

Jesus is Better #4

Series: A Heavenly Christmas

Hebrews 1:1-14

God's Final Word: His Son

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3The 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. 4So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

5For 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"?

6And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." 7In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire." 8But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. 9You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy."

10He also says, "In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. 11They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. 12You 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." 13To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? 14Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?' [NIV]

INTRODUCTION: Over one hundred years ago, a man by the name of Charles Spurgeon, approached his pulpit, opened his Bible to the text I just read, and said,

"I have nothing to do tonight but to preach Jesus Christ." That is my intention today, to simply preach Jesus Christ.

Luke who tells us about the Christmas story also tells us that the very first Christians, in the very first church, **"did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."** (Acts 5:42) When Philip went down to Samaria, he **"preached Christ to them."** (Acts 8:5) When he climbed into the Ethiopian's chariot, he **"preached Jesus to him."** (Acts 8:35)

The spark of salvation had just barely ignited a fire in Paul's heart, when we read, **"immediately he preached Christ in the synagogues."** (Acts 9:20) You can get in trouble preaching a lot of things, but you never go wrong when you preach Jesus.

God inspired the Scripture so that Jesus might be shown, and God sent the Spirit that Jesus might be known.

An anonymous author wrote these accurate, and immortal words, years ago:

More than 1900 years ago there was a man born contrary to laws of life. This man lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity....Only once did he cross the boundary of the country in which he lived; that was during his exile in childhood....In infancy he startled the king; in childhood he puzzled the doctors; in manhood he ruled the course of nature, walk-ed upon the billows as if on pavement, and hushed the sea to sleep....He never wrote a book, and yet all of the libraries of the country could not hold the books that have been written about him....He never wrote a song, and yet he has furnished the theme for more songs than all the songwriters combined....He never founded a college, but all the schools put together cannot boast of having as many students....Though time has spread many years between the people of this generation and the scene of his crucifixion, yet, he still lives. Herod could not destroy him, and the grave could not hold him....He stands forth upon the highest pinnacle of heavenly glory, proclaimed by God, acknowledged by angels, adored by saints, and feared by devils, as the living, personal, Christ, our Lord, our Savior, and our God.

There are four great passages on the person of Jesus Christ. The first one is in John 1—**"in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word**

was God." The second one is in Philippians 2, "***Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God. . .***" The third is Colossians 1. "***He is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creation.***"

The 4th great passage on Christ is here in Hebrews 1. The author's purpose in the book of Hebrews is to show the superiority of Jesus. You will find that one of the key words in the book is the word "better." It occurs 13 times in this letter. The writer of Hebrews takes everything imaginable and holds it alongside Jesus, and says, **Jesus is better.**

He takes up the Old Testament system of sacrifices and puts that alongside Jesus Christ and says Jesus is better. He takes the Old Testament high priest and puts Him alongside Jesus Christ and says Jesus is better.

That's the title of this morning's message – JESUS is BETTER.

Jesus is different; Jesus is distinct; Jesus is dissimilar from anyone who ever lived. In these verses, the author of Hebrews shows us the ***absolute supremacy, sufficiency and superiority of Jesus.***

I. Jesus is Supreme in Power

Jesus had unsurpassed, unequaled, unparalleled power.

A. The Power of Creation

1. We read here that Jesus is God's Son, "***through whom He made the universe.***"

Now do not miss the impact of that statement. **The Christ of the New Testament is the Creator of the Old Testament.**

Speaking of Jesus, we read in Colossians 1:16, "***For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.***"

John said: "***All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.***" (John 1:3) In other words, if anything is here, it is because Jesus created it.

We all know that Genesis 1: 1 says, "***In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.***" The Hebrew word for God used here is, Elohim, which is a plural noun, which is always followed by a singular verb.

In other words, when we speak of ourselves collectively in the plural, we would say, "we are." But here God says, "we is." Now that may be bad grammar, but it is tremendous theology. Because in the beginning it was God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, who was creating this universe. It is because Jesus created this world that He had power over this world when He was in this world.

Jesus had power over disaster. In the middle of a raging storm, he could speak to a boisterous sea and say, "Peace be still" and the waves would lie down.

