

“God: Is Jesus Your Final Answer?”

Hebrews 1:1-4

Introduction

An old puritan preacher said there were only two things he needed to know: 1) Does God speak? 2) What does God say? To these two excellent questions I would add a third: 3) “God: is Jesus your final answer?” I believe we find the answer to all three of these questions in the opening verse of the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews is a finely crafted series of sermons. It is scholarly and simple, brilliant and basic. There is, however, an overriding theme that links its 13 chapters together and that is this: Jesus is God’s very best. The word “better” or “superior” occurs 19 times in the New Testament, 13 of those in Hebrews. As we mine the wealth of this book, we discover that Jesus:

1. Is better than the angels. (1:4)
2. Provides a better hope. (7:19)
3. Provides a better covenant. (7:22; 8:6)
4. Provides better promises. (8:6)
5. Provides a better sacrifice (9:23)
6. Provides a better possession (10:34)
7. Provides a better country (11:16)
8. Provides a better resurrection (11:35)
9. Provides a better blood testimony (12:24)

The author of Hebrews believes Jesus is the best that God could send, the best that God could give and therefore in the coming of Christ, God 1) speaks; 2) He speaks clearly; and, 3) He speaks with finality. What was God saying when He sent His Son from heaven to this earth? Hebrews 1:1-4 says in a single and superlative sentence He was telling us at least these three things.

I. If you want to hear God, listen to Jesus. 1:1-2

The late Francis Schaeffer reminded us, “The infinite personal God is there, but also He is not silent; that changes the whole world.” (*Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 276). Indeed the Christian God is a talking God, one who has been talking continually to His people.

1. God’s revelation through His prophets was true, but partial. 1:1

In many portions and in many ways is fronted for emphasis. At different times and in different ways God (lit. “of old” *palai*) spoke. 68 times God is mentioned in Hebrews. Immediately we are confronted with both His reality and activity. “God spoke...” and because it was God speaking it was true; and because it was in many portions and in many ways it was partial, progressive, fragmented. What he gave the fathers and prophets was inerrant but incomplete, it was promise not fulfillment.

How did God speak? What were the different ways?

- To Adam and Eve He spoke directly in the cool of the day.
- To Abraham He spoke directly in visions and a visit.

- To Jacob He spoke in a dream.
- To Moses He spoke in a burning bush and face to face, as a man speaks to a man.
- To Elijah He spoke in a still small voice.
- To Isaiah He spoke in a grand vision in the temple.
- To Hosea He spoke through family tragedies.
- To Amos He spoke in a basket of summer fruit.

God spoke through visions and dreams, the Urim and Thummin. He spoke through angels, natural events and pillars of fire. He spoke in history and psalms, proverbs, and prophecy. And because it was always God speaking, it was also always true. Yet according to His providential plan, it was also partial, step by step, elemental and preparatory.

When we learn to read, first letters, then words, then sentences, then paragraphs, then stories, then novels, and so on... so it is with God and His instruction of us. He began simply, progressively beginning with that which was good, but saving the best for last. God's revelation through His prophets was true, but partial.

2. **God's revelation through His Son is true and perfect. 1:2**

Last Days – the final age, the messianic age. Where we have been since the cross.

Spoken – same word as in verse 1. The same God spoke in both, but now there is a difference in time and quality: 1) time: last days; 2) quality: a son.

Son – (lit. “in Son”) emp. on one whose nature and character is that of a Son (of God).

The coming of the Son brought to completion and fulfillment all that the Old Testament predicted and promised concerning Messiah.

Genesis 3:15 – He would defeat the serpent and He did.

Genesis 12:1-3 – He would be a descendant of Abraham and He was.

Genesis 49:10 – He would be a king from the tribe of Judah

Deuteronomy 18:15 – He would be a prophet greater than Moses.

2 Samuel 7:12-13 – He would be from David and a king forever.

Isaiah 7:14 – He would be virgin born.

Isaiah 9:6 – He would be a wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, prince of peace.

Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 – He would be a suffering servant and sin bearer.

Micah 5:2 – He would be born a babe in Bethlehem.

All of this and more came to pass when the talking God spoke in His Son. When God came down, God came near. Indeed, again as Francis Schaeffer said, “He is there and is not a silent, nor [is He] a far off God.” (276).

Transition

If you want to hear God, listen to Jesus.

II. **If you want to see God, look at Jesus. 1:2-3**

Jesus is the face of God! [Jesus is the invisible God made visible!]

Colossians 1:15 – “He is the image of the invisible God.”

When you look at Jesus, you are looking at God. If one looks carefully and closely, exactly what does one see? Hebrews bursts forth with seven glorious affirmations of God’s final answer.

1. He is the divine inheritor. 1:2

Looks to the future.

Appointed – emphasis on the divine will and intention of God.

Heir of all things – a title of dignity. Christ has supreme place in all of creation. God has only one Son and to Him everything has been given. The Father delights to honor the Son. Not a beautiful rose or a majestic peak, not a radiant sunset or a single drop of the deep blue sea belongs to anyone other than Jesus. All things belong to Him. You belong to Him! You are not your own)1 Cor. 6:19-20).

2. He is the divine creator. 1:2

Through whom also He made the world – all three members of the triune God are active in creation. The Father is the author, the Son is the administrator and the Holy Spirit is the agent. Here attention is on the Son. Through Him the Father made literally “the ages.” It is the universe as sum total of all the various periods of time that is in view, and how appropriate that word is for the Son. It has been well said, “history is His story.” From Genesis to Revelation, from the Garden of Eden to the Island of Patmos all of Scripture and all of history is about Jesus.

3. He is the divine revealer. 1:3

He is the radiance of His glory – He is the Radiance – a shining forth of brightness from within or the Reflection – a shining forth of brightness from without. He is the outshining of the glory of God or the reflection of the glory of God. Whichever is the case, and the former is the better option, in Jesus, the Son, we see the true and authentic glory of God. As Jesus himself said in John 14:9, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” Put those words in the mouth of any other and they are foolishness and folly. But put them in the mouth of Jesus and you have nothing less than God’s final answer. As the sunlight is to the sun, so the eternal Son is to the Father. As John 1:14, 18 teaches us ...

4. He is the divine character. 1:3

- “The exact representation (*character*) of His nature” – exact representation translates a single Greek word found only here in the New Testament. Originally it meant an instrument of engraving and then the mark stamped by that instrument. Jesus is the very stamp of God’s nature, the precise impression or mark.
- Whatever it is that makes God, God; the Son is all of it as well. If God is omnipotent then the Son is omnipotent. If God is omnipresent then the son is omnipresent. If God is omniscient (a doctrine now under attack by open theism) then the Son is omniscient. If God is eternal then the Son is eternal. If God is immutable (unchanging) then the Son is immutable. If God is holy, just, righteous and love then the Son is holy, just righteous and love. When you see Jesus you see who God really is. This is not true of Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, Sun Yun Moon, the Dali

Lama or any other person of history. God really is. “He is indeed the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15)

5. He is the divine sustainer. 1:3

Looks to the present.

- “Upholds (maintains) all things by the Word of His power.”
As a little boy growing up in a Baptist church in Atlanta, GA, I was taught the little rhyme, which captures the truth of this proposition, “He’s got the whole world in His hands.”
“Upholds” – sustains (pre. tense), carries along. He created, it, He maintains it, and He is carrying it toward its appointed goal.
- Note “all things” not some things. Nothing is excluded either on a global scale or a personal one.
- The Son has a vital interest in this world He made and loves. Through this powerful, enabling, active word He spoke the worlds into existence, and by that same word He sustains the worlds until their proper end.
- Illustration: My son Paul asking me as a little boy about being afraid to go to sleep at night for fear of nuclear holocaust? My answer: no. Why? He’s got the whole world in His hands.

6. He is the divine redeemer. 1:3

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator.

If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist.

