

Hope Christian Church
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Sermon Series: *Hebrews: The Supremacy of Christ*



God Has Spoken To Us By His Son

The Supremacy of the Son of God

Introduction

Today we begin a new sermon series through the Letter to the Hebrews.

Why should we turn our attention to Hebrews?

First, *because it is unflinchingly focused on Jesus*. This letter is laser-focused on the person and work of Christ. The author wants you to know who Jesus is and what he has done. He also desires that you see him as the absolutely supreme Son of God. In the mind of the author there is no one like Jesus and you need to feel the weight of this truth so that you too can

delight in him with all your heart. Given this focus on Jesus and the primacy given to him, I'm entitling the series, "Hebrews: The Supremacy of Christ."

Secondly, *this letter is deeply rooted in the Old Testament (OT)*. The coming of Christ—the anointed messiah—is the fulfillment of all the promised blessings and prophecies of the OT. Accurately fulfilling prophecies is the singular qualification for determining whether or not someone has truly come from God the Father.¹ Jesus fulfilled at least a hundred specific OT prophecies and the author of Hebrews will refer to the OT more often than any other New Testament (NT) author except Matthew. He prefers the Pentateuch and the Psalms. He "quotes the Pentateuch twelve times and alluding to it without direct quotation thirty-nine times."² He makes reference, either by quote or allusion, to the other parts of the OT another 30 times. That's a total of over 80 allusions or quotes from the OT. Only Matthew refers to the OT more and he does so 97 times.

The Bible Project Introduction Video

To get us started, I'll let the guys at The Bible Project give you an introduction to the book. (The full video is 8:16. Watch it [here](#), although I'll only be referencing the first 3 minutes.)

Date

In case you're wondering, in addition to the author, the date for this letter is also unknown. However, it almost certainly was written before A.D. 70, since the author writes as if the sacrificial system was still in place. Timothy is also mentioned, along with some fairly severe persecution of Christians. Thus we should probably think of the letter being written before the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, but probably not much before that since that would have been the time when persecution of Christians was intensifying. So a good guess would be somewhere between A.D. 65-70.

Author

We do not know for certain who wrote it. For most of the history of the church it was assumed that the apostle Paul wrote it, but there are good reasons for doubting this. For starters, in every other letter Paul wrote, he always introduces himself. There is no such introduction in this letter. Second, the author of Hebrews is a second generation Christian (2:3). He learned about Jesus from the apostles. Paul never talks of himself in this way. In fact, he does the opposite. Paul bases his authority as an apostle on the fact that he was personally commissioned by Christ to go preach the gospel. So who wrote it? Only God knows, but God has seen to it that this letter has been handed down to us. Therefore, we will benefit from it if we will receive it as having come to us from God himself.

¹ Isa. 41:22-23; Jer. 28:9.

² Leon Morris, "Hebrews," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 7.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (ESV)

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

May the Lord work in us through his Word, the Letter to the Hebrews, as we make our way through this letter. This morning we'll tackle the first four verses.

Hebrews 1:1-4 (ESV)

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

God Speaks and Has Spoken

The first observation that can be made is that **God is a God who speaks and who has spoken.** The author takes us back into the past. He reminds us that God spoke to "*our fathers by the prophets.*" We may be tempted to think that God does not speak. There certainly are times when God seems to be silent, but the Bible stands as a witness against this deceptive lie. *God is not a silent God.* He speaks and he has spoken. From the opening sentence to the final verse of the Bible, God's words are recorded. He speaks this world into existence and the Bible closes with the words of Jesus declaring, "*Surely I am coming soon*" (Rev. 22:20).

At Many Times In Many Ways

The author notes that God has spoken "*at many times and in many ways.*" You know this is true if you've read your Bible. Sometimes God spoke directly to people, as he apparently did to Adam and Abraham. God spoke to Joseph through dreams. God spoke to Moses through a burning bush. He spoke to the people of Israel through a thick, dark cloud. He spoke to Samuel by a voice in the night. God spoke to Elijah through a still small whisper. To other prophets he spoke through visions. To the priests he spoke through Urim & Thummim. To Jonah he spoke through a tempestuous storm. Sometimes he spoke to individuals through other people. To some of the kings, simply by reading his word God was speaking. God has spoken through *at many times in many ways.* God is not a silent god. He speaks and he has spoken.

