

**Jesus is... God**  
**Heb 1:1-4, John 1:1-5, 18**

Brothers and sisters, let me start this sermon by saying; as followers of Jesus Christ, we are at our best, we are most excellent, noble, admirable, outstanding, faithful... the kind of disciples to whom our Lord would say “*well done good and faithful servants...*” we are such... when we have a high view of Jesus Christ.

Consider for a moment those early followers of Jesus who lived under the Roman Empire. These Christians were willing to turn away from the pagan Roman gods and follow Jesus Christ and endure whatever persecution resulted from that decision. Some faced financial ruin, others were exiled, beheaded, or thrown to the lions in the Coliseum and some were burned alive! Yet more and more people began to follow Jesus and they continued to worship Jesus and share His testimony and serve the poor and needy.

Consider the missionaries sent out by the subsequently established Church, who left behind families, friends, the

comforts of their home country and culture and undertook lengthy and dangerous travels across the oceans and mountain ranges to make contact with peoples who had not yet heard about Jesus. They endured the hostility of these people, some perished from it, but others stayed, and they persisted and lived amongst these people, learned foreign languages and customs in order to preach and teach about Jesus Christ. Today – the Church is established on every continent in this world because of them.

And consider our Christian brothers and sisters in China right now. Who, as I shared with you in a sermon before Christmas, endure social scorn, arrest, imprisonment, having their lives disrupted, their belongings confiscated and their church buildings torn down by their government because they persist in following Jesus and gathering together to worship Him.

In all of these situations, these disciples were and are willing to face hardships and persecution and even death... because they have a high view of Jesus Christ. They see Jesus as Savior, as Lord, as God. Thus they are willing to follow Him through

whatever circumstances may come, all the way to the very end and live out what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus Christ.

So let me say it again brothers and sisters; followers of Jesus Christ are at their very best when they have a high view of Jesus.

In fact the scripture records this dynamic for us in Acts chapter 7. You might remember the story of how Stephen was stoned after having testified before the Jewish Sanhedrin and indicting them of resisting God and killing His Messiah. Just before Stephen is dragged off to be put to death in vs. 56 it says that Stephen looked upward and said *“Look, I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”* That’s a high view of Jesus brothers and sisters, and it enables Stephen to faithfully endure what comes next and offer his life as a witness to the power and truth of who Jesus really is.

Followers of Jesus Christ are at their very best when they have a high view of Jesus... and there is NO higher view of Jesus

than to see Him as God, and thus – we begin this new sermon series of 2023 focusing on who Jesus is... as God.

Now I’m fairly certain that all of us here this morning generally agree with the statement that Jesus is God, it’s the sort of biblical truth that is just assumed in the same way we know snow is cold or water is wet. Jesus is God – sure, so... how ‘bout that gold medal for the Canadians in the world junior championship eh!?

But brothers and sisters, when we have a high view of Jesus the conversation would actually go like this: *“A gold medal for the Canadians in the world junior championship – cool... Hey! What about Jesus being God!?”*

So my prayer this morning is that as we study and reflect on what the writer of Hebrews offers as testimony to Jesus’ divinity that we will be captivated by it and inspired by it and become awestruck at what it truly means that Jesus is God.

So the writer of Hebrews starts his letter to the Jews in the first two verse saying *“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”*

There is no Pauline greeting, introduction or establishing of credentials like we see in the other letters in the New Testament. Instead, the writer of Hebrews is so concerned with convincing Jesus’ followers that Jesus is God, all the pleasantries and opening protocols are skipped and the writer immediately launches into his purpose for writing.

Now the definition of what it means to be God has to come from somewhere but that’s not a problem for the writer of Hebrews because he can simply reach back into the history of God’s revelation to Israel and bring all of that forward to apply it to Jesus.

And that’s why he starts off stating *“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets...”* and revealed who He is, and in the past – a year ago at this time - we studied those

attributes which define who God is, that He revealed and spoke through the prophets.

God is the Living, self-existent God as He revealed to Moses in Ex 3:14 *“I am who I am!”*

God is the eternal and infinite God, who created the universe, as He revealed to David in Psalm 90:2 *“Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

And God is the only God, He is one God, all powerful as revealed in Deut 32:39 *“See now, that I myself am He! There is no god beside me!”*

God is All-knowing and Sovereign as He revealed to Isaiah, 46:10 *“I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’”*

And ALL things belong to God as Creator and Sovereign Ruler, 1 Chronicles 29:11-12 *“for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.”*

And God is gracious and merciful and also just and holy. He will not simply excuse sin as He says to Moses in Ex 34:6-7 describing Himself as *“Yahweh, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished;”*

So all this and much more forms the background to understanding of what it means to be God and the writer of Hebrews brings it all forward to apply to Jesus.

