus is greater than Moses and Joshua
4:14-7:28	Jesus is greater than the Levitical Priesthood
8:1-10:18	Jesus is greater than the Levitical Sacrifices
10:19-13:25	Final Exhortations

RESOURCES

EHAC Launch Night – Term 4, 2022

- Brief summary of Hebrews 1–7 (Term 4, 2021) and introduction to Hebrews 8–13.
- Available at – www.eac.org.au – or YouTube.

Audio overviews

- Mark Dever, <https://bit.ly/dever-overview>
- Sam Storms, <https://bit.ly/storms-overview>

Recommended commentaries

- Peter Adam, Hebrews – The Majestic Son
- Kent Hughes, Hebrews – An Anchor for the Soul
- Michael J. Kruger, Hebrews For You
- Moore College PTC, Letters and Revelation

Study 1 – A GREATER COVENANT

Hebrews 8:1-13

Getting Started

If you weren't able to be at our Term 4 Launch Night, watch it online.

Share: What are you looking forward to as we study Hebrews 8-13 together?

Read Hebrews 8:1-2

1. As we return to Hebrews, vv. 1-2 orient us. They summarise what has come before (Heb 4-7) and prepare us for what is to come (Heb 8:3 – 10:18).

What three things does the writer of Hebrews want us to know about Jesus?

- He is our High Priest
- He has sat down at the right hand of God
- He serves in the heavenly—not earthly—sanctuary

Covenant is a word that we will encounter 15 times in Heb 8 – 13. Here's a definition:

'A solemn commitment, guaranteeing promises or obligations undertaken by one or both parties, sealed with an oath.' – Paul Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath*, p. 43.

The writer of Hebrews will invite us to compare the "old" and "new" covenants. The old covenant is the one God made with Israel. The new covenant is the one God has made with us, in Jesus.

Read Hebrews 8:3-13

2. vv. 3-6 compare the high priests of the old covenant to Jesus.

What similarities and differences can you see highlighted?

Similarities:

- both appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices on behalf of the people.
- both act as mediators

Differences:

- OT priesthood was earthly. Jesus' priesthood is heavenly.
- OT priesthood was a shadow and copy of Jesus' priesthood.
- Jesus' ministry established on better promises

3. V. 6 states that “the new covenant is established on better promises”. Vv. 7-12 explain what this means.
 - a. What was “wrong” with the old covenant?
 - Nothing on God’s part. The fault lay with the people. (v. 8a, 9b)
 - b. What did God “declare”?
 - vv. 8-12 there will be a time when God will make a new covenant
 - c. What promises did God make?
 - laws will be in their minds and written on their hearts,
 - they will truly *know* God, and not need to teach
 - sins will be forgiven

4. According to v. 13, the new covenant has made the old obsolete.
 - a. What do you think it means that the old “... will soon disappear?”
 - OT priestly ministry is no longer practiced
 - obsolete, as in “no longer in use” → the sacrificial system is not practiced
 - OT Covenant continues only as a *type* (sign/shadow/comparison) of the New Covenant in Jesus
 - b. How will this affect the way we read the Old Testament?
 - need to read it in light of Jesus’ fulfilment.
 - when reading the ordered and detailed instructions of the Mosaic Covenant (e.g. Exodus–Deuteronomy, see v. 5), we need to see that these laws are prescribed in such a way to show how superior and perfect the ministry that Jesus is doing in heaven is. So we shouldn’t just skip over them. They highlight Jesus’ superior ministry!

Thinking It Through

5. Because of Jesus, we belong to the new covenant.
Reflect together – how have the better promises:
 - a. defined *your* relationship with God?

 - b. encouraged *you* in the daily battle with sin?

Study 2 – A GREATER SACRIFICE

Hebrews 9:1-28

The Tabernacle was a moveable tent. Under the old covenant it was God’s “earthly sanctuary” (v. 1) – the place where He dwelt and met with His people. Hebrews 9 helps us understand the purpose of the Tabernacle. Especially, the way it was designed to point us to something greater.

