

The excellence of the Son

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[0 : 00] Who is Jesus? I've got two quotes for you this morning from most unlikely sources! Anybody have a clue who might have said between Jesus and whomsoever else in the world! there is no possible comparison.

My clue is this. He's not a well-known Christian person. You're a bone-upon. Christ is the most unique person in history.

No man can write a history of the human race without giving first and foremost place to the teacher of Nazareth. You'll never get this.

This is H.G. Wells. Writer of War of the Worlds, Time Machine. Lived at the end of the 19th century. So here are people with no distinctive Christian experience or behaviour who are saying these things.

[1 : 23] Yet history is full of really inadequate views of Jesus Christ. And the history of the church is full of inadequate views of Jesus Christ.

So last week we were looking at the first letter of John. And we saw that there was a heresy, a teaching abroad in the very earliest days of the church, which was suggesting that Jesus Christ was not really a man.

He'd come from heaven. He was God. He appeared as a man. But he was not really a man. So he didn't really die upon the cross. And he was not really resurrected bodily from the tomb.

And this heresy later given the name Docetism, which means it appears. He only appeared. And then at another extreme, a more virulent heresy is what is now given the name Arianism.

That Jesus was not really God. He was definitely a man, but he's not really God. In some fashion, he's a created being.

[2 : 46] And there's much in Hebrews that actually addresses that particular point. But this heresy went around for 300 years or so in the early church until it required a major council of the church to address.

But it is not dead, has a thought. And there are plenty of teachings around today that do not ascribe anything more to Jesus than the fact of him being a man, a great man, a good man, a holy man, but a man, a created person.

Why does this matter? Because inadequate views of Jesus Christ rob the gospel message of substance and power. If you're a Christian, you can only become a Christian by accepting into your life, personally, the work and the person of Jesus Christ.

And saying, I believe this, that he came from heaven, he was born of a virgin, he lived a sinless life, he died upon a cross, not for his own misdeeds, but for ours.

He paid the penalty for us, he received the judgment of God himself, and God vindicated his own son, by raising him from the dead.

[4 : 27] And he now lives at the right hand of God, ruling and reigning, and will come again. And these are the things that Christians believe.

And if you want to identify yourself as a Christian, you must believe those things. It is not enough to say, I like his moral teaching. I am impressed by his life.

I think this is probably the best way I can live my life. Those, that is inadequate. And if we have inadequate views of Jesus Christ, either because we do not believe he was really a man, or because we do not believe he was really God, come from heaven, then we are in great danger as to the integrity and the reality of our experience.

Whether it can actually be said that we are Christian people. And brothers and sisters, if we lose this, we have no gospel to speak to one another and to this city.

We have nothing. It is that important. In inadequate views of Jesus Christ, rob him of his glory, deny the father's testimony about his son, and grieve the Holy Spirit.

[6 : 02] That is so important. I trust that none of us wants to be in that place today, individually or as a church.

We want to have more adequate views of Jesus Christ, so that he will be glorified, he will have the supreme place in our thinking.

That the father's testimony of Jesus, when he says of his son, this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him.

where the Holy Spirit's primary work is to exalt Jesus Christ. Well, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are glorified when Jesus has his rightful place in our thinking and practice.

So this morning, we're going to be continuing this little series in thinking of the being of God. We started several weeks ago by thinking of the need for a fresh encounter with God.

[7 : 16] We saw in Isaiah 6 what that inevitably looks like. that the fundamental, we must say, always of God is he's a holy God, a separate God.

Last week, we were thinking of the love of the Father, that enormous love that from the foundation of the world set his love upon a people and we have been privileged in time to receive that love and that love will never depart from us.

And today, we're going to be thinking of the excellence of the Son. We're going to look at Hebrews chapter 1 and I've given out these notes today partly because there is quite a lot of scripture that we'll be looking at and if you like making notes, you'd probably be too busy writing the notes to be able to listen at the same time.