Which is a bit mind blowing isn't it, that all of God's eternal, infinite, uncreated, perfect, divine qualities are attributed to this human being! Now how that all works out specifically is something we'll get into a bit later on in this series... but as we

start out, when we say Jesus is God, you can assume that everything you know about who God is from the Old Testament is applied to Jesus, because He is also God -right from His conception and His birth.

Which brings us to vs.2 where the writer of Hebrews says *“in these last days He (God) has spoken to us by His Son.”*

Now we know this is referring to Jesus, but why doesn't the writer of Hebrews say that? Why does he refer to Jesus as God's son?

Again, its to reach back into Israel's history and this time to bring forward God's plans and purposes and apply them to Jesus as well. Jesus is God means that Jesus has the same plans and purposes as God does.

So, the term Son of God when applied to Jesus here is certainly a testimony to the fact that He is God, but prior to it describing Jesus it was used to describe the nation of Israel and also the

King of Israel in reference to the divine purposes which God assigned to them.

In Ex 4:22 God instructs Moses to say to Pharaoh *“This is what Yahweh says: Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, “Let my son go, so he may worship me.”*

And in Ps 2:7-8 King David writes *“I will proclaim Yahweh’s decree: He said to me, “You are my son; today I have become your father. Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.”*

So, when the writer of Hebrews adds in the description about the son being *“whom God appointed heir of all things”* its because that’s part of being the Son of God, it was promised to the King of Israel.

Furthermore, with regards to Israel we read God’s purpose for them in Isa 49:6 where God says *“I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.”*

Thus, God’s purpose for the King of Israel as its leader is reflected in the command to the King in Deut 17:18-19 *“When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees”* and thus lead the nation to do so as well so that their light will shine brightly to the Gentiles.

So, the reference to God’s Son here in Hebrews 1:2 takes God’s divine plans and purposes for Israel and Israel’s King from the past and they become Jesus’ plans and purposes – because Jesus is God.

Then, just to make sure no one gets confused about whom the writer is referring to here in using the term God’s Son, he qualifies it’s the Son *“through whom He made the universe.”* So he’s not talking about the nation of Israel nor it’s King but the one of whom we read in John’s gospel this morning, the Word *“who was with God at the beginning and who was God”*

and *“through him all things were made”* and *“who became flesh and dwelt among us!”*

Jesus... the one who spoke in John 8:58 saying *“before Abraham was born, I am!”*

Brothers and sisters this is a high view of Jesus Christ. Jesus has all the perfect attributes of God, Jesus has the same plans and purposes as God, Jesus is responsible for creating all things like God, and Jesus is self-existing and uncreated - the same as God.

This is Jesus brothers and sisters, the little baby in the manger at Christmas, the boy who stayed behind in the temple, the miracle worker who drew the crowds, the one who died on the cross, the one who was resurrected back to life... This is Jesus – He is God.

And as we just heard, and as the writer of Hebrews confirms – He speaks to us, *“in these last days God has spoken to us by His Son.”* So – what is it that God says to us as Jesus?

You know its kind of trendy these days to take the contrast that we see in these first two verses of Hebrews: the past vs. these last days, the ancestors vs. us, what God said through the prophets in the O.T. v.s. what God says as Jesus... and we play Jesus off against God like a good cop bad cop scenario right??

Back then, in the O.T. when God spoke through the prophets, He was angry, vindictive, all about laws, very strict and weird laws and punishments – but oh thank goodness now we have God as Jesus in the N.T. and He doesn't say that kind of stuff anymore... that's changed... God as Jesus says stuff like *“don't judge”* and *“love your neighbor”* – thank goodness!

Brothers and sisters, this is NOT a high view of Jesus – and its not even a correct view of Jesus, or God. You see when we confess that Jesus is God, with all of God's attributes and plans and purposes, it also includes God's Immutability.

Brothers and sisters God doesn't change, and Jesus doesn't change either – that's emphasized for us in the description

given by the writer of Hebrews in vs. 3 that the Son is the radiance of God's glory, he doesn't reflect it like Moses did, He radiates it himself, and the Son is the exact representation of the God's being, not a variation on it, not an improvement on it, but the exact representation of it. And the Son is involved in the continual and constant and ongoing upholding of the existence of the universe, because... He is immutable, unchanging.