Getting Started

1. Read Hebrews 9:1-5 and locate all the places and items mentioned on the diagram on the following page.

Alternatively, grab some scissors and glue, print off the file below, and have some fun making your own simple model!

https://visualunit.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/tabernacle_model.pdf

Read Hebrews 9:6-10

2. Locate on the diagram or with your model:
 - a. where the priests would do their ministry
 - b. where the high priest did their ministry once a year (c.f. Leviticus 16) i.e. [Day of Atonement](#)

3. What was the Holy Spirit illustrating through the design and function of the tabernacle?

People weren't able to come into the Most Holy Place. There was a physical barrier between man and God. The Holy Spirit was showing that there was still something that was missing with the OT sacrificial system in dealing with sin. The old tabernacle with its sacrificial system couldn't clear the conscience of sinners. (v.9) Sacrifice was needed to deal with sins done in ignorance.

Read Hebrews 9:11-15

4. Here we see the tabernacle was a shadow pointing to something greater – the person and work of Jesus Christ. Use vv. 11-15 to answer the following:
 - a. Who is Jesus?
 - high priest of the good things that are now already here
 - he is *the* High Priest and mediator of the new covenant (v. 15)
 - b. Where did he go?
 - Into *the* Most Holy Place
 - The Greater and perfect tabernacle (v. 11) [“heaven itself” (v. 24)]
 - c. What did he sacrifice?
 - Himself unblemished – not blood of goats or bulls, but his own blood (v.12,14)
 - d. Why has he done it?
 - to obtain eternal redemption for sinners (v. 12)
 - to cleanse our consciences → so that we can worship God. (v. 14)
 - so that sinners who are called can receive the promised eternal inheritance (v.15)
 - to set us free from sin (v.15)

Read Hebrews 9:16-28

5. What has Jesus established?
 - he has established (or put into effect) the new covenant
 - the one and only eternal access to God
6. How is a “will” related to the idea of “covenant”?
What makes our eternal salvation certain?
 - both are related to something guaranteed under contract
 - “will” and “covenant” are actually the same word in the original Greek text
 - a will isn’t put into effect until a death occurs → Christ’s blood (his death) put into effect the new covenant
 - similarly, the inheritance of a will aren’t bequeathed until after the death → so the effects of the new covenant (eternal salvation, eternal inheritance, forgiveness) come with Christ’s death.
 - certain eternal salvation because:
 - Christ has entered *heaven* itself (v. 24)
 - his sacrifice was *once-for-all* (v. 25-26)
7. When Jesus returns, where will he take “those who are waiting for him”?
 - into God’s presence → into the promised eternal inheritance (see back in v. 15)
 - that is what “bringing salvation” means. → Redemption begins at the cross, where sin is dealt with (Jesus’ 1st coming). The eternal inheritance is the end goal of salvation for those awaiting him (2nd coming).

Thinking It Through:

8. How do you feel about the certain future of facing God’s judgment?
What does this future reality mean for you now?
9. Think of someone you know, who doesn’t yet know Jesus.
How might this (complex!) passage help you share Jesus with them?

Study 3 – A GREATER PERFECTION

Hebrews 10:1-18

Getting Started

1. Share a time when someone made a great sacrifice for you.

Read Hebrews 10:1-18

2. According to v. 1a, what is the Old Testament law (i.e. the old covenant)?
How has this been shown in Hebrews 8 – 9?

- only a *shadow* of the good things to come
- some examples we've seen:
 - the earthly tabernacle → heaven itself
 - OT high priest → Jesus *the* high priest
 - temporary cleansing of outward sin → eternal cleansing of sinful consciences
 - blood of bulls and goats → blood of Jesus
 - law written on stone tablets → law written on hearts

3. Use vv. 1b-4 to answer the following:

- a. What could the law not do?
 - could not make perfect (or complete) those who worship (v. 1b)
 - could not cleanse once-for-all (v. 2)
 - could not completely remove the guilt from sin (v. 4)
- b. What did the law do?
 - act as a reminder of the peoples' sins (v. 3)

