

Book in a Day: Hebrews

Consider Jesus

He's Greater!

Timetable

9:00-9:30	Coffee
9:30-10:45	Overall Purpose & Strategy: Consider Jesus, he's Greater!
10:45-11:15	Break
11:15-12:30	Consider Christ (a): The Son Enthroned @God's right hand: Greater Speaker
12:30-13:45	Lunch
13:45-15:00	Consider Christ (b): The Son Appointed @God's right Hand: Eternal Priest
15:00-15:20	Break
15:20-16:30	Consider Christ (c): The Son Guarantor @God's right Hand: New Covenant

Heb. 1: Overall Purpose & Strategy – Consider Jesus, he's Greater!

➔ *Is Hebrews really worth teaching to gentile-majority Scottish churches?*

Hello! Quick survey: how familiar are we with Hebrews?

My experience with Hebrews:

Our church's experience with Hebrews:

Session 1 Plan:

Hebrews: a) Why teach it? b) What is its overall Purpose? c) What is its Strategy?

1. Why Teach Hebrews?

It might seem daunting....

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)

...but it is absolutely BRILLIANT!!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

But let's not just be expository magpies... what is it ALL about & for?

2. Discerning the PURPOSE of Hebrews: what is it all FOR?

Situation on the ground

Read 10:32-36. What do we learn about this church's specific situation?

Previously?

Now?

Pastoral concerns of the author (seen in key commands/warnings):

Find the exhortations in...

- a) 2:1-4
- b) 3:12-15 & 4:11
- c) 5:11-6:1 & 6:9-12
- d) 10:35-39
- e) 12:1-3 & 12:12-17
- f) 12:25-13:16

Theological situation in these last days (3:6-4:11, picking up & applying Psalm 95)



"...you have need of " (10:36)

The RELEVANCE Q: what if our churches aren't tempted to turn back to Judaism?!?!)

NB. What were the pressure points that made it tempting to?

- Carrot: The appeal of the old covenant? Are we ever tempted by equivalent pulls?
- Stick: The pressure of societal context? Are we ever pressured by similar forces?

NB. How might failing to endure look? e.g. Step back from active public allegiance to unique Christ (3:6, 4:14, 10:23-25, 13:13-16) to more culturally-acceptable religious form

3. Discerning the STRATEGY of Hebrews: what is it all ABOUT?

Discuss: In 2s/3s...

a) first, for 2 mins: is there any particular focus to the theology of this book? Main topic?

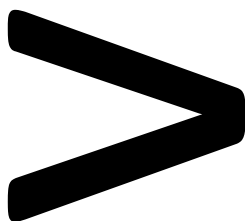
b) then, read 3:1-6 & 12:1-3: What is the key strategy here to help us to keep going?

Considerfor you have need of endurance

Q: From Hebrews: what about Jesus are we supposed to focus on/consider/look to?

NB. Importance of *comparisons*.... 'MORE' [x7], 'BETTER' [x10], 'GREATER' [x2]
[not just "great", or "best", or "greatest" – why?]

Consider Jesus, he's GREATER
...for you've need of endurance



Q: Greater than what?

Consider Jesus, he's greater than what came before

The RELEVANCE Q revisited: but we are not tempted by Levitical priests & temples!!

Q: Greater how, in what sense?

Discuss: In 2s/3s...

a) read Heb 1:1-2. What comparison is drawn and in what way is Jesus greater?

b) read Heb 3:1-6 again. What comparison is drawn and in what way is Jesus greater?

The S

vs

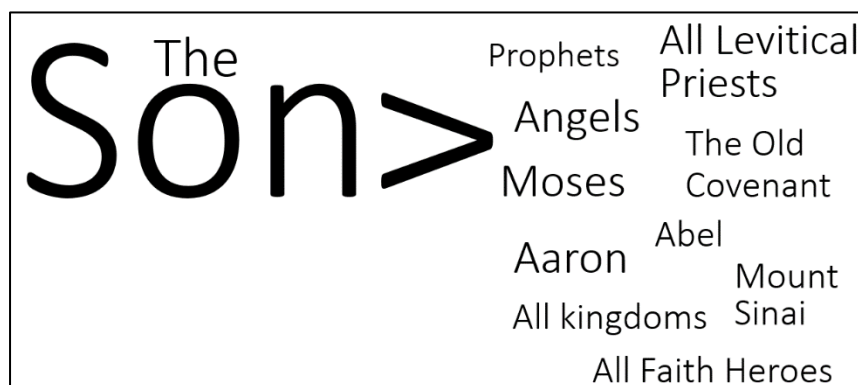
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Consider Jesus, **the Son**, he's greater than what came before.



...for you
have need
of endurance

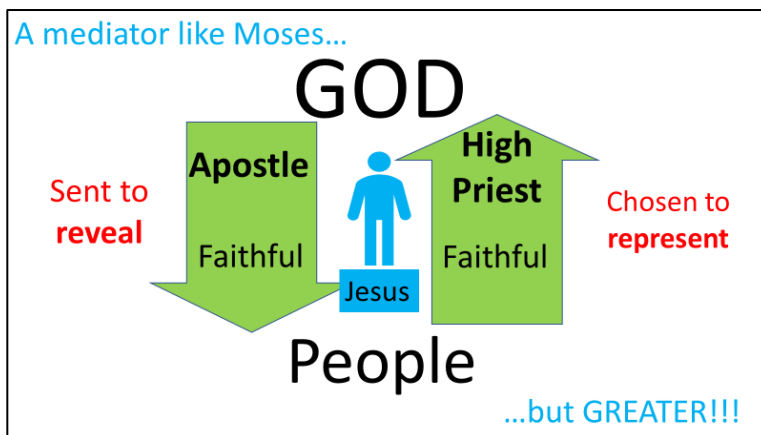
But is there a *focus* to the Old Testament comparisons, or just scattergun?

