



# Hebrews: Remedies for Drifters (Part 2)



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**Hebrews 7:1 – 13:25**

INTEGRATED BIBLE STUDY GUIDE  
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## i

**How to get best value out of these studies...**

Welcome to a new series of New Testament studies in the book of **Hebrews**. These Study Guides are designed in a three part format...

- 1 Opening questions to get you thinking are listed as **Appetisers**.
- 2 Those which get you to investigate the text are contained in the **Main Course**.
- 3 The **Application** section prompts you to reflect on what you've looked at and consider how it will change you and those in your group.

**If you're using these Guides in a Small Group**, it is vital that you have done preparatory work *before* you get to your meeting. This will be of great benefit not only to you, but to the other members of your group.

**If you're doing these studies individually**, make sure you let someone know you are doing so, and arrange a time to meet with them when you've finished (or even before) to let them know how your life is being changed by God's Word.

If you're after good commentaries or resources to complement your looking into the bible, speak to your Small Group Leader or one of the staff, and we'll try to be as helpful as possible. Most people aren't going to spend lots of dollars on theological works, so we're constantly on the look out for good quality titles that will result in money well spent.

We trust you'll find the guides helpful, and we welcome any feedback you can give us as you use them.

Always surround your time looking into God's Word with **prayer**, asking God to change your heart and life so that you – with God's people – might become more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ.

6. To the Hebrews, Christian service of God could seem a bit dull without the ritual of the Old Testament ceremonies (compare v. 9 "ceremonial foods"). In our church, do we have any rituals etc. that obscure the grace that we have in Christ? In what other ways do we hang on to shadows that appear to give more security than the reality in heaven?
7. How could the Hebrews (recipients of the letter) go to Jesus "outside the camp" (vv. 11 – 13)? What does this mean for us?

**To Ruminat...**

8. Leadership is a topic that comes up repeatedly in this chapter.
  - a. Apart from prayer, how can you remember your leaders (verse 7)?
  - b. In your church community, how can you help them so that, as one body, we can be more dedicated to glorifying God, edifying the church, and serving the world?
  - c. We are to show obedience and submission toward those put in authority over us (v. 17). How does this work out in practice in "a world of autonomy and emancipation"?
9. Today, what sort of sacrifices can we offer to God (compare verse 15)? What area do you need the most work on?
10. What has been the most significant thing that you have learnt from studying Hebrews together? How has this affected your personal life?

## 11

## True Worship

## Hebrews 13

*In Chapter 9 we noticed (9: 1) that under the first Covenant there were regulations for worship. In 12: 28, 29 we are again exhorted to “worship God acceptably.” In this final chapter the author explains what it means for us to have “come to the heavenly Mount Zion” (12: 22). Here he indicates areas in which we might engage in true worship, so that we might run the race to the end, in a way that brings joy to the Lord.*

## Appetisers...

1. In the Old Testament the Israelites were urged to be kind to “the stranger,” because they had been strangers in Egypt. Australia is a multi-cultural society; what is your experience with “entertaining strangers” (v. 1)?

## Main Course...

2. What does it mean to honour marriage and to keep the marriage bed pure (v. 4)? What are some of the consequences if we don't?
3. Why is contentment (verse 5) so important in the context of the overall message of Hebrews (the danger of trusting in shadows and drifting away)?
4. Reread verses 5 – 8. What use can a Christian make of the Old Testament for encouragement and admonishment?
5. “Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever” (v. 8) is often quoted, but what does it mean in the context?

## The Background to Hebrews

## Why read Hebrews?

Hebrews is a great book to read, because it tackles an issue which is important for all Christians. It was written to those who had been active as Christians for a while, but who had begun to slip away from their original commitment and practice. They were beginning to drift away, perhaps unaware of what was really happening. They were, in fact, turning away from the living God! So it is essential for us to read Hebrews today, because it is just as easy to slip, to drift, to turn away from the living God.

## How is it organised?

Hebrews describes itself as a word of exhortation or message of encouragement and so at its heart the teaching of Hebrews is pastorally driven. In that sense it is better to think of it as a written sermon rather than a letter. As a sermon, the writer to the Hebrews explains parts of the OT to his listeners in the light of Jesus Christ, and then applies these passages to them, finishing with an exhortation which alternates between both strong encouragement and a helpful warning... eg: compare the warning of 6:4-6 with the encouragement of 6:9.

## Starting off in Hebrews

When you read Hebrews – try to do it in one or two sittings – mark or briefly take note of:

- (a) those parts which you understand and are encouraged by,
- (b) any parts which you find difficult to understand or believe.

