

Jesus, Revealed To The Hebrews Pt.1

Ken Birks, Pastor Teacher

I. Introductory Remarks.

The Book of Hebrews was written in response to legalistic Jews who traveled to young churches, arguing that an Old Testament lifestyle must be maintained by believers in Jesus. The letter to the Hebrews shows that Christ is the reality which Old Testament institutions only foreshadowed.

The Book of Hebrews points out that in Christ there is far more than an Old Testament faith offered. There is a maturity, an experience with God, a full and complete salvation that through history had awaited Jesus' coming. It is this full salvation that the Book of Hebrews explains.

The Book of Hebrews begins with Jesus because total confidence in Him must be the basis of our new life, and of our identity as Christians.

Hebrews 1:1-2 *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, {2}has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

In this lesson we will focus on the following areas concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

- The Superiority of Jesus
- Jesus, the Living Word
- Jesus, Our High Priest

II. The Superiority of Jesus.

The clearest evidence of Jesus' position as a full Member of the Godhead is given in these first few verses in Hebrews. We see who Jesus is, all He accomplished, and all that will be His.

Hebrews 1:3-4 *who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, {4}having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

The Godhead or the Trinity was never explicitly taught in the Old Testament, although it was glimpsed in the plurals of Genesis 1 as God said, *"let Us make man in Our image."* It was also detected in the very terms by which the unity of God was affirmed: *"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is One."* "One" in the original speaks of a compound unity, such as that of a single bunch of grapes which is composed of numerous units. Other glimpses of the Godhead are seen in the many Old Testament references to the Spirit of God as distinct from God Himself.

In the New Testament, however, we find Jesus teaching, *"I and the Father are One"* (John 10:30), *"No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 14:6).

It also became important to realize that all there is of salvation for us is to be found in Jesus. There is nothing higher or greater than knowing Jesus.

Acts 4:12 *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

There is nothing beyond knowing Jesus that is key to a supposedly "higher" spiritual experience. The Bible says of the Holy Spirit, *"He will bring glory to Me [Jesus]"*

John 16:14 *"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."*

In everything in our Christian lives, God has determined that the focus should be on Jesus. Our understanding of who Jesus is should leave no doubts that Jesus is God. The verses in Hebrews 1 above show this so clearly.

1. Sonship Belongs To Jesus - Hebrews 1:2 (*spoken to us by His Son*).

This term has been used by some to question the full deity of Jesus. But the term "son" is designed to emphasize relationships between the Persons of the Godhead, not to suggest that Jesus is a created being.

The term *firstborn* in verse 6 (*...when He again brings the firstborn into the world*), is used to describe Jesus as the One coming forth from God to found the New Testament Church.

Romans 8:29 *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to*

the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Revelation 1:5 *and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,*

2. The Coming Kingdom Belongs To Jesus - Hebrews 1:2 *He has appointed heir of all things.*

Jesus has been appointed "Heir of all things." He will inherit and purify this world at His coming, and then create a new heaven and a new earth. He is Heir to all, and this constitutes a promise that one day all will be fully God's.

John 3:35 *"The Father loves the Son, and has given **all things** into His hand.*

3. Creative Power Belongs To Jesus - Hebrews 1:2 *(through whom also He made the worlds)*

Jesus is the one who spoke, and in speaking caused our whole vast universe to appear. Jesus is the One who acted to shape stars so distant that astronomers can only guess at their existence.

John 1:3 ***All things** were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

4. The original glory of God belongs to Jesus - Hebrews 1:3 *(who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person).*

The phrases brightness of His glory and the express image of His person are both strong assertions. Brightness, the light shining forth from a luminary, is all that the human eye can see. Similarly, all that we can see of God shines through Jesus! Express image assures us that there is a total and complete correspondence between the eternal God and the Man, Jesus. When we look at Jesus, we see exactly what God is like, for Jesus is God, and reveals Him exactly.

John 14:8-9 *Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." {9} Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father**; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

5. **Sustaining Power** Belongs To Jesus - Hebrews 1:3 (*upholding all things by the word of His power*).

The entire universe and the natural laws are energized and held together by the sustaining power that belongs to Jesus.

Matthew 28:18 *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in **heaven** and on **earth**."*

Luke 8:25 *But He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"*

7. **Redemptive Work** Belongs To Jesus - Hebrews 1:3 (*when He had by Himself purged our sins*).

As a man, Jesus walked our earth and knew our nature and weaknesses. But now, He has returned to "the right hand of the Majesty in heaven." His work has been accomplished through the Blood that was poured out for us. He has provided salvation to make us whole.

1 Peter 1:18-19 *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, {19}but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

III. Jesus, the Living Word.

In Israel's past God communicated to His people in many ways. The writer of Hebrews identifies some in the first verses of this book--and then goes on to say that now God "has spoken to us by His Son"

Hebrews 1:1-2 *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, {2}has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

1. The Living Word of God Became **Flesh**.

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

John 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

1 Timothy 3:16 *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.*

2. Jesus, The Living Word, Is **Superior** To The Angels.

Hebrews 1:4-6 *having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. {5}For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son"? {6}But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."*

- **The writer of Hebrews now begins an extended argument to prove that Jesus is superior to the angels.**

Why is this important? The answer is seen in Hebrews 2:2.

Hebrews 2:2 *For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,*

The message spoken by angels was referred to as being binding in that the Jews believed that their Old Testament had been mediated through angelic messengers. The Word of God was deeply respected in part because of this supernatural mediation.

Now the writer is saying, *the Spokesman is greater than the angels!* The Messenger is God Himself, exalted above the ancient messengers, for He is the very Father of eternity.

Because of the temptation on the part of the early church to think of Jesus as a "high" angel, the writer of Hebrews makes it clear at the outset that Jesus is superior to all angels.

- **Superior Relationship - (1:5)** Jesus stands beside God the Father as His Son, not below Him as a creature.
- **Superior as Deity - (1:6-9)** None of the angels is called God, and no angel is

worshiped by his fellows. Yet Jesus is given the name of God, and the angelic hosts worship Him. (*"Let all the angels of God worship Him."*)

- **Superior as Creator** - (1:10-12) Unlike angels, Jesus was there *"in the beginning"* when He laid the foundations of Creation. Angels change and grow in knowledge as the centuries unfold God's plan, but Jesus remains the same; as God He knows all.
- **Superior in Destiny** - (1:13) No angel was ever invited to share the rule of the universe as God's equal. But for God to picture Jesus *"at My right hand"* indicates that Jesus shares God's rule even now.

In every way Jesus is superior--and thus it must be that the revelation He brings, and the salvation He offers is superior to the fragments offered in the Old Testament.

IV. Concluding Remarks.

What should be our response to the presentation of Jesus as the ultimate spokesman? *"We must pay more careful attention therefore, to what we have heard."*

Hebrews 2:1-3 *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. {2}For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,*