

### **God's Final Word Is Jesus Christ**

I believe God directed me to work our way through **The Epistle to the Hebrews** for one main reason. God the Father wants us to see Jesus Christ clearly and in all His glory. We will not see Jesus physically until we die or He returns; however, seek to see Him clearly with the eyes of your heart and He will illuminate your soul. If the Lord grants this vision to us through His Word, we will never be the same. To see the Lord is to be changed. I pray that our imagined ideas of the Lord will fade away as we see clearly the Lord of Scripture high and lifted up as the prophet Isaiah said, **“In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.”** (Isaiah 6:1) When Isaiah saw Jesus in the Temple he was forever changed. Isaiah heard the angels singing and as they sang the foundation of the temple shook because of the glory of the Lord. Immediately, Isaiah realized a mortal sinful man was in the presence of deity and he believed he would die. However, the Lord was gracious to him and was going to use Isaiah to be His spokesman – God’s prophet. He cleansed Isaiah’s sin and gave him a job to do. Isaiah would be the Lord’s prophet to the people Israel. If you believe in Jesus as your Lord; you too have been cleansed of your sin and God has given you a job to do. You need to determine what that job is and faithfully fulfill it just as the prophet Isaiah was faithful.

Let’s pray for God’s revelation of His Word as we examine the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 verses of Hebrews chapter 1.

As God's prophet Isaiah was blessed to have visions of Christ, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw **the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.**" (Isaiah 6:1) and the Apostle John said of God's prophet, <sup>41</sup> "Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him" meaning Jesus. The early church was being attacked by the Jews as John continues, <sup>42</sup> "Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in *Jesus*, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God." (John 12:41-43) The question laying before these believers was, "did they love the glory of God more than man or were they willing to compromise God's glory for favor with men? That is the same question before each of us.

It is in the midst of this conflict that the writer pens **The Letter to the Hebrews**. To understand Hebrews is to understand Jewish or Hebrew Christian convert's faith was being challenged by the Jews on several levels and in many ways. This letter was written to show the complete supremacy of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, over the Hebrew system of Judaism. Christianity far exceeds Judaism, just as Jesus far exceeds Moses. God's New Covenant through Jesus Christ is superior and exceeds the Old Covenant. The Old Testament is of God and is good, but the New Covenant brought by Jesus is better and this is the theme that echoes throughout this entire letter.

The writer begins by comparing the way God spoke in the past with how He speaks now. When one speaks for God; it must be of God and not man, it must be eternally true or they have committed a great sin by declaring something of God that is of man. Throughout my Christian life I have heard statements of well-meaning people concerning the Word of God. I give them the benefit until scripture is violated and what they spoke is proven untrue. I remember when I was with a

group of pastors at a prayer meeting and a young man came in and explained he had cancer and was headed to the hospital for surgery. He asked that we pray over him and rightly we gathered, laid on hands and prayed. The pastor next to me said God had given him a “word” and God said “this young man would be healed and would not need the surgery.” After we were done praying the pastor said to me that he felt me stiffen when he prayed and he ask if I had a problem with his prayer. This was my answer, “if what you prayed is of God and the young man is healed and God is given glory it will be a great time of blessing for many. However, if you took it upon yourself to speak for God without God’s giving you His words and you have given false hope to this young man, then you have committed a great sin. The pastor responded by asking if I believed in modern-day prophecy? I responded, yes, because God stills speaks through men to show His glory. However, if the young man was not healed then he was a false prophet and should be taken to the city gates and stoned. Fast, forward a few months – the young man died of his cancer. This pastor sought the favor of men more than the glory of God. He wanted to be looked up to by fellow pastors. The writer of Hebrews has been proved to speak for God by the truth of history and he tells us that God has spoken to mankind and that God has spoken in certain ways.

Reading from Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 to 3, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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.”

