

## Hebrews 1:3-14

“Jesus Is God”

We left off last week in the midst of these 7 “snapshots” that picture in brief the superiority of Christ over any *thing* or any *one* that one may look *to* or trust *in*, in order that they might be made right in the sight of God. Jesus alone is sufficient to be our righteousness, He alone is acknowledged by God as sufficient to save us, there is no power above Him or even beside Him. He is God’s final word to mankind, at various times and in various ways God has spoken in time past to the fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He’s spoken to us by His Son. It’s His Son whom He has appointed heir of all things; Jesus is both the heir and the agent of creation, it’s through Christ that God has made the worlds. He was in the beginning with God and all things were made through Him and with out Him nothing was made that was made. Not only did he make universe physically, but He formed and fashioned the flow of the ages historically, all of history is literally “His story.”

Jesus is the brightness of the Father’s glory, the express image of His person, upholding all things by the word of His power; He by Himself has purged our sins and has sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. So it’s almost as though we’re looking through a 7 page photo album and each page illustrates the superiority of Christ compared to any and everything or anyone else. and Each picture is worth well over 1,000 words. Jesus is greater than Moses, greater than Joshua, He’s greater than the prophets, greater than the Levitical rituals and rites of sacrifice or priesthood, He’s greater than the angels. There is simply nothing that holds a candle to what God has for us, and has *done* for us *in Christ*. As our time came to a close last Sunday we had really only got a brief glimpse at the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 “photos.”

We considered Jesus as the “Heir of all things,” as the One through “whom the worlds were made,” (the ages were formed and fashioned) and we concluded considering Jesus with regard to what it means that He is the very “brightness,” the outshining, the “Shekinah” of the Father’s glory. He radiates and reflects the glory of God to mankind. Remember Paul told the Corinthians, “*For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*” 2 Cor 4:6 Jesus is the living essence of the glory of God. Remember when John was describing the new Jerusalem after the great tribulation there in the book of Revelation and he said, “*The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.*” Rev 21:23 Jesus is the brightness of His (that is the Father’s) glory.

How does that apply to me, how does it apply to you? It applies to us in a very critical, in fact non-negotiable way as it pertains to our very salvation. In John Ch 8 you find Jesus teaching in the temple (and of course that familiar scene whereby they tested Him regarding the woman caught in the act of adultery). But after Jesus told her that He didn’t condemn her but that she was to go her way and sin no more He spoke to the people saying, “*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.*” John 8:12 It’s in Christ that we have the *light* of life.

John underscored that again in 1<sup>st</sup> John when he said, “...*if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*” 1 John 1:7 The brightness of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ applies to you and me in a very real, incredibly critical kind of a way. Rather than break in, in the middle of Vs 3 let’s begin again at Vs 1 that we might fall into the flow of the text and we’ll carry on from there.

### Vs1-3 (express image of His person)

Perhaps you recall from our time together last week speaking of gleaning our perception of the scriptures through the lens of Jesus Christ How we can get a grip on the heart of God by the way Jesus spoke and interacted with people. If you want to know what God is like get to know Jesus Christ personally/intimately, He is the “express image of His person.” Or as we might say in our vernacular (with no disrespect intended) He’s the “spitting image” of His Father. If you want to know what God is like its imperative that you study the life of Jesus Christ He is the “express image” of His person. These words translated “express image” is the Greek Word “charakter” from where we get our English word “Character.” It’s a word that speaks of an exact representation like the image stamped on a coin, the impression is an exact representation of a particular image. Now that’s just an illustration for the sake of the point, I don’t want you to think that Jesus is a “copy” of God like we have an original and then I make a copy of it. The reason He’s the exact representation of who God is, is because *He is* God. To the Colossians Paul put it like this, “*For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;*” Col 2:9 In 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:16 Paul tells Timothy that Jesus was God manifested in the flesh, He’s the express image of His person.

So when you consider the person of God in the character of Jesus Christ we realize that God isn’t One who’s looking to condemn the world, but that the world through Christ might be saved. You realize that He is merciful, compassionate, full of grace and truth; sure He’s indignant toward sin, or self righteousness, or anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. But we serve a God who has so loved us that He’s given Himself for us, God demonstrated His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. That’s the heart of God, and Jesus is the express image of His person.

