**Hebrews Ch 1 Sermon.**

Some Background to Hebrews:

Audience: Christians who have been in the faith a while (Hebrews 10:32-34). Perhaps many or most are of Jewish background.

The problem. A strong persecution is coming and some of them are weak in their faith. Some are even considering backing into a “safer” life as a practicing Jew (for us: retreating to being merely religious).

Purpose: To help them to remain faithful and to make it to heaven. (subpoint: if we become merely religious we may lose our salvation)

Theme: The preeminence of Jesus.

“better” 13 times “perfect” 15 times

Outline:

1. Jesus is awesome and what he brings is greater than that in Judaism in such-and-such way.

2. Therefore, here is what you should do. (admonition)

The Greatness of Jesus:

1. Greater than all the prophets. Hebrews 1:1-3

2. Greater than the angels. Hebrews 1:4-14

3. Greater than Moses. Hebrews 3:1-5

4. Greater than Joshua Hebrews 4:1-10

5. Jesus the Great High Priest. Greater than Aaron. Hebrews 4:14-5:10

6. The Priesthood of Melchizedek (and therefore of Jesus) is greater than the priesthood of Aaron Hebrews 7:1-28

7. Jesus is greater than Abraham 7:1-9

8. The Old Covenant foreshadows the greater New Covenant Hebrews 8:1-13

9. The earthly Tabernacle foreshadows the greater heavenly Tabernacle (the one where Jesus is now) Hebrews 9:1-11.

10. The sacrifice Jesus offers is greater than any of the Mosaic sacrifices. Hebrews 9:12-10:18.

Admonitions:

Pay careful attention 2:1-4

Make every effort. 3:7-4:13

Move on to maturity Grow up 5:11-6:12

Draw near to God, do not shrink back. 10:19-39

Live by faith. 11:1-40

Hebrews is a sermon. It is meant to be spoken. This sermon is 45 minutes long.

Hebrews 1:1-4 Prologue Jesus is greater than the prophets.

Opening of the letter: The Hebrew writer lays out the theology of the book. Jesus is vastly superior than anything they have considered to be great.

Some have called Hebrews 1:1-4 the most beautiful and elegant Greek writing in the entire New Testament. The first sentence contains five words starting with the letter “p”. Just try to make a theological statement using five words that begin with the letter p and see what you come up with!

1:1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days….

Greek: *polumeros* various parts (NIV times) and *polutropos* various ways

God spoke through history, poetry, prophecy, proverb

God spoke through kings (David, Solomon), patriarchs (Moses), poets (Asaph), scribes (the history books), priests (Ezra), prophets, prophetesses (Deborah), government administrators (Nehemiah), farmers (Amos sycamore-fig trees)

Each writer brought out a particular aspect of God’s nature.

Hosea: the grace of God

Amos: social justice

Isaiah: the holiness of God

David: the heart of God

Joel: the judgment of God

Jonah: salvation for the Gentiles

Solomon: wisdom

Etc.

Each brought a part of the message, but Jesus is the whole message.

Each prophet is a musician, Jesus is the whole orchestra.

Jesus is the ultimate prophet, (and the ultimate king, scribe, priest).

All this was just setting the stage. He incorporated all these messages.

Others revealed God to us. Jesus revealed God simply by walking around.

Prophets were friends of God. Jesus WAS God.

Hebrew writer stresses the continuity, not the contradiction between the earlier revelation and that from Jesus, but Jesus’s message is the consummation. (John 5:39,40 you diligently study the scriptures….)

Progression from promise to fulfillment.

OT promise NT fulfillment (also **Hebrews 11:39,40** 1 Pet1:10-12)

Illustration:

Have you ever sat through a 20 minute introduction, then the speaker finally gets to his first point. The OT is the introduction. Jesus is the thing introduced.

**LAST DAYS** v. 2 in these last days….

The resurrection and ascension of Jesus began the last days.

(1 Pet 1:20, 1 Cor 10:11 (the fulfillment of the ages), **Acts 2:17**)

“once for all at the end of the ages” (Heb 9:26)

Vs. 2-4 In some of the most beautiful Greek prose in the Bible, the Hebrew writer summarizes how amazing Jesus is. (parallel Colossians 1:5-19)

a. He inherits everything. Parallel: Col 1:15 firstborn over all creation

(we inherit along with Christ Romans 8:17 co-heirs)

b. He is the means through which God made the universe. Wow!

 (John 1:3 Apart from him, nothing was created which has been

 Created. Coll 1:16 all things created by him and for him)

c. He is the *apaugasma* of God’s radiance. The shining forth of God’s glory. He is the means by which God’s glory is revealed. (John 8:12 I am

 the light of the world)

Note how God’s glory is revealed: not in blitzing his enemies, but in serving

d. He is the *character* (exact representation, image, wax seal) of God.