If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist.

If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer.

But, our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.

“When He Had Made Purification of Sins”

Jesus did what no forefather or prophet could ever do. He did what no apostle or angel could ever do. He did what only He could do. He took care of our sin. Purification is *katharismos*. It means to cleanse, purge, purify. This is why He is God’s final answer. Jesus cleansed us of sins (1:4); He made a satisfaction for sins (2:17); He puts away sins (8:12; 10:17); He bore our sins (9:28); He offered a sacrifice for sins for all times (10:12); He made an offering for sin (10:18) and He annulled sin by His sacrifice (9:26). Look at sin anyway you will, He has dealt with it, He has defeated it.

- “Made” means provided, and here affirms a once-for-all completed action in the past. The purpose for which he came was not to be admired in a Christmas cradle. The purpose for which He came was to make atonement on Calvary’s cross by His blood.

Illustration

All of humanity had a heart problem, not a physical but spiritual. We needed a spiritual catharsis, a divine cleansing. Jesus, God’s final answer, did that for us all.

7. He is the divine savior. 1:3

“Sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.” Hebrews 10:12 says, “But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.” The Lord has completed His work. Unlike any high priest under the old covenant, the work is finished. There was no chair in the Holy of Holies for the work was never finished, more sacrifices always needed to be made. No so, with the Son, God’s final answer. He is at the right hand of God, of the majesty on high. Sitting, He rests in the position of greatest honor.

➤ The wonderful preacher of Memphis, TN, R.G. Lee, said it well, “Jesus is the only person with no heavenly mother but a heavenly father. He had no earthly father but an earthly mother ... He is older than His mother and as old as His Father. He is indeed God’s final answer.”

III. If you want to worship God, lift up Jesus. 1:4

The Bible is deaf when it comes to religious pluralism and multiple ways to God. There is only one way, and an excellent way it is to the Father. We come by way of the Son, God’s final answer. And this Son is to be worshipped, honored, lifted up. Why?

1. Jesus is not an esteemed servant. 1:4, cf. 13-14

In the 1st century as in the 21st, there was confusion about the proper place of angels. For the first of 13 times the author of Hebrews uses the word “better” to put angelology in its correct perspective. Angels are good, mentioned 105 times in the Old Testament and 165 in the New Testament. They are ministering spirits for the saved (1:14). They are good; they are not, however, the best. They are servants. Jesus is sovereign (1:7). They are creatures, Jesus is the creator. They are workers, Jesus is worshipped (1:6). They are esteemed servants, but Jesus is not.

2. Jesus is the exalted Son. 1:4-5

Angels are called servants. Jesus is called Son. Angels continue to serve for God. Jesus is now seated by God. “Name” connotes all that a person is in character and conduct. In all respects Jesus is better, better in His person (He is God) and better in His work (He dealt once and for all with sin), and better in His position. At God’s right hand, God has many servants, but only one Son. His name is Jesus. “Hark the herald angels sing...”

Conclusion

He was born contrary to the laws of nature, reared in obscurity, lived in poverty, and only once crossed the border of the land in which he was born and lived, and then as a small child. He had no wealth or influence, neither training nor education in the world’s schools. His relatives were inconspicuous and unimportant. His death was the height of shame and disgrace in His day. Yet in infancy He startled a king. As a boy He puzzled learned scholars. In manhood He ruled the course of nature. He walked upon the waves and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book, yet if everything He did were written in detail, the world itself couldn’t contain the books that would be written. He never founded a college, yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as He has. He never practiced medicine, yet He has healed more broken hearts than doctors have healed broken bodies. Throughout history great men have come and gone, yet He lives on: Herod could not kill Him, Satan could not seduce Him, death could not destroy Him and the grave could not hold

Him. As King He is enthroned at God's right hand. As priest He has atoned for sin and now prays for us. As prophet He is the final spokesman for God. Yes, Jesus is God's final answer. Now what will be your answer to Him?

If Jesus is God's final answer God want to know will He be your final answer?