

## Hebrews 1:1-4 Consider Jesus: So Much Better

### 1. What makes for a good sermon?

Ask for feedback – matter, method, manner.

What makes for a good evangelistic, or outreach orientated sermon?

As we come to the book of Hebrews, we need to understand that we are essentially reading a sermon.

The whole letter to the Hebrews is actually a sermon.  
It is a word of exhortation (13:22)

What does this mean?

Well, multiple things:

- 1) There is a logic to the structure of Hebrews, the preacher goes from point A to point B to ...
- 2) There are times in which he delves into matters of deep insight and understanding of God
- 3) But there are times where he pauses, takes a moment, and applies the deep insights to the audience.
- 4) There is a variety of devices and techniques used to communicate
  - a. Rhetorical questions – asked but no answer given? Engage the audience
  - b. Play on words – “Covenant vs. will”.
  - c. Hook words & Hinge sections – that join sections together
  - d. Quotations from the Old Testament (but I’ll come back to that one)
  - e. Repetition – Ch. 11 – “By Faith”
  - f. Old Testament characters used to make comparison (but again, we’ll find out ...)

On the flip side, as an audience, we need to first “hear” the sermon.

Imagine that we’re in the audience, as the preacher speaks to us...

## 2. The mysteries surrounding Hebrews

But before we get into this sermon, there are some mysteries that surround Hebrews.

### a. The author

The first mystery is the actual author of Hebrews.

Here's the list of possible authors

Paul, Barnabas, Luke, Apollos, Silvanus,

the deacon Philip, Priscilla and Aquilla, and Jude.

Now, any of these answers are a stab in the dark.

We just don't know.

What we do know about the author is this:

First, he has a personal relationship with the recipients (13:22)

Second, he was mates with Timothy, and presumably buddies with Paul (13:23)

Third, the writer was a highly trained, highly educated speaker.

He knew all the tricks of the public speaking trade,

and he delivered a verbal masterpiece.

Fourthly, he was both a theologian and a pastor.

He provides some of the most profound insights into Jesus,

And yet, he drives home his insights by applying it to his audience.

### b. The recipients

The second mystery is the actual recipients of the letter.

We don't know specifically who they were.

We don't know specifically where they lived.

We don't know specifically what type of people they were.

However, what we do know about the recipients is this.

First, they were Christians, meeting in a local house church, in a city (13:14)

Second, they were highly Biblically literate

(31 direct O.T quotations, 37 allusions, 19 summaries of O.T material)

Third, they were undergoing tremendous persecution (10:32-34)

Fourth, they were in danger of drifting away from their initial commitment (2:1-4)

That is, they were struggling in the marathon race of being a Christian (6:11)

<<Application – us – are you a Christian, suffering persecution, in danger, struggling >>

O.k. Now that we've got our bearings with the book. Let's get stuck into it.

### 3. God spoke (v. 1-2a)

Firstly, **God spoke**.

Notice, there are two ways in which God spoke.

#### *i. In the past (through prophets, to forefathers)*

In the past, God spoke to our forefathers and through the prophets.

That is, God spoke to the nation of Israel through various people and events.

Here's a short list of some of the ways and means that God spoke to Israel.

<< Interaction - why don't you tell me some of the ways that God spoke to Israel??>>

God spoke through Moses, to Israel at Mount Sinai.	(Exodus 19)
God spoke through the non-burning bush to Moses.	(Exodus 3)
God spoke through Balaam's donkey to rebuke Balaam	(Numbers 22)
God spoke through Ezekiel's lying on his side	(Ezekiel 3)
God spoke to Daniel through the writing on the wall.	(Daniel 5)

There's no end to the number of different ways that God spoke to Israel.

#### *ii. In these last days (by his Son)*

And do you know what?

As awesome as these are, the pale in comparison to the way that he has spoken in these last days.

That is, in these last days, there is the ultimate source of God's revelation,

And that ultimate source is Jesus.

Jesus is the one who reveals exactly who God is.

Jesus is the one who God speaks through today.

Now, the world around wants to find God through miraculous signs.

There was the fence post at Coogee, which showed the virgin Mary.

There was the piece of toast that was sold on E-Bay depicting Mary.

There has been any number of crucifixes that weep blood.

And yet, why does the world need to find God, when God is yelling through his megaphone, Jesus?

Our God is a speaking God.

Not only has God spoken to us through the prophets,

But now, God speaks to us through his Son.

<< Illus'n – Drink driving – the message is loud and clear – and yet people chose not to listen>>

#### 4. Consider Jesus (v.2b-4)

Well, on what basis can this claim be made?

How can the preacher of Hebrews dare to make such bold statements about Jesus?

We need to consider Jesus.

We need to consider *Jesus as the creator*, v. 2

And we need to consider *Jesus as the priest*. v. 3

##### - *The Son as Creator*

Jesus is the creator of the world.

