

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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10. Freedom! (Heb.9.1-28)

[w/b Sunday 3rd November 2019]

“.. Christ is the mediator of a new covenant ..”

The work of any priest involved him essentially ‘mediating a covenant’ - a ‘covenant’ being the particular way in which God chooses to relate to and engage with His people.

Having in the previous couple of chapters explained that the priesthood of Jesus is not the Levitical priesthood, but ‘in the order of Melchizedek’, the writer now goes on to expound the (new) covenant He mediates, and to explain why it’s better.

[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 2, 3 and 5. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. Read Hebrews 9.1-28. Reading through the whole passage will give you a feel for what the writer is on about: the writer is contrasting the new ‘version’ of God’s covenant with the old.

How would you summarise the message of this chapter?

What stands out for you as you read the whole passage?

2. **Read Hebrews 9.1-7.** These verses set the scene, by describing the basics of the way the original version of God's covenant with His people functioned.

Don't be too pre-occupied with the details, but consider rather - what were these 'regulations for worship' (v.1) intended to underline for the people of Israel?

What were the 'limitations' of that 'first covenant' to which the writer draws attention in v.7? (*There are at least 4 - see if you can find them all!*)

3. **Read Hebrews 9.8-10.** The writer now reminds his readers that the regulations involved in the 'first covenant' were never meant as anything more than a pointer to the real thing.

In what sense were the 'first covenant regulations' '*an illustration for the present time*'?

What does the writer pinpoint as the 'inadequacies' of the way the original version of the covenant?

4. Read Hebrews 9.11-14. In these verses the writer starts to show how all the 'deficiencies' of the 'prototype' are completely resolved in and through the ministry of Jesus.

In what respects is the priesthood of Jesus shown by the writer to be such an improvement on the 'first covenant'?

What difference does it make to you when you have a clean conscience?

5. Read Hebrews 9.15. This is a summary verse, in which the writer pulls together all that he's been saying in the chapter thus far, and applies it to his readers.

What is meant by '*the promised eternal inheritance*' which is secured by the 'new covenant'?

What has been your experience of being 'set free' by Jesus?

6. Read Hebrews 9.16-22. The reference to Jesus' death 'as a ransom' in v.15 prompts the writer to explain why a death was necessary for the efficacy of the covenant.

What did Moses mean when he spoke about 'the blood of the covenant'?

Why is it the case that '*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness*'?

7. Read Hebrews 9.23-28. In these verses the writer concludes the point he's been making, underlining the 'once-for-all' nature of Christ's saving work (see vv.26-28 esp.).

From what you read in these verses, what are the main ways in which the work of Jesus differs from, and is superior to, the earlier 'prototypes'?

What do you think is encompassed by the 'salvation' which Jesus will bring when He appears a second time (v.28)?