

SERMON GUIDE

Hebrews: The Supremacy of God

Hebrews 1:1-3



SERMON NOTES:

Christianity is all about Jesus. God is Triune in nature. One God revealed in Three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. But the Son is the special object of affection and focus throughout the New Testament.

The Father is glorified through the exaltation and glory of the Son:

Philippians 2:9-11 -- 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Spirit's role is not to draw attention to Himself, but to point all attention to the Son. I explained this to someone last week. The Spirit never draws attention to the Spirit. This is where many Christians err in focusing so much on the Spirit, rather than on Christ. The Spirit's role is to magnify and shine light on the Son. Like a flood light in the yard that shines light on the house. The role of the floodlight is to magnify the beauty of the house.

John 16:4 -- He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

So the Son is the focus. And in focusing on the Son, both the Father and Spirit are glorified too. This is why our mission statement as a church is showing Jesus as incomparably glorious. Nobody is like Jesus.

In light of that, we are starting a series through the book of Hebrews. Here at TJC, we like to teach through books of the Bible. We take 10-12 week chunks at a time and then go back to another book, and as a result, we go through a couple of books at the same time. We just finished the Gospel of John recently. We are in Genesis right now (up to Chapter 17). Today we start Hebrews. The focus of Hebrews is Jesus. Again and again, throughout Hebrews, the author takes an Old Testament passage and shows us how it points forward to something that was fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus is God's unique Son, the one who has dealt with sins fully and finally, and He is the One who now rules at God's right hand. From the beginning, the book fixes our eyes on Jesus, and at the end of the book, he urges us to fix our eyes on Jesus.

Hebrews helps us to look at Jesus with a telescope, not a microscope. Microscopes make small things look bigger than they are. A lot of churches and professing Christians have small views of Jesus. A.W. Tozer once said, "**What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing**

about us." Think about that statement. What comes to your mind, your conception of God, is the most important thing about you because it will shape how you live and what kind of person you are.

Similarly, J.B. Phillips, in his book *"Your God is Too Small"* writes: **"The trouble with many people today is that they have not found a God big enough for modern needs. While their experience of life has grown in a score of directions, and their mental horizons have been expanded to the point of bewilderment by world events and by scientific discoveries, their ideas of God have remained largely static. It is obviously impossible for an adult to worship the conception of God that exists in the mind of a child of Sunday-school age."** Phillips isn't saying God is small and unable to meet modern needs. He's saying most people receive a shallow view of God in childhood and as they mature and learn more complex things about the world, their conception of God remains largely static. They have a small view of God which is why they remain uninterested. He's right.

Hebrews helps us to avoid that. We are not looking at Jesus through a microscope to make the small Jesus look bigger. Hebrews is a telescope. Telescopes make massive things, which appear small to us, look more like what they really are. Hebrews helps us see the greatness and grandeur of Christ. It helps us to see Jesus more like He actually is.

Background of the letter:

We don't know who the author of Hebrews is. We know from the context of the letter that it is addressed to Jewish Christians scattered outside of Israel, probably in and around Italy. They would be Christians who came to faith from the preaching and testimony of the apostles, not being first-hand eyewitnesses of Jesus themselves. However, as Jews, they could follow the arguments drawn from the Old Testament such as the sacrificial system and priesthood. We know from the context of the letter that they were believers who had undergone suffering and presently going through suffering. The goal of the letter is to help them to see that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises, and the One we look to in our lives to fix our hopes.

Scripture Exegesis: Hebrews 1:1-4

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,

The beginning of Hebrews contains some of the most incredible verses in all of the Bible. The first four verses in Greek are one sentence with multiple clauses. Let's look together at how Hebrews begins by looking at it through a few points:

1. God has Spoken

The book opens with "long ago," like in an epic movie or novel. **Long ago at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.** The first important thing established in Hebrews is

that "God has spoken." This is the argument of the entire book. God has spoken decisively and definitively through His Son.

The author highlights that God spoke to the fathers (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, etc.) through the prophets. This came through visions, dreams, and prophetic sayings. And this happened over a series of centuries and thousands of years. The God who created all things, made Himself known. He spoke. This is a massive deal. It is one thing to believe that there is a Creator over the universe that is impersonal, unknowable, and so transcendent as to be in the dark about Him. But the testimony of Scripture is that this Creator HAS NOT left us in the dark, but has made Himself known. This God is personal. He speaks. He reveals.