In These Last Days

However, "*in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.*" Finally, God has sent his Son to speak. This is something completely different. God is doing things in a different way. And the coming of the Son has changed time. The coming of the Son has begun "*the last days.*" The

coming of the Son is the beginning of the final stage of time. We do not know how long the last days will last, but the last days began at the coming of Jesus.

Peter was the first to connect the last days with the coming of Christ. He did this on the day of Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on that day, Peter quoted the prophet Joel saying,

Acts 2:17 (ESV)

"In the last days it shall be, that God will pour out his Spirit on all flesh..."³

Peter noted that with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the last days had arrived. Paul⁴ spoke of the last days, as did James.⁵

The times are changing. In times past, in many different ways, God spoke through the prophets. But now, at the closing of time, *in these last days, God has spoken by his Son*. In the past God spoke indirectly. Now God has spoken directly. It is the same God who is speaking, but he has chosen a different way to speak. The latter way is better than the former. The former is not irrelevant, but the latter is better, far better. God speaking through his Son is far superior to his speaking through clouds, dreams, fire, visions, and prophets. Why is it better? It is better because of the person through whom God is speaking.

The Son of God is superior to all other messengers. He is superior to prophets. The Son is in a different class entirely from the prophets. Jesus is not a mere prophet. He is Son. Jesus can be called a prophet in the sense that he speaks on behalf of God. He teaches God's word and explains God's law. However, if you think Jesus is merely a prophet—and this is what Islam teaches about Jesus, that he's just a prophet—then you're missing the most important fact about who Jesus is. Jesus is not a mere spokesmen for God. He is **Son** of God!

He is related to God in a way that no other human is. He shares his nature with God. He is directly descended from God. God is his Father. Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived and his parentage came about as the direct work of the powerful Holy Spirit. Jesus is vastly superior to any and all prophets because only he is Son. No other prophet can make this claim. No other prophet was born of a virgin. Jesus alone is the Son of God Almighty.

Eight Reasons for the Supremacy of the Son Over Prophets

The author now moves on to offer eight reasons why the Son is superior to all other prophets and messengers from God. If you need some evidence for why you should put 100% of your faith and trust in Jesus, then here are eight solid reasons. If you need rational reasons for why

³ Cf. Joel 2:28-32.

⁴ 2 Tim. 3:1.

⁵ Jam. 5:3.

Jesus is the Sovereign Son of God, then here are eight reasons. If you need evidence that Jesus is Son and just a mere prophet, then get out your pen and paper (both are in the seat pocket in front of you). We'll get through only seven today. The eighth will lead us into the next step in his argument, so we'll save that for next week. Here are eight reasons for why the Son of God is superior to all other spokesmen of God.

1) He is the Heir of All Things

The first reason Jesus is superior to prophets is because the Son has been "*appointed heir of all things*." Use of the word 'heir' does not necessarily imply the receiving of property through the death of another. Rather,

In biblical Greek, the word 'heir,' (κληρονόμος) does not, unless (as in Heb. 9:16f.) the context so specifies, imply the transmission of property by a testator, but more generally the idea of taking permanent possession, especially of something given by God.⁶

Like the Promised Land, for example. The Promised Land was an inheritance the children of received not because of anyone died and left it to them, but because God gave it to them. And so, among the final words of Jesus to his disciples, he said,

Matthew 28:18 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

All authority was given to him by God the Father. God appointed Jesus as the permanent possessor of all authority and all things. He has been appointed by God as the one person who was worthy enough to receive all that God promised. By virtue of his obedience through life and death, God has demonstrated his unique favor toward his Son by raising him from the dead.⁷

Jesus alone has earned the right to be the *heir of all things and all authority*. Thus, only through him alone can all the promises of God given in the OT⁸ come to us. Jesus alone has been appointed the heir of God's kingdom. There is no prophet about whom anything like this can be said. Not Enoch. Not Abraham. Not Isaac. Not Jacob. Not Joseph. Not Moses. Not Elijah. Not even John the Baptist, about whom Jesus said,

Matthew 11:9, 11 (ESV)

"A prophet? Yes, I tell you, [John was] more than a prophet."

⁶ Paul Ellingworth, [*The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1993), 94–95.

⁷ Acts 17:31.

⁸ 2 Cor. 1:20.

"I tell you, of those born of women, there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist,"

Not even John is called "the heir of all things." John was the greatest prophet who ever lived and yet not even he attained the honor of being called "the heir of all things." This honor belongs to Jesus alone. That he is the heir of all things is the first piece of evidence to the supremacy of Jesus above all prophets and previous messengers of God.