## For Leaders

Get hold of a Bible Dictionary and take some brief notes on the following questions:

1. Who wrote it?
2. Who was it written to?
3. Where did it come from?
4. What is the historical background?
5. When was it written?

## 6

## A High Priest, ... But Different

## Hebrews 7:1 – 28

*After Hebrews 5: 11 to 6: 20 (a passage exhorting people not to get sluggish, 6: 12) the author proceeds with his theme “Jesus the greater High Priest.” The Levitical priesthood was such a fundamental concept of the Old Covenant, that any change in the priestly order of necessity meant a change in the ‘Law’ (Tora), indeed in the whole order of things, and thus of the Covenant, 7: 22.*

## Appetisers...

1. What types of modern-day covenant have you come across in your life? To what extent were they binding and unalterable?
2. What evidences do you see today of people using mediators in religion, in relationships, etc.?

## Main Course

3. Melchizedek is a somewhat mystical figure. With the help of a Bible Dictionary, find out who he was. What function did this man “without beginning of days or end of life” have? See also Gen. 14: 17-20 and Ps. 110: 4.
4. Why do you think Jesus Christ is compared with Melchizedek? What do they have in common and why is this Good News?
5. What is the spiritual significance of the fact that Melchizedek was *first* King of Righteousness, and *then* King of Peace? v. 2

- c. Do you look at your own painful situations in the light of this passage?

6. In what way have we come to the heavenly Jerusalem etc. (vv. 22 – 24) and what is the significance for your Christian walk?
7. Can you be certain about your enrolment in heaven (v. 23)? What would you say to a person who denied the possibility of such certainty?

## To Ruminat...

8. What makes you weary and faint-hearted, and what is the best plan of action you can take for dealing with these times?
9. How can we be heaven-minded (v. 22 – 24) and at the same time fully engaged with the world around us? Which of the two is the most difficult and why?
10. What sort of fear of God should we have both in our prayers and in our daily walk (compare 12: 28)? Did anything change after the Resurrection/Pentecost? For “fear of God” in the New Testament see also 2 Cor. 5: 10, 11; 1 John 4: 18 and Rev. 14: 7.
11. Pray together about this passage, for each other, and also remembering any Christians you know who are struggling with sin or enduring hardship, and finding it hard to believe that God loves them.

## 10

## Can You See The Finish Yet?

## Hebrews 12

The examples of faith in Hebrews 11 form the background for our entry into Chapter 12. The first three verses of this chapter set the theme for what is to follow. Looking to Jesus helps us to ‘run the race’ faithfully and with perseverance.

## Appetisers...

1. Are you good at completing a project? When did you last leave one unfinished?
2. Discipline is unpopular nowadays. Why do you think that might be?

## Main Course...

3. What does “Jesus the pioneer/author and perfecter of our faith” mean? How does Jesus ‘pioneer’ our faith? Compare Hebrews 2: 9, 11 – 13; 3: 5 – 6; 6: 20 and 7: 28.
4. We also need to struggle against sin (v. 4). What would have caused the recipients of this letter to be slack at resisting sin? What pressures do we feel regarding resisting sin “to the point of shedding our blood”?
5. Verses 4 – 13 deal with discipline.
  - a. What do these verses say about God’s discipline?
  - b. How does discipline differ from punishment?

6. In what ways were the ancient rules of the Jews “weak and useless”? vv. 18-19
7. How does Jesus guarantee our covenant with Him? vv. 22-25
8. Read vv. 11-28. Make a chart on a big sheet of paper under the headings: The Old Way: Inadequate; Jesus: Adequate. Fill in the chart according all the points you can find from these verses and distil what it is about Christ’s character and sacrifice that sets Him far above other earthly priests.

## To Ruminare...

9. We have seen that the former priesthood for the Jews was “weak and useless” (v. 18). Have you come to the realisation of the utter bankruptcy of living a good life as a way to please God (even if you use some sort of mediator)? In your life, where does this natural tendency to revert back to old ways creep in every so often?
10. How will you explain to friends that living a good life is not good enough? Compare with Lk. 18: 9-14.
11. Share together what have been the most important truths in this chapter about Jesus and about yourselves. Turn these thoughts into a time of prayer and praise.



## The Superior Ministry (I)

### Hebrews 8

Jesus, the greater High Priest, provides a new and better: -

- a. covenant (Chapter 8); and
- b. sanctuary and sacrifice (9: 1 - 10: 18).

This radical change and its implications for His followers are explored in this rather large chunk, so we divide it into two studies.

### Appetisers...

1. According to Chapter 8 the Old Mosaic Covenant has become obsolete. What is one thing in your life you wish was obsolete right now? Why?

