

Hebrews

The Superiority of Christ (Part 3)

Hebrews 1:1-4

INTRODUCTION:

Hebrews 1:1-4 (NASB95)

Hebrews 1:1-2a (NASB95)

BODY:

I. The Heir of all Things.

Hebrews 1:2b (NASB95)

Deuteronomy 21:17 (NASB95)

Colossians 1:16 (NASB95)

John 6:37 (NASB95)

Psalms 8:3-6 (NASB95)

II. The Ultimate High Priest.

Hebrews 1:3c (NASB95)

Philippians 1:6 (NASB95)

III. The Ruler of All.

Hebrews 1:4 (NASB95)

Hebrews 2:7 (NASB95)

Philippians 2:9-11 (NASB95)

CONCLUSION:

Romans 8:1-11 (NASB95)

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INTRODUCTION:

Our need for a Messiah began when Adam and Eve sinned. They thought God was holding out on them and took a bite of fruit from a tree he told them not to touch. They lost their closeness to God and could not get it back on their own merit. And on the saddest day in history, God cast them out of his presence into a world now broken by sin. A world that has been waiting and longing for redemption ever since.

And as we were born, we added **our** sin to the world's need. But God was not silent. He promised to send a Savior. And when Jesus was born in that manger in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago, it was God's **shout** to the world that the Savior is here to **reclaim what we had lost** and to **redeem what we broke**. The most wonderful thing to ever happen was God sending his Son to live among us and die and rise again!

So the book of Hebrews helps us because it was written to a group of Christians who were suffering through persecution and having their homes taken away from them. Some of them were wavering in their faith and some had even fallen away. They were beginning to wonder if Christianity was really worth all of the agony. They, like Adam and Eve, and you and I, sometimes have a hard time **listening** to Jesus.

To compel us to listen, the author highlights **seven messages** God sends to us through the Holy Spirit in the opening verses. When so many other things try to push their way into the space that only belongs to Jesus, Hebrews reminds us that Jesus is superior to all that has come before and all that will come after him.

Two weeks ago we looked at the fact that Jesus was fully God. He is the Creator of Everything, the Radiant Brilliance of God, the Imprint of God's Nature, and the Upholder of the Universe.

The Christians that the author of Hebrews wrote to was reminding them that Jesus was God Himself walking among them and He was the Word of God. He taught us about God and our purpose in life. He made it possible for us to have our relationship with God that we lost due to our sins **restored** by dying on the cross for our sins.

Will we listen to him?

All Stand and Read Scripture

Hebrews 1:1-4 (NASB95)

1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

Prayer

In the two previous sermons we learned That God has spoken conclusively through His Son, and that **Jesus is fully God**. This morning we are going to also see **that Jesus is fully man**. He is the our **complete** Savior.

Our greatest need is to hear from the one true God Who created us and everything around us. Without his voice we are lost, wondering what life is all about. We do not know **who** we are, **why** we are here, or **what** our purpose is in life. But God is not silent. He has been speaking since the foundation of the world. And what he has been telling us all along is that he is God, we are his people, and he loves us despite everything that seems to prove otherwise.

Hebrews 1:1-2a (NASB95)

1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son,...

So, God spoke through two big eras, that we separate by the Old and New Testaments. The difference between these two eras is the difference between receiving a letter in the mail about a **visitor that is coming** one day and **receiving that visitor** on your doorstep in the flesh. In Jesus, the world received her King—the one she groaned for throughout the ages. What God told us beforehand through our forefathers and prophets, He has now conclusively revealed to us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The birth of Christ is awe-inspiring not just because God came down. In fact, God came down throughout the ages. He walked in the Garden with Adam and Eve. He talked with Moses as with a friend. He was with Israel as a cloud and pillar of fire. His glory came down to the temple. Christ's birth inspires awe because in Jesus, God came down in a new way. In Jesus, God came down **as man**.

