

# **JESUS THE GREATEST**

**BY**

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## **PREFACE**

History has many who in some way earned the name great. They did things that motivated people to add great to their first name, such as Alexander the Great, Herod the Great, and Catherine the Great. But nowhere in history has the name greatest been added to a name. Many have become the greatest in certain categories, such as the greatest mountain climber, the greatest runner, the greatest artist of a certain period, the greatest mind, the greatest scientist, and the greatest in numerous areas of achievement. But none have been called Alexander the Greatest, or Einstein the Greatest. This makes sense, for no person can be called the greatest until history is over, for no matter how great a person has been in any area of life, someone might come along and be greater yet. Nobody has, nor can, attain to the heights of being worthy of the name Greatest. No one, that is, but Jesus. He alone is worthy of the name Jesus the Greatest, for He alone has attained a level beyond which it is impossible to go. No one in the past, and no one in the future can be greater than Jesus, and that is the point of the book of Hebrews. It is a message so stressed in the first three verses that there is no place in the Bible where Jesus is more exalted than in these verses. The highest Christology you will find anywhere is right here in verses 2 and 3 of this first chapter of Hebrews. Before we look at what they say about Jesus being the greatest let's look at an introduction to the book as a whole, which I call God's Greatest Commercial.

## INTRODUCTION

### GOD'S GREATEST COMMERCIAL Introduction to Hebrews

The book of Hebrews could be called God's Greatest Commercial. Commercials are designed to tell people that their product is the best. It is better than what you are now using, and so switch to what is better. This whole book is saying switch to Jesus, come back to Jesus, or never leave Jesus, for he is superior to all others. He is better than the angels in heaven and the priesthood on earth. He is the best, and so why give yourself to the lesser? Like commercials this book does a lot of comparing of values in order to show that Jesus is better. All products claim they are better than their competitors, and that is what Jesus is, the best of what God has given. He is the final product and the most improved of all God has given to man. Competition is a major issue in life, for there is so much calling for our time and commitment, and we need to be able to choose the best and give it priority in our lives, and that priority goes to Jesus if we listen to this book.

This book is very judgmental in that it says all other persons and values are not as good as Jesus. They may have been okay before Jesus, but now that he has come and finished the work of atonement, there is nothing better. He is the best, and it is time to switch from what you are now exalting to the highest level and put Jesus there. If you think your soap is good, now is the time to use Jesus for he gets all things whiter, for even your soul needs to be cleansed from the stains of sin. There is none better. God gave much good in the Old Testament, but now we have the new and improved offer of forgiveness by a better way.

The commercial often says come now, call now, buy now. There is urgency about the message, and so it is here, for now is the time of salvation, and we must not wait, or drift from it or neglect it. Someone has put together this outline that shows the whole book is designed to promote that Jesus is better.

**Jesus - The New And Better Deliverer - Ch. 1-7**

- 1. Jesus the God-Man - better than angels - (Ch. 1-2)**
- 2. Jesus the new Apostle - better than Moses - (Ch. 3)**
- 3. Jesus the new Leader - better than Joshua - (Ch. 4:1-13)**
- 4. Jesus the new Priest - better than Aaron - (Ch. 4:14- 7)**

**B. Calvary - The New And Better Covenant - Ch. 8 - 10:18)**

- 1. New covenant has better promises - (8:6-13)**
- 2. And it has a better sanctuary- (9:1-14)**
- 3. And it has a better sacrifice - (9:15-18)**
- 4. And it achieves far better results - (10:1-18)**

I have put this list together of how Jesus is better just in this first chapter. Like any good commercial, it shows us that Jesus is better than all who have gone before Him.

**Better Messenger-the Son**

**Better than prophets**

**Better than angels**

**Better power source-the king of universe**

**Better name than angels**

**Better relation to the Father**

**Better in permanence**

**Better joy v. 9**

**Better victory that is complete v. 13**

Another list I have put together shows how these first few verses exalt the superiority of Jesus.

- 1. He is superior as a spokesman.**
- 2. He is superior as a son.**
- 3. He is superior in status. Heir**
- 4. He is superior as source. Creator of all**
- 5. He is superior in splendor.**
- 6. He is superior in substance. Exact replica of Father**
- 7. He is superior as sustainer.**
- 8. He is superior as sacrifice.**
- 9. He is superior as sovereign.**

Advertising is an over 100 billion dollar a year industry and affects all of us throughout our lives. We are each exposed to over 2000 ads a day, constituting perhaps the most

powerful educational force in society. The average American will spend one and one-half years of his or her life watching television commercials. The ads sell a great deal more than products. They sell values, images, and concepts of success and worth, love and sexuality, popularity and normalcy. They tell us who we are and who we should be. Sometimes they sell addictions. Advertising is the foundation and economic lifeblood of the mass media. The primary purpose of the mass media is to deliver an audience to advertisers, just as the primary purpose of television programs is to deliver an audience for commercials.

Bill Walsh writes about what commercials say about us, and he tells us what we already know, and that is that a good commercial has to capture our attention, and one of the best ways to do that is by using a celebrity. He writes, “Real-life celebrities like Michael J. Fox with that Pepsi ad where he was trying to sneak a Pepsi during an opera and wound up on stage, Larry Bird and Michael Jordan trying to out-do each other with trick basketball shots, and even football's Mean Joe Greene, discouraged and limping, tossing his game shirt to some little kid who offers him a Coke, are here also. What they all have in common, I think, is a unique and instantaneously recognizable personality. It's interesting, although it's carefully planned, that we often tend to link commercial products with their spokespeople. It tends to humanize an otherwise inanimate commercial commodity. And it works.”

In this book of Hebrews God is using the most celebrated celebrity of all time to get the attention of Christians who may be tempted to go back to a lesser product, which is the Old Testament system of sacrifice as a basis for forgiveness of sin, and the legalism of the law as the basis for salvation. Jesus is the most universal celebrity. In Italy Garibaldi is a great hero, but other nations do not even know of him. In Germany they can celebrate Bismarck, but in France it will be Napoleon, which England despises. Washington is a great hero in America, but the rest of the world does not give him any attention at all. The only person of universal fame is Jesus. The greatest commercial calls for the greatest celebrity. If you want people to buy golf equipment you use Tiger Woods. You use the best of who is related to your product to associate your product with greatness. This motivates people to want your product so they too might become great. Here are the key characteristics of great commercials.

COMPARE AND SHOW A BETTER PRODUCT, NEW AND IMPROVED.  
CONTRAST BY SHOWING HOW THE OLD CANNOT KEEP UP WITH THE NEW.  
CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT BY USING WELL KNOWN AND LIKED PEOPLE.  
CALL FOR ACTION BY AN URGENCY TO BUY AND TRY NOW.

Each of these are basic components of the book of Hebrews. It compares Jesus with all that God had given in the past and shows that He is superior. He is the new that does away with the old and makes it obsolete. Not only is He exalted as the greatest celebrity, but a host of the great people of God in the past are brought forth in Hebrews 11 to confirm that faith and not law is the essential principle that has always been foremost with God. And all the way through the book we are urged to make Him our priority in all things, and to live a life that pleases God by being as much like Jesus as we can be by His grace. We are urged to turn our eyes on Jesus, who is the author and perfecter of our faith, and to be loyal to Him alone as our Savior and King. This book is truly God's greatest commercial. If you want people to fall in love with Jesus, and see them fall before Him in worship, then you can do no better

than to direct them to this book where He is shown to be the one who is better than everyone and everything. No commercial can say that the product it promotes is the greatest that has ever been, and that will ever be. That would be presumption on the highest level, and so no one does it. But this commercial for Jesus does just that, because the One it promotes is just that-the best ever, and the greatest that can ever be.

There is no book of the Bible that is more Christ centered than Hebrews. It is designed to show that Jesus is superior to all that has ever been, or will ever be. He is the final Word of God to man. There is no place to go beyond Jesus, and so this book settles it once and for all that believers are to be Christ centered in all that they believe and in all that they do. This is the very purpose of life, for that alone fulfills the purpose of God. The only meaning to life that counts forever is the meaning that comes to those who make Jesus the center of all. This is the goal God seeks to reach by means of His greatest commercial.

St. Patrick got the message and responded as God intended. We see this in his fifteen-hundred-year old prayer, part of which goes like this: "Christ be with me, Christ in the front, Christ in the rear, Christ within me, Christ below me, Christ above me, Christ at my right hand, Christ at my left, Christ in the fort, Christ in the Chariot seat, Christ at the helm, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks to me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me." Here is a Christ centered life, and it illustrates where God wants all of His children to be.

Leonardo da Vinci illustrates how we are to be Christ centered in all that we do. He was 43 years old when the Duke of Milan asked him to paint the Last Supper. He worked on it slowly and with meticulous care to detail. He spent much time making the cup that Jesus held as beautiful as possible. After three years he was ready to show it, and he called for a friend to come and see it. He said, "Look at it and give me your opinion." The friend said, "It is wonderful. The cup is so real I cannot take my eyes off of it!" Immediately Leonardo took a brush and drew it across the sparkling cup! He exclaimed as he did so: "Nothing shall detract from the figure of Christ!" This needs to be the attitude we have in all that we do in life. We need to pray that nothing will detract from Christ, for it is to Him that all eyes are to be fixed, and not to the works of man.

Charles Spurgeon spoke words that echo the conviction of all who love and preach the Gospel of Christ. In his first words he spoke to his congregation when he became the pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London he said this: "I would propose that the subject of the ministry of this house, as long as this platform shall stand, and as long as this house shall be frequented by worshipers, shall be the person of Jesus Christ. I am never ashamed to avow myself a Calvinist; I do not hesitate to take the name of Baptist; but if I am asked what is my creed, I reply, "It is Jesus Christ." My venerated predecessor, Dr. Gill, has left a [theological heritage] admirable and excellent in its way. But the [legacy] to which I would pin and bind myself forever, God helping me,...is Jesus Christ, who is the arm and substance of the gospel, who is in Himself all theology, the incarnation of every precious truth."

Writers are warned not to over use superlatives, for they lose credibility when they overstate their case and try to say too often that this or that is the best and the greatest and

the most fabulous. But when it comes to Jesus you cannot overstate the case for His being the best. The first three verses of this book are all that is needed to put Jesus on a level beyond which the mind cannot go. Jesus is exalted here beyond all that the rest of the Bible can do. There is no place to go after this. He is the final Word of God to man, and the heir of all things, and the one through whom he made the universe, and the one who is the radiance of His glory, and the exact representation of His being, and the sustainer of all by His powerful word, and the one who paid the price for all sin, and the one who is seated at the right hand of God in heaven. What human language can find a phrase that can go beyond these and exalt Jesus ever higher? You cannot use language that overstates the case for the superiority and supremacy of Jesus. There is no way to exaggerate his glory, power and position. There is a prayer prayed by monks that uses only superlatives, for it is fitting to so address Jesus. It goes like this:

“Creator of Angels and Lord of Hosts, as of old You opened the ear and tongue of him that was deaf and dumb, so now open my perplexed mind and tongue to praise Your most holy Name, that I may cry to You:

Jesus, most wonderful, Astonishment of Angels.  
Jesus, most powerful, Deliverance of Forefathers.  
Jesus, most sweet, Exultation of Patriarchs.  
Jesus, most glorious, Dominion of kings.  
Jesus, most desired, Fulfillment of Prophets.  
Jesus, most praised, Steadfastness of Martyrs.  
Jesus, most gladsome, Comfort of monastics.  
Jesus, most compassionate, Sweetness of presbyters.  
Jesus, most merciful, Abstinence of fasters.  
Jesus, most tender, Joy of the righteous.

Whatever Jesus is, He is the most, and the best, and the greatest. Jesus never comes in second in any competition. He is always first and number one. He is Jesus the Greatest, for in every comparison the book makes with other persons Jesus comes out as superior and the greatest. If you were going to give this letter a name other than Hebrews it would be appropriate to call it Jesus the Greatest. When you begin to grasp the truth of this letter, and get grasped by the truth that Jesus is the greatest, you will be compelled by the Spirit to pray and praise like the monks have done for decades in this manner:

“Jesus, pre-eternal, Salvation of sinners.  
Jesus, my King supremely powerful.  
Jesus, my God omnipotent.  
Jesus, my Lord immortal.  
Jesus, my Creator most glorious.  
Jesus, my Guide supreme in goodness.  
Jesus, my Shepherd most compassionate.  
Jesus, my Master rich in mercy.  
Jesus, my Saviour, Friend of man.  
Jesus, enlighten my senses, darkened by passions.

Jesus, heal my body, wounded by sins.  
Jesus, cleanse my mind from vain thoughts.  
Jesus, preserve my heart from evil desires.”

There are not enough titles of glory and greatness to adequately describe all that Jesus is, but someone has put together a marvelous list that shows that the entire Bible is really a commercial for Jesus. Everything in the Bible is directed toward Jesus. He is the center of it all, for He is the center of God’s entire plan of salvation from beginning to end. Many of these names and titles are dealt with in the book of Hebrews. As you read these names you will begin to grasp why Jesus should be the Lord and center of your life, for He is the ultimate, the best, and the greatest of everything, and He should be everything to us. There is no other name so exalted in all of history and in all of the universe. Can language express it any more forcefully than these verses? **"God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name" (Philippians 2:9-10).** When God raised Jesus from the dead, he **"seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet" (Ephesians 1:20-23).** Jesus is the combination of all these names and greater, ones yet we will only learn in eternity.

### *Jesus Is the:*

Almighty  
Alpha and Omega  
Amen  
Angel of his presence  
Anointed  
Author and perfecter of our faith  
Beloved  
Bread of life  
Bridegroom  
Bright and morning star  
Brightness of the Father's glory  
Captain of the Lord's army  
Captain of salvation  
Carpenter  
Carpenter's son  
Chief Shepherd  
Chief corner stone  
Chosen of God, Christ  
Christ Jesus

Christ of God  
Christ the Lord  
Christ the power of God  
Corner stone  
Counselor  
Dayspring  
Day star  
Deliverer  
Door  
Emmanuel  
Ensign  
Eternal life  
Everlasting Father  
Faithful and True  
Faithful witness  
Faithful and true witness  
Finisher of faith  
First and last  
First begotten  
First begotten of the dead  
Firstborn  
Foundation  
Fountain  
Forerunner  
Friend of sinners  
Gift of God  
Glory of Israel  
God  
God manifest in the flesh  
God of the whole earth  
God our Savior  
God's dear Son  
God with us  
Good Master  
Governor  
Great shepherd of the sheep  
Heir of all things  
High priest  
Head of the church  
Holy one



Holy one of God  
Holy one of Israel  
Hope  
Horn of salvation  
I Am  
Image of God  
Jehovah  
Jesus  
Jesus Christ  
Jesus Christ our Savior  
Jesus of Nazareth  
Jesus, the King of the Jews  
Jesus, the Son of God  
Jesus, the Son of Joseph  
Just one  
King  
King of saints  
King of kings  
King of glory  
King of Zion  
King over all the earth  
Lamb  
Lamb of God  
Lawgiver  
Leader  
Life  
Light  
Light, everlasting  
Light of the world  
Light to the Gentiles  
Living bread  
Living stone  
Lion of the tribe of Judah  
Lord  
Lord of lords  
Lord of all  
Lord our righteousness  
Lord God Almighty  
Lord Christ  
Lord Jesus

Lord of glory  
Lord of Armies  
Lord, mighty in battle  
Lord of the dead and living  
Lord of the sabbath  
Lord over all  
Lord, strong and mighty  
Lord, your redeemer  
Master  
Mediator  
Messenger of the covenant  
Messiah  
Messiah the Prince  
Mighty God  
Mighty one of Israel  
Mighty to save  
Morning star  
Most holy  
Most mighty  
Nazarene  
Outstanding among ten thousand  
Only begotten son  
Power of God  
Physician  
Precious corner stone  
Priest  
Prince  
Prince of life  
Prince of peace  
Prince of the kings of the earth  
Prophet  
Rabbi  
Ransom  
Redeemer  
Resurrection and life  
Redemption  
Righteous branch  
Righteous judge  
Righteous servant  
Rose of Sharon

Salvation  
Savior  
Savior of the world  
Seed of the woman  
Servant  
Shepherd  
Shepherd and bishop of souls  
Son of the Father  
Son of God  
Son of Man  
Son of the highest  
Son of David  
Star  
Sun of righteousness  
Sure foundation  
Teacher  
True God  
True vine  
Truth  
Way  
Which is, which was, which is to come  
Wisdom  
Wisdom of God  
Witness  
Wonderful  
Word  
Word of God  
Word of life

**As you study the book of Hebrews you will see many of these names used to exalt and glorify the Person of Jesus. Why is this book so persistent in portraying Jesus as the greatest in every way and in every category of comparison? It is because it is a world filled with competition to get your attention, and then your time, and then your life devoted to some philosophy or value system that determines who you will be. The goal of Hebrews is to get us to “..fix our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith...” If we do this it will determine our philosophy, our life style, our goals, and our eternity.**

**A good commercial will get your attention, and then drive home a message that gets you to focus on a need you have that can be met by a product that is available, and then motivate you to take action and get that product. We have a need for a Savior and a compassionate intercessor to deal with our sin. We have a need for a Friend in high places who can assure us of a place in God’s final kingdom. We have this and much more in the book of Hebrews,**

but it is also filled with warnings of the danger of not looking to Jesus and trusting Him as Lord. The bottom line is, we must surrender our lives to Jesus as Lord of all, and the greatest of all, to make it true for us that Hebrews is God's greatest commercial. Now let's look at the product this commercial promotes. That product is the Person of Jesus Christ as the greatest in every category. He is the greatest in everything that men most long for in life. There are 7 categories of what men most long for, and in verses 2 and 3 of the first chapter of Hebrews Jesus is the greatest in each, and each of them will be a chapter in this book. Men long for-

Possessions, and he is heir of all.

Power, and he is sustainer of all.

Position, and he is at the right hand of God.

Perfection, and he is sinless.

Personality, and he is the radiance of God.

Prestige, and he is the Son of God.

Permanence, and he is eternal.

## **CHAPTER 1. THE GREATEST REVELATION**

Anne Graham Lotz in her book *Just Give Me Jesus* begins her introduction with this story. "Several years ago, Andrew Morton wrote a biography of Diana, Princess of Wales. In his publicity tour for the book he said his information was based on conversations he had with some of her closest friends. His book sold thousand of copies. After Lady Diana's tragic death in a car accident in Paris, Andrew Morton's book was re-released. This time he revealed that the source of his information had not been intimate friends of Diana's but Diana herself. He then produced hours of taped conversations with the princess as proof. And his book sold hundreds of thousands of copies. It made an enormous difference to the reading public to discover the book was not hearsay but what Diana had said about herself."

God has had many spokesmen through history, and they have revealed God's will for His people faithfully, but they were only instruments through which God spoke. When Jesus came into history God was doing something different. He was no longer just using the bodies and minds of men to convey His Word. He was Himself in a body and mind speaking directly to man. It was no longer just "Thus saith the Lord," but "I say unto you." Jesus was God speaking to man, and not just another tool God was using to convey His Word. He was the Word. He was the greatest revelation of God because He was God revealing Himself. His revelation is superior to all that had gone before Him because He was superior to all that had gone before Him. He was superior to everyone and everything is the major point of this whole book. The first three verses of Hebrews are the greatest summery of Christology you will find anywhere in or outside of the Bible. They reveal Jesus to be superior in these ways:

1. He is superior as a spokesman. He is superior to all past spokesmen.
2. He is superior as a son. God's ultimate revelation.
3. He is superior in status. Heir of all things.
4. He is superior as source. Creator of all.

5. He is superior in splendor. God's glory.
6. He is superior in substance. Exact replica of Father.
7. He is superior as sustainer. By His powerful word.
8. He is superior as sacrifice. Provided purification for sins.
9. He is superior as sovereign. At right hand of Father.

Hebrews does a lot of comparing to show that Jesus always comes out on top when compared with any other person or thing. We see it is the first goal of the book to show us that God has done a lot of revealing of Himself by speaking to men in various ways, but that the highest and final way is in Jesus. It is of interest to note that the first verse uses alliteration in that the five key words of "many times," "many ways," "past," "fathers," and "prophets" all begin with the Greek letter "pi." I am going to follow that pattern as we look at the three kinds of revelation that the book of Hebrews deals with. They are Past Revelation, Progressive Revelation, and Perfect Revelation.

### **THE PAST REVELATION**

The first things that needs to be made clear is that the superiority of the revelation we have in these last days through the Son does not mean that the revelation that came through the prophets of old is not valid. It was the best that God was giving at the time. It was incomplete, but it was the best that could be had in the days of the prophets. Jesus did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them. They were the introduction, and Jesus is the completion. They gave us fragments of God's purpose, but Jesus gave us the final and full revelation of God's purpose. Through the prophets we come to know about God, but through Jesus we come to know God, for He is God speaking directly and not through the voice of another.

Jesus made it clear that the Old Testament was God speaking to man about Himself, and that there was a final revelation coming. In John 5:39-40 Jesus says to the Jewish leaders, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." Jesus is saying that the old revelation was pointing to Him. He makes it even more clear to the two on the road to Emmaus after he arose from the dead. In Luke 24:25-27 we read, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." Later he appeared to the disciples and said in verse 44, "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

Jesus made it clear that the past revelation was valid and was revealing piece by piece the reality of a final revelation, which was fulfilled in Himself. The bottom line is this: As Christians we love the Old Testament as the Word of God, for it shows us how God was working all through history to bring His Son into the world to be the Savior. The whole Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is the Christian Bible because it is God's revelation. The New is in the Old contained; the Old is in the New explained. The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed. The Old was the commencement of revelation, but the New in Jesus was the climax of revelation. Next then we see,

## **THE PROGRESSIVE REVELATION**

God is not longwinded in the sense that He speaks so long that it drives men crazy and they cannot wait to get away. Some preachers can do this in speaking about and for God, but God is one who gets to the point and does not go on and on. He speaks His mind on the issue at hand and then waits for a more appropriate time to add new insight into His will. He knows that the human mind cannot handle everything all at once. So He gave guidance in the past in small bits and pieces, like a parent feeding a baby, or a very small child. They just break off little chunks at a time, for they know the child will choke on larger pieces. God knew His people could not handle more than He gave them, for they failed to live up to the partial revelation that they had. If your baby is choking on what you are giving it, give it less. Less is more when more is too much to handle, and so God just spoke briefly and in part in the Old Testament. "By progressive revelation . . . God brings man up through the theological infancy of the Old Testament to the maturity of the New Testament." (B. Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interp.)

If you have ever been out walking during the late afternoon, and you are walking away from the sun you can see your shadow cast on the road ahead of you, and it can be the size of a blimp as it stretches out dozens of feet before you. Much of the Old Testament revelation was like that shadow. It was not real, but only the image cast by the better things yet to come. It was the best at the time, and by obeying the law of God, which was a shadow, you could please God and be a righteous person. There was nothing false about the revelation in the past. It came by means of authentic men of God, who were His prophets. It was good, but it was far short of the best. It was just a shadow of what was to come. When what it foreshadowed did come it was foolish to stick with the shadow and ignore the reality. The Jewish Christians to whom this book was written were in danger of doing that very thing by slipping back to the ways of Judaism that were more familiar than the new ways of the Christian church. That is why the New Testament makes an issue of the difference between the shadow and the reality.

### **Heb 10:1**

"The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming-not the realities themselves."

### **Col. 2:16-17**

Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

What was fine in the old days is now folly in these new days, for these are the last days. There is no more revelation to come, for this is the final age, and there will not be another age coming with some new revelation. Progressive revelation has an ending point where you reach the peak beyond which there is no place to go. You cannot keep climbing a mountain once you reach the top, and you cannot keep getting higher revelation once you have received the highest and greatest that there is. Progressive revelation ended with Jesus. He is the pinnacle of revelation beyond which there is no higher place to go. Jesus said to His disciples, "Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not

see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it" (Mt 13:16-17). Jesus is that final Word that all the people of God had been longing to hear.

God kept getting closer and closer to mankind, and He became more and more intimate until He actually became one with them and became a man. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. There was no way God could come closer and reveal Himself more completely. There was no next step, for progressive revelation had reached its final stage and highest level. Progressive revelation was concluded with the coming of His Son. People often meet for the first time on the internet and begin to share about themselves. They get to know each other quite well over a period of time, and may even send pictures of each other. But the final revelation of who they are is when they arrange to meet in person. Once that happens, and they are conversing face to face, it is folly to think you can know them better by type on a screen. The prophets are like type on the screen, but Jesus is meeting God face to face. He is the superior, the final, the ultimate, the greatest revelation of God.

Mike Bradaric has put together a list of the ways that God revealed step by step more and more information about the coming Messiah. He writes, "At differing times throughout the OT, God was revealing more and more of himself and how he would redeem a fallen humanity.

In Genesis 3:15 he revealed that a Redeemer would come from the human race

In Genesis 12:1-3 he revealed that the Redeemer would come from Abraham descendents

In Genesis 28:14 he revealed that the Redeemer would come from the seed of Jacob and thence forth would be called Israel

In Genesis 49:10 he revealed that the Savior would come from the tribe of Judah

In 2 Samuel 7:16 he revealed that the Savior would come from the house of David and that he would rule forever

In Isaiah 7:14 he revealed that he would be virgin born

In Micah 5:2 he revealed that the Savior would be born in Bethlehem

Psalms 22 he revealed the kind of death the Savior would die

In Malachi 4 he revealed that John the Baptist would come before him to announce him

In Isaiah 53 he revealed not only the nature of his death, but manner of his burial and his resurrection.

The Old Testament saints had many pieces of the puzzle, but they could not get the full picture of the Messiah put together until they received that large missing piece in the center of it, and that piece was Jesus. Even when Jesus came He could not give a full revelation of all God's plan, for men were not capable of grasping it.

