

**HEBREWS 1:1-4**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Hebrews chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

I realize that there are some that avoid this letter because they don't feel it relates to them. And others felt that this was written to Jews and the Christians in Western Europe years ago believed that the Church replaced Israel as the people of God. Thus, this book was irrelevant to the Church! And, I am sad to say, that same thought is going around and spreading today!

Let me say this. First of all, the Church has not replaced Israel, it never has, and it will never replace Israel. God will deal once again with this nation and all you have to do is read the Scriptures and you will see that very clearly. Look at Daniel, look at Romans, God is not done with them, or as Paul said, "**And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.'**" Romans 11:26.

Then why do we have so many Old Testament verses and points being made in this letter?

The reason is simple. This letter is written to Jewish believers who were struggling with their faith. Maybe because of the heavy persecution they were facing from non-believing Jews and thus, to go back to Judaism and avoid this persecution was something that they were thinking about.

Not only that, but keep in mind that the Temple is still in existence and thus, as they saw the daily sacrifices being made, as they saw all the other Temple activities going on, it was drawing them back to those practices, that were just temporary, until the Messiah, the perfect sacrifice would come.

Keep in mind that in the early church this was a big issue, a salvation by grace alone or grace and works or the keeping of the Law.

It was so bad that James had to have a church council meeting to discuss this and let the Gentile believers know how salvation comes, by grace through faith or the Law through works.

This issue was going on in Antioch and it brought about much confusion regarding salvation. So Paul, Barnabas and some men from Antioch traveled to Jerusalem to discuss this matter with the church in Jerusalem and with the Apostles.

When they arrived in Jerusalem the church received them and then some believing Pharisees rose up and said, “... **‘It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.’**” Acts 15:5.

So this first council meeting was gathered together for the purpose of determining if the Gentiles needed to keep the Law of Moses to be saved, and for that matter, do Jewish believers need to keep the Law of Moses for salvation?

First of all Peter rose up and shared how God makes no distinction between Jew and Gentile in regard to salvation and why should they place this heavy burden of the Law upon them when they themselves could not keep the Law in the first place!

He tells them, “**But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.**” Acts 15:11.

In other words, just as the Gentiles are saved by Grace through faith, so are the Jews! A powerful point Peter is making here.

After Peter spoke, Paul and Barnabas stood up and shared with them how God's Grace was extended to the Gentiles and just the awesome power of God at work in bringing them to the faith.

After this we see James, the half-brother of Jesus and the head of the church in Jerusalem speak.

Now James comes to the conclusion that salvation is totally by Grace through faith in Jesus Christ and not by the Law through works. And James sends a letter back to the church in Antioch to comfort them and remove this confusion that has come upon them by believers who were not speaking for God, but out of their own hearts and they were wrong.

The results, **“So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. And after they had stayed there for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles. However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.”** Acts 15:30-35.

Notice, they rejoiced when they heard that it was by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and not by the Law mixed with grace!

Now, when was this letter written? It had to be written before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A. D., because the writer speaks of the Temple still being in existence.

In knowing that, this letter was written to Jewish believers, Jewish Christians, somewhere between 64 to 66 A. D.

Also, in Hebrews 13:23 the writer mentions Timothy, which points to an early date of this letter, probably around 64 to 66 A. D.

Again, the reason that this letter was written was to encourage them to not be pulled back into Judaism but to stand strong in Christ and that truly is the theme of this letter, “**. . . let us go on to perfection . . .**” Hebrews 6:1.

The writer did not want them or us to become enslaved in legalism!

Now, the big question is this, “*Who wrote this letter to the Hebrews?*”

There is much speculation to who wrote this letter, from Luke, to Barnabas, to Apollos, some even saying Priscilla along with her husband Aquila wrote Hebrews.

Now I can't be dogmatic about this, even though I am pretty certain that Paul wrote this letter to the Hebrews! And please understand, when I speak about this letter, I probably will be saying that Paul wrote it, so don't be offended.

Why do I think Paul wrote this letter?

Remember, Paul had such a passion for his people, his fellow Jews to not only get saved but to grow in the Lord.

Then, as he starts hearing of them returning to the old ways, back to the Law of Moses for salvation, back to the sacrifices, his heart is stirred so much that he wrote this letter.

Why didn't he sign it like he did with the other letters?

