

Notes for Study Group Leaders - Hebrews Chapter 1

1 God Speaks:

In the Old Testament:

Who did God speak to? (Patriarchs, Prophets, Priests, Judges, Leaders)

How did God speak to them? (Phenomena, visions, dreams, events, angelic visitations, scripture etc.)

For us in the Church Age:

Who does God speak to? (just all believers or all men and women? - discuss)

How does God speak to them? (scripture, prayer, circumstances, church, and the O.T. list above)

What is the difference between our situation and the O.T. situation?

What are the practical consequences of the above facts for our spiritual life - corporate and personal?

2 The Nature, Qualities and Achievements of Jesus:

Verses 2 to 4 tell us seven things about Jesus what are they? What do they mean?

- He is the heir of all things.
- He was the agent for the creation of all things.
- He is the revelation of God's glory.
- He is the exact representation of God - like the imprint of a stamp.
- He carries along all of creation, holding it in existence moment by moment moving it towards its goal.
- He has obtained purification for our sins - there is now only one kind of sin, forgiven sin. This forgiveness just has to be appropriated by faith.
- He is seated in Heaven in a position of honour.

Is our personal and corporate worship of Christ a true reflection of his nature and a proper response to it?

If Christ holds creation in existence moment by moment (the idea behind the Greek word used is also of "carrying along towards a goal"), what does this mean for Christ's intimate involvement in the detail of our lives? Of our churches? Of our communities?

In our thinking do we comprehend the level of Christ's intimate involvement with us? Each of our heartbeats comes to us as an intentional gift from the hand of Christ.

Do our worship and prayer properly reflect our comprehension of this level of involvement of Christ in his creation, his Church, his disciples?

What should be the consequences of a proper understanding of this theology - for faith, for life?

3 Challenging Our Worldview:

Hebrews presents to us a view of reality where the physical world that we can see and touch, exists with a deeper, spiritual realm beneath it. In fact in the Bible, it is the spiritual world that is the 'real' and the physical that is the 'shadow' world. This spiritual realm is inhabited by angels and spiritual forces whose actions directly and continually impact the physical world.

One commentator states that angels have disappeared from the consciousness of Western man because they 'no longer have any job to do'. Most phenomena can now be explained without recourse to the spiritual realm. Healing / disease, good weather / natural disasters, good harvests / failed crops used to be explained by man in relation to the activity of spiritual forces. Now our scientific rationalist worldview can now explain the mechanisms behind many of these events.

How does our understanding of these mechanisms relate to the activity of spiritual forces presented to us in Scripture? What are the implications for discernment?

How do we maintain a balance between the two extremes of 'seeing a demon under every cornflake' and a 'functional disbelief' in the spiritual realm?

The biblical picture is one where the membrane separating the spiritual and the physical worlds is thin and permeable. We as Christians can therefore have an influence on the spiritual world by our prayers and actions, an influence which in turn impacts the physical world. What Scriptures can you think of which support this statement?

(Ezekiel 22:30, Matthew 18:18, Ephesians 6:12, James 5:16 etc.)

What impact should this understanding of reality have on;

our understanding of events in our lives / church?
our prayer-life?
our discipleship?