

The Supremacy of God's Son

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[0 : 00] with me in your Bibles, if you have one, to Hebrews chapter 1, and I'm going to read from verses 1 through 4. As you're turning there to Hebrews 1, just let me give my thanks for this opportunity. It's a real privilege to be invited by Paul. I worked with Paul William Purvis for several years, and it was a great time there. And my only actual times at Westerhills Baptist were in a funeral capacity, so it's actually nice to be here under more favorable circumstances, and it's a real privilege to be with you all. So, thank you. We're going to read from Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 through 4. 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, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful Word.

After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven. So, He became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs. This is God's Word. Let's join together and just ask for God's blessing as we pray now. Let's pray together. Father, we do thank you for the privilege of being able to sing to you, to praise your name. As we turn now to your Word, we ask that you might open our eyes, that we might see wonderful things in your law. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. In July 1934, the German inventor, Gerhard Zucker, conducted an experiment in the outer Hebrides of Scotland. His goal was to provide a postal service to the island of Scarp, which was approximately 400 metres from the nearby Isle of Harris. This 400 metres was often filled with shallow waters. This made it both difficult for boats to cross, but possible for islanders to wade through. The difficulty, of course, came when the tide came in. The shallow waters quickly rose and endangered the life of anybody who risked crossing. And so Gerhard Zucker came up with an idea.

He wanted to send the community of less than a hundred people their post by, wait for it, rocket. Most of the island of Scarp was rocky and uncultivated land, but at the southeast corner of the island, there was a small area of low-lying fertile land. The perfect launch pad for mail delivery.

[3 : 19] Well, how did he get on? Let's just say he had two attempts, and you can view the singed envelopes at a museum in Stornoway. And if you're interested in watching the movie, it's called The Rocket Post.

It came out in 2006. How we communicate with one another has been constantly changing throughout the centuries. One of the newest forms of communication is the emoticon.

Now, if you're like me, a little bit old-fashioned and not really up to date with the latest iPhone or Samsung, you'll want to understand what an emoticon is. I'm sure most of you probably already do. An emoticon is a keyboard-made character that is used to convey feeling. They're most often seen in email or text messages. It's kind of like when you were at school and your teacher gave you a smiley face to convey the idea that you had done something good. Emoticons are electronic forms of that.

Well, today you can send an email or text and communicate that you're happy, sad, surprised, embarrassed. You can wink, laugh, blush, or apologize, all without even using a word.

[4 : 38] The changing face of communication shows no sign of letting up. From the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt to the smoke signals of North American Indians, from the lighthouses of uninhabited islands to the church bells heard on a Sunday morning, from telegrams to mobile phones, from rockets to emoticons.

Communication methods are always changing. And so we read in the opening passage, chapter 1, verse 1 of Hebrews, Hebrews, consider some background information on the book of Hebrews as a whole.

Well, what do we know? Although we don't know who wrote the book of Hebrews, it was probably written to Jewish Christians. This is most likely because of the Old Testament themes and imagery heavily spread throughout the book of Hebrews. Why was the letter written? In a nutshell, the author's book of Hebrews, the author's book of Hebrews, the author's book of Hebrews, and the author's book of Hebrews. And so our author is exhorting God's people not to give up, but to persevere in their faith.

So if Hebrews is an exhortation to persevere, what does the author appeal to as the basis, as the substance for his message? Well, ultimately, it's not circumstances. Things will get better. It's not psychology. You just need to think differently. And it's not time. This will pass.

No, the author points believers not to circumstances, psychology, or time, but to a person. And not just to any person, but to the superior person, the person of Jesus Christ.

[7 : 08] So the motivation for persevering in faith as a believer is a superior Jesus, a more excellent Jesus, a better Jesus. The author has already contrasted and compared Jesus, or he will do in chapter one with the angels. He'll go on to compare and contrast Moses. He'll contrast, compare the Old Testament, Old Testament priesthood. And we're going to find throughout Hebrews that Jesus is superior to each one of these. So the motivation for not throwing in the towel, for not giving up, is the excellency and greatness and majesty and glory of the person whom we are following, Jesus Christ.