 Want to see God? Fine, look at Jesus (John 1:18 no one has seen

 God, but Jesus has made him known)

We didn’t find God, he revealed himself. This is what differentiates Christianity from all other religions.

e. He sustains all things. Beginning (creator of all) middle (sustainer of all) end (inheritor of all).

 Scientists like to think they can explain how the universe works without God. Without Jesus, the entire system of laws would instantaneously fall apart.

f. Provides for purification from sin. This, of course, is discussed thoroughly in Hebrews.

g. Mediates for us at God’s right hand. (Note: he is sitting down. Aaronic priests in the temple never sat down)

This is the chief quality of Jesus emphasized in Hebrews.

Five gospels

Matthew reveals Jesus as the one who fulfills the prophecies of the Old Testament and who satisfies and completes the law of Moses.

Mark reveals Jesus as the one who powerfully announced the coming of the kingdom of God.

Luke revealed Jesus as the one who brings salvation even in this life, especially for the poor, the outcast, women and Gentiles.

John reveals Jesus as the Son of God through his miracles and his I Am statements.

In Hebrews Jesus is the great high priest who mediates with God for us.

Jesus is Prophet, Priest and King (at God’s right hand). He holds all three offices of religions service that the Jews had.

Is Jesus mind-blowingly great or what? How could anyone (including you) settle for merely being religious?

Hebrews 1:4-14 Jesus is greater than the angels.

First: greater than the prophets

Second: greater than the angels

Heb 1:4 higher in rank, superior lit. better name

Ancient people saw more significance to a name than we do.

Jesus’ name: SON

Angel (Greek: *aggeloi* Hebrew: *malakim*) = messenger

Context for angels in Hebrews:

Jews: Angels communicate (mediate) between God and man. Angels deliver the Law at Sinai, rather than God directly (Gal 3:19, **Acts 7:53**)

Angels become important as communicators, mediators between God and man.

OT and angels:

**Archangels** Michael (archangel over Israel Dan 10:21 Michael, your prince)

Gabriel (God’s special messenger Daniel 8:16, Luke 1:19)

Evil angels over Persia, Greece (Daniel 10:20)

2 Sam 24 an angel about to destroy all in Jerusalem.

Cherubim (Ezekiel 10, Genesis 3:24) guard God’s holiness

Seraphim (Isaiah 6:6) messengers

Guardian angels (Matt 18:10)

Satan is a “fallen” angel?

Bottom line: There is a lot we do not know about angels. The Jews filled in the details.

The writer of Hebrews’ point: Jesus is more excellent, by far, than angels, so let us not focus on the angels.

Q: What might we be tempted to focus on other than Jesus (the preacher, religion, rules, the church,….

Read Heb 1:5-13

1. He has a greater name (position) v. 5 SON (quoting Psalm 2:7 2 Sam 7:14)

2. Angels worship him v. 6

3. Angels are temporary and changing. v. 7 They are winds and fires (temporary?) But Jesus is forever. (v. 8 your throne… forever) (v. 11 they will perish, you will remain…)

(Esdras 8:21 God, “before whom the heavenly host stand in terror and at your word change to wind and fire.” Angels are changeable, temporary. Jesus is unchangeable and permanent.)

A rabbinic homily: angel says, “God changes us every hour. Sometimes he makes us fire, other times wind.”

Quotes Ps 104:4, Psalm 45:6,7, Ps 102:25-27, Ps 110:1 all as evidence that Jesus is unchanging and eternal.

Q: What is one billion/infinity? Answer: zero!

4. They are ministering spirits, Jesus is the one they minister to v. 14

 In fact, they minister to us.

 Why worship the worshiper? Worship the one they minister for.

Application to us? Don’t admire the messenger (preacher, author, teacher, idea, system, success, etc.) admire Jesus!

If time: Hebrews 2:5-9?

God’s plan was to put everything in creation at our feet, but WE FAILED!

v. 6 man… the son of man. He is repeating himself. The “son of man” here is us. (man is “son of man” 80 times in Ezekiel Ezek 21:2, 30:2, etc.

v. 7 You made him a little lower than the angels *for a little while* (NIV is not very good here).

Remember, we will judge angels (1 Cor 6:3)

Verse eight closes this section, pointing out that Man has failed!

v. 8 Man is NOT in control even though God put everything under him.

God gave us the responsibility and we messed up badly!

**Vs:9** We see Jesus who took on our position as Man now sitting in victory because where man failed Jesus succeeded.

Jesus was made “a little lower than the angels” as well.

Not lower in importance, but lower in power. It was all about us. The angels are about us. That is his point with regard to angels!!!!!!

Note **Hebrews 2:16** It is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.

Q: Who are Abraham’s descendents? Us!!!

v. 9 Jesus tasted death so that we will not have to. (this is spiritual death, the death we suffer because we are children of Adam)