

# Hebrews 1 (Part 1):1-3 Jesus, the Radiance of the Glory of God

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Book of Hebrews.

We're starting the book of Hebrews this morning, and I'm kind of excited about it. We're skipping over what they call the pastoral letters, which is first and second Timothy and Titus. And we'll go back and we'll cover those a little bit later.

I wanted to get into Hebrews because I love this book, and it's been a long time since we went through it. And it just has so many wonderful things to say to us. And I'm excited about doing it. And don't expect us to go quick. My goal is to be still teaching through this when Jesus comes. So, there you go. That's the plan anyway. We'll see how it goes. Of course that was the plan with the last several books I've taught through but.

Hebrews chapter one. We're just going to look at the first three verses today, and it's going to be a little awkward, because it stops us in the middle of a sentence. But we're going to do our best. Verse one:

*<sup>1</sup> Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

We're going to stop there. Let's pray:

Heavenly Father, just speak to us with these incredible words. We pray for your Holy Spirit to open our ears and our eyes, spiritually speaking, that we might really be able to apprehend what you're saying to us today. And I thank you, Lord, for preserving this word for us these many years, so that we can consume it today, and be nourished, filled up and encouraged. Be with us, we pray Father. We ask it in the name of Jesus, our Savior. Amen. Amen.

These first three verses of Hebrews, chapter one, are just so amazing. And I feel like they're the kind of verses that it would be better off for me just to read them, and then close in prayer, without any kind of a comment at all, because I'm just afraid that I'm not going to do them justice. There's so much here.

But you may have noticed as we kind of started Hebrews, that there's no mention of who this letter is written by. We're used to hearing in Paul's letters, or Peter, or whoever, these other biblical writers, their name at the very beginning of the letter (Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ. Peter, an apostle of Jesus).

Nothing here. Nothing in the beginning. Nothing actually in the rest of the letter. And that's obviously brought up a lot of debate over the years as to who is the author of this letter.

Well, I'll tell you, that for many, many, in fact, hundreds of years, it was believed to be written by the Apostle Paul. And there are many people who still hold to that today. And they'll call this one of the letters by Paul. Actually, interestingly enough, the earliest suggestion, recorded suggestion, of who wrote it, came in 200 AD, by a man named Tertilian. Don't name your kids that, by the way, and he said that it was written by Barnabas.

For my part, and by the way, my part isn't worth anything, but I'll just tell you anyway, I think it was written by Apollos, because we're told in the book of Acts that Apollos had an incredible handle on the Old Testament. And particularly in, connecting it to Jesus Christ. That's why I think so. But you know what? I could be wrong. And I guess we'll just have to wait someday for the Lord to, kind of, reveal it. So anyway, I just want you to know that if it does turn out to be Apollos, I might just say, "I told you so," so you can remember that all right.

One thing we do know about this author is that he was a master of the ancient Greek language, and not only that, but he also was very familiar with the Greek version of the Old Testament.

Now you remember the Old Testament was not written in Greek. It was written in Hebrew, and yet before the time of Christ, someone translated it into Greek. We call it the Septuagint. And this author knew, and was very familiar with that, because he quotes the Septuagint, many times throughout this letter.

By the way, that's one of the things that makes the book of Hebrews a little confusing for some people. Because you know, we become a Christian, and we

start learning things. Like the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the New Testament was written in Greek. And then we turn in our New Testaments to this book called Hebrews, which is just, kind of, all confusing.

But it's written, or it's called rather, the book of Hebrews because it is written primarily to Hebrew Christians, Jews who had come to know Christ as their Savior.

And the reason this letter was written was to encourage those believers who were now undergoing great difficulty, great persecution, for their faith. And many of them were being tempted, to turn back to Judaism, for many reasons, I would assume, not the least of which was, to lessen the degree of persecution that was coming their way.

You and I have a hard time understanding how this might all play out. But if you can imagine living in a completely Jewish town, village, city or whatever, and everybody there is Jewish. And they've been raised that way. Generations, and generations, and generations of Jews, learning the traditional Jewish way. Jewish practices, Jewish feasts, Jewish traditions. It's just thoroughly Jewish. And then you come to Christ.

You believe that Yeshua is the Moshiach, the Messiah, and you embrace Him as the Messiah. And suddenly, your neighbors want nothing to do with you. Your family wants nothing to do with you. Your business associates. Maybe you're a carpenter, or you do something else. Suddenly, no one is coming to you for business. Nobody wants to deal with you. Your money is drying up. Can you imagine what that's like? And then, of course, there was always physical persecution that many times went along with, just simply confessing Jesus Christ as Savior.