Hebrews 3:1-2 again:

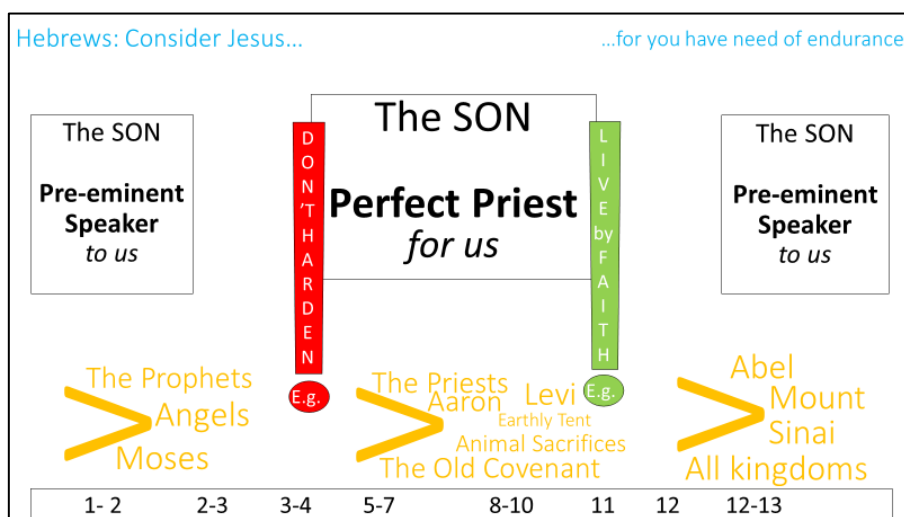
Greater **revelation**

&

Greater **representation**



A brief word on structure:



Greater revelation tops and tails the letter (the speech of the Son to us)

Greater representation sits in the centre (the ministry of the Son for us)

For reflection:

→ Consider Jesus: what do his voice & his work currently mean to me? ...He's greater!

Hebrews Session 2: Christology (a) The Enthroned Son Speaks

What specifically do we need to consider about Christ to keep going?

Recap:

Who is the audience? Weary (Jewish background) believers who've suffered for Christ

What is their danger? Giving up on public allegiance to & service of Jesus, turning back

What is the key exhortation? Keep enduring! By considering Christ

What about Jesus should they consider? He's the Son himself! Greater than all before!

Any focus to how the Son is greater? (Clues so far) greater revelation & representation

Session 2 Plan:

a) WHERE is the Son now? b) WHY is that so significant? c) WHAT does this term "Son" actually mean? d) WHEN did Jesus become the "Son"? e) SO WHAT for us?

Q1: According to Hebrews, WHERE is Jesus right now?

Look up these references (not the ones in brackets): where is Jesus now?

a) 1:3

b) 1:13

[cf. 2:9]

c) 8:1 "The main point of what we are saying is..."

[cf. 5:5-6, 6:19-20]

d) 10:12-13

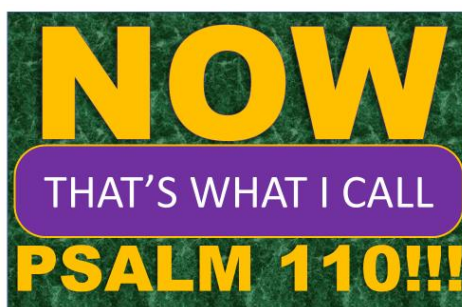
[cf. 9:12,24]

e) 12:2

Q2: WHY is where Jesus is sat right now so significant (biblically)?

Psalm 110!!

If remember nothing else
today remember this!

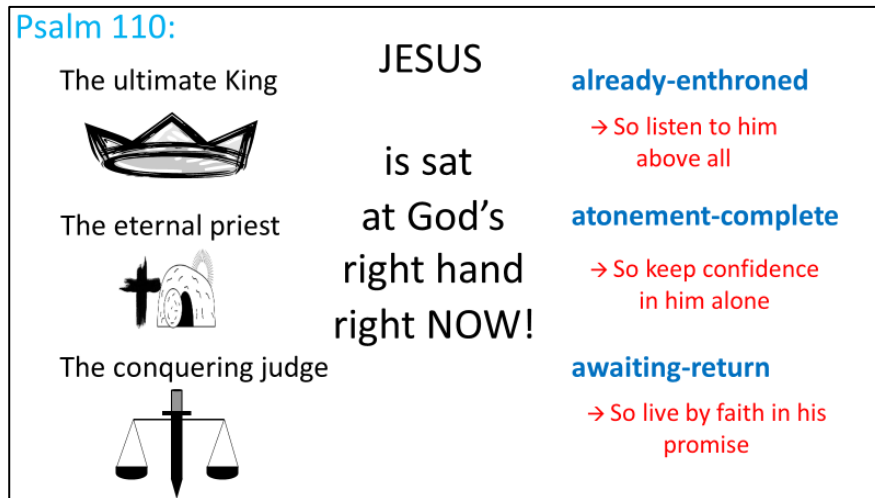


Read Psalm 110: as well as "sit at my right hand", what other key Hebrews ideas are here?
(More than 5 to find!)

[NB: the better we understand Psalm 110, the better we get Hebrews, and vice versa!!!]

Q. What does Psalm 110 get us considering about Jesus?

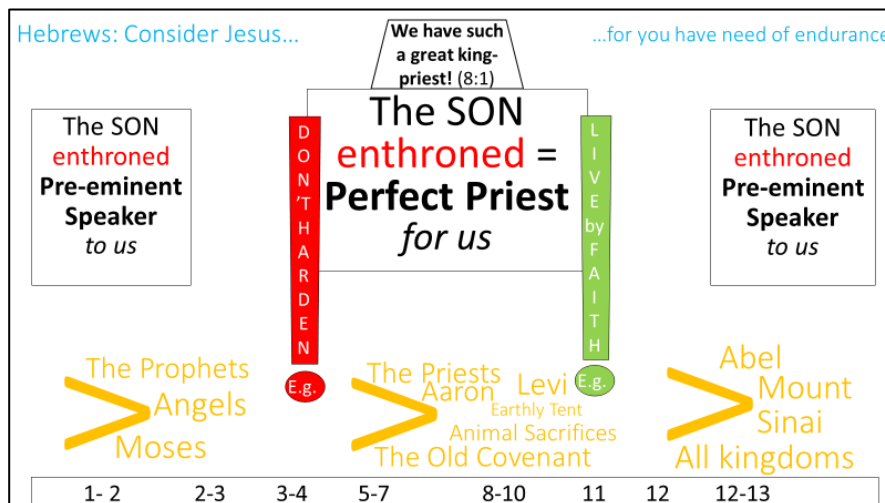
And why is his seated position so significant?!