It is possible that he veiled his authorship because the Jews didn't like Paul very much.

Also, there is some similarity in what Paul wrote in other letters to what was written here in Hebrews. (I Corinthians 9:24-25; Galatians 2:2; 5:7; Philippians 3:13-14; II Timothy 4:7-8 with Hebrews 12:1-2)

Also, Paul uses the word “**mediator**” in Galatians 3:19-20 and I Timothy 2:5 and only Paul uses this Greek word and we see it used here in Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24.

We also see what is expressed regarding the life of the writer is seen in the life of Paul. He was a prisoner in Rome – Hebrews 13:19-24. The writer was a friend of Timothy – Hebrews 13:23.

Not only that, but this writer had a tremendous knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, the Old Testament Law and how that pointed to Christ. Paul was such a man!

One writer put it like this in regard to the evidence that Paul wrote this letter to the Hebrews. He wrote,

As to the external evidence, by the fourth century and as early as the late second century, many in both the eastern and western branches of the church held that Paul was the author. Indeed, the earliest known manuscript portion that we possess of Hebrews (labeled by scholars as P<sup>46</sup>), dating from approximately AD 200, is in a collection of Paul’s letters. . . .

According to fourth-century church historian Eusebius, it was second-century Clement of Alexandria’s assertion that Hebrews was originally written in Hebrew by Paul and translated into Greek by his associate, Luke, and purposely left unsigned due to either the negative reputation that Paul had in the Jewish community of the first century or apostolic modesty. . . .

- Steven Ger, *The Book of Hebrews – Christ is Greater*, p. 2

And for me, when I compare what Paul wrote in Romans to what is written here in Hebrews, they both are doctrinal deep.

In Romans Paul showed that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Thus, they need a Savior, they need Jesus to deliver them from their sins.

Here in Hebrews, where these Jews were trying to go back to the Law, Paul shows them that Jesus is superior to all, even all the Old Testament sacrifices.

And you will see that in the outline of this letter as Paul shows us the superiority of Jesus. These chapters break down like this:

**1. SUPERIORITY OF JESUS OVER PROPHETS AND ANGELS – HEBREWS 1-2**

Prophets are just men, created beings and angels are created beings. But Jesus is eternal, He is God!

**2. SUPERIORITY OF JESUS OVER MOSES – HEBREWS 3**

Moses could only bring them to the boarder of the Promise Land, he couldn't bring them in, only Jesus can.

**3. SUPERIORITY OF JESUS OVER JOSHUA – HEBREWS 4**

Joshua brought them into the Promise Land but not into the rest promised by God, only Jesus can do that.

**4. SUPERIORITY OF JESUS OVER THE LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD – HEBREWS 5-10**

The writer will show that Jesus is a better way, a better sacrifice by looking at:

- A. A better priestly order – Hebrews 5-7
- B. A better covenant – Hebrews 8
- C. A better sanctuary – Hebrews 9
- D. A better sacrifice – Hebrews 10

**5. SUPERIORITY OF JESUS OVER THE PRINCIPLE OF FAITH – HEBREWS 11-13**

- A. Examples of faith – Hebrews 11
- B. Endurance of faith – Hebrews 12
- C. Exhortation in the faith – Hebrews 13

That is the basic outline for this letter that we will be following over the next couple of months and we will go over it again as we go through these studies.

Let me share with you just a portion of the introduction to this letter that is in my Bible.

It says:

Many Jewish believers, having stepped out of Judaism into Christianity, want to reverse their course in order to escape persecution by their countrymen. The writer of Hebrews exhorts them to “go on to perfection” (6:1). His appeal is based on the superiority of Christ over the Judaic system. Christ is better than the angels, for they worship Him. He is better than Moses, for He created him. He is better than the Aaronic priesthood, for His sacrifice was once for all time. He is better than the law, for He mediates a better covenant. In short, there is more to be gained in Christ than to be lost in Judaism. Pressing on in Christ produces tested faith, self-discipline, and a visible love seen in good works.

- The New King James Version, Holman, p.1052

And just one more and then we will dig into our study this evening. One writer had this to say regarding the book of Hebrews.

He wrote,

Without question, Hebrews is one of the greatest and most important books in the New Testament. It contains an in-depth study of both the deity and humanity of Jesus the Messiah, covering His earthly ministry to His exaltation at the right hand of God Almighty. This epistle explains the excellence of Christ in His person, priesthood, preeminence, and purpose for coming to Earth.

