

God has Spoken in His Son!

Hebrews 1:1-4

22 May 2022

Halifax, 10:30 AM

Introduction:

Today, we are going to begin going through the epistle to the Hebrews.

- Several weeks ago, we had an introductory message to this letter.
 - I showed you that the author refers to what he has written as a brief word of exhortation—and that it certainly is.
 - It was written to Jewish Christians to urge them to continue in the gospel of Jesus Christ and not give way to the pressure to return to Old Testament ceremonies.
 - I explained to you that though the letters in the Bible address specific situations, the Holy Spirit gave them to us in such a way that they have powerful application to believers in every generation that come after.
 - That is one of the most marvellous things about the Bible.
 - It speaks to us in a way that is powerfully and personally relevant.
 - When God's Spirit is at work, people often feel like they are being directly addressed by the Lord through the scriptures.
 - The overall message of Hebrews that pertains to everyone is that we should continue in the gospel without wavering because Jesus is better than anything else that might pull at us and demand our allegiance.
 - Maybe we are weary of the rigours of the Christian life and just want to take it easy.
 - Perhaps our family is tugging at us to come back to Roman Catholicism with all its rituals and traditions.
 - Maybe it's Charismania with its hyper-emotionalism and man-centred feel-goodism.
 - or religious liberalism with its respectability in the academy and in the political sphere—perhaps that would make us more respectable at work.
 - Shallow Evangelicalism with its busyness and activity that ignores holiness and doctrine—where you can go on a mission and sleep with your girlfriend.
 - Reformed Legalism that emphasises confessional purity but ignores personal faith, discipleship, brotherly love, and concern for the lost.
 - The world with its pull to fit in, to cast off God's commandments, to follow your own passions instead of God's word...maybe we are attracted to an unbeliever or want to get out of a hard marriage...
 - Hebrews confronts us and shows us that Christ is superior to all of these things.
 - None of them can be compared to Him.

As we come to this first chapter, we may think of all the things that pull us as so many voices calling us to ignore God's voice (or at least turn it down a bit) and listen to them.

- Hebrews confronts us from the very first verse with the voice of God.
- Everything in this letter—indeed, everything in the Bible—boils down to this.
 - God Himself has spoken in His Son.

- Will you hear His voice, or will you hear the voice of another?
 - Nothing could be more foolish than to ignore the voice of God Almighty.
 - How will you answer to Him when He judges you, when He confronts you as one who shut your ears to His gracious calling of restoration to Him?
- As I told you in that introductory message, Hebrews teaches us that there is no place for half measures with God.
 - Either you accept that God has spoken, or you ignore Him to your own peril.

Listen now to this powerful opening to Hebrews.

- I will read the first four verses—Hebrews 1:1-4.
- Give careful attention because this is the Word of God...

Hebrews 1:1-4: God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; ³ who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and

upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His holy word.

You see that, in this letter, there is no greeting, no introduction—

- It goes straight to the heart of the matter upon which everything else depends.
 - That God has now spoken to us in His Son.
- This is what we are going to look at today.
 - First, that God has spoken to reveal the way to glory.
 - Second, that God’s Son is alone qualified to bring us to glory.

I. God has revealed the way to glory (to harmony with Himself and with all things).

A. Verse 1 tells us that God has spoken in a variety of ways to the fathers by the prophets.

- v. 1: **God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets**
 - What is this talking about?
 1. This is talking about the speaking that God did to a select group of people before Jesus came to tell them how to be restored to Him.
 - The fathers are the fathers of the Jews...
 - Adam; Noah; Abraham; Moses; David; the prophets
 - a. It was a very gracious speaking that God did to them!
 - In short, He spoke to them to tell them that He was going to restore paradise through a Son that would be born to them.
 - They all knew that they were not in paradise.

- They all knew that they had sinned against God and that people were not in harmony with God or with the whole creation—
 - Surely we all know that too if only we would admit it.
 - But God told them that He would establish a people through a son born to them and that He would be their God and they would be His people.
 - He graciously promised to make them into a beautiful city built by Him, a holy nation that would serve Him, a kingdom that would be blessed.
 - They would be a people reconciled to God—a people who would know God and who would live in perfect harmony with Him, with nature, and with each other.
- b. They learned very quickly, however, that this kingdom was a future kingdom.
- They had to trust God that the Son that would be born to them to restore them would not be born until long after they had died.
 - They had to believe that God would raise them from the dead to inherit this city, and that in this world, they would have to bear many hard things—
 - often things that came from being the people who were looking for this city whose builder and maker was God.
 - Often, they would feel pressured to turn back.
 - As those looking for this city, they were, however, immediately reconciled to God through faith in His promise and began to live for Him...
 - Though they often sinned, God dealt with them so that they would come back to Him and seek His forgiveness.
 - Their coming short made them yearn for the coming of God's promise even more.
 - And when they faced opposition from those who rejected God's call, that made the ones with no true faith depart, but it made the ones with true faith all the more zealous for the Lord to come.
2. God used a whole variety of ways to speak to them.
- With Adam, He simply came to talk to him as He had done before the fall, except He confronted Adam, who was trying to hide...
 - And then He made His promise to him indirectly by telling the serpent who (led Adam and his wife astray) that some of the woman's children would oppose the serpent and that eventually a Son would come who would destroy the serpent and establish the city of God.
 - With Noah, God sent the flood to show how displeased He was with the world that ignored His voice,
 - Yet to promise that he would continue to preserve the world for those who had faith until the Son of promise came.
 - With Abraham, God called him after the world had been busy trying to find salvation in its own way at Babel,