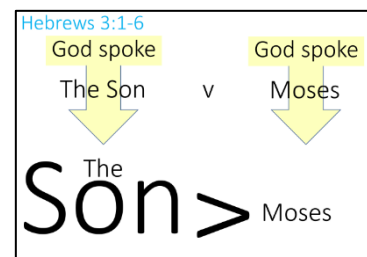
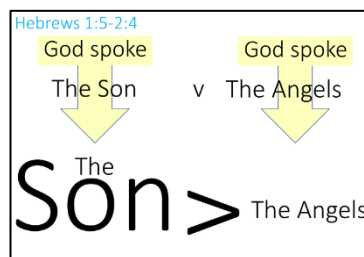
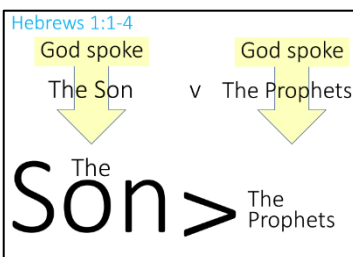
NB.:

- Invisible, hence: 'Consider Jesus, the already-enthroned Son

- Delayed return, hence: 'you have need of endurance in faith'



Q. So how is "enthroned Son: he's greater!" applied at start & end?

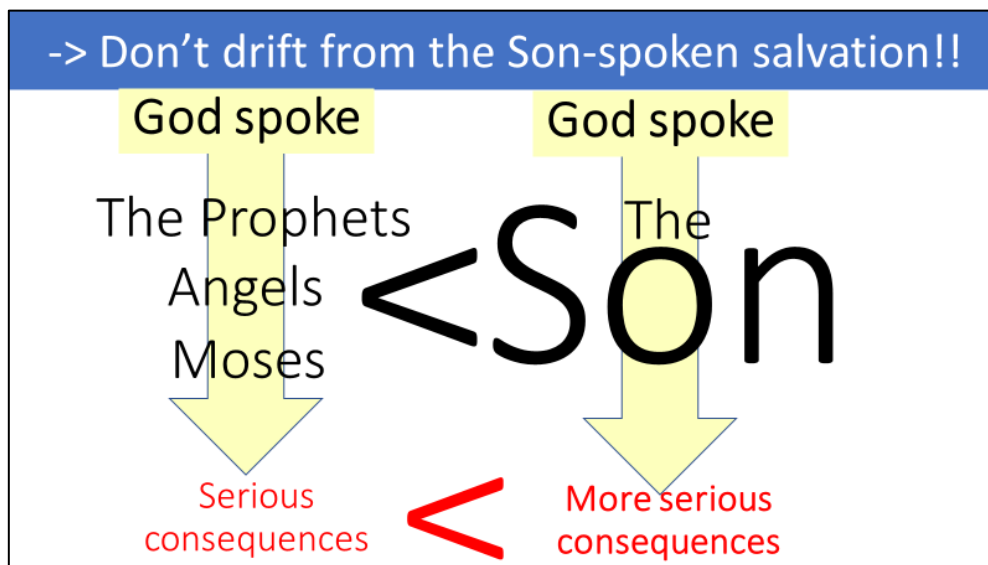


Look up these references: what is the take home application of these comparisons?

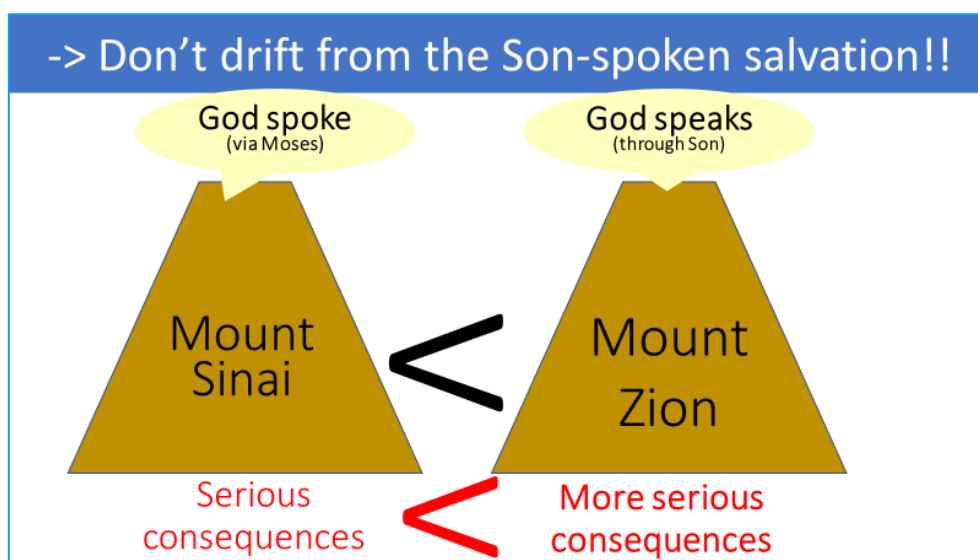
a) 2:1-4

b) 3:5-4:1

NB. Rejecting the Sinaitic covenant → deadly, how much more the Son's salvation?!



See also: 12:24-25 (as part of 12:18-29 "Two Mountains" Sinai-Zion comparison)



Teaching tip: what if the people I'm teaching have no idea about Sinai or Exodus→Exile?!

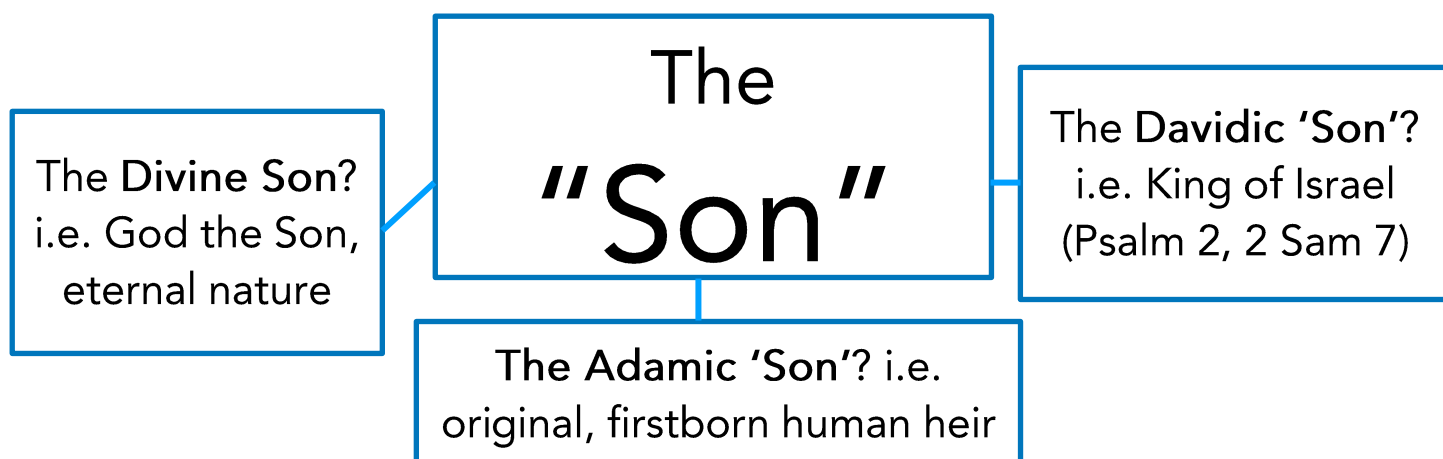
NB both:

→ you wouldn't DARE to drift;

→ you wouldn't WANT to drift

Time for a stretch, recap and deep breath...

