

Series: “Behold the Son – An Exposition of the first two chapters of Hebrews”¹

Main Idea: In Hebrews 1:1-4 we discover eight truths regarding the incomparable Son, eight truths that make Him unique and indeed a treasure worth giving your all to possess.

- I. God spoke through the prophets (1).
 - A. What He said was good.
 - B. What He said anticipated something better.
- II. God spoke ultimately through His Son (2-4).
 - A. The Son is the heir of all things.
 - 1. He doesn’t promote Himself.
 - 2. He exists in eternal submission to the Father.
 - B. The Son is the creator of all things.
 - 1. The Father designed creation.
 - 2. The Son accomplished the work of creation.
 - C. The Son is the perfect expression of glory.
 - D. The Son is the exact representation of God.
 - E. The Son is the sustainer of all things.
 - 1. His word is the means by which He works.
 - 2. His word is powerful.
 - F. The Son took care of the sin problem.
 - G. The Son took a seat in heaven.
 - 1. That indicates He completed His task.
 - 2. That indicates He possesses intrinsic worth.
 - 3. That indicates He deserves honor and obedience.
 - H. The Son is superior to the angels.
 - 1. He assumed a superior position.
 - 2. He inherited a superior name.

Make It Personal: Since God has spoken, two responses are in order.

- 1. Listen to His Son.
- 2. Let others know what He has said.

Scripture Memory Song (“Redeemed people sing the Word”): Isaiah 33:2

Nepal Trip Update (part two, focus on first module)

In just a little over a month Christmas will be here, the day set aside to recognize the birth of Jesus Christ. Many who will observe the holiday called Christmas don’t know the truth about Christ. If a person doesn’t know who that baby was and is, then he or she will not appreciate fully the significance of the holiday which celebrates the incarnation.

Think of it this way. *If you don’t appreciate what you have, you’ll constantly be looking for something else.*

If you don’t appreciate your parents, you’ll be longing for the day when you leave home. If you don’t appreciate your spouse, you’ll be on the lookout for someone else who can make you happy. The same is true for your job, your house, your car, and just about everything else in life. *If you don’t appreciate what you have, you’ll constantly be looking for something else.*

Beloved, I’m concerned that many don’t fully appreciate what they have when it comes to the person of Christ. Oh, they believe in Christ. They believe that He was born in Bethlehem, lived in Galilee, died on Golgotha, raised from the dead and returned to heaven from a hillside outside of Jerusalem. They believe those *facts*, but if they’re

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the Hebrews series preached at WBC in 2007.

honest with ourselves those facts don't make much of a difference in their lives Monday through Saturday.

May I suggest to you that at its root the problem is that we don't grasp as we ought the *who* behind those facts? If we don't know *who* it was that lay in that cradle and hung on that cross, we won't appreciate the *what* He accomplished and *what* it is we have. And if we don't appreciate what we have, we are in grave danger of looking for something else.

The problem is nothing new. It was happening in the first century. There were professing Christians who were considering turning away from Christ, and settling for something else. And the Spirit of God provided a book to address that problem. It's the book of Hebrews.

You see, if we don't know *who Christ is*, we are in great danger. That's why we need the message of Hebrews today. And that's why, in preparation for Christmas, we're going to spend several weeks in Hebrews 1-2.

Hebrews is an amazing, Christ-exalting, brain-stretching, life-transforming book. Hebrews introduces us to the person of Christ. Hebrews says, "If you've got the best, namely Christ, why would you settle for anything else?" And so, let's begin our series beholding the incomparable Son.

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 1:1-4

Behold the Son! That's the title of this series. We're going to *behold* the Son. Not just look. Certainly not just a casual glance. But behold! Gaze. Concentrate on. Be amazed by. Ponder. Look intently at. At what? At the Son of God Himself.

Why behold? you ask. Because when we behold, something happens to us. We become something we would *not* be if we did not behold. Paul explains it this way in 2 Corinthians 3:18, "And we all, with unveiled face, *beholding the glory of the Lord*, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another." There's why we behold. There's incredible transforming power that's unleashed in the beholding.