But the ultimate revelation of this God, and the ultimate way in which He has spoken is through the Son. So already we see there are two time periods of God's speaking to His people: "**long ago**" and "**these last days.**" Jesus' coming, the Son's coming, marks the period of "**these last days.**"

The revelation of God which comes through the Son is superior to that which came before. The Son speaks, just as the prophets did, but the Son's revelation is final. Why is that the case?

2. The Supremacy of Christ

In the next several clauses we have a list of things that showcase the supremacy of Christ. There are 7 things highlighted that show the attributes and achievements of the Son.

Heir of all things: As the eternal Son, He is not created nor does He become the Son. But as we'll see in a moment in Colossians 1:16, all things were created for Him. This also describes the fulfillment of Psalm 2 which says God's Son would inherit the nations and the earth. Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension place all things under Him. Jesus says this a few times Himself, "**all things, in Heaven and on Earth belong to me.**" All power and authority are His. He's the heir of all things.

Through whom He created the world: God, out of His own choosing, created the material and spiritual world. This also points to His Sovereignty because He was not constrained by any outside force to create the universe. It did it out of the pleasure of His will. How did God create these things? Did it take Him months, years, or millenniums to create the heavens and the earth? No. He simply spoke it, and it was. That is His power on display. You see, we can build houses and buildings and bridges, and structures, but it takes months and years for us to do this. God simply decides that He is going to do it, and does it. Immediately, what God has spoken to be, is.

So Jesus is the agent through which the Father creates the heavens and the earth. That tells us about His power, but it also tells us something about the scope of who He is and just how big God is. Consider a few things for a moment. God created the physical universe that we see. Listen to some of the facts about the size and scope of the universe:

** The sun, which is by far the nearest star to us, is 93 million miles away. If we could take a 747 jet to the Sun, and a 747 jet flies at about 600 miles in one hour, it would take 17 years to fly from the Earth to the Sun. Think about this, that is the nearest star to us.

** How big is the Milky Way? The Milky Way galaxy is our galaxy. Listen, it is one of estimated billions of galaxies, each like ours in size. How big is it? Astronomers don't use miles to measure many distances because they are too large. We use the light-year. A light-year is the distance that light travels in one year, which is equal to 5,676,000,000,000 miles! We think that our galaxy, the Milky Way, is about 100,000 light-years across. So even if you could travel at the speed of light (186,000 miles per second) it would still take 100,000 years to cross our galaxy!

**Our universe consists of more than 100 billion galaxies, and each galaxy, on average contains more than 100 billion stars, which accounts for more than 10 billion trillion stars i.e. 1 followed by 22 zeros. It's estimated that the number of stars in the universe is greater than the number of grains of sand on all the beaches in the world! On a clear night, we can see the equivalent of a handful of sand.

When you consider facts like these, and you attempt to get your mind around the scope and size of the universe, it is mind-blowing, but here is the thing that should blow our mind even further: this is just creation, the Creator is even greater. The universe is like a penny in the pocket of God, and even then, that is giving the universe too much credit when compared to God.

Psalm 147:4 (ESV) - *He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.*

Psalm 8:3-4 (ESV) - *When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?*

What are the implications of who such a being is? A being this powerful, this spectacular, and this grand, is not to be trifled with. He is not to be dismissed. In fact, if He is to be considered rightly, He should be considered as central to all things. He should not simply be a part of our lives, He should be the point of our lives.

We see clearly from this text that the Son is the One through whom the Father created the world. He is the agent of the Father in every act of creation. All that was made was made through Him. This is further proof that Jesus does not belong in the category of created things, instead, He is the One doing the creating. He is the Word from the beginning who was with God and is God (John 1).

Colossians 1:15-20 (ESV) - *15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 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. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For*

in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

All things were made through Him, and without him was not anything made that was made... -- this is a huge statement. Interesting to note is that one of the reasons why Christ is the heir of all things is because He is the creator of all things. He is the agent of creation and therefore heir over all of it.

These next few clauses are separate but hang together to form the core nucleus of the argument being made. They are the grounds for asserting that the Son is uniquely qualified to be the revealer of God and the mediator of a new covenant.

Radiance of the glory of God: The radiance of the glory of God. This idea is one of light radiating from a source. Just as the radiance of the sun reaches this earth, through Christ, the glorious light of God shines into the world and the hearts of men and women.