This epistle was written primarily to Jewish believers, some of whom were thinking about returning to Judaism (Heb. 10:23-25). It encourages them to go on to maturity in Christ (6:1-2) and shows that Christ is better than what Judaism had to offer (1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24). By contrast, Hebrews shows that Christ is superior to prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron, Melchizedek, the Tabernacle, sacrifices, priesthood, and the Old Testament saints. In other words, the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus (cf. Lk. 24:27, 44).

Even today, the book of Hebrews reminds Jewish believers that Christ is superior to anything they had in Judaism and that He is sufficient for every area of their spiritual lives. The first three verses provide irrefutable proof that Jesus Christ is God and heir of all things.

- David M. Levy, Hebrews A Commentary, p. 17

Make no mistake about it, this is a powerful letter and if anyone is struggling with keeping the Law, with the Hebrew Roots movement, this letter should expose the falseness of those things and show you that Jesus is superior to all, and we are saved by grace, not by the Law.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Hebrews chapter 1, starting in verse 1 as Paul shows us the superiority of Jesus, God's supreme revelation and moves into the superiority of Jesus over the prophets and then the angels, and eventually, over all!



## HEBREWS 1

### VERSES 1-2a

I like the way that Paul opens up this letter. He just starts by saying, “**God.**”

What more can you say when you begin with a statement like that?

And for Paul, there is no attempt to prove the existence of God or to explain God but it assumes that as you look at this world you will see that there had to be a creator, there had to be a designer and thus, there had to be a God!

It is as Psalm 19 reminds us, “**The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, And rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.**” Psalm 19:1-6.

Max Planck, winner of the Nobel Prize and one of the founders of modern physics, wrote, “According to everything taught by the exact sciences about the immense realm of nature, a certain order prevails – one independent of the human mind . . . this order can be formulated in terms of purposeful activity. There is evidence of an intelligent order of the universe to which both man and nature are subservient” And that is just the heavens!

And thus, David is saying that creation itself is crying out that there is a designer, a creator, for you only have to look and listen to what they are trying to show you. In fact, Paul, in Romans chapter 1, tells us that those that suppress this truth, the truth that nature is showing them, that God has revealed to them through His creation, will be judged accordingly, they are without excuse for nature testifies of the existence of God. (Romans 1:18-23).

Now if you reject the creator God what do you hope for, what do you place your trust in? Do you put your trust in man, or science or what?

It is as Robert Jastrow wrote, “For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”

May we look to our Creator God and enjoy the beauty that He has created, even though it has been tainted by sin, it still is beautiful to behold!

Now in saying all that, what other book opens up like the book of Hebrews?

The book of Genesis tells us, “**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**” Genesis 1:1.

Again, not trying to prove there is a God, but common sense tells you there must be a God. And the key here is that if you don’t approach the book of Genesis believing that “**In the beginning God**” then you are going to be in trouble and the same is true here in the book of Hebrews.

The Bible says, “**The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ . . .**” Psalm 14:1.

I think that the writer of Genesis and the writer of Hebrews had that in mind when they penned these words, that you are a fool to deny the existence of God and thus, they begin writing the fact that there is a God and it is God who has done these things; that He does exist!

You see, even if you did not have a Bible you can know that there is a God by looking at nature because nature declares this and the idea of God is not something that should be foreign to man.

Paul tells us in Romans 1:18-20, **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”**

That is the reality; man is without excuse because as you look at this world you see that these things did not just happen by random chance!

Let me show you what I mean, and this is just one illustration at how man has to suppress the truth and deny there is a God. We are told,

Mechanical gears – like those found in clocks – have been around since the Greeks are thought to have invented them around 300 B. C. But scientists have now discovered a small hopping insect equipped with a set of living gears!

