

Making much of Jesus

present-day lessons from the letter to the Hebrews

Although written to Jews who had trusted in Jesus, and although drawing regularly on Old Testament references, the letter to the Hebrews has a very pressing contemporary significance.

This series of studies is intended to stir in our hearts both a deepening delight and a growing confidence in all that Jesus is and has done, imparting to us the fortitude and strength we need to serve Him faithfully in today's world.

You can find the background to this short series [here](#).

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2. So great a salvation (Hebrews 1.4-2.4)

[w/b Sunday 8th September 2019]

“.. pay the most careful attention ..”

Peter O'Brien (*“The Letter to the Hebrews”*) describes the letter to the Hebrews as ‘a word of exhortation’: this passage sees the writer spell out the first of a number of such exhortations.

Put negatively, we’re not to ignore, neglect or downplay the significance of the message of Jesus, and thereby ‘drift away’: more positively, we’re to ‘pay the most careful attention .. to what we have heard’. The writer explains why!

[Before attending a Community Group try on your own to consider all 7 questions - even though your Group may concentrate on just some of them: having given thought to questions 1-3 will better inform discussion of the other questions. Key questions in this study are probably 4, 6 and 7. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. Read Hebrews 1.4-2.4. Talk of angels and the bombardment of quotations from the Old Testament in 1.5-13 can be off-putting! But the writer’s main point is simply stated in 2.1.

How would you summarise the point which the writer is making in this passage?

Why might Christians (generally) and you (in particular) need this message today?

2. Read Hebrews 1.1-7. The reason why we need to pay careful attention to the message has everything to do with the One who has delivered this message to us.

Angels are mere servants, whereas Jesus is God's Son: how does that awareness affect *you* as you hear the message?

Read **Matt.21.33-46**: in what ways does this parable of Jesus make a similar point?

3. Read Hebrews 1.8-14. The contrast between Jesus and the angels is continued, underlining the same point - the higher-ranking the messenger the more important the message.

What striking truths about Jesus does the writer highlight in vv.8-9 by quoting the words of Ps.45.6-7 as God's own statement about His Son?

In what ways does the quotation from Psalm 102.25-27 in vv.10-12 add to your understanding of who Jesus is?

4. **Read Hebrews 2.1.** Having stressed the significance of the One through whom the message has been brought, the writer spells out the implications: we must pay very careful attention!

In what ways are we likely, as followers of Jesus, to 'drift away'?

How does hearing the Word help *you* to hold fast to the faith?

5. **Read Hebrews 2.2.** The '*message spoken through angels*' is a reference to the Law (see Acts 7.38, 53) which God gave in grace as the path of *life*: embracing it brought blessing, rejection death.

Read Acts 7.38: what did Stephen mean by referring to the Law as '*living words*'?

How can a delight in the Law of God go hand in hand with a declaration of the grace of God?

6. **Read Hebrews 2.3.** The message of salvation which we have now received through Jesus is more significant by far than the 'living words' which Moses brought to Israel.

In the light of what the writer has already said (Heb.1.1-3) what constitutes this great salvation?

According to the writer why is our ignoring or neglecting the message of salvation in Jesus so serious a matter?

7. Read Hebrews 2.3-4. The writer concludes this first exhortation of the letter by highlighting again the essential nature of the message which we have received.

In what ways does the writer bring out the *importance* of this message of salvation?

Have you been in any way ignoring or neglecting this message of salvation - and if so what action does reflecting on this passage prompt you to take?