This is why Jesus is called the Son of God. Although Mary was his mother, God himself was the father. Thus Jesus was truly the Son of God. He is also referred to as the Son of man because Mary, who of course was human, was His earthly mother.

So let's look at how the author of Hebrews relates to these early Christians and to ourselves how **Jesus is Fully Man**.

BODY:

I. The Heir of all Things.

Hebrews 1:2b (NASB95)

²...whom He appointed heir of all things,...

Jesus Christ is the **heir of creation** for whom all things have been made. The heirs most often mentioned in the Old Testament were sons, principally the firstborn, born only to legitimate wives, not concubines. A firstborn son held the **birthright**, which means he was heir to a larger portion than what his brothers received.

Deuteronomy 21:17 (NASB95)

¹⁷ But he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; to him belongs the right of the firstborn.

The New Testament portrays Jesus Christ as God's "firstborn" Son because He was the **only** Son of God, making Him the firstborn of God. So Jesus holds the "birthright" and is the heir of all the Father has. "**Whom He appointed heir of all things.**"

God has given Christ all of creation as a gift, because all was created **for** Him.

Colossians 1:16 (NASB95)

¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created **through** Him and **for** Him.

The inheritance that Christ receives also includes believers, those whom the Father has given to the Son.

John 6:37 (NASB95)

³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

So when the author speaks of Jesus being the heir, we understand what he means. Everything the father has, the Son has. And although Jesus is Creator, through his finished work God also appointed him the heir of all. He alone is worthy to inherit the Father's kingdom.

But there is a deeper insight the author wants us to see. There is good news for us here. When Jesus became a man and therefore inheritor, he brought with him the possibility of us inheriting something of God as well. The author highlights this in chapter 2, quoting from Psalm 8-- a Psalm about mankind.

Psalms 8:3-6 (NASB95)

³ When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; ⁴ What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? ⁵ Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! ⁶ You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,

Now, the Psalmist says that's who **you** are.

But wait a minute. That does not sound right does it? You probably do not feel like you are crowned with glory and honor, do you? You do not see everything in subjection under your feet. You cannot tame the storms. You cannot even tame your heart. But Jesus can. And Psalm 8 is ultimately about you because it is ultimately about Jesus. Because

Jesus inherits all things, including you. And when he inherits you, and grants you faith, he places you in himself and you get what he has, which includes, amazingly, glory and honor and rule over the world. This doctrine reminds us that every promise God has made will come to pass in and through and for Jesus Christ.

See, Jesus does not lord his inheritance over you. He serves you with it, giving you a portion along with him. Why? **Because he loves you!** You are not his property like a slave. You are his joy like family.

When we are saved, Jesus unites us to himself and makes us, as Paul says in Romans 8, co-heirs with Christ. But that happens because Jesus first united himself to **us**, making himself human. For all the good things Jesus inherited, when he came to earth, he inherited something else—our inheritance from Adam. Now, he was conceived of the Holy Spirit, so he was not born with original sin like we are. But by becoming human, Jesus willingly partook of the same things as us, and on the cross the Father gave him the inheritance due to us so that in the resurrection he could give us the inheritance due to him.

He is the heir of all things, and that "**all things**" includes **you**, but to get you he had to pay for your sins. And on the cross he did.

Listen to Him!

II. The Ultimate High Priest.

Jesus is the priest of God who has provided the perfect sacrifice for all human sins.

Hebrews 1:3c (NASB95)

3 ...When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Hebrews makes a big deal about Jesus being our High Priest. Sin dirties us in the sight of God. And if we are to be with the holy, pure God, we cannot waltz into his presence as we are. We must be cleansed. And God's appointed way for cleansing is through the shedding of blood by the priestly sacrifices.

After Jesus had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. This sentence describes the High Priestly role of Jesus on behalf of all who hear His word and follow Him. Like the priesthood of Aaron, Jesus has provided a purification for sins; only in Jesus' case, the purification was permanent.