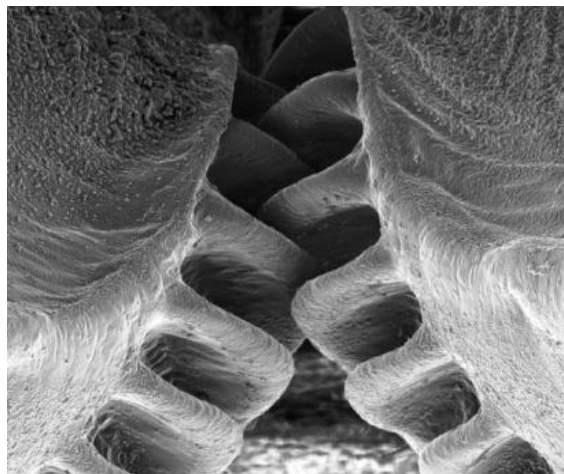
University of Cambridge biologists discovered that *Issus coleoptratus* have an intricate gearing system that locks their back legs together. This allows both legs to spring at the exact same instant, propelling the tiny creatures straight forward. If one of the bug's legs jumped a fraction of a second earlier than the other, this would push the insect off course to the left or right.

The gears are located at the top of the insects' hind legs and include 10 to 12 tapered teeth. The teeth of the gear lock together neatly, and they even have curves at the base, a design incorporated into man-made mechanical gears to reduce wear over time.

Researcher Gregory Sutton said, "We usually think of gears as something that we see in human-designed machinery. . . . These gears are not designed; they are evolved – representing high speed and precision machinery evolved for synchronization in the animal world."

What we'd like to ask him is how did this insect survive for thousands of years while it couldn't jump straight? No, there is a much simpler explanation that scientists might see if they weren't so biased against a Creator. The gears were designed by God, who gave all of His creatures – including you and me – all of the intricate parts we need!

- <https://bit.ly/2W0jet9>



Do you see how they have to suppress the truth to believe there is no God and everything happened by random chance happenings!

You see, that is not science that is faith. There is no evidence that this ever happened by random chance! But as you look at the design, the beauty, the variety of life, there had to be a creator, there had to be a designer, there had to be a God and there is!

So we start out with God and we see that He is not distant from us or trying to hide Himself from us but God spoke to us in many different ways and He spoke to us through the prophets who then shared the words of God with us, or specifically here the idea is that they spoke to the Jewish people.

So, who spoke in times past?

God spoke!

How did He speak to man?

He spoke in various ways – through angels, through men, by the mouth of a donkey, by illustrations such as Ezekiel lying on his left side for 390 days showing the iniquity of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and then on his right side for 40 days showing the iniquity of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Jeremiah had a sash that he buried in the river Euphrates showing how this once profitable garment was now unprofitable and it illustrated how Judah and Jerusalem had become unprofitable because of their sin, their filth, He spoke by a burning bush, a still small voice and-so-on.

Almighty God, the creator of heaven and earth made the choice to speak to us. Think of it like this,

We can't expect the bug in the bottle to understand the little boy that put it there anymore than we can expect the natural man with his natural capacities to understand the supernatural God - unless that God chose to condescend and reveal Himself to man.

- John MacArthur

And how do we know that this is God speaking to us?

Because we have the prophetic word made surer than what we can see with our eyes. God has shown us what is going to happen before it happens to show that He is God and thus, we need to listen to Him.

And as important as the prophets were in telling us what God wanted us to know, listen to what we are told once again here in Hebrews 1:2, "**has in these last days spoken to us by His Son . . .**"

You see, now, in these last days, God speaks to us through Jesus who is called the Word of God.

In John 1:1-2 we are told, "**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.**"

Thus, the last days began with God becoming flesh and dwelling among us and will continue on to His second coming.

In fact, the Jews understood that phrase to mean, "*The last days of this present evil age of man's rebellion in preparation for the Messiah coming to establish the Kingdom Age upon the earth.*"

Now in saying that, who is speaking to us through angels or other things today then?

Listen to what Paul tells us in II Corinthians 11:13-15, **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”**

We need to be careful and use the Word of God as our plum line or we will be deceived!

Folks, if Jesus is the Word of God, then as we read the Word of God and the Holy Spirit opens the Word of God up to our hearts, we are hearing from Jesus!

We are living in a day when spiritualism, occultism has moved into the church and it is because we don't listen to God's voice, we are looking other places.

Thus, Yoga, Transcendental Meditation, Hypnosis, Tarot cards, witches, eastern mysticism, all kinds of New Age teachings and the like are brought right into the church!

We hear of angelic messengers speaking to people, the virgin Mary speaking, we even have *Jesus Calling* and yet, it is not Him who is calling because what is written in that book goes contrary to the Scriptures.

Remember what we read, **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son . . .”**

Hebrews 1:1-2a.