## **God Speaks Through Time** (v. 1-2a)

### **In The Former Way**

To begin with, it is important to note that God lowered Himself in order to speak to people. He is the One who takes the initiative and chooses to speak to us. He has chosen to do this because we are His creation. God does not owe it to us. He is not obligated to speak - just as He is not obligated to save. To think that God is powerful and awesome in every way and at the same time lowers Himself in order to speak to us is an amazing thought. He cares about us and wants to communicate His love and mercy to us. So much so, God came to earth, in the form of man, to personally bring people His love and mercy and salvation.

As we think about how God spoke before Christ came to the earth, we should understand that He spoke in various ways. This is what the writer is getting at. God spoke through visions, dreams, and face to face with the prophets but when God spoke to the people; He spoke through the prophets that He appointed. God spoke to Moses in the burning bush in Exodus (3.2), He spoke to Elijah in a still small voice as one finds in 1 Kings chapter 19 (v. 12), He spoke to Isaiah in a vision in the temple as we read in chapter 6 and to Amos in a vision of a basket of summer fruit (Amos 8). He spoke to these prophets in various ways and then the prophets spoke to the people.

If we are to understand anything about God, it is He must be revealed by Himself to us. We are desperately in need of revelation. Humans do not have this kind of knowledge within themselves. Innate knowledge of God is non-existent within us. Until God comes and calls us, our souls are spiritually dead. To recognize this, all one has to do is look at all the crazy ideas out there floating

around about God. Whenever people try to speak intelligently about God without relying on His revelation, His Word - people speak falsely.

If one goes to the Old Testament and tries to get a clear picture of God, one comes away, at best, with a fragmentary picture. For example, in the Book of Ruth one can get somewhat of a picture of our Redeemer Jesus Christ when we look to Boaz who redeemed Ruth and Naomi. However, this picture is not complete. It is simply a shadow or an unclear image of the complete picture. Remember, the Old Testament is about Jesus but it is in fragments. The idea that the Old Testament is about Jesus is sometimes hard to believe and at times meets with resistance. Jesus knew this to be true and so did Luke, for he recorded these words of his Redeemer and his savior, **“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”** (Luke 24:44) Jesus fulfilled the Old and brought the New. Luke later wrote in Acts concerning the ministry of Paul, **“When they had appointed a day for him (Paul), they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening, he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.”** (Acts 28:23) The Old Testament prophets spoke truth and spoke about Christ but their prophecies were not complete. God gave them only bits and pieces. The Prophets did, in fact, know some things but did not know the specifics in many cases. The prophets longed for Jesus, even though they did not have a complete picture of Him. The prophets knew God had a plan for the salvation of mankind and desired to see it and for it to come, but they lacked the full picture.

The Apostle Peter confirmed the desire of the Old Testament prophets,  
<sup>10</sup> **“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,** <sup>11</sup> **inquiring what person or time the**

Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. <sup>12</sup> It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.” (1 Peter 1:10-12) So, we understand what the prophets knew was that God was speaking through them and that there would be more coming later. The Bible contains what theologians call progressive revelation. As you turn the pages of God’s Word you discover more and more specific information concerning the Savior. The prophets were guided along by the Holy Spirit like the wind carries along a sail boat. They spoke and wrote as the Lord gave them utterance. No true prophet of God spoke his own words but spoke the words God wanted him to speak. Peter tells us “no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21) All prophecy is consistent with God’s Word the Bible. It is important for us to also understand what happens when God chooses to speak. When God speaks things happen. All parents have heard their words fall on deaf ears as children sometimes have selective hearing. But God’s words are different, even if people choose not to hear God purposes will take place. Again, the prophet Isaiah teaches that God commands “so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11) When God spoke creation into existence, it obeyed. God’s Word is what created everything. When He spoke, “Let there be light,’ and there was light.” (Genesis 1:3) God spoke and things took place. His very Words create. Unfortunately, humans have a tendency to worship the wrong things. When God spoke through the prophets and utilized the temple, the people began to worship these rather than God.