Jesus had power over demons. He could say to a demoniac, "Come out of him!" and demons would run.

He had power over sickness and disease. He could say to a leper, "Be healed," and the spots would look for a place to hide.

He had power over death. To one who died he said, "Lazarus, come forth," and he walked out of that grave.

He had power over depravity. He could say to the worst sinner, "Your sins are forgiven." Immediately, guilt would be replaced by grace. Because He created this world, He controlled this world.

Mathematicians do interesting things with mathematical probabilities. I like math. In high school I took every math class that was offered. When I was working on my college degree, I needed one more elective, so I chose statistics. I figured that can't be hard, it's just math. If a baseball player gets one hit in three at bats, he's batting .333. Let me just say that it was a lot more complicated than that.

If you had ten pennies in your pocket and you put a number on each one of those pennies. 1-10. Put those pennies back in your pocket, reached in and pulled out a penny, what would be your odds that the first time you reached in your pocket and pulled out a penny that you would pull out the number 1 penny? Your mathematical odds of picking out the number one penny the first try are 1 in 10. Then if you put that penny back and after shaking up your pocket a little, you reach back in and you pick out the first penny and it's the number 1 penny, then

you pick out the second penny and it's the number 2 penny. The odds of that are 1 in 50. They say the odds of you taking all those pennies and shaking them up, and picking them out in numerical order, are one in ten billion.

That's small math in comparison to the odds the mathematicians give us that all our universe, all our creation, all the complexities of its design—the odds that all of this should come about by some kind of colossal accident are 400,000 trillion, trillion, trillion to one.

Our modern telescopes have demonstrated to us that we are in an expanding universe. That proves that the universe had a beginning. All intelligent astronomers believe that the universe had a beginning. Now, some of them think it was a big bang. I got news for you; it WAS a big bang. In the beginning, God said, **'let there be light'** and BANG the universe has been expanding ever since.

Jesus Christ made all things by His mighty power.

B. The Power of Cohesion

The one who put this world together is now the one who holds this world together. He is the one who is ***"upholding all things by the word of His power."*** (v.3) I mentioned last week in Col. 1:17, ***"He is before all things, and in Him all things are held together."***

Christ is the glue of the galaxies. He is the one who brought this world together, and He is the one who holds this world together. Just so you know, what is true of this world is true of your life.

STORY: I read about a little boy who had a jigsaw puzzle that had a map of the world on one side, and a picture of a man on the other side. His mother asked him to put the map together. Well, before long the little guy had put that puzzle together and had all the world in one complete piece. The mother could not believe it. She had no idea her son knew so much about geography. She said, "Son, how on earth did you do that?" He said, "it was easy. I did the side of the puzzle that had the man on it first. When I got the man right, the world was right."

What was true of that puzzle is true of your life. Only Jesus can take the pieces of your life, no matter how shattered, broken, or messed up, and put them together.

C. The Power of Communication

God is not only in the creation business, but He is also in the communication business. Because all that we can know of God, He reveals to us. Now verbally God revealed Himself through the prophets. ***"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways,*** (v.1)

Prophets shook the world with the things they said. They caused kings to tremble. They spoke eternal truth. Think about the things the prophets had to say. In fact, the Old Testament prophets spoke about the coming of the Lord Jesus. Moses said that he would be the seed of the woman. Micah said he would be born in Bethlehem. Isaiah said that he would be born of a virgin and is the Wonderful Counselor, the Everlasting Father, the Mighty God and the Prince of Peace.

There were prophets such as Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Daniel; we could name many others, Amos, Hosea and other Old Testament writers. These men spoke the revelation of God as God gave it to them.

And then God used kings. Amos was a herdsman of sheep, but He also used Kings like David and Solomon, very powerful men. Men who were poets and philosophers. But he used others like Daniel, men who were men of great vision.

He also used priests. Samuel was a priest of the Lord. Samuel recorded many of the acts of God and he gave us much of the revelation of God in the history of that time.