I like what Guthrie said regarding this, “If men cannot learn about God from the Son, no amount of prophetic voices or actions would convince them.” How true!

Also, in I Peter 1:10-11 we are told, **“Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.”**

In other words, God revealed things to the prophets that they wrote down but did not fully understand for it was not for them but another generation.

For example, in Daniel 12:8-9 we are told, **“Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, ‘My lord, what shall be the end of these things?’ And he said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.’”**

But now, in these last days God has spoken to us and has opened our understanding to these things.

Thus, the book is complete, despite what the Mormons may say or anyone else who wants to add to or take away from the Scriptures.

In fact, the book of Revelation gives this warning to those who want to add or take away from the Scriptures, **“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”** Revelation 22:18-19.

I am amazed at the pride, the audacity, the arrogance of those who do add or take away from the Scriptures and making Bible translations that edit the deity of Jesus, the prophecies of Jesus!



And the warning of Jesus to those who try to lead people away from Him, “**But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.**” Mark 9:42.

Before we move on, let me share this with you. We are told,

As we study Hebrews together, we must keep in mind that our purpose is not to get lost in curious doctrinal details. Nor is our purpose to attack or defend some pet doctrine. Our purpose is to hear God speak in Jesus Christ, and to heed that Word.

We want to echo the prayer of the Greeks: “Sir, we would see Jesus” (John12:21).

If our purpose is to know Christ better and exalt Him more, then whatever differences we may have in our understanding of the book will be forgotten in our worship of Him.

- The Wiersbe Bible Commentary, NT, p. 805

Exactly, we want to see Jesus and remember what Jesus said, “**You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.**” John 5:39-40.

The Scriptures are testifying of Jesus, they are pointing us to Jesus and thus, the choice is yours, to see Jesus and receive Him into your life or reject Him and reject eternal life with Him!

### VERSES 2b-3

Here we see Paul give to us a sevenfold description of the Son, Jesus Christ showing us His superiority over all before he speaks of His superiority over specific things, like angels.

I like the way that one writer summed this up for us. He wrote,

Someone has said that Jesus Christ came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman. He put on humanity that we might put on divinity. He became Son of Man that we might become sons of God. He was born contrary to the laws of nature, lived in poverty, was reared in obscurity, and only once crossed the boundary of the land in which He was born – and that in His childhood.

He had no wealth or influence and had neither training nor education in the world's schools. His relatives were inconspicuous and uninfluential. In infancy He startled a king. In boyhood He puzzled the learned doctors. In manhood He ruled the course of nature. He walked upon the billows and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services.

He never wrote a book and yet all the libraries of the world could not hold the books about Him.

He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all songwriters together.

He never founded a college, yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as He has.

He never practiced medicine and yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors have healed broken bodies.

This Jesus Christ is the star of astronomy, the rock of geology, the lion and the lamb of zoology, the harmonizer of all discords, and the healer of all diseases.

Throughout history great men have come and gone, yet He lives on.

Herod could not kill Him.

Satan could not seduce Him.

Death could not destroy Him, and the grave could not hold Him.

- John MacArthur

That is our Jesus! And look at this sevenfold description of Jesus Christ.

### ***1. HEIR OF ALL THINGS***

This means that the Father has given all things to the Son and He will shortly reign over all creation.

Jesus is heir to all things that God possess and in Colossians 1:16 Paul not only speaks of Jesus creating all things but that they are all His.

Interestingly enough, Paul tells us in Romans 8:16-17, **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”** We are joint heirs with Christ!

### ***2. HE MADE THE WORLDS***

Paul is speaking of the Son being the creator of all things. In Colossians 1:16 we are told, **“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.”**

Sir John C. Eccles, who is a Nobel laureate in neurophysiology, said that the odds against the right combination of circumstances occurring to have evolved intelligent life on earth are highly improbable, and yet, because he rejects God he believes it did occur but could never happen again! (Evolution and the Conscious Self, in the Human Mind: A discussion at the Nobel Conference, 1967)

You can't look at creation, at life and say that it just happened unless you suppress the truth that there is a creator God that did all this and when He did, it was very good. Sin has darkened what God has created.

We are told in John 1:3, "**All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.**"

### ***3. BRIGHTNESS OF HIS GLORY***

No man has ever seen God and yet, in John 14:8-9 we are told, "**Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.' 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'?'**"

In other words, Jesus is an exact representation of the Father and as we look at Jesus, He radiates the Father back to us.