So let us behold. This morning, as we examine carefully the God-inspired words of Hebrews 1:1-4, we're going to behold eight breathtaking features of the Matchless Son. And as we behold these features, we will leave a different people, a changed people. But before we can begin to behold, we need some help understanding this book.

A Brief Introduction:

What is Hebrews? I just called it a book, but that's a little misleading. It's actually an epistle (letter). At the end of Hebrews (13:22) the author refers to his message as "my word of exhortation." Some think it was first a sermon (it takes about 50 minutes to read it aloud) that the author later turned into a written epistle.

Who wrote Hebrews? We don't know. Scholars have suggested Apollos, Barnabas, Luke, and Paul, but each suggestion is conjecture. What we do know is this. The writer did not identify himself in the book, had a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament, possessed a keen mind and the ability to develop elaborate argumentation, knew Timothy (13:23), and knew some Italian believers (13:24). He apparently wrote the book some time before the destruction of Jerusalem which occurred in AD 70, probably in the decade of the 60's.

Who were the original recipients of this sermon/letter? Again, we don't know for sure since the letter doesn't identify the recipients. Based on the content, the readers of Hebrews must have been Jewish by background. Later statements in the book indicate they were facing persecution, and the frequent warnings in the book suggest the readers were wavering in their faith. Apparently, the first recipients of the book of Hebrews were Jewish people who had made professions of faith in Messiah Jesus but were discouraged and were considering going back to their old beliefs and practices. To put it bluntly, they were in danger of defection.

Don't do that! says the author. And to help them, he puts two themes before them. The first is the *superiority of Christ*. The word 'better' or 'superior' appears thirteen times in the book, indicating that in Christ we have better things (6:9), a better hope (7:19), a better covenant (7:22; 8:6), better promises (8:6), better sacrifices (9:23), a better possession (10:34), a better country (11:16), a better resurrection (11:35), and blood that speaks better (12:24). The point is, if you've got that which is *better*, namely Christ, why would you go back to that which is inferior?

This leads to the other theme, the *call to perseverance*. The book is full of some thirteen commands using what's known as the Greek "hortatory subjunctive." They're easy to spot because these commands begin with the inclusive "let us." For instance:

4:1 "Let us be careful..."

4:11 "Let us make every effort to enter that rest."

4:14 "Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess."

4:16 "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence."

6:1 "Let us...go on to maturity."

10:23 "Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess."

10:25 "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Now let's take a close-up look at the first paragraph of the book. The author makes a two-part contrast involving God's speech.

I. God spoke through the prophets (1).

Verse 1 begins, "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets." God spoke. The God who created the heavens and the earth is a revealing God. We would not know Him had He not taken the initiate to make Himself known. And that's what He did. He spoke.

He spoke *long ago*. How? *Through the prophets*. There's about twenty-five of them in the Old Testament. Men like Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Obadiah, and more. A prophet was a spokesman for God. God gave special revelation to His chosen servants who in turn passed that revelation on to His people.

Verse 1 says He did this *at many times*. We know this because many of the prophets, as directed by God the Holy Spirit, wrote down what God said to them, beginning with Moses around 1400 BC. and ending with Malachi one thousand years later around 400 B.C. The result is what we call "the Old Testament."

The author also states that God spoke *in many ways*. He once spoke to Moses out of a burning bush (Ex. 3:2-4), and later on Mount Sinai God wrote His words on two stone tablets (Ex. 32:16). To Elijah He spoke in a still small voice (1 Kings 19:12). He spoke

to Daniel in dreams and visions (Dan. 7:1).² He spoke to Hosea through his marriage trouble (Hos. 1:2), and to Amos in a basket of summer fruit (Amos 8:1).

If you've read the Old Testament, you've likely noticed two things regarding this revelation God gave through the prophets.

A. What He said was good. Over and over again, when God gave His Word to the Israelites, it was a manifestation of His gracious character. We mustn't miss the grace of God in all this. Think about it. Do you like it when someone gives you the silent treatment? God did not give the world the silent treatment. In the past, says the writer of Hebrews, God *spoke to our forefathers*. And His speech was a good gift to them.