**Jesus said he had many things to tell his disciples but they were not ready. You do not tell your young children about income taxes and wills, for they are not ready for such things. So God's people needed to be prepared for they were not ready. God is like any intelligent parent and that is why He gives Progressive Revelation. He tells people what they can grasp, and then builds on that to reveal more when they are ready. It is called going from the known to the unknown, which is the essence of education. Next we see-**

## **THE PERFECT REVELATION**

**The goal of the book of Hebrews is to so exalt Jesus that there can be no doubt in anyone's mind that He is the ultimate and supreme revelation of God. In these first three verses the author makes it clear that Jesus is superior in every category. I like the way one author described them as the narthex to a great cathedral. In these opening words we begin to see the grandeur and majesty of the One this book is all about. Lightfoot has called it "the most beautifully constructed and expressive sentence in the New Testament" It may, in fact, be the most expressive sentence ever written, for it says what is never said elsewhere in such completeness. With less than a hundred words it conveys more than can be found anywhere. It cannot be matched in any other part of God's Word. There is nowhere where Jesus is more exalted. Let me repeat the list again:**

- 1. He is superior as a spokesman.**
- 2. He is superior as a son.**
- 3. He is superior in status.**
- 4. He is superior as source.**
- 5. He is superior in splendor.**
- 6. He is superior in substance.**
- 7. He is superior as sustainer.**
- 8. He is superior as sacrifice.**
- 9. He is superior as sovereign.**

**There is no higher source of revelation, and there is no other that can compare, for Jesus is in a class by Himself. It is folly to even dream of finding a greater source, and a greater Savior. To drift away from Jesus and begin to look for some greater source of knowing God and His will is like giving up on the sun for a source of light and raising fireflies in hopes of meeting your need. Hebrews makes it clear that Jesus is the supreme revelation of God, and that there is only judgment ahead for those who will not receive Him as God's final and perfect revelation. The author compares all of the values of the Old Testament to what we have in Jesus, and shows that what was in the past was good, but that what we now have in Jesus is far superior, for it is the best. Your crayon was good, but your ballpoint pen is better. Your candle was good, but your electric light is better. Your well was good, but your indoor faucet is better. We could go on and on illustrating the point that the old was just fine at the time, but now there is that which is far superior. That is the theme of Hebrews as it shows us all that was revealed was good, but in Jesus we have the better and perfect revelation. The old was a preview, but Jesus is the full feature. Someone has made a top ten list in Hebrews that goes like this:**

- 10. Better than the prophets.**



9. Better than the angels.
8. Better than Moses.
7. Better than Joshua.
6. Better than Aaron.
5. Better message.
4. Better maturity.
3. Better covenant.
2. Better sacrifice.
1. Better rest.

Someone else has made lists of what is better and perfect in Hebrews, and they are:

#### **BETTER**

- 1:4 Christ is better than the angels
- 6:9 Better things that belong to salvation
- 7:7 The less (inferior) is blessed by the better (superior)
- 7:19 A better hope is introduced
- 7:22 Jesus is the surety of a better covenant
- 8:6 Christ is the mediator of a better covenant
- 8:6 New covenant established on better promises
- 9:23 Better sacrifices
- 10:34 Heaven a better substance or possession
- 11:16 Heaven a better country
- 11:35 They obtain a better resurrection or life
- 11:40 God had provided something better for us
- 12:24 Christ's blood speaks better things than the blood of Abel

#### **PERFECT**

- 2:10 Perfect through suffering
- 5:9 Being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him
- 6:1 Let us go on unto perfection (KJV)
- 7:11 If perfection had been obtainable by the Levitical priesthood...
- 7:19; 9:9 Law made nothing perfect
- 7:28 ...the Word of the oath... appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.
- 9:9 Sacrifices cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper
- 9:11 Greater and more perfect tabernacle
- 10:1 The Law and sacrifices cannot make perfect
- 10:14 His single offering has perfected for all time those who are sanctified
- 11:40 Old Testament faithful not made perfect apart from Christ
- 12:23 Spirits of just men made perfect
- 13:21 Make you perfect in every good work

I have made my own list of what is better just in this first chapter. There is really no end to the lists you could make, for if you compare Jesus with anything or anyone, He always comes out better.

**Better Messenger-the Son v.2**

**Better than prophets v. 2**  
**Better revelation of God v. 3**  
**Better relation to the Father v. 3 & 5**  
**Better power source-the king of universe v. 3**  
**Better than angels v. 4**  
**Better name than angels v. 4**  
**Better joy v. 9**  
**Better in permanence v. 11**  
**Better victory that is complete v. 13**

The goal of the book of Hebrews is to make it so plain that what we have in Jesus is so much better and so superior to all that God has given in the past that no sensible person would dream of forsaking Jesus for the old ways of Judaism, or, for that matter, the ways of any other religion. When you have the best and the perfect revelation you do not put your trust in anything less. From the point of the incarnation on everything that is pleasing to God must be Christ-centered. This is the standard by which we measure and judge all teachings and beliefs. Jesus is the final, supreme and greatest revelation. As one author wrote, "The prize jewel in the treasure chest of Hebrews is Jesus." We still study the revelation of the past and treasure it, but it always needs to be upgraded by comparing it with what Jesus said. He would say often, "You have heard what it was said to the people long ago.....But I tell you...." Matt. 5:21-22. Jesus was always upgrading the Old with the final revelation of what God wants man to be and do. In Him the revelation becomes perfected. Consider the following questions-

**Is everything you say of equal importance?**  
**Is everything the President says of equal importance?**  
**Is everything God says of equal importance?**

We are to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, but does that mean that all are equal? Is the Old Testament equal to the New Testament? This book of Hebrews answers all of these questions with a resounding No! God updates his Word to man in Christ and what he says through Jesus is more important than what he said in the Old Testament. Much of the past Word was to prepare for the final Word in Christ. When the fulfillment came the preparation was finished and completed. This means that many of the laws that God laid down for Israel are now obsolete for us as Christians. The ceremonial and Sabbath laws are no longer in effect, for they were fulfilled in Christ. They were God's ultimate Word at the time they were given, but when God upgraded His Word in Christ the old became obsolete. That is the theme of much of the book of Hebrews. When the sun rises you can put away your candles, and when the real Savior comes you can put away your types that pointed to Him.

The practical value of knowing that Jesus is the greatest revelation we can have of God is that it gives us a way to evaluate every situation in life. The "what would Jesus do" theme is our guide. He is the revelation of what God would do. He responded to every need of every individual He met with compassion. We cannot do what He did in terms of healing and raising the dead, but we can show the same love and caring spirit He showed. We can have the same hatred he had for the legalism of the Pharisees that made religion a burden. We can

have His same heart that desires to forgive and bring about peace and reconciliation for those who have gone astray. In every situation of life it is valid to ask the question, “What would Jesus do?” He is the revelation of God’s will in every situation. We do not know what Jesus would do in every situation, but we will be more likely to respond as He would if we are looking to Him as our highest example, and the most perfect revelation we have of God’s ideal person.

The Old Testament was like the alphabet and the New was the beginning of reading. They needed the foundation of the alphabet before they could understand the full revelation of God. The world is full of truths, but only in Christ do we get the full truth. He is the highest revelation of who God is and what his plan is. Christians do not have a monopoly on truths, for there are truths in Judaism and most other religions, but the fullness of truth is in Jesus. He is the truth and the last word on truth because He is the greatest revelation.

## **CHAPTER 2. THE GREATEST VOICE**

We often long for things to happen that would frighten us into wishing they would not have happened. One of these things is that God would talk to us directly in an audible voice. We have no conception of what this would be like to hear the voice of God. The people of Israel did hear it once and they were so frightened that they begged Moses to tell God never to do it again, but to speak to them through the voice of a man. In Deut. 5:22-23 it says that God spoke to them out of the darkness as the mountain was ablaze with fire. It was scarier than listening to ghost stories around any campfire. They felt they would die if they ever heard God speak directly to them again, and so they requested that Moses go near to God and listen, and then pass on to them what God had to say to them. God’s voice was too awesome for them, and they did not want to hear it anymore. They survived it once, but did not want to risk ever hearing it again.

Apparently God talks too loud for the comfort of the human ear. He does not even need any loud speakers when He speaks from the top of a mountain to the people in the valley below. If you have even been in a storm where the lightning and thunder have kept coming in a continuous series of loud bangs that startle your ears, then you have a slight concept of what it must be like to hear God’s voice. Spurgeon said in one of his sermons, “It might well have occurred to a Jewish mind to have called the thunder the voice of God, when he considered the loudness of it, when all other voices are hushed; even if they be the loudest voices mortals can utter, or the most mighty sounds; yet are they but indistinct whispers, compared with the voice of God in the thunder.” The people who heard it said never again do we want this experience. We want God to speak to us in a quieter voice. No man can shout loud enough to frighten us like the voice of God, and so from now on they preferred to hear God through the voice of man.

God was not offended, for He knew His voice was not the best for public speaking. The ears of man were not designed to listen to such loud tones. He agreed to keep silent and

speak through the voice of man, and especially a very specific man. This is how he responded:

**"And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him" (Deuteronomy 18:15-19).**

**This is a messianic prophecy that refers to the coming of Jesus Christ into the world to speak the Word of God. God sent many prophets, but Jesus was the Prophet who spoke in the name of God. When Jesus spoke it was the very voice of God that men heard, and God holds all men responsible for what they hear from the voice of Jesus. Hearing Him is hearing God directly, and so the voice of Jesus is the greatest voice in history, and the greatest voice in the universe, for it is the voice of God. It is a softer voice, and it is easier on the ears, but it is just as authoritative as the thunderous voice of the Father. Heb. 1:2 says, "...in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son,..." God spoke in a variety of ways in the Old Testament, but now He has spoken directly again by the Word, and the Word was with God from the beginning, and the Word was God. Jesus was the very voice of God in human flesh. Jesus was God speaking to man again directly and not through an agent. God speaks through nature, music, poetry, books, sermons, and a host of different ways, but these voices are not the greatest. There is only one that is the greatest and that is the voice of Jesus. Other voices tell of God, but the voice of Jesus is God speaking, and his voice shows us God.**

**In Heb. 12:18-19 this Old Testament event of hearing the voice of God is referred to again, and tells of how the people begged not to hear the voice of God again. It was so frightening that even Moses was trembling with fear it says in verse 20. It goes on in verse 25 to warn believers not to refuse to hear the voice of Jesus, for there is no escape from judgment for those who refuse to listen to the voice of God in Him. He will shake up more than a mountain. He will shake up both earth and heaven the passage goes on to say. Jesus is the greatest voice any person will ever hear, for His voice is the voice of God. It is a quieter voice, but it should still frighten us to think of not obeying it, for not obeying the greatest voice will lead to the greatest judgment. Rather than fear this voice, however, we should be praying often the prayer of Saint Makarios of Alexandria (300 - 394 AD).**

**Eyes of Jesus, look on me;  
Lips of Jesus, smile on me;  
Ears of Jesus, hear me;  
Arms of Jesus, enfold me;  
Hands of Jesus, bless me;  
Feet of Jesus, guide me;  
Voice of Jesus, speak to me;  
Heart of Jesus, love me;**

**Spirit of Jesus, abide in me;  
now and forever...**

**Amen.**

**We want to look at some of the characteristics of the voice of Jesus. Because His voice is the very voice of God it is a subject too vast to cover in one message, but I want to share some basic ideas. First of all-**

### **IT IS THE LORD'S VOICE.**

**There are many passages of Scripture that deal with the voice of God, and when you look at a series of them you can get a clear impression that the voice of Jesus is the voice of God. Here is a series of examples:**

**Genesis 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.**

**Genesis 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I [was] naked; and I hid myself.**

**Isaiah 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here [am] I; send me.**

**Jeremiah 7:23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.**

**Jeremiah 7:28 But thou shalt say unto them, This [is] a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.**

**Jeremiah 42:6 Whether [it be] good, or whether [it be] evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.**

**Matthew 17:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.**

**John 10:3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.**

**John 10:4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.**

**John 10:5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.**

**John 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, [and] one shepherd.**

**Hebrews 3: 7 Therefore (as the Holy Ghost says, To day if you want to hear his voice,<sup>8</sup> Do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.**

**I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to say and what to speak. John 12:49**

**He who is of God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them is that you are not of God. (John 8:47)**

**Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. (John 5:24)**

**He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings has a judge; the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day. (John 12:48)**

**Jesus was the voice of God, and in Him we have the final Word of God. He is the ultimate authority. Secondly-**

### **IT IS A LOUD VOICE.**

**It may not always be as loud as the voice of the Father who scared the wits out of people when he spoke and shook the very mountain, but it is loud enough to be clearly heard so that there is no excuse for not obeying it. In Rev. 1:10 John writes, “..I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...” He turned to see and discovered it was Jesus. Jesus knows how to speak loud enough to get man’s attention. Revelation 3: 20 has Jesus speaking, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will fellowship with him, and he with me.” He knocks loud enough to be heard.**

**In John 10:27 we read, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me...”His voice is always loud and clear enough for us to hear and open the door to Him, or to follow Him in obedience as our Shepherd. Two hymn writers have conveyed the idea that we can clearly hear and we can respond in obedience to the voice of Jesus.**

**Hark, the voice of Jesus calling,  
“Who will go and work today?  
Fields are ripe and harvests waiting,  
Who will bear the sheaves away?”  
Long and loud the Master calls us,  
Rich reward He offers free;  
Who will answer, gladly saying,  
“Here am I, send me, send me”?**

The voice of God is calling its summons in our day;  
Isaiah heard in Zion and we now hear God say:  
“Whom shall I send to succor my people in their need?  
Whom shall I send to loosen the bonds of shame and greed?”

“I hear My people crying in slum and mine and mill;  
No field or mart is silent, no city street is still.  
I see My people falling in darkness and despair.  
Whom shall I send to shatter the fetters which they bear?”

We heed, O Lord, Your summons, and answer: Here are we!  
Send us upon Your errand, let us Your servants be.  
Our strength is dust and ashes, our years a passing hour;  
But You can use our weakness to magnify Your power.

From ease and plenty save us; from pride of place absolve;  
Purge us of low desire; lift us to high resolve;  
Take us, and make us holy; teach us Your will and way.  
Speak, and behold! We answer; command, and we obey!

Another hymn writer made it clear that all who will listen can hear the voice of Jesus calling them into the family of God. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. This voice of Jesus is going out over our planet constantly by means of radio, video and print, and it is loud enough so that many daily make the choice to listen and respond. In 1846 Horatio Bonar wrote-

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
thy head upon my breast."  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
so weary, worn, and sad;  
I found in him a resting place,  
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Behold, I freely give  
the living water; thirsty one,  
stoop down and drink, and live."  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"I am this dark world's light;  
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,  
and all thy day be bright."

**I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my Star, my Sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk  
till traveling days are done.**

**One day the voice of Jesus will be so loud that it will wake the dead. “Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.” (John 5:25) When John says, “and now is,” he is referring to the fact that those dead in sin now can hear the voice of Jesus and rise from the dead to new life in Jesus. The ultimate will be, however, when Jesus comes again and by His voice raise all who are in the graves to face their judgment and reward. Ray Stedman gives an account of just how loud and powerful a voice Jesus has in raising the dead in sin to newness of life. He writes,**

**“Yesterday morning I gathered with about 650 other people to hear former Senator Harold Hughes, ex-Governor of Iowa, tell how God had drastically changed his life. When he was a hopeless alcoholic, wallowing in his own vomit, so despairing he was ready to take his own life, God met him and delivered him through much struggle and pain, and led him to a place of prominence and power. I sat on the platform watching people hanging on his every word, listening to a man describe what God could do.**

**Listening to Senator Hughes, I was again impressed by this phenomenon. He spoke of reaching a point in his life where his wife and children had left him and he had lost his work. He ended up drunk, sitting in a bathtub, with the barrel of a gun in his mouth and his finger on the trigger. He sensed within an agonizing cry of despair. Then he called out to God and immediately felt a spreading sense of peace within that delivered him from the crisis of the moment. Through much pain, heartache, and failure, God led him along until he was at last free from the grip of alcohol. He eventually became the governor of his state and a United States senator.”**

**The voice of Jesus is loud enough and power enough to accomplish all that God wants to do in history and in lives. Thirdly-**

### **IT IS A LOVING VOICE.**

**Jesus was just like His Father in heaven. He was the express image of the Father, and, like the Father, He was always seeking to encourage those who followed him in obedience. He loved deeply and longed for them to have his joy. It says of the Father in Zeph. 3:17 "The LORD your God is with you...He will rejoice over you with singing" Only once do we read of Jesus singing, and that is when the Last Supper was over and He and His disciples were ready to follow Him to the garden. It says in Matt. 26:30, “When they has sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.” Jesus was in human flesh and so He did not have the powerful voice He had before the incarnation. We cannot imagine what it would be like to hear His voice in heaven as he sang in joy over His people. What a divine duet it must have been for Father and Son to join in a song of joy over the people**



of God when then walked in obedience. We know that He also sang the blues, for so often His people did not walk in obedience. But the voice of God and that of Jesus is a voice that loves to sing in joy. Love songs are His favorite, and we will get to hear His songs for all eternity.

We tend to hear only about how we will praise God and the Lamb of God for all eternity, but we have every reason to believe that we will also have the opportunity for all eternity to hear them sing to us, or over us, with joy. Talk about a concert! This will be the mother of all concerts when we hear the Father and the Son join is a concert of love songs for the people they have redeemed and made a part of their family forever. The Hebrew word describing how God sings means a loud shout expressing extreme joy and gladness. Imagine a vast choir with voices like that of Pavarotti, and you still will not get the thrill it will be in hearing this divine duet. For all eternity we will hear the loving joyful voice of our Redeemer singing over the Bride He loves so dearly that He died for her so she could be with Him forever. There will be no blues in heaven, but only joyful love songs. We will sing them to our Savior, and we will listen to them as we hear the loving voice of Jesus, and never again have to hear his voice of judgment.

Unfortunately we still need to hear His voice of judgment in this life because we do not always walk in obedience. But the fact remains, that even in time we hear most often the loving voice of Jesus giving comfort and encouragement as we run the race of life. Thomas Troeger in *The Parable of Ten Preachers* tells this story that comes to a conclusion that the Scripture clearly supports.

... A youngster...had asked a spontaneous question during a church service... The child was standing on the chancel steps with other boys and girls who had come forward for the children's sermon. Before [the preacher] had spoken her first words to them, the boy asked, "What does the voice of God sound like?"

...The little boy's question had preempted the [prepared] children's sermon...All were waiting to see how their pastor would answer the question, "What does the voice of God sound like?"

...She began slowly, saying "The voice of God sounds like...." and drew the words out as long as she could while she prayed desperately that God would speak and give her an answer.

She started once again: "The voice of God sounds like ... like your best friend, like someone you trust, someone you can really talk things over with. The voice of God sounds like your mother or your father or your favorite baby sitter when they comfort you because you're having a bad dream in the night. You hear them next to your bed, calling: "Everything's all right. Everything's all right. I'm right here beside you."

One of the main themes of the book of Hebrews is that Jesus became fully human that he might fully understand and sympathize with us in our temptations and trials. Chapter two stresses that he became just like us in order to understand what we go through, and then in

**4:15-16 we read, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Again, the hymn writer has expressed it-**

**The great Physician now is near,  
The sympathizing Jesus;  
He speaks the drooping heart to cheer,  
Oh! hear the voice of Jesus.**

**We can hear the loving voice of Jesus time and time again by reading the many promises He gives us in the Gospels. For example:**

**Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**

**These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. (John 15:11)**

**Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you . . . (John 14:27)**

**I have said this to you that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)**

**So, if the son makes you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36).**

**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. (John 11:25,26)**

**I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)**

**The more you listen to a voice the more easily you can identify the person who is speaking. Some people call on the phone and you can know who it is right away by the first word they say because their voice is known to you. Mary Magdalene though it was the gardener she saw that first Easter morning, but when He spoke her name she knew it was Jesus. She knew His voice well, for she spent much time listening to Him teach. We need to listen to the voice of Jesus often so we can distinguish between his voice and the voice of impostors who try to pretend to be the voice of God. That which does not conform to the voice of Jesus is not the voice of God.**

**The world is filled with the voices of those who seek to give you religious guidance, but these voices often convey that which leads us in different directions from that of the voice of the Good Shepherd. The only way we can be sure of any guidance is to compare it with the voice of Jesus in His Word. The more we understand the Bible the easier it is to detect what**

is false guidance. So much that sounds good is not truly of God, and the only way to know this is to listen often to the voice of God. When you hear what is truly His voice often enough you will be able to detect right away what is contrary to His voice, and also what is consistent with His voice.

I read an account by a pastor who knew by experience how sheep can hear the voice of the shepherd and respond. He wrote, "We just didn't have many sheep running around where I grew up on the south side of Chicago. So I listened with fascination the other day when my father-in-law told about being the shepherd for his family's flock of sheep. He was just a boy, the only child, and Mom and Dad left the sheep pretty much with him - and he was with them a lot. One day he and his parents were watching the flock and he said, "Would you like me to call one of them out?" Right, kid - like one sheep is going to know it's him you want? So Mom and Dad kind of laughed. The little shepherd asked them to pick a sheep they wanted called out . . . and then he made a little bleating sound . . . and the selected sheep proceeded to leave the flock and come right to him. Mom and Dad were still skeptical. "Pick another sheep", he said. Another bleat - this one a little different - and Mr. Sheep answered the call. And no one else could get that kind of response. That little exercise was repeated several times, until there was no denying the amazing fact - those sheep had such a personal relationship with their shepherd that his was the only voice they followed."

The point is, if we spend a lot of time listening to the voice of Jesus as our Shepherd we too can hear when He calls to give us guidance, comfort, and encouragement. We will not be led astray if we know how to distinguish His voice from the many voices that seek to entice us to follow them. All the stress on reading the Bible and prayer is not just a legalistic duty, but it is so that we can be familiar with the voice of Jesus, and respond in obedience when we hear his call. The call often comes through the voice of a man, and that is why Jesus has ordained that the Gospel be preached in all the world.

By the voice of pastors, missionaries, and teachers of all kinds, Jesus speaks today. Spurgeon once said, "And now tonight Jesus speaks to us in the gospel. So far as his gospel shall be preached by us here, it shall not be the word of man, but the word of God; and although it comes to you through a feeble tongue, yet the truth itself is not feeble, nor is it any less divine than if Christ himself should speak it with his own lips." Jesus confirms this, for he said in Luke 10:16, "He who listens to you listens to me..." When we speak the Word that God has revealed in Jesus, we too can become the voice of God.

Ray Boltz and Steve Millikan wrote a song called When He calls, and it end with this chorus:

**"When He calls, When He calls  
Just say "Lord I am listening"  
When He calls, When He calls  
Just be ready to obey.  
For there's no greater joy  
Than hearing Him call . . . your name."**

**There is no greater joy than hearing Jesus call, for there is no greater voice than His. Jesus has the highest recommendation in the universe, for when Jesus was transfigured a voice from the cloud said in Matt. 17:5, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!” No matter how poor a listener you are, it is your highest obligation to listen to Him. Without a doubt, Jesus is the greatest voice.**

## **CHAPTER 3 THE GREATEST WEALTH**

### **THE RICHEST PERSON IN THE UNIVERSE Based on Heb. 1:2**

**There was a day in the history of our nation when a measly 20 million dollars could make you the richest man in America. This was the case with John Jacob Astor, who came to this land with only five pounds sterling and seven flutes that he got from his brother who sold music instruments in London. Then you had Cornelius Vanderbilt who gained that title with 105 million. Then came Andrew Carnegie with his 175 million, followed by John D. Rockefeller with 250 million. All of this was like petty cash to the wealthy of our day. Bill Gates, for example, is not just the richest man in America, but the richest man in the world. His wealth soared over 100 billion at one time. Recently it has fallen to 55 billion and less, but he is still the richest man in the world. He started Microsoft in 1975 and has made on average since then about one million dollars per hour if you figure 14 hours for every working day since that beginning. That is wealth beyond our imagination.**

**There is one person, however, who is so much richer than Gates that he can only be given the title The Richest Person In The Universe. That person is none other than the man Christ Jesus. In His divine glory for all eternity He was the Lord of the Universe, for He created it and guided its formation. But it is as the Son of Man that Jesus died for the sins of the world and then ascended to heaven where God placed him at His right hand on the throne next to Him. The whole point of the book of Hebrews is that it is the man Christ Jesus who is on the throne of the universe. The phrase that we want to focus on in this message is that in verse 2 which says of the Son, “..whom he appointed heir of all things.” The implications of this are even more staggering than the riches of Gates and all of the other over 500 billionaires in the world today. In essence this phrase is saying that the lowly carpenter of Nazareth, who died with nothing but the clothes on his back, and who did not even have a place to be buried, is now the richest person in the universe. He is heir of all things, and this is not an isolated idea, but is supported by many Scriptures.**

**“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.” Romans 11:36**

**“To be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.” Ephesians 1:10**

**”And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”  
Ephesians 1:22-23**

**”He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.” Ephesians 4:10**

**”..and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” Colossians 1:20**

**Jesus spoke on this subject, and He made it clear that God had full confidence in Him, and that He had given Him all authority. *"All things have been handed over to me by my Father . . . "* (Matt 11:27a, NRSV). *"The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in His hands"* (John 3:35, NRSV). *"The Father loves the Son and shows Him all that He Himself is doing . . . "* (John 5:20, NRSV). *"The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son . . . "* (John 5:22). *"For just as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself . . . "* (John 5:26, NRSV). *" . . . the Son of Man will give you. For it is on Him that God the Father has set His seal"* (John 6:27, NRSV). *" . . . the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world . . . "* (John 10:36, NRSV).**

**There is no one who can ever match such wealth, power, and authority, for he is appointed to inherit all things. Everything God has made is going to the Son. He will be rich beyond all human calculation. And the next best thing to being rich is being related to one who is, and so all who are in Christ will be wealthy forever. Paul writes in II Cor. 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.” It is clearly stated that one of the goals of God for all his children is that they be rich. His only begotten Son became poor that he might become a perfect sacrifice for our sins, and make it possible for us to become partners in the eternal riches he would inherit from the Father. The dream of every human being is to be so wealthy that they can enjoy all the wonders of what God has made possible for man to enjoy. This goal will be achieved, and we will be joint heirs with Jesus, the richest man in the universe.**

**We want to look at three aspects of these riches of Jesus that he inherits from the Father. First we want to look at the fact that they are-**

## **SUPERIOR RICHES**

**The richest person in the world has to be wealthy in more than physical and material possessions or it is irrelevant, for once one has millions and billions it is superfluous to have more. It is a meaningless title to be the richest person in the universe if there is nothing you have that is not also possessed by the millions of millionaires of the world, and even by those**

with much less. Jesus inherits all things, but if we read the whole chapter we see that his wealth includes far more. Jesus is superior to all other beings that God has made. Verse 9 says that because he loved righteousness and hated wickedness God has set him above his companions by anointing him with the oil of joy. This means Jesus is rich in the love of the Father, and this makes him the happiest person in the universe.

