



8 Bible studies in

# Hebrews

(2nd 1/2)



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# *'still the greatest'*

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Last year we looked at the first 1/2 of Hebrews. And the writer was at pains to persuade his Jewish audience to stick with Jesus. He showed how Jesus was greater than angels, the high priests, even Moses! Why would you want to give up on someone who has secured for us an eternal future that the angels, the high priest and Moses were all pointing to in the first place?

In this second 1/2, it's not surprising that the writer continues to prosecute this case. He'll chew over additional profound instances where Jesus is clearly superior, how he's greater than more 'superstars' from the Old Testament and the highly esteemed institutions of the times. The writer will continue to go into a lot of this detail in order to help us to persevere and see beyond circumstances to the eternal realities of Jesus.

Most of us are not steeped in the rich Jewish culture of this writer's day. But 2000yrs later, in principle, we still face the same challenges to faith in Jesus.

The picture on the front cover of these studies is some graffiti from first century Rome where Christians were being mocked for putting their faith in Jesus. The man on the cross disparagingly has a donkey for his head with another man looking on. The text translates... 'Alexamenos worships his God.'

Many today don't reckon Jesus is that great. But Hebrews helps us to see - no he is amazing!

**"...through Jesus Christ,  
to whom be glory forever and ever.  
Amen."**

**(Hebrews 13:21)**

**Hints for these studies** – with each question, sometimes there's a follow up question or two included at the same number. This is to just help draw it out a bit more. You may get it with the first one so don't panic if you end up saying the same thing in thinking about the follow up question—so just move on. Also, don't panic if you can't quite see what a question might be driving at. These questions are not the Bible. Feel free to move onto the next one. The questions are just an attempt to help us get into the passage/issue. Let the passage drive things at the end of the day. The questions are of course still meant to be a lead in to what could be very important with what God has in front of us here. So at least think about it before moving on—it's good to dwell for a bit and often, it then becomes a little more obvious.

# greater than Melchizedek



**kick off**

What's so attractive about things that last?



**key verse**

Hebrews 7:21...  
"The Lord has sworn... You are a priest forever."



**big idea**

Only Jesus can bring true forgiveness—a forgiveness that lasts forever.

## read Hebrews 7:1-28



**investigate**

1. Why would Melchizedek be right up there in the thinking of a Jew in this writer's day? (v1-4) *See Genesis 14:17-20 to get the background.*

2. How does this writer see Melchizedek as being greater than all the priests the Jews ever had? (v5-10)

3. What's the problem with the Levite priesthood? (v11-22) Think about what keeps being emphasised here.

4. How is Jesus different to the Levite priests? (v11-22)

5. How does this writer fill out this difference? (v23-28)

6. Why does this all therefore fit with the writer's assertion that Jesus is a priest *"in the order of Melchizedek"*?



**think & apply**

7. *Read Psalm 110:1-10 where the quote in v17 comes from about Melchizedek.* Discuss how the relationship with kingship makes Jesus' priesthood so amazing and powerful. Note how it's divine kingship to boot.

8. Why is it such a massive comfort and assurance for Christians that Jesus' priesthood is *"sworn", "forever", "guaranteed"*?

9. What's going on when we start doubting our forgiveness in Jesus?

10. What kind of situations lead to this?



**prayer points**

## Pray in response to this chapter...

\* **your life**

\* **family/friends**

\* **church**

\* **our world**



**through wk**

**Hebrews 8**

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*

# greater than the old covenant



kick off

Roosevelt came up with 'the new deal' to fight the US Depression of the 30's. Why 'new'?



key **verse**

Hebrews 8:10...  
"I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts."



big **idea**

Only Jesus can give us a living, personal relationship with God.

## read Hebrews 8:1-13



investigate

1. What was the purpose of the old sanctuary/covenant, especially given it was not the "true tabernacle", set up only "by man", a "copy"? (v1-6)
2. How is Jesus' "ministry" superior to what the old covenant allowed for? (v6) *See Matthew 26:27-28.*
3. Why are they "better promises"? (v6) *See John 14:15-17, 23.*
4. What was "wrong" with the old covenant? (v7-8)
5. Think about the situation *Jeremiah* was in back in the late 6th century (check out Jeremiah if time, although there are enough clues in the quote of v8-12). How does this amply support the case in Hebrews that Jesus brings in such a better deal or covenant?
6. How does the reference to the old covenant as "obsolete" help us see what's going on here, that it's not like God made a mistake with the old covenant? (v13)
7. Would Old Testament believers prefer to live now rather than under the old covenant?
8. Think about how Jesus made it possible for God's law to be "(written) on (our) hearts" (v 10). How special does that make this relationship we can have with God?
9. How does God's law in our hearts make it easier for us? How does it make it harder?
10. Share how having God's 24/7 presence through the new covenant makes such a difference in your every day living? When is this most precious?



think & apply

## Pray in response to this chapter...

\* your life

\* family/friends

\* church

\* our world



through wk

Hebrews 9

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*



prayer points

# greater than any sacrifice



**kick off**

What kind of tasks annoy you that never seem to end?