The 5<sup>th</sup> “snapshot” in our “photo album” that demonstrates the superiority of Christ is found in these words, (Vs 3) “...upholding *all* things by the word of His power.” The idea here is that not only did Christ *create* all things through the word of His power, “God said...and there was...” God didn’t have to lift so much as His little finger in the creation of the universe, all He needed to do was to but speak it and it was a done deal. Can you imagine the magnitude of power that would be unleashed if God actually placed Himself in an aggressive motion regarding whatever it was He desired to accomplish? It’s impossible to even come close to comprehending. But not only was everything *created* by the word of His power, it’s actively *sustained* by the word of His power. The reason the universe isn’t careening out of control crashing cosmically into itself; the reason things stay in orbit, or don’t fly off the planet but stay gravitationally bound to it is because Jesus is actively sustaining it all by the word of His power.

The picture isn't that of Atlas passively holding the earth on his back, but rather Christ is active in His maintaining of the universe.

Isaiah Ch 40 teaches us that God has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, He's measured with the span of His hand, He's calculated the dust of the earth in a measure, weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance. He upholds all things by the word of His power, "Is there anything too hard for Me," says the Lord?

How does this apply to you? It has very definite application to you and me; because God holds the universe together, keeps things from flying apart. Here's the application, maybe you feel like your world is flying apart, that your universe is careening out of control. If Jesus can maintain the order of the universe I'm pretty sure He can handle "your world" as well. Look *to* Him, trust *in* Him, you may feel as though your world is falling apart, out of control, but God's still in control. The bible says, "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*" Prov 3:5-6

Be a doer of the Word of God, build your house on the solid rock foundation of Jesus Christ He upholds *all* things by the *word* of His power.

Snapshot # 6 He has "By Himself purged our sins." What makes Jesus superior to any one or any thing else? He has *by Himself* purged our sins. One of the dominant threads that's woven throughout the tapestry of the Word of God is God's desire to have fellowship with man. But there's a problem, what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness, godliness with wickedness, holiness with sinfulness? Can 2 walk together lest they be agreed? There was a sin problem in the way, a holy God can't have fellowship with sinful man. The sin issue had to be dealt with and it was dealt with exclusively in Christ. He purified us of our sins *by Himself*.

Now that's hard for a lot of people (even Christians) to accept, they want to help absolve themselves of their sin through some sort of legalistic list of do's and don'ts, or through the ritual of baptism. But there's nothing you can do, there's nothing I can do to purge myself of sin, only Jesus could do that being in all ways tempted as we are yet with out sin. and So He was able to offer Himself as a Lamb with out spot and with out blemish as a sacrifice for our sin upon the altar of the cross so that by faith in Him we might be purged of our sins. That's exactly what he did, again 1<sup>st</sup> John tells us, "*And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.*" 1 John 3:5 Our sins aren't taken away through being a good ol' boy, through being religious, through Islam, Hinduism, or any other philosophy or ideology, only in Christ. He dealt with the sin issue, and He did it *by Himself*. He alone is the door, Jesus said that He was the door and that those who entered into the sheepfold through Him would be saved.

What's that imply? That if you don't enter through Him you won't be saved; I mean this is the gospel message. The good news, that all of mankind has sinned and falls short of the glory of God, we're all doomed to destruction before the holy and righteous standard of God. But God has so loved us that He's become one *of* us in the person of Jesus Christ but as to where we have the sin nature of Adam, Jesus didn't because Adam wasn't His father, God is His Father. So He has the divine nature of God, with out sin, now the wages of sin is death. and So Jesus bore the penalty of sin on our behalf, He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He purged our sins "By Himself." and When He did, snapshot #7 He, "Sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Now this phrase, "sat down" would mean something to the Jewish believer during this particular time, why? Well, he's just spoken of a sin sacrifice, then he speaks of sitting down. If you were to study the layout of the tabernacle, or the temple in the OT what you won't discover anywhere in or around it is a place to sit. The work of the priest was never done, he was needed constantly, perpetually to perform ritual sacrifice for the sins of the people. To hear of the sacrifice of Christ followed up by Him taking a seat at the right hand of God is to say what? There's no more need for sacrifice, the sin issue is settled in Christ. Or as Jesus put it, "*It is finished!*" John 19:30 and The fact that He's on the throne places Him in an exalted position right there on the co-equal level with God the Father, so the sin issue is settled in Christ in His "once for all" sacrifice and now He's seated upon the throne at the right hand of God. (Which in and of itself implies deity because you don't sit on a throne at God's right hand unless you deserve to be there, and anyone less than Himself is unworthy to be on the throne in His presence.) So you can see the overwhelming emphasis placed upon the superiority of Christ even in these 1<sup>st</sup> few Vs.

Vs4

Now when it speaks of inheritance again we're dipping into the fact that Jesus is deity, He's God; because an inheritance comes through family.