B. What He said anticipated something better. Something far better. And that something came four hundred years after He spoke to the last prophet, Malachi.

Notice the contrast at the beginning of verse 2. "But." "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, *but*." But what? Here's the astounding answer. "But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son."

II. God spoke ultimately through His Son (2-4).

Prior to the first century, the Jewish conception of history went like this. There was *the present age*, which would end when Messiah came and inaugurated *the age to come*. But what the Old Testament announced yet didn't make clear was that the Messiah would come not once, but *twice*. The first time He would suffer and die, and the second time He would rule and reign.

When the author of Hebrews speaks about "these last days," he's talking about the last days of the present age that will give way to the age to come. And that has happened, he says. In these last days God has spoken to us by His Son. This means we actually are living between the two ages. As he will explain in Hebrews 9:26, "But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Please realize that the Son mentioned in verse 2 is more than the last in a long line of prophets. He is the person who initiated the new age, the Messianic age.

Who is this Son? In the Greek text there is no article or pronoun. It literally says that in these last days God has spoken to us "in Son" (*en huiōi*). Robert Gromacki explains, "This grammatical feature stresses the quality or nature of His sonship. Stress is not only on what Christ said and did, but especially on what and who He is. The prophets spoke the word of God, but Christ *is* the word of God."³

In the first four verses of Hebrews 1, the author invites us to behold eight features of the Matchless Son. Remember, he's writing to people who were thinking of walking away from Christ. If you do that, this is who you will be leaving.

A. The Son is the heir of all things. Verse 2 says, "Whom he appointed the heir of all things." Look at the words carefully. Whom—that's referring to the Son. He—that's referring to God, the antecedent mentioned in verse 1, God the Father to be precise. We're told that the Son of God is the God-appointed heir of all things.

If the Son is the heir, does this mean that the Father must die in order for the Son to receive His inheritance? Obviously not, for the eternal Father could never die. In what

² Observation by R. Gromacki, pp. 22-23.

³ Robert Gromacki, pp. 23-24.

sense then is the Son His *heir*? And furthermore, what inheritance does the author have in mind here? What will the Son receive that He did not already possess?

We find a clue in verse 5. There the author quotes from an Old Testament passage which he does repeatedly in Hebrews. What's the passage? It's Psalm 2. So we know the writer has Psalm 2 in mind.

Listen to Psalm 2:7-9. "He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.'"

Notice that prediction. *I will make the nations your inheritance*, says God to His Son. Why would God do that? The answer goes back, all the way back to the beginning.

When God created the first man, He created him in His image and gave mankind dominion over the earth. But of course, Adam failed to do so. He sinned and tarnished this dominion-capacity, turning it into self-seeking, self-promoting ends. But God fixed the problem. How? He appointed His Son heir. That is, He purposed that His eternal Son would enter the world as the second/last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) and restore what the first Adam ruined. He would regain what Adam forfeited. He would become the heir of all things.

And that's exactly what He did. The Son entered the world in obedience to His Father and gave His life to redeem Adam's helpless race. Through His perfect life, His sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection, the Son set free the very inheritance His Father had given Him to enjoy, a people for His glory.

I'm grateful that the Lord has given gifted minds to His church to help us understand His Word. I'll be quoting from several throughout this message. Listen to this observation by commentator, Philip Hughes: "The statement that the Son was *appointed heir of all things* is a statement, rather, concerning the mediatorial office of Christ...The heirship of Christ, then, is established within the perspective of redemption: his inheritance is the innumerable company of the redeemed and the universe renewed by virtue of his triumphant work of reconciliation."⁴

My friend, let this truth sink in. Behold the Son! This is your Savior, if you're a believer, and could become your Savior today if you would believe in Him.

1. *He doesn't promote Himself.* The text states that He was *appointed heir*. Do you see the humility of this amazing Son? In John 14:31 Jesus said, "But I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father."