The writer of Hebrews tells us, God has given another Word with which He now speaks. Literally, the text says, in former times God spoke “**by his prophets**” but now, He speaks “**by his Son**”. God has a new mode for which He makes His revelation known. Formerly, He spoke to the prophet and then the prophet spoke to the people. Now, God speaks in Jesus Christ. At Christ’s transfiguration, He appeared with Moses and Elijah – Peter wanted to build a tent for each. God had to tell Peter, James and John, that Moses and Elijah represented the Old and now they needed to understand the resurrected Jesus is the New and better covenant and God says to them, “**This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.**” <sup>6</sup> **When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified.** <sup>7</sup> **But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and have no fear.’** <sup>8</sup> **And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.”** (Matthew 17:5-8) Do you see Peter’s tendency to worship Moses and Elijah in the same way as he was going to worship Christ? The problem with the Old Testament was that there was a middle man. God spoke to the prophet and the prophet spoke to the people. The people worshipped what they saw which was the prophet or the temple. Now there is no middle man. God speaks directly through Jesus. Jesus is God and so when He speaks in the pages of Scripture, we are hearing the words of God Himself. Jesus is superior to the prophets. God was clearly saying that there is a difference now in how revelation is given. In the past you listened to Moses and the prophets, now listen to My Son.

### **In The Present Way** (v. 2)

Reading at verse 2, “**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.**” So, while it is important to see the way God speaks in the latter days as superior to the former, it is also important to note that the message is still the same and God is

speaking as the One God. The Old Testament leads up to the New Testament, just as John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus. His preaching was to prepare the hearts of the people to hear the preaching of Christ and so the Old was to get the world ready to hear the message of the New.

Now, in Christ, we have entered a pivotal point in the salvation of God's people. Everything has come together. When the time was right and everything was in place God came to earth put on flesh and gave us a fuller revelation to understand our salvation through Christ as Paul made clear, <sup>4</sup>“when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

(Galatians 4:4-5) The Old Testament law was to show people their sin and need for a Savior, but it could not save. When someone says to you that they are in a good standing with God because they keep the commandments, they really do not understand the commandments correctly. The commandments, as the law of God, are there to show us our sin. Only God keeps all the Ten Commandments.

While the law can only condemn and not save, the gospel saves through repentance and submission to Christ Jesus and is far more important to us than the Ten Commandments. To say it succinctly -

Aren't you glad in the New Covenant God speaks Son?

In the past God spoke prophet

In the present God speaks Son

In the past He spoke to our forefathers

In the present He speaks to us

Israel would hear a prophet speak and they would test his words to see if they came to pass. God sent one prophet after another, but the people continued to



move away from God. Today, we must realize that God speaks through His Son and there is no other revelation coming because there is no other Son coming. We read the pages of the New Testament to hear the Words of God as He speaks in Jesus. We must see clearly that the authoritative Words of God are complete and perfect as we have them recorded for us in the Bible. Since there is only one Son and He has already completely spoken there will not be any more Scripture written. The cannon of the Bible, the 66 books, are God's Word in completion. The storyline of the Bible is a progressive story leading up to the pinnacle of revelation, who is Jesus Christ. "There is salvation in no one else (Jesus), for there is no other name (Jesus) under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

We should not let the phrase "in these last days" confuse us. When Scripture speaks of the last times or last days, it has in mind the time when the Messianic prophecies are fulfilled. In other words, when Jesus came 2000 years ago those Messianic prophecies came to pass and placed us in the last days. The last days is the time between Jesus' first coming and His second coming. We are presently in the last days, we hear God speak by the lips of Jesus and we are currently waiting on His return.

From here we move on with the writer of Hebrews as he shows us why the New revelation is superior to the Old.

### **The Completion of God's Word** (v. 2b-3)

Very simply the New is superior because Jesus is superior. To express the excellence of the New the writer describes what the Son has done. Jesus, the Son of God, accomplished that which is far superior to what the prophets had done. Reading verse 2 and 3 of Hebrews' introduction, "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.<sup>3</sup> 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.” What is it that Jesus has done that no one else could do?