It is possible to be very rich in material things and be unhappy, and so the greatest riches are in having a joyful spirit along with the wealth of things. When one combines the riches of the inner life with the riches of all that gives external pleasure, then one has the superior riches beyond which none can go. You cannot be any happier than Jesus, for he is the happiest person in the universe. He is rich in glory so that all the angels worship him, and rich in love, for he is loved by God, the angels, and man. He is rich in joy because his kingdom will be eternal and all his enemies will one day be defeated, and all who love him will reign with him and inherit the salvation he purchased for them on the cross. There can be no one in the same category with Jesus when it comes to riches. He is the richest person in the universe in every way that one can be rich.

This phrase, however, does focus on things, and so we need to see that Jesus will be the richest person in the universe in terms of material possessions. It has been the dream of powerful rulers all through history to rule the whole world. Some have come close to ruling the known world of their day, but none have come close to having possession of power over the whole planet. This is the kind of riches we see that Jesus will have. Psalm 2, which is quoted in verse 5, states it forcefully in 2:7-8, "I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.'" In other words, Jesus will be the first and only person to ever be King and ruler over all the nations of the world. He will be rich in power far superior to all the emperors and kings of history. Even before Jesus ascended to the throne he said, "All power in heaven and on earth is given unto me." On that basis he sent his church into all the world to take it over for the kingdom of God.

There is more to the universe than the visible and the material, and so the riches of Christ go beyond just possessing the nations of the world. His riches include the ownership and Lordship over the entire universe of beings that we know so little about. Paul gave us some insight into this vast mystery when he wrote, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And he is before all things and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the ecclesia, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross." (Colossians 1:16-20) Such words make it clear beyond dispute that the riches of Jesus are superior to all other being who are and who will ever be. Secondly we see they are-

## **SOVEREIGN RICHES.**

**This richest man in the universe will be sitting on the throne of God as the sovereign of the universe. His riches will be the wealth of the eternal King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Under His reign we will have universal wealth. Paul makes it clear in Phil. 2:9-11 that Jesus is sovereign over all the universe. He writes, "Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."**

**Never have people had such a powerful and rich King. The book of Hebrews is above all Christ-centered. He is the center and the circumference. He is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. The goal of studying this book is that we will often fall at the feet of Jesus and say with Thomas when he saw the risen Christ, "My Lord and My God." John 20:28. Many acknowledge Jesus as a great man, and there are masses who will admit he was the greatest teacher that ever lived. Jesus is rich in honors bestowed upon him from every source imaginable. But all of these fall short of seeing who Jesus really is. He is God. He is sovereign over all the universe. We do not grasp who he is until we worship him as our Lord and King.**

**You can find quotes from great minds all through history who exalt Jesus as the greatest man who ever lived. It is so obvious that he was the greatest teacher to ever live that today we have Atheists For Jesus. Here is the testimony of the founder of this group: "My name is Ken Schei, I'm the founder and President of "Atheists for Jesus". And yes, as the name implies, I am an atheist for Jesus.**

**"Now, I'm sure that at least some of you (perhaps it would be more accurate to say *all of you*) are asking: "Just what in the heck is an Atheist for Jesus?" Fair enough! I realize that this may well appear to be a contradiction of terms, so I'd best start out with an explanation of just what I mean by my use of the terms.**

**"First of all, what I mean by the term "Atheist", is that I do not believe that any deity is probable, nor do I believe that any deity that I have ever heard of is possible. While I do not claim omniscience--and can, therefore, not absolutely rule out the existence of some sort of deity--I feel confident that my definition will identify me as an atheist to the vast majority of the populace (and thus avoid the confusion which often results from the use of term Agnostic.**

**"Secondly, when I say that I am "for Jesus", I do not mean to imply in any way that I have converted to Christianity or that I now believe Jesus to be a god. What I do mean is that I have come to have a great deal of respect for the teachings of Jesus. My respect for Jesus is not based on the Cross, but rather on the Mount--not on His death and supposed resurrection, but on His teachings as exemplified by the Sermon on the Mount." This is the end of his testimony.**

**I share this because it is the ultimate in praise to Jesus from a humanist viewpoint. Volumes could be filled with such testimony from all over the world. This makes Jesus the greatest man who ever lived, but it falls so far short of who he really is. This book of**

Hebrews starts off by making it clear that Jesus is superior to all that has ever been, or that will ever be. He is superior as God's final revelation; He is superior as heir of all things; He is superior as the Creator of all the universe; He is the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of his being. He is seated at God's right hand as the ultimate in Royalty. He is the King over all. All praises of Jesus that do not make him the Royal King of the universe fall so far short of who he is that they are false. He is the greatest man who ever lived, and the greatest teacher who ever was, but to stop there is to deny the revelation of God as to who he really is. He is the richest person in the universe because he made it all, redeemed it all, inherits in all, and reigns over it all as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is the richest of all royalty that has ever been, or who could ever be, for there is nowhere to go beyond owning all that is. Thirdly we see they are-

### **SHARED RICHES.**

Jesus does not keep all of this enormous wealth to himself, but he shares it with all who become a part of the family of God. There is no poverty in the family of God in eternity. The poor you always have with you in time, but in eternity all will be rich, for He who owns all will share it abundantly with the whole family. Jesus will ultimately solve the poverty problem of the world.

Once when Caesar Augustus had bestowed a princely gift upon one whom he wished especially to honor, the recipient was so overcome with the gift's magnitude that he exclaimed, "This is too great a gift for me to receive." "But it is not too great a gift for me to give," Caesar replied, pleased with his own bounty. Christ will have an even greater bounty, and an even greater generosity. "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:19.

The purpose of Jesus coming into the world was to make as many people rich as possible by means of his atonement for sin. This sacrifice made it possible for sinners to come to God, be forgiven, and be reconciled to God as His children. Jesus was no Prodigal Son who took his inheritance and squandered it in folly. He left his inheritance at home with the Father and entered into poverty on earth. He lived the perfect life of love and laid down his life for us so that we could join him in heaven where he could share his inheritance with us. His joy is in giving and sharing just as it was in his earthly life. Jesus was always giving of himself, and all of his miracles were for the meeting of the needs of others. He will be a sharer of wealth unlimited for all eternity. He is heir of all, and he will share all of which he is heir.

Arthur Pink writing of Isaac says, "As we have seen in our previous studies Isaac, typically, represents sonship. In perfect consonance with this we may note how he was appointed heir of all things. Said Eliazer to Bethuel, "And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath" (Gen. 24:36). Observe how this is repeated for sake of emphasis in Genesis 25:5-"And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac." In the type this pointed first to Abraham's greater Son, "Whom He (God) hath appointed Heir of all things" (Heb. 1:2). But it is equally true of all those who are through faith the children of Abraham and the children of God-"And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). As with Isaac, so with us: all the wealth of the Father's house is ours!"



**The riches we have in Christ are to eventually include material wealth, for we will be in a new heaven and earth that will be ours to have and enjoy as we have eternal pleasures at God's right hand. We will reign with Christ over this new creation and all we ever dreamed of concerning unlimited resources will be ours. But right now we have the greatest wealth in the realm of the non-material treasures that God has for us. We are rich in all the fruits of the Spirit, and in all of the spiritual values that we see in the life of our Lord. These are superior right now in this fallen world where there are so many problems connected with physical wealth.**

**Many who are rich try to hide the fact because of the problems connected with it. The wealthy are plagued by those who try to take advantage of them. There is the constant threat of their children being kidnapped. People pretend to care about them, and seek to marry them for their money. They are resented and envied for their money. Sarah Stein gives us some insight into how some of the rich act to keep their wealth hidden. She said, "The hardest thing for me is being truthful about my wealth. I feel like, if someone knows I'm wealthy, I'll be in a lions' den. I lie a lot. I lie a lot! Like, 'Oh God, I want to buy this Lexus, but I can't afford it.' " She lives in a state of ambivalence because, as she says, "I know people like me for my money, and I know they don't like me for my money."**

**The shared riches of Christ with all who love him does not lead to such problems as does material wealth. We are joint heirs with Christ of a whole new universe where there will be no envy and jealousy, and no one is going to take advantage of anyone in that universe, for it is free of all the consequences of sin. We still live in a fallen world now, and even as the children of God we have to suffer many of the consequences of sin. But the fact is, we are even now the richest people in the world because we have received the love of Jesus our King. Someone has written this prayer that conveys the riches of what we have in Him.**

*"Lord Jesus, Your magnificent power and wisdom are so far beyond our minds that we stagger under the thought of them. And yet, in all this might and knowing, You care for each of us. It is Your will, your desire, that no one would perish. Your hand is reaching out to everyone. You know our names, our cares, our likes, our heart's desires and our days. Such intimate care seems to contradict the limitless strength. But it is all used to Your glory and our benefit. Thank you for that love and care. Keep us mindful of it. Teach us to love You and each other better as the days pass, even though we can never expect to return the smallest fraction to You by comparison. Amen."*

**Jesus does not expect us to return anything but our thanks and love, for he already has everything. What do you give to the man who has everything, and to the man who is the richest person in the universe? You give him praise and worship, for he is worthy of worship, and the only one who is so worthy as he reigns alongside his Father in heaven. He does ask, however, that we share with one another all the love and values he has shared with us. John Hendrick Bangs tells a story that illustrates the point.**

**"One night a little boy cried for the moon. So his father, who was a kind and generous, as well as a wise man, gave it to him. "You may have the moon," said the father, "Only you must not be selfish about it. The very best**

place to keep the moon is up there in the heaven where it will give you light by night, and of course you want it to give light to me and your mother and other people also. You may have the moon just as long as you are unselfish, but when you grow greedy then the moon will belong to someone else who will make better use of it.” And one day when the lad wanted the ocean his father gave him that also on a similar condition. “You must not carry it away and bottle it up,” he said. “It is yours, but you must not be selfish. Let other people bather in your ocean and sail boats on your ocean. Indeed, it is very much better for you to have others using your ocean, for it would not be nearly so interesting without ships sailing up and down to all parts of the world to bring you and me and your mother tea and coffee and bananas, and other fishing boats going out to catch our fish for us.” So when the lad wanted a great forest the father gave it to him, and when he asked for the mountains the father gave him the mountains also. Until by and by he owned the whole universe. But always on condition that he would not be selfish but

would let other people enjoy his moon, and his ocean, and his forest, and his mountains with him.”

God has given all the universe to His Son, but the Son does not hoard it as His own. He shares it with all, and he expects us to share with others the blessings that are ours in Him. “Those who become children of God through the operation of faith are called, “Heirs of God and JOINT HEIRS with Christ.” Rom. 8:17. This heirship suggests partnership. If you have a joint account at the bank with your wife or business partner it simply means that both parties can draw on the account. As joint heirs it means that God’s believing child can draw upon the Divine resources for all his needs.” Someone has put together a partial list of what riches we have in Jesus.

#### **“What We Have In Christ:**

**A love that can never be fathomed;**

**A life that can never die;**

**A righteousness that can never be tarnished;**

**A peace that can never be understood;**

**A rest that can never be disturbed;**

**A joy that can never be diminished;**

**A hope that can never be disappointed;**

**A glory that can never be clouded;**

**A light that can never be darkened;**

**A happiness that can never be interrupted;**

**A strength that can never be enfeebled;**

**A purity that can never be defiled;**

**A beauty that can never be marred;**

**A wisdom that can never be baffled;**

**Resources that can never be exhausted."**

**When we love Jesus as our Lord and King we are heirs of all the riches that he received from the Father, and this makes us the richest people in the world. Paul writes in Galatians 4:7 "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."**

**"In his splendid book of anecdotes entitled Bible Windows, Ivor Powell tells the story of a rich man who died and left no heirs. When his household goods were auctioned off, an elderly lady dressed in shabby garments was the only one to bid on the picture of the dead man's son. It had been greatly cherished by the wealthy father because his only child had died at an early age. But the crowd that had gathered for the sale showed no interest in it. When the woman who bought the portrait was asked why she wanted it, she said she had been the boy's nurse many years before, and had loved him dearly.**

**Later she examined the picture closely and noticed a bulge in the heavy paper on the back. Making a small cut, she removed an envelope, which turned out to be the man's missing will. The document very clearly stated that he wanted to leave his property to the person who still held dear the memory of his beloved son." That is how every person can become rich forever. It is by loving the Son whom the Father sent to save men from the consequences of sin.**

**We are rich because we are brothers and sisters to the richest person in the universe. We may not yet have material wealth, but we all have riches that are beyond measure in the realm of wisdom and truth in Christ. It is our obligation to share this with those who are poor because they do not have these riches. Jesus sent his church into all the world to share these riches. He has made us all rich enough to have plenty to spare that we can share. We will do so more freely and more often if we keep reminding ourselves that we are part of the family of the richest person in the universe.**

**Harriett Buell wrote the words for A Child of the King one Sunday morning while walking home from her Methodist church service. She sent her text to the Northern Christian Advocate, and it was printed in the February 1, 1877 issue. It is a song that every person can sing with meaning when they have trusted Jesus as their Savior.**

*(1) My Father is rich in houses and lands,*

*He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!*

*Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,*

*His coffers are full, -He has riches untold.*

Chorus: *I'm a child of the King,*

*A child of the King!*

*With Jesus, my Savior,*

*I'm a child of the King.*

*(2) My Father's own Son, the Savior of men,*

*Once wandered o'er earth as the poorest of them;*

*But now He is reigning in glory on high,*

*Preparing a place for the sweet by and by.*

*(3) A tent or a cottage, why should I care?*

*They're building a palace for me over there!*

*Though here I'm a stranger yet still I may sing;*

*All glory to God, I'm a child of the King!*

**If we have trusted in Jesus as our Savior we are rich now and will be rich forever. Man had the richest life possible in Eden, but he lost it by disobedience. Jesus won in all back for us by becoming a man, and by living in full obedience to the Father's will. To as many as receive Him God will make His children, and so we will be rich forever, for we will be related by blood to the richest person in the universe.**

## **CHAPTER 4 THE GREATEST CREATOR**

**The story is told of the teacher who asked her class to write down what they thought were the 7 great wonders of the world. They could be the ancient wonders or the modern wonders. The choices were many and one little girl could not finish her list. The teacher said just read what you have and maybe I can help you. The little girl said "I think the 7 wonders of the world are to touch, to taste, to see, to hear, to run, to laugh, and to love." This was a surprise to the teacher and the whole class for they were all thinking along the lines of the Pyramids, the Great Wall of China, and the Golden Gate Bridge. But this little girl was thinking, not of the wonders that man had made, but the wonders that God had made in making us in His image. Man is the wonder of the world, and even of the universe, for we know of no creature in heaven that has been given greater honor than man. Jesus never became a Seraphim or Archangel, but He did become a man who did all**

of those things the little girl listed as the wonders of the world. Our goal in this message is to show that Jesus is the Creator of the universe.

## **JESUS IS THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE**

Man has created some marvelous wonders, for he was made in the image of God and creating is a part of his nature. The world is filled with works of art and architecture that witness to the fact that man is a creator, and that he has been given the gift of creativity. It is impossible to judge who has been the greatest creator of wonder and beauty in the history of the world, but it is no problem determining the greatest creator in the universe, for the Bible makes it clear that this honor and title goes to the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 2 of this great book of Hebrews says that it was through Jesus that God made the universe. God spoke the Word and said, "Let it be," and Jesus was the Word that made it happen. He was the agent of creation, and everything that is wondrous and marvelous about creation is due to His power and wisdom. It is clearly stated that he created in many other passages.

### **A. THE WITNESS OF SCRIPTURE.**

Later on the author of Hebrews says in Heb1:8 &10 "But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;-You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands." This is God's testimony to the fact that His Son is the Creator. If you do not accept God's testimony there is no higher authority to appeal to, and so you take God's Word for it, or you reject God as your final authority.

In John's Gospel it is stated as strongly as possible for it says in John 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." This is as comprehensive as a statement can get. If it was made, Jesus made it. If we could turn all of the stars and planets over and find the mark of the Maker it would say MADE BY JESUS. What was made without him? Nothing! The origin of the universe is not found in any mysterious power, but in the person of Jesus Christ.

John 1:10 "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." The world was created by those very hands that were nailed to the cross for our redemption. The creature turned on the Creator, but even killing him could not rid the world of him, for he had the power to take his life back again. He made all life, and so he could make it again when man took it from him.

Col 1:16 "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:" It is not only all that we can see,

but all that exists that we can never see that is a part of his handiwork as Creator. We do not see the atoms out of which all matter is made, but these invisible energy packets have their origin in the mind of Christ. There are realms of beings other than man also in the universe, and they too have their origin in Him. Nothing, and no being, has an independent existence, for he is the reason for all that is. If it is real, it is because Jesus made it real.

"...yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live" (1 Corinthians 8:6). This makes it clear that the Father and the Son are one, and that all creation came from both of them. There is no point in trying to decide if the Father created or the Son, for they both did equally. Those who try to say the Bible contradicts itself by sometimes saying the Father created and other times the Son, are ignoring the plain fact that the Bible clearly teaches that they are one, and all that each does the other does.

These verses leave one with no alternative but to believe Jesus is the Creator of all things, or to deny the Bible as their authority. Those who believe the Bible can see that Jesus is the greatest Creator in the universe because he is the Creator of the universe. It is a universe and not a multiverse because it all came from the same mind. There is a unity in the entire nature of all that exists because it is not the work of many, but the work of one mind.

Even when Jesus came into the world in human flesh and took on some of the limitations of manhood he still continued to be a Creator. His first miracle was at the wedding of Cana where he changed the water into wine. This was a direct act of creation where something that did not exist was brought into existence immediately by the power of his word. He did the same thing when he fed the four thousand and the five thousand by turning a small portion of food into a large supply by the power of his word. In some of his healing miracles he had to create new tissue, muscles and nerves on the spot. When he raised Lazarus he had to give him a great deal of new tissue, for his body was already decaying. When he first made Adam he took lifeless dirt and breathed into it the breath of life and made a living man. He took the lifeless body of Lazarus and breathed into it the breath of life and restored him to life again. Jesus demonstrated that he was the Creator even in his manhood.

## **B. THE WITNESS OF SCIENCE.**

Man's choices as to the origin of the universe are reduced to two. It either came by chance circumstances, or it came by the mind and power of a Creator. Those who choose chance as their source of all reality will often criticize those who choose a Creator by saying they do so by blind faith. This is a major mistake in thinking, for the fact is, it takes far more blind faith to believe that all the marvelous order and design of the universe came by sheer chance than by the working of an intelligent mind.

What are the odds of the universe coming about by means of chance? Some have calculated this and have come to this conclusion: "Calculate, if you like, the odds against life ever coming about spontaneously. Take an 8 1/2 x 11 inch sheet of paper and put the number "1" in the upper left-hand corner. Type zeros after it, single-spaced, until you fill up the whole page with zeros; turn the sheet over and type additional zeros upon the entire page. Continue filling pages with zeros until you produce a volume three inches thick. Compile enough volumes to spread across the whole United States. Stack volumes until they reach past the moon. That is the number of volumes necessary to contain the number of chances to one that life would ever come about by spontaneous generation. Not impossible, but highly unlikely. To hold that position, one is exercising faith, not upholding evidence, which is overwhelmingly in his favor. Such a position is held basically because, as Wald says, one chooses not to believe in God."

Dr. Hugh Ross in his book *The Creator and the Cosmos* gives another example of the odds against chance being the cause for the precise balance of electrons to proton mass. He writes, "One part in  $10^{37}$  is such an incredibly sensitive balance that it is hard to visualize. The following analogy might help: Cover the entire North American continent in dimes all the way up to the moon, a height of about 239,000 miles (In comparison, the money to pay for the U.S. federal government debt would cover one square mile less than two feet deep with dimes.). Next, pile dimes from here to the moon on a billion other continents the same size as North America. Paint one dime red and mix it into the billion of piles of dimes. Blindfold a friend and ask him to pick out one dime. The odds that he will pick the red dime are one in  $10^{37}$ ."

We can only conclude that it takes an amazing kind of faith to believe in chance. The odds of chance being the cause of what we have in this world are similar to the chance of the works of Shakespeare being produced by an explosion in a printing factory, or as the result of monkeys scampering across the keys of a typewriter over many centuries. The bottom line is this: It takes more faith to believe in chance than to believe in Christ as the Creator of all.

Now faith is essential also to our belief that Jesus is the Creator of all the universe, but it is a faith that is based on the combined sources of Scripture and science. In Heb. 11:3 we read, "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." Science now confirms this completely, for it has established that all the material universe is made up of atoms, which are unseen, and which are basically energy. Many authorities in science conclude that matter is congealed thought. It is very close to what we call an idea. Christian theologians have said the universe is really a thought in the mind of God. Jesus spoke it all into existence. It was first a thought in his mind before he created it, and it is still in existence by the power of his thought. Mind is behind it all, and mind is what sustains it all. To turn from Christ to chance is to reject all that the Bible says, and all that has been learned by modern science as to the nature of matter. The greatest Creator in the universe is not chance, but it is Christ.

The study of the design of the universe is what supports the Christian faith that Jesus is the mind behind all that is made. There was a time when Christian faith and science were at odds. Much of this was the fault of Christians because they based their beliefs

about the universe on the authority of Aristotle, and when he was proven wrong the scientific world thought they had proven Christian faith wrong. All they proved was that Christians had built on the wrong foundation. If the Bible alone is the authority on which we build there is no conflict between science and the Christian faith. Robert E. Kofahl has written,

**“To believe in divine creation does not make one "unscientific." It is logical and satisfying for the person who desires to place his faith in the intelligent, purposeful Creator God, rather than in dumb atoms. This faith is not satisfying to the person who desires to trust in chance and dumb atoms in a purposeless evolved universe. The choice between these two faiths is a religious choice, not a scientific one. It is an act of faith. But the believer in the God of Creation finds that he has much scientific evidence, which supports his choice. This evidence is the whole vast system of interdependent design features which can be seen in the nuclei of atoms, the laws of physics and chemistry, in the fitness of the earth-sun-moon-galactic environment which affords the human race the only known habitable home in the entire universe, in the complex designs of living things, and, most persuasively, in the personal nature of man--intellect, affections, moral capacity and will. To believe our personal nature was designed and created to show forth and glorify the Creator is better than to believe we are nothing but slime improved by chance without purpose, without goal, without reason for existence.”**

This view is held by a host of scientists, and even by those who do not profess to be Christians. They are just convinced that the evidence supports the reality of a Creator rather than chance as the origin of the universe. One of the leading Physicists of our day, Dr. Freeman Dyson, said when he received the Templeton Prize, “Atoms are weird stuff, behaving like active agents rather than inert substances. They make unpredictable choices between alternative possibilities according to the laws of quantum mechanics. It appears that mind, as manifested by the capacity to make choices, is to some extent inherent in every atom. The universe is also weird, with its laws of nature that make it hospitable to the growth of mind. I do not make any clear distinction between mind and God. God is what mind becomes when it has passed beyond the scale of our comprehension.” John Archibald Wheeler, the former president of the American Physical Society and professor of physics at Princeton University, who received the Einstein Award, likens all existence to an idea. Numerous others agree, and this fits perfectly with Jesus being the Creator of the universe. He is the Mind that is the source of all the energy that the universe is made of. When science studies the universe it is studying the mind of Christ.

