

Text: Heb 1.2b-4

As I study our passage, I find it incredibly rich with worthy preaching themes. I've been thinking about how to address it.

Today, our message will focus on the content of verses 2-4. Next week, I think we will be on the same theme, but focusing on the structure more than just the content. The way the author constructed this passage communicates powerful truths about our Lord Jesus Christ, so that will be how we deal with it next week.

But then we look at the specifics of each phrase in the passage. Each one of them could launch at least one sermon each (and I discovered at least one more sermon based on an important word). If I turned to each of those themes in turn, we would be in the first four verses of Hebrews until after our Christmas series.

What I've decided to do is make the opening of Hebrews the source for our next eight months of communion messages, so we will come back to our theme again and again for some time.

What a theme it is! I have put it into the title for our message today:

The Supreme Value of the Son

Last Sunday we were talking on the subject "God Has Spoken." In verse 1, our author points out that God spoke in the past "in the prophets." Verse 2 opens, "in these last days he has spoken to us in His son."

We made the point that there is *no difference* between God speaking in the prophets and God speaking in the son. It is still God who is speaking.

God can never lie, so everything God says is true. (Even if we can't understand it all.)

There is a difference, however, in God's spokesmen. We can go through the list of all the prophets we have in the Old Testament, who spoke for God. Some of them we know little about, but if we knew their life stories, we would quickly see they are men like us.

When we turn our attention to God's final spokesman, the perspective alters immediately. There never was a man like this. This Son of God is altogether beyond anything that even the holies of all the prophets who ever lived cannot come close to matching.

Read Heb 1.1-4

So, again, our theme today:

The Supreme Value of the Son

This is the theme of Hebrews. This is the center of the Christian life. This is the thing that makes us gather week after week to hear God's word and sing God's praises. The Son of God is the center of all we do, and I will do my best to lift him up today to call you to make him the center of your heart.

Proposition: There is no man in all of time who is like the Son, nor ever will be. You must bow before him.

I. The position of the Son in God's revelation (1-2)

A. Our text says, "in these last days" God spoke in a Son

1. We emphasized last week how the days of the Messiah are the last days (our days)
2. I want to remind you that the "speaking" here emphasizes the voice
 - a. Two Gk words for speaking: *legō* and *laleō*. ("*lego*, I say, *lego*" — Mr. Babb)

"The semantic difference would appear to be that *laleō* focuses on the act of speaking rather than remaining silent, and *legō* focuses more on the content of what is said."¹

- b. One truth about God is that he cannot remain silent: it is his nature to reveal himself, to speak

"The significance of this usage of 'speech' for divine revelation in Hebrews prompted Vos to write, 'Revelation is the speech of God to man,'⁴⁷ and A. B. Davidson to remark, 'Revelation when spoken is the 'word' of God.'"²

¹ David Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary 35 (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Publ. Group, 2010), 103.

² Allen, 103.

B. The Son isn't the last instance of God's speech

1. God continued to speak through the witnesses he appointed

Heb 2.1-3 ¶ For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away *from it*.² For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,³ how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,

2. "those who heard" (Heb 2.3) are the apostles

C. The Son is the ultimate summation and focus of all God speaks

1. The prophets spoke in fragments to move forward the revelation
2. He speaks in a Son to display himself (revelation)

Now our author moves to underscore the supreme importance of the Son.

II. The superlative nature of the Son itemized (2-3)

"Seven facts are stated about the Son of God which bring out his greatness and show why the revelation given in him is the highest which God can give."³

A. Appointed heir of all things (2)

1. The "inheritance" precedes creation — he inherits all he made
2. Points to the future day when all rule over all things is placed in his hands
 - a. He rules now, sitting at the right hand of God (providence)
 - b. He will rule then, sitting on the throne of his father David

³ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 46.

B. Creator of all things (2)

1. The word “also” (καί) concedes that the one who is heir *also* is creator
2. Many Scriptures affirm that the Son is God’s agent in creation
3. If he is the creator of all things, he preceded all things (speaks to deity)

This elevates him beyond merely the heir of David, though he is that.

C. Radiance of God’s glory (3)

1. The word describes something that shines out from a light source
 - a. The sun shines with the glory of its own light
 - b. The moon shines with the brightness of reflected light
2. The Son radiates the glory of God — from himself

From the Nicene Creed:

We believe ... in one Lord, Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-begotten, that is, of the essence of the Father, God from God, **Light from Light** ...

3. One comment on this whole section:

“Each word pulsates with deity.”⁴

D. Imprint of God’s nature (3)

1. The word used here is *charaktēr* (we get the English “character” from it)
2. Has the idea of an exact replication of that which it represents

Roman coins bore the emperor’s *charaktēr* stamped on their surface — “It did not express a general likeness but an exact duplication of the original.”

⁴ Allen, *Hebrews*, 116.

3. The Son reveals God as he really is

Jn 12.44-46 ¶ And Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. ⁴⁵ "He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. ⁴⁶ "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.

E. Sustainer of all things (3)

Col 1.17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

"The creative utterance which called the universe into being requires as its complement that sustaining utterance by which it is maintained in being."⁵

1. This reveals the Son is distinct from all things (we are not pantheists)
2. This reveals that creation continues in the direction the Son intends (though our culture is full of turmoil, he will guide it to a complete resolution)
3. The forces (laws) that govern our universe are secondary causes to His great will and word

F. The Son is the purifier of all sins (3)

1. The Son created a perfect universe: sin brought death, corruption, and decay
2. The Son reversed the power of sin, purifying those who submit to his will and accept his sacrifice
 - a. The believer finds redemption immediately
 - b. The creation will find redemption imminently (when he brings all things to consummation)

Rm 8.19-22 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the

⁵ Bruce, *Hebrews*, 49.

creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

G. The Son is now seated at the right hand

1. The posture proclaims the work is complete
 - a. Nothing more needs to happen to deal with sins
 - b. Nothing more needs to happen to guarantee redemption of all creation
2. The place represents his position as Most High
 - a. He does not sit at the feet of the Father
 - b. He isn't exalted above the Father
 - c. He is at the right hand, sharing in the authority and rule of God, as God

"The crucial factor here is that it is the incarnate Son who is enthroned at the right hand of God."⁶

Each of these descriptors have the function of elevating the ultimate source of the revelation of God, the Son, to the highest degree.

III. The excellent name of the Son accepted (4)

- A. The conclusion of the matter: his work exalted him higher and glorified him more than any other being in existence
 1. "Having become" modifies "sat down" (3)
 2. It is either the result or the cause of his seating
 - a. He became higher as a result of sitting
 - b. He sat down because he became higher

⁶ Allen, *Hebrews*, 128.

B. The position to which he came: higher than angels

1. Angels are the pinnacle of created beings (higher in power, wisdom, and dignity than men)
2. His elevation comes from his work (purification of sins, 3) and from his more excellent name (4)
3. The more excellent name is “Son” (all we have been extolling in our previous point)

Wasn't he higher than angels before the incarnation? How has he become “much better?” How has he inherited a “more excellent name?”

C. The mystery of the incarnation infuses the whole description

1. He is the Creator, over all things
2. He entered the Creation to redeem all things: a deliberate lowering of himself

Heb 2.7 “YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS ...

3. He purified sins and sat down

Heb 2.7 “...YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS...

Conclusion:

Proposition: There is no man in all of time who is like the Son, nor ever will be. You must bow before him.

Have you accepted him?