And there's a great temptation then to say, you know what, I was raised Jewish. My family, going back as long as I can remember, are all Jewish. All the feasts are still going on. All of the traditions are still being kept. It's just more comfortable to settle back into that sort of a routine. And the writer of this letter is writing to Jews. And he's making a couple of points.

First of all, he's writing to encourage them, in the midst of their persecution. But, he's also writing to make it very clear, and this comes through this letter, as a warning. And the warning is, you cannot remove Jesus and still have any sort of an understanding of God's redemptive program.

Jesus is the center. Jesus is the cornerstone. Jesus is essential. And he's going to argue for that very idea throughout the course of this letter, and beautifully so, in this very first chapter.

So we're going to see that here in this book. He's going to say over and over again, through various ways, that Jesus is not a departure from Judaism. He is the fulfillment of it. He is the completion of it.

I've shared with you guys how Sue and I have watched videos on YouTube from an organization that shares testimonies of Jews living in various parts of the world, who have come to know Christ as their Savior. And it's fascinating to hear them. And how they perceived Jesus prior to reading the New Testament. Understanding who He really is.

You'd be shocked to know how many Jews grow up believing that Jesus is, like, Italian. And He is a Catholic God. That's what they believe. Many Jews grow up believing Jesus is a Catholic.

And then they're told, you know, to stay away from the New Testament. Avoid it like the plague. Because this is where people learn how to persecute Jews. That's what they're told. By reading the New Testament and following it, that's why they hate us as Jews. And so, you know, most of them stay away from the New Testament, and avoid it like the plague.

But those who finally come to that place and begin to read the Bible, they open up the book of Matthew. And what did they begin to read? The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of Abraham. And it goes through this whole genealogy. And, they're like, wait a minute, this guy's a Jew. He's Jewish. And, they're blown away. And they start reading this whole story, and it's full of Jews, and it's full of Jewish things, and Jewish traditions, and Jewish festivals and all the things that go along with it, and they come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. And what do you think happens in their families?

In most cases, their families disown them. How in the world could you turn your back on Judaism? How in the world? And they try their best to explain. I have not turned my back on anything. I have embraced the fulfillment of Judaism. I have embraced He, who is the completion of Judaism.

And so, you see, you can't look at Christianity, and say, well, you got Christianity as a religion, and then you've got Judaism as a religion. That's not true. Christianity and Judaism go hand in hand. They are one. Jesus is the

fulfillment of the Old Testament law, and the prophets and the writings. It's all about Jesus.

And that's what the author of Hebrews is going to do in the course of this letter. He's going to draw a thread. In fact, you know, for people who don't have that great a familiarity of the Old Testament, this is a great primer, going through the book of Hebrews. I mean, this will wet your appetite for understanding more about the Old Testament. And he's talking to Jews who know about the sacrificial system, who know about the priesthood, who know about these various feasts, and so forth, that go along with Judaism.

He begins here in verse one by saying, "<sup>1</sup> Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,"

He is basically talking about Old Testament times. And that phrase, "*our fathers*," tells you, for sure, you know who his audience is, it's Jews, "*spoke to our fathers by the prophets*," And then he goes on to say in verse two, "<sup>2</sup> but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son,"

I want you to stop there. And I want you to see that, right off the get go, the writer of Hebrews draws that line between the Old Testament prophets and the coming of the Son of God, who continues the conversation from God to man. In old times, God spoke through the prophets many ways, and so forth, and so on, but now, He has spoken through His Son.

He is the continuation of the conversation. And more than that, He is the final word in the conversation. Jesus is the final declaration of God's revelation that fulfills and completes the Old Testament communication to mankind.

And so he says, you know, God spoke through prophecy. Now He has spoken through His Son. And by the way, this is not a proof text in these first two verses for saying that prophecy no longer exists. And I bring that up because there have been people over the years who have done that very thing. They've looked at these two things, and they say, see, it says it right there. God spoke, past tense, through prophets, but now he has spoken through his Son. We have that revelation in the word of God. There's no longer any need for prophecy. Prophecy doesn't exist any longer, because the declaration of Jesus has completed the word of God to mankind.