Exact imprint of His nature: Christ is the very image of the essence of God. He bears the stamp of His nature. The being of God is really in Christ. Jesus is the exact representation and embodiment of what the Father is like. What God essentially is, is made manifest in Christ.

The idea here is incredible. Let me unpack it. The Greek word that is translated as "exact imprint" is the word character. In the ancient world, they engraved or stamped hot metal with a pattern that the metal would continue to bear. They didn't have printing presses yet, but they used this technique to make coins. Emperors would have their portraits made and engraved on a stamp so they could press it to hot metal and leave the image or impression. That's what the word character in ancient Greek meant: the accurate impression left by the stamp on the coin. This is what the Hebrew writer is saying about Jesus. The exact imprint of the Father's very nature and glory has been precisely reproduced in the Son's nature. It is there for the world to see. The Hebrew writer tells us that the Father had for a long time been sending advance sketches of Himself to His people, but now He's given us His exact portrait.

Upholds the universe by the word of His power: Jesus not only created all things, but He is sustaining them. This is a contrast from the view of God that Deism holds, who makes the world and sits back to watch it operate on its own (like a clockmaker). And this sustaining the world isn't passive support, but the language implies movement and progress toward an objective.

How? Through His Word. He speaks it. He tells it to keep going.

Sidenote: I was discussing this recently with our small group. Have you ever noticed that the vast majority of people don't wake up every day terrified of hurling through space? Nobody wakes up scared that the earth's axis or gravitational cycle around the sun will get off track. Yet if it did life would cease to exist. We watch movies like Armageddon where meteors threaten to destroy the planet, but

we don't leave scared it will happen. Do you know why? Because we intuitively know God sustains the universe. It exists by His sustaining power.

Made purification for sins: How did the Son of God make purification for sins? He died on the cross as a sacrificial lamb. He gave Himself up to be a substitute for His people. Notice we go from the cosmic functions of the Son of God (creator, sustainer) to His relationship with mankind as its High Priest (a theme of the book). Jesus not only made purification for sins, but the implication here is that He is the ONLY one capable. Jesus purified a defiled bride by taking on her stains and dying in her place, making her as white as now.

Have you been purified from your sins by the Savior? Has Christ purified you? You see, the issue here is not that we can purify ourselves with good behavior, but that we must be purified by trusting Christ. Being purified is an act of receiving, not of doing. After we're purified, all doing is an act of love in response to the grace of the Savior, not an attempt to earn the grace of the Savior. Nobody purifies themselves. Nobody washes their sins away. They must be purified by Christ alone.

Sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high: The phrase "*Majesty on High*" is a description of the Father. After Jesus' death, He was raised in glory and ascended to Heaven (assumed in the text) where He now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Now for clarity, there is no spatial location where the Father is and Jesus is to the right of Him. There is no literal location intended here (this was well understood by early Christians too). The emphasis of the right hand is the place of honor. The military still follows this precedent. When two people are walking together, the senior-ranked individual walks on the right side, and the lesser-ranked individual walks on the left side. The right side is the position of honor. That is exactly what the writer is describing. Jesus' resurrected and enthroned state exalts Him in the place of honor.

What is Jesus doing in this exalted state? Governing all things. He is sustaining the universe, including His people. He is orchestrating all things to the appointed end which has been fixed in Heaven since the ages began. This is why Christians shouldn't despair at world events. We shouldn't be silly conspiracy theorists who say things like I heard one church say that Taylor Swift and Travis Kelcey were going to have a child that would be the Anti-Christ. I mean, cmon guys, do better. We are hopeful people in a world of insanity because we believe that this world is on a triumphant march toward God's appointed future. Jesus is King. He rules over it all at the right hand of the Majesty. When you lay your head down to sleep tonight, sleep in Heavenly peace.

To see Jesus rightly, to behold Him in all His glory as revealed in our passage today, will change your life. That's no small god. If this comes to our mind when we think of Jesus (not just a moral teacher or compassionate healer or miracle worker), it will be reflected in your life. He's kind of a big deal.

There is no in-between on this. If Jesus isn't all these things, we're wasting our time. But if He is... If Jesus is everything this passage describes of Him, then that matters a great deal in how we live. There's not an in-between. Either be all-out because you don't believe it. Or be all-in because you do.