So it'll be helpful for you to have that. But I hope also that it might just be a stimulating thing for you. You might go away with those points and find that a profitable way of spending the coming week just looking at those scriptures more quietly and in greater length because we're going to make quite a lot of pace as we go through 12 points concerning the Lord Jesus Christ which are all found within this one chapter of Hebrews which is astonishing.

12 magnificent points about Jesus Christ and there are more but 12 is enough so we'll have to make some fair pace today. So I want to start now.

[8 : 52] Please have your Bibles open. The text from the NIV is on the screen at all times but I will always read it out so it's there and it's available on the recording.

So firstly we must say of Jesus Christ he is this supreme prophet this supreme prophet. in the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son.

By his son. What do I mean by prophet? I do mean someone who is able by the power of God to tell that which is to come but more importantly it is someone who is given the grace and the power to say the things that God wants to be said.

Therefore in a very real sense when preaching is conducted in the power of the Holy Spirit there is a prophetic element to the preaching of God's word because it is saying what God wants to be said and that is what the Bible is full of.

It is the things that God wants to be said at a particular time and place are brought to a people.

There were many prophets many prophets the Old Testament is full of these prophets and their sayings Isaiah Jeremiah Elijah Elisha Moses himself was a prophet speaking the word of God and the writer of this book says in the past looking back from a New Testament age he is saying in the past God spoke to our forefathers through prophets at many times and in various ways in these last days he has spoken to us by his son not just this is the end not just this is the sort of Jesus is the last one in the relay race who has received a baton and is going to finish the race no no no this is something much more climatic and final

[11 : 19] God has spoken in a final and conclusive and a fulfilling way by the person of Jesus Christ so in the gospel of Luke in chapter 24 and verse 27 Jesus is speaking to the disciples on the road to Emmaus he has risen from the dead they don't recognize who he is but he begins to open up the scriptures to them and we read in verse 27 beginning with Moses and all the prophets he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself that the prophets had been pointing forward to him all of them were pointing forward to someone else but Jesus is not pointing forward in his words to someone else he is actually fulfilling in himself all that the others have said about him he is the word of

God himself there is a very poignant parable which is a parable of the tenants the people in the vineyard who are not willing to give to the owner of the vineyard what is his due as the landlord it is found in Matthew 21 don't look it up but it says how he sends repeated envoys to these people and says you owe me something give it to me what do they do they abuse all the people who have come that quite often was the lot of the prophets in the past they were abused by the people who should have received the message they gave and then it says very poignantly in this Matthew passage he says last of all last of all he sent his son we have this picture brought very realistically to us now of

Jesus Christ as if God had given all his words from heaven he sent all these prophets before and now he says I'm going to give my one son I'm going to send my one son into the world to tell them what they need to know after the sending of his own son God had no one else to send heaven was empty there was nothing more that God could do Jesus is the final word so there's nothing else to be heard and that's why in the book of Revelation there is a warning and a curse upon anything which is adding to the finished word of God and why we have no truck with any belief system that suggests that there are prophets who will come after

Jesus Christ do you see what I'm saying Jesus is a final word for any belief system that suggests that there is any further word to come from God that would add to the final words that Jesus himself has expressed and revealed in himself we can have no space for it no time for it so we have a serious problem with Islam because this robs God's son of his glory by suggesting there is a further word to be brought as we have a problem with

Mormonism we suggest that there is something further that God needed to say to people which Jesus Christ has not said Jesus is the supreme prophet Jesus is the supreme creator and through whom he made the universe all the worlds all that could be expressed ages that the stamp and hand of Jesus Christ is upon the whole of time I'm reminded of this in closing words from Jesus before he was about to go back to heaven where he says to his disciples surely I'm with you always to the very end of the ages Jesus is the supreme architect of the ages we don't know what the future holds that bothers us and worries us and concerns us but