**key verse**

Hebrews 9:28... "...Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many..."



**big idea**

Jesus' sacrifice wonderfully fulfils what the Old Testament was always longing for.

## read Hebrews 9:1-28



**investigate**

1. What was the point of the elaborate Old Testament tabernacle/temple or "*earthly sanctuary*"? What went on there? (v1-5) The keen can scan *Exodus 25-31* for the finer details.

2. What were it's obvious limitations? (v 6-10)

3. How is Jesus' sacrifice so much better? (v11-14)

4. What are the amazing benefits that flow from this? (v15)

5. Why is this writer so careful to explain the need for the sacrifice of blood? (v16-22)

6. Why does he kind of go over again the superiority of Jesus' sacrifice? (v23-28)



**think & apply**

7. Did the Old Testament sacrifices actually take away sin? How were they forgiven? *See Romans 4:1-8 and compare Galatians 3:6-9.*

8. Is it all just too 'bloody'? What does this tell us about the gravity of our sin?

9. How does all of this explain why we have communion tables rather than altars in reformed Churches—symbolic communion meals rather than sacrifices as in the Roman Catholic Church?

10. What would you say to someone who says there is no judgment to worry about? What about the opposite—someone very concerned about how they can be right with God, worried about whether they really can be OK?



**prayer points**

## Pray in response to this chapter...

\* **your life**

\* **family/friends**

\* **church**

\* **our world**



**through wk**

**Hebrews 10**

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*

# greater than giving up



**kick off**

Share an example of when you gave up on something you used to do a lot. Why?



**key verse**

Hebrews 10:23... "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful."



**big idea**

We've just got to stick with Jesus, taking practical steps in this.

## read Hebrews 10:1-18



**investigate**

1. Does this all sound quite familiar? What's the ongoing problem of the old sacrificial system? (v1-4)
2. How does the Psalm quoted by the writer (Psalm 40:6-8) confirm both the problem and the solution? (v5-10) *Reading the whole Psalm helps reinforce the point, especially v1-3.*
3. Again, does it sound quite familiar? How does Jesus' sacrifice wonderfully, literally dwarf the old sacrifices? (v11-18)



**think & apply**

4. Why do you think this writer is going over again this old 'new' territory here?
5. Why is it so critical for the cross (Jesus' once for all sacrifice) to always be the foundation for the Christian faith?

## read Hebrews 10:19-39



**investigate**

6. How does all this good news or 'Gospel' about Jesus demand a response? (v 19-25)
7. How does this writer reveal why he's been so careful to point out how great Jesus is? (v26-31)
8. What about their personal experience of Jesus? How does that also back up the case for Jesus? (v32-39)



**think & apply**

9. Why are Christians and Churches tempted to water down the central place of the cross? What are they forsaking?
10. How should Church be vitally important in helping us to stick with Jesus?



**prayer points**

### Pray in response to this chapter...

\* your life

\* family/friends

\* church

\* our world



**through wk**

**Hebrews 11**

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## greater than sight



kick off

Discuss the various ideas out there about what faith might be.



key verse

Hebrews 11:1... "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."



big idea

God calls us to trust Him for His gracious plan of salvation to be completed.

## read Hebrews 11:1-40



investigate

1. Of these many examples of faith, which one is your favourite or stands out? Why?
2. Are there any surprises in who makes the cut? (eg Jacob? Samson? Maybe them all?)
3. How do these people demonstrate Biblical faith? (v1) Maybe explain one of the examples—what or who fed their faith for what they were yet to experience?
4. How could Moses "*(regard) disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt*" (v26) when he was living about 1500yrs before Jesus arrived?
5. Did they all receive or 'win' the battles of faith within their lifetimes? (v32-38, noting the contrasts, for eg between v34 and v35)?
6. How is it that this writer can conclude that "*none of them received what had been promised*"? (v39-40)
7. Can you think of modern day examples of the kind of faith talked about here? What's so encouraging about these?
8. What do we need to be careful of when admiring the faith of others? Think about the shortfalls of all who made the 'A list' - who really made the difference (*see Psalm 71:7*).
9. The mega band U2 sang 'I still haven't found what I'm looking for'. Any truth to that?
10. This writer used examples of faith that would resonate with his very Jewish or Hebrew audience, so they might stick with Jesus. What kind of examples could we use today to resonate with our Australian audience?



think &amp; apply



prayer points

## Pray in response to this chapter...

\* your life

\* family/friends

\* church

\* our world



through wk

Hebrews 12  
(v1-13)

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*

# greater than giving up



**kick off**

Ever run in a long-distance race? How did you go?