2) Through Him God Created the World

The second reason the Son is superior to all other prophets is because *he predates all prophets and he created them*. The Son has been around longer than any prophet, priest, or king. The Son is eternal. The author states that the Son is the one, *"through whom God created the world."* The Son, even though he is fully human, is much more than just a mere man. He is eternal. The Son is co-Creator with God. God created the world *through* him. The apostle Paul said it like this.

Colossians 1:16 (ESV)

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

The apostle John, who lived and walked with Jesus, said it this way.

John 1:3 (ESV)

All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Anything that exists began to exist through the agency of the Son. God created all things and he brought them into being through the Son. God commanded and the Son effected. God spoke and the Son went to work. You and I and every material thing came to exist through the work of the Son. This can be said of no prophet. Not Joseph Smith nor Mohammad. The Son of God is supreme and through him and him alone this universe came into existence.

3) The Radiance of the Glory of God

The third reason for the supremacy of the Son over all prophets is because *"he is the radiance of the glory of God."*

The Son of God is the shining out of God's brightness. He is the going forth of God's beauty and the emanation of his goodness. Recall what John wrote about Jesus.

John 1:14 (ESV)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

If you want to know what God is like then you must look at the Son. Jesus is to God what the sunbeams are to the sun. Sunbeams are the shining out of the brightness of the sun. Jesus is the shining out of the glory of God. Remember what Jesus said to his disciples.

John 14:9 (ESV)

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

What does the glory of God look like? It looks like Jesus. If you ever wonder “What is God like?” Then you have only to look at the Son in order to see him. Jesus was so full of the Spirit of God that he always acted in way that rightly represented God the Father. Jesus said, “*I always do the things that are pleasing to the Father*” (Jn. 8:29).

All the good that Jesus did, was an outward reflection of the glory of the Father. Whenever he healed, restored, reconciled, drove out demons, preached with power, put self-righteous to shame, and lifted up the faithful lowly, all those actions and words were radiating the glory of God the Father. No prophet ever did these things to the degree of the Son. No prophet ever even came close. Jesus is vastly superior to any and every prophet. The Son is the radiance of the glory of God.

4) The Exact Imprint of God's Nature

The fourth reason that the Son is superior to all other messengers and prophets is because “*he is the exact imprint of God's nature.*”

The word translated “exact imprint” is the Greek word *charaktēr* (Χαρακτήρ), which referred to the mark left from an impression, like the image left on a coin after it has been struck by a die.⁹

The word translated “nature” is the Greek word *hypóstaseōs* (ὑπόστασις), which literally means “that which stands under.”¹⁰ It refers to the material substance of which a thing is made. It points to the very essence of a thing, or its essential nature.

These two words together point to the fact that the Son is like God the Father in every way. He precisely represents him in every way. In fact, he is like the Father to such a degree that we can say that he is of the same **substance**, or that he has the very same **nature** as God. In other words, the two are so similar that they can be thought of as

⁹ Leon Morris, “[Hebrews](#),” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 14.

¹⁰ Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1993), 99.

essentially one. Even though there are differences. God is Spirit and therefore has no flesh and bones, while Jesus has both. Yet, in essential nature and character, they are the same. They love and hate the same things. They are unified in purpose and mission. They are always agreed and never in disagreement. They have the same opinions and plans. Jesus made this claim.

John 10:30 (ESV)

*"I and the Father are one."*¹¹

No other prophet ever dared to speak like this. Jesus is not merely a prophet. He is immensely more than a prophet. He is superior to every prophet and every man. *The Son is the exact imprint of God's nature.* There is no one like him.

5) The Sustainer of the Universe

The fifth reason that the Son is superior to the prophets is because *"he upholds the universe by the word of his power."* The Son sustains the continued existence and functioning of this universe. This is certainly the exclusive prerogative of the Son and no mere prophet.

The word *'sustains'* has the meaning "to prevent from falling."¹² The sun, moon, & stars rise and set because the Son sustains them. This earth continues to rotate on its axis and maintain its 23 degree angle because Jesus commands it to. Winter comes and goes, along with every other season, because of the power of his word. Jesus gives the word, and the world and everything in this universe carries out his command. We are here this morning, living and breathing, because he has commanded it to be so. The Son is the *sustainer* of all things.

And not merely a sustainer, as in he set it in motion and then stepped back to watch it all unfold from a distance. The word *'sustains'* has the notion of "carrying it along toward a goal."¹³ In fact, the word translated *'power'* is *dynamis*, from which we have our word dynamite. The Son, by his powerful word, is continually keeping this world moving as he carries it along and directs it towards its appointed goal by his dynamic power.