### **Jesus Inherits All Things**

Everything belongs to Jesus, as verse 2 states, Jesus “**whom God the Father appointed the heir of all things**”. Jesus owns all of creation. This means that Jesus owns all people. They are His to do with what He wills. Jesus made clear, “**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**” (Matthew 28:18)

What does it mean to us that all of creation belongs to Jesus? One thing it means is that I belong to Him. He is Lord over me. He can do whatever He wants with me. As Paul taught, “**Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?**” (Romans 9:21) We are the clay and He is the Potter. He is the Master and we are His servants.

### **Jesus Created All Things**

Verse 2 continues, telling us about Jesus’ superiority, “**through whom also he created the world**”. So, not only does the Lord Jesus own all things, but He made everything. Jesus is the Creator of all, including you and me. Again, it is Paul who makes this clear, “**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.**” (Colossians 1:16) Not only is everything created by Jesus but everything was created for Jesus.

## **Jesus Is God**

Continuing in verse 3, “**He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature**”. This can be a little difficult to understand. It does not mean that Jesus reflects the glory of God, as some translations have recorded. The moon reflects the glory or light of the sun but has no light of its own. Jesus does radiate God’s glory. In other words, He produces God’s glory because He is God the Son, He does not simply reflect God’s glory. The Apostle John writes, “**And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.**” (Revelation 22:5) Jesus is the exact imprint or substance of God, because He is God, One God expressed in the Trinity. The Son causes the radiance of the Father to shine forth so humans can understand and partake of God’s glory through Christ. Again, John teaches us, “**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.**” (John 1:14) John understood completely that Jesus had His own glory as God of the Trinity.

## **Jesus Upholds The Universe**

Verse 3 continues, giving us understanding that Jesus “**upholds the universe by the word of his power.**” Here the author refers to Jesus maintaining the universe which he made by His Word. We should listen to Jesus because it is His Words that creates. No prophet could create by speaking a word. The Lord is so powerful that by simply speaking, the universe and everything in it, obeys. Scientists are continually trying to determine how many galaxies and stars there are, but Jesus’ Word keeps them all in place with special attention to the planet we live on.

## **Jesus Is The Perfect, Prophet, Priest and King**

Verse 3 ends with saying that Jesus, “[After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.](#)” Why should people listen to and obey Jesus? Because this same Jesus, who creates, upholds and inherits all things - is the same Lord who gave up His life for sinners. His perfect sacrifice freed sinners by purifying our sin. Our sin has been taken away.

Why has the Old been overshadowed by the New? Because we have the completed revelation through God Himself. Jesus is the perfect Word of God given to people for their salvation. One thing to clearly see in this text is that God inspired the writing of Hebrews because He wants us to see that without a doubt we can and must trust the final and greatest Word given to us by Jesus Christ.

Let me close with this final thought. Throughout Scripture Jesus is known as possessing a three-fold office. He is Prophet, Priest and King.

What we hold in our hands, God’s Word, is our sufficient source of eternal knowledge. The Bible is God’s final, decisive Word to the world. If we are to know God, then we must come to His Word for instruction. We must recognize that God has given mankind all they need in the Bible what He says to us in His Son is His revelation that we call the New Testament. **Jesus is the final and perfect prophet!**

**Jesus is also the final and perfect priest!** Through Jesus’ obedient, sacrificial, substitutionary death - sin has been dealt with once and forever. If you have trusted Christ as Savior, then you can be assured that your sins have been removed - past, present, and future.

**Jesus is the final and perfect King.** He is the King of kings! Jesus sits at the right hand of Majesty. God has highly exalted Him. God was pleased with His Son's sacrifice. In light of all this, what should our response be? God tells us, as He told Peter, James and John at Jesus' transfiguration, **"This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"** (Luke 9:35) Jesus is God's final and greatest Word. Amen!