2. *He exists in eternal submission to the Father.* Indeed, the Son always does what the Father tells Him to do.

You say, "I don't like the term submission. It's demeaning." Actually, it's not demeaning. It's divine. Submission is something God's Son does. God the Son loves God the Father so much that He finds great delight in submitting to His will.

Philip Hughes offers an important caution, "The distinction between the Father and the Son in the Godhead is a deep mystery of revelation; but God is one and we must always beware of surrendering the divine unity by attempting to make the divine person conform to the limitations of our human situation."⁵

Who is the Son? First, He is the heir of all things. But keep looking. There's more!

⁴ Philip Hughes, pp. 38-9.

⁵ Philip Hughes, p. 38.

B. The Son is the creator of all things. Verse 2 continues, “Through whom also he created the world [NIV ‘the universe’; AV and NKJV ‘the worlds’].” *Whom* refers to the Son. *He* refers to God the Father. So the Father and the Son worked together in the activity of creating the world.

1. *The Father designed creation.*

2. *The Son accomplished the work of creation.* The Father gave the assignment of creating the universe to His Son, and the Son, again in perfect obedience, fulfilled the assignment. “He made the universe,” says the NIV.

The writer actually uses the Greek word for ‘ages’ (*aiones*), rather than the usual word for ‘worlds’ (*kosmoi*). Guthrie explains, “The reason is that the word for ‘ages’ is more comprehensive, including within it the periods of time through which the created order exists.”⁶

Dear friends, if something exists, it all came from the Son. He made everything. That’s a staggering thought, so ponder it carefully. The Son made the stars, the trees, the animals, *everything*. He created the first man out of the dirt. He created the first woman out of the bone and flesh He scooped from Adam’s side. It all came from Him.

Centuries later He fashioned the woman who would carry Him for nine months, and feed and care for His needs as a helpless baby. He created her. He created the Galilean dirt upon which He walked for thirty-three years. He created the tree to which He was eventually nailed.

“For *by him all things were created*,” says Colossians 1:16, “things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; *all things were created by him* and for him.”

The apostle John explains it this way in John 1:1-3, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. *Through him all things were made*; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

Sometimes I think we read statements like these and gloss right over them. So stop, hear it again, and behold Him! “Through whom also He created the world.”

Think about this world He created. Think about how massive this universe is that He brought into existence by merely saying, “Let there be...let there be...let there be (Genesis 1:3, 6, 14).”

If you could bore a hole and hollow out the sun, you could fit over one million planet earths inside it, and still have room for over four million moons. The sun is 93 million away from earth. To put that in perspective, the moon is 211,453 miles away, and at a normal walking pace you could walk to it in twenty-seven years. The speed of light is 186,000 miles per second, so it would take a beam of light one-and-a-half seconds to reach the moon from earth. If we could travel at the speed of light, we would reach Venus in two minutes and eighteen seconds, because it’s only 26 million miles away. After four-and-one-half minutes we would have passed Mercury, which is 50 million miles away. To get to Mars, again at the speed of light, it would take us four minutes and twenty-one seconds to cover the 34 million miles. Jupiter—that’s 367 million miles away—would take thirty-five minutes. Saturn is twice as far as Jupiter (790 million miles from earth) and would take one hour and eleven seconds. If we kept going we would pass Uranus, Neptune, and finally Pluto which is 2.7 billion miles away—and we still haven’t left our solar system! The nearest star is ten times further than the

⁶ Donald Guthrie, p. 65.

boundaries of our solar system—20 billion miles away. The North Star is 400 billion miles away. The star called Betelgeuse is 880 quadrillion miles from us and has a diameter greater than the earth's orbit (250 million miles)!

And where did all this originate? He made it, says the writer of Hebrews. The Son of God created it all.⁷

The Bible clearly teaches both the pre-existence of the person Jesus Christ and His co-existence with the Father. The church father, Athanasius, explains, “When the sacred writers say that ‘he is before all things’ and that ‘through him he created the world.’, they proclaim the eternal and everlasting being of the Son and thereby designate him as God.”⁸

You say, “I’m having trouble fathoming this.” So am I, and we’re just getting started! Here’s the third truth on the Son’s resume.