Colossians 1:17 (ESV)

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

No prophet does this. No teacher claims this kind of power. Neither the Bible nor any other ancient holy text comes anywhere close to making such a claim of any prophet. The Son is

¹¹ Cf. Jn. 5:19; 14:9; 17:22.

¹² Paul Ellingworth, [*The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1993), 100.

¹³ Leon Morris, [*"Hebrews,"*](#) in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 14.

much more than a prophet. He, along with God the Father, is sustaining the very existence of this universe through his powerful word. The Son is superior to all men.

6) The Purifier of the Putrid

The sixth reason to understand the Son to be superior to the prophets and other messengers of God is because he alone **"has made purification for sins."** The Son should be sweet to you because he is the purifier of the putrid. He is the purifier of sinners. God hates sin.¹⁴ Sin is death.¹⁵ Putrid is a word that describes the smell of death. It is from sin and death and their disgusting odor that we need to be cleansed.

The Son has made purification for sinners. In him the putrid can be purified. The Son has accomplished what no prophet or priest has ever been able to do. He perfectly atoned for sin. He offered himself as a sacrifice. He willingly laid down his life¹⁶ in order to purify anyone who will trust in him. Later, in chapter 10, the author will tell us,

Hebrews 10:14 (ESV)

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

That "single offering" was the offering up of his own body at Calvary. He gave himself up for sinners to cleanse them from sin. We know that he was successful in cleansing from sin because God raised him up from the dead. When purification had been accomplished and the full payment paid, then God raised him up proving that purification for sins had been made. The Son alone accomplished this. No priest ever did this. No prophet did this. Only the Son alone secured purification from sin. For this reason the Son is far superior to any prophet.

7) The Seated Sovereign

Finally, the seventh reason the Son is superior to the prophets and to be trusted is because he is the seated sovereign. The Son, this very day, is **"seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high."** When Jesus was asked by the high priest if he was the Christ, Jesus responded by saying,

Luke 22:69 (ESV)

"from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God."

When the Son finished 'making purification for sins,' he then took a seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. When his work was finished, he sat down. His mission was accomplished and his labor finished. From the cross he cried out, **"It is finished"** (Jn. 19:30). He sat down to show that he had done all of the Father's will.

¹⁴ Prov. 6:16-19.

¹⁵ Dt. 24:16; Rom. 5:12; 6:16, 23; 7:13.

¹⁶ Jn. 10:18.

The '*Majesty on high*,' is simply another way of referring to God the Father. The Son is seated at the right hand of God. He is with his Father seated on the throne of the universe. The right hand is the place of honor. There's only one place at God's right hand and the Son is seated in that place. There is no other person or being who holds this honor. There are not multiple seats at the Father's right hand. There is only one and there the Son is seated.

He alone is the way to God.¹⁷ All religions do not lead happily to God. All religions do lead to God in the sense that after we die we must stand before him who created us in order to give an account of our lives. Everyone will stand before God as judge, but only those who go to him through the Son, through Jesus, will go to him as welcoming Father and not as condemning Judge. Only through Jesus can the condemnation of God against our sin be escaped. The Son alone is seated at the right hand of God. No prophet is seated there. No priest is seated there. No guru, no imam, no father, pastor, pope, preacher, or patriarch is seated at God's right hand. The Son alone is seated there. The only road that leads to salvation is through Christ. All other roads lead to condemnation. Therefore, the Son alone is superior to all other prophets and messengers from God.

The eight reason Jesus is superior has to do with his name, but we'll take that up next week.

Conclusion

This is what God has spoken to us in these last days. The way to the Father is only through the Son, whom he loves. Do you hear what God is saying to us today?

My Son alone is the heir of all things. My Son alone is the one through whom I created the world. My Son alone is the radiance of my glory. My Son alone is the exact imprint of my nature. My Son alone upholds the universe by his powerful word. My Son alone has made purification for sins. My Son alone is seated at my right hand.

Do you hear what God is saying to us about his sweet Son? Do you rejoice in who he is and what he has done? Oh, please do not think of him merely as a prophet. Treasure him as the beloved Son of God whom the Father has exalted to his right hand because he alone has made purification for sins. Cherish him as your Savior. Respect him as your Lord who upholds you by the word of his power. Prize him as precious for it is through him we and all the universe came into existence.

¹⁷ Acts 4:12 "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."