You see, Jesus is greater than even my loftiest explanations of Him. No matter how highly I exalt Him and describe Him, you need to understand that He is even greater. No matter how much power I ascribe to Him, His power is greater. No matter how much wisdom I attribute to Him, He is wiser. No matter how much beauty I describe Him with, He is more beautiful. No matter how much effort I use to capture his holiness, He is more holy. No matter how much love I describe Him as having, His love is more. Jesus is beyond our comprehension and imagination, yet He has revealed Himself to us to be known. God has spoken. It is inexcusable for us to dismiss God as uninteresting or small in our minds or lives. The more accurate knowledge you have about the truth and magnitude of who God is, the more you should desire to serve Him, follow Him, praise Him, stand in awe of Him, and treasure Him.

In this series on Hebrews, we will seek to do just that.

LOOK BACK

- How was your week? What is one thing you're grateful for and one thing that challenged you?
- How did you GROW in obedience to Christ over the last week?
- Where did you GO to share the gospel or have a spiritual conversation with someone?

BUILD UP

- **REVIEW:**
 - Read **Hebrews 1:1-3** and then have someone else in the group read it again, preferably from a different version.
 - What big takeaways did you have from the teaching?
 - Additional Scripture:
 - 1 Timothy 3:16-18
 - Colossians 1:16
 - John 13:3
 - Matthew 28:18
 - Proverbs 8:22-31
 - Isaiah 44:24
 - John 1:14
 - 2 Corinthians 4:6
 - 2 Corinthians 4:4
 - Colossians 1:15
 - Psalm 75:3
 - Colossians 1:17
 - Revelation 4:11

- Hebrews 7:27
- John 1:29
- 1 John 1:7
- Psalm 110:1
- Mark 16:19
- Acts 2:33

● **REFLECT:**

- What comes into your mind when you think about God?
- What does it mean that God has spoke to us by his Son?
- What does the following phrases mean:
 - Heir of all things? (John 13:3, Matthew 28:18)
 - Through whom He created the world? (Proverbs 8:22-31, Isaiah 44:24)
 - The radiance of the glory of God? (2 Corinthians 4:6, 4:4)
 - The exact imprint of His nature? (Colossians 1:15)
 - That He upholds the universe by the word of his power? (Psalm 75:3, Colossians 1:17, Revelation 4:11)
 - How did He make purification for sins? (Hebrews 7:27, John 1:29, 1 John 1:7)
 - That He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high? (Psalm 110:1, Mark 16:19, Acts 2:33)

● **RESPOND:**

- How did this change or challenge your view of God?
- How does this change or challenge your walk with God?

● **MEDITATE:**

- Hebrews 1:1-2 -- *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.*

● **MEMORIZE:**

- Colossians 1:16 -- *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.*

SEND OUT

- **FOLLOW:** How will you follow Jesus this week and grow in your love and understanding of Him?
- **FISH:** Who in your sphere of influence needs to hear this story, your story or the gospel?
- **PRAYER:**
 - Pray over any request from your group members.
 - Worship Pastor - **Brett Perkins**
 - Ministry - **Journey Worship Co.**
 - **Pray for our long-term units on the field:**

- The Wilsons
- The Grays
- The Starks
- **Pray for our mid-term sent ones on the field:**
 - Kaesi
 - Ethan & Dustin (May 16 - June 30)
- **Pray for our short-term teams:**
 - Asian Pacific Rim Team - on the field
 - Southeast Asia Team #2 departing on June 15
 - London Team departing June 30
 - Central Asia Team #2 departing on September 27
- **Pray for the lost - Unreached People Group (UPG):** Wiwa in Colombia



- **Population in Country:** 19,000
- **Global Population:** 19,000
- **Christian Adherent:** 2.10%
- **Evangelical:** 0.40%
- **Primary Religion:** Ethnic Religions
- **Primary Language:** Sanka
- **Summary:** Who are these men, all dressed in white with long black hair? They are the Malayo, also known as Wiwa people. They live in the valleys of the Sierra Nevada Mountains of north Colombia. The Malayo have a democratic way of governing. Every few weeks, the men gather at night to discuss and vote on the various issues their tribe faces. Village shamans act as leaders and are in charge of carrying out the decisions.
- **Prayer Focus:** A tiny fraction of the Wiwa are believers. Pray that they would grow in the faith and be bold in sharing the good news. Pray that Wiwa parents would be able to provide for their children. Pray that teams would go to the Wiwa to help with both their physical and spiritual needs. Pray that God would raise up many disciples among the Wiwa in this decade.