SNAP-SHOT OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

***- Re-focusing on the greatness of the Lord Jesus***

**1 v 2 God has spoken… through his Son**

 **2 v 1 So we must pay as close attention as possible**

These Jewish Christians were beginning to drift (eg 2:1; 10:25), and as a result were becoming isolated from church. Clearly life is hard for them, with much opposition **1**. Despite strenuous faithfulness to the Lord in the past (5:12; 10:32-34) they had become tired, exhausted even (10:35-39; 12:1-13), and so it was becoming easy to ‘down tools’ (6:12) and switch off, and opt for the easy life. So much so they were danger of missing out on heaven (2:3; 3:7­4:11).

Drifting / falling asleep as Christians is so easily done! This leads to lacking in spiritual nourishment, which in turn can lead to a hard-heartedness (3:12-15; 12:25).

But the writer **2** clearly knows them and loves them (5:11­6:3, 6:9­12, 10:32­39, 12:4­13), and so exhorts them to turn back. He urges them to be anchored to the solid unmovable rock that is Jesus, who is the same yesterday today and forever (13:8). He writes this letter/sermon/exhortation (13:22) to comfort and encourage them to “fix their eyes on Jesus - the champion, pioneer, author, perfector of their faith” (12:2). In sum, he wants them to once again “consider Christ” (12:3).

So, the writer systematically shines the spotlight on Jesus, his person and work. And to support his teaching he includes exposition of key Old Testament texts, applying it to the readers' situation (eg Psalm 8:2­6 in Heb.2:5­18; Psalm 95:7­11 in Heb.3:7­12ff etc.). It is as exhilarating as it is precious.

Why not read through the book and write down encouragements and questions as we launch into this series. And let us pray that “we see Jesus” (2:9).

***Please see a Structure to the book on p.2 (scroll down)***

If you would like a more extensive overview of Hebrews please see the separate document “Hebrews Overview” [under ‘Resources - Latest News’]

**1**  Hebrews is probably written in the late 60s when persecution is beginning to hot up. EG Emperor Claudius Expelled Jewish Christians from Rome in AD49 (Which is why Aquila and Priscilla had left (Acts 18:1-2). By AD64 (after the great fire in Rome), under Emperor Nero, martyrdom had become an aspect of the Christian experience – mainly in Rome The date is interesting because the author talks about the temple in the present tense (it was destroyed in AD70 by Rome) So as this is written it's probable that the temple sacrifices and so on are still going on.

**2** Down the centuries many authors have been suggested by scholars EG Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, Luke, Phoebe….

 the list goes on. But we simply don't know who wrote Hebrews

Structure of Hebrews

 **Truth**  **Application**

 [look at Jesus!]

1 v 1-14 **Jesus, the Divine Son**

 key verse: v.8 he is the God who reigns for ever

 **2:1-4 Pay attention to THIS Jesus**

2 v 5-18 **Jesus, the True Man**

 key verse: v.11 he understands and loves us

 **3:7 - 4:13 ‘Hear’ his powerful word**

4 v 14 – 7 v 28 **Jesus as High Priest**

 4:14-16 He is our Great High Priest through whom we approach the God of grace

 **Bookends 5:11 – 6:12 Do not bin His book**

 **Key verses 5:11 & 6:12**

 7:25 He eternally intercedes (prays) for us

8 v 1 - 10 v 18 **Jesus as Sacrifice**

 key verses: 10:12-14 He is our Priest who has shed his own blood for us

 **10:19-39 keep fellowshipping**

 **Key verses 10:23-25**

11:1 - 13: 25 The implications of the exhortation [Warnings and encouragements]

 - practical application for Christ-focused living

11 v 1-40 **Our Unseen Future - run to it!**

12v 18-25 **Our Unseen God - the present [we can approach him today ]**