Because ultimately, if we're going to abandon our faith, what are we going to abandon it for? What is there? What is out there for us to follow if not Jesus Christ? Everything else is temporary. Everything else is fleeting. Everything else will come to an end. So that's the thrust of Hebrews, trusting in a superior Christ, persevering because of the superior Christ. And so as we turn now to verses one through four, we're going to look at four ways in which Jesus is superior. Four ways that Jesus is superior. So let's join together in this journey. The first way that Jesus is superior is in revelation. Jesus is superior in revelation. 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. The author is seeking to contrast the various means God used to speak throughout the Old Testament with the superiority of how he is now speaking in this New Testament period. In the Old Testament, God spoke through the prophets at many times, from Abraham in Genesis 20 verse 7, all the way through to Malachi at the end of the Old Testament. In Daniel 7, he spoke through dreams. In Isaiah 1, he spoke through visions. In Zechariah 1, he spoke through angels. In Ezekiel 12, he spoke through signs.

In Jeremiah 40, he spoke through events. God was speaking through very different means and in a variety of ways. And God's people spoke. The prophets spoke according to what God gave them for that point in history. However, it was never a full, it was never a complete or a final message. It always pointed ahead. It was looking ahead to that perfect and final and complete message. Theologians call this progressive revelation. While each prophet received something of God's revelation and his plan and instruction, all of them looked ahead to this final reality when God would speak finally and completely.

[10 : 23] And that time had now come, of course, hadn't it, with Jesus. Last days was Old Testament language for the time of the time of the end, which began with Christ. Last days here does not refer to sometime in the distant future, just before the second coming of Christ, but it refers to now. We're living in the last days. And in these last days, God has spoken to us by his Son, who is the pinnacle and climax. He's the apex of God's revelation to us. And consequently, Jesus is superior in revelation. So, having established Jesus' superiority as God's final word to us, what are the implications of that? Well, let me just give us a few. Firstly, any person who claims to have further revelation from God is a false prophet, Deuteronomy 18.22. So, for instance, Joseph Smith, the founder of the Latter-day Saints movement of the 19th century, more commonly known as the Mormons, would be a false prophet. He translated a book of golden plates into English, and the Book of Mormon came to be. Allegedly, the restored gospel was published in 1830, over and above what God has already revealed to us in the final word of his Son.

Any religious book which claims to have further revelation from God is a false gospel. So, for instance, the Quran, supposedly revealed to Muhammad from Allah through the angel Gabriel in the 7th century, Muhammad claimed that he had received these revelations from God, pronounced himself a prophet of God. Again, over and above what Jesus Christ has revealed in his person and work and word hundreds of years before. And we could put into this category any other religion or

cult, couldn't we? Most cults today are one of the distinguishing features is that they have some extra kind of teaching or extra biblical mandate that they use over and above what has been revealed to us in Scripture.

We could also say any novel which promotes an alternative revelation from God is a false teaching. It seems like such a long time ago now, but Dan Brown in the Da Vinci Code of 2003. In his novel, Brown suggests that Jesus was married, fathered children, and wasn't considered divine until the fourth century. Well, what's the problem? It's just a novel, isn't it? Well, the problem, apart from the fact that it's untrue, is that he states early in his book, all descriptions of documents in this novel are accurate. It's very clever, isn't it? He'll write a novel, but he's claiming actually that his facts are based on truth. Philip Pullman, an award-winning popular children's author, no less, in The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ of 2010, claims that there were two Christs. There was the one Christ, and the other one was called Jesus. Any TV program which promotes an alternative revelation from God is a false educator. So, I'm sure we've all seen programs, if no less, on The God Channel where things are said and done which are totally contrary to what the Bible teaches. I was speaking with an unbeliever a while back, and they said this line in the midst of our conversation, which I've never forgotten. They said, you can't believe everything you read in the Bible.

And then, fast forward a few weeks or months, can't quite remember, I was speaking with the very same person, and we were talking about the internet, and they had read something, and they said, you just have to believe that it's true. And I thought, we live in a generation that irrationally rejects the authority of the Bible, but will uncritically accept the authority of internet sites, which can be compiled by thousands of people. So, where do I go to hear God speaking to me?

