

## Jesus Our Great High Priest Forever

### Hebrews 1:1-4

(Week 1)

### “Message From God”

#### Introduction

Every year on New Years Day, my family gathers to eat chili and watch college football (we are real party animals, my family). This year we all met at my oldest son's house. My four year old granddaughter and my son's niece were apparently bored with the festivities and decided to play a game of hide and seek. One of the girls would hide, while the other would try and find her. As time went by, it became increasingly obvious to me that neither of the two had a lot of practice in finding things hidden from view. The searches seemed endless, even with the constant coaching of the the ladies in the room. You know the drill... "You're getting warmer. No, your getting colder... warmer, warmer, warmer!" I suppose this would have all been quite charming had I not been trying to watch the Rose Bowl in the SAME ROOM! I'll be honest, there were a couple of times that I just wanted to take my granddaughter (lovingly of course) by the hand and say (in the gentlest way possible), "SHE'S RIGHT HERE! Now can we PLEASE just let Pap-a watch the game?!" I restrained myself of course (much to my credit, I might add), and it all worked out in the end. The kids had a great time, and Georgia beat Oklahoma. So, I suppose that all's well that ends well! But that little game of hide and seek got me to thinking. I wonder how frustrating it was for God The Father, when He gave so many clues in His Word about His Son, and the people still didn't recognize Him when He came? I mean EVERYTHING in the Old Testament points directly to Christ, and yet, the very people who knew the Old Testament best couldn't seem to see the proverbial forest for the trees! They were waiting patiently for the promised Messiah, and as He stood there in front of them, they were unable to see Him for who He was. How incredibly frustrating that must have been for Him!

Before you say it, yes, I realize that Jesus is all-knowing, and He knew before He came that it would be this way, but still, it must have have been disheartening. The *Book of Hebrews* was written for those faithful Jews who were, in fact, able to see Jesus for who He was. Believing in Him, most likely caused them to be disowned by their families and possibly even banned form their local synagog, but they believed nonetheless. We do not really know the writer of Hebrews. There are many theories, but I will not speculate as to it's authorship. However, I am thoroughly convinced that the book is divinely inspired by The Holy Spirit. Hebrews stands alone in it's magnificence. It is wonderfully written and inspiring in it's message. There are three key words that are mentioned repeatedly in the text; *better*, *perfect*, and *heaven*. The main thrust of the book is that in Jesus we find a "better faith", "a perfected faith" and a "heavenly faith". The Old Testament rituals were merely an earthly picture of a heavenly truth, and were never intended to be the final Word from God. Jesus was The Final Word form God! To cling to the old ways and miss Christ is indeed a horrifying and tragic mistake. There are five specific warnings given within the book of Hebrews to make the reader understand the dangers of missing the truth of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of all that God had promised in His Word. To miss out on Him is to miss... EVERYTHING!

The beginning chapter of the book assumes two very important things: First, that there is a God, and Second, that He speaks to us.

**"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son....."**

**Hebrews 1:1-2**

Nowhere in the scriptures is there a case made to "prove" the existence of God. In fact the scriptures say that creation does that for us:

**"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."**

**Psalms 19:1-4**

You see, if you don't believe in the existence of God, then *The Bible* says that you are a fool (**Psalm 14:1**) *The Bible* says that all that we have to do to believe in God is just step outside and look around! The writer of Hebrews just assumed that his readers believed in God, and also, that God actually speaks to us. In the past, He had spoken through angels or the prophets, but in the "last days" (the days of the Messiah), He spoke plainly through His Only Begotten Son. Jesus was the ultimate and final MESSENGER from God. He was the very MANIFESTATION of God, and He was the perfect MEDIATOR between God and Man!