Q3. But WHAT exactly does "Son" mean in Hebrews?



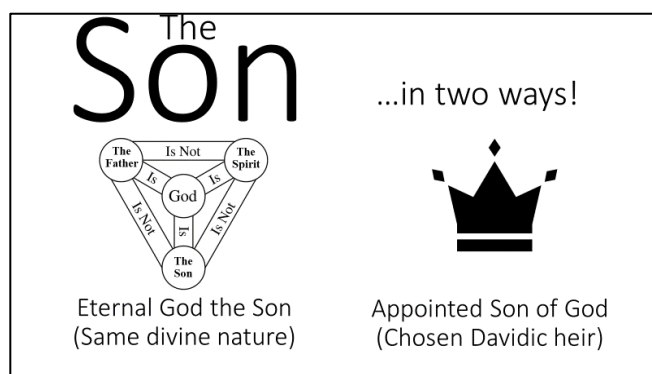
Discuss: In 2s/3s...

a) read 1:1-5 and think which of these meanings of 'Son' Hebrews is talking about

b) think from these verses: WHEN did Jesus become the 'Son'? Anything puzzling?

Hebrews 1:1-14: Divine AND Davidic

He's greater on two counts!!



So we should listen to Jesus as both our creator and our king!

Hebrews 1:6-14...

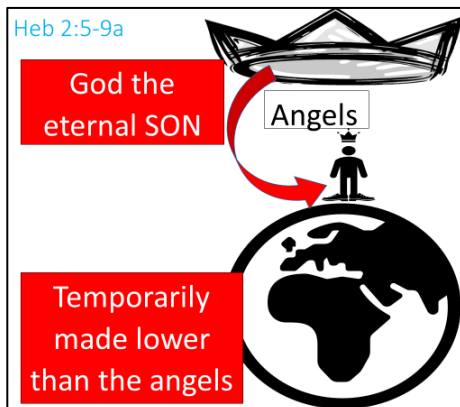
"ladies, gentlemen and assembled angels...welcome to the throne-room of heaven, announcing special guest, recently promoted & newly appointed, the SON!!!"

But, hang on, how can God be "promoted" to the Davidic throne?!

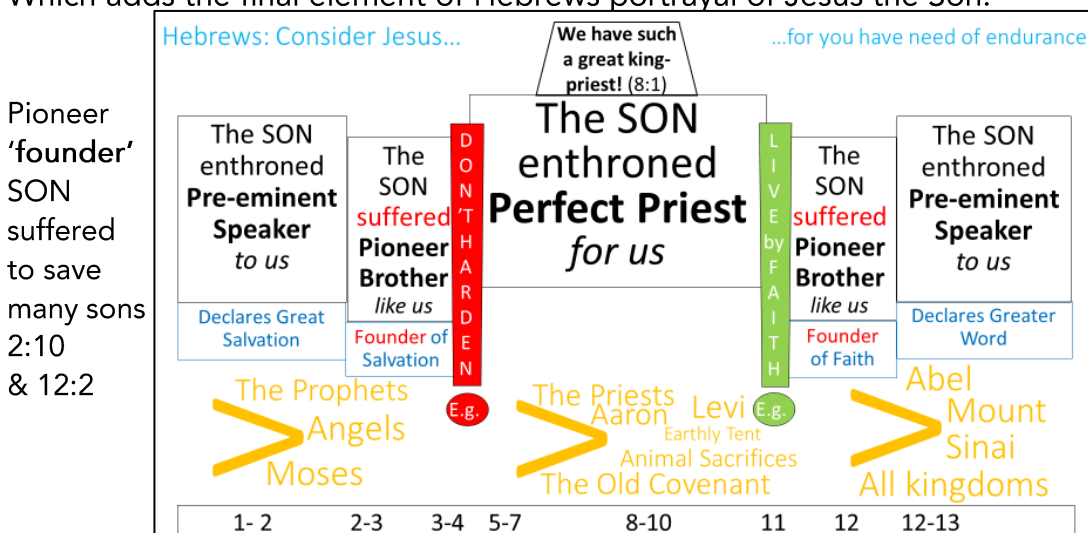
And doesn't the Ps 2 Davidic king (& so Psalm 110 king-priest!) need to be human?

Q4. WHEN (& how) did Jesus become the Psalm 110 Davidic 'Son'?

Hebrews 2:5-18 !!FLASHBACK!!



Which adds the final element of Hebrews portrayal of Jesus the Son:



Let's sum up! Consider the SON...for you have need of endurance

Where is Jesus, the SON right now? Enthroned at God's right hand
 Why is that so significant? He's the psalm 110 King-Priest-Judge!!
 So what does "Son" mean? Divine Son by nature & Davidic ruler by appointment
 When & how did Jesus become that Son? After stooping below the angels into our shoes, to taste death on our behalf, he was exalted to the right hand of God

Q5. So what for us?**→ Listen to him!!!****He's so so so so so so far above us**

- E.g. How would you respond if an angel appeared with a message?
- E.g. Who is the most impressive speaker around today?
- E.g. Wouldn't it be amazing to meet Isaiah or Moses?
- E.g. Who are the most influential voices on your life?
- E.g. How much attention do you pay at church to stuff you've already heard?

→ Consider him!!**Yet he stooped to stand in our shoes****Tasted death for us****Made salvation possible****Ran the race ahead of us**

- E.g. What's the secret to Christian endurance/hope? Considering Jesus...
- E.g. How big is your God - do we believe in a pocket-sized Jesus?
- E.g. Do we realise what the SON had to do to make us sons & heirs?
- E.g. why does death make us so afraid, and can anyone help with that?

Let's Pray

Hebrews Session 3: Christology (b) – our Great High Priest

What specifically do we need to consider about Christ to keep going?

Recap:

Who is the audience? Weary (Jewish background) believers who've suffered for Christ

What is their danger? Giving up on public allegiance to & service of Jesus, turning back

What is the key exhortation? Keep enduring! By considering Christ

What about Jesus should they consider? He's the Son himself! Greater than all before!

Who is the "Son", in what sense? Divine Son & now appointed Davidic Psalm 110 king

Where is the Son right now? At God's right hand, as the ultimate King, PRIEST, judge

Session 3 Plan:

a) Structure Sidebar b) Do we really NEED to know re:Melchizedek?! c) How was Son APPOINTED priest? d) what's so SPECIAL re:Melchizedek-like priest? e) So...?