- promising that He would preserve him and his descendants to be the people who would believe and through whom the Son of promise would be born.
 - He told him that though his seed, all the families of the earth would be blessed, that is, restored to harmony with God
 - but then Abraham and his wife were barren—and God taught Abraham to believe what He had told him even when it looked impossible...
 - Then God did enable Sarah to give birth to Isaac through whom the promised Son would come.
3. God continued to keep that promise.
- a. Abraham's family grew to over a million, but God had brought them into slavery in Egypt...
 - He had told Abraham about this 400 years before, and had promised that He would bring them out of Egypt and bring them to a city where they were to serve Him until the promised Son came.
 - b. When the time came to deliver them, God appeared and spoke to Moses in the burning bush and sent him as His prophet to lead His people out of Egypt to the promised land.
 - But their faith was tested because Pharaoh resisted and would not let them go—until God sent the ten plagues—then they came out.
 - But it was still not so simple. They had to go through the wilderness, and they had God speak to them in a terrifying way on Mt. Sinai.
 - God was teaching them to wait for His promise and He was purifying them through affliction—affliction is needed in our lives to prepare us for God's kingdom
 - They saw signs and wonders and were fed with bread from heaven.
 - They were given ordinances of worship that showed them that they were sinners who needed to have a sacrifice made to atone for their sin.
 - And they often had to be corrected for turning away from the Lord, but He preserved them.
 - c. God did eventually establish them in their own land and He raised up a faithful king named David to lead them.
 - But He made it clear that David was not the Son that He had promised—He told David that the Son of promise would be born of David's line.
 - Through David, He revealed many things about His coming kingdom, but soon, rebellion destroyed the Davidic kingdom and left it as a stump.
 - Yet, God renewed and greatly strengthened His promise that He would bring the Son of promise and still bring His people to glory.
 - d. Over all these years, God kept sending prophets and working in His people in various ways that kept their faith alive.
 - They would forget the promise and start drifting away, but then God would send hard things to them with prophets to call them to repent.

- The prophets would tell them that the hard things were sent because of their sin and their unbelief, and they would come back to God again to seek His kingdom and to wait for the promise.
- In short, God kept on speaking to the fathers by the prophets and He kept on promising them a Son that would come to establish His glorious city.
 - The Jews understood that when the Son of promise came (the Messiah), He would tell them all things and give them new ordinances to replace all the ones that God had given them through Moses.
 - They called the time of the Son's coming the last days or other similar phrases that showed that everything would change when He came—
 - that the Messiah would speak to them and lead them and that the days of all their temple service would be fulfilled.

TRANS> So that is what the first verse in Hebrews means when it says that God spoke to the fathers by the prophets.

- It was a gracious speaking of a promised Son who would restore paradise, a city and a kingdom whose builder and maker was God.

B. Verse 2 of Hebrews tells us that God has now spoken by His Son.

- It says that God who spoke in time past by the prophets **“has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things...”**
 1. This is a direct claim that the Son who was promised has now come.
 - Of course this is talking about Jesus Christ who was born of a woman, yet was the Son of God.
 - The Jews that Hebrews was written to had accepted Him as the Son of promise, but most of the Jewish leaders had rejected Him.
 - You know about that—they had put Him on the cross declaring that He was an impostor.
 - This was the opposition and pressure that the Jews were facing when this letter was written to them. They were cut off from family, from their jobs, their respect—they were even put in prison and executed.
 2. The odd thing is that their leaders were expecting the Messiah when He came, but they did not accept Him.
 - This was odd because He did the things that the prophets said He would do—
 - He came at the time that Daniel had indicated that He would come.
 - He was introduced by the voice in the wilderness, John the Baptist, as Isaiah had foretold.
 - He introduced the sign of baptism as Ezekiel had promised, declaring that Messiah who baptised with the Spirit had come.
 - Jesus came from David's line and was born of a virgin.
 - He healed the sick and gave sight to the blind and even raised the dead.
 - He preached with wisdom and grace, and He cast out demons.
 - He declared that the kingdom of God had come among them through Him.