### **The Perfect Messenger From God (vs. 1-2)**

The opening statement of the *Book of Hebrews* tell us that God has always spoken to us. We live in a physical world, one in which we can only interact with our five senses. We can neither see, nor enter into the spiritual realm that exists just outside our reach. For us to be able to know anything of this realm, God must come to us; for we cannot go to Him. God has been revealing His truth to mankind since creation. Before Adam sinned and separated us all from God, He and God had complete fellowship in the Garden of Eden. Adam's disobedience created a rift between God and mankind, but God had always known His plan to restore the close communion that He had with man when the world began. Jesus Christ, the God/Man, would come and undo the curse that sin had brought into the world. But, until that preordained time in history, it was necessary for God to have some interaction with men, in order to keep them from total destruction. These interactions were accomplished in the words of the writer of *Hebrews*, **"at many times, and through many ways" (vs. 1)**. God revealed himself to mankind little by little, through messengers such as angels or prophets, who spoke on The Lord's behalf.

The Law of God, meant to protect mankind from total depravity, was given to Moses through the mediation of angels (**Acts 7:53; Hebrews 2:2**). The word "*angel*" in Hebrew, "*Malak*" actually means "*messenger*". Therefore, God had sent many "messengers" at many different times to speak to His people. The prophets, who were men set apart to speak on behalf of God, were also were given His special "revelations of truth" that were at best, incomplete portraits of God's character, His purposes and His ways. The messages of the prophets were meant to reveal the truths of God, along with things that He intended to accomplish upon the earth. Sometimes they revealed His promises of protection, and other times they revealed His warnings of impending judgement for the sins of the people. The prophets also spoke of a time when God would reign over all the earth as King, and **the earth would be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 2:14)**. This time was commonly known as "the Messianic Age". It was a time when God would speak to His people face to face.

*The Old Testament* itself was written over a period of 1,500 years by some forty-five writers. But all of these messages, from so many different messengers, had one thing in common. They ALL were intended to point us to that Great and Final Messenger, who would one day come not only to speak on God's behalf, but to speak to us as God Himself! God was coming into this world, clothed in the flesh of mankind, and would reveal Himself to us as He had never before been revealed. The writer of Hebrews wanted his readers to understand fully, that Jesus was not just another messenger from God. No. He was so much more. Jesus IS God, come to bring His final message to us... in PERSON! He is the culmination of all *The Old Testament* promises. He came to perfect what God had begun so many centuries earlier. Every promise that had been made to the "Fathers" of Israel (Abraham, Issac, Jacob, David, etc.) was fulfilled in Christ. To see Jesus and to hear His truth is to see and hear God Himself. No other man who has ever lived can rightfully claim such authority, save Jesus, the only begotten Son of God!

## **The Perfect Manifestation of God (vs. 2-3)**

**Verses two and three** of this passage are so packed with truth, that it would be possible for me to preach an entire series just on these two verses of scripture! They are given to the reader so that he may fully comprehend that Jesus is no ordinary man, but rather, He is the fullness of God. He is a manifestation (showing) of God the Father in every possible way. The writer (inspired by The Holy Spirit) gives us a sevenfold description of Christ as He displays for us the very essence of God. Seven in the scriptures is the number of completeness. So, it is used here to express that Jesus is in all ways fully God. Let us look together at the seven attributes of Christ that prove His divinity.

1. He is the heir of all things.  
When we read the book of Revelation we see in Chapter 5 that only Christ is found worthy to open the "scroll sealed with seven seals" (Rev. 5:5). In the time of this scripture, Title Deeds transferring ownership of property were sealed in such ways. What the book of Revelation is depicting for us, is that Jesus is destined to inherit the earth. He is God and the earth is His and His alone. Though presently the devil is called "the prince of this world", the day is coming when Jesus shall take it back for Himself. The Book of Revelation actually is about the time and processes that Christ will employ to do exactly that.
2. Through Him all things were created.  
Jesus made the universe. The very creation that proves to us that there is in fact a God, was spoken into existence by none other than Christ Himself.
3. He is the radiance of God's glory.  
The Shekinah Glory of God that led the children of Israel through the wilderness, and illuminated the temple... is none other than Christ Himself!
4. He is the exact representation of God's being.  
As Jesus once said to Philip the disciple, **"If you have seen me, you have seen The Father." (John 14:9).**
5. Sustaining all things.  
It is Christ who holds the universe together. He is the very power of God. Have you ever thought about the perfect way that the universe works? It is Christ who keeps everything from flying apart. If He were to disregard the universe for a single moment, everything that we know would explode into dust.
6. He is The Sacrifice of God.  
He and He alone was able to satisfy completely the penalty for our sin.
7. He is the Majesty of God.  
He sits at God's right hand in honor, authority, the finisher of our faith, and our intercessor. **"At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God The Father." (Philippians 2:10-11).**