Q1. Is there any structure in Hebrews?!...

Why so hard to work out?

The Christology Content-based approach:

- e.g. Vanhoye: Psalm 110 v1 (King) = Psalm 110v4 (Priest), e.g. 5:5-6

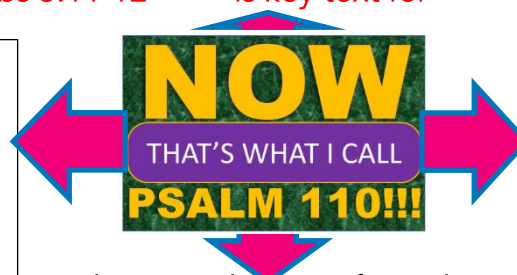
- *The Exhortations & Warnings- based approach (cf. 13:33)*

- E.g. either finding patterns in interweaving teaching/exhorting chunks
- Or assume theology drawn in ad-hoc to reinforce the Ch3-4 challenge

The Series of Expositions of Major Key Texts approach

- i.e. Psalm 110v1 is key text for 1:1-2:4
- i.e. Psalm 8 is key text for 2:5-18
- i.e. Psalm 95 is key text for 3:7-4:13
- i.e. Psalm 110v4 is key text for 4:14-8:5
- i.e. Jeremiah 31 is key text for 8:6-10:31
- i.e. Habakkuk 2:3-4 is key text for 10:32-12:3
- i.e. Proverbs 3:11-12 is key text for 12:3-17

Purple Explainers: say what?!



Psalm 110 is key text for Hebs

Red Appliers: so what now?!

The clearest structural markers of all are 4:14-16 and 10:19-25 [& cf. 8:1]

Heb 4:14-16 (ESV)

¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the

Heb 10:19-23 (ESV)

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold fast

Exercise: spot the matching ideas & phrases in the two chunks above:



Exercise which of those ideas/phrases also come up in 7:26 & 8:1? (ESV)

7v26: For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.

8v1 Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven...

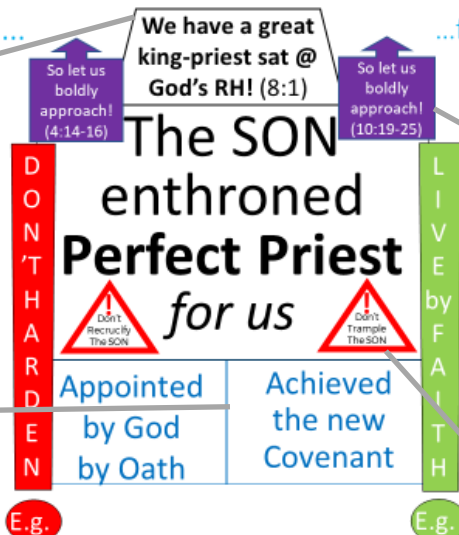
Hebrews: Consider Jesus...

We have a great king-priest sat @ God's RH! (8:1)

...for you have need of endurance

8:1 sits at the centre of the Priesthood

The section splits neatly in half at 8:1, with 5-7 about the Priest's APPOINTMENT, and 8-10 about his ACHIEVEMENT of



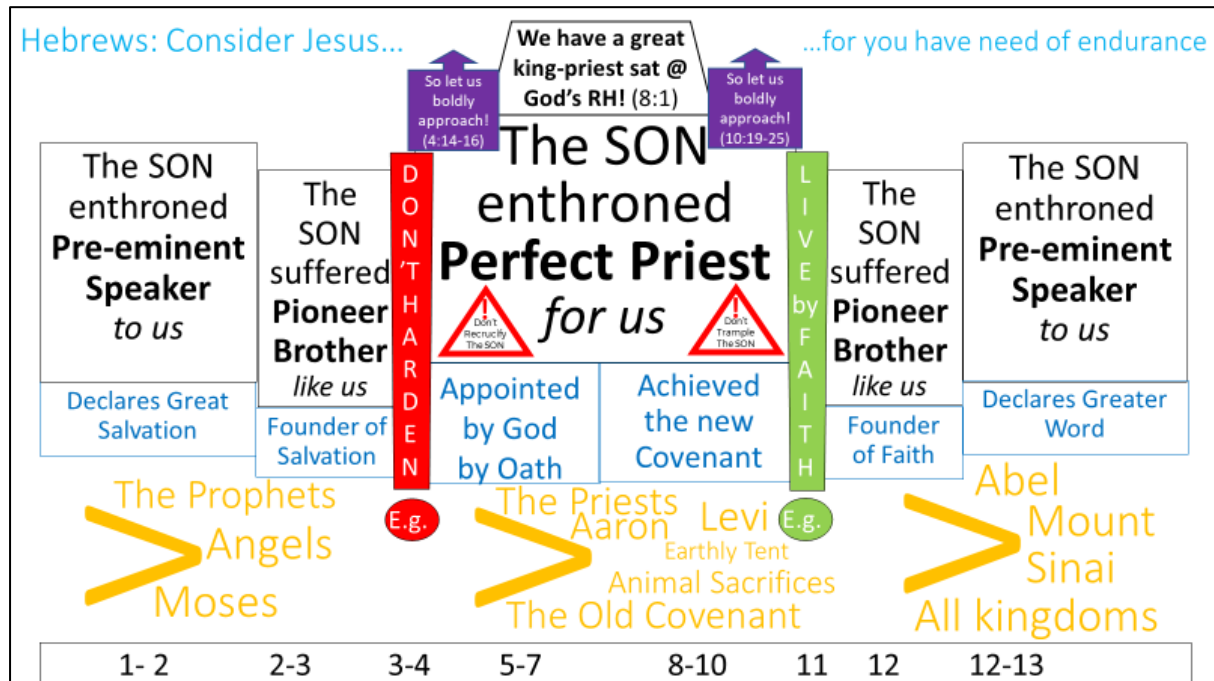
The section has inner 'LET US' brackets with the application

The section also has outer inner application example brackets about faith vs unbelief

There also similar, severe parallel warnings against 'trampling' or 're-crucifying' the

CTC: Hebrews (3) Consider: the Son Appointed @God's right Hand: Eternal Priest

So best approach to structure: concentric, centred on Jesus' King-Priesthood



Q: That's interesting (kind of), but I'm not a structure-geek. Does this matter?!

YES! In a heavy meal (Heb. 5-10)... don't forget the Let-Us!!

➔ So what impact should the centre of the book have on us?



Let us have confidence to draw near in full assurance



Let us hold fast the confession of our hope



Together! Corporate not just solo applications



'Since we have'Do we realise what we have?

All of which brings us to the question we might all be thinking after lunch...

Q2: Do we really NEED to know about Melchizedek?