There is no change from who God has revealed himself to be in the past when we see God in Jesus in the New Testament, there is however fulfillment - and this is what God speaks to us in Jesus in these last days. Matt 5:17 Jesus says *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."*

Now in the past, when God spoke through the prophets, a lot of what He said was about sin and guilt and calling God's people to repentance through offering sacrifices to atone for their sin and then living in obedience.

All of this was fulfilled by God in Jesus as Jesus gave His life as the perfect and ultimate sacrifice for sin. John 10:11 Jesus says *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep."* And when Jesus broke bread at the last supper and gave it to his disciples saying *"this is my body given for you, do this in remembrance of me."*

So, in His death on the cross and in His resurrection from the dead Jesus fulfilled all that God had said previously through the prophets about sin and sacrifice and forgiveness and purification. Thus, the writer of Hebrews highlights this fulfillment in vs. 3 saying *"he had provided purification for sins."*

Again this is a high view of Jesus – because only God is able to forgive sin and purify from sin.

And then the writer of Hebrews gives us another high view of Jesus that is quite literal. He says *"He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in Heaven."* Now this is an obvious reference to Jesus' ascension to heaven and his return to his

heavenly glory, and that He is honored for His sacrifice for sin in being seated in a place of honor next to God.

And in phrasing this verse the writer of Hebrews, with his own Jewish background, offers Jesus' his own honor and deference in how he makes reference to God. The writer doesn't use the generic term for God, Theos, instead he uses a very intimate and reverential term by which the Jews honored Yahweh. Remember the Jews understood God was so holy and set apart, so awesome and magnificent, that they refrained from speaking His name Yahweh lest they speak it casually and dishonor it, so they would refer to Yahweh as "the Majesty in Heaven."

Thus the writer of Hebrews demonstrates his own high view of Jesus by using this reverential term to describe the deity whom Jesus is seated next to in heaven, which also makes it very clear exactly who Jesus is AS God – He is Yahweh.

So as Yahweh Jesus is obviously THE highest God of all, higher than any other spiritual or divine beings, such as angels –

superior to them in fact in His very nature. And that is stated in Heb 1:4 *"he became as much superior to the angels"* and he receives a name that shows this.

Any other spiritual being in heaven serves the Majesty in Heaven, they serve Yahweh and as we see them serving in the scriptures they are referred to as angels, which means *"messengers"* this is their name.

But Jesus' name is superior to theirs, not the name Jesus... but the name He inherits which is Lord, as a fulfilment of what God says to David in Ps 110:1 *"Yahweh says to my **lord**: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."*

This is why the Apostle Paul can write in Phil 2:9-11 *"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name Jesus [inherited] every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is – [and here's the name] **Lord**."*



What higher view can we have of Jesus brothers and sisters, than to confess that He is indeed God and that He is Lord – and doing so now knowing ALL that this encompasses.

All of God's perfect and eternal and unchanging attributes are in Jesus

All of God's wonderful and amazing plans and purposes are in Jesus

All of God's grace and mercy and forgiveness and purification from sin are in Jesus

And as Jesus himself says "*All authority in Heaven and on earth has been given to me*" its in Jesus – there is no one higher than Jesus, because Jesus is God.

So, brothers and sisters, Jesus is worthy of our adoration, Jesus is worthy of our sacrifice, Jesus is worth following regardless of what it costs us, regardless of what we have to endure. Jesus is worth the extra energy and effort it takes to arrive early to participate in worship right from the very start of the service!

May the Holy Spirit fill us with a sense of awe and wonder, with inspiration and enthusiasm, with commitment and dedication for Jesus – the Lord Jesus.

And perhaps that's one thing you can do to co-operate with the work of the Holy Spirit in this regard, when you pray – address you prayer to Jesus as LORD Jesus. I know its been my practice and the practice of many others to start our prayers to Jesus as if we were writing a letter to a friend – dear Jesus...

But brothers and sisters – let's work with the Spirit to cultivate a high view of Jesus, the Lord Jesus.. in ourselves because it helps to bring out the best in us as His followers.

Make an intention effort to call Him Lord, don't use His name casually, speak up when others do – wisely, and when you pray – pray to the LORD Jesus and ask Him for whatever it is you need to follow Him and serve Him and Love Him – because brothers and sisters... Jesus is.... God. Amen.