He spoke to the children of Israel through the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. He spoke to Moses through the burning bush. He spoke to Daniel in the lion's den. He spoke to Samuel in an audible voice, that Samuel could hear as a little boy in the middle of the night as he was sleeping there in the temple. God even spoke to Balaam, the prophet, through a donkey.

STORY: I heard about a couple of ladies, from some other church. They were talking about this phenomenon of God speaking to Balaam through the donkey in the Old Testament. One said, "Do you really think that God could speak to us through a donkey like he did to Balaam?" The other lady replied and said, "Well, yeah. He does it in our church every Sunday." That was somewhere else.

God revealed Himself at many times. He revealed Himself progressively through the years of time. It is an unfolding of God's revelation of Himself. As you begin the Bible in the book of Genesis and as you continue through the Word of God, God is gradually revealing Himself and His plan for mankind.

And then God revealed Himself in various ways. Sometimes God used parables and stories to illustrate truth. Sometimes God used symbols to illustrate a greater truth. Sometimes He used ceremonies such as in the book of Leviticus we read of all the ceremonies that God gave to Israel. The Feast Days that God gave to Israel that illustrate the greater spiritual truth about Christ who would come.

We read the story about the brazen serpent that the Israelites were told to make and lift on a pole in the camp. They were being bitten by poisonous snakes and God said raise up a snake of brass in the camp. And whoever will look at the snake of brass if he has been bitten by a serpent, he will live. Jesus said, as Moses lifted the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. We have been bitten by the poison of sin, and the only way of salvation is to look to Christ.

2 Peter 1:20-21, ***"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."***

That is how you know that your Bible is inspired by God. That is how you can be sure it is God's Word, not the word of man because the Scripture says no prophecy is of any private interpretation, but holy men of God spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, as He breathed into them the words.

The prophets spoke about the truth. Jesus IS the truth. The prophets pointed TO the way. Jesus IS the way. The prophets talked about life, but Jesus Christ IS life.

In the Old Testament you have things concealed but in the New Testament you have things revealed.

Now God reveals Himself in the last days through one man in only one way and that is Jesus Christ, His Son, the Messiah. We think about the last days as the

immediate time before the coming of Christ. But the writer of Hebrews is writing about 70 A.D. and he is saying I am living in the last days, and so are we.

The full and final record of God's revelation of Himself to man was the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, the finished work of Jesus Christ. And we have the full record of that work in the New Testament. The full and final revelation of God to man has been given to us in His Son Jesus

The writer of Hebrews is writing to Jewish believers. And Jewish believers were being told that they had to keep the law as well as believe on Jesus. That salvation was by grace through faith, AND keeping all the ceremonies of the Old Testament.

So, the writer of Hebrews writes to these Jewish Christians and says in times past God revealed Himself to you through those ceremonies, rituals, and symbols, but now in these last days, He revealed Himself in only one way, through Jesus. All you need to be concerned about is God's revelation of Himself through Jesus Christ.

Now it goes on to describe in this chapter and throughout the book of Hebrews that Christ is better to everything else that the Bible has ever mentioned that He is superior to priests, He is superior to angels, He is superior to principalities and powers. Christ is the ultimate revelation of God because He is God in human flesh.

If you change the words of Scripture, you can change the entire meaning. For instance, if you say the meaning of the word virgin is that Mary was a young woman not a virgin, then you have changed the whole doctrine of the birth of Christ. And you destroy the fundamental truth of salvation.

Verse 2 tells us that' ***in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,***'

You see, Jesus was more than just a prophet. In fact, Jesus was better than the prophets, and Jesus was greater than the prophets for these reasons:

- **A prophet is God's messenger, but Jesus is God's Messiah.**
- **A prophet was God's spokesman, but Jesus is God's Son.**
- **From the prophet we hear God's voice, but in Jesus we see the very person of God.**

Jesus is not just God's best word to man; He is God's last word to man.

Jesus is unique because of His Supreme Power, and secondly,

II. Jesus is Superior in Perfection

A. Jesus is the Exact Representation of God

We are told in v.3 that Jesus is ***'the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being...'*** Now that language is deep, but the truth is simple. Jesus is God, and God is Jesus. They are distinct, but they are inseparable. This is one of the strongest statements of the deity of Jesus in all the Bible.