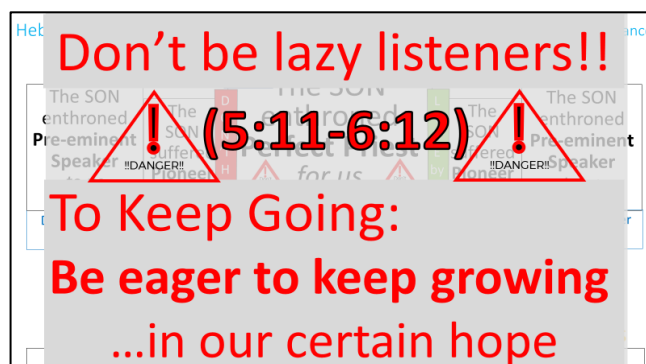
Even before Hebs, Psalm 110 (& Psalter) said **YES** the eternal king-priest matters!

Discuss: **why** might people in our churches be tempted to zone out/be less excited for section on priests & Melchizedek (Ch.5-10)? [Many possible answers!]

NB. The bit we are least excited about, Hebrews is **MOST** excited about!

Q: why do we NEED to learn about Melchizedek?! In order to keep enduring...

Author of Hebrews, like a good preacher, knows when he might lose his audience. So when he has barely even mentioned the big "M" he gives congregational pep talk...! (5:6,10,11-6:12)



→ Enduring big suffering for Jesus needs big view of Jesus

→ The only way to keep going is to keep growing!

→ "Consider him" means *think carefully* about Jesus to strengthen assurance

→ So we might need to tackle some UK evangelical anti-intellectualism

Q3. How was the Son **APPOINTED** as Great High Priest?

Q. What's the point of a priest anyway? "Only thing I know about priests is...I don't need one thanks!" [Didn't the reformation say we don't need one?]

- Wrong! Reformation said you already have one, who is a wholly sufficient!

Hebrews 4:14-5:5 – A High Priest's Job Description

Exercise: Read 4:14-5:4 & fill in **POSITION NEEDED: HIGH PRIEST** God

Who can get the job & how? (5:1, 5:4):

Nature of the work? Towards God (5:1):

Towards People (5:2, 4:15):



→ Implications: so we (sinners) need a priest, that **GOD** has chosen

Q: So how was Jesus APPOINTED for the job?

4:5-6 By God's declaration and word of oath in... you guessed it...

4:7-10 And the Incarnate Son was "made perfect" for this job 5:5-10
[Huh?? Vocational perfection]



Q. What does it mean that is Jesus a priest-like-Melchizedek? 7:1-28

Q. Was Melchizedek in Genesis 14 Jesus turning up early?

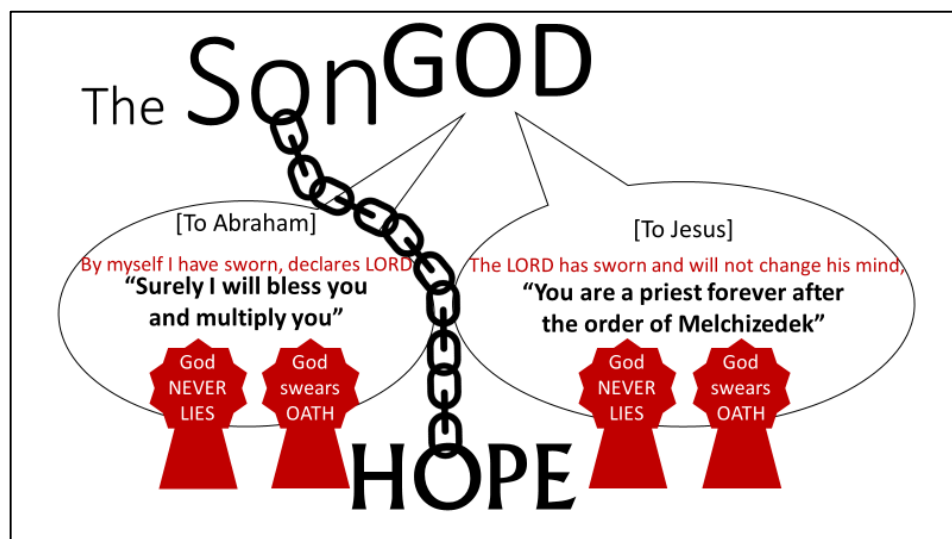
- No (Heb 7:3 and 7:15 and Psalm 110v4)
- But he sure looks like him!! A scriptural placeholder for the Son to come

Q: What's so special about Melchizedek (mark I)?

- The original Priest in the Bible (Long before Levite priests!)
- The only example of King-Priest (Judah & Levi separate roles)
- The "what about the parents?" priest (No genealogy!? In Genesis?!)
- The "one-off" priest – no passing baton (Normally hear of next in line)
- The greater-than-Abraham priest (HE gets tithes from Ab.!)>
- Who mediates God's blessing to Abraham (HE blesses Ab.!!)
- Oh, and his name means 'King of Righteousness', his title means 'King of Peace', he rules in Jerusalem, he brings bread and wine to Ab. etc etc!!

Q. What's even more special about Melchizedek mark II (i.e. after-the-order-of)?

- All of the above, except M mark 1 was just the warm up pattern to prepare
- The Son is the original, the ultimate, the long-planned, one-off king-priest
- Who, according to Psalm 110 is actually ETERNAL (how?)
 - o Requires a resurrected, indestructible life (7:16, 7:23-21)
- Who, according to Psalm 110 is appointed by an OATH from God (when?)
 - o 7:20-22 [Remember 5:4-6?] [cf. 6:17-20]



So what? Reflect on 7:17-20 ("**draw near!**") and 7:23-25



- ➔ *Pluralism and God's choice of priest* (hold fast your confession!)
- ➔ *To what extent do we value not just Christ's past work, but his current and ongoing work at God's right hand (...right to the end!)?* (in full assurance!)
- ➔ *How might that help those of us daunted by the next years/decades serving Christ in a hostile culture?* (since we have)
- ➔ *How does this help us understand the severe & scary warnings?*

An example sermon:

Do we Realise what we Have?

Hebrews 7:20-8:2

Intro: In a post-Christian culture... is a priest really necessary??

The MAIN POINT: (8:1)
What a wonderful high priest we have in heaven!!

1. Our Permanent Priest: totally secure in his role (7:20-25)

- Secured by God's oath (20-22)
 - ➔ Guaranteeing our covenant relationship
- Secured by Christ's immortality (23-25)
 - ➔ Saving us through his prayers all the way to the end

2. Our Perfect Priest: totally suitable for his role (7:26-8:2)

- Sin-free, utterly!!! (26-28)
 - ➔ Offered himself for us once for all
- Situated at God's right hand in heaven!!! (8:1-2)
 - ➔ We have such a priest!!!