**key verse**

Hebrews 12:1-2... "Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus"."



**big idea**

Following Jesus is a long, hard, race. It's critical that we don't fail to finish!

## read Hebrews 12:1-2



**investigate**

1. Who are the 'great cloud of witnesses', and what have they done? (v 1, cf. last week's study on Hebrews 11)
2. On whom should we fix our eyes, and what has he done? (v 2)
3. What two things do we need to throw off? (v 1)



**think & apply**

4. How might you use those who've finished the race before you as motivation? What can you do to make sure your eyes are fixed on Jesus? What can you do to actively get rid of everything that is holding you back?

## read Hebrews 12:3-13



**investigate**

5. Who is it who has faced the same challenges we have from external forces of sin? (v 3)
6. How does God use the sin we struggle against for good? (v 10-11)



**think & apply**

7. Given the author's words in Hebrews 12:3-13, just how hard do you think the Christian life is? Why is it worth enduring?

## read Hebrews 12:14-17



**investigate**

8. What's our responsibility to each other in this race? (v 14)
9. Check out Deuteronomy 29:16-19. What is the 'bitter root'? If we let the bitter root grow up among us at church, what are jeopardising?
10. What will you do to make sure no one at church trades crossing the finishing line with something as trivial as a bowl of stew, like Esau did?



**prayer points**

## Pray in response to this chapter...

\* **your life**

\* **family/friends**

\* **church**

\* **our world**



**through wk**

**Hebrews 12:18-29**

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*

# greater than Sinai



**kick off**

What things seem most impressive in life?



**key verse**

*Hebrews 12:28... "Worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire."*



**big idea**

Some things in life seem awfully impressive, but they pale in comparison with the city of the living God!

**read Hebrews 12:18-21**



**investigate**

1. Compare these verses to Exodus 19: 1-23. Which mountain is the writer of Hebrews referring to, and what happened there? How do you think this rates in impressive moments of Israel's history?

2. What was the experience of standing before Mount Sinai like for the Israelites? (v 19-21)



**think & apply**

3. When are you impressed by things that appear much more spectacular than Jesus?

**read Hebrews 12:22-24**



**investigate**

4. Have a look at the words that describe Mount Zion. (v 22-23) How do they compare with the words used to describe Mount Sinai?

5. Who is responsible for this difference?



**think & apply**

6. Just how impressive is Jesus, the king on Mount Zion?

7. When you gather with other at church, do you view it the way it's described in these verses?

**read Hebrews 12:25-29**



**investigate**

8. Check out Numbers 14:120-23. What is Hebrews 12:25 referring to?

9. When God again shakes the heavens and earth, what will remain?



**think & apply**

10. If we know that our God is 'a consuming fire', how will it change the way we approach life?



**prayer points**

**Pray in response to this chapter...**

**\* your life**

**\* family/friends**

**\* church**

**\* our world**



**through wk**

**Hebrews 13**

\* \* \* Ordinary people following an extraordinary God \* \* \*

# greater worship



**kick off**

When you hear the word 'worship', what do you think of?



**key verse**

*Hebrews 12:16... "Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."*



**big idea**

Worship is a whole-life attitude, of sticking with Jesus in word and action, and helping others do the same.

## read Hebrews 12:28-13:18



**investigate**

1. Chapter 13 outlines just what acceptable worship is (mentioned in 12:28-29). List all the ways the writer of Hebrews commands us to worship God (hopefully you can find at least seven in verses 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5-6, and 7-17).



**think & apply**

2. How can you better love people at church as brothers and sisters?

3. What is hospitality? What is it not? How can better you show hospitality?

4. How can you better remember those less fortunate than you?

5. How can you better honour marriage?

6. How can you better keep your life free from the love of money?

7. Is loving money (and yourself) compatible with loving others at church? How can you better be content with the steadfast love of God? Could God ever hold anything back from us when he's already given us his only son?

8. Why should you imitate and obey your leaders? (v 7-8) What do we risk if we don't obey our leaders? (v 9)

## read Hebrews 20-25



**investigate**

9. What do all these commands have in common? (Hint: Think about the main message of Hebrews!) Does keeping, or net keeping, these commands affect only us, or others also? How are we able to keep these commands? (v 20-21, 25)



**think & apply**

10. How serious are the consequences for us as individuals and as a church if we fail to do these things?



**prayer points**

## Pray in response to this chapter...

**\* your life**

**\* family/friends**

**\* church**

**\* our world**



**through wk**



**Review the section that most spoke to you.**

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