One author put it like this, "Christ is to the Father what the rays of the sun are to the sun. He is the radiance of God's glory. As it is impossible to separate the rays from the sun, it is also impossible to separate Christ's glory from the nature of God."

Then why don't people see the Father?

Paul tells us in II Corinthians 4:4, **“whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”**

But for those that do believe, for those that see the Father through Jesus, we see Paul tell us in II Corinthians 4:6, **“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”**

And keep in mind that this **“brightness of His glory”** refers to the Shekinah glory of God that dwelt in the Tabernacle and Temple.

Jesus’ full glory was veiled with humanity while on the earth, but we got a preview of His Second Coming glory on the Mount of Transfiguration!

#### ***4. EXPRESS IMAGE OF HIS PERSON***

We dealt with that to some degree in the last section, but the idea is an exact likeness, an exact copy or reproduction of the Father.

Paul said in Colossians 2:9, **“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”**

If you want to know what the Godhead is all about, look to Jesus!

And in John 10:30 Jesus said, **“I and My Father are one.”**

The word that Jesus uses here for **“one”** is *Hen* in the Greek. It is not saying that they are the exact same person but one in essence, thus, by seeing Jesus they have also seen the Father!

And in Colossians 1:15 we again are told this truth, **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”**

### ***5. UPHOLDING ALL THINGS BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER***

The Greek word for upholds means “*to support, to maintain,*” and it is used here in the present tense, implying continuous action, everything in the universe is sustained right now by Jesus Christ.

There is Coulomb’s Law of Electricity that states that like charges repel each other. The atom is made up of protons in its nucleus and they are like charges. Thus, they should repel each other, blow the atom apart, but they don’t, why is that?

Scientists don’t know the answer, they have made many speculations and they do know that something is holding them together, like “*atomic glue*” but they are not sure what that is.

Listen to this. We are told,

One of the continuing puzzles of science is the question of what holds the universe together. We know that everything is made up of tiny atoms that consist of electrons buzzing around a nucleus.

Why doesn’t the centrifugal force of those orbiting electrons cause atoms to fly apart? Scientists talk hopefully of a “grand unified theory” of forces that they hope will someday explain what holds the universe together, but scientists are still a long way from such a theory.

Moreover, as the great physicist-mathematician Stephen Hawking has pointed out, testing such a theory would require a particle accelerating machine “as big as the solar system,” and such a machine is “unlikely to be funded in the present economic climate” (Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, 74)

What holds our universe together? Science cannot answer and can only point to unnamed, undiscovered, unknown forces.

- Ray Stedman, *Adventuring Through Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians*, p. 29

That was the most brilliant mind in the world, he doesn't know and we would need an accelerator as big as the universe, come on, get real, I don't care how much money you have, how in the world would you build it?

So, who holds all things together?

Jesus does as Paul reminds us in Colossians 1:17, “**And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.**”

The Amplified Bible puts it this way, “**And He Himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist (cohere, are held together). [Prov 8:22-31.]**”

The Living Bible says, “**He was before all else began and it is his power that holds everything together.**”

The Son not only created all things into existence, but He sustains them, keeps them going.

Scientist A. K. Morrison tells us that the conditions for life to exist on the earth demand billions of minute, interrelated circumstances occurring simultaneously and if it didn't, life would be over!

Praise the Lord that our God holds all things together, even our lives!

## ***6. HE HAD BY HIMSELF PURGED OUR SINS***

Notice, it is not that we can purify ourselves or even help in this process, He alone did this by paying in full the penalty for our sins on the cross of Calvary.

Paul tells us in Hebrews chapter 9 starting in verse 12, **“Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? . . . not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another - He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”** Hebrews 9:12-14, 25-28.

Peter also tells us in I 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, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”**

But, if you don't appropriate that free gift into your life, if you reject Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you will die in your sins!

### ***7. SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE MAJESTY ON HIGH***

This speaks of His exaltation and to the Jews, this was an important point that we might miss.



Keep in mind that in the Tabernacle and later the Temple there were different pieces of furniture, like the seven branched oil burning lamp, the Table of Showbread, the Golden Altar. But there was no chair, not even one!

And the reason there was no chair was because the priest's work was never finished.