Dr. Gerald L. Schroeder in his book *The Hidden Face of God*, from which I have gotten the above quotes and information, points out that the insights of Einstein have shown that material reality is a form of condensed energy, and if you heat any matter in the universe hot enough it will revert to pure energy. All matter is congealed energy, or another way of saying it is, all matter is thought in concrete form. It is an invisible idea that has become visible by its energy being compressed into a form that can be seen by human eyes. This is the scientific confirmation of what the Bible says in Heb. 11:3, “By



**faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."**

**When we begin to study specific examples of the wisdom and design built into creation, we cannot help but praise God for what He has done through Jesus. It is incredible that people can continue to believe in chance when they see the evidence. But man does not like the alternative, for the only alternative to chance and evolution is God. So they go on defending mindless chance as the author of such marvels as the following.**

**We all know that dolphins are very intelligent, and that is why they can be trained by man. But does anyone believe they developed the amazing sonar power that they have? This power is not just better than man's development of sonar used in submarines. It is not even just ten times better. It is over 100 million times better than anything man has been able to develop. Are we to believe that chance gave them this superior sonar that is far beyond what the most intelligent creature on the earth, which is man, can develop? Did they get this by means of evolution over many millions of years? Or is this a gift from their Creator? It takes more faith to believe this is due to chance than to believe it is a purposeful gift from the mind of Christ.**

**Some of the most outstanding scientists of our time have urged that Creation be taught in the schools, and not limit the exposure of young minds to evolution alone as the only theory of the origin of the universe. They have seen the design and intelligence in the creation, and they see it is the most logical explanation of its origin to be the mind of a Creator. For example, "Wernher Von Braun was one of the world's first and foremost rocket engineers and a leading authority on space travel. His will to expand man's knowledge through the exploration of space led to the development of the Explorer satellites, the Jupiter and Jupiter-C rockets, Pershing, the Redstone rocket, Saturn rockets, and Skylab, the world's first space station. Additionally, his determination to "go where no man has gone before" led to mankind setting foot on the moon. Wernher von Braun is, without doubt, the greatest rocket scientist in history. His crowning achievement, as head of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, was to lead the development of the Saturn V booster rocket that helped land the first men on the Moon in July 1969." What were the views of such a man of science? He tells us in a letter he sent to the California State Board of Education. Here is a copy of that letter:**

**"Dear Mr. Grose:**

**In response to your inquiry about my personal views concerning the "Case for DESIGN" as a viable scientific theory for the origin of the universe, life and man, I am pleased to make the following observations.**

**For me, the idea of a creation is not conceivable without invoking the necessity of design. One cannot be exposed to the law and order of the universe without concluding that there must be design and purpose behind it all. In the world around us, we can behold the obvious manifestations of an ordered, structured plan or design. We can see the will of the species to live and propagate. And we are humbled by the powerful forces at work on a**

galactic scale, and the purposeful orderliness of nature that endows a tiny and ungainly seed with the ability to develop into a beautiful flower. The better we understand the intricacies of the universe and all it harbors, the more reason we have found to marvel at the inherent design upon which it is based.

While the admission of a design for the universe ultimately raises the question of a Designer (a subject outside of science), the scientific method does not allow us to exclude data which lead to the conclusion that the universe, life and man are based on design. To be forced to believe only one conclusion - that everything in the universe happened by chance - would violate the very objectivity of science itself. Certainly there are those who argue that the universe evolved out of a random process, but what random process could produce the brain of a man or the system of the human eye?

Some people say that science has been unable to prove the existence of a Designer. They admit that many of the miracles in the world around us are hard to understand, and they do not deny that the universe, as modern science sees it, is indeed a far more wondrous thing than the creation medieval man could perceive. But they still maintain that since science has provided us with so many answers, the day will soon arrive when we will be able to understand even the creation of the fundamental laws of nature with a Divine Intent. They challenge science to prove the existence of God. But, must we really light a candle to see the sun?

Many men who are intelligent and of good faith say they cannot visualize an electron? The electron is materially inconceivable and yet, it is so perfectly known through its effects that we use it to illuminate our cities, guide our airliners through the night skies and take the most accurate measurements. What strange rationale makes some physicists accept the inconceivable electron as real while refusing to accept the reality of a Designer on the ground that they cannot conceive Him? I am afraid that, although they really do not understand the electron either, they are ready to accept it because they managed to produce a rather clumsy mechanical model of it borrowed from rather limited experience in other fields, but they would not know how to begin building a model of God.

I have discussed the aspect of a Designer at some length because it might be that the primary resistance to acknowledging the "Case for DESIGN" as a viable scientific alternative to the current "Case for CHANCE" lies in the inconceivability, in some scientists' minds, of a Designer. The inconceivability of some ultimate issue (which will always lie outside scientific resolution) should not be allowed to rule out any theory that explains the interrelationship of observed data and is useful for prediction.

We in NASA were often asked what the real reason was for the amazing string of successes we had with our Apollo flights to the Moon. I think the

only honest answer we could give was that we tried to never overlook anything. It is in that same sense of scientific honesty that I endorse the presentation of alternative theories for the origin of the universe, life and man in the science classroom. It would be an error to overlook the possibility that the universe was planned rather than happening by chance.

With kindest regards.

Sincerely,

(signed) Wernher von Braun

**The point I am trying to make by all of these quotes from great men of science is to show that the belief that Jesus is the greatest Creator in the universe is not a far-fetched idea without support of sound reason and evidence. The Christian does not need all of this evidence, for the Bible teaches it clearly and that is sufficient, but all of the support of science backing it up gives us what is needed to appeal to the skeptical world. Jesus gave evidence to support his claim to be the Son of God, and we need to give the world some evidence to believe that faith in what the Bible says is not blind faith, but faith that is moving in the direction that the light is pointing. It is easier for unbelievers to look into the claims of the Bible when they see the evidence of science to support what it claims. Science becomes an important ally in reaching a skeptical world with the truth of the Bible. And that truth is that Jesus Christ is the greatest Creator. This will be even more evident in the new heaven and earth He will create, for all of the awesome wonder and beauty of this world are just the warm up. The best of the best of His creative power and genius is yet to be seen by those who acknowledge Him as the Greatest Savior as well as the Greatest Creator. Let me conclude with a poem I wrote on a passage in Colossians.**

**JESUS IS FIRST, Based on Col. 1:15-20. This can be sung to the tune of Hymn to Joy by Beethoven**

**He's the image of Deity, Icon of God's own  
Being. In Him invisibility Can by human eyes  
be seen. First Born over all creation; All that is  
was by Him made. All things both in earth and  
heaven, He their foundation has laid. Visible  
and invisible, All was created by Him. Every  
power conceivable, Was created just for Him.  
He existed before all things, No exceptions can  
be found. He's the source of power that brings  
Order by which all is bound. He holds  
everything together, And He's the Head of the  
church. There is no need to ask whether We  
should for another search. He is the very  
beginning; He's the firstborn from the dead.  
None can over Him be winning; He is**

supremely ahead. God was pleased to have His fullness Dwell so completely in Him, And through His divine completeness, Reconcile all things to Him. Nothing on earth or in heaven Will make God suffer a loss, For peace He has just the weapon, Through His blood shed on the cross.

## **CHAPTER 5 THE GREATEST GLORY**

### **THE MOST GLORIOUS PERSON IN THE UNIVERSE**

The Hubble telescope has discovered a star in the center of the Milky Way that is startling in its brilliance. The report of its brightness is astounding, for scientists say it glows with the awesome radiance of ten million suns. That is power, glory and brilliance that is beyond our minds to comprehend. Before this discovery the brightest star was Sirius, which was over 20 times brighter than the sun. This new star makes Sirius pale in comparison.

The more we know about God's creation the more we understand that God is light. The first thing he created was physical light. The very first words of God revealed in the Bible are in Gen. 1:3 where God says, "Let there be light." Light is of the very essence of God, and of the very essence of creation. Creation came from the Creator, and they have something in common, and that something is light.

All of life is dependant upon light. Plants absorb light from the sun and produce life, and animals eat the plants for life. Take the light of the sun out of our solar system and all life will cease. Life and light are one, for you cannot have life without light. That is why hell is eternal death, for it is darkness without light, for it is the absence of God, which is the absence of light. Heaven has no darkness or night, for it is everlasting light in God's presence, for God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

Physicists who study subatomic particles realize that all matter is made up of vibrations and light. In other words, all of reality is made in the image of God, who is light. All that the Creator has made has a part of Himself in it, and man is especially made in His image. Jesus was the light of the world and he said that we as his followers are to be the light of the world. This means that all people have some of the light of God, for they were made in God's image. The believer in Christ rises to a higher level of light, for they are to have the light of Christ within them that can shine out for the world to see. But Christ is the most glorious person in the universe, for he is the very radiance of God's glory. Some of God's glory is radiated by all things and beings, but Jesus is the full radiance of His glory. In other words, He is equal with God the Father, and to see Him is to see the Father.

Words wobble, language limps, and communication collapses in its attempt to describe the glory of Jesus. No tongue can ever tell, and no pen can ever write the words that could convey the glory of the site-of Jesus, the radiance of God's glory. But those who love Jesus have tried to do so in poetry. Here is one of my attempts to convey who Jesus is in these first verses of Hebrews.

Glorious is your radiance.  
You're the essence of all light.  
Your majesty's magnificent.  
You're the most wonderful sight.

But the eyes cannot behold you;  
Human words fall impotent;  
All our words of praise is due you,  
Lord of all omnipotent.

The tongue, nor pen, can ever tell  
Of the glory of the Son.  
There's no other that ever shall  
Shine brighter than this great One.

Even the darkness of life's hell  
Can never dim His great light.  
Let joyous praise in our heart swell,  
For He rids our life of night.

He's the radiance of glory.  
He's the image of our God.  
And there is no other story  
Like that of the Son of God.

He is seated at the right hand  
Of the Majesty on high.  
He's the King of everyone's land,  
For He came for all to die.

Even in life's stormy weather  
He's the One in full control.  
He is holding all together,  
Body, spirit, and the soul.

We will praise His name forever,  
King of Kings and Lord of Lords.  
Because of His great endeavor,  
We will share in His rewards.

Here we are looking at a Son who is more glorious than all of the suns of the universe put together, for He is the radiance of the glory of God, which is the cause of all the glory and radiance of the universe. The awesome glory of the new star that has been discovered is but a candle in the light of the glory of Jesus. There are no words to convey the brightness of that one star even, let alone words to convey the brightness of the source of all light in Jesus. All we can say is that Jesus is the most glorious person in all the universe. No one else has ever dreamed of challenging that title, for His splendor is as far beyond that of all other beings as the splendor of that new star is beyond the light in your flashlight. History is filled with great men and women who have lighted up their generation with their great gifts and leadership that changed history for all time, but none can match the glory of Jesus, even in time.

This is not to say that the Glory of God cannot be seen in others, for the Bible makes it clear that it can. In Ex. 34:29 we read, "When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord." He was so brilliant that the people were afraid to come near him, and he had to put a veil over his face. Moses reflected the glory of God in a unique way, but that glory faded. It was a mere reflection that was not permanent, for it was not a part of the essence of Moses. Jesus did not just reflect the radiance of God's glory. He is the radiance of God's glory. It is who He is. It is His essence.

Believers have always been able to reflect some of the glory of God. Ps. 34:5 says, "Those who look to him are radiant..." In II Cor. 3:18 we read, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" We are in the process of being glorified all through life as we spend time in the presence of Christ, and as we open ourselves up to be reflectors of His glory. Progressive glorification is what Christian living is all about. It will be completed when we are changed in the resurrection or rapture and become like Him when we see Him as He is. We will radiate God's glory for all eternity. But no one will ever be the radiance of God's glory but Jesus. He, and He alone, is the exact replica of God's being. He will always be the most glorious person in the universe. Again I am compelled to try to say in poetry what cannot ever be said in any adequate way.

What art can reveal such brightness?

What words can pen ever write?

Jesus is God's very likeness;

He shines with glorious light.

He shines with radiant glory;

No eye could gaze on His face.

Wonderful is the great story,

We can still His light embrace.

He is our radiant Jesus.

He is our Savior on high.

He ever looks down and sees us

As those He will glorify.

**One day our eyes will behold Him.  
In all His glorious light.  
And we'll sing this eternal hymn  
As we praise Him with delight.**

**Glory! Glory! Unto you Lord!  
You're the brightest star of all.  
It is our greatest of reward  
To before your glory fall.**

**You are the radiant Savior.  
You are the source of all light.  
We will not cease this behavior,  
Praising you all day and night.**

**He is radiance and brightness. He is glory, splendor, light. He is the source of all the energy that rids eternity of night. The sun and moon need shine no more, for life does not depend upon them as before. Forever and ever the great I AM will shine upon us with the light of the Lamb. The greatest of pleasures will ever be there in that glorious radiance beyond all compare. We will stand and praise His glory. We will bow and praise His name. It will be our ceaseless story praising Jesus that He came. He brought glory to the earth. He brought glory to the sky. He brought glory of the new birth, so that we need never die. We will live with Him forever, walking ever in His light. And we'll never, no not ever, be out of his glorious sight. He's the most glorious person, who has been, or who can ever be. And it is just for that reason, He will be our song eternally.**

**Drew Worthen wrote, "The Son is the radiance of God's glory" This little phrase shows us that the Father and the Son are one in nature. To radiate God's glory is to shine with the brightness of His glory. To do that you must be of the same essence. Jesus is the radiance of God's glory because they are of the same nature. That's why Jesus said to His disciples in John 14:7 "If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." If we want to see what God is like, we look to Jesus, for when we see Jesus we see God, for He is God. We do not look to angels, to Moses, to the Law, to the priesthood, or to any other person, place or thing for our assurance of salvation, or for our knowledge of the greatness of God.**

**The word used here for radiance, or brightness as in the KJV, is used only this once in the Bible. It means the out-ricing of divine glory. Just as you cannot have the sun without its rays, so you cannot have the glory or light of God without the rays of that glory and light. The two are one, and Jesus is as one with the Father as the rays of light are one with the sun from which they radiate. The glory of God is His combined attributes, and these attributes are seen fully in the Son, just as the rays of the sun convey the attributes of the sun. The sun and its rays are one, as the Father and Son are one. The sun shines and we see its glory in its rays. The Father's majesty and glory shine, and we see it in the life of our Lord. He is the manifestation of all that is to be admired, adored and worshiped in God.**

**John MacArthur has written, "The phrase "being the brightness of His glory" is**

very simple. The brightness is the word *apaugasma*. It means "radiance." It means "to send forth light," or "to send forth brightness." It's simply saying He is the shining forth of God. Just as the radiance of the Sun reaches the earth to light us, to warm us, to give us life and growth, so in Christ do we sense the warmth and radiance of the glorious light of God touching the hearts of men. The brightness of the sun is of the same nature as the Sun. It is as old as the Sun. And never was the sun without its brightness. The brightness of the sun cannot be separated from the sun and yet it is distinct. And so, Christ is God and yet distinct. He is God and yet He is the manifestation of God. He is the glory of the Lord who shouts the reality of God, which is only whispered and spoken in time past. He is the Son of righteousness risen with healing in His beams."

S. Lewis Johnson writes, "'Who does not see,' asks Athanasias, 'that the brightness cannot be separated from the light, but that it is by nature proper to it and co-existent with it and is not produced after it.' For example, we do not think of the sun as having been created and then given light later on, but rather that light belongs to the sun and is part of its being. 'Think not,' St. Ambrose admonishes, 'that there ever was a moment of time that light existed with radiance.' And we read here that the Son of God is the brightness of the glory of God! There never was a time in which the glory of God did not have brightness and our Lord possesses that brightness! Thus, when you look at Jesus Christ, you see all of the rays of the glory of the attributes of the Everlasting God. And only God Himself may reflect the glory of God. So this is a testimony to the deity of the Son of God. When you look at Him, you look at God. When you look at Him you see the true light that lights every man, that has come into the world."

If you want to see a picture of God, and a perfect picture of Him, then look at Jesus, for in seeing His glory you are seeing the glory of God. Louis Evans writes, "The character of God must radiate; He must express Himself. Jesus Christ is the earthly and human expression of God, God's own character in human form... When we analyze Jesus Christ we learn about the radiant source, the glory of God... 'He who has seen me (recognized my true identity, accurately analyzed me) has seen (understood, comprehended) the Father' (John 14:9)." A small boy was looking at a picture of Jesus, musing long over it in thoughtful silence. Noticing the boy's studious quietness, his father asked, "what are you doing, son?" "Looking at this picture of Jesus." Then with an approving and decisive nod of his head, the boy added, "Hmmm, best picture God ever had taken." When we see Jesus we are looking at the face of God. Again, I try to say it in poetry.

**We cannot see God the Father;**

**The Holy Spirit leaves no trace.**

**These facts our faith need not bother,**

**For in Jesus God has a face.**

**God has a face that we can see**

**In both time and eternity.**



He joined the human race just so  
His heavenly Father we could know.  
The eyes of man are so finite  
There's much of God in shades so dim,  
But Jesus came to give the light  
That we might get a glimpse of Him  
You cannot see and live to tell  
If God's glory comes your way,  
But Jesus came and bore our hell  
And by it tore the veil away.  
He let the light of heaven shine  
On this dark world of sin and shame.  
He took away your sin and mine,  
To show love was his aim.  
He came to show to our blind eyes  
What can be found no other place.  
He made it clear as sunny skies,  
That God has a loving face.  
God has a face and we can see it  
If we in his light will run.  
God has a place and we can find it  
If we say "Thy will be done."  
God has a grace and we can feel it  
If all evil ways we shun.  
God has a space and we can fill it  
If we make Him number one.  
God has a face and we can see it

## **In the person of His Son.**

We cannot look into the sun for any length of time without going blind, and we could not look at the glory of God for a second without going blind, and more than likely, without going out of existence in a puff of vapor. But we can behold the glory of God in Jesus, for He brought that glory down into a human existence where men could see the nature of God. In John 1:14 we read, "The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." The earthly life of Jesus was a taste of the glory of God, but Jesus wants his followers to have the full dose of his glory, and so he prays in John 17:24, "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world." We will obviously have new bodies and eyes that are capable of seeing such glory without being vaporized. In heaven we will see the fullness of God's glory in Jesus, and He will be forever the most glorious person in the universe.

Jesus gave some of His disciples a brief glimpse of His heavenly glory on the Mt. of Transfiguration. His face began to shine like the sun and his garments became bright with glorious light. God spoke from heaven saying He was pleased with His Son. Moses and Elijah appeared representing the law and the prophets. The whole picture was revealing that Jesus was superior to all that God had done and spoken before. They were now to listen to the Son, and all of this supernatural expression of glory was to convince them that Jesus was God final and supreme authority. That is also the primary purpose of the book of Hebrews, and especially in these opening verses, which exalt Jesus above all that has ever been, or could ever be. He is the very radiance of God's glory and none can surpass that glory, and so it is folly for the Hebrews, or anyone else, to even think of turning back to the law and prophets, or any other authority, as a foundation on which to build. When you have found Jesus, you have found the very best, and everything and everyone else is like a candle in comparison to the glory of the noonday sun.

Arthur Pink makes this comment: "Someone has suggested an analogy with what is recorded in Matthew 17. There we see Christ upon the holy Mount, transfigured before His disciples; and, as they continue gazing on His flashing excellence, they saw no man "save Jesus only." At first, there appeared standing with Him, Moses and Elijah, and so real and tangible were they, Peter said, "If Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But as they looked "a blight cloud overshadowed them." and a Voice was heard saying, "This is My Beloved Son: hear Him" (Luke 9:35). How significant are the words that immediately followed: "And when the Voice was passed, Jesus was found alone." The glory associated with Moses and Elijah was so eclipsed by the infinitely greater glory connected with Christ, that they faded from view."

A poem written in Venice in 1495 and translated from the Latin by John M. Neale expresses the glory of this experience.

O wondrous sight! O vision fair  
A type of those bright rays on high

**Of glory that the church shall share,  
Which Christ upon the mountain shows,  
Where brighter than the sun He glows!**

**From age to age the tale declares  
How with the three disciples there  
Where Moses and Elijah meet,  
The Lord holds converse high and sweet.**

**The law and prophets there have place,  
Two chosen witnesses of grace,  
The Father's voice from out the cloud  
Proclaims His only Son aloud.**

**With shining face and bright array,  
Christ deigns to manifest that day  
What glory shall be theirs above  
Who joy in God with perfect love.**

**And faithful hearts are raised on high  
By this great vision's mystery;  
For which in joyful strains we raise  
The voice of prayer, the hymn of praise.**

**O Father, with the eternal Son,  
And Holy Spirit, ever One,  
Vouchsafe to bring us by Thy grace  
To see Thy glory face to face.**

Peter was so impressed with what he saw that day on the mountain that he gave his testimony about it in II Pet. 1:16-19. "We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain." Peter uses terms like majesty and Majestic Glory, for these are the highest terms he can find to express just how glorious the sight was. These are terms used of royalty and their grandeur. He was seeing Jesus as the King of Kings with a majesty never experienced or expressed by any other king of history. It is because His glory was expressing the weight and worth of God Himself.

The Amplified Version says, "He is the sole expression of the glory of God the Light-being, the out-lying of the divine and He is the perfect imprint and very image of [God's] nature, upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power." Note, He is the sole expression of the glory of God. There is no other who can convey the fullness of God's glory, for there is no other who is the fullness of God. The fullness of all God's attributes is His glory, and these can be seen nowhere but in Jesus. All other glory is but a faint reflection of the fullness of Glory we see in Jesus. Nobody ever really knows God until they know Him in Jesus. Blot out the

rays of the sun and you will see no sun. Take Jesus out of your view of God and you have no God, but only some man made image. You have no sun without its rays of brilliance, and you have no God without the radiance of Christ. Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." We cannot see God directly, but we can see Him by looking at Jesus.

"The Sun of God in glory beams  
Too bright for us to scan,  
But we can face the light that streams  
From the mild Son of man."

Paul put it in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:6 "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." There is deep Christology in this one phrase of Jesus being the radiance of God's glory, and Dr. Gouge in a commentary way back in 1650 did a great job of expressing it. Let me conclude with what he wrote: "No resemblance taken from any other creature can more fully set out the mutual relation between the Father and the Son: "1. The brightness issuing from the sun is the same nature that the sun is-cf. John 10:30. 2. It is of as long continuance as the sun: never was the sun without the brightness of it-cf. John 1:1. 3. The brightness cannot be separated from the sun: the sun may as well be made no sun, as have the brightness thereof severed from it-cf. Proverbs 8:30. 4. This brightness though from the sun is not the sun itself-cf. John 8:42. 5. The sun and the brightness are distinct from each other: the one is not the other-cf. John 5:17. 6. All the glory of the sun is this brightness-cf. John 17:5; 2 Corinthians 4:6. 7. The light which the sun giveth the world is by this brightness-cf. John 14:9 . . . Thus the Son is no whit inferior to the Father, but every way His equal. He was brightness, the brightness of His Father, yea, also the brightness of His Father's glory. Whatever excellency so ever was in the Father, the same likewise was in the Son, and that in the most transplendent manner. Glory sets out excellency; brightness of glory, the excellency of excellency." There can be no doubt that Jesus is the most glorious person in the universe.

## CHAPTER 6 THE GREATEST IMAGE

This third verse of Hebrews 1 does not merely say that Jesus was like God, or that he was a reflection of God's nature, but it says He is the exact representation of His being. It is not approximate, but the exact representation of His being. In other words, Jesus is exactly like God. He is the greatest image of God we can have because we have in Jesus exactly what we have in God the Father. Like Father, like Son, for they are closer in identity than identical twins. When you see Jesus you see the Father. God had forbidden that His people ever worship any idol that was built to supposedly represent Him. There is nothing on earth or in heaven that can represent God, and so it was folly to ever have anything to be an image of Him. But when God came into history in the person of His Son He was here in person. It is now legitimate to have an image of God to worship when that image is the person of Jesus Christ. To worship Him is to worship God, for they are one and the same. It sounds like heresy, but the reality is that we, as Christians, worship an image of God, and that image is Jesus.

When you have a seal that can make a mark on paper, that mark is an exact copy of the original seal. It may be a seal that is used to put its mark on clay or wax, but it is always just like the original. The reason all our coins look the same is because they are made from the same mold that stamps them as identical to the original. There can be nothing different from the original in the copy. The point is, God is represented perfectly in the copy of Himself, which is Jesus. There is no difference between God the Father and God the Son. Any characteristic you find in Jesus will be a characteristic of the Father, and vice versa. As Pink says, "All that God is, in His nature and character, is expressed and manifested, absolutely and perfectly, by the incarnate Son." In Col. 1:15 we read it again, "He is the image of the invisible God..." All that we cannot see of God because He is invisible, we can see in Jesus who is His image. We know exactly what the original seal looks like because we have the image and impress of it. We know exactly what God is like because we have an exact copy in Jesus. He is the visible manifestation of the invisible. J. B. Phillips put it, "Jesus is God in focus."

This is Christology at its highest level, for in essence it is saying that Jesus is God. Paul spelled it out even more clearly in Col. 2:9 where he says, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form...." Jesus is the fullness of Deity means that He is fully God. Those who do not accept the New Testament revelation that makes clear that Jesus is God are not New Testament believers.

Pastor Worthen writes, "The Greek word used for exact representation is (charakter) which is where we get our English word character, which could mean a symbol used to describe a particular letter of the alphabet. And so by inference they're interchangeable. If I say the letter A, you think of the character which has two slanted lines coming together at the top with a vertical line in between connecting the two slanted lines. If I were to show you this character you would immediately think of A. (One and the same)."

His point is, just as when you see the character A you know that it is A, so when you see Jesus you know it is God you are looking at. He is the character that represents God, for He is the image of God. All people are made in the image of God, and this means that even though fallen with a marred image they still have some of the characteristics of God that no other creature has. But Jesus has them all in perfection and fullness. He is the exact representation of God.

What this means is that all the virtues, graces and attributes of God are combined in Jesus in complete harmony. He is all that man was meant to be in perfection, for He has all of the image of God in fullness and completeness. Every attribute of God that we can study equally applies to Jesus. No one can compare with him - not Mohammed, not Krishna, not Buddha and not Confucius. Not even Moses can compare with Jesus. As with all of the other statements in these first three verses of Hebrews, comparison is impossible, for there are no others in any of the categories where Jesus is exalted. He is the ultimate and the greatest in every category, and this is certainly true for this category of being the exact image of God.