You see, Jesus is the perfect manifestation of God, for He is God in the flesh. **"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven, given to mankind by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12).**

### **The Perfect Mediator Between God and Man (vs. 3)**

This brings us to one of the best verses in the entire Bible. **Verse three** tells us that **“After He (Jesus) had provided purification for sins (on the cross), he SAT DOWN at the right hand of The Father”**. Any Hebrew worth his salt would have understood exactly what this meant, but for us Gentiles, it requires a little further explanation. You see, the Levite priests at the Temple never got an opportunity to “sit down”. In fact, there weren’t even any seats at the temple where the priests performed their daily services. Every morning and every evening, they were required to perform ritual sacrifices on behalf of the people, not to mention all of the “special occasions” mentioned in the *Book of Leviticus* where they were required to make additional sacrifices. No, the work of the priest was never ending, as they tirelessly endeavored to stand in the gap between a Holy God and a sinful people.

So much was required of the priests, and yet, it was never enough. For you see, God’s perfect holiness can never be satisfied by the righteousness of men. Our righteousness is filthy rags (**Isaiah 64:6**). But when Jesus, The Perfect High Priest, gave His life upon the cross, it completely satisfied our sin debt. This is what He meant when He said, **“It is finished”**, as died upon that old cross. The wrath of God was completely satisfied in Him, there was no need for any more sacrifices to be made ever again! This is why Jesus, our perfect High Priest, could “sit down” after He paid for our sin! He paid it FOREVER! No earthly priest would ever be able to do that, but Jesus was no earthly priest. He is the heavenly High Priest, sent from The Father as the perfect sacrifice for our sin.

Jesus, our great High Priest forever, now sits at the right hand of God the Father as the perfect Mediator between God and man. He ever lives to intercede with God The Father on our behalf (**Hebrews 7:25**). That’s what He “gets up” every day to do now... to talk to God on your behalf, if you have put your faith and trust in Him. How does it feel to know that Jesus is standing at the right hand of God The Father, praying for YOU at this very moment?! Thanks to Christ, we now have right standing before God. All the sacrifices made by the Levite Priests in the past were only temporary earthly pictures of an eternal heavenly truth. Jesus was the final and perfect sacrifice for sin. He is the ultimate High Priest. His death upon the cross is sufficient, and we have been completely forgiven once and for all! That is why, He SAT DOWN.

I recently had a conversation with a young man about where he would spend his eternity. He told me, sadly, that he didn’t believe that God could still love him after all the terrible things that he had done in his life. So, I asked Him if he thought Jesus was a liar. “No, absolutely not”, he said emphatically. I told him that if he truly believed that God could no longer love him, nor forgive him, for all that he had done, then he was, in fact, calling Jesus a liar, because The Word of God says plainly;

**“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from ALL unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9).**

No one has the power to forgive like Jesus can! He is more than just a Messenger from God, He IS God, bringing HIS Message of forgiveness. He is more than just a good man, or even a prophet. He is the MANIFESTATION of Almighty God, and He is not just a Mediator between God and Man. He is God, The MEDIATOR who offers us restoration. His sacrifice was enough, because HE is enough. The message of *Hebrews* is that Jesus is better than the sacrificial system of The Old Testament. He is better than the prophets. He is better than the priests. He loves you and longs to forgive your sins and to bring you into everlasting communion with God. He is able to do this, because He IS God! Call upon his Holy Name, and you shall never be disappointed.

And ALL of God’s people said... TRUTH!!!