4. Psalm 40:6-8 is quoted in vv. 5-7:

- a. How does the writer of Hebrews explain Jesus fulfilling these words (vv. 8-9)?
 - Jesus came and did God's will, which was to offer himself as the sacrifice.
 - Jesus is the only one prepared to obediently do God's will
- b. What is the result of Jesus fulfilling these words (v. 10)?
 - through Jesus' obedience, we have *been made holy*
 - that is, our holiness is *only* through the work of Jesus

5. In vv. 11-14 the focus shifts from sacrifices to priests. Compare the old covenant priests with Jesus as you discuss the following:
 - a. What is different about their sacrifices?
 - OT priestly sacrifices are daily; Christ's is *once-for-all*
 - OT sacrifices cannot take away sins; Christ's *does*
 - b. What is different about their posture?
 - the OT priests remain standing; Christ *has sat down* (v. 12; recall 1:3) = it is finished!
6. How can we be sure that Jesus' death genuinely achieved us being made perfect (or holy) in God's sight? (vv. 15-18)
 - God's word in Scripture– he has promised so!

Thinking It Through:

7. In what ways do you find v. 14 helpful in our everyday experience as followers of Jesus?
8. What place is there in the Christian life to make sacrifices for sins?
What are we implying if we try to?
it is important to hold to the fact that it is Jesus' sacrifice that makes perfect those who draw near to worship. It's not about our own sacrifices, our works/prayers/service that make us holy.
9. How does this passage help us think about the purpose of:
 - a. Serving God
 - b. Praying
 - c. Feelings of guilt

Study 4 – A GREATER PERSEVERANCE

Hebrews 10:19-39

Getting Started

- Over the last 3 studies, we've spent a lot of time considering in great detail what it means for Jesus Christ to be the high priest of the new covenant. If someone asked you – "So what?" – what would you say?

Hebrews 10:19 – 13:17 is the final section of this sermon-letter, addressing many practical implications that flow out of what has come before (Hebrews 4:14 – 10:18). Note that v. 19 begins with the word – "Therefore".

To put it another way, Jesus Christ is the high priest of the new covenant – "So what?"

Read Hebrews 10:19-25

- In light of Hebrews 4:14 – 10:18, the writer now gives five exhortations ("let us ..."). Use the passage to fill out the following:

draw out the corporate nature of the exhortation ↓

	The exhortation?	On what basis?	What will it look like in our lives?
v. 22			
v. 23			
v. 24			
v. 25a			
v. 25b			

In light of these five exhortations, the writer of Hebrews now turns to address three particular concerns he had for the original readers of this sermon-letter.

Read Hebrews 10:26-39

3. Consider each of the three sections in turn. Discuss the following:
 - a. vv. 26-31: What is the warning? What is the basis?
 - deliberately sinning → only fearful judgment awaits
 - deliberately sinning = saying that Jesus means nothing and has done nothing for you.
 - If you reject the covenant, don't expect the benefits of the covenant (like the people who received the law who died because they rejected the law, v. 28)
 - the basis is the covenant promises of God
 - b. vv. 32-35: What is the encouragement? What is the basis?
 - Even when you were persecuted and rejected, you stood your ground!
 - The author wants them to remember their confidence when they first believed.
 - Basis: "you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions" (v. 34) (i.e. basis = the covenant promises of God)
 - c. vv. 36-39: What is the exhortation? What is the basis?
 - Keep persevering! Keep doing the will of the Lord!
 - Basis: the covenant promises of God, including the promise that Jesus will return.
4. How do you think the exhortations of vv. 19-25 address these three particular concerns?
 - God's faithfulness to his promises means we can have full assurance and confidence in how we live out our faith.
 - The five exhortations look to the *present* ministry of Jesus as High Priest, but also to the *future* reality of his return (i.e. "the Day approaching", v. 25)

Thinking It Through

5. When have you struggled most to persevere in your faith?
6. What can you remember God doing in your life, that will help you to persevere?
7. How can you better encourage others to persevere, as together we wait for Jesus to return?