**Jesus was a character. We often say this about someone who is strange and unusual in behavior. This certainly fits Jesus, for He was always doing something out of the ordinary. He was not your usual personality. He was a character, for He was God in human flesh. We would expect God to be somewhat unusual and different from the average person. He loved people that others hated and wanted nothing to do with. He healed people who others would just avoid and say they deserve what they suffer. He befriended people that were rejected by society. He violated the legalism of the religious leaders of his day. He spoke in private with a woman, and let women follow him and even supply the money needed to keep his group in operation. He was a radical in numerous ways, but when he had the power to escape from his enemies he voluntarily went to the cross to lay down his life, and while dying forgave those who nailed him there. He was a real character, for He had the character of God. God's character was stamped on Jesus's very being, and so He had to be as different as God is different from fallen man.**

**It was because man is fallen they could not see who Jesus was. Paul says it in II Cor. 4:4, "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." It should not be surprising that there are so many who are not impressed with Jesus. He is still despised and rejected by many who will not see Him as anything but a religious fanatic. But for those who are enlightened, He is the greatest character that ever walked this earth, and He is the greatest image of God because He was God in human flesh.**

**One commentator adds to our grasp of what this means in these words: "Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:4 and in Colossians 1:15 says, "Christ is the image of God." And he uses a different word, the word is eikon which means "an exact reproduction, an exact image or a precise copy." So whether it's charakter or whether it's eikon, Jesus is the stamp of God, the mark of God, the seal of God, the image of God, the reproduction of God, the precise copy of God. And may I hasten to add that those words even at their best come short of the reality of the truth because it's impossible to express that He is in fact the very essence of God in any analogous way without losing something. I think it's best expressed in Colossians 2:9 where Paul says, "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."**

**The Father and the Son side by side showing how Jesus is an exact reproduction and representation of the Father. Some of the parallels are weak, but over all it is clear that Jesus and the Father are one.**

**God is the only Savior in Isa. 43:11, and Jesus is the only Savior in Acts 4:12 and I John 4:14**

**God created the universe in Isa. 44:24, and Jesus created it in Heb. 1:10 and Col. 1:16**

**God is the first and the last in Isa. 41:4, and Jesus is the first and the last in Rev. 1:17**

**God forgives sin in Psalms 103:2-3, and Jesus forgives sin in Mark 2:5**

**God is our redeemer in Isa. 63:16, and Jesus is our redeemer in Titus 2:13-14**

**God is the holy one in Psa. 78:41, and Jesus is the holy one in Acts 2:27**

**God is worshipped in Matt. 4:10, and Jesus is worshipped in Matt. 9:18**

**God is from everlasting in Ps. 93:1-2, and Jesus is from everlasting in Micah 5:**

**God is the I Am in Ex. 3:14, and Jesus is the I Am in John 8:58**

**God is the Judge of the whole earth in Ps. 94:1-2, and Jesus is the Judge of all in John 5:22**

**There are many more parallels, but you can see what Jesus meant in John 14:9 where he said, “He who has seen me has seen the Father.” If God looked into a mirror He would see Jesus, and Jesus doing the same would see the Father. They are identical, even though they are two distinct persons. If you see Jesus full of compassion and love for those with any need, you are seeing God responding to people with acts of love. If you see Jesus forgiving the sinner, you are seeing the grace of God being expressed. Every good thing you see in Jesus is a picture of the mind and heart of God. I have tried to say this in poetry.**

**Jesus is the exact image Of the Majesty on high.**

**He is the Lord of every age, But He stooped for us to die.**

**There is no one who is like Him, For He’s just one of a kind.**

**Victories like His none can win, Nor a better Savior find.**

**He’s exactly like the Father, No one can tell them apart.**

**To divide them do not bother, They are One in mind and heart.**

**Jesus is the visible manifestation of the invisible God. He is the paradox resolved, for God cannot be seen, but we do see Him in Jesus. Jesus shows us God. Jesus explains God. Jesus reflects God. Jesus reveals God. Jesus is God. And that is why He is the exact representation of God, and why He is the greatest image in the universe. He, and He alone, is the perfect image of God, and He alone is the perfect image of Man made in the image of God. There can be no comparison with other great religious leaders and founders, for He is truly unique and one of a kind. No one else is exactly like God, for no one else is God but Jesus. In Him we see God, and I express it in poetry to end this message.**

**We cannot see God the Father;**

**The Holy Spirit leaves no trace.**

**These facts our faith need not bother,**

**For in Jesus God has a face.**

**God has a face that we can see**

**In both time and eternity.**

He joined the human race just so  
His heavenly Father we could know.  
The eyes of man are so finite  
There's much of God in shades so dim,  
But Jesus came to give the light  
That we might get a glimpse of Him  
You cannot see and live to tell  
If God's glory comes your way,  
But Jesus came and bore our hell  
And by it tore the veil away.  
He let the light of heaven shine  
On this dark world of sin and shame.  
He took away your sin and mine,  
To show love was his aim.  
He came to show to our blind eyes  
What can be found no other place.  
He made it clear as sunny skies,  
That God has a loving face.  
God has a face and we can see it,  
If we in his light will run.  
God has a place and we can find it  
If we say "Thy will be done."  
God has a grace and we can feel it,  
If all evil ways we shun.  
God has a space and we can fill it,  
If we make Him number one.  
God has a face and we can see it



**In the person of His Son.**

## **CHAPTER 7 THE GREATEST SUSTAINER**

Anne Graham Lotz in her book *Just Give Me Jesus* tells of her father Billy Graham being given a watch by a friend, and after some time it stopped working. His wife took it to a jewelry store to get it fixed, but they could not do it. She took it to several and they all said it could not be fixed. Then when she went to Switzerland she took it along and sent the watch to the company that made it. They returned it fixed for they made it and they knew how to make it work again. So Jesus who made all things can repair them and sustain them and make them work again. He can save all things as well as people. We seldom think of it, but there has to be a power that keeps all things going in this universe. Everything is in motion from the particles in each atom to the largest stars in the galaxy. The energy to keep all things moving is beyond imagination and calculation. Hebrews makes it clear that Jesus is the source of all that vast energy, for He is the sustainer of all things.

The Deist idea that God just made the universe and then let it run on its own as He turned His attention to other things is not the picture the Bible gives us. The Creator is actively involved in the operation of all He has made. The laws of nature are His energy at work to keep everything working according to plan. He maintains what He has made to keep it in working order. The material creation is not independent of its Creator, but needs someone to manage and maintain it in order for it to continue its existence and progress.

Jesus has the whole universe in His hands, and if He should let go and cease to sustain it, it would collapse into a massive heap of rubble, and then fade into extinction. We think of dead matter as having no life, but the fact is even the inanimate creation is made up of atoms in constant motion. If the energy of that motion ceases, it would cease to exist. All things are in motion, and the energy of that motion is in the powerful word of Jesus. He made it all come into being by His Word, and He keeps it sustained and maintained by that same all-powerful Word.

Jesus is a hands on Creator. He does not just sit on a heavenly throne and watch what happens to His creation. He is actively involved in its continuous operation. He is the infinite source of energy that keeps the entire universe functioning as it was meant to function.

We have a picture of Jesus here that is totally different than what we usually get, for He is Lord, not just of the spiritual realm, but of the natural realm. There is no distinction between secular and sacred with Jesus, for He is Lord of both realms. His Word not only saves the sinner, but it also saves the material universe. It upholds the universe of matter. It supports, maintains, and preserves the physical reality of all that man can see and study. We usually only think of Jesus as the Lord of the spiritual realm with angels and saints singing His praises as Savior and King of Kings. But here we get a picture of Jesus as the One that is the power behind all that men study in Physics, geology, astronomy, and all studies that have to do with the material realm of what exists. Jesus is actually the center of everything, and not just those things we call spiritual. Everything man studies has a source of energy and

order behind it, and that source is our Lord. He is Lord of all, and this means, not just all people, but all things. He is the Greatest Sustainer, because He sustains everything. He brought everything into being and He sustains its being, or it would cease being. Nothing exists independent of His power to sustain it.

There is no competition for this title of The Greatest Sustainer, for there are no others who have ever claimed to be the source of the energy that holds all things together. In Col. 1:17 Paul says of Jesus, “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” The things said of Jesus cannot be said of any other person in history. If He is not the Son of God, and equal with God, it is preposterous what is said, and even blasphemy, as the Jews said who killed him. He is not in the same category with other great religious leaders at all, for none made such claims, and no such claims are made for them. Jesus is not only superior to all others, He is supreme over all others and all other powers, for the power of His Word is the ultimate power. It is first-

### **UPHOLDING POWER**

The KJV has “Upholding all things...” Williams has, “and continues to uphold the universe...” Amplified has, “upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe...” You get the picture of one who supports the universe, and that if He did not, it would collapse, for it does not have the strength on its own to stand and continue operating. There are those who do not like this word upholding because it pictures Jesus like Atlas holding the world up on his shoulders. The word here is more active than that, and it has to do with motion. Jesus is the power that keeps everything in motion. You have many electric particles revolving around every atom in the universe, and every body of matter in the universe is revolving. The whole of reality as we know it is in perpetual motion, and there is some source of power that keeps it going, and that power is Jesus. Take Him out of any equation and you have death. Jesus is the life of all being, for He is the power that makes it possible for all things to continue to exist, and this includes us.

In Psalm 37:17 we read, “For the power of the wicked will be broken, but the Lord upholds the righteous.” We have the upholding power of the universe at our side, so if we fall, He is able to uphold us and keep us going. In verses 23 and 24 of this same Psalm we read, “The Lord delights in the way of the man whose steps he has made firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord uphold him with his hand.” The same word is used in Psalm 119:116, but is translated sustain. “Sustain me according to your promise and I will live;..” In Psalm 145:14 we read, “The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.” In Isaiah 41:10 we read, “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” The point is, there is a power in this universe that cares about life and order and the continuation of all that is good and righteous. That power is Jesus, and He is the one who upholds us, as well as the world, and all of the galaxies of space. The book of Hebrews stresses that Jesus became man in order to fully understand man and what he experience so that he could sympathize and give them encouragement to uplift them in times of temptation and trial.

There is hope and help for our sighs and tears,  
For the wound that stings and smarts.  
Our God is at home with the rolling spheres,  
And at home with the broken hearts. -Arthur Petrie.

It is so wonderful that we can know the Person behind the Power that upholds and sustains all that is. He is our Savior, and the One who upholds us in the race of life. We get weary and stumble and sometimes want to give up, but He upholds us and gives us the energy to keep going. By His power we will persevere to the end. Everything He created will by His guidance and providence attain the end for which it was made. He is able to uphold all, including those who trust in Him, and save all from the evils that tend to deprive them of life. We have no concept of the battles that may be going on in this universe with the principalities and powers in heavenly places. All we know by God's revelation is that Jesus is the supreme power and He is our assurance that the victory will be won over all the forces that seek to destroy what He has made.

Beneath His watchful eye  
His saints securely dwell;  
That hand which bears all nature up  
Shall guard His children well. -Doddridge

## II. UNIVERSAL POWER

Sometimes we tend to think that because Jesus finished the work of salvation on the cross that he has little to do now as he rests on His throne in heaven. But the fact is He is in charge of administering the entire universe as well as being our advocate before God. He is ever interceding for the saints, and He is ever maintaining the order of the whole creation. There is nobody anywhere more busy than Jesus, but fortunately His power is infinite and so He gets all His work done by the power of His Word. You can get a lot done even while sitting when you have unlimited power in your words. In fact, you can get everything done, and you can govern the whole universe. It does not take a great deal of insight to recognize that this makes Jesus superior to everyone. The power that keeps the universe going is a Person, and that Person is Jesus. It makes me want to write a poem to express that Jesus is the power behind all that impresses us in our study of the universe. All the awesome energy and beauty in the universe has its source in Him. I say it in poetry-

There is power beyond measure  
In this universe we see.  
And this truth we greatly treasure:  
It's not it, but it's a He.

**Jesus is the greatest power,  
On the land and on the sea.  
He from the very first hour  
Sustains all that came to be.**

**By His power all has begun.  
He started all in motion.  
He made every star and our sun,  
And every sea and ocean.**

**Everything moves as directed  
Some great power all does bind,  
And it is clearly detected,  
That behind all is a Mind.**

**There is nothing that is by chance,  
For behind all is a plan.  
There is a universal dance  
Written by the Son of Man.**

**This universal dance I refer to is the dance of life that Jesus has put into all reality, and that includes what we call inanimate matter. It is dead matter we call it, but we know that even dead matter is alive with motion. Every atom in a rock is filled with motion. In fact, in the Old Testament Jesus was the rock that gave forth the water to the people of God as the wandered in the wilderness. Paul writes in I Cor.10:4, "...for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ." There is life in rocks even, and that is why the mountains and the hills can break forth in praise of God. If people did not praise Jesus even the rocks would cry out. The point is that there is life and motion in all that exists. Everything is moving in harmony with the tune Jesus writes for the dance of creation.**

**Dr. J. Brown writes, "The term 'uphold' seems to refer both to preservation and government. 'By Him the worlds were made'-their materials were called into being, and arranged in comely order: and by Him, too, they are preserved from running into confusion, or reverting back into nothing. The whole universe hangs on His arm; His un-searchable wisdom and boundless power are manifested in governing and directing the complicated movements of animate and inanimate, rational, and irrational beings, to the attainment of His own great and holy purposes; and He does this by the word of His power, or by His powerful word. All this is done without effort or difficulty. He speaks, and it is done; He commands, and it stands fast."**

**What holds everything together? This is a question that science asks and seeks for an answer, but all they have found is that it takes an incredible amount of power to hold even an atom together. If you split them there is a release of enormous energy. The power in a small amount of matter is amazing, and man has learned how to use that power and have atomic energy. But they still do not know what the source of that power is that holds all things together. The Bible tells us that it is Jesus. COL 1:17 says, "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." Philo said that the Logos, the Word, is the bond of the**

universe. Jesus is called the superglue that holds the universe together. If He did not sustain it, it would fly apart and be destroyed. By His releasing His power over anything He can cause it to explode into fragments. I found this interesting example:

**“A Navy pilot was describing his complex helicopter to his parents one day. He told them that a small hexagonal nut held the main rotor to the mast of the helicopter.**

**"Guess what we call that nut?" he asked his mother. She could only shrug her shoulders. With a smile, the pilot answered his own question: "It's called a Jesus nut."**

**That may sound irreverent, but here's an explanation. If that small piece of metal ever came off, the helicopter would not be able to stay in the air but would come crashing to the ground. So it's understandable why pilots in the Vietnam War gave that little part the name "Jesus nut."**

**The whole universe is like a helicopter. It depends on some power to hold it together, and if that power that does so did not function, the whole universe would fly apart and crash into oblivion. Everything owes its existence and preservation to the universal power of Jesus Christ. He sits on the throne of the universe for He is King over all. The praises of all creation that we read of in the Psalms is very appropriate when we realize the truth of Jesus as the sustainer of all. Everything that exists has reason to praise the Creator, for He is also the source of the power that keeps them in existence moment by moment. Paul said in Acts 17:28, “For in Him we live and move and have our being.” And this applies to all that exists, and not just to people.**

**Jesus demonstrated His power over all things to some degree in his earthly ministry. The winds and the waves responded to His word. He could make sickness dissolve before people eyes, and body deformities would vanish at His word. Lifeless bodies would come to life again when he commanded it. He had control of things even in the limitations of the flesh. He made all things and He knew how to fix them when they were broken. After His resurrection he said that all power in heaven and on earth was His, and so now as He sits at the right hand of God He is in control of the entire universe. We owe Him thanks, not only for saving us, but for sustaining us, for we cannot even live without His sustaining power. Our very existence depends upon His sustaining power. We cannot even have existence, let alone salvation, without Jesus. If He did not preserve us moment by moment, we would cease to exist. And this is true of all the universe. In Him it all lives and moves and has its being. One word from Christ and anything that is can cease to be, for it He is the power that sustains it, He is also the power that can let it collapse and cease to be. There is nothing and no one who is independent, for God alone is independent and self-sufficient. All else is dependent upon His power for its being and continuing.**

**The whole context here stresses the universality of Jesus and His power. He is not just the sustainer of many things, or even of most things, but of all things. These first verses of Hebrews stress the all things. He is described as-**

**The receiver of all things.**

**The creator of all things.**

**The revealer of all things.**

**The sustainer of all things.**

**The redeemer of all things.  
The ruler over all things.**

**Chrysostom, the great preacher of the fourth century wrote, “He holds together what would fall to pieces; For, to hold the world together, is no less than to make it, but even greater (if one must say a strange thing). For the one is to bring forward something out of things which are not: but the other, when things which have been made are about to fall back into non-existence, to hold and fasten them together, utterly at variance as they are with each other: this is indeed great and wonderful, and a certain proof of exceeding power.” Today we have a far greater understanding of just how exceeding great is the power needed to preserve life and order just on our small planet.**

**Our earth must be maintained at just the distance it is from the sun or we would burn if it got closer, or freeze if it got further away. Life depends on the maintaining of the exact distance we are now. Our planet is tilted on an exact angle of 23 degrees, which gives us our four seasons. If it was not tilted and maintained there the vapors from the ocean would move north and eventually fill the earth with ice. If the moon was not kept at the right distance the ocean tides would flood the world. If our atmosphere thinned out, we would be bombarded by meteors. We could go on and on about all of the things that need to be kept in perfect balance to maintain life on this planet. Jesus is the one who is doing the maintaining. If He lets go of the reins of power, it is all over, and the end of the world. We only survive day by day because He sustains the order necessary for life.**

**Elisabet Sahtouris writes a lot about the dance of earth, and about how some power maintains the balance that makes life possible. Here are a few examples:**

**“The atmospheres of the other planets in our solar system all make sense chemically as stable mixtures of gases. Only Earth has an atmosphere that is quite impossible by the laws of chemistry. Its gases should have burned each other up long ago.**

**If they had, Earth would have no living creatures. And of course it does. They make and use almost the entire mixture of gases we call the atmosphere, ever feeding it new supplies as they use it and as it burns itself up chemically. This activity of living things always keeps the atmosphere in just the right balance for the life of Earth to continue. We can compare it to the activity of our cells in producing, using, and renewing the blood, lymph, and intercellular fluids flowing around them. Living creatures, for example, produce four billion tons of new oxygen every year to make up for use and loss. They also make huge amounts of methane, which regulates the amount of oxygen in the air at any time, and they keep the air well diluted with harmless nitrogen. In fact, the Gaian atmosphere is held at very nearly 21 percent oxygen all the time. A little more and fires would start all over our planet, even in wet grass. A little less and we, along with all other air-breathing creatures, would die.”**

**There are a number of scientists today who are writing about this intelligence that is seen in all of creation. It is as if matter itself has wisdom and is able to act in such a way as to do what is best for the system as a whole. Science can never discover what the Bible**

reveals, and that is that there is wisdom in matter because the all-wise Creator is sustaining and maintaining it so that it accomplishes His purpose. There is purpose in the universe because it is maintained by the wisdom and intelligence of the Creator, who is Jesus Christ. Without Jesus you have a universe that is a machine, which makes itself and repairs itself. This is harder to believe than believing that there is an intelligent Creator behind it all. Science and faith are in agreement that the universe is full of intelligence and order and purpose, but many scientists are not willing to agree that that intelligence is personal. But this is the heart of the Biblical faith. When a scientist explains the universe he often explains it in terms of the dance going on in all matter. For example:

**“Physicist Fritjof Capra, who pioneered our understanding of the intriguing parallels between Western quantum physics and Eastern mysticism, put it this way:**

**“Modern physics has shown that the rhythm of creation and destruction is not only manifest in the turn of the seasons and in the birth and death of all living creatures, but is also the very essence of inorganic matter. According to quantum field theory, all interactions between the constituents of matter take place through the emission and absorption of virtual particles. More than that, the dance of creation and destruction is the basis of the very existence of matter, since all material particles "self-interact" by emitting and reabsorbing virtual particles. Modern physics has thus revealed that every subatomic particle not only performs an energy dance, but also is an energy dance; a pulsating process of creation and destruction.”**

**All of the multiplicity and variety of energies in the universe have one common source, and that is Jesus. That is why it is a universe and not a multi-verse. It is multi in many ways, but the source of all its multiplied variety is the same. Jesus plays the tune to which all reality dances. Just as there is oneness in God’s essence, even though He is a multiple of Persons, so there is a oneness to all creation, even though it is filled with a multiplicity of differences. This means there is an ultimate oneness to all reality, including Creator and creation, because there is only one source of all the power in existence, and that is Jesus. It is pure folly to ever put Jesus into the same category with any other person or group of persons, for He is so unique that one of a kind is the only way to describe Him. He is God, and nothing less can describe who Jesus is.**

**Science knows there is an amazing power holding all things together, but they cannot figure out what it is. Lee Chestnut wrote a book called The Atom Speaks. In it he wrote, “Consider the dilemma of the nuclear physicist, when he looks in utter amazement at the pattern that he has drawn of the oxygen nucleus. For here are eight positively charged protons closely associated together within the confines of this tiny nucleus. With them are eight neutrons; a total out of sixteen particles: eight positively charged; and eight with no charge.” Dr. James MacDonald makes comment on this:**

**“Now if you’re not scientific, you think that’s not a big deal. But hang on. Coulomb’s Law of Electrostatic Force states that like particles, when put together, repel each other. So**

scientists begin to wonder, “What holds the nucleus together? Why doesn’t it fly apart? Why don’t all atoms fly apart?” Scientists admit that there is an incredibly powerful force that holds all of these teeny particles together, but they have no explanation for why it exists.”

One of the physicists who developed the Big Bang Theory puzzled over how we could live in a world in which practically every object was a potential nuclear explosion, and yet not be blown to bits. Carl Darrow, a physicist at Bell Laboratories, wrote that these particles have no right to be alive at all—they never should have been created and, if created, they should have blown up instantly. Yet there is something that relentlessly holds them together.

What is this force that keeps the universe intact? Where does the power come from to keep the universe from instantly dissolving into one massive nuclear explosion? The answer is found in Colossians 1:17, which teaches that it is Jesus who upholds all things: “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” Not only did Jesus Christ create all things (verse 16), He is the one holding it all together. Jesus Christ is the power behind every mysterious force in the universe.”

This is also who the book of Hebrews is teaching by saying Jesus is the sustainer of all things. We have the answer to one of the greatest mysteries of science, and that answer is that Jesus is the greatest sustainer in the universe, for He sustains and holds together everything in the universe. If this is not enough to get you to glorify Jesus and worship Him as Lord, then there is nothing that can. Those who grasp just who Jesus is will join the universal chorus of heaven that we read of in Rev. 5:12-14. “In a loud voice they sang: “Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” 13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!” 14 The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshipped.” Let us join them in praise to the Greatest Sustainer.

## **CHAPTER 8 THE GREATEST SACRIFICE**

One of my favorite poets is William L. Stidger, and I want to begin this message with one of his poems.

### **I SAW GOD WASH THE WORLD**

I saw God wash the world last night  
With his sweet showers on high,  
And then, when morning came, I saw  
Him hang it out to dry.

He washed each tiny blade of grass  
And every trembling tree;  
He flung his showers against the hill,



**And swept the billowing sea.**

**The white rose is a cleaner white,  
The red rose is more red,  
Since God washed every fragrant face  
And put them all to bed.**

**There's not a bird, there's not a bee  
That wings along the way  
But is a cleaner bird and bee  
Than it was yesterday.**

**I saw God wash the world last night.  
Ah, would He had washed me  
As clean of all my dust and dirt  
As that old white birch tree.**

**We know it was not dust and dirt that he longed to have cleaned, for he did not need God's help to wash that off. He could have taken a bath or a shower, or even jumped into a lake to achieve that goal. What he is longing for is the universal desire to be forgiven and cleansed from the dirt of the soul so that he could be free from all guilt for his sins. The good news is that God has made this possible. He did not do it last night, and He did not do it by means of rain. He did it at Calvary by means of the sacrifice of His Son. We used to sing the old hymns that went-What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus, and Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. I have written what Stidger could have written -**

**I saw God wash the world that day  
When His Son died on the cross.  
His Son Jesus had hell to pay  
To spare us eternal loss.**

**He shed His blood for all sinners,  
Now all can be forgiven.  
In Him we all can be winners,  
Living forever in heaven.**

**It was the greatest sacrifice  
That any had ever made.  
For cleansing sin it did suffice  
All our debt has now been paid.**

**I saw God wash the world that day  
When He gave His Son to die.  
He washed all of our sin away,  
And from guilt did purify.**

That is what Heb. 1:3 is saying by the phrase, “After He had provided purification for sins...” That is when He ascended and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Jesus accomplished His goal for coming to earth when He died for the sins of the world, and by that sacrifice made it possible for any who put their trust in Him to be cleansed and made fit to join Him in the presence of God forever. There has never been a sacrifice that achieved so much for so many. History is filled with sacrifices that have saved the earthly lives of many people, but never has there been another sacrifice that cleansed from sin and saved people for all eternity. Jesus has no competition in this area, for there are none who even claim that they have been able to make it possible for all sin to be forgiven by their sacrifice. Jesus is the greatest in every area where He competes, but in this area there are no competitors, and so His is the greatest sacrifice in the universe.

If you study the word sacrifice in the New Testament you will discover that the book of Hebrews uses the word more than all the rest of the New Testament together. The Hebrew Christians it is written to have grown up all their lives going to the temple and depending upon the sacrifice of animals and the ministry of the priests and high priest. It is the only sacrifice they knew, and they needed to be educated in understanding the once for all sacrifice of Jesus that did away with all that was basic to their Old Testament faith. Once they could grasp how superior this sacrifice was they could let go of the old without fear and anxiety that they were forsaking the plan of God.

Hebrews does recognize that the old system was God’s plan at the time, but that in Christ there is a better and complete plan. In Heb. 9:23 we read, “It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.” Then he goes on to say in verse 26, “But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.” In 10:10 we read, “...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Then in 10:11-12 we read, “Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.” Hebrews is making it clear that the once for all sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was greater than all the billions of animals that have been sacrificed for atoning for sin. All of them together did not cleanse from a single sin, but His once for all sacrifice made it possible for every sin to be cleansed. It was, without a doubt, the greatest sacrifice ever.

The author of Hebrews is trying to prevent the Hebrew Christians from going back to their old trust in the temple sacrifices. They are suffering for becoming Christians and there is a temptation to go back to what was safe and escape the persecution they had to endure by becoming Christians. He is trying to make the point that it is better to suffer in following Christ and being loyal to Him than to go back to what will not cleanse from sin and make them acceptable to God. Change has been hard on them, and costly, but it is worth any price they have to pay to gain the eternal benefits of the sacrifice of Jesus. They have to suffer by their choice to be loyal to Jesus, but it is still better than continuing in the old system that does not work, for that is fatal. No number of animal sacrifices will make them acceptable to God.