### Main Course...

2. Why would Jesus not have been a High Priest on earth? Compare 8: 3-4 and 7: 27.
3.
  - a. 'Covenant' is an important Biblical concept. To refresh your memory: in today's world, what is a covenant again? In what ways is God's Covenant with men different?
  - b. What was the Old Covenant that was administered by the priests? Compare Ex. 19: 5-6; 24: 1-8.
  - c. Why did Jesus' new ministry also call for a new covenant? 8: 7-9

7. Faith and hope are key notions in Hebrews. How would you describe them? (Don't be satisfied with quoting 11: 1. Dig a bit deeper.) Why is hope called an anchor of the soul (Hebr. 6: 19) and where is it moored?
8. Each of the men and women in Chapter 11 showed faith and hope. Go round the group and let each take one character and mention:
  - the uncertain present; and
  - the certain future.

### Application

9. In 10: 19 – 25 the exhortation "Let us..." sounds five times (NIV). How could you obey this more earnestly?
10. How does your trust in Christ's return affect your daily life? Compare 9: 28.
11. How were you positively encouraged to press on, having reflected on 10: 32 – 39?
12. When you face adversities and trials, what are some of the obstacles that prevent you from believing that God might have "planned something better" (11: 40)? How can you overcome this?

## 9

## Receiving the Promise

## Hebrews 10:19 – 11:40

*The author's argument continues in this section, starting with a "therefore;" based on the fact that Christ is God's Son, Priest and sacrifice, he now exhorts his readers to live according to its implications.*

## Appetisers...

1. For Christians, is there any place for *self*-confidence?
2. In the movies, what does it take to be a hero(ine)?

## Main Course...

3. How do verses 19 – 21 summarise Chapters 7 – 10?
4. What is the confidence to enter the Sanctuary based on? Notice the link between verse 19 and 21 (even more obvious in Greek): having a) confidence (19) and b) a great priest (21). Compare vv. 34 – 35.
5. In verses 37 and 38, Habakkuk 4: 3 – 4 is cited. This OT passage is not easy. How does Paul vest it with meaning in Gal. 3: 11 and Rom. 1: 17?
6. Is it possible, for *real* Christians, to shrink back and fall away from the faith? See 10: 39; 6: 4 – 6; John 10: 27 – 28, 1 John 2: 18 – 20, and other passages to do with apostasy.

- d. What does a mediator (cf. v. 6) do in today's world?
- e. What is the New Covenant mediated by Jesus? 8: 10-12
- f. Why did Jesus' new ministry also call for a new covenant?
- g. The Old and New Covenant are *essentially* one, but they differ in terms of administration. What became obsolete (8: 13)? Think of the ceremonial framework (bloody sacrifices, etc.), the way of works of the Law (Thora) and the sphere of influence (Israel).
4. Covenant and predestination are really two sides of the same issue. What is the relation between the two? Think of how the covenant with Abraham was worked out in history and organically (cf. the 2nd Commandment: "showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me..." – Ex. 20: 4).

## Application

5. What areas of your life look like you are still 'living under the Old Covenant'? How do you intend to change this?

## 8

## The Superior Ministry (II)

Hebrews 9 – 10:18

*We continue our study on Christ's superior ministry. In Chapter 8 the author talked about the framework of God's dealings with us: the New Covenant. He then proceeds by contrasting the High Priestly ministry in the Old and the New Covenant.*

## Appetisers...

1. Many people seek the sanctuary of a part of their homes to rest, reflect or escape. Do you have a "Most Holy Place" at home? If so, what is it?
2. Using a Bible Dictionary, draw a plan of the tabernacle on a big piece of paper.

## Main Course...

3. What was the significance of each item in the Holy Place?
4. What was the significance of each item in the Most Holy Place?
5. Why were the gifts and sacrifices being offered not able to clear the conscience of the worshipper? vv. 8-10
6. How do we cleanse our consciences? v. 14. How does this take place in practice?

7. In 9: 15 the author writes about Jesus having died as a ransom. Who paid the ransom to whom?
8. What are the "heavenly things themselves," described in verse 23?
9. If the sacrifices were "merely a reminder of sins," how were the sins of those living under the Old Covenant taken away? Compare vv. 2, 3 and 11.

## To Ruminatē...

10. Thank God for Jesus' superior ministry. Be specific about the aspects of the Covenant, sanctuary and sacrifice that are new.
11. Discuss what are the *essential* elements of corporate worship. To what extent are they present in your congregation?
12. How could the things learnt in this passage prevent you from drifting away?