[15:05] Do I look for signs? Do I look for wonders? Do I go to the television? Do I pick up a biography? Where do I go if I want to be sure that I'm hearing God's Word? Well, let's be careful that it's not a false prophet. Let's be careful it's not a religious book, a novel, the TV, the internet, or whatever else is put before us, but rather let it be God's eternal and perfect Word, seen in His Son, the final, full and perfect revelation of God. So, that's the first point. Jesus is superior in revelation.

Secondly, Jesus is superior in creation. He's superior in creation. God has spoken to us by His Son, verse 2, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe. And then in verse 3, He was sustaining all things by His Son, He Child of all things. He was to be the heir was to be an inheritor. That is, it was to receive something as a possession. And throughout Hebrews, both Old and New Testament people are revealed as heirs or inheritors. In Genesis 11, Noah is the heir of righteousness.

in 11.8 Abraham is called to a place he would inherit 11.9 Isaac and Jacob are heirs of the same promise 9.15 believers receive an eternal inheritance and Jesus in verse 4 of Hebrews 1 inherits a superior name to angels so here in verse 2 we are told that Jesus is appointed heir of all things God the Father has revealed Jesus as the one to whom all things rightfully belong all nations all the ends of the earth Psalm 2 verse 8 and with them all the glory and honor and praise it's a sad fact of life isn't it that when there's an inheritance to be handed on within families there's often fighting and squabbling and a battle for supremacy sure Paul's seen that in the nature of his work and all of us too are probably familiar when someone dies there sadly can often be squabbling within families about who gets what it's tragic absolutely tragic to see but with Jesus there's no squabbling over inheritance rights there's no infighting about it God has made this Jesus this

Christ heir over all things he's the heir of all things he's also the creator of all things it was through Christ verse 2 God made the universe Jesus Christ created the Pleiades and Orion he created Jupiter and Saturn Jesus Christ created Tyrannosaurus and Pterodactyl Jesus Christ created penguins and kangaroos Jesus Christ created light and land and living creatures Jesus Christ created sun and sea and seed bearing plants Jesus Christ created Adam and Eve Genesis 1:26 something no angel or any other being could do and so God's son is superior in creation but that's not all Christ not only creates all things but he sustains all things through his powerful word he's the sustainer of all things verse 3 this is very similar isn't it to Paul's thought in Colossians chapter 1 verse 7 where he says in him all things hold together this is where deists like Voltaire and other enlightenment thinkers fall down those people who saw God as a cosmic watchmaker who wound up the world and then let it carry on of its own and of its own accord while God stood back into the shadows and just let things run without any intimate involvement in an ongoing way that's not what the Bible teaches is it Bible teaches that God is intimately connected

and concerned about his creation that he sustains all things by his powerful word nor is Jesus Christ like the Greek mythical figure Atlas supporting the dead weight of the globe upon his shoulders the Bible teaches that

