



Hebrews 8 : *Old and New*

It can be difficult to imagine ourselves into the world of the first recipients of Hebrews. Try to think: why would Jewish Christians be tempted to go back into Judaism? Apart from the negative factors - persecution, social isolation - what positive things might draw them back?

It is hard to understand the force of this chapter unless you get something of the love which the Jewish Christians would have had for the 'old' covenant...

Earthly vs. Heavenly - vv1-6

What sort of High Priest did we need? (Look back to 7:26-28).

How should we feel about the fact that our High Priest serves in heaven? How is that better for us than an earthly priesthood?

If you want to press into this: How do these verses help us with reading the Old Testament?

Old vs. New - vv7-13

What was the problem with the Old Covenant?

This would be a good point to check that everyone knows what the 'old covenant' is - the pact which God entered into with Israel at Mount Sinai, when they received the Law and God promised to bring them into the promised land.

What changes with the New Covenant - and how? Start in these verses, and bring in wider Bible knowledge if possible.

How does Jesus guarantee this New Covenant - as 7:22 says he does?

Do you feel that God has written his laws on your heart? What do you think should be the response when we feel more like unfaithful Israel than 'new covenant' people?

Thoughts for Junior Church

There is going to be a lot of Tabernacle stuff in coming weeks, so I would recommend focusing on the New Covenant from vv7-13. This is potentially a bit abstract - but children will understand what it means for two people to make an agreement. Maybe go back to Exodus - think about what God had done for the people, and how they treated him (e.g. the golden calf!)

You could have two pieces of paper - one headed 'I will be your God' and the other headed 'You will be my people'. Get the children to think about what is involved on each side - maybe write them on

the pieces of paper. What will God do for his people? What are the people to do in faithfulness to God? Then you can illustrate the people's unfaithfulness by screwing up their piece of paper...

The key point to get across is that Jesus lets us start again, because he is perfectly faithful to God (maybe replace the screwed up piece of paper with a piece describing Jesus) and because he changes us so that we can love God's ways.