[17:02] Jesus knows because he is the architect of history he knows the present and his hand is on the future he is the supreme creator there is no other everything that has been made has been made by him he has not delegated any of that he is the supreme creator he is the supreme sustainer he sustains all things by his powerful word extraordinary idea it is that Jesus Christ by his word sustains everything that he's made keeps it going guiding all things in the universe to their appointed goal in Colossians chapter 1 17 we read in him all things hold together everything that could be expressed about this body of people here today everything about you your life your past and present and future everything that's going on in your life and the interaction of your life with all other lives and so on that is all being kept in being by

Jesus Christ shouldn't that make us so respectful so dependent upon him he's the supreme inheritor he has been appointed heir of all things heir of all things I read yesterday about a young man in the states who won 451 million dollars on a lottery and he's wondering what to do with all that money he wants to do good he won it by luck Jesus is an inheritor not by luck!

well there may be someone out there who's got a very rich uncle or father and you're looking forward to an inheritance! but even Jesus did not receive inheritance!

just by the DNA of his father but he receives an inheritance what I might call rather a reward by the excellence of all that he has done by coming into this world the humility that he's shown by becoming a man the sorrow that he has borne by coming into a sinful world the rejection and pain that he as a son of God has willingly embraced the judgment that he has endured by his death upon the cross in our place we read in one of the Psalms the father as it were speaking to him ask of me and

I will make the nations your inheritance the ends of the earth your possession and Jesus asks and Jesus is going to get it because of the excellence of his finished work a total inheritance in the book of Philippians we read unto him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord no one so rewarded in this universe as the son of God he is a supreme revealer verse 3 the sun is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being that's a beautiful phrase the sun is the radiance of God's glory the exact representation of his being so you might say well

[21:56] Jesus shows us a bit of God he points to God but the Bible doesn't allow us to be in that place it takes us into much holier ground than that and says that he is the exact representation of

his being so Philip don't you realize anyone who has seen me has seen the Father that's an extraordinary thought the true glory of God the shekinah glory in whom dwelt the Godhead bodily John 1 14 and it says in Colossians that God was pleased that all his fullness should dwell in Jesus wow he is a supreme priest after he had provided purifications for sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven it's such a final statement and such a shocking contrast for these people who all their lives had been aware of priests for thousands of years the

Jewish people had had a succession of priests but they were fallible they were failing they were limited they were restricted in what they could do they were sinful like other men and they died they all died they all died but he provides a purification for sin and it's done it's done in the land of Israel there was anything more certain than death and taxes it was sacrifice and priesthood day after day after day after day we read of occasions when there were a thousand sacrifices made on a single day the smell the sound the noise of sacrifice that was just part of the

DNA of these people that's all they'd grown used to as if it would always be that way and here comes one who offers a sacrifice and then there is silence no more sacrifice it's never going to happen again because this perfect ever living priest has made the perfect sacrifice historic work with eternal in the present implications he's the perfect priest oh what an answer to the prayers of the people there oh how we'd love to have the perfect priest to represent us before God and he's come and his name is Jesus and he's the supreme sacrifice after he provided purification for sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven but who sits down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven it's the lamb who was slain before the foundation of the world he shows his wounds blood has been spilt and it's his own and he is priest and sacrifice and supreme in that because the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer can never take away sin that's damning statement in hebrews later on he could never do it could never do it there was never any virtue and value in the sacrifice itself the only virtue and the value is found in one perfect sacrifice which is Jesus Christ the son of God come to earth on the cross the perfect unblemished sacrifice so that the father can say of the son it's well done it's well done there's nothing else to pay no more price to be paid it's the perfect sacrifice he's the supreme name so he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs you know that in the bible a name bestows bestows the dignity of the person it describes the inherent qualities of that person and he Jesus Christ the son has been given a name there's an important comparison here made with angels and we spoke about angels earlier an extraordinary thing is said in hebrews chapter 2 verse 7 where it says you made him a little lower than the angels verse 9 you see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels I'm thinking about this and thinking how was Jesus made lower than the angels how could the uncreated son of God be made lower than the angels who are created beings what is the writer referring to here I think it must be to the time of his earthly experience where he goes into a place of temptation and vulnerability and weakness and