There's only one problem with that. In the New Testament, you have Paul talking about prophets and prophecies. In fact, Paul writes to the Ephesians and says, it was Christ who gave to the church the evangelist, the apostle, the

prophet, and the pastor teacher (Ephesians 4:11). And when he's writing to the Corinthians and tells them to seek after gifts that are going to build up the church, what does he tell them to seek after (1 Corinthians 14:12)? The gift of prophecy so that what they say would be an encouragement to the many, rather than just an encouragement to self.

And so prophecy is still very much active in the New Testament church throughout the book of Acts and onward. So we're not saying that prophecy doesn't exist. We're simply saying that the fulfillment of prophecy, and the final word of God communicating himself and his revelation of salvation, has come through the person of Jesus Christ.

And the other thing about the prophets of the Old Testament is, you know, they weren't given the whole story. The prophets weren't given the whole story at all. Look at what Peter says in the first chapter of his first letter. He says:

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**1 Peter 1:10-11 (ESV)**

*...the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.*

We learn elsewhere in the Bible that even angels long to look into these things. There's a desire. The prophets weren't given the whole picture.

You'll remember that Daniel received a revelation of the last days, and he prayed, and he said, Lord, I want to know more about this. And God spoke to Daniel and said, no, seal it up, Daniel. It's for the time of the end. It's not for your time. It's not even for your people right now. It's for the time of the end (Daniel 12:4). So he wasn't, he longed to know what this was all about, but he was not given that information.

Jesus comes to give us the final word, to speak to us in completion. And so that's what makes the message of the Son so superior to the message that was given by the Old Testament prophets. First of all, He's the Son. There's no other. There's no other. No, no prophet from the Old Testament about which God said, here is my Son. This is my Son. That was said about Jesus, but about no other. And we're going to talk a lot more about the implications of Jesus, being the unique Son of God, as we get into these verses.

So he moves on here, and concerning the Son, he goes on. And, check this out, "*whom he* (God the Father speaking here, or speaking of God, the Father) *appointed the heir of all things,*"

Now, this is something that in biblical times, it was taken for granted. You and I don't think about this a whole lot. We don't turn over our goods, you know, when we're getting ready to pass on, or whatever, usually to our first-born son, or something like that. But that was tradition, in ancient times. The first-born son received or was the beneficiary of his father's goods, if not all of them, the lion's share of them. And we're told here, that God has appointed Jesus to be the heir of all things. And that's what God owns is "All Things." And so, all of creation. Jesus is the heir of creation.

And then the author goes on, concerning the Son saying, if you look with me in your Bible, <sup>2</sup> "*...through whom also He created the world.*"

And now we're told something more about this unique Son. Again, something that isn't said of any of the prophets. This one, is the one, through whom God created the entire world. And that really tweaks some people's brains, because they say, now wait a second here, I go back to Genesis 1:1 and it says, <sup>1</sup> "*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*" (ESV)

And you're telling me that everything was created through Jesus? That's exactly right. It's exactly what I'm telling you. Everything was created through Jesus.

Because if you go back to Genesis, and you read how God created, we know that He spoke it into being. God said, let there be, let there be light, let there be firmament, let there be animals, let there be so on, and so on, and so on.

And when God spoke, what happened? What came out? His Word, right? What comes out of your mouth when you speak? Your word. When God speaks, out springs the Word. Who is Jesus Christ? The living word of God so He is the Creator. Through Him all things have been created.

John the Apostle affirms the same truth. Up on the screen, from John chapter one, he says, concerning Jesus:

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**John 1:3 (ESV)**

*All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.*

So Jesus is the Creator through whom all things have been created. So what else do we know about the Son of God, as we are communicated here, from Hebrews?

Look at verse three. The beginning of verse three says, "<sup>3</sup>*He is the radiance of the glory of God...*"

And that means, "the brightness." In fact, some Bible translations use that word, brightness.

I want you just to think about that for just a moment. Jesus Christ is the brightness of the glory of God, the radiance of His glory.

Now, I don't know if you have any problem with that. Some people might. You know, we're still going through the book of Isaiah on Wednesday nights, and I don't know if you remember, but back in chapter 48 of Isaiah, we read something interesting about glory. Let me remind you here, as we put it up on the screen. From Isaiah 48, the last part of verse 11 says, and this is God speaking:

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**Isaiah 48:1 1b (ESV)**

*My glory, I will not give to another.*

Well, now, we have to reconcile it here too, Hebrews chapter one, verse three, where the Bible tells us, in no uncertain terms, that Jesus exudes the glory. He is the brightness of the glory of God.