Often, I think we're comfortable with the Father being the creator,

And Jesus being the saviour.

And we keep these concepts in very separate categories.

But here, Jesus is the creator,

And not only the creator,

but also the sustainer, and the inheritor of all things.

And so under the umbrella of Jesus as Creator,

There are three aspects, I want to draw to your attention.

##### *i. Heir of all things*

One. He is the heir, the inheritor of the whole universe.

You see, just as King David inherited the kingdom of Israel from God,

So too, Jesus will inherit the kingdom of everything

– from the smallest microbe to the distant galaxy.

Every molecule in the universe will have Jesus as its king.

##### *ii. Radiance of God's glory*

Two. Jesus is the radiance of God's glory.

Or as the preacher puts it, Jesus is the exact representation of God's being.

That is, there is no distinction between God and Jesus in revelation.

When Jesus reveals himself to us, it is God revealing himself to us.

When the Son speaks to us, it is God himself speaking to us.

And when we see the glory of Jesus, we see the very glory of God.

<<Illustration – some of my children – look like me, speak like me, act like me ... they are my glory>>

### ***iii. Sustaining***

And not only this, but also thirdly.

Jesus sustains the world right now.

Jesus keeps the universe ticking over right now.

And he does so by his powerful word.

You see, it is not only the words of Jesus that brought the world into being.

It is also the very words of Jesus that keep the universe going.

Every breath that I take is only because Jesus' word is sustaining me.

Every beat of my heart is because Jesus' word is keeping me going.

In one instant Jesus could stop sustaining, and we would cease to be.

Jesus is the creator, the heir, and the sustainer of this whole universe!

#### **- *The Son as Priest***

And not only so, but Jesus is also the priest who intercedes for us. v. 3b.

And again, how does Jesus purify us? And why does he sit down?

#### ***i. Purifying***

One. Jesus purifies us against sin.

Jesus is the one who cleanses us from our own consciences that condemn us.

Now, at this point, the preacher is summarizing his argument.

It will take until the end of Chapter 10,

to demonstrate how Jesus can purify for sins.

And so, for now, we'll note that Jesus is the one who purifies.

#### ***ii. Sitting down***

Second. Jesus is the one who sits down.

Now sitting down is a very symbolic act.

When the Parliament is sitting, the work of legislation gets done.

However, when Jesus sits down it symbolises that the work has been done.

Jesus' act is complete. Whatever Jesus had to do, it is now done.

Again, we'll find out more down the track about this,

So suffice it to say now, Jesus has offered his sacrifice once and for all,

And he has offered that one sacrifice, only once and he has sat down.

<<Illustration – working at Taronga Zoo – sitting down. Jesus' sitting down after work>>

Now, the ramifications of Jesus sitting down are gigantic.

Jesus sitting down means we can be guaranteed forgiveness.

Jesus sitting down means that our sins have been dealt with completely.

Jesus sitting down means that we can always come to God in prayer

for Jesus is there interceding for us.  
Jesus sitting down means that our future salvation is assured  
because we are justified now.  
Jesus sitting down means that when we gather here as God's people,  
We are also gathered in heaven around God's throne.

But more of this as we delve the riches of the sermon to the Hebrews.

At this point, the Son is the one true high priest sitting down in heaven.

## 5. So Much Better (v. 4, 2:5-12)

And so, ***Jesus is much better than the angels.*** << v. 4 >>

So what on earth does that mean?

Why does the preacher compare Jesus to angels?

Because angels were the messengers that were part and parcel of the Old Testament. Angels were the ones who brought the message to the prophets.

In fact, embedded in the messages that were brought by angels, and prophets  
There was the distinction made between the “Son” and “the angels”.

The rest of the chapter rams home the distinction.

These heavenly messengers pale in comparison to the Son.

And therefore, by association, their messages are but a shadow of the reality found in Jesus.

<< Aside –the method – use of O.T quotations to provide the framework for understanding  
- Illus’n – the flatmates and Mahler  
– the ability to compose music that then transforms when you listen to it >>

In fact, without the Old Testament we would fail to comprehend the beauty and majesty of Jesus.

<< E.g Ch. 2 – Jesus as the pinnacle of Psalm 8 – but actually about his death >>

Ch. 3-4 Israel wandering in the wilderness – the warning for us – ‘do not harden your heart’>>

So, as we explore the riches of the book of Hebrews,

More, as the preacher preaches to us about the greatness of Jesus,

We will be blown away by his glory, his power, his majesty, and his obedience...

So, in preparation for next week, can you read up to 4:11?

Immerse yourself in the sheer power of Jesus, as the preacher speaks to you and me.

<< Illus’n – visiting the Chicago art institute – the wonder of the impressionists – Monet ...

- and yet it was totally lost on me...

We’ll work hard at the sermon to the Hebrews, so that it isn’t lost on you,

But that you can know that Jesus is so much better.

Let’s pray.