Whenever Aaron or one of the priests of Levi offered a sacrifice in the tabernacle or in the temple, they could never sit down in God's presence. In the temple furniture, there was no place for a priest to sit—because his work was never finished. To sit down in God's presence is an image of completion. It would mean that all the work was finished and there was nothing more that could possibly be done to satisfy God. The high priest of the Levitical tribe would be struck dead if he were to sit down in God's presence—because his sacrifice was never complete and he had to keep coming back year after year after year.

In the Old Testament, a priest would sprinkle the blood of a spotless lamb on the altar symbolizing that the blood of perfection must be shed for the forgiveness of sins. But the blood of an imperfect animal could never bring about the kind of cleansing we need. One

sin against God is worthy of eternal damnation. How could we ever pay for **all** the sins we have committed?

Well we can't. But Jesus can. Jesus became the only person ever born on a mission to die. He became the only priest to ever walk the road of a sacrificial lamb.

He lived the perfect life on our behalf, obeying God every step of the way. And when he reached the end, he obeyed to the point of death on a cross. He set aside all his rights as God and God made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Jesus did not die because **He** was sinful. Jesus died because **we** were sinful. He was spotless. We were stained. He was our sacrifice. We are the forgiven.

By this single offering Jesus **perfected** us for all time, making purification for sins by his blood. What Christ's arrival began, the cross ended.

Philippians 1:6 (NASB95)

6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

And after the finished work of the cross, Jesus **sat down** in the presence of God! Old Testament priests **never** sat down in God's presence. The work was never finished. More sin always needed forgiving. But in Christ, all the sin of all God's people was forgiven once for all. "**For sins He sat down.**" There is **no** question about your salvation if you are his. The **culmination** of **our salvation** will take place at the Second Coming, when we will be reunited with God face to face.

III. The Ruler of All.

Hebrews 1:4 (NASB95)

4 having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

As a result of His atoning work on the cross, Jesus was crowned with glory and honor, and He is now seated at the right hand of His heavenly Father.

Again, quoting from Psalm 8, that the early Christians were very familiar with, the author of Hebrews points out that Jesus' humble state was but temporary: "**for a little while**" He was made lower than the angels.

Hebrews 2:7 (NASB95)

7 "You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And have appointed him over the works of Your hands;

Jesus is exalted above all angels, and some day every knee will bow at His name and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11 (NASB95)

9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Believers in Christ will reign with Him in the future. Christ will subject all things to Himself as the Second Adam. What the first Adam and his descendants failed to accomplish because of our sin, the last Adam (Christ) will accomplish, and the curse will be reversed. All believers will share in Christ's glory forever, living with Him in His new heaven and new earth. Without Jesus becoming "a little lower" than the angels, there would be no redemption for any of us. Praise the Lord that He humbled Himself to come to us and seek and save the lost!

CONCLUSION:

In the first four verses we learn that we have a Savior that was fully God. He is The Creator of Everything, The Radiant Brilliance of God, The Imprint of God's Nature, and The Upholder of the Universe.

And we have a Savior that was fully Man. He is The Heir of all Things, The Ultimate High Priest, and The Ruler of All.

God has spoken to us in his Son. So I ask one more time: **Are you listening yet?**

These seven messages show us that we have a complete savior. One that is worth every trial that we face on earth.

So listen to Paul and how we are to live.

Romans 8:1-11 (NASB95)

8 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. ⁵ For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, ⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able *to do so*, ⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. ¹⁰ If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

This is what the early Christians at the time of this writing was needing to hear once again. We are **forgiven, accepted, and loved!** The persecution that they were going through was difficult, but it will all be worth it in the end if they would just remain faithful. Jesus has communicated perfectly God's true nature and character. By knowing Jesus, we know the Father and by believing in Him, we can have eternal life with Him in His glory for eternity.

He is Lord.