An ideal example of what their conflict was all about is the agony of defeat video seen by millions on "The Wide World of Sports" program. The skier is coming down the jump when all of a sudden he falls off the side and goes smashing against the rail and tumbles down the hill. It looks like he will spend the rest of his life in a wheel chair if he survives this terrible accident. But the fact is, it was his choice to make that painful fall. He realized half way down the ramp that he was going too fast and that if he completed the jump he would land on level ground, and this could be fatal. He had to abort the jump and take that awful tumble. We see it as the agony of defeat, but he may have saved his life by doing it. He suffered only minor injuries by that fall, but may have ended his life by continuing. Those Hebrews who continued to trust in the sacrifice of animals for their sins were risking their lives, but those who took the tumble of suffering to trust in Jesus alone, and His once for all sacrifice, were paying a small price for such an ultimate success. It was preventative suffering, just as it was for that skier. In essence Hebrews is saying to take the fall for Jesus. Sticking with the old is fatal, but trusting Jesus is only painful for a time. It may look like the agony of defeat, but it is the way of the greatest wisdom and the greatest success.

The reason that the sacrifice of Jesus was the greatest ever is because it is the only sacrifice that ever worked. All the animal sacrifices just pointed to the need for blood to be shed and life paid for cleansing from sin. God's justice demands that when His law is violated there is a penalty that has to be paid. The wages of sin is death, and so that is the penalty that must be paid if the guilty are to be set free. Death came upon all, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The only hope would be a substitute who could die in our place so the penalty would be paid, and we could be free from it, and not have to pay it with our own lives. Jesus became that substitute and took on himself the guilt of the whole world. As the perfect Lamb of God he died for the sins of the world. It is beyond our comprehension why He would do so. We know He is a God of love and compassion, but it is still hard to comprehend why He would take our place and suffer the penalty that is rightfully ours. We need earthly illustrations to help us grasp the wonder of this great sacrifice. We get a taste of what God did in this true story that I read about.

"After a few of the usual Sunday evening hymns, the church's preacher slowly stood up, walked over to the pulpit and, before he gave his sermon for the evening, briefly introduced a guest minister who was in the service that evening. In the introduction, the preacher told the congregation that the guest minister was one of his dearest childhood friends and that he wanted him to have a few moments to greet the church and share whatever he felt would be appropriate for the service. With that, an elderly man stepped up to the pulpit and began to speak.

"A father, his son, and a friend of his son were sailing off the Pacific coast," he began, "When a fast approaching storm blocked any attempt to get back to the shore. The waves were so high, that even though the father was an experienced sailor, he could not keep the boat upright and the three were swept into the ocean as the boat capsized." The old man hesitated for a moment, making eye contact with two teenagers who were, for the first time since the service began, looking somewhat interested in his story. The aged minister continued with his story, "Grabbing a rescue line, the father had to make the most

excruciating decision of his life: to which boy he would throw the other end of the life line. He only had seconds to make the decision. The father knew that his son was a Christian and he also knew that his son's friend was not. The agony of his decision could not be matched by the torrent of waves. "As the father yelled out, 'I love you, son!' he threw out the life line to his son's friend. By the time the father had pulled the friend back to the capsized boat, his son had disappeared beneath the raging swells into the black of night. His body was never recovered."

"By this time, the two teenagers were sitting up straight in the pew, anxiously waiting for the next words to come out of the old minister's mouth. "The father," he continued, "knew his son would step into eternity with Jesus and he could not bear the thought of his son's friend stepping into an eternity without Jesus. Therefore, he sacrificed his son to save the son's friend. How great is the love of God that he should do the same for us. Our heavenly father sacrificed his only begotten Son that we could be saved. I urge you to accept his offer to rescue you and take a hold of the life line he is throwing out to you in this service." With that, the old man turned and sat back down in his chair as silence filled the room. The preacher again walked slowly to the pulpit and delivered a brief sermon with an invitation at the end. However, no one responded to the appeal.

"Within minutes after the service ended, the two teenagers were at the old man's side. "That was a nice story," politely stated one of the boys, "but I don't think it was very realistic for a father to give up his only son's life in hopes that the other boy would become a Christian." "Well, you've got a point there," the old man replied, glancing down at his worn bible. A big smile broadened his narrow face, he once again looked up at the boys and said, "It sure isn't very realistic, is it? But I'm standing here today to tell you that story gives me a glimpse of what it must have been like for God to give up his son for me. You see --- I was that father and your preacher is my son's friend."

J. Allen Peterson gives this simple illustration: "I read about a small boy who was consistently late coming home from school. His parents warned him one day that he must be home on time that afternoon, but nevertheless he arrived later than ever. His mother met him at the door and said nothing.

At dinner that night, the boy looked at his plate. There was a slice of bread and a glass of water. He looked at his father's full plate and then at his father, but his father remained silent. The boy was crushed. The father waited for the full impact to sink in, then quietly took the boy's plate and placed it in front of himself. He took his own plate of meat and potatoes, put it in front of the boy, and smiled at his son. When that boy grew to be a man, he said, "All my life I've known what God is like by what my father did that night."

Another illustration is in the story of a one-room schoolhouse in the mountains of Virginia where it was nearly impossible to get a teacher to stay because of the roughness of the boys. No teacher had been able to handle them. The teller of this story goes on, "Then one day an inexperienced young teacher applied. He was told that every teacher had received an awful beating, but the teacher accepted the risk. The first day of school the teacher asked the boys to establish their own rules and the penalty for breaking the rules. The class came up with 10 rules, which were written on the blackboard. Then the

teacher asked, 'What shall we do with one who breaks the rules?'

""Beat him across the back ten times without his coat on,' came the response.

"A day or so later, . . . the lunch of a big student, named Tom, was stolen. 'The thief was located-a little hungry fellow, about ten years old.'

"As Little Jim came up to take his licking, he pleaded to keep his coat on. 'Take your coat off,' the teacher said. 'You helped make the rules!'

"The boy took off the coat. He had no shirt and revealed a bony little crippled body. As the teacher hesitated with the rod, Big Tom jumped to his feet and volunteered to take the boy's licking.

""Very well, there is a certain law that one can become a substitute for another. Are you all agreed?' the teacher asked.

"After five strokes across Tom's back, the rod broke. The class was sobbing. 'Little Jim had reached up and caught Tom with both arms around his neck. 'Tom, I'm sorry that I stole your lunch, but I was awful hungry. Tom, I will love you till I die for taking my licking for me! Yes, I will love you forever!'"

This is to be our response to the sacrifice of Jesus in taking our place in paying the penalty for sin. By so doing he provided purification for sin, or as some versions have it, "He made an expiation for the sins of men." Others have it, "He had effected our cleansing from sin," or, "He had brought about the purgation of sins." The bottom line is that His sacrifice made it possible for us to escape the penalty of sin, which is our justification; the power of sin, which is our sanctification, and the presence of sin, which is our glorification. Our complete salvation was purchased by the greatest sacrifice in the universe, and how can our response be less than that of the little boy who said, "I will love you forever?"

We may not know, we cannot tell,  
What pains he had to bear,  
But we believe it was for us  
He hung and suffered there.

And because we believe it, we will praise Him forever for this great salvation. He paid an enormous price that we might have everlasting peace.

He was betrayed by Judas.

He was denied by Peter.

He was abandoned by the disciples.

He was persecuted by the scribes.

He was railroaded by the Pharisees.

He was mocked by the priests.

He was hated by the chief priest.

He was spat upon and condemned by the crowd.

He was scourged and betrayed by Pilate.

He was crucified by the Romans.

He was forsaken by His Father.

The book of Hebrews is written to warn believers not to add to the suffering of Jesus by trampling under foot the blood of Christ by ignoring and forsaking such a great salvation. What Jesus did for us demands a lifetime commitment of love and loyalty. Nothing is to come between us and our Savior. We are to be faithful unto death, for no sacrifice can compare with the sacrifice he made for us. He made the whole universe by merely speaking the Word, and He sustains the universe by omnipotent power that does not exhaust Him at all. But the work of atonement for sin was hard beyond our comprehension. As the Son of God Jesus never had to work so hard, but as the Son of Man He had to work harder than any man has ever had to work. He had to resist all temptation and overcome all evil, and then lay down His perfect life in sacrifice for all who yield to temptation and submit to all evil. This called for physical, mental and spiritual labor harder than any other being has ever had to endure. No wonder that His one act of sacrifice was greater than all other sacrifices put together. All others never cleansed one sin, but His cleansed for all sin.

This hymn called the Akathist Hymn to the Divine Passion of Christ should be a prayer from the heart of every Christian.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God,  
Creator of Heaven and earth, Savior of the world,

Behold I who am unworthy and of all men most sinful,  
humbly bow the knee of my heart before  
the glory of Thy majesty and praise Thy Cross and Passion,  
and offer thanksgiving to Thee, the King and God of all,  
that Thou wast pleased to bear as man all labours and hardships,  
all temptations and tortures,  
that Thou mightest be our Fellow-sufferer and Helper,  
and a Saviour to all of us in all our sorrows, needs, and sufferings.

I know, O all-powerful Lord, that all these things  
were not necessary for Thee,  
but for us men and for our salvation Thou didst endure Thy Cross and Passion  
that Thou mightest redeem us from all cruel bondage to the enemy.

What, then, shall I give in return to Thee, O Lover of mankind,  
for all that Thou hast suffered for me, a sinner?  
I cannot say, for soul and body and all blessings come from Thee,  
and all that I have is Thine, and I am Thine.  
Yet I know that love is repaid only by love.  
Teach me, then, to love and praise Thee.

Trusting solely in Thine infinite compassion and mercy, O Lord,  
I praise Thine unspeakable patience,  
I magnify Thine unutterable exhaustion,  
I glorify Thy boundless mercy,  
I adore Thy purest Passion,  
and most lovingly kissing Thy wounds, I cry:  
Have mercy on me a sinner,  
and cause that Thy holy Cross may not be fruitless in me,

that I may participate here with faith in Thy sufferings  
and be vouchsafed to behold also the glory of Thy Kingdom in Heaven.

Amen.

The act of atoning for the sins of the world is so significant that it is put in a list of the greatest things that can be listed. Jesus is the heir of all things, and He is the Creator of all, and He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of God's being, and he sustains the whole universe, and sits at the right hand of God. This is the most impressive list you will find anywhere in the Bible, and in that list is added this one, that He provided purification for sins. What Jesus did on the cross for us is right up there with the greatest truths in the universe. It is so big and important that it makes the headlines in the greatest newspaper of the universe. Call it The Trinity Tribune, The Gospel Gazette, or the Heavenly Herald. It is the paper read by all in heaven, and in bold letters taking up a full page is the story of the angelic reporter who was assigned to cover the crucifixion. It is titled I WATCHED GOD WASH THE WORLD LAST NIGHT. That is what God did at Calvary, for the shed blood of Jesus made atonement for the sins of the world. The more we know God, the more we will recognize how important it was in His plan to provide purification for sin.

Saphir writes with eloquence of what Jesus did by His sacrifice. "Why has this wonderful and glorious Being, in whom all things are summed up, and who is before all things the Father's delight and the Father's glory; why has this infinite light, this infinite power, this infinite majesty come down to our poor earth? For what purpose? To shine? To show forth the splendor of His majesty? To teach heavenly wisdom? To rule with just and holy right? No. He came to purge our sins. What height of glory! what depths of abasement! Infinite in His majesty, and infinite in His self-humiliation, and in the depths of His love. What a glorious Lord! And what an awful sacrifice of unspeakable love, to purge our sins by Himself"! It is no wonders that Boreham could not speak too highly of the cross even when he spoke of it as "the climax of immensities, the center of infinities, and the conflux of eternities." You cannot exaggerate the wonder of and the importance of the sacrifice of Jesus by which he made possible the cleansing of sin.

It is in ignoring this greatest of truths about Jesus that the world goes astray. He was God in human flesh dying as a substitute for man that man might be forgiven and cleansed from sin and all its consequences. There are so many willing to acknowledge Jesus as a great teacher, and even the greatest teacher to ever live. This sounds good, but the fact is, to stop there is to be a fool, for if Jesus was not much more than that, and even God and the Savior of the world, then he was not a great teacher at all. One of the most often read quotes on this issue is that of C. S. Lewis. Let me share it again, for it gets to the point that is crucial.

"Jesus told people that their sins were forgiven. This only makes sense if He really was the God whose laws are broken and whose love is

wounded in every sin. I am trying here to prevent the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I am ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man who said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

**The words of Jesus are not just the teachings of a great man - on par with other great human teachers of history - they are the words of God Himself. When we read them, we are hearing God! Even more than that, when we get to know Jesus, we are getting to know God, Himself. Anything short of seeing Jesus as God is what some call Jesus lite. It is taking something true of Jesus but not the whole truth. Hebrews gives us the whole load of who Jesus is, and Jesus lite is worthless in the light of the full story. He did far more than teach great truths, for He did something by His sacrifice that is the greatest truth. He washed us white as snow by the shedding of His blood. We do not really know who Jesus is, or for that matter, who God is, until we see what Jesus accomplished on the cross. The poet has captured this truth.**

**"Where is God?" inquired the mind:**

**"To His presence I am blind. . . .**

**I have scanned each star and sun,  
Traced the certain course they run;**

**I have weighed them in my scale,  
And can tell when each will fail;  
From the caverns of the night  
I have brought new worlds to light;**

**I have measured earth and sky  
Read each zone with steady eye;  
But no sight of God appears  
In the glory of the spheres."**

**But the heart spoke wistfully,  
"Have you looked at Calvary?" Thomas C. Clark**

**Jesus sat down at the Father's right hand because He finished the work of atonement, which made it possible for John to write in I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." No sin has to be paid for again, for Jesus paid the price so all sin could be forgiven and cleansed. The**



finished work of Christ does not mean that there is no more for Him to do. The blood has to be applied, and so there is no end to the follow up of the work done on the cross. If the blood was not applied to the doorpost when the angel of the Lord passed over Egypt the firstborn would die. The blood had to be applied then, and the blood of Jesus has to be applied today, and all through history. We apply it by confessing our sin and seeking forgiveness through our interceding Savior who will plead His blood before the throne of God. Jesus ever lives to intercede on our behalf, and so He is ever busy in a world where sin is so common. The lost sinner can do nothing to save himself, for Jesus has done it all, but he still must come to Jesus and ask for the salvation he purchased and will freely give.

An Englishman by the name of Ebenezer Wooten had just concluded a preaching service in the village square. The crowd had dispersed, and he was busily engaged in loading the equipment. A young man approached him and asked, "Mr. Wooten, what must I do to be saved?" Sensing that the fellow was trusting his own righteousness, Wooten answered in a rather unconcerned way, "It's too late!" The inquirer was startled. "Oh don't say that, sir!" But the evangelist insisted, "It's too late!" Then, looking the young man in the eye, he continued, "You want to know what you must DO to be saved. I tell you it's too late now or any other time. The work of salvation is done, completed, finished! It was finished on the cross." Then he explained that our part is simply to acknowledge our sin and receive by faith the gift of forgiveness. Jesus is the one he must go to and ask for this forgiveness. It is free, but it still has to be asked for, and this is the continuing work of Jesus as follow up of His completed work.

Jesus now administers the plan of salvation that he purchased by His sacrifice. It is like there is an insurance company for all His saints and sinner who desire to become saints. All the premiums are paid up for life, but there is still the need for applications to be submitted and for the transfer of merit to cover the cost. We make application for coverage when we confess our sins to Him, and then he intercedes and pleads His blood as sufficient payment for them, and then God wipes them from the record leaving it clean. Jesus is ever busy in making what He did on the cross practical in the lives of believers. By His Spirit He empowers them to overcome sin and bring them through their trials and tribulations. He is ever helping them to overcome all the enemies of their faith. He dispatches angels to minister to them, and gives them the gifts of the Spirit to enable them to serve the kingdom of God with power and purpose.

Peter said on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:33, "Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear." Peter said again in Acts 5:31, "God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sin to Israel." Jesus administers the work of the Holy Spirit and the vast work involved in forgiveness of sin. What He did on the cross was once for all, but the administration of His cleansing blood is a never ending task. The heavenly work of Jesus will never be complete until every possible sinner is cleansed by His sacrificial blood and made fit to dwell with him in heaven. That is why the author of Hebrews can write in 10:19-22, "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our goodies washed with pure water." Jesus

paid it all, and He want to apply His blood to cleanse all who will come to Him and confess. The greatest folly in the world is to ignore and neglect what we have available in Jesus because of the greatest sacrifice in the universe.

## **CHAPTER 9 THE GREATEST RULER**

We are ahead of our time when we bow to Jesus, for one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess him as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Back in 1917 at the Annual Exhibition of the Royal Academy in London, Charles Butler exhibited a painting he had worked on for three years. It is called the King of Kings. Jesus is the central figure standing at the foot of his cross and is receiving the homage of the royalty of the world. 158 portraits are there of great rulers including George Washington. So luminous is the halo around the head of Christ that many thought there must be a light behind it, but not so. It was due to much prayer as the artist mixed his paint to capture the superiority of Jesus over all other rulers.

Jesus is, without a doubt, the greatest ruler there ever was, or ever will be. The question in verse 12 is, "To which of the angels did God ever say, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet?'" This is to make it clear that Jesus is superior to any and every angelic power ever created, but it equally applies to all other beings in the universe. There has never been, and there will never be anyone who receives such an invitation to that exalted place at God's right hand, for Jesus alone has taken that position, which makes Him the greatest ruler in the universe. The book of Hebrews is not alone in its emphasis on Jesus being exalted to the highest place of power and prestige at God's right hand. Here are all the texts that do the same.

Ephesians 4:8 - "ascended up an high"

Ephesians 4:10 - "ascended up far above all heavens"

Acts 2:33 - "by the right hand of God exalted"

Acts 2:34 - "into the heavens"

Acts 7:55-56 - "standing on the right hand of God"

Romans 8:34 - "at the right hand of God"

Ephesians 1:20 - "at his own right hand in the heavenly places"

Colossians 3:1 - "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God"

Hebrews 1:3 - "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"

Hebrews 8:1 - "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty In the heavens"

Hebrews 18:12 - "sat down on the right hand of God"

Hebrews 12:2 - "set down at the right hand of the throne of God"

I Peter 3:22 - "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God"

This is an impressive amount of evidence that supports the conviction that Jesus is the greatest ruler in the universe. He governs the universe from this position of equality with God the Father. Paul in Eph. 1:19-21 sums up the point beautifully. "That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead

and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.” This is conclusive, and it settles it once and for all for those who accept the Bible as God’s revelation.

Jesus is above all other rulers and powers in the universe, and He is the greatest ruler that will ever be. All other rulers will come and go, but His throne will endure forever. In Christ we are under a government that will never pass away. What Jesus did for us on Calvary to atone for our sin is completed and will remain in effect for all eternity. His pardon is not one that can be overturned by a new administration. Verses 10 through 12 stress that everything in heaven and on earth can change and pass away, but Jesus will remain the same forever. In 13:8 it is stated, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” We have a friend in high places, or, rather, the highest place, and it will never change. No revolution can alter the government of the universe. The throne of power is securely held by our Lord and Savior, and this is the basis for our assurance. The whole universe can collapse, but His throne will endure for eternity. Our text stresses two positions that Jesus has as the greatest ruler in the universe, and we want to look at the significance of each of them.

#### **POSITION ONE-HE SAT DOWN**

When you sit down you are usually finished with something and are ready for a time of resting. God rested after Creation, and we see Jesus resting after Crucifixion. He said on the cross, “It is finished,” and after he had completed the atonement for our sin he sat down at God’s right hand to indicate that the plan of salvation he came to achieve was completed. There were no chairs in the temple for the priest to sit on, for they were never done with their activity. There was no place to rest after they were finished offering sacrifice, for they were never finished. The only completed salvation in the universe is that which Jesus accomplished on the Cross. His being seated in this highest of all positions in an indication of at least three major things: His Authority, His Approval, and His Achievement. His authority is equal with God the Father. He has the highest approval rating possible for His labor of love in dying for man’s sin. He has achieved the ultimate goal of making it possible for man to live forever in fellowship with God.

No one had ever sat down along side God before, because no one but Jesus had ever finished a work making them worthy of such a glorious honor. He is being rewarded for a job well done. He humbled himself even to the point of the cross, and God exalted him to the point of the highest honor possible. Eventually every tongue that ever existed will join in praise of Jesus, for His name is the name above all names. By His life and acts of obedience He became the Savior, not only of mankind, but of the entire creation. A new heaven and new earth our in the future, and they will be free from all sin and darkness, and it is all because of the universal redemption based on the sacrifice of Jesus. Jesus earned the right to sit at the right hand of God. Unlike Lucifer who tried to take that place of honor and power by force, Jesus takes it as a deserved reward, for He paid the price a Savior must pay to redeem a lost world.

**In Chapter 10:10-12 of Hebrews this difference between Jesus and the priest of the Old Testament is spelled out. “10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.” Jesus could sit down because His one sacrifice was superior to all the sacrifices of history, and His one time act of sacrifice finished the job that trillions of others could never achieve. His work is done, and He is seated in a position of highest power. Because He is there, we can have perfect peace about the forgiveness of our sin. We can be fully assured of salvation in Christ, for He is seated where He could only be if He had done all that is necessary for us to be reconciled with God.**

**We need to recognize, however, that this is only symbolic of his finished work and His triumph over the kingdom of darkness. Jesus is still busy interceding for us. Paul says in Rom. 8:34 “Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” You can get a lot done while seated on a throne, and Jesus does, for he ever lives to intercede for us says Heb. 7:25. He is also busy beyond our comprehension as the sustainer of the universe. He is not a lazy Lord sitting around doing nothing, but is actively engaged in all of life to assure the successful outcome of the total plan of God for an eternal kingdom wherein dwells righteousness forever.**

**There is not other being worthy of being seated at God’s right hand. All creatures in the presence of God are standing in obedience to carry out His will, or they are bowed before Him in Adoration. Only Jesus has the right to be so relaxed in the presence of Majesty. A man named Lear was once hired to give Queen Victoria art lessons. It was in the palace so often that he began to feel too much at home and was too relaxed in the presence of the Queen. One of her servants recognized this and urged him to move about the room more. He got the point that it was not good etiquette to be too relaxed in the presence of royalty. It was being too familiar with one on a superior level and was not acceptable. This rule applies to all beings in the presence of God, except Jesus, for He can sit at the right hand of God and be very comfortable, for He is on the same level with God, and is fully acceptable to God, for He is God.**

**All other beings are subjects, but He is Sovereign. When you are an employee you do not remain relaxed in the presence of the boss or owner of the business. You act busy even if you are not, for you do not have a relationship with him that gives you the right to relax in his presence. So you make sure you have something to do when he is coming by your area. If you are to the son of the owner, however, you can relax, and look like you have nothing to do if you choose, for you have a relationship with the owner that allows you to feel comfortable and free of any pressure or condemnation. Jesus has this comfort level with God, as no other being can ever have. Next consider-**

## **POSITION TWO-RIGHT HAND**

**Jesus is God’s right hand man. He governs at God’s side with the full authority of God**

himself. The right hand of God is His hand of power. In Ex. 15:6 we read, “Your right hand, O Lord, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O Lord, shattered the enemy.” If you can put it on your resume that you are seated at the right hand of God, you do not need to apply for any other position, for you are already at the top. There is no place to go from the right hand of God, for this is the place of ultimate power and authority. Jesus is the final authority. When someone tries to give you guidance in life that goes contrary to that which we have in Jesus, it is like this experience I read that was shared by another pastor:

“The story is told of a famous actress back in the early 40’s. Her name was Billie Burke, and she was quite impressed with herself. Once, when she was on a transatlantic ocean trip, she noticed a man getting some sun on the deck who seemed to be suffering from a very bad head cold. “Are you uncomfortable?” she asked him. The man nodded his head. “I’ll tell you just what to do,” she said. “Go to your room and drink lots of orange juice. Take two aspirins. Cover yourself with all the blankets you can find. Sweat the cold out. I know just I’m talking about. I’m Billie Burke from Holly wood.” “Thank you,” the man said. “I’m glad to meet you. I’m Dr. Mayo from the Mayo Clinic.”

Jesus has the highest qualifications for giving instructions on how to have a healthy soul, for He is the Great Physician, and He is on the throne at God’s right hand. The world is filled with religious leaders and teachers who have dozens of different ways to deal with sin, and with living a spiritual life pleasing to God. Much of it is consistent with the teachings of Jesus, but much is not, and when it is not, it is to be put aside, for Jesus is the final authority on what pleases God. When He says, “No man comes to the Father but by me,” we had better listen, for when He speaks it is God speaking. The highest authority in the Catholic Church is the Pope when he speaks ex-cathedra, that is from the throne. All through history kings and rulers have made decrees from their thrones which become the highest law of the land. But everything Jesus speaks is from the throne of the universe, and it is the highest and most powerful and final word of authority. By His Word He made the universe, and by His Word He sustains the universe, and it is by His Word that He give us wisdom and guidance. He is the greatest ruler ever, and His Word from His throne at God’s right hand is the greatest authority in the universe. Paul says in Col. 2:10, “and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”

The significance of this highest position in the universe is that Jesus has now become the ultimate man. God created man to have dominion over the world of His creation. Man fell and lost that dominion. Jesus became a man and won the right to again reign over all creation. He is now what God intended man to be. He is not just Lord of man, but He is Lord of all, and that means absolutely all. It was all made for Him, but man lost control. He regained that control, and is now the greatest ruler that can ever be, for He rules over all the universe, and this includes the invisible realm as well as the visible. ( for more on this see the message The Greatest Sustainer.)