Now we are told first that Jesus is ***"the exact representation"*** of God. In other words, we could put it this way: Jesus is the ***"mirror image of God."*** In Col. 1:15 we are told, ***"He is the image of the invisible God..."*** It means a precise copy, an exact reproduction. Jesus is the perfect copy of God Himself, for He is God Himself.

Jesus did not become God. He became man. He was always God; "one with the Father, and one with the Spirit." You remember what the Bible says in Isaiah chapter 9, verse 6, prophesying about Jesus. It says, ***"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given."*** ***The child was born, but the Son was given. The Son was always the Son and never ceased to be the Son. But at Bethlehem that Son was given in the birth of a child.***

Now the reason this is so important is, that if it is true that Jesus is God, then He must have been sinless, because God is perfect. Therefore, Jesus is God, then He, too, must have been perfect. Jesus was not God because He was sinless. He was sinless because He was God.

Illustration: Have you ever said something that you wished you had never said? Have you ever made a statement that you had to correct? Do you realize that Jesus never withdrew or corrected any statement that He ever made? Has it ever occurred to you that Jesus never once had to apologize to anyone for anything? Jesus never apologized for anything he did, because he never made a mistake. He never apologized for anything he said, for he never made a misstatement. He never apologized for anywhere he went, for He never made a misstep.

Not once do you ever read where Jesus ever confessed his sins. Even though he taught his disciples to ask for forgiveness, He never asked for forgiveness. Even on the cross, while he was dying as a common criminal, He said, "**Father, forgive THEM...**" The reason why he never had to confess any sins is because he never had any sins to confess.

B. Jesus is the radiance of God's glory

There's a difference between the light of the moon and the light of the sun. The moon reflects light. In fact, if any of you had one of the older screens that was used to show motion pictures on, it was covered with a substance known as titanium. Titanium is a perfect reflector. When the astronauts went to the moon for the very first time, do you remember all that dust on the moon they were kicking around on the moon? They discovered that the moon's surface was covered with titanium. The moon does not generate light; the moon reflects light.

But the sun is different. The sun does not reflect light; the sun radiates light. It is of the very essence and the nature of the sun to give forth light. This verse of Scripture right here says that Jesus Christ is the radiance of God's glory. That means that Jesus Christ is the perfect reflection of the glory of God.

II Corinthians 4:6 says, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He is the radiance of God's glory.

Do you remember on one occasion Jesus saying, "***I am the light of the world?***" 1 John 1:5 tells us, "***That God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.***" Do you realize that unlike water, or even air, light is incorruptible. Light is not susceptible to contamination or corruption.

It doesn't matter whether it is sunlight, moonlight, starlight, or lamplight; light is always nothing but light. Light can come through a dirty window, but the light itself will be clean. Light exposes the dust particles, but not one speck of dust gets on the light. No matter which avenue light comes through, it always remains perfectly pure. That is true of Jesus Christ. Though He walked and lived in a sinful dirty world, his feet never picked up the dirt of human sin.

Jesus is Supreme in His Power, He is Superior in His Perfection

III. Jesus is Preeminent in His Position

Jesus holds a position that no one has ever held. In his power, we see his dominance. In his perfection, we see his dignity. But in his position, we see his dominion.

A. He Is the Recipient of All Things

Verse 2 tells us that Jesus has been "**appointed heir of all things...**" This world was not only made by Jesus, but it was also made for Jesus. "***For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.***" (Rom. 11:36) He holds the title deed to all the earth. It was made by Him; it was made for Him; it was made through Him.

That is why the Bible speaks of stewardship, rather than ownership. Everything you have is on loan from the Lord Jesus Christ who owns it all. You see, Jesus is your landlord because He is Lord over your land. If you want any part of this world, you had better know the one who owns it all.

If you are a part of the family of God, you should rejoice that Jesus is the heir of all things. Because Romans 8:17 tells us that as children of God, we are "***heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ...***"

STORY: I heard about a king who honored a soldier who had been a hero in battle by saying, "Ask whatever you will, and I will give it to you."