Conclusion: what does it look like to really get this? (4:14-16, 10:19-23)

Let's Pray

Time for break and a picture challenge...

Hebrews Session 4: Consider Christ (c) –New Cov Guarantor!

What specifically do we need to consider about Christ to keep going?

Recap:

Who is the audience? Weary (Jewish background) believers who've suffered for Christ

What is their danger? Giving up on public allegiance to & service of Jesus, turning back

What is the key exhortation? Keep enduring! By considering Christ

What about Jesus should they consider? He's the Son himself! Greater than all before!

Who is the "Son", in what sense? Divine Son & now appointed Davidic Psalm 110 king

Where is the Son right now? At God's right hand, as the ultimate King, PRIEST, and judge

What does that mean for us? We have a secure, eternal priest appointed for us

Session 4 Plan:

a) What's so good about the New Covenant? b) Navigating the NOW and NOT YET of Hebrews c) What has Faith got to do with it? D) So how should we live now?

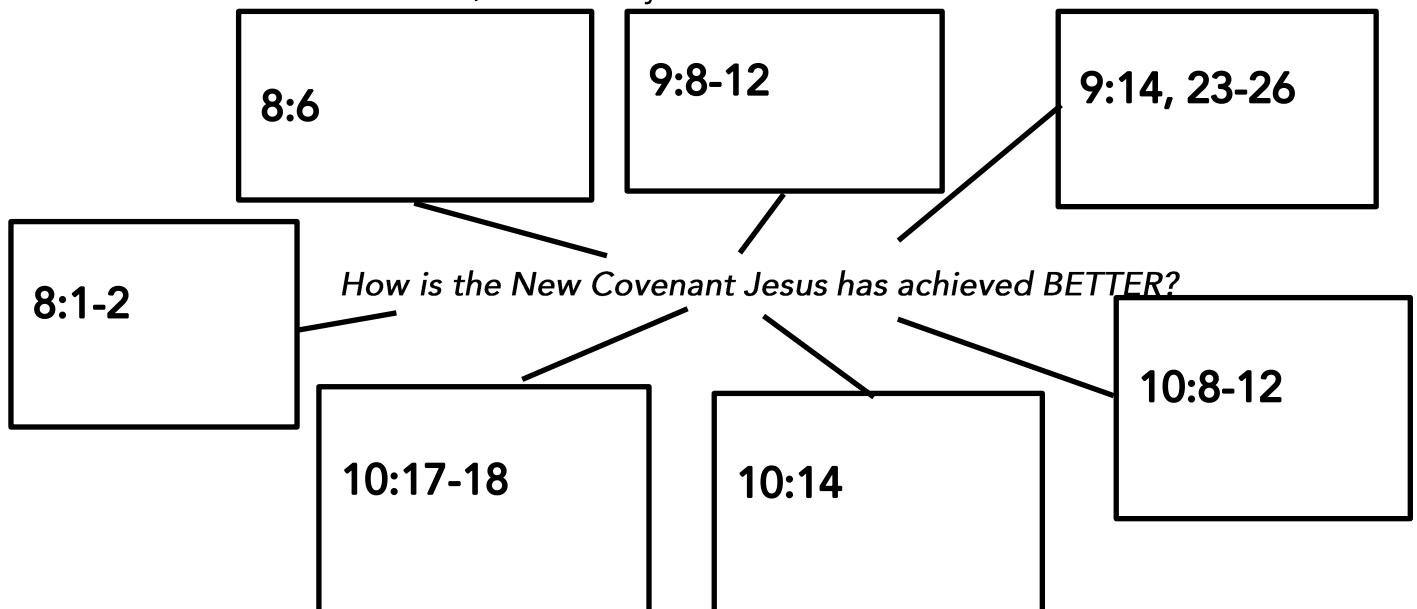
Consider Jesus – the guarantor of a better covenant (7:22)

Q1) What's so good about the New Covenant?

Do we get excited about covenants....?

Remember it's all about RELATIONSHIP with God

Exercise: fill in the boxes, in what ways is the New Covenant better?



Q. How does it help us to know this?

Remember the Let us!



Q. Secular Scotland and people around us are not asking for a better priesthood/tent/sacrifice (!), so should we skip this section of Hebrews?

a) Many parts of Scotland are becoming increasing multicultural, not secular!

b) This section addresses universal and fundamental issues:

- Forgiveness [NB Tops and tails from Jer 31: 8:12&10:17]
- Cleansing and purification
- Access to the Divine
- Clear conscience
- Hope that is secure not fanciful

c) And OT types and shadows were given by God to educate us on what's needed

- Can't just waltz into God's presence, Holy Mediator is required
- God's forgiveness requires blood (death) & animal sacrifice is inadequate
- Human obedience is necessary

d) So don't just teach: that was all rubbish/outdated/outmoded and so irrelevant

But rather: God telling us exactly the kind of thing required, but better

➔ Which means relativism or religious pluralism is ruled out by Hebrews 5-10... if the absolute best of OT religion didn't work, how could any other human religious system?

Teaching Examples:

<u>Entering the Presence of the Living God</u> <i>Hebrews 9:1-14</i>		
<i>Intro: How can we enter the holy presence of the living God?</i>		
1. The old covenant had the best, God-designed worship ever seen...		(1-7)
a) The golden, glorious, God-given special place ...		
b) The chosen, set apart, God-given special people ...		
c) The careful, regular, God-given special processes ...		
2. But it demonstrated that access to God was denied:		
a) God's presence was not truly open		(8-9)
b) Guilty consciences were not truly dealt with		(9-10)
3. Until Jesus, the greater, new covenant priest came!!!		(11)
➔ So now God's presence is permanently open to his people		(12)
➔ So now guilty consciences are fully purified to serve God		(13-14)
<i>Conclusion: We can have confidence to enter, any moment of any day</i>		10:19-23

A Better Purification

Hebrews 9:15-28

Intro: How hard is forgiveness that wipes the slate completely clean?

1. Jesus' death paid the price required (9:15)
...to receive God's promised rest
...to redeem from breaking God's law
2. The necessity of Jesus death (9:16-22)
3. The superiority of Jesus' death (9:23-28)

Out of the Shadows comes the Son

Hebrews 10:1-10

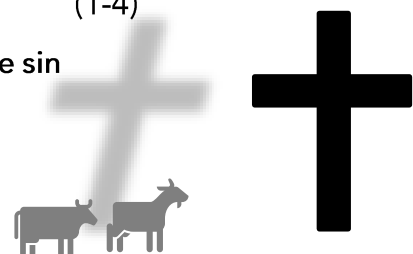
Intro: Do you seriously expect me to believe that Jesus dying on a Roman cross is the only way to made clean before God??