The blood of animals could not take away sin, it could only temporarily cover sin until the next sin was committed.

Consequently, the priests never sat because their work was never done, that is, until Jesus offered Himself for our sins.

You see, Jesus, the Great High Priest, came and offered Himself as a sacrifice and He now sits down, why?

Because the work is finished, the complete sacrifice for our sins was made and paid in full. Jesus now accomplished what could not be accomplished under the old covenant once and for all!

Because of what He has done we are told in Psalm 103:12, "**As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.**"

And in Isaiah 43:25 we are told, "**I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.**"

You see, that could never happen under the old covenant, but it has happened in the new covenant!

And notice what Peter tells us in I Peter 3:18, "**For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.**"

You see, once for sins, it is finished, paid in full by Jesus and thus, He is seated at the right hand of the Father!

How important that was for these Jewish believers to hear and apply to their lives. They were not to go back to the old sacrifices that could never take away your sins, but to Jesus, the perfect sacrifice who has come and taken away all our sins!

One writer summed this up for us like this. He wrote,

Here we have God's portrait of Jesus Christ. We have seen the preeminent Christ in all His offices. We have seen Him as prophet, the final spokesman for God.

We have seen Him as priest, atoning and interceding.

We have seen Him as King, controlling, sustaining, and seated on a throne.

This is our Lord Jesus Christ.

A man who says that Jesus Christ is anything less than this is a fool and makes God out a liar. God says that His Son is preeminent in all things.

What does this mean to us?

It means everything.

To reject Him is to be shut out from His presence into an eternal hell.

But to receive Jesus Christ is to enter into all that He is and has. There are no other choices.

- John MacArthur

So, as we have seen, ***JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO THE PROPHETS!***

VERSE 4

This verse begins the section where Paul shows the superiority of Jesus over the angels.

Was this a problem?

Yes, it was!

You see, the Jews took angelic mediation very seriously. It was part of their heritage, it was a part of their boasting, that God's heavenly armies (angels) were a part of their national life, they spoke to their fathers and they fought for the nation of Israel in battle.

But here can be the problem, as Paul, in Colossians 2:18-19 warns us, **“Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.”**

Also, in Galatians 1:8 we are told, **“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”**

The worship of angels is wrong because Jesus is superior to angels.

In Deuteronomy 33:2 we see the old covenant came by the hands of angels to Moses, but a better covenant came by Jesus!

Is this a problem today?

Remember several years ago the angel craze that swept across this nation, nothing about Jesus but everything about angels, how people were *“Touched by an Angel!”* That was wrong, and I think that has died down recently, but we are to worship God alone, not His creation!

And just look at some of the cults today and how they picture Jesus.

In Mormonism Jesus is not God but the spirit brother of Lucifer.

Who is Lucifer?

According to Ezekiel chapter 28, verses 11-17, he was “**the anointed cherub**” who rebelled against God.

Thus, Lucifer was an angelic being, which makes Jesus an angel according to Mormonism!

But we have seen that is wrong because Jesus is superior to angels, He is God not a created being like angels are.

In fact, Jesus created angels and thus, Jesus and Satan are not the same, as some like to tell us.

Satan’s equal is Michael the Archangel and they have done battle over the body of Moses and will do battle again, as the book of Revelation tells us!

And so, Jesus is not an angel, He is not a created being, He is eternal, He is God!

The Jehovah Witnesses believe that Jesus is not Almighty God but the first creation of God.

In fact, they believe that Jesus is none other than Michael the Archangel, He was an angelic being before God brought Him forth in a human body.

Again, that goes contrary to what Paul just said here, that Jesus is superior to angels.

In fact, as we will see next time, Jesus is God, the second person of the Holy Trinity. He is eternal, has always existed and He not only created all things but by Him they consist!

And here we see that Paul says that Jesus has a more excellent name than the angels.

What does that mean?

First of all, in our culture we don’t put much stock in a person’s name, but in the Jewish culture they did.

And the writer wants to show how the name of Jesus, the Son of God is far superior to any angel!

And Paul is going to continue on and expound on this point that Jesus is superior to angels and how His name is more excellent than that of angels.

But, as you can tell, we will not finish up Hebrews chapter 1 tonight, but I hope I have laid out the ground work for you, showing you the superiority of Jesus over all of creation, and next time we will specifically look at the superiority of Jesus over angels!