In conclusion let me share some comments from others that make it clear that this verse does teach that the greatest ruler in the universe is Jesus.

Calvin comments, “Hence to sit at the right hand of the Father is no other thing than to

govern in the place of the Father, as deputies of princes are wont to do to whom a full power over all things is granted. And the word "majesty" is added, and also "on high", and for this purpose, to intimate that Christ is seated on the supreme throne whence the majesty of God shines forth. As, then, he ought to be loved on account of his redemption, so he ought to be adored on account of his royal magnificence."

Pink has a comment that makes it clear that the heavenly position of Jesus assures us that His reign is universal. He writes, "The first time that Christ is referred to in this Epistle it is as seated at "the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3), for it is with a heavenly Christ that Christianity has to 'do: note the other reference in this Epistle to the same fact-Hebrews 1:13, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2. In perfect accord with Hebrews 1:3, which strikes the keynote of the Epistle, in addition to the heavenly Christ, reference is made to "the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1), to "the heavenly gift" (Heb. 6:4), to "heavenly things" (Heb. 8:5), to "the heavenly Country" (Heb. 11:16), to the "heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22), and to "the church of the First-born, whose names are written in Heaven" (Heb. 12:23). This emphasis is easily understood when we remember that our Epistle is addressed to those whose inheritance, religious relationships, and hopes, had been all earthly."

Ann Graham Lotz lists the 6 ways Jesus is King

King of the Jews=a racial king  
King of Israel=a national king  
King of Righteousness=a moral king  
King of Ages=an eternal king  
King of Heaven= a universal king  
King of Glory=a celestial king

The point is, He is the King of Kings, and there never has been, and there never can be any ruler who is greater than Jesus. Seeing this, we have no alternative but to bow to Him as our Lord and King. I express my own allegiance in poetry.

Lord Jesus you reign in splendor  
Enthroned at God's own right hand.  
At your glory we in wonder  
Before your majesty, stand.

You have all power in heaven  
King of kings on earth you are.  
We before your throne are driven  
Praising you for who you are.

God to you has given all things,  
And by you all things were made.  
You are sustainer of all things,  
And the price for sin you paid.  
You have done your all to free us

**From the judgments of the fall.  
Therefore we proclaim you Jesus  
King of kings and Lord of all.**

**Pastor Don Fortner has done an excellent job of thinking through all of the implications of Jesus being seated at God's right hand. I have found no one who has done as much thinking as he has, and so let me share with you the fullness of what he has put together. He freely gives permission to use his material.**

**[Don Fortner](#)**

**"Our Lord Jesus Christ, when he had finished all the work which his Father gave him to do upon the earth as our Substitute, Surety, and Mediator, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high!" Let me show you something about what that means. Here are seven reasons why the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, our Mediator and Substitute, sat down upon the throne of grace, on the right hand of the Majesty on high.**

**1. He sat down because his work was finished (John 19:30; Rom. 8:33-34; Heb. 10:10-14).**

**2. He sat down because God the Father accepted his sacrifice as our sin-atoning Substitute (Isa. 53:10-11).**

**The Lord God sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied. The law and justice of God, the righteousness and truth of God, the holiness and purity of God cannot demand more than Christ paid for the sins of his people! Now, God can be and is, both just and the Justifier of all who believe on his dear Son. He is both "a just God and a Savior".**

**3. The Lord Jesus Christ sat down in heaven as our great High Priest upon the throne of grace, because he is now, as the God-man our Mediator, the sovereign Monarch of all the universe (John 17:2; Rom. 14:9).**

**4. The Lord Jesus took his place in glory at the right hand of the Majesty on high, because this Man is himself God.**

**The throne of God is his throne! He was given this place as a man; but it was always his as God; and he took it. He "sat down" as the God-man, our Savior!**

**5. The Lord Jesus Christ sat down upon the right hand of God as the Representative and Forerunner of his people (Heb. 6:20; 1 John 2:1-3).**

**Yonder, in Glory Land, upon the very throne of God, is a Man, a Man who is himself God, who incessantly pleads our cause with the Father. Because our Forerunner is there, we soon shall be.**

**6. The Lord Jesus Christ sat down in heaven, because he has now opened the way for sinners to come to God (Heb. 10:19-22).**

**7. The Lord Jesus sat down in heaven as a mighty Victor, a Conqueror whose enemies shall never rise again, whose enemies must and shall be put under his feet (Phil. 2:8-11).**

**Because Christ sat down in glory, as the mighty Captain of our salvation, our salvation is a matter of certainty. We are now more than conquerors in him (Rom. 8:28-39).” This truth makes me again respond with poetry.**

**Next to God Jesus is seated;  
In humility we bow.  
Never will it be repeated;  
Sin has been atoned for now.**

**He has won the right to reign there  
On the throne at God’s right hand.  
None can with His glory compare.  
We in awe before Him stand.**

**In Him we find all our treasure.  
None can surpass His great name.  
In Him is our greatest pleasure.  
Praise the Lord our Savior came.**

**None in heaven, nor on the earth  
Is superior to Him.  
We now with the most joyous mirth  
Surrender our all to Him.**

**We His praises will ever sing  
As before His throne we fall.  
We acknowledge He is our King;  
King of kings and Lord of all.**

**Pastor Steve Zeisler has one of the best illustrations I have ever read of the significance of Jesus being seated at God’s right hand. He writes, “The Boston Celtics used to have a coach named Red Auerhach. One of the best basketball coaches of all time, he put together the Celtic dynasty that won championship after championship. He had a habit that always psychologically destroyed opposing coaches ante players. He would conclude at some point in a game that the Celtics were far enough ahead that the opposition could no longer catch up. Until then Auerhach would coach energetically pacing and waving his arms. Then, at that point, he would sit on the bench, light his cigar and watch the rest of the game. When Red sat down, the game was over. Nobody came back against the Celtics. Once he perceived that the team had won, he would sit down. This was psychologically devastating to the opposition because they knew that nobody beat the Celtics once Red sat down and lit his cigar.**



**Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. All opposition is conquered, all questions answered, all needs met. There are no doubts about what will be the end of history. We only wait to see in time the heavenly reality of the reign of Christ.”**

**When Jesus walked this earth He had an opportunity to become a ruler, for Satan tempted Him by offering Him the rule over the kingdoms of the earth if He would bow in loyalty to him. Jesus refused that offer and remained loyal to His Father in heaven. He lived in perfect obedience, which took Him to the cross, but the pay off was that God exalted Him to the place of ruler over all the universe. It was a long way down from the glory of heaven to the gory cross, but in the end it was no loss, for because He humbled himself God exalted Him above all others, and made Him the greatest ruler in the universe. How can we help but sing-**

**Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne.  
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.  
Awake, my soul, and sing of Him who died for thee,  
And hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.**

**Crown Him the Son of God, before the worlds began,  
And ye who tread where He hath trod, crown Him the Son of Man;  
Who every grief hath known that wrings the human breast,  
And takes and bears them for His own, that all in Him may rest.**

**Crown Him the Lord of life, who triumphed over the grave,  
And rose victorious in the strife for those He came to save.  
His glories now we sing, Who died, and rose on high,  
Who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.**

**Crown Him the Lord of love, behold His hands and side,  
Those wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.  
No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight,  
But downward bends His burning eye at mysteries so bright.**

**Crown Him the Lord of Heaven, enthroned in worlds above,  
Crown Him the King to Whom is given the wondrous name of Love.  
Crown Him with many crowns, as thrones before Him fall;  
Crown Him, ye kings, with many crowns, for He is King of all.**

## **CHAPTER 10 THE GREATEST NAME**

**Here is a powerful story of a man who made a great name for himself and left a name that is long remembered. I quote another’s account: “World War II produced many heroes. One such man was Butch O’Hare. He was a fighter pilot assigned to an aircraft carrier in the South Pacific. One day his entire squadron was sent on a mission. After he was airborne, he**

looked at his fuel gauge and realized that someone had forgotten to top off his fuel tank. He would not have enough fuel to complete his mission and get back to his ship. His flight leader told him to return to the carrier. Reluctantly he dropped out of formation and headed back to the fleet.

As he was returning to the mother ship, he saw something that turned his blood cold. A squadron of Japanese Zeroes were speeding their way toward the American fleet. The American fighters were gone on a sortie and the fleet was all but defenseless. He couldn't reach his squadron and bring them back in time to save the fleet. Nor, could he warn the fleet of the approaching danger.

There was only one thing to do. He must somehow divert them from the fleet. Laying aside all thoughts of personal safety, he dove into the formation of Japanese planes. Wing-mounted 50 calibers blazed as he charged in, attacking one surprised enemy plane and then another.

Butch weaved in and out of the now broken formation and fired at as many planes as possible until finally all his ammunition was spent. Undaunted he continued the assault. He dove at the Zeroes trying to at least clip off a wing or tail, in hopes of damaging as many enemy planes as possible and rendering them unfit to fly. He was desperate to do anything he could to keep them from reaching the American ships. Finally, the exasperated Japanese squadron took off in another direction. Deeply relieved Butch O'Hare and his tattered fighter limped back to the carrier.

Upon arrival he reported in and related the event surrounding his return. The film from the camera mounted on his plane told the tale. It showed the extent of Butch's daring attempt to protect his fleet. He was recognized as a hero and given one of the nation's highest military honors. And today O'Hare Airport in Chicago is named in tribute to the courage of this great man."

Jesus is the greatest hero in history for the believer, for He was able to win a victory over the greatest enemies of man, and He gained a name that is above every name. Jesus is the greatest person in the universe, and he is the greatest in every category of the roles that he plays in life. There is nothing we can do to make him any greater than he is, but we can magnify his name. Psalm 34:3 says, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." We cannot make him greater than he is, but we can make him greater in our minds than he is now. We can give him a greater place in our thinking until he is the greatest, and above all others. We can magnify him until he is the primary focus of our life, and the greatest influence in our life. We can lift him up until he is truly Lord of all in our lives. We can magnify him until there is nothing and no one larger in our lives and in our love, and this is to fulfill the first commandment of God, which is to love him with all our being. It is the purpose of the book of Hebrews to help us do this, for it gives us a clear revelation of how Jesus is the greatest in every category in which he competes with others for our love and loyalty. God gave his very best when he gave his Son Jesus. Isaac Watts wrote,

Join all the glorious names

Of wisdom, love, and power,  
That ever mortals knew,  
That angels ever bore:  
All are too mean to speak His worth,  
To poor to set my Savior forth.

The Psalmist knew God was a big wonderful God but he is saying, "O magnify [in your thinking] the Lord with me, and let us exalt [lift up to the place where it rightfully belongs] his name together." The same thing is given in Psalm 35:27: "Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favor my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified." That is, let Him get bigger and bigger in our minds until He is the greatest reality in our lives. We cannot make God bigger than He is, but we can make Him the biggest and greatest influence in our lives. He belongs as the number one power in our lives, and it is by magnifying His name that we get Him to that place where He belongs.

The first names that we learn as a child are mama and dada, and they are the most important and influential names in our lives for years to come. As we grow older we begin to learn many names of family and friends. Then in school we learn the names of teachers and of famous people in history. More and more the names of contemporary famous people become a part of our awareness. We go on all our lives learning more and more names of authors and others who influence our thinking and choices. Name recognition becomes a major aspect of our intellectual growth. We discover that the only way we know what is going on in the world is to learn the names of those people who are making the news and playing the biggest roles in the events that are making history. We also learn that knowing people by their name can make a big difference in the success we have in many fields of endeavor. Success is often dependant upon who you know by name. The point is, names of people play a vital role in our lives from the beginning to the end. The names you most honor and exalt in your value system determine the kind of person you are.

If you love the names of movie stars, and they become the names you most often think of and admire, and if you dream about their lives and put their pictures on your wall, you are magnifying their name. They have become a primary factor in your value system, and this will influence in a very strong way the kind of person you will be. This same thing will happen if the names you most admire are famous wrestlers, racecar drivers, sports heroes, writers, politicians, or any number of other possibilities. The names you exalt will be the major influence in your life, and you will become like those whose names you magnify. Whatever name is greatest in your life is the greatest influence on your life. That is why Christian growth has not reached its highest level until the name of Jesus is the greatest name in your thinking. We need to magnify the name of Jesus until there is no greater name, for only when this is true, is it true that Jesus is Lord in our lives. As long as any other name is greater in our lives, we are not totally submitted to His lordship, and we border on being idle worshippers.

Jesus made two comparisons in Matt. 12:41-42 that sound like pride, but are really just revealing the fact of who He is. He said, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment

with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.” Then He said, “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” The most successful prophet and the wisest king are not to be compared to Jesus, for He is greater than all of the greats of the past, and when you are greater than all, you are the greatest. That is the theme of Hebrews and the whole New Testament.

Paul makes this clear to the Philippians when he writes to them about how Jesus gave up equality with God and humbled himself to become a man and become obedient all the way to the cross. Then he writes in Phil. 2:9-11, “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” God has given Him the greatest name for all eternity, but it is our responsibility to give Him the greatest name in our lives for all time. We will have no choice in eternity, for every knee will bow before His lordship, but in time we have a choice, and the purpose of the book of Hebrews is to persuade us to make it our choice to magnify the name of Jesus as the greatest name in our lives.

Every nation has its heroes whose names are learned and exalted in their schools so that children grow up admiring them for the role they have played in their history. We have great names like Washington and Lincoln, and we come to love and admire these men for what they did that so influenced the history of our land that we are blessed because of them. We have been saved from tyranny and slavery because of these great men. We could go on and on with the names of others who have saved our freedoms, and who have saved us from ignorance of all kinds. We have been saved from diseases of all kinds because of great names in medicine. We have been saved from drudgery by the many famous inventors that have made our lives so much easier. We are among the richest people in history because of the great names in our history that have enriched us and saved us from innumerable negatives. But none are greater than the One who saved us from our sins. Matt. 1:21 says, “And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” He alone could save us from that which would lead to the loss of all that is good and best in the future, and that is why His name is the greatest of all names, and needs to be exalted to the highest place in our thinking and in our lives. Jesus is the greatest possible name that we can have in the hierarchy of values in our lives. Charles Wesley wrote,

Surrounded by a host of foes,  
Stormed by a host of foes within,  
Nor swift to flee, nor strong t’oppose,  
Single, against hell, earth, and sin,  
Single, yet undismayed, I am;  
I dare believe in Jesus’ Name.

What though a thousand hosts engage,  
A thousand worlds, my soul to shake?

**I have a shield shall quell their rage,  
And drive the alien armies back;  
Portrayed it bears a bleeding Lamb  
I dare believe in Jesus' Name.**

**Me to retrieve from Satan's hands,  
Me from this evil world to free,  
To purge my sins, and loose my bands,  
And save from all iniquity,  
My Lord and God from heav'n He came;  
I dare believe in Jesus' Name.**

**Salvation in His Name there is,  
Salvation from sin, death, and hell,  
Salvation into glorious bliss,  
How great salvation, who can tell!  
But all He hath for mine I claim;  
I dare believe in Jesus' Name.**

**Not all values are equal. There are many things that are true, but they are not all equally valuable. It is true that Thomas was an Apostle, but he was not the most valuable of the Apostles, for he was not used of God like Peter, John and Paul to write so much of what was God's Word to be read for the rest of history. Their names are greater in Christian history because of what they wrote. They were to the New Testament what Moses was to the Old Testament. They were the great authors God used to communicate what He wanted to say to man. But they were all servants, and the Son is always greater than the servants, and that is the point of Hebrews. Jesus is the Son of God, and the Son is superior to all of the servants of God, and the angels have been great servants of God all through history. The New Testament does not put the angels down, for they play a major role in the life of Jesus and the Church. They will play a major role in the way history ends, and they will join the church of the redeemed in eternal praise of the Redeemer Lamb upon the throne. They are the most numerous and loyal of servants, but as great as they are they do not compare with the name above every name, the Lord Jesus.**

**The name of Jesus is above the name of any and all angels. Because this truth was neglected there have been cults all through history that have idolized angels. They have exalted angels to the place of the highest value in their lives and their whole life revolves around the seeking to know them and depend upon them for guidance and protection. Angel worship has been common in the ancient world and has been revived again in the modern world. It is not that they are not fascinating beings that we need to study about and be aware of, for they are among the greatest messengers of God in the Bible. Bible students need to know plenty about angels, for they are major players, but when they become more important to us than Jesus, and when we become more involved with them than Jesus, then we have let the good become the enemy of the best. This is what is constantly happening in our value system if we are not magnifying the name of Jesus.**

Very good and valid truths and beings can rise to the level of first place in our thinking and value system if we are not constantly exalting Jesus to the top level as the greatest name in the hierarchy of names that we honor and magnify. The danger is not that bad things will be given the priority, but that good things, and good values, and good beings will be given priority. The good always becomes an enemy of the best when it is exalted above the name of Jesus in our value system.

The danger of idolatry is never far away from the believer, for it is so easy to begin to let some good thing or person rise to the level of first place in our lives. The cults thrive on this tendency. They come with what is a neglected truth, and it is so reasonable and possibly even biblical, and we get excited about it and go off on a tangent promoting this truth to the point that we neglect exalting Jesus as the greatest truth that we have to promote. This happens to believers all the time, and we cannot blame the cults for all of it. Evangelical believers can get so hung up on some newly discovered system of theology dealing with the end times, or some other aspect of theology, such as the debate between Calvinism and Arminianism, that they exalt this issue above Jesus. They no longer care that others love Jesus and claim Him as Savior and Lord. Now all that matters is whether or not they think the same about their pet view of theology. Jesus is no longer the highest name in their value system. It is now Calvin or Wesley, or Dispensationalism, or Premillennialism, or Amillennialism, or any number of other isms. All the isms will one day become wasims, but Jesus will always be the greatest name for all eternity. If His is not the name that is the highest value that guides your thinking and actions, then you are an idolater, even as a Christian, and you will live on a sub-Christian level in some area of your life, and be a hindrance to others seeing the glory of Jesus in you.

I know of what I write, for when I was younger I was one of those who got so excited about some aspect of theology that it became more important in its effect on how I related to other believers than did the fact that they loved Jesus. Jesus was not the primary value that determined my love for others. If they held to a theology that differed from mine, I felt they were inferior and foolish, and not worthy of my respect and love. I was an idolater and had no idea I was, for I felt I was being more loyal to God and My Lord by being uncooperative with those who thought differently from me. It often takes a lot of reading widely and a lot of exposure to other people with other view points before one realizes that the only thing that can create unity among believers is their common love for Jesus. He, and He alone, is the power that holds the universe together, and He alone can hold people together in the oneness that He seeks in His body the church. I still do not agree with everyone in viewpoints on many issues, but I feel I have grown in maturity by being able to love and call brothers in Christ all who name the name of Jesus as Lord of their lives. This is part of what magnifying and exalting the name of Jesus means. It means letting His name be the primary value by which we determine fellowship, and not the names of authors of a variety of theological viewpoints. I may be wrong in some of my views, but I can never be wrong in loving all who love the name of Jesus.

Someone said, "Jesus is not valued at all until He is valued above all." This is too strong a statement, for Jesus may still be among the highest values, even when He is not the highest, but when this is the case, He is not Lord of your life. This was the problem the author of Hebrews was dealing with. The Jewish Christians he wrote to were

seriously thinking of returning to Judaism and exalting the angels again to the highest level. They were in danger of idolatry, and this book was written to prevent that. We may not be in this particular danger, and the angels actually play less a role in our thinking than they should. But all of us face the danger of putting some other value above the name of Jesus. It could be the name of our family, the name of our company, the name of our church, the name of our denomination, the name of our school, or the name of our nation. Any one of these things could become a idol in our lives and have more influence on our thinking and actions than that of the name of Jesus. When this is the case we are idolaters, and are in the same need of the teaching of Hebrews as were its first readers. Nobody is all the Christian they can be until the name of Jesus is the name they magnify and exalt to the highest place.

Mike Bradaric has put together a list of the ways this name is so significant.

1. It is the name that every tongue will confess
2. It is the name to which every knee will bow
3. It is the name, the only name, given under heaven by which men and women can be saved.
4. It is the only name through which your sins can be forgiven
5. It is a name that is above every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.
6. It is the only name that is majestic in all the earth
7. It is the only name that stretches to the ends of the earth
8. It is the only name that endures forever
9. It is a name that is a strong tower
10. That is a holy name
11. That is a righteous name
12. That is a mighty name
13. That is an eternal name
14. Whose glory cannot be shared with any other
15. It is a name by which we will be known
16. It is a name by which he will know us
17. It is a name that will be written upon our foreheads forever
18. It is a name foolish not to know
19. It is a name foolish not to name
20. It is a name foolish not to call upon
21. It is a name we can lean upon
22. It is a name you can believe on

There is no angel who has a name like Jesus, for no angel is the Son of God, and no angel is the Savior of the world. They are created; He is Creator. They are servants; He is the Son. They had a beginning; He is eternal. They work for God; He is the God for whom they work. We do not know of any higher beings in this universe that are above angels except God Himself, and Jesus is one of the Persons in the Triune God. The point is, you cannot go higher than Jesus, for His is the greatest name in the universe. It is greater even than the name God, for He is God who became one of us, and so is closer to us than any other name by which we name the name of God. He is God as we know God best. He is superior to all other beings, and, therefore, has a name that is superior, and which is to be magnified above

**all others. I try to say it in poetry-**

**His name the greatest name ever,  
In all heaven and the earth.  
A greater there will be never,  
None can ever give it birth.**

**God Himself gave this name Jesus  
To this one His only Son.  
Only His name from sin frees us;  
He alone salvation won.**

**There is no need for another  
To come and release from sin.  
Jesus is our final brother;  
He every battle did win.**

**No angel can ever match Him;  
None would even care to try.  
He took the full cup to the brim  
When for us He came to die.**

**Even angels bow to His name,  
For they know Him as their Lord.  
Heaven has never been the same  
Since they sing now in accord.**

**Our Lord Jesus is the greatest;  
No name can with His compare.  
His name has eternal greatness;  
There's none greater to declare.**

**It is saying something very powerful to say that Jesus is superior to the angels, and that they are subject to Him, and that they ever bow and worship Him. We need to keep in mind that they were the key supernatural beings all through the Old Testament, and that even the pre-incarnate Christ appeared in the Old Testament as the Angel of the Lord. It is important to know why the angels were so important to the Jews, and even those Jews who became Christians, in order to understand why the book of Hebrews make so much of Jesus being greater. Let me quote an old writer who says so much in a brief paragraph.**

**"Being made so much better than the angels." To appreciate the force of this we must, briefly, consider the excellency of the "angels." Angels are the highest of all God's creatures: heaven is their native home (Matt. 24:36). They "excel in strength" (Ps. 103:20). They are God's "ministers" (Psalm 104:4). Like a king's gentlemen-in-waiting, they are said to "minister unto the Ancient of days" (Daniel 7:10). They are "holy" (Matthew 25:31). Their countenances are like "lightning," and their raiment is as white as snow (Matt. 28:3). They**



surround God's throne (Rev. 5:11). They carry on every development of nature. "God does not move and rule the world merely by laws and principles, by unconscious and inanimate powers, but by living beings full of light and love. His angels are like flames of fire; they have charge over the winds, and the earth, and the trees, and the sea. Through the angels He carries on the government of the world" (Saphir).

To have a name greater than these beings is to be great beyond comparison, as we have said. When you are greater than the greatest, then you are truly the greatest conceivable, and that is who Jesus is. He is the greatest beyond which none can be conceived to be greater. It is not in the mind of man or God to conceive of one greater in importance than Jesus. That is why His is the greatest name. In another message we will deal with the specific name that the first chapter of Hebrews is focusing on, and that is the name "Son". We will look at this in a whole new message called THE GREATEST SON.

## **CHAPTER 11 THE GREATEST SON**

It is a story often told, with a variety of versions, but they all illustrate a great truth. A confederate soldier sat outside of the White House at the end of the Civil War. He was depressed because he needed to see the President and tell him of how his farm in the South was unjustly taken from him. He knew Lincoln was a just man, and that he would help him with his problem. He could not get past the Federal soldiers who marched in front of the gate and turned him away. All that changed, however, when a young boy saw him and asked why he was so sad. When he explained his situation the boy took him by the hand and led him through the gate as the soldiers stood aside, and then to the White House library where the President was resting. He introduced the soldier to his father. The boy was Tad Lincoln, the son of the President. The son could do for the man what no one else could do. That is the case with all men and God. "No man comes to the Father but by me," said the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Son can take us where no man can go without the Son. This is often true on the human level, and if you know the son of a famous or influential person you have the key to their presence. God's presence is the highest in the universe, and it is gained by means of knowing the Son, and so this makes Jesus the greatest Son in the universe. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Knowing Him is the highest knowledge. Loving Him is the highest love. Serving Him is the highest service. Heb. 1:5 has God saying to Jesus, "You are my Son." God said it again at the baptism of Jesus. God's voice from heaven proclaimed: "This is my Son, whom I love." (Matthew 3:17). Again at the Transfiguration: God's voice proclaimed: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him." (Mark 9:7.).

Ray Stedman tells of his experience of knowing a son: "I once visited a ranch as the guest of the hired man on that ranch. When we came onto the property we had to drive around the big house and go to the bunkhouse in the rear. I stayed with him there in the bunkhouse and

never once got into the big house with him. There were some beautiful sorrel horses in the pasture and I suggested we take a ride. He said, "Oh, no, I'm not permitted to ride those horses." So we had to ride some mangy fleabags out to the pasture.

A few weeks later I became acquainted with the son of the household, and he invited me out to the ranch. When I went out with him, it was entirely different. We went right into the big house and he took over as all teenagers do. After a sumptuous meal we went out and rode the sorrel horses all over the range. What a wonderful time we had.

That is the difference between a son and a servant, and that is the difference between Christ and any angel. He is greater because of his relationship, the fact that he is a Son. Blood is always thicker than water."