1. Old Testament rituals made it very clear: (1-4)

It is impossible for animal sacrifices to fully cleanse sin

A shadow of the substitution solution...

...But unable to effectively substitute



2. Old Testament teaching made it very clear: (5-7)

God requires human obedience not animal sacrifice

In the Beginning: Genesis 2:16-17

In the Law: Exodus 19:5-6; Leviticus 26; Hebrews 8:8-9

In the Prophets:

Isa. 1:11-20, Jer. 6:19-20 & 7:20-23, Hos. 6:6-7, Amos 5:22

In the Kings: Deut. 17:18-20; 1 Samuel 12:8-14 & 15:22-23

In the Psalm of the Davidic King: Psalm 40:7-9!

Obedience  Sacrifices

3. Which is why Jesus offering his perfectly obedient life as a substitute sacrifice has now COMPLETELY cleansed us! (8-10)

Job Done

Hebrews 10v11-18

Intro: Can I really be sure, today, that God has fully forgiven me?

1. The sitting of Jesus proves it: (10:11-14)
The Cross perfectly purifies us for God's service, once-for-all

[Cf. Psalm 110 in Hebrews 1:3, 1:13, 4:14-16, 5:6-10, 7:17-8:1.]

2. The Holy Spirit said it: (10:15-18)
The New Covenant provides full forgiveness, once-for-all

Conclusion: Do we realise how good we have it?

To help with that, let's recap Hebrews:.

You have need of endurance... ...so consider Jesus...

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| The enthroned son, a greater speaker to us | 1:1-2:4 |
| The enthroned son, a greater brother to us | 2:5-18 |
| The enthroned son, a greater high priest for us | 4:14-8:1 |
| The enthroned son, a guarantor of a greater covenant to us | 8:1-10:18 |
| ➔ So draw near to God | 10:22 (cf. 4:16) |
| ➔ So hold fast to Christ | 10:23 (cf. 4:14, 2:1. 3:6) |
| ➔ So help each other to keep meeting and serving | (10:24) |



Some reflections on the significance of the new covenant for applying Hebrews:

1. It is what links the speaker, brother, priest aspects of Jesus the mediator
2. It is what enables the Abrahamic blessings and Adamic purpose to finally happen
3. It is what explains the strength of the warnings in Hebrews
4. It provides HUGE relational blessing and confidence now!! Do we live with a sub-Christian understanding of our privileges?
5. It is what connects the grateful and reverent worship/service motif in ch 12-13 with Jer 31 and Heb 8-10 (and Psalm 110v3)
6. It explains why the UNSEEN nature of faith is such a big theme in ch11

Q2) How should we navigate the NOW/NOT YET of Hebrews?

Let's recap: the now and not yet of Jesus

Look up:	Where is Jesus right now & what is he doing?	What will Jesus do in the future?
1:3 & 1:13 7:21-25 & 8:1 9:24-28 12:2 12:24-29		



"Sit...until I make your enemies your footstool"

Rule in the midst of your enemies..."

"Your People offer themselves freely...in holy garments"

The now and not yet for us

"I know how this goes...everything in the Christian life is a bit of both"

Look up:	What do Christians have right now?	What are we still waiting for?	So how should we live now?
3:6-14 4:14-16 10:19-25 12:1-3 12:22-29 13:12-16			

NOW We really do have some things fully now...!

NOT YET But we are still waiting for our full inheritance...

Q3) What has Faith got to do with it?

- Trusting God's promises when you can't see, but NB that includes both:

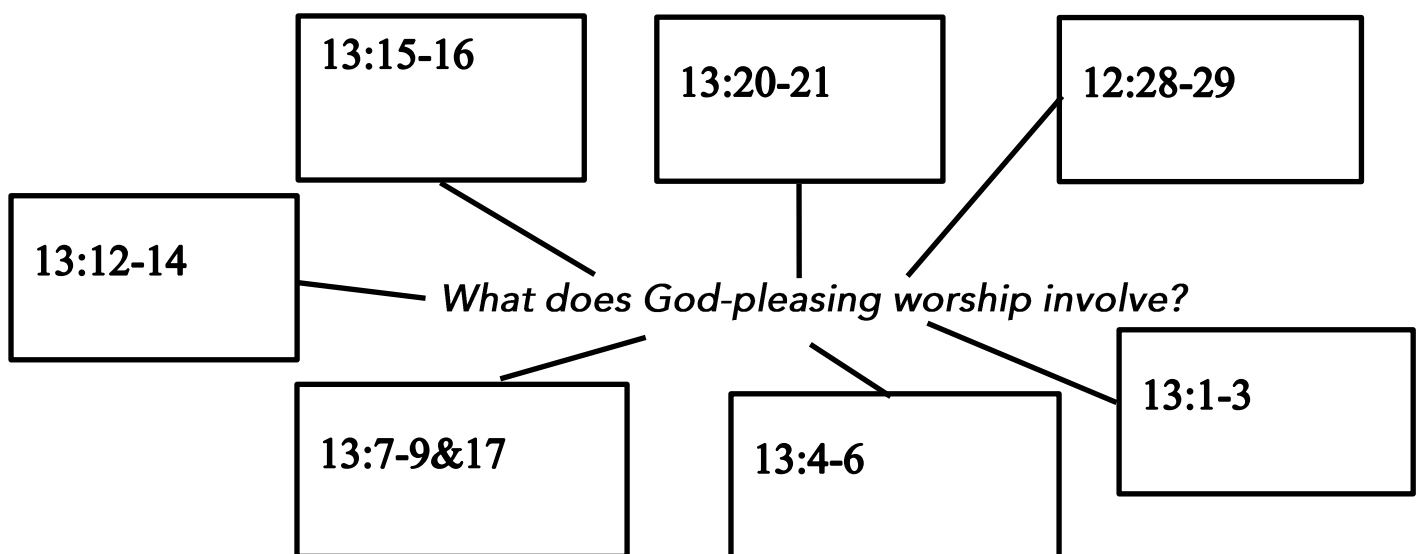
- The UNSEEN PRESENT

- i.e. the Son's enthroned status & intercession– consider him!)
- i.e. our status as already qualified part of Zion's assembly

- The UNSEEN FUTURE

- i.e. the new creation to come
- i.e. still on the journey to the heavenly city

Q4) So how should we live in the meantime?



...rule in the midst of your enemies...

Your people offer themselves freely on the day of your power in holy garments

Let's Pray