he goes into a place at some point where he is separated from the presence of his own father and he goes into a place of judgment so for that season of time he's made a little lower than the angels! but the father cannot wait as it were to elevate his son and to bring him out from that unnatural position bring him to that place where he will receive the proper glory and praise that's due to him and because of what he has done he now has a name that he couldn't take to himself before but because of what he has done at that point in time in history he now has a name which is above every other name he's now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death for us he's the supreme son for to which of the angels did God ever say you are my son today I have become your father or again I will be his father and he will be my son although it's on the screen turn it up in your bibles acts 13 32 and 33 acts 13 32 and 33

[30 : 22] Paul is saying we tell you the good news what God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us their children by raising up Jesus as it is written in the second psalm you are my son today I have become your father father and in what sense what is being said here in this psalm here because God has always had a son from all eternity so why is it that this psalm suggests that there is a moment in time where a statement is being made you are my son today I have become your father I think Paul has the reference right here and the connection he makes is this he has fulfilled for us their children what is written in the second psalm by raising up

Jesus there is a worldwide declaration of the glory of the son by his being raised up from the dead God is placarding to the whole world this is my son in whom I'm well pleased he was always a son but that day it was so manifest how much the father loved treasured cherished admired honoured

his own son he's a supreme king verse eight but about the son he says your throne oh god will last forever and ever and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom he's enthroned now and he will never be supplanted from that throne divinely so therefore eternal with the kingdom hallmark of strict justice about all he does he loved righteousness and hated iniquity how painful might I say would it be for this one who came with such an attitude to find such a dreadful reversal at the end of his life!

where he had to take on himself all that iniquity in order to receive the righteous judgment of God he is the supreme I am he also says in the beginning oh lord you laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens of the work of your hands they will perish change but you remain they will all wear out like a garment you will roll them up like a robe like a garment they will be changed but you remain the same and your years will never end this is said of the Lord Jesus Christ of whom the same book says Jesus the same yesterday today and forever our unchangeable beautiful saviour he is a supreme conqueror to which of the angels did God ever say sit at my right hand until

I make your enemies a foot still for your feet Jesus has not fled into heaven to escape all the horrors of this world he's not fled into heaven just so that the battle can be paused and he can have a rest he's gone into heaven so that he can reign and rule and there is a process taking place that will reach a magnificent culmination there will be a manifest and global and thunderous triumph where every opponent and every opposition to Jesus Christ will be put manifestly under his feet and every knee shall bow and everyone will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and that's a magnificent thought isn't it there's going to be such a revealing of the sun at that time that even the darkest things that have been so opposed to him will confess that he's Lord that they will be forced to give glory to him he's a conqueror book of revelation he rides on the white horse conquering and to conquer he's not weak he's not anemic he's not placid passive but he is intent on having his reward he is intent on having glory he's intent on having praise and adoration salvation so we looked at 12 12 aspects of the supremacy of Jesus

Christ the son prophet creator sustainer inheritor revealer priest sacrifice name son king i am conqueror and what response shall we make what is the right response for every single person in this room today to that truth i know where i need to be on my knees to bow and worship and adore and to love and to serve unreservedly without compromise that is the call and the command is made to all of us here today it is not actually a matter of choice because it is a command god commands all men everywhere to repent and believe the gospel your calling is exactly the same as mine which is to be on your knees to be repenting of your sin to be honoring and worshiping and loving and serving the son without reservation and that's our calling and by god's spirit that's what we will do because one day if we belong to him that is what we will do without sin without frailty without lack

[37 : 33] Jesus will have his reward and it's us it's us our worshiping and our serving people will