Well, the soldier went off and visited a very wise man and told him what the king had said. He said to this man, "I think I'll ask the king to make me a general, and then I shall control the entire army." The wise man said, "I wouldn't do that."

The soldier said, "Well, I think then that I will ask for half the kingdom, because then I will be wealthy forever." The wise man said, "I don't I would do that either."

The soldier said, "Well, what would you ask for?" The wise man said, "I would ask for his daughter's hand in marriage." That wise man knew that would make him heir to all the wealth, and all the power of all the kingdom.

Likewise, when you choose Jesus, you become part of the Church, the bride of Christ and an heir of the Father.

B. He Is the Redeemer of All Things

Verse 3 tells us that the Lord Jesus *'provided purification for sins,'* Notice carefully, he did this by Himself. Now I want to tell you plainly and simply, you don't need anyone or anything else to save you but Jesus. You are saved by grace through faith. All Jesus needs to save you is your faith in Him, and all you need to be saved is His grace offered to you.

We are told **"After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."**

Now that is a beautiful thing because the priests in the Old Testament never got to sit down, because their job was never finished. Of all the furniture they had in the tabernacle, there were no chairs.

But Jesus was the perfect priest because he offered the perfect sacrifice, which was Himself. Because his sacrifice was perfect, it was also permanent, never needing to be repeated.

"26Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself." (Heb. 7:26-27, NIV)

In a stroke of the pen, the writer of Hebrews, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit has carried us all the way from creation to Calvary. Now, he shows us this eternal Christ who is the creator, now as the redeemer—the Savior, who by Himself on Calvary's cross made purification for our sins. Once and for all, Jesus paid a price on the cross that paid the complete payment for all our sins.

STORY: A little boy came forward one Sunday at a church where they ask you to give your public testimony. The little boy said, "I did my part. Jesus did His part."

They asked, "What do you mean?" He said, "I did the sinning and He did the saving."

Hebrews 10:11, 13, "***And every priest stands daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins, but this man (Jesus) after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever sat down on the right hand of God.***"

Jesus is the recipient of all things, the redeemer of all things and lastly,

C. He Is the Ruler of All Things

1. Where is this High Priest sitting today? He is sitting "***at the right hand of the Majesty on high.***" Now the right hand was the place of power and authority. In other words, Jesus is not just a king, He is the King of Kings. He is not just a lord; He is Lord of Lord. To put it simply and plainly, He is everything and all things to everyone and to anyone.

To the architect, He is the Chief Cornerstone.

To the astronomer, He is the Bright and Morning Star.

To the butcher, He is the Lamb of God who was slain before the foundation of the world.

To the baker, He is the Living Bread.

To the carpenter, He is the Master Builder.

To the diplomat, He is the Prince of Peace.

To the doctor, He is the Great Physician.

To the educator, He is the Master Teacher.

To the electrician, He is the Light of the World

To the farmer, He is the Lord of the Harvest.

To the florist, He is the Lily of the Valley and the Rose of Sharon.

To the geologist, He is the Rock of Ages.

To the horticulturist, He is the True Vine.

To the jeweler, He is the Pearl of Great Price.

To the judge, He is the Righteous Judge.

To the lawyer, He is the Chief Advocate.

To the philosopher, He is the Wisdom of God.

To the publisher, He is Good Tidings of Great Joy.

To the sculptor, He is the Living Stone.

To the theologian, He is Author and Finisher of our faith.

To the zoologist, He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.

CONCLUSION:

This is the miracle of the message. Hebrews 1 says it so clearly. God didn't just send a message; He became the message. Jesus is the Word made flesh, communicating God's love in a way we could see, hear, and understand. That's what Christmas is all about. It's not just a celebration of an event; it's the celebration of a person. God stepped into our world, into our story, to reveal His heart to us. And today, we celebrate the miracle of the Christmas message, Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us.

If you are hungry, He is the Bread of Life. If you are thirsty, He is the Fountain of Living Water. If you are blind, He is the Light of the World. If you are lost, He is the Way. If you are confused, He is the Truth. If you are dying, He is the Life.