Jesus Christ Jesus Christ created all things in that moment by moment by moment he is sustaining he's causing everything to exist by the word of his power he causes atoms and molecules to function in ways that cause our existence every nanosecond and through his intimate ongoing involvement with his creation Jesus Christ sustains nature and agriculture weather technology governments human beings animals planets and everything in the entire solar system and if he were to withdraw his power for even just the slightest nanosecond the entire solar system would be no more it would disintegrate it would collapse it's amazing isn't it Christ is at work this very moment sustaining us sustaining this building sustaining the entire created order that is the implication of his sustaining all things all things all things by his powerful word so Jesus is superior in creation he created the universe he sustains the universe and this should provoke worship shouldn't it this is why we were created to worship the creator not created things as I was thinking about this as I began to think about the ordinary stuff of life the seats you're sitting on the buildings the cars that go shops you know technology all these things that we so often just use on a daily basis that we take for granted but God has created the resources for these things to be made he sustains them and we ought to worship him as the good creator who gives good gifts to his children but in order to do that we need to live with our eyes wide open don't we we need to see the mundane things as unmundane we need to see the ordinary and extraordinary new ways and for that we need God's spirit to help us to open our eyes to help us to see beyond the curtain as it were the living realities the sustaining power of Christ behind all things and when we live with our eyes wide open we'll begin to see that the mundane and ordinary things of life are actually full of wonder and awe because they're made by a wonderful and awesome God well firstly Jesus is superior in revelation secondly we've seen that he's superior in creation and thirdly we see he's superior in his person [22 : 55] Jesus Christ is superior in his person verse 3 the sun is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being Jesus is the brilliance and the brightness and the shining force of God's glory both in his person and in his work in the old testament God manifested his glory at various times his glory settled on Mount Sinai when Moses was given the law in Exodus 24 16 God's glory filled the tabernacle where God dwelled in Exodus 40 God's glory filled the temple in 2nd Chronicles 5 verse 14 but God's glory could also depart as in 1st Samuel 4 21 through 22 when the ark of the covenant was captured by Israel's enemies in the new testament God manifests his glory primarily through his son Jesus the glory of God never departs from the sun just as a ray from the sun s-u-n cannot be separated from the sun itself so too the glory of God in Jesus Christ cannot be separated from Christ to see the glory of God we must look to Jesus to see Jesus we must gaze and linger and dwell on the final and full and complete perfect word of God

Jesus is the radiance of God's glory and we're also told in verse 3 that he is the exact representation of his being this word was used in classical Greek of an engraver one who minted coins or medals to mint a coin was to make it out of metal and then engrave it or stamp it displaying the exact image of the original picture and so we use phrases today don't we like he's just like his father or he's a chip off the old block or like father like son and sometimes it's not a fair assessment of a person but in this case it actually is a fair assessment of the person because Jesus Christ is like his father he is God's son displaying that image that very likeness that glory because Jesus is the exact representation of God he's superior in his person to any being that has ever been created and if we believe that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever then we must be hungry and thirsty to know and experience Jesus if Jesus is God if he's superior to every being that's ever existed in the entire universe does my pursuit of him reflect that?

do I have a greater pursuit? what is superior to Christ? what little false God am I chasing? what idols do I have in my life that I am placing as superior if not in my thoughts but in reality in my experience what idols what false gods are there that I am saying are superior to the risen Christ because of what I observe in my life than from what I have seen in the Bible that Jesus is the superior one is it a hobby?

is it a job? is it a relationship? money? sex? power? position?

[27 : 03] leisure? comfortable lifestyle? I don't know each of you here this morning but you know what holds that position in your life that when you get frustrated the most it's actually because you're elevating it to something as superior than Christ what is our ultimate pursuit this morning?

why are you here? well Jesus is superior in revelation Jesus is superior in creation Jesus is superior in his person and fourthly and finally Jesus is superior in salvation Jesus is superior in salvation verse 3 after he had provided purification for sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in heaven this was the great work wasn't it?

that Jesus came into the world to accomplish to provide purification for sins to save sinners from their sins to accomplish what had been necessary since Genesis chapter 3 the guilt and punishment for every sin committed since Adam and Eve had weighed heavily on mankind no priest had ever been able sorry able to offer a sacrifice that had fully and finally atoned for the sins of mankind the whole Old Testament system of the Levitical priesthood had looked ahead to the coming of Christ to that one sacrifice of atonement bearing the wrath of God in himself on the cross taking the punishment that you and I deserve so that we could be justified so that we could be made not guilty so that we could receive the righteousness of Christ as our own a free gift not by works but by faith to the glory of God no priest had been able to offer a sacrifice in that way their many sacrifices were always temporary

Hebrews 10 verse 11 but Hebrews 10 verse 12 when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins what did he do?

he sat down and in this heavenly enthronement Jesus fulfills Psalm 110 verse 1 the Lord says to my Lord sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet when your work is completed you sit down no Old Testament high priest would ever sit down in the presence of God they stood to serve and administer sacrifices in the tabernacle and the temple but when this great high priest had finished his work on the cross what did he do?