C. The Son is the perfect expression of glory. Verse 3 says, “He is the radiance of the glory of God.”⁹ The term ‘radiance’ is translated ‘brightness’ in the KJV and ‘effulgence’ in the ASV. Think of what happens at dawn. The sun breaks the horizon and the rays of light penetrate and soon eliminate every element of darkness. So it was when the *Son* entered the world two thousand years ago. The glory of God began to break through the darkness on earth.

Do you remember what happened on the mount of transfiguration? Matthew 17:2 states, “There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.”

But it wasn’t just on that mountain that the Son revealed God’s glory. Every aspect of His life on earth was a demonstration of the glory of God. When He talked with the teachers in the temple, when He touched the leper and made Him whole, when He fed the multitudes, when He raised the dead, even when He wept at the tomb of Lazarus, He radiated the glory of God.

Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 4:6, “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

And here’s a mind-boggler. John 12:41 says that Isaiah saw the preincarnate glory of the Son before the Son ever even entered the world, probably referring to his experience in the temple (Isaiah 6:1 ff.).

D. The Son is the exact representation of God. Verse 3 continues, “And the exact imprint of his nature.” The NIV says, “And the exact representation of his being.” The Greek term translated “exact imprint” is *charakter*, from which we get the English word “character.” It referred to an engraving tool, later to a die made by that tool, and finally to the mark made upon a coin by the die.¹⁰ It’s like a stamp on a wax seal. The seal bears the same image as the stamp. There is an exact correspondence between the two.

There is no difference between the nature of God and the nature of the Son of God. To see the Son is to see the exact imprint of the Father.

⁷ John MacArthur, *Hebrews 1-2*, pp. 33-34.

⁸ Quote taken from Hughes, p. 40.

⁹ The NIV says, “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory.”

¹⁰ Robert Gromacki, pp. 27-8.

As commentator Donald Guthrie observes, “The writer has rapidly plunged his readers into profound theology, but he does not tarry to discuss it. He assumes that his readers will accept this view of Jesus Christ without question.”¹¹

Perhaps you’re having trouble accepting it. Perhaps you’re wondering whether this teaching appears elsewhere in Scripture? Indeed, it does. Jesus Himself said in John 14:9, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.” The apostle Paul had this to say about the Son in Colossians 1:15, “He is the image of the invisible God.” And in Colossians 1:19, “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.” And in Colossians 2:9, “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.”¹²

God is one God, yet He exists eternally as three persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They are equal in essence yet distinct in function. It’s called the doctrine of the Trinity.

Some today say that Jesus wasn’t equal with God since the Bible calls Him “the Son of God.” That’s what Jehovah’s Witnesses assert, for instance. But that misses the biblical point of what *Son* means. Here we’re told that the Son is the *exact representation* of God.

In the fourth century AD a great battle took place in the church over the identity of Christ. Why did they fight over such minute points? Hughes hits the nail on the head, explaining, “Athanasius and those who stood with him in the fourth century so clearly perceived that a false doctrine of the person of Christ must inevitably result in a false doctrine of the work of Christ and consequently undermine the whole system of the gospel.”¹³

You say, “But I can’t believe something I can’t explain.” Really? My hunch is you probably can’t explain gravity either, but you believe it. And this is why you don’t jump off of the roof of your house when you’re done cleaning your gutters.

Ponder these words by Philip Hughes, “The real problem...is that of terminology: human language is inadequate to describe transcendental truth with precision. ‘Since language is incapable of speaking worthily of God and the intellect unable to comprehend him...for that very reason, when speech and understanding fail in the description of God, then all the more we ought to glorify God, for we have such a God as transcends both intellect and perception.’”¹⁴

If you looked out the window in the back of this room you’d see a hill on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River. You probably didn’t even notice it when you entered this building. You *saw* it but it had little effect on you because there are thousands and thousands of other hills like it on planet earth.