Well, you got two options, really, to consider. One is that God changed his mind. And said, well, you know, I know I said that back in 700 years before Christ was born, but you know what, we're going to make an exception here. Well, that's a problem because then I can quote another verse to you that says, I am God. I do not change my mind. Now you've got another issue to deal with.

Or the other option is to simply understand that God still does not and will not share His glory with another, and that Jesus Christ is God. And that is the conclusion that we draw, knowing in fact, that he is the living word of God, through whom all things were created. We see also from the scripture that He is God because He exudes the glory, the glory of God.



Now taking that idea of the deity of Christ even further, look what the author goes on to say, "*He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature,*"

*He, "is the exact imprint of his nature,"* or if you will, representation of His nature. In other words, Jesus conveys the nature of God perfectly because He is the exact representation of that nature.

People, we can't even comprehend what is fully the nature of God. We've been given some great insights in the word of God. But as far as understanding fully the nature of God, we can't even go there. And yet, Jesus is, we're told, the exact representation of that nature.

And so we're left with the conclusion, from these verses, Jesus is God. He is God in human flesh. There's no other way to consider it. Otherwise, you've got a Bible that's full of problems, full of holes and full of contradictions. But that's not what we have. We have a thread of consistency in the word of God, and Jesus is the Creator God. And yet, what's crazy about this is that along with these verses and so many others in the Bible, people still struggle with the deity of Jesus Christ.

That's what blows me away. When somebody says, well I don't believe Jesus is God. I'm like, well okay, but have you read the Bible because it clarifies this thing really easily when you look into these things, and you compare things that are said about Him with other passages of scripture.

You know, we brought up in our study of Isaiah one other aspect. In Isaiah, God says, I am the Lord, God, and besides me there is no Savior. There's no Savior other than me.

And then, you remember when we were going through Isaiah, I had you turn to the book of Luke. We're not going to do it this morning, but we talked about how the angels declared to the shepherds out in the open field on the night that Christ was born. Behold, this day in the city of David, a Savior has been born to you (Luke 2:11). The angels declared a Savior had been born and God, 700 years said, there is no other Savior but me. I am Yahweh, the Lord God Eternal.

You put all those things together, and it is just, you can't come to any other conclusion if you're going to honestly read the Bible, and believe what it says, Jesus is God.

But you know, for those people who struggle with the deity of Christ, I understand, and I want to say that. I understand it from the standpoint that if you're going to look at the nature of God, which includes the deity of, you know, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, the personhood of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. And try to work all that together, in some kind of a cohesive, understandable whole, you're going to have trouble. You're going to struggle with it.

I had a guy write me, just this week and say, Pastor Paul, explain to me in what sense Jesus Christ was forsaken on the cross by God the Father. He wanted me to explain that to him. And I wrote him back and I said I can't. I cannot explain to you how, God the Son, was forsaken by God the Father. I only know that He was. And He was forsaken so that you would never be.

But how God can be forsaken of God, I don't get it. I don't know that I ever will. Because, you see, the various elements of the nature of God, particularly as it touches on the deity of Jesus Christ, are truths for the heart, not for the mind. We embrace them because they are in the word of God. Not because this gray matter contained "right here" (Pastor Paul touches his head) can make sense of it.

If I put everything in the Bible to the test, according to my gray matter, and said, I'll believe it, if I can figure it out, I'd have to get rid of a whole lot of the Bible just like Thomas Jefferson did. I don't know if you know that. Thomas Jefferson once stayed up all night long and cut out of the Bible everything he couldn't get and didn't believe. He had a cut and paste Bible.

And there's a lot of people, frankly, he had the guts to do what a lot of people just do anyway in their mind. They just ignore or reject parts of the Bible that they just can't understand. And what they're doing is they're saying, when it comes to God, I refuse to leave room for mystery.

But if you're going to do that, you're going to end up missing a great deal of what the Bible has to say. You have to leave room for mystery when it comes to God. Otherwise, if you're going to insist that everything is understandable from a human standpoint, then what you are insisting is that you are equal to God. Simple as that.

If you can understand everything there is to know about the nature of God, then your brain is equal to the nature of God. And that's just not going to happen. And so, you see, I derive a great sense of comfort from the fact that there's great mystery, and things that I just can't figure out.

It's not that I don't know them. I know them from the standpoint that they are. I just can't explain to you how they are, because it's beyond me. It's not human. It's related to the eternal, uncreated, self-sustaining God of the universe, who had no beginning, and will have no end.

