

“Jesus is Better” – 4 Meditations from the Book of Hebrews

Meditation 1: Christ is the Greater Prophet, Priest, and King – Hebrews 1:1-4

Introduction

How would you speak to a *doubting* or *struggling* believer who was tempted to walk away from Christ? What would be the first words out of your mouth? Maybe you would want to **exhort** them to *live for God*. Maybe you would want to **warn** them about the *consequences* of forsaking Christ.

1. In this letter, the preacher to the Hebrews *will* exhort to people to follow Christ and warn them about the dangers of falling away, but that is not the first words out of his mouth. But he begins by showing the people how valuable Jesus really is. He does so here by showing how Jesus is God’s final speech and God’s *savoir* for the world

God’s Speech (v.1-2a)

1. God speaks, and that truth alone is incredible. Ps.19, “the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.”
 - a. We can only know God because he has chosen to freely reveal himself to us. **ILL**: the same is true in human relationships. I can’t really know my wife unless she opens up herself up to me. If ask her, “What’s wrong?” and she says “nothing,” then I am left in a perpetual state of mystery...and I’m also probably in trouble!”
 - b. Same is true with God. We can only know God if he reveals himself to us. We don’t have to wonder if there is a God, or if there is purpose to our lives or to this world, because God has spoken to us! He speaks to us in the world around us, but he speaks personally to us in his Word! That is what **v.1-2** tells us.
2. God speaks *personally* to his people. The term used for “spoken” used in v.1 is a unique word, is has to do w/ human conversation. It’s an amazingly personal way to describe God’s speech. This is what we read of in the scriptures:
 - a. God spoke to **Adam** and to **Eve** in the garden personally and directly. He had communion and fellowship with them. Even *after* the Fall, God did not abandon his creation, but he continued to speak to his people, although he did so through angels, prophets or by dreams.
3. Hebrews tells us God spoke at *various times*—= he spoke in the time of Moses, in the time of Joshua, in the time of David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah., etc. God spoke **in** and **through** the prophets to his people.
4. God spoke in *various ways* —He spoke through angels, prophets, dreams, visions, circumstances, miracles. God used various mediums to speak to his people of old. But the preacher here says his **final** and **better** word that he speaks to the world is Jesus! Jesus is the final and complete revelation of God to this world.
 - a. When Jesus was **transfigured** in **Lk. 9:35** before Peter and John the voice of God spoke from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son, LISTEN to him!”
 - i. LISTEN to Jesus, because he is the final Word of God. How is Jesus better? He does merely speak of God’s forgiveness, but HE *actually forgives sins himself*. He said to the paralytic in Jn.5 “**Your sins are forgiven.**” He does not merely speak *about* God’s

salvation, but he can *pronounce* from his *own* lip. Because he is greater than the prophets of old!

- b. God has not only spoken to *our fathers* in the past, but he is *speaking* to us today in his Son. The Hebrews, the references to the OT in as the HS speaking in the present, “therefore, the holy Spirit says...” (2:7) The Holy Spirit speaks to the church today through the Living Word of God!
- c. APPL: We need to LISTEN to Jesus! With the Hebrew Christians, we are pay **special attention** to God’s final Word in Christ. Jesus is not only God’s Speech to the Word, but he is God’s Savior for the world.

God’s Savior (v.2b-4)

WHO is Jesus as the Savior?

1. He is the creator – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God, all things were made through him. **Col. 1:16-17** tells us this same truth, “*For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rules or authorities – all things were created through him and for him..*”
 - a. Here the preacher tells us that God’s Son not only created the word, but also the ages. Time and space and the various ages were set up by Christ. But he also “*uphold the world by the Word of his power!*” **Not** like the Greek mythological creature Atlas who carried the world on his back and shoulders. Jesus upholds all things by the **Word** of his power. He is powerful to create by his Word, and powerful to uphold all things by his Word. E
 - b. He is not only effortlessly upholds the world, but this word has to do with **guiding** the world to a certain end. What a comforting truth to hold on to. This world, Christ’s church, and our own lives are in the hand of Christ. He is guiding all things to their appointed end. Sustaining us. Keeping us. Preserving us. But how?
2. Because he is the divine Son of God! – “*he is the radiance of the glory of God.*” God’s glory is the beauty of his perfections – his excellence, his purity, his goodness, etc. God’s attributes are revealed to a degree in the created world around us
 - a. But creation simply reflects God’s glory as the **moon** reflects the light of the **sun**. The moon doesn’t shine its own glory, but simply reflects the sun’s light. But Jesus shows God’s glory in his very being. He is the **radiance/brightness** of the glory of God, the one who shines forth God’s brightness into our dark world just as the sun beams in rays on this earth. Because he is of the same substance of his Father!
 - i. In the words of the **Nicene Creed**– He is “God of God, light of light, very God of very God.”
3. WHAT did Jesus come to do? (v.3)
 - a. He came to make *purification* for sins.” This phrase refers to Christ making **atonement** for our sins at the cross! Here we see how far Jesus shows us the glory of God – he shows us the justice, love, holiness, and mercy of God in his cross. Our sins need to be dealt with by a holy God, and Jesus came out of the Father’s love to show that God is both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Christ. He is not only our prophet who reveals God to us, but he is

our **priest** who makes atonement for our sins. Lastly, the preacher shows us Christ as our **King**.

4. Christ has finished the work that he came to do - "*He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High.*"
 - a. You know what it is like to sit own after a long day or long season of work?. After long stretch at work, or at school, you got to sit down with family and friends and enjoy a meal, enjoy opening presents.
 - i. In the beginning, God sat down and rested on the seventh day after he completed his work of creation. Likewise, the Son, after he completed his work of salvation and said at the cross, he said, "it is finished," he sat down as Lord of all.**
 - b. This act is important because it shows us our salvation is complete. After the Day of Atonement in the OT, the priests would always present themselves before God, but they would always remain standing, because their work was never done. But here Jesus, after he makes purification for sins, he sits down! Because our full salvation was accomplished by him!
 - c. **Second**, his sitting down at the right hand of God shows he is now king and Lord of all, and the Father approves his work. Jesus said after his resurrection, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*" He is now the resurrected and ascended King who now dwells in the place of power, reward, and completion. We are to rest in the finished work of Christ, and submit ourselves to his Lordship over all.

Conclusion

5. Jesus is supremely valuable. If we need **truth**, Jesus is the better **prophet** who not only speaks the Word of God to us but reveals God in his being. If we need **cleansing** form a guilty conscience, or forgiveness, he is the better **priest** who has come to make purification for our sins that we might be reconciled to God. If we need **guidance**, he is the better **king** who rules at the right hand of God, guiding this world to a glorious end. Put your eyes on Jesus today, he is greater than all! Amen.