Jesus was special to God, for He was the only person in history to have God speak from heaven and acknowledge that He was His Son. This had to mean the world to Jesus, for in His flesh He had to live a truly human life with so many limitations. He was still the second person of the Godhead, but, as Paul tells us in Phil. 2, he gave up the equality He had with the other two persons of the Godhead. He emptied himself and became fully human and humbled himself even to suffer death on the cross. History has been filled with many famous sons and daughters who did great things, but never has there been a son or daughter who did for God and man what Jesus did. He made it possible for all mankind to get a second chance to avoid judgment and achieve heaven. He made it possible for God to forgive the sins of men and welcome them to come home as forgiven prodigals. That is why Paul goes on in Phil. 2 to say that God exalted Him and gave Him a name above all names. Someone wrote this song of praise to His precious name.

There have been names that I have loved to hear,  
But never has there been a name so dear  
To this heart of mine, as the Name divine,  
The precious, precious Name of Jesus.

There is no name in earth or heav'n above,  
That we should give such honor and such love  
As the blessèd Name, let us all acclaim,  
That wondrous, glorious Name of Jesus.

That is the name that Paul says will have every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that He is Lord. Jesus is the sweetest name we know as believers, but the title of Son is the focus of the verse before us. The author says that God never said to any angel, "You are my son.." It is the title son that is being exalted here, for it is a title exclusive to Jesus, and no other supernatural being is entitled to it. It is true that the angels as a group were called sons of God, but never is an individual angel called the Son of God. Redeemed humans are also called sons of God, but none are called the Son of God. All of the saved can say "I am a son of God," but none can say, "I am the Son of God."

Jesus is called "Son" eleven times in Hebrews. They are, 1:2,3,5,6,8, 3:6, 4:14, 5:8, 6:6, 7:3,28,10:29, 11:17,24, 12:6-7 Son of man in 2:6 The son was honored along with

the father in the Jewish heritage, for every father wanted his son to carry on the family, the faith, and bring honor to the name. Genealogies were father's begetting sons. The full title of Son of God is used 4 times in 4:14, 6:6, 7:3 and 10:29. One commentator writes, "What is distinctive about Hebrews, however, is its use of the title without the definite article (1 :2; 3:6; 5:5, 8; 7:28). This anarthrous construction with *huios* occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. As with "High Priest," so here with "Son," the intention is evidently to lay stress on the nature or character, rather than the personality, of Jesus. The point here is that when we see Jesus we see One who is Son, that is, One who possesses all the characteristics and qualities to which that title points."

Oscar Cullmann, in his book *The Christology of the New Testament*, points out that the kings in ancient Babylon, Assyria and Egypt were considered to be sons of God, and in Greek religions those who were believed to possess unusual powers were called sons of God. Another author writes, "We can produce a catalogue of Hindu, Sufi, and Hellenistic holy men who made such claims, not to mention Mizra Ali Muhammad (the Bab) and Hussein Ali (Baha'Ullah), founders of the Babi and the Baha'i Faiths respectively." The point is, history is filled with many who have made the claim to be a son of God.

Jesus has no competition when it comes to being the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and none claim to be the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being. None have claimed to have sacrificed their lives for the sins of the world, or that they have been seated at the right hand of God. But when it comes to claiming to be the Son of God Jesus does have competition. This means that people are always in the same boat as those to whom the book of Hebrews was written. Jesus had to compete in their minds with Moses, Joshua, the High Priest, the Law, and all of the heroes of the past. The whole argument of the book is to show that Jesus is better and superior to all the leaders that have ever been. That is really the goal of the whole New Testament. Believing in the unique and exclusive Son-ship of Jesus is a vital aspect of New Testament revelation.

Peter said to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:69; Matthew 16:16). Belief in the Son decides our destiny. "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36; see also John 3:16-17). It is the spirit of antichrist that denies Jesus as the Son of God. In Scripture we read: "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also." (1 John 2:22-23). "Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:5). Andrew Murray commenting on Hebrews sums it up this way: "Our whole epistle is the unfolding of the glory of the person and work of the Son." He could have said this of the whole Bible. The very essence of Christian theology is belief in Jesus as the Son of God. It is His being the Son of God that makes Him the greatest son in the universe.

There are those who doubt the Sonship of Jesus, but the Scripture leaves no doubt. Just a portion of the texts that reveal it clearly are enough for those who accept the Bible as God's revelation. Here are some clear verses and thoughts collected from a number of

**sources:**

**They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He (Jesus) replied, "You are right in saying I am." (Luke 22:70)**

**The Annunciation: The angel Gabriel told the virgin Mary that her son would be called "the Son of God". (Luke 1:32,35)**

**The Baptism: God's voice from heaven proclaimed: This is my Son, whom I love." (Matthew 3:17, etc.)**

**The Transfiguration: God's voice once again proclaimed: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him." (Mark 9:7, etc.)**

**The Crucifixion: The Roman centurion and his men confessed at the time of Jesus' crucifixion: "Surely he was the Son of God!" (Matthew 27:54)**

**The Resurrection: St. Paul writes that Jesus' resurrection from the dead declared Him to be "the Son of God". (Romans 1 :4)**

**Madmen and even unclean spirits confessed to Jesus: "You are the Son of God." (Mark 3:11; cf. 5:7; Matthew 8:29; Luke 4:41; 8:28) . Jesus' disciples also confessed that He is "the Christ (Messiah), the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16; cf. 14:33). Jesus, as a true Son, preferred to give glory to His Father, but He too would not deny His Sonship (Matthew 26:63f.; Mark 14:62; John 10:36). Of interest in the first two of these passages (and others) is the close association between the terms "Messiah" and "Son of God".**

**It is also interesting to note how closely Jesus' Sonship is associated with His suffering (Romans 5:10; 8:32; Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 5:8; 6:6) . When Jesus was famished after a long fast, the tempter said to Him: "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread" (Matthew 4:3, etc.). When Jesus was in agony on the cross, the passersby mocked Him and said: "Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" (Matthew 27:40).**

**Matt 16:13-17 13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?"**

**14 And they said, "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias (Elijah); and others, Jeremias (Jeremiah), or one of the prophets."**

**15 He saith unto them, "But Whom say ye that I am?"**

**16 And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."**

**17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona (Peter): for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven."**

**Every man in history except Adam has been a son of someone, but Jesus alone is the Son of God. By faith in Him we become a part of the family of God, and we are His brothers, and that makes us sons of God, or children of God. We only become this by our relationship to Jesus as our Savior, but He has been the Son of God for all eternity. Many have the right to claim to be a son of God, but no one but Jesus has the right to claim to be the Son of God. It is the uniqueness of His Sonship that is stressed in the words that call Jesus the only begotten Son.**

Abdullah Ibrahim has this interesting study on the word: "The Greek word for "one and only son", "mono-genes", means literally, "one in kind, unique" and has sometimes been incorrectly translated into English as "only begotten". This rendering is wrong because "Mono-genes" is also used in Hebrews 11:17 to describe Isaac as Abraham's "one and only son", namely the one who was promised by God to Abraham and his wife Sarah. (Genesis 15) Since Ishmael too was Abraham's son, but through his servant Hagar (Genesis 16), the term "one and only" distinguishes Isaac as being unique in his kind but not as the only begotten." The point he is making is that no matter how many sons God may have, Jesus is unique in His Sonship. He is not like any angel, or man, or any other being that God may take into His family. He is one of a kind, and there will never be another like Him. He is the greatest Son for all eternity past and future.

Jesus made His uniqueness very clear when He said in Luke 10:22, "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. (Luke 10:22) Other examples can be found in John 5:22-23, Luke 20:9-19 and Matt. 3:17. In John 1:18 we read, "No-one has seen God; but God's only Son, He who is nearest to the Father's heart, he has made him known."

"Son of God, Thy Father's treasure,  
He yet gives Thee all to me;  
Angels vainly toil to measure  
What I have in having Thee.  
Grace so vast bewilders heaven;  
God to me His Christ has given."      Author unknown

When the text asks the question, "To which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father?'" the implication is none at all. This means the teaching of some cults that Jesus was the highest angel is false, for God never calls any angel, not even the highest, by this name. C. S. Lewis points out that angels are all created beings, and all that is made is of less value to one than what is begotten. What is born to you is a part of you, and Jesus is the only begotten Son. He is a part of the very being of God and so far more precious to God than any created being. What is begotten is like us, and what is made is different from us. Jesus is just like the Father for He is begotten, and not just made, of the Father.

Only the Son can be the exact image of the Father, and only the Son could be the spotless Lamb of God to provide purification for sins and then set down at the right hand of the Father. The cross is the center of history because of what Jesus did there for all mankind as the greatest Son in history. An unknown poet expresses the conclusion of the centurion who stood at the cross and saw the awesome events of nature surrounding that event.

Yonder - amazing sight! - I see  
The incarnate Son of God  
Expiring on the cursed tree,  
And weltering in His blood.

**Behold, a purple torrent run  
Down from his hands and head,  
The crimson tide puts out the sun;  
His groans awake the dead.**

**The trembling earth, the darkened sky,  
Proclaim the truth aloud;  
And with the amazed centurion, cry,  
"This is the Son of God!"**

The glory and brilliance of all other beings fades into the shadows when we behold the glory of God in the face of the Son. Even the glory of men like Moses and Elijah fades into the background when Jesus is transfigured and we see who He really is. That is the major point of Hebrews, that Jesus is so superior to all that has ever been and all that can ever be that we must keep our eyes on Him and Him alone as the ultimate authority, and as the ultimate basis for our hope of forgiveness and eternal life. No angel, and no man can ever be adequate to do what Jesus alone can do, for He is The Son. To take your eyes off of Jesus as you run the race of life is as foolish as running through a dense woods in the pitch darkness of the night when you can choose to run in broad daylight. When the sun is available you do not use a candle to light the way, and when the Son is available you do not use angels or any other being for your guide to knowing and doing the will of God. The wisdom of Hebrews and the whole New Testament is simply this: look to the Son, for He is the greatest.

Phillip Schaff said: "This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times."

The Hebrew Christians were in danger of drifting away from making Jesus the greatest light in their sky. They were suffering for being Christians and the old ways of Judaism looked so much more peaceful and free of trial. They were tempted to look away from what they had in Christ and go back to the law of Moses and the worship in the temple. They were forgetting what they had in Jesus that was of infinite value. Many years ago a man in North Carolina picked up a beautiful rock from a stream-bed and used it as a doorstep for his cabin. Years later a geologist was hiking in that area and noticed the rock. He had the knowledge to be able to identify it for what it was. It turned out to be the largest gold nugget ever found east of the Rockies. He was using a great treasure as if it were nearly worthless. That is what these Christians were in danger of doing with the greatest Gem God ever sent into this world. Jesus was their Rock, but they were tempted to use Him as a trivial part of their lives and exalt angels and the Old Testament laws as having priority.

The goal of Hebrews is to so exalt Jesus that only the most blind and foolish would ever dream of forsaking the Son of God as their Rock and turning to some other source for

salvation. No other person in history has had such things written of them as we have of Jesus. Some unknown author has written a paragraph that has been published for all to read. It has circled the world, and I want to share it again.

**“Jesus Christ came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman. He put on humanity that we might put on divinity. He became Son of Man that we might become sons of God. He was born contrary to the laws of nature, lived in poverty, was reared in obscurity, and only once crossed the boundary of the land in which He was born-and that in His childhood. He had not wealth or influence and had neither training nor education in the world's schools. His relatives were inconspicuous and un-influential. In infancy He startled a king. In boyhood He puzzled the theologians. In manhood He ruled the course of nature. He walked upon the billows and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book and yet all the libraries of the world could not hold the books about Him. He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all songwriters together. He never founded a college, yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as He has. He never practiced medicine and yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors have healed broken bodies. This Jesus Christ is the star of astronomy, the rock of geology, the lion and the lamb of zoology, the harmonizer of all discords, and the healer of all diseases. Throughout history great men have come and gone, yet He lives on. Herod could not kill him. Satan could not seduce him. Death could not destroy him and the grave could not hold him.”**

Only a Son like this could be exalted to sit at the right hand of the Father on His throne. No one else is seated there, for no one else is the unique Son of God. Being seated there signifies that Jesus completed all that He came into the world to accomplish. It means that He now has the authority and power He claimed when He said, “All power in heaven and on earth is given unto me.” It means He is the closest person to the Father and is the only intercessor needed. In Rom. 8:24 we read, “Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-more than that, who was raised to life-is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.” He is the only one who has the authority to take us to the highest place and be seated there with Him. In Rev. 3:21 we read these words of Jesus to the church: “To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.” It is no wonder we are to look to the Son as we run the race of life, for He alone has made it to the finish line, and He alone can make us ultimate winners. Heb. 12:2 says, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Jesus has always been the Son of God, but now He is the Son of Man also, and it is as the God-Man that He sits at the right hand of God. God made a radical change in His very being in order to save man and make him a part of His eternal family. Jesus will always be the greatest Son, for He is the one that made it possible for others to become sons of God. In Galatians 4:4 we read, “But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman . . .” He was already God’s Son when He came into the world. There has never been a time when God was not a family in His very being as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As a man, however, Jesus became the Son in a unique sense that was not true for all

eternity past, for He became a mixture of deity and humanity, which He never was before. He was the greatest Son forever in time past, but now He has become the greatest Son for all eternity future as the God-Man Son. He was never this before, and so those who say God never changes have not thought deeply about the implications of the Incarnation. The well known hymn sung by millions around the world conveys the dual sonship of Jesus, and that we worship Him as both the Son of God and the Son of Man. His sonship is one of ultimate beauty, for He combines the best of both God and man.

**Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,  
O Thou of God and man the Son,  
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,  
Thou, my soul's glory, joy and crown.**

**Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,  
Robed in the blooming garb of spring;  
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,  
Who makes the woeful heart to sing.**

**Fair is the sunshine,  
Fairer still the moonlight,  
And all the twinkling starry host;  
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer  
Than all the angels heaven can boast.**

**All fairest beauty, heavenly and earthly,  
Wondrously, Jesus, is found in Thee;  
None can be nearer, fairer or dearer,  
Than Thou, my Savior, art to me.**

**Beautiful Savior! Lord of all the nations!  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,  
Now and forever more be Thine.**

Jesus prayed in John 17:5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" Jesus was going back to the glory He had for all eternity past, but He was going back as a Son with a dual nature so as to be both God and man, and the ideal mediator between God and man. As the God-Man Son he has equal honor with the Father. In John 5:23 we read, "All should honor the Son just as the honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." Only one who is God or the Son of God could dare to receive worship. No angel can do so, for they are created beings, but Jesus accepted worship as the Son of God. We see this in John 9:35-38, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you." Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him."



History is filled with sons who have brought great pride to their fathers, and son who did great service for mankind, but none can compare with Jesus in what He did to glorify His Father and benefit mankind by making their salvation possible. He, and He alone, deserves the title **THE GREATEST SON**.

## **CHAPTER 12 THE GREATEST JOY**

**THE HAPPIEST PERSON IN THE UNIVERSE** based on Heb. 1:9

My wife and I sometimes debate as to which of us loves the other the most, and we each make the claim that “I love you more.” The other responds, “No, I love you more.” It is one of those debates that can never have a winner because there is no love measuring device by which we can measure our love to see which is the greatest. It is also impossible to measure joy and happiness. No one can say I am happier than someone else, for without a way of measurement it is a meaningless statement. However, if the God who made us, and who knows all things, says that someone is happier and more joyful than others, then we have a basis for the claim that a person can be the most joyful and happy person there is. That is what verse 9 of Hebrews chapter one tells us about Jesus. It says,  
“You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.”

The anointing with the oil of joy is translated by Moffat as. “with the oil of rejoicing beyond thy comrades.” TCNT has it, “with the festal oil more abundantly than thy peers.” Today's English Version renders it: "The kingdom that God has given you will last forever and ever. You rule over your people with justice; you love what is right and hate what is evil. That is why God, your God, has chosen you and has poured out more happiness on you than on any other king."

The greatest joy comes to those who are in fullest agreement with the nature and purpose of God, and that means those who love what is good and hate what is evil. All people do both to some degree, for if you read the statements of crime leaders you learn that they want their children to grow up and be legitimate and not criminals. Everyone loves good and hates evil to some degree, but only one person in history loved and hated in perfect agreement with God, and that was Jesus Christ. He was the happiest man in history, and the happiest being in all the universe, because he had the very joy of God.

Is God actually happy? Does He have a heart filled with joy? It seems like He might be sad most of the time because of the sin and rebellion of man, and the mess they constantly make of His beautiful world, but the fact is, God is a God of joy. One of the great texts of Nehemiah is in 8:10 where we read, “..for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” It is God’s joy that makes it possible for Him to put up with a fallen world, and this joy was

the joy that gave Jesus the strength to go all the way to the cross and to the depths of hell for lost sinners. Heb. 12:2 says, "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Without the joy of the Father Jesus could not have had the strength to go through with the plan of salvation. He needed joy and the power it provides to fulfill His purpose for time and eternity.

Webster's Dictionary defines joy as - pleasure caused by the EXPECTATION of good. Jesus expected to see billions of redeemed sinners in glory, and enjoying pleasures forever at God's right hand with Him in the Father's house, and it was this expectation that filled Him with joy. No one in history has ever been able to expect such success from what they do. No other sacrifice in history has ever come close to doing so much for so many. He purchased by His blood that which is of infinite value. It is beyond measure what will be because of His sacrifice, and that is why it is beyond measure to determine the greatness of His joy. It can only be described as a joy equal with the joy of the Father whose will He accomplished by going to the cross.

The Nehemiah text is talking about the strength that the joy of the Lord can give to men, and so Jesus, who was the greatest of men, could have this strength in far greater measure. Spurgeon in a sermon on the text shows just what power is available to all believers in the joy of the Lord. He writes, "Let us endeavor to analyze that special and peculiar pleasure which is here called 'The joy of the Lord.' It springs from God, and has God for its object. The believer who is in a spiritually healthy state rejoices mainly in God himself; he is happy because there is a God, and because God is in his person and character what he is. All the attributes of God become well-springs of joy to the thoughtful, contemplative believer; for such a man says within his soul, 'All these attributes of my God are mine: his power, my protection; his wisdom, my guidance; his faithfulness, my foundation; his grace, my salvation.' He is a God who cannot lie, faithful and true to his promise; he is all love, and at the same time infinitely just, supremely holy. Why, the contemplation of God to one who knows that this God is his God for ever and ever, is enough to make the eyes overflow with tears, because of the deep, mysterious, unutterable bliss which fills the heart." One can only ask: How much more would knowing God as Jesus did, fill His heart with joy beyond measure?

The point I am making is that even those of us who are redeemed sinners can experience great joy, and if that be so, how much more could Jesus, who was sinless, experience the fullness of God's joy? We read such texts as Isaiah 51:11, "Therefore the Redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing into Zion: and EVERLASTING JOY shall be upon their head; they shall obtain gladness and JOY and sorrow and mourning shall flee away." I John 1:5 says, "And these things write we unto you, that your JOY may be full (having ALL it can contain, abounding.)"....OVERFLOWING!!! I Peter 1:8 says, "Whom you have not seen, you love; in whom though you see him not, yet believing you rejoice with JOY unspeakable and full of glory." What can be said of the saints can obviously be said in the highest degree of the Savior who made them saints. The logical conclusion is that Jesus was and is the happiest and most joyful person in the universe. His oil well was a joy well, and by

the power of that joy He became the Savior of the world. The most precious oil on this planet was the oil of gladness by which the Father anointed His Son.

This truth has some powerful implications for all believers. It makes it clear that with a Heavenly Father of joy, a Savior of joy, and the Holy Spirit, whose fruit is joy, we have an obligation to be a people of joy. How great students of the Bible could ever conclude that it was a duty to be only solemn in church is beyond me. There was a time when laughing in church would be a sin. It was borderline even to smile. This is totally out of harmony with the nature of God. If we are to be like Jesus, then we are to be people of joy, and that means faces, bodies and voices that communicate that joy. The Old Testament is often thought to be the harsh part of the Bible, but the fact is, there are 27 different Hebrew words for some aspect of joy. The Jewish Encyclopedia states that no language has as many words for joy and rejoicing as Hebrew. Joy is the very goal of life in the Old Testament. We read in Psalm 16:11 "Thou dost show me the path of life; in thy presence there is fullness of joy, in thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." Even in the Old Testament the saints could taste in time of what was to be the total meal in eternity. An unknown poet wrote,

The joy of the Lord is our strength for life's burdens,  
And gives to each duty a heavenly zest;  
It will set to sweet music the task of the toiler;  
And soften the couch of the laborer's rest.

Yes, the joy of the Lord is our strength for life's trials,  
And lifts the crushed heart above sorrow and care,  
Like the nightingale's song, it can sing in the darkness,  
And rejoice when the fig tree is withered and bare.

The joy of the Lord is our strength for temptation,  
And counts it the testing of patience and grace;  
It marches to battle with shouts of salvation,  
And rides o'er its foes in the chariots of praise.

Charles Woodard makes a statement about the joy of the Lord that will give balance in our understanding lest we think that joy is all emotion. He writes,  
"What is the joy of the Lord? Is it finger snapping, hand clapping, foot stomping? I think not. Is it singing Jazzy choruses and yelling hallelujah? I think not. Is it guitar-picking and dancing the charismatic two-step? I think not. "Joy" is an inward emotion that may or may not have an outward manifestation. The joy of Jesus, or that Jesus had, was in keeping the Father's commandments: *"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love."* (John 15:10) Then Jesus said: *"These things (above) have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."* (John 15:11) The joy of the Lord is His joy abiding in us! We may be full of His joy by keeping His commandments." This balance is necessary, for we do not see Jesus doing a lot of dancing before the Lord, as David did. We do not see Him clapping and shouting praises. The worship practices of Jesus are hidden, and all we know is that He spent a lot of time in private prayer, but His joy is seen most clearly by the life He lived in obedience to His Father in heaven. His greatest joy was to do the will of His Father.

**It is, however, a great mistake to take this to mean that Jesus did not have the usual emotions that accompany joyfulness. All too often Jesus is portrayed as if His whole life was lived with the same negative emotions He had to endure the last days and hours of His life on earth. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief at that time, and that dark period of His history has been imposed on all of His history. This is clearly folly when you look at what the Gospels reveal about Jesus.**

**Jesus made it clear that He did not want His disciples to be like the gloomy Pharisees who would look like death warmed over because they were fasting. They were looking for credit for their being miserable. Jesus said His disciples were to wash their faces when they were fasting and to look as radiant as possible, for they were to be lights in the world and not clouds. Joyfulness was an obligation on the part of those who followed Him. Henry Van Dyke, who wrote the words to Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee, wrote also,**

**Joy is a duty-so with golden lore  
The Hebrew Rabbis taught in days of yore,  
And happy human hearts heard in their speech,  
Almost the highest wisdom man can reach.  
But one bright peak still rises from above  
And there the master stands whose name is love,  
Saying to those whom heavy tasks employ,  
Life is divine when duty is a joy.**

**When Christians fail to do this duty you have scenes like the one described by Erma Bombeck when she was in church. A small child turned around and smiled at everyone. The child's mother slapped him and said, "Stop that grinning! You're in church!" Erma wrote, "I wanted to grab this child . . . and tell him about my God. The happy God. The smiling God." We might see a little of this attitude in the disciples when they tried to push the children away from Jesus, but we do not see in it Jesus, for He said let them come to me, for of such is the kingdom of God. He loved children and they loved to come to Him. He exuded joy and friendliness and that is why people of all ages wanted to be near Him. He had His times when He was down and frustrated, especially with His disciples slow pace in spiritual growth. He had to lament, "How long do I have to put up with you?" They often debated who of them was the greatest, and Jesus had to rebuke them for their pride. The Pharisees made Him angry with the way they made religion a burden rather than a blessing as God intended. He had His share of negative emotions, but in His public life He attracted all people because He had the spirit of joy in great measure. He was filled with the Spirit, and joy was one of the fruits of being so filled. Eccles. 3:4 reminds us there is a time to weep and a time to laugh, and Jesus had the balanced life that He expects all of His followers to have.**

**Can you imagine Jesus not laughing along with Mary and Martha when Lazarus came walking out of that tomb alive. They had been weeping for days at his loss, and now they have him back again. They would be overwhelmed with joy. It is in that context that we read in John 11 that Jesus was so moved by their tears when He arrived that he wept. Can we conceive that He would be moved by their tears to weep and not be moved by their joy to join them in praise and laughter at the great miracle of resurrection. Jesus would not be truly human if He did not laugh and rejoice at such a time. He would be lacking basic human emotions, and this is not possible in the only perfect man to ever live since Adam. Multiply**

this over and over in all of the situations Jesus was in month after month as He healed people of their diseases. The people would be delirious with joy to see again, and walk again, and be able to go back from the life of a leper to live with their family again. Imagine all of the joy in the crowds day after day, and then try to imagine the author of all this joy not cracking a smile. It is nothing short of sacrilegious to think that Jesus was some sort of freak who could not join in the joyful celebrations all around Him. No one has ever lived who had more reason to be filled with joy and laughter at the marvelous love and grace of God to fallen people.

Leslie Weatherhead wrote, "I want us to see that Jesus Christ was and is the most radiant personality in history." He goes on to help us see this by describing some of the situations in the life of Jesus that can only be explained by seeing His sense of humor. It is a long quote, but even this does not cover all of the humor of Jesus. Elton Trueblood has a whole book called *The Humor Of Christ*, in which he covers thirty jokes of Jesus. Weatherhead covers some of the obvious ones. He writes, "Probably we shall have to emphasize almost to the point of exaggeration the gayer sides of Christ's character before we can correct the picture of Him which is in most people's minds. Many people, for instance, are still quite shocked at the thought that Jesus ever made jokes or was deliberately 'humorous. