

Hebrews *Moving Forwards*

4. Before and After *Hebrews 8.6-9.14*

Aim of the study: To help people understand the significance of the new covenant we live under, whilst not losing sight of the Old Covenant and its importance in God's salvation plan.

To start with:

- How do you feel about 'make-over' programmes on TV? Do you have a favourite? If so, which and why?
- Why do you think, as a nation, we are so fascinated with 'transforming' things and people?

Engaging the text:

- When you hear 'Old Testament' or 'Old Covenant', what words spring to mind? Are they positive or negative ideas, and why?
 - What do you understand a 'Covenant' to be?
- Read Exodus 34.10.**

 - How does God describe the 'Old' Covenant he made with Israel?

Background info: This section of Hebrews lays out the contrast between the Old and New Covenants. This passage contains a long prophecy from Jeremiah 31 about the arrival of the New Covenant and the replacing of the Old, followed by a description of the old 'model' of atonement as compared with the new.

Now Read Hebrews 8.6-13.

- What is God finding 'fault' with and what does this say about the Old Covenant?
- How will the New Covenant be different?
- How do you make sense of God apparently 'changing his mind' like this?

3. *Read Hebrews 9.1-14 round the group.*

- What does this passage say the Old Covenant and New Covenant are for?
- Why do you think that remembering the Old Covenant is still important, even if it is 'obsolete' and 'passing away'? (What would we lose if we deleted the Old Testament and Covenant from our scriptures and faith?)

Application:

- Given that we live under the New Covenant - what would you say are the benefits for us? (In addition to being able to eat lobster and bacon!)
- How might remembering these things affect the way we:
 - Live out our faith day to day?
 - Share our faith with others?
 - Respond and relate to God?