- However, it was not really so odd that they rejected Him because that is what most of them did with all the prophets.
 - And not only that, but the prophets had declared that He would be rejected when He came and had foretold His suffering.
3. But you see, Hebrews 1 verse 2 is showing that God's former ways of speaking by the prophets has ended.
- God's Son has come.
 - It is the last days—the end of the prophets speaking in all sorts of different ways has come because now God has spoken to us by the Son that He promised through the prophets.
 - Now the rituals of Moses are ended and new way has come.
 - This makes it very clear that there is a finality to the speaking that God does through His Son.
 - He is the final revelation of God's way of restoration.
 - He is the One we look to to bring us to paradise.
 - Now God is calling the nations to come to Him and be reconciled.
 - We look to Jesus, the Son of God, and to what He has done, because now God has spoken through Him.
- Take a close look at what it says about God's Son in verse 2.
- C. It says that the Son by whom God speaks is **appointed heir of all things** and that He is the One **through whom God made the worlds**.
1. Saying that He is appointed the **heir of all things** indicates that He is the Son who inherits the city whose builder and maker is God.
- He is the Son of promise who establishes the kingdom of glory, paradise, for Him and His people.
 - He is the heir of eternal life—the heir of God's everlasting blessing.
 - As an heir of God's city, that means that He is one of us—and He is—He is a Son born to us—the Son born of woman—bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh.
- But verse 2 also says something else about Him. Something very remarkable.
2. It says that He is the One through whom God made the worlds.
- That indicates that He is God.
 - Only God can create, and God's Son created the worlds.
 - That tells us that this One who was born of woman and who inherits all things is also God.
 - He is God who became man.
 - Of course, He could not stop being God when He became man.
 - But He is both God and man—one person with two natures.
3. This is what John describes so well in his gospel.
- He calls Him “the Word” when he introduces Him, which he does in the very first verse of his gospel:

- He says, John 1:1: **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”**
- As the Son of God, He was not created—He was there at the beginning.
 - As the Son of God, He was with God, but as the Son of God, He also was God.
- But then John tells us the other part.
 - In John 1:14, he says: **“And the Word became 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.”** He became man.
- All this tells us that the Son by whom God has spoken—who is His final word of salvation—has now come as man.
 - He is the one who inherits the kingdom of glory that God promised to give His people through a Son that would be born to them.
 - This Son is God now born man.

TRANS> If it is true that God has spoken by His Son, then we have no one else to listen to. He is the final word of God for those who would inherit paradise.

- You either follow Him or you don't.
- It is a great insult to God if God speaks through Him and you act like other voices are just as important or even more important.
 - If God has spoken in Him, He must be heard and He must be believed.

II. In Hebrews 1:3-4 we see how uniquely qualified this Son who is both God and man is to be our way to paradise.

Let me show you three ways that He is uniquely qualified to be our way to paradise.

A. First, He is uniquely qualified to be our way to paradise because of who He is.

1. As the Son of God made flesh, He is (look at verse 3) the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person.
 - a. As the brightness of His Father's glory, He radiates the glory of God.
 - As the Son of God, He is fully God—all that the Father is, He is.
 - But now that He has become flesh, that glory shines through His human nature the way that it ought.
 - It cannot do otherwise with Him because He Himself is God made flesh.
 - He was able to say, “If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.”
 - He shows us what we could not otherwise see, for no one can see God, but we see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
 - As John says, He dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
 - b. The same is true of His character. He is the express image of His person—that is, His character is God's character in human flesh.
 - There is no sin, no malice, no corruption, no defilement.
 - He is pure and holy, filled with love for God and praise to God, one who truly loves His neighbour, one who is always true.

- When things happen to Him as a man, He responds the way God would respond if He was a man because that is exactly what He is—God made man.
 - This is why those who saw Him were in awe of Him; why those who were honest said “no man ever spoke like this Man spoke;” why those who heard Him pray said, “Lord, teach us to pray.”
 - It is the reason that He went to the cross when called to do so, giving His life for His people that they might be saved.
 - It is the reason the Father said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him.”
2. Such a one is what all are to be in paradise.
- Were we not created in God’s image?
 - Were we not created to be like God in human nature? to love as He loves, to be true as He is true, to be good as He is good, to be faithful as He is faithful, to be holy as He is holy?
 - Jesus is the first one to be all of that.
 - And He promises to all who will come to Him in faith that He will bring us to glory and establish us in His kingdom of righteousness.
 - He is the firstfruits of the resurrection—all who are raised in Him will be like Him.
 - He gives us the Holy Spirit so that we will serve God, and He promises that the Spirit will make us like Him when He comes at the end of this age.