I mean, just explain that one to me. How can a being have no beginning and no end, and be completely self-sustainable? You and I know nothing of that. Everything we know had a beginning, and everything we know has an end. And everything we know is dependent upon something else. We know nothing of God in that sense. We can't relate to it, and yet it is a truth for the heart. We embrace it because the Bible declares it to be true.

Now, the author of Hebrews is not yet done describing the primacy of the Son, because he goes on and he says, <sup>3</sup>*"He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power."*

Now we know that the universe was created by God, by speaking it. Let there be, let there be, let there be. The word went out and created. Now we find out that the word also sustains. It holds all things together. The very word of God. And who is the word of God? Jesus Christ. He holds the universe together by the power of His word.

I don't know what that does for you, but it does something, kind of cool, inside of my heart. Because, you see, just like you, as a human being, I can give into fears very quickly, very easily. And we do that, don't we? I mean, we fret. We fret about anything and everything that might come along, that seems to, kind of, threaten our existence, or cause us some kind of concern. And so we end up having all these fears. And, you know, we call them phobias, and so on and so on.

Some people refuse to get on an airplane, and other people say, "Well I'm never going to do this." Some people say, "I'll never ever." And we say this and that, you know? And it's crazy. We are literally, I mean if the universe is held together by the word of His power, can you imagine about your life? Is your life part of that universe? Yes. Are you being held together by literally the power of His word? Yes.

So He's the one holding it all together, not you. And we think that I got to get in control of this situation and we're searching for control and we don't find it. And so I need a pill to help me because I realized I'm not in control. Maybe that pill will help me feel a little bit more like I'm in control.

You're not. And you never will be. But we know who is in control, the one who literally holds the universe together by the power of His word. And you can trust Him. You can trust Him. And I want to encourage you to take all of your fears and lay them at the feet of the One who holds the universe together, by the power of His word.

And to say, "You know what, I am done fretting and fearing all these things in life that I think are going to just sweep me away, and I'm going to begin to trust You because I believe You hold my life. I believe You know how many are the hairs on my head. I believe that You know every issue, every concern, every need, and I believe that You will take care of me."

That's the kind of trust. And you know what? That's the kind of trust that's going to make a difference in our world today. Because the world is being fed words of fear, every single day. In almost every single news story. Every single headline. Fear, fear, fear, fear.

But you and I have a precious responsibility and privilege to show something different in this world today. They say, I will not be afraid. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall have everything I need. He's the one who makes me lie down in green pastures. He restores my soul. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. You're with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Those are words that are real, you guys. It's not just this poetic sort of a "Oh, Psalm 23, isn't that delightful? Let's put it on a plaque and hang it on the wall." It's the reality of someone in the Bible. And David in this case, who came to terms with the fact, my life is in His hands and it's not going anywhere, apart from His power, His will, and His purpose.

Kind of reminds us, doesn't it, when we read words like this in Hebrews, that our view of Jesus can become pretty limited, you know? Can't it? I mean, don't get me wrong, I'm glad that God became a man so that I could relate to Him, I really am. I'm really pleased that God chose to become a human being like me, but He's not totally a human being like me. I mean, He's fully human from that standpoint, but He's also God. The eternal, the immortal, the all powerful. And I have to be careful not to let go of that.

You know, when I was a kid, we centered a lot on the baby Jesus. In fact, when I grew up, He rarely got out of the crib. And, you know, we never talked about Him going to the cross. And we certainly didn't talk about Him upholding the universe with the power of His word. We kind of kept Him in the manger.

And I read verses like this in the book of Hebrews, and I'm lifted up so much farther beyond what I've ever understood about the person of Jesus Christ. And that is exactly what the author of Hebrews is intending to do for you and I. That's exactly what He wants you to do.

He wants you to see Jesus in a new light. He wants you to see Him for who He is, the powerful Creator God, who holds all things in His hands, and can hold you too. You're not too much for Him. And He will sustain you. He will keep you, so let's not limit Jesus. And I hope that encourages you in your prayer time too.

When you pray to Jesus, when you pray and pray, in the name of Jesus, listen, you are praying in the name of the One who holds all things together by the power of His word.

Finally, we're told this about Jesus, the last part of verse three, <sup>3</sup>*"After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"*

And the writer of Hebrews is telling us two things about Jesus. First, it says, *"he sat down,"* and that doesn't literally mean that ever since he ascended to heaven, He's been seated, and He's never, ever, ever, gotten up. That is a term to describe rest. And what it fundamentally means is that Jesus, after making purifications for sins, rested from that work of purification for sins. What that tells you and I is, the work of salvation is done. It's over. It's finished. And there's nothing you need to add to it. There is no purgatory. There's no other working off of sins.

There's just Jesus. And we trust what He did on the cross. He sat down, which means He rested because it was done. And you'll remember that's one of the last things He said on the cross. "It is finished," and that's what that means. He sat down. It is finished. And so he's emphasizing here, for us, the author is, that finished work.

And of course, you know, that's specifically meant to speak to those Jews, who are being tempted to return to Judaism. Who have to go back and do the sacrificial system all over again. And they have to go back and begin to trust in the repetition of sacrifice, after sacrifice, after sacrifice, in the temple, bringing animals, bringing these thank offerings, and bringing grain offerings and all. No, no, no. It's done.

Jesus sat down. It's finished. And then he says, referring to Jesus seated at the, *"right hand of the Majesty on high,"* and this is a statement that's meant to

communicate to the readers, and to you and I, that Jesus now holds the place of honor at the throne of God. And he is declaring, in no uncertain terms, that Jesus has received the place of supreme authority on the throne of God.

You'll remember when John the apostle was taken up into the heavenlies, he beheld the throne of God, and literally the throne room of God Almighty. And he, as he's looking at this throne, this incredible majestic throne, he says, suddenly there was a lamb. I saw a lamb. And where was it? It was standing in the midst, or in the center, of the throne. Literally on the throne is this lamb looking as if it had been slain.

The apostle Paul made a similar statement when he wrote to the Philippians speaking of the majesty, the sovereignty, and the power of Christ when he said in Philippians two, verses 9 through 11:

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**Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV)**

*...God has highly exalted him (speaking of Jesus) and bestowed on him the name that is above every name (and there is coming a day when), so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Wow! I hope you're being lifted up in your understanding of Jesus. You can imagine how important this truth is to people who are being tempted to return to Judaism. How important just these first three verses are, and this letter is going to continue making this point again and again as he makes comparison after comparison with things from the old covenant and compares them to Jesus.

And that's what we're going to be seeing in the coming weeks, and so forth, as we go through this book. And the author is going to emphasize over and over again, by way of warning, that to ignore or disregard the person of Jesus Christ is to literally forfeit salvation all together.

You can't take Jesus out of the equation. The equation doesn't work anymore. Have you ever noticed that people will have a level of comfort talking about God and heaven and the Bible, and they'll sit and talk with you, and then you bring up Jesus and suddenly the room gets uncomfortable.

You can sense the tension because, you see, Jesus is this one character, that, people, He's the pivot point. And what you do with Jesus is going to make all

the difference in the world. You can sit and talk about how much you believe in God. People, don't ever tell anybody you believe in God. That says nothing. And know this, when they tell you they believe in God, that doesn't mean anything.

Satan believes in God, okay. Satan believes in God, believe me. He knows and understands there is a God who is on the throne of heaven. Satan knows that. So when somebody goes, "Oh, I believe in God," big deal. Who cares! It all comes down to the person of Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus? Well, Jesus comes along and He doesn't leave us any room for debate.

He says, I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. And no man comes to the Father except through me. You want to come to God, you come through Me. I am the gate. I am the door. I am the way. Look at all these I am statements around this room. I am the true vine. I am the beginning and the ending, right? The Alpha and the Omega. I am the bread of life. I am the resurrection. I am the gate for the sheep. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I'm the light of the world. I am the good shepherd.

He NEVER said, "I am A light, I am A way". He said, "I am THE." There is no other way. So you see, Jesus forces us into this place where we have to choose. That's why people get uncomfortable when you say, "Well, let's talk about Jesus." Well, I don't really want to talk about Jesus.

Well, you got to talk about Jesus. You got to deal with Jesus. You got to deal with His claims at some point. And this is what this letter to the Hebrews is about. You can't leave out Jesus. Because, if you go back, and you begin to partake in all of the sacrificial requirements related to the law, you are essentially saying in no uncertain terms, what Jesus did on the cross was insufficient. Because now I see I have to do all these other things. You are denying his very words on the cross, when he said, "*paid in full, it is finished.*" I'm not about to deny that, and I hope you aren't either. It all comes down to Jesus.

It's all about Him. So where do you stand on Jesus? That's the part that's going to make or break the entire equation.