Ten days ago, I looked out the window at the airport in Kathmandu and saw a mountain that’s part of the Himalayas. That mountain is *twice* the height of the tallest mountain in the Rockies. So strike that word. I didn’t *see* it. I *beheld* it. In fact, I went and found my friend and said, “You have to come and see this too!” And then I went to my other friend and said the same. And I took him too because I wanted to see it again.

My friend, there’s a huge difference between merely *seeing* the Son and truly *beholding* the Son. The difference? When you truly behold the Son, you want to keep

¹¹ Donald Guthrie, p. 67.

¹² See also 2 Corinthians 4:4

¹³ Quote taken from Philip Hughes, p. 43.

¹⁴ Philip Hughes, p. 41.

looking, again and again, and you want others to join you. Which word best describes how you have been treating Jesus? If you're content with a mere glance at Him every now and then, a little Bible reading here, a little church attendance there, you can be sure you're not beholding Him. And the solution? Get on your knees with an open Bible and pray this simple, heartfelt daily prayer. "Oh Father, open my eyes so that I behold Your glorious, awesome, beautiful, breath-taking Son!"

E. The Son is the sustainer of all things. Verse 3 says, "And he upholds the universe by the word of his power." The NIV says, "Sustaining all things by his powerful word." The word "sustaining" ('upholding' in the KJV, from the Greek *pheron*) means more than just keep something going. It carries the sense of holding and taking something forward towards a goal. In other words, don't picture Atlas holding the dead weight of the world on his shoulders. That's not this word. This word implies, as Hughes puts it, "the motion of carrying something from one place to another."¹⁵

That's what the Son does, and He does this by His powerful word. That's right.

1. *His word is the means by which He works.* And that's because of this.

2. *His word is powerful.* The Deist compares God to a watchmaker who makes the watch, winds it, and then lets it go, and moves on to other tasks. Not so, says the Bible. The God who created the universe is personally involved in its continuing care. And more specifically, the Son who created is the Son who sustains.

Do you realize what would happen if Christ stopped His sustaining work for even a second? The sun has a surface temperature of 12,000 degrees Fahrenheit. If it were any closer to the earth, we'd burn up. If any further away, we'd freeze. Our globe is tilted on an exact angle of 23 degrees, which is why we have four seasons. If it weren't tilted, vapors from the ocean would move north and south, eventually piling up monstrous continents of ice. If the moon didn't remain at its specified distance from the earth, the ocean tide would completely inundate the land twice a day.¹⁶

The old spiritual said it well:

*He's got the whole world in his hands,
He's got you and me, brother, in his hands,
He's got the tiny little baby in his hands,
He's got the whole world in his hands.*

And now it gets personal. Notice the next statement in verse 3. "After making purification for sins." This is our greatest need, to get rid of his sins. We know that we have done wrong. We know that we have violated a divine standard. Our conscience screams at us. And so we devise all sorts of way to try and remove the sin barrier and reconnect with God. That's what *religion* is, man's attempt to bridge the gap with God. And that's why there are so many religions in the world, for man is continually coming up with new systems designed to deal with the sin problem and reach God.

But here we're told something amazing. The sixth truth regarding the Son.

F. The Son took care of the sin problem. He provided purification for sins. How He did it we're not told in this verse. The author of Hebrews will devote much of this book to that question (if you can't wait, read chapters nine and ten this afternoon).

And don't miss the change in verb tense here. The Son is the radiance of God's glory, and the Son sustains the universe. Present tense. *But* the Son provided cleansing

¹⁵ Philip Hughes, p. 45.

¹⁶ Observations by John MacArthur, p. 37.

for sins. That's an aorist tense participle meaning it happened in the past and it happened one time. The Son is no longer making purification for sins. He did that once. When? On the cross. There's only one Good Friday and on that day the Son of God took care of our sin problem in totality. His purification work is a finished work.

This brings us to the seventh trait of the incomparable Son.

G. The Son took a seat in heaven. As verse 3 concludes, "He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." To say that the Son is seated in heaven doesn't mean that He is *inactive* now. Indeed, He is still at work, sustaining the universe, ruling over history and subduing enemies (1 Cor. 15:25), and interceding for His people (Heb. 7:25), and dispensing mercy and grace for their needs (Heb. 4:16). Why is He seated then?