Of course the "name" of someone is to imply way more than a particular verbal expression that someone answers to. It speaks of the entirety of one's nature and character, and so when the angel said (regarding Jesus) "...and He shall be called Immanuel" which is translated "God with us" the idea there is that the nature and person of Jesus is that of "God with us." By inheritance His nature, His character is above and beyond that of even the angelic hosts, His is the name "God with us" Jesus was God with us upon the earth. In the book of Eph we're told that when God raised Jesus from the dead and sat Him at His right hand in heavenly places that He sat Him, "...*far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*" Eph 1:21 There is no power, or principality, there's no nature or character be it human or angelic that comes close to Christ, He's superior over them all. When he says here in Vs 4 "Much better" the idea is that of superior and it's a word that's used 13 times throughout the book of Hebrews.

Now this passage of the book of Hebrews though it's incredible in it's unraveling of many of the deceptions of various cults who deny the deity of Christ, or try to say that Jesus was Michael the arc angel, or the brother of Lucifer, it wasn't written to diffuse the doctrines of cults. So try to avoid falling into the trap of seeing this Ch as merely ammunition against various cultic groups. The author wants us to be enamored, overjoyed and awed at who the person of Christ *is*. So to go through this theologically will effect our mind (and that's needed), but to view it devotionally, affectionately so as to see Christ more clearly will penetrate our hearts, (and that's needed as well).

The angelic ministry was intimately tied to the old covenant, the bible says that the law was given by God to Moses through the hand of angels (Acts 7:53, Gal 3:19) (it's thought possibly thousands of them). As you study the tabernacle, there were angels woven in the tapestry, there were cherubim fashioned out of gold whose wings were outstretched over the mercy seat. and So it's a pretty impressive thought to think of being handed the covenant by God through the means of the angelic. But what's being communicated here is that what's been given to us by God in the new covenant by far exceeds anything that could've been given to us through even angelic means because it came through Christ who was God come in the flesh.

Vs5-6

So we're beginning to see how Jesus by far exceeds the angels. # 1 In the very fact that God refers to Jesus as His "Son" having been begotten of Him places Him over the angels. Now it's true that in the book of Job the angels are referred to collectively as the "sons" of God, but there's no individual angel with the privileged position of only begotten "Son" of God. and Even in the word "Begotten" we see deity again. Look at it like this; one can only beget that which one is. An animal begets an animal, it doesn't beget a human, humanity begets humanity, nothing less and nothing more. When God speaks of begetting a Son that means that the Son that's been begotten is God as well. So the idea is that of equality of substance and essential nature that's present in both the Father and the Son, as the Father is God, so is the Son. Now as far as His entrance into this world regarding the time and space continuum that we live in that came though Mary, a human being. So just as Jesus was fully God, He was also fully human, fully God, fully Man. He doesn't acknowledge the angels in the privileged position of Sonship nor do the angels share in His nature.

Now here in Vs 6 when it speaks of bringing again into the world the 1<sup>st</sup> born I don't want you to be confused over that point.

The angels were present at His 1<sup>st</sup> coming into the world, but in large part they were secluded, revealed only to a chosen few. But when He comes again (the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming) there will be an open outpouring of angelic worship. So Jesus is greater both in character and in His essential nature than the angels, the angels of God worship Him which means He's higher than them, He doesn't worship them, they worship Him. Which speaks again of deity because the bible is clear that we're to have no other gods before the 1 true living God and we're to have no other object of worship. We're to worship the Lord our God and Him only are we to serve. So if the angels of God worship *Him* there's a whole lot of idolatry going on in heaven... (and on earth for that matter).

But with regard to this idea of being "firstborn" this is what a lot of cults will point to in saying that Jesus was created 1<sup>st</sup> then He created everything else. But 1<sup>st</sup> born in the bible doesn't always mean "Born 1<sup>st</sup>." It doesn't necessarily designate a numeric order, it speaks of position/rank and preeminence, a place of privilege and favor. For instance we read in Ex 4:22 "*Thus says the Lord: 'Israel is My son, My firstborn.'*" Well if you research the chronological order you find that Esau was born 1<sup>st</sup>, not Jacob (Israel) but 1<sup>st</sup> born doesn't necessarily indicate born 1<sup>st</sup>. It speaks of the place of privilege and favor. Same thing in the case of Manasseh and Ephraim, Joseph's born 1<sup>st</sup> son was Manasseh. But in Jer 31:9 you find God saying, "*For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.*" So we're speaking of that position of status, of preeminence; so when God refers to Jesus as His 1<sup>st</sup> born, He's simply stating the fact that Jesus has preeminence, He's in the position of privilege and favor. Not that He was "born 1<sup>st</sup>" but that He has the privileged status of being firstborn.

