

The Book of Hebrews

Lesson 1: God Has Spoken by His Son -- Hebrews 1:1-14

Think for a moment about the last time someone you loved finally said the thing you had been waiting years to hear. Maybe it was a father who had never been able to say it, and then one day, near the end, he did. Words like that land differently. They are not small talk. They carry a whole life inside them. The opening lines of Hebrews are written by someone who understands that God has been talking to His people for a very long time, in pieces and fragments, through prophets and dreams and burning bushes and still small voices, and now, at last, He has said the thing He has been building toward since the beginning.

The writer of Hebrews does not open with a greeting or a list of names. He opens with thunder. Long ago, he says, God spoke in many portions and many ways. But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son. Imagine every prophet who ever lived standing in a long line, each one holding a single candle, each one telling a little more of the truth. And then the sun comes up. That is what the writer wants you to feel. The Son is not one more candle in the line. He is the dawn that makes the candles unnecessary.

And then the writer tells you who this Son is. He is the heir of all things. He is the one through whom God made the universe. He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of His nature. He holds the whole creation together by the word of His power. He made purification for our sins, and then He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Read that slowly. The hands that flung the stars into space are the same hands that were nailed to a cross for you. The one who upholds the universe stooped to carry your guilt away.

This is where our study of Hebrews begins, and it is no accident that it begins here. Before the writer asks anything of you, before he warns you or corrects you or calls you to endure, he wants you to see Jesus clearly. Because everything else in this letter depends on it. If you do not see how great the Son is, you will not understand why drifting away from Him is so dangerous, or why holding fast to Him is worth everything. So come and look. Let your heart grow quiet. God has spoken, and His final word is a Person.

Group Discussion: The writer says God spoke to the fathers in many ways, but has now spoken to us by His Son. Why do you think God chose to give His clearest and final word to us in a Person rather than only in a book, a law, or a voice from heaven?

Personal Reflection: When you imagine God speaking to you, what tone do you instinctively expect to hear? Is it the tone of the One described in this passage, who made purification for your sins and then sat down because the work was finished?

Read Hebrews 1:1-14

Study Questions

1. In verses 2 and 3, the writer makes several claims about the Son: He is heir of all things, the one through whom God made the world, the radiance of God's glory, the exact imprint of

His nature, the one who upholds the universe, and the one who made purification for sins. What do these descriptions together teach you about who Jesus actually is?

2. The Son is described as the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of His nature, which means that when you look at Jesus you are seeing the very character of God. What is one way your picture of God's character would change if you let Jesus, and not your fears or your past, define it?
3. Verse 3 says that after He made purification for sins, the Son sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. What is the significance of the fact that He sat down, and what does that posture tell you about the completeness of His work?
4. The passage moves from the vastness of the Son who upholds the universe to the intimacy of the Son who cleansed your sins. Where in your life right now do you most need to remember that the One who holds the galaxies together also holds you?
5. In verses 4 through 14 the writer piles up Old Testament quotations to show that the Son is far greater than the angels. Why do you think the writer works so hard to establish that the Son is superior to angels, and what is at stake if we get this wrong?
6. Verse 14 describes angels as ministering spirits sent out to serve those who are to inherit salvation. How does it change the way you face an ordinary, difficult week to know that the unseen world is at work on behalf of God's people?
7. In verse 5 God says to the Son, You are my Son, today I have begotten you, and in verse 6 He commands, Let all God's angels worship him. What do these words tell you about the unique relationship between the Father and the Son?
8. The Son did not cling to His glory but made purification for your sins at infinite cost to Himself. When you consider that He stooped this low for you, what is one specific attitude or habit He might be inviting you to lay down in response?
9. In verses 8 through 12 the Father Himself addresses the Son with words no creature could ever receive: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and, You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. Some teach that Jesus is a created being, a lesser god, or the highest of the angels. Using this passage, how would you show from the text that the Son is fully God, eternal, unchanging, and worthy of worship?
10. Look back across the whole chapter. The writer wants you to walk away seeing Jesus more clearly and loving Him more deeply. Name one specific way that seeing the greatness of the Son in this passage is reshaping how you will live, worship, or trust Him this week.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: John 1:1-3, the Word who was God and through whom all things were made; Colossians 1:15-20, the Son as Creator and sustainer in whom all the fullness of God dwells; Philippians 2:5-11, the eternal Son who humbled Himself and was given the name above every name; Revelation 5:11-14, every creature in heaven worshipping the Lamb who sits on the throne; Psalm 110:1, the LORD's word to David's Lord, seated at His right hand.