[30 : 19] he sat down his work was finished it was finished the sacrifice for your sins that was necessary was complete no more guilt no more shame it's been pinned to the cross Jesus Christ has taken the punishment he has taken in himself the just punishment of a holy God for his people so that we could be free so that through the gospel we can be righteous and overflow with joy through the Holy Spirit that is the gift of God that is the gospel everything that is required for our salvation has been accomplished and so Philip Bliss wrote in a hymn we're going to sing in a few moments hallelujah what a saviour lifted up was he to die it is finished was his cry now in heaven exalted high hallelujah what a saviour and so he became as much superior to the angels verse 4 as the name he had inherited is superior to theirs evidently the believers to whom the author of Hebrews was writing were getting confused about the person and work of Christ specifically with regard to angels and so the author writes to remind them that Jesus is superior to angels through providing salvation although Jesus was made a little lower than the angels

Hebrews 2 7 and 9 when he came to earth he had been superior to angels before that in heaven and after his sacrificial death on the cross and his ascension he again became superior to the angels reflecting the superiority he had before his incarnation verse 4 tells us that the name he inherited is also superior Jesus had always been God's son throughout all eternity there was never a time when Jesus wasn't God's son but here on earth he inherited the title the name son of God thus displaying to mankind what he had always been and so having accomplished eternal redemption that name now had even greater honor a name far greater than any angel so do you know him this morning have you got to that point in your life where you realize that every earthly endeavor outside of

Christ is in the words of Ecclesiastes meaningless what is the point of life if Jesus Christ isn't who he said he is we're born we live we might have a good life we might not we die is that it I don't think so why do I not think so because God has spoken in his word to reveal his glorious son who has entered into human history who has lived died and rose from the grave who's ascended into heaven who sits at the father's right hand interceding for his beloved children that one day he will return and come back to earth so that we may enter into eternal glory with him forever that's worth living for isn't it that's worth giving your life to C.S.

Lewis once wrote if I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world have you tried to find satisfaction in the world have you found a fool and final satisfaction in the world it always dissipates doesn't it it never fully satisfies whatever it is but in Christ he promises to fully satisfy to quench the thirst of the thirsty to feed the hungry to fill those who would hunger and thirst after him so are you fed up with the world yet if so you might just be ready for the most wonderful discovery of your life a superior Jesus a Jesus who can save you from your sins who can satisfy your deepest longings eternally go to him

by faith trust in him well I started my sermon in the north of Scotland and I want to finish it along the USA Canada border along the eastern USA Canada border there are five vast freshwater lakes called the Great Lakes Lake Michigan Lake Huron Lake Erie Lake Ontario and lastly Lake Superior Lake Superior is the largest of the five Great Lakes with the capacity to contain all the other Great Lakes put together and more it's 350 miles long 160 miles wide with an average depth of 483 feet the water surface covers over 31,000 square miles by surface area it's the world's largest freshwater lake and it contains 10% of all the earth's fresh surface water and it holds enough water to flood all of now

[36 : 14] North and South America combined to a depth of one foot well in the 1760s England took control of the region they like to do that around the lake and changed the name first given by French explorers to Lake Superior and I quote author George R Stewart on account of its being superior in magnitude to any of the lakes on the vast continent superior in magnitude to any of the lakes on the vast continent many professing Christians never persevere to the end of their lives many genuine Christians are struggling in their faith on a day-to-day basis what is the solution the solution in part is to rediscover the superiority of the risen Lord Jesus Christ the solution in part is to rediscover a Jesus who is superior in magnitude not just to any of the lakes on this vast continent but who is superior in magnitude to any other being in the vast universe superior in revelation as God's full and final word superior in creation as the maker and sustainer of all things superior in person as the blazing glory and exact image of God superior in salvation as the once and for all time sacrifice this is the answer to finding meaning in life to persevering in faith to rediscover the greatness and superiority of the

Lord Jesus Christ I pray this morning that we would seek him and find him to be so let's pray together our father we do want to pause and give you thanks we want to thank you for the gift of your son who is superior in every way to any other created thing Lord I want to pray this morning for any of us who are struggling to believe that any of us who are struggling to experience that that you might forgive our sins and bring us back to the foot of the cross where we might be made right with you and have our eyes open to see how wonderful and awesome you really are through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen