



# Knowing what the Hebrews knew

Old Testament background for Hebrews 13:1-25



## A good reason to be strong and courageous

Moses led Israel to the edge of the promised land, but the LORD told him that he would not lead Israel into it (Numbers 20:1-13). Shortly before his death, Moses gave an encouraging message to the nation and to their new leader Joshua as they faced the potentially daunting prospect of facing their enemies in the new land.



Read Deuteronomy 31:1-8 for Moses' message, and Joshua 1:1-9 for the LORD's follow-up message to Joshua after Moses' death (notice all of the things that Moses says the LORD is going to do in the coming conquest). *The phrase repeated at the end of Deuteronomy 31:6, 8 and Joshua 1:5 is quoted in Hebrews 13:5.*



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Read Psalm 118, where the writer thanks and praises God for deliverance from enemies. *Verse 6 is quoted in Hebrews 13:6.*

## Eating from the altar

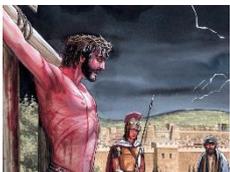
In the Law of Moses, the priests were generally allowed to eat some of the food that had been brought to the Tabernacle as a sacrifice or offering (1 Corinthians 9:13). However there were rules about how this was to be done, and in some cases it was not allowed (eg see "Outside the camp", below).



Read Leviticus 2:10; 6:16,18,26,29; 7:9; Deuteronomy 18:1 for some references in the Law of Moses to the priests' right to eat from the altar. *In Hebrews 13:10 the author points out a contrast to this.*

## Outside the camp

Most of the action on the Day of Atonement happened in the Tabernacle area (see the *Faith that He brews 7* hand-out). However the instructions for dealing with the sin offerings involved leaving the camp completely.



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Read Leviticus 16 for a description of the Day of Atonement, including the sin offerings. *The actions described in verses 14, 15 and 27 are referred to in Hebrews 13:11. The author goes on to draw parallels with Jesus on the cross (in Hebrews 13:12) and us following Him (in Hebrews 13:13).*

## The great Shepherd

When Jesus called Himself the "good shepherd" (John 10:11,14), He wasn't coming up with a completely new biblical idea. He was referring to a way that God had already described Himself in the Scriptures – a way with which the people of Israel (such as the Hebrews receiving this preach-letter) would have been familiar.



Read Psalm 23, Isaiah 40:9-11 and Ezekiel 34:11-16 for wonderful descriptions of God as our Shepherd. *Jesus is referred to as "the great Shepherd of the sheep" in Hebrews 13:20.*



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# Engaging with the message

Questions & answers for Hebrews 13:1-25



## Hot spots

- 1) What's alive for you in this passage? (Things that stand out, "aha" moments, questions you have, etc)



## Digging into the passage

- 2) Using the tables below, make lists of who the Hebrews are urged to bless in this passage, and how they are urged to bless those people. (Note: think of "blessing" as doing good to someone.)

Who to bless	How to bless them

Who to bless	How to bless them

- 3) According to the author, what are the key differences between following Jesus Christ and following "strange, new ideas" (verse 9) or rules-based religious groups (also verse 9)?



## Connecting life and faith

- 4) If you can, describe a time when you showed hospitality to a stranger OR a stranger showed hospitality to you.
- 5) How can we guard against the dangers of sexual immorality, love of money and addiction to stuff?
- 6) What can we do to give our spiritual leaders reason to watch over us "with joy and not with sorrow"?
- 7) Find a persecution situation to pray about. [www.opendoors.org.nz/get-involved/pray/](http://www.opendoors.org.nz/get-involved/pray/) is one web page that will give you this sort of information (scroll down to the place on the screen where it says "Requests from the field"). Pray now for this situation and then again in your brew time, together.



## Faith: the ongoing brew

- 8) What is one key thing you will take from this journey through the whole preach-letter of Hebrews?
- 9) Pray the prayer of Hebrews 13:20-21 for each other.