Think about it. Think about the fact that there were no chairs in the tabernacle nor temple. The priests never sat down there because their work was never done. Day after day, year after year, more sacrifices, more blood, more sin to cover.

And then the Son came. And after providing purification for sins, the Son sat down! That simple statement reveals three important truths.

1. *That indicates He completed His task.* Listen to Hebrews 9:26b, "He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "It is finished," He said on the cross as He breathed His final breath (John 19:30).

2. *That indicates He possesses intrinsic worth.* Where did He sit? At the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. To take a seat in heaven's throne room means this Son Himself is majestic and possesses inherent worth.

3. *That indicates He deserves honor and obedience.* Psalm 110:1 says, "The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'" The reason the Son took a seat in heaven is because His Father invited Him to do so. And He will do so until His Father says, "It's time." The time for saving is over. Your inheritance is secure. Now it's time to judge and make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

Who is the Son? Behold Him, my friend. He is the heir of all things, the creator of all things, the perfect expression of glory, the exact representation of God, the sustainer of all things, the One who took care of the sin problem, and took a seat in heaven. Now the final trait.

H. The Son is superior to the angels. In verse 4 the writer says, "Having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs."

We'll hear much more about the Son's superiority over the angels in the rest of chapter one, but the question is, why? Why is the author emphasizing this point anyway? Apparently it's because people then are like people now. Dangerously fascinated by angels. In Colossians 2:18 Paul refers to it as the "worship of angels."

Robert Gromacki explains, "The Dead Sea Scrolls have indicated that the Qumran sect believed in the advent to two messiahs, that the kingly messiah would be subordinate to the priestly messiah, that both messiahs would be under Michael the archangel, and that angels would be over men in the kingdom."¹⁷

Not so, says the writer to the Hebrews. The Son is superior to the angels in two ways.

1. *He assumed a superior position.*

¹⁷ Robert Gromacki, p. 30.

2. *He inherited a superior name.* What name does He possess that's better? The verse seems to be saying that it's better to be called a "Son" than an "angel" (which means 'messenger'). More about that next time.

But for now, the question is this. Why would you settle for anything less the Son? Here's the answer. *If you don't appreciate what you have, you'll constantly be looking for something else.* For some, it's angels. For others, it's money. For others, fame, possessions, worldly acceptance, and more. But as you come to know the One the Father has given, as you begin to truly behold His incomparable Son, everything changes.

Make It Personal: Since God has spoken, two responses are in order.

1. *Listen to His Son.* Again, God has spoken through His Son. Are you listening to Him? I'll say it again. God has spoken. Are you listening? Does the evidence of your life show that you are listening to God's Son?

2. *Let others know what He has said.* Many people all around you and me don't know what we've learned today about the Son today. Who will tell them? Will you? I urge you this week to invite someone to join you in church next week as we continue to learn about the incomparable Son.

Closing Song: #97 "*All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*" (all four verses)

This afternoon: *Community groups*

Community Group Discussion:

1. Christmas is just a month away. To help us prepare for Christmas, we're beginning a new series, "*Behold the Son,*" an exposition of the first two chapters of Hebrews. Before discussing today's message, take a few moments to share practices you have found helpful in making Christmas meaningful in your family.

2. How can a series in Hebrews help us prepare for Christmas? What is backdrop for this book? Why was it written?

3. Read again today's text, Hebrews 1:1-4. The author presents eight truths regarding the incomparable Son. What are these truths that set the Son apart from all others?

4. What does the writer mean in verse 2 when he says that God has "appointed" the Son as "the heir of all things"? What is an heir and in what sense is the Son an heir?

5. Verse 3 is staggering. What do we learn about God's Son from this verse? How does this description compare to the way people often think about Jesus? How will our lives be affected this week if we truly grasp how great Jesus is? After discussing, spend time as a group expressing prayers of worship and devotion to Jesus.