

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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8. Encouragement (Heb.6.13-20)

[w/b Sunday 20th October 2019]

“.. so that .. we .. may be greatly encouraged ..”

The writer's pastoral concern for his readers is in evidence here again. He recognizes that what he's just been writing (5.11-6.12) could be taken as meaning that everything hinges on our hold on God: the converse is the case, of course - it's *His* hold on us which is the critical thing.

In the passage before us in this study, therefore, the writer's concern is to encourage his readers by reminding them of the certainty of God's promise, the commitment He makes to us.

[Before attending your Community Group try to consider all 7 questions - even though your Group may not have time for them all. 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 6.13-20. It's always helpful to read and reflect on the passage as a whole before looking at it in more detail - try to get some sense of what the writer is aiming to communicate.

What would you say was the writer's intent and hope in writing this passage of the letter?

What impact do these verses have on yourself?

2. **Read Hebrews 6.13.** The readers of this letter were clearly 'wavering' in their faith in Jesus: the writer, therefore, reminds them that at the heart of the gospel is the promise of God.

Read **Gen.11.27-12.4:** Why do you think God promised Abram something which was humanly out of the question?

Read **Josh.23.14:** How do these words from Joshua encourage you? What promises of God are applicable to you?

3. **Read Hebrews 6.13-14.** The writer now reminds his readers of the substance of the promise made to Abraham - and explains how God 'reinforced' it by swearing to the truth of it.

The specific reference here is to **Gen.22.15-18:** why does this promise to a man so long ago have such relevance for ourselves?

What is the significance of God swearing by Himself?

4. **Read Hebrews 6.15.** Having spoken of God's making this promise to Abraham, the writer now speaks of the way in which Abraham eventually 'received what was promised'.

Why do you think Abraham had to wait so long for the fulfillment of the promise made to him?

What lesson would the writer have meant his readers to learn from this?

How do you square what the writer says here with what he will later say in Heb.11.13 ("*.. they did not receive the things promised ..*")?

5. **Read Hebrews 6.16-17.** The nature of promises generally - along with the rationale behind people swearing to a statement they are making - is now explained by the writer.

What does the writer say God had in view in swearing by Himself?

How would you describe God's 'purpose', whose nature the writer underlines is 'unchanging' (v.17)?

6. Read Hebrews 6.18. Having established the principle, the writer now draws the inevitable conclusion from it with reference to what God has done.

What are the “*two unchangeable things*” to which the writer refers?

The writer anticipates that reflecting on this will leave us ‘greatly encouraged’: why?

How does it encourage you - and how does that affect the way you live?

7. Read Hebrews 6.19-20. The writer rounds off this passage by applying what he’s been writing to his readers and giving them the assurance they need in the face of the trials they face.

What does the writer mean to impress on his readers by using the picture of an anchor?

In what ways (if any!) does the study of this passage leave you more ‘secure’?