

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?

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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?

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?
 - b. What did God “declare”?
 - c. What promises did God make?

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?”
 - b. How will this affect the way we read the Old Testament?

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

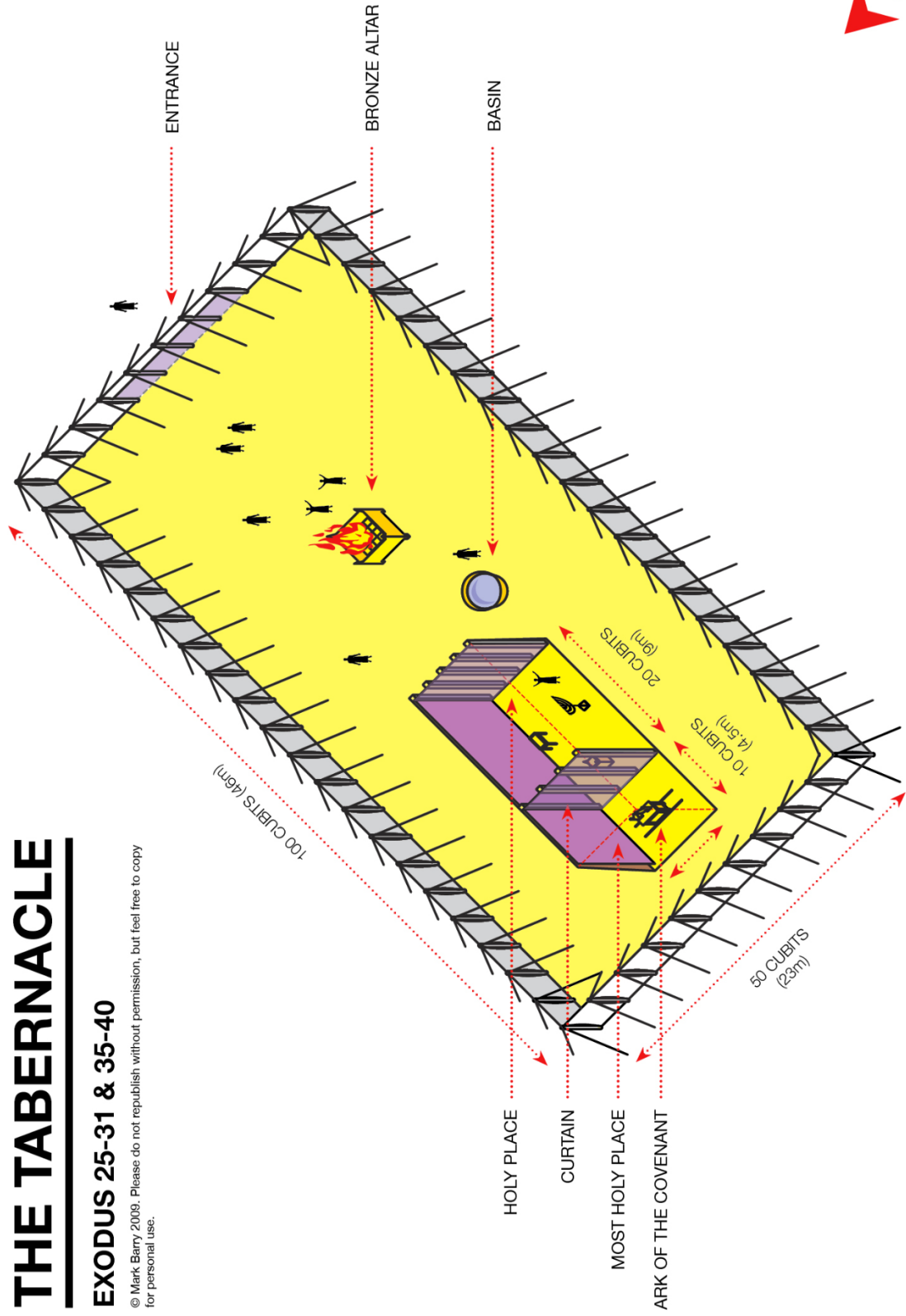
Read Hebrews 9:6-10

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

THE TABERNACLE

EXODUS 25-31 & 35-40

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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?
 - b. Where did he go?
 - c. What did he sacrifice?
 - d. Why has he done it?

Read Hebrews 9:16-28

5. What has Jesus established?
6. How is a “will” related to the idea of “covenant”?
What makes our eternal salvation certain?
7. When Jesus returns, where will he take “those who are waiting for him”?

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?

3. Use vv. 1b-4 to answer the following:
 - a. What could the law not do?

 - b. What did the law do?

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)?

 - b. What is the result of Jesus fulfilling these words (v. 10)?

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?

 - b. What is different about their posture?

6. How can we be sure that Jesus' death genuinely achieved us being made perfect (or holy) in God's sight? (vv. 15-18)

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?

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

1. 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

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

	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?

 - b. vv. 32-35: What is the encouragement? What is the basis?

 - c. vv. 36-39: What is the exhortation? What is the basis?

4. How do you think the exhortations of vv. 19-25 address these three particular concerns?

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?