TRANS> But what about all the suffering in this world? And what about our sin? How can our sin be pardoned? That brings us to the second way He is qualified to establish God’s holy city.

B. Second, He is uniquely qualified to be our way to paradise because of what He has done.

1. Verse 3 goes on to say that He **upholds all things by the word of His power**.
- When He was here, He showed us the dominion that He had to rule over all things.
 - He commanded demons and they obeyed.
 - He spoke life to the dead and they were raised up.
 - He was able to command the wind and the waves and they obeyed Him.
 - He called for full nets of fish and full baskets of bread and there they were.
 - In these ways, He showed us that as God made man, He has authority over all things—angels, death, and nature.
 - That means that when the time comes for paradise to be restored, He can do all that needs to be done.
 - The word indicates that He both maintains everything and carries it along to bring about His purposes.
 - He has been doing that from the beginning so that history is marching forward to the goal that He has for it... that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas.

- But what about our guilt for our sin? Look what else He has done. He has done something about that also.
- 2. Verse 3 also says that He has **by Himself purged our sins**.
 - This is the most remarkable thing of all.
 - This speaks of how He secured forgiveness for all of His people on the cross.
 - It is not talking about Him purging sins from our character—it is talking about Him bearing the punishment of our sins so that we, though sinners, might be declared forgiven and counted as righteous in God’s sight.
 - You see, sin must be punished. The honour of God requires it.
 - God cannot pardon without punishing sin as it deserves to be punished because to leave sin unpunished would be unjust—it would be to say that sin was not sinful—that there was no great wrong in rebelling against God!
 - It is so sinful that it must be punished in hell.
 - We have a hard time believing that because we need to learn about God, and one of the ways He teaches us is by punishing sin the way it deserves.
 - On the cross, Jesus bore the pains of hell because He was God made man. *He* went to the cross!
 - He alone was qualified to bear His people’s sins.
 - We all have our own sins, and even if we didn’t, we could not die for another because we are not the Son of God.
 - By becoming man, He could represent men, and because He was God, He could cover all our sins.
 - Understand then that God has spoken His final word of forgiveness through Jesus.
 - There is no paradise without forgiveness and there is no forgiveness without Jesus crucified and without faith in Him as crucified!
 - If you don’t have faith in Jesus, you still think that it is okay to rebel against God.
 - God’s voice is the only voice that can declare forgiveness and God declares forgiveness only to those who repent and trust in Jesus.
 - What other voice might speak forgiveness?
 - Not the priests of the old covenant, certainly not pagan priests or modern priests in the church.
 - God, in the last days, spoke by His Son.
 - Like Daniel prophesied, He put an end to sacrifice and offering.
 - He is God’s final word about atonement for sin.
- That is the second way He is uniquely qualified to be our Saviour. Now let’s look at the third way His is uniquely qualified to be our Saviour.

C. Third, He is uniquely qualified to be our way to paradise because His saving work has been accepted by the Father—He has successfully completed His work.

1. We are told at the end of verse 3 that after He had presented Himself as God made flesh and purged our sins, He sat down... look at the whole of verse 3:

- **“who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”**

- This testifies to us that His work was accepted by the Father.

- He was able to sit down at His right hand—not as the Son of God only, but as the Son of God made man who finished the work that the Father gave Him to do to inherit paradise for all those the Father had given Him to save.

- In human flesh, He was the brightness of the Father’s glory (which He always had been as God the Son, and which He continued to be as God made man); He was the express image of His person, and the one who exercised dominion over all things.

- Then, after all that, He went to the cross to purge our sins and the Father accepted His saving work.

- He was invited to sit down, waiting until all His enemies are made His footstool, either gathered into His kingdom or cast into outer darkness with Satan.

2. Verse 4 describes how, as God made man who did all of this, He has been exalted above the angels...

- Not as God—for He was already exalted as God,

- but as God made man, and a man who was mediator of a sinful people.

- Now He has been given the name that is above every name, not as the Son of God, for He always had such a name as God, but now as God made man.

- He has obtained glory for Himself and for all who trust in Him.

- How safely you can trust in Him!

Conclusion.

What comfort there is for you who know that God has now spoken through His Son.

- Here is the One who has the words of eternal life.

- Here is the One who is the way to paradise for all who believe in Him.

The great question for you is this: have you heard God through Him?

- He alone has the words—the message—of eternal life.

- There is nothing uncertain here. God has spoken through His Son.

- If He is Lord, hear Him.

- If you will not, then go your own way and perish in your sin.