Vs7

So not only to the angels *worship* Jesus, and Jesus is *over* them regarding position, privilege and favor, but the angels *belong* to Jesus as well. They are *His* angels, *His* ministers (or servants) He doesn't serve them, they serve Him, He has dominion over them. and Note as we go through this particular portion that the author of Hebrews isn't just making this stuff up, thinking idealistically as it were, he's quoting from scripture, primarily the psalms. (Which J. Vernon McGee refers to as a "HIM" book because the psalms have so much to say about Christ).

Vs8-9

Now to me the line of reasoning that seeks to demonstrate the fact that Jesus is God culminates right here. and Though we're given even more "proof text" the fact is at this point it's icing on the cake. Why do I say that? Because right here in Vs 8 we read where God the Father says of Jesus Christ "*Your throne O God,*" If God calls Jesus God what more is there to say, I'm not going to argue with Him, or seek to contradict Him. He speaks of the eternal nature of Jesus, "*Your throne O God is forever and ever,*" with out beginning and never ending. and Notice His is the scepter of righteousness, He loves righteousness and hates lawlessness.

Now if Christ is in you that will be reflected in your life as well, you'll have a love for righteousness, rightness, and a detesting of lawlessness and damage that's done by sin, it's horrible, detestable. "Therefore God (a reference to Christ) Your God (a reference to the Father) has anointed You (a reference to the Spirit) with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." To Jesus was given the Spirit with out measure, we're all limited regarding the sphere of anointing that God as anointed our lives with. Jesus was given the Spirit with out measure. But again here in Vs 9 we're seeing the mutual acknowledgment of divinity in the Son by the Father.

#### Vs10-12

Over and over again we're being pummeled (in a good way) just overwhelmed with the divine attributes of Jesus Christ Vs 10, He's the Creator, "...laid the foundation of the earth, the heavens are the work of Your hands." Who but God is a Creator? Everything else (including angels) is created. Vs 11 Again underscores the fact that Jesus is eternal in nature, "They will perish (that is the works of creation) but You will remain." In Vs 12 we see the sovereignty of Christ, that He has a plan, "Like a cloak You will fold them up and they will be changed." Yet Jesus is unchanging, yesterday, today, and forever the same, "But You are the same, and Your years will not fail." Who but God can be recognized with such attributes?

#### Vs13

The fact here is that Jesus sits upon the throne of heaven, who but God rules and reigns in heaven and over all the earth? Who but God is a sovereign creator, eternal in nature? Who but God do the angels worship and serve? and I'm glad to know that Jesus *sits* on the throne, that means He's relaxed, He's in control. I get all up tight, my world gets rocked, Jesus isn't worried at all, He's in control, upholds all things by the word of His power. Yrs ago I went with my wife (don't remember if we had Elizabeth yet, or just Greg) to St Louis during a 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration occasion there at the arch. and They had all sorts of things going one of which was an air show. and At one point one of those hover Jets that the military employs flew over, came to a stop and hovered over the Mississippi River there in front of everyone, and the water was spraying, the noise was deafening and then it turned nearly vertical and took off into the sky. The display of power was awesome and I told my wife I'd sleep easier that night knowing that that kind of might is on the frontlines of our country's defense. That we're being watched over with that kind of power. Hey, no offense to the United States military but we don't hold a candle to the awesome power of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ who is watching over you and over me as we speak. Sleep ez, God is in control, Jesus Christ in on the throne.

Vs14

The idea here being that the angelic hosts are *subjects* Jesus Christ is the *sovereign*, He's on the throne, He has dominion. Does this mean the angels serve you in certain ways seeing as how you'll inherit salvation? It certainly could mean that. Does it mean that they'll serve you once you've inherited salvation perhaps with a view toward the millennial kingdom? It could mean that. I think the important thing to grab hold of here is that Jesus Christ is God the Son come in the flesh who laid down His life for the sins of mankind. and What's critical is that you be in this # who are going to inherit salvation. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and as Your savior? Because there is no salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. You can trust the sufficiency, the superiority of Christ to gain you acceptance before the Father, come to Him, turn back to Him, do what you need to do to be found in Him. He's given Himself for you, how important it is that we give in turn ourselves to Him.

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for the clear insight of Your word, You make it so plain for us. Jesus we acknowledge You for who You are, our Lord and our God. Continue to open our hearts, and open our eyes that we might know You more, trust You more, and love You more. God give us servants hearts, that we might serve You with all that we are out of the overflow of love for You, we want to lead lives pleasing to You.

If you've not inherited the salvation that's found in Christ I want to invite you to do that today. Turn to Him, trust in Him and He'll give you new life, forgive your sin and make you whiter than snow. Everlasting life is but a prayer away, why not cry out to Him right where you're at and just offer Him your heart that He might make it His home.