

"The Superiority of Jesus Christ over the Prophets"

Hebrews 1:1-3

Part 5

Introduction: Tonight as we come back to our study in Hebrews we are coming back chapter 1:1-3 and in these chapters the writer is explaining to the Jewish believers why Jesus is better than the prophets.

Notice Hebrews 1:1

Here in these verses the writer points back to the Old Testament and reminds his readers that the prophet's writings were incomplete in the sense that they did not give a complete picture of the Messiah.

*God, who at **sundry times** [by many parts] and in **divers manners** [in various ways] spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,*

As we had discussed before, the Old Testament contains beautiful pictures of Jesus Christ but not one of the writers gives a complete picture of the Promised Messiah.

Notice Hebrews 1:2a

God spoke through the prophets in the Old Testament but in the "last days" has spoken through His Son. The writer here points to the central focus of the letter which is Jesus Christ. He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies; Jesus is the complete picture which the prophets did not have.

The writer then goes on to show that the Son was not just another prophet and he does this by listing 6 points about the Son.

Notice Hebrews 1:2b

1. **He is the appointed heir of all things.**
2. **He is the Creator of all things.**

We have looked at both of these in detail and therefore we shall move on to the next 4 points.

Notice Hebrews 1:3

3. **He is the brightness of God's glory.**

There is much to be said about this statement and there is an application that we shall consider that is very encouraging.

What does it mean that "Jesus is the brightness of God's glory"? This can best be understood by considering the sun of our solar system. There is none of us who have actually seen the sun. It is impossible for any of us to look upon the sun for to look at pure sun would blind us immediately. When we step out on a clear day and the sun is shining and we look up we do not see the sun but we only see the rays of the sun. The sun is made known to us by the rays of the sun. The rays which we see from the sun let us know that the sun exists. The rays are the manifestation of the sun to you and me. We could say that the rays of the sun are the "glory" of the sun.

This is the very idea here in Hebrews when the writer tells us that Jesus is the brightness of God's glory. No one has ever seen God except Jesus Christ. No man could ever look upon God for if anyone did they would die. Let me show you some verses on this thought.

In Exodus 33 Moses has just come through dealing with the sin of the golden calf. There were 3000 men who died that day and Moses had broken the Tablets of Stone out of anger. Now that things had calmed down there was a discouragement that had settled in and Moses was in need of encouragement. Notice the conversation between God and Moses.

Exodus 33:18-23

¹⁸ *And he[Moses] said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*

¹⁹ *And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*

²⁰ *And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.*

²¹ *And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:*

²² *And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:*

²³ *And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.*

Moses desired to see the glory of God but no man could do that and live. Let me show you the words of Rabbi Jehudah on this thought:

"Of that divine glory mentioned in the Scripture, there is one degree which the eyes of the prophets were able to explore; another which all the Israelites saw, as the cloud and consuming fire; the third is so bright, and so dazzling, that no mortal is able to comprehend it; but should anyone venture to look on it, his whole frame would be dissolved.' In such inconceivable splendour is the Divine Majesty revealed to the inhabitants of the celestial world, where he is said to 'dwell in the light which no man can approach unto.' (1Ti 6:16.) By the 'face of God,' therefore, we are to understand that light inaccessible before which angels may stand, but which would be so insufferable to mortal eyes, that no man could see it and live."

God desired to reveal Himself to man but no man could look upon His face and therefore God sent His Son to reveal His glory to man in a way that man would be able to know God and God's character and Person would be made manifest to man.

John 1:18

¹⁸ *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, **he hath declared him.***

John 14:6-9

⁶ *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

⁷ *If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and **from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.***

⁸ *Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.*

⁹ *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;** and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?*

Now we need to look at a word in Hebrews 1:3.

Hebrews 1:3a

*Who being the **"brightness"** of his glory...*

The word "**brightness**" has a very important meaning. Let me first of all tell you that it does **NOT** mean "reflection". Jesus is NOT a reflection of God. The word "brightness" means "radiance" or "out shining". In other words just as the rays of the sun are "out shining" of the sun so Jesus is the "out shining" of God. He is God in the flesh. He was not

a reflection of God; He was God in a human body. Let us now consider the next point the writer makes.

Notice Hebrews 1:3

4. He is the express image of God's Person.

The phrase "express image" refers to something "engraved" or "impressed". It would be the same idea as a coin being run through a mint and a press would stamp the coin and every line of the stamp would be impressed into the coin.

Notice the words of John Phillips:

"The idea is like that of a dye impress. The lines of Deity have been reproduced in Jesus' humanity, so to find out what God is like we need only to look at Jesus."

One man puts it this way, "Jesus is God in focus".

In both of these points we learn that Jesus Christ came to this earth to reveal to all of mankind the very Person of God. We must understand that if God had not revealed Himself to man it would have been impossible for man to know God. We cannot know anything beyond the natural realm in which we live in. Jesus came into this world to reveal the very Person and nature of God.

John 1:14

¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John 17:

³ And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

If you and I desire to learn more about God we need only to look deeper into the life of Jesus Christ. Let us now notice the next point.

Notice Hebrews 1:3

5. He upholds all things by the word of His power.

This is a very interesting statement. The word "upholds" means "to carry" or "support". The word "uphold" refers both to "preservation" and "government". These 2 thoughts have

great comfort for the day in which we live in. This statement refers to the sovereignty of our Lord. Let us consider each one separately.

- a. **Preservation** – There is a verse that comes to mind that will help us to grasp the meaning here.

Colossians 1:16-17

¹⁶ *For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:*

¹⁷ *And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

This preservation can be applied to many things:

1. **Life** – Our lives are in the hands of God.

Job 14:1, 5

Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

⁵ *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;*

God controls our lives in the sense that He has set our boundary and we cannot go beyond it.

2. **Earth** – The preservation of this earth is controlled by God and not by man.

Genesis 8:22

²² *While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.*

I point this out to help you to see that man is not destroying this earth with "Global Warming". It is all controlled by the power of our Lord. God promised that the seasons would never stop while this earth exists. There will be cold and heat.

3. **Mankind** – We can see throughout the history that if it was not for the Spirit of God and grace that man would completely destroy himself with the help of Satan and his demonic spirits.

Genesis 6:1-3

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

² *That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.*

³ *And the LORD said, **My spirit shall not always strive with man**, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.*

These verses point to a time 1656 years after creation and man was joining up with the demonic spirits in an attempt to avoid death and in so doing was on a path of utter destruction. Then we see God's preservation.

Genesis 6:8

⁸ *But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.*

It is the same today. We see this in 2 Thessalonians when Paul writes about the coming of the anti-christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:6-8

⁶ *And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.*

⁷ *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth[hinders] will let[hinder], until he be taken out of the way.*

⁸ *And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:*

These verses speak of the restraining power of the Holy Spirit on the demonic world. If it were not for this restraint man, with the assistance of Satan would destroy himself.

These are 3 ways we can see the preserving power of our Lord.

- b. **Government** - Not only does Jesus uphold all things in the sense of preservation but also in the sense of government.

We could go on for hours about this topic but we do not have the time. But I do want to remind you that all that we see happening in our nation and within the world today is in the control and the plan of God. Everything that is happening is taking our world toward the kingdom of the anti-christ.

Revelation 13:6-7

⁶ *And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.*

⁷ And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

The anti-christ will rule the entire world and the kingdoms and the governments of this world will need to merge into one and will need to be completely anti-God when the anti-christ comes on the scene. This is why we are seeing the deterioration of moral principles and the increase of a society which is against God today. We are seeing the formation of the kingdom of the anti-christ. But we must remember this is all under the control of our Lord.

Romans 13:1

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Conclusion: There is yet one more point to see and it must be connected with what we looked tonight.

6. **He revealed the heart of God.**

Notice Hebrews 1:3

"when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:"

This is such an important thought. When we look around in our world it can become rather frightening. I have heard people ask, "Where is God in the midst of all that is happening?" I am sure the Hebrew Christians asked the very same thing. As our world moves toward the kingdom of anti-christ life will become difficult and people may question the love of God. This verse contains the Anchor to sustain our faith in the midst of a society on a direct path toward the tribulation period. Our Lord loves us so much that He, by Himself paid the penalty for our sins.

Romans 8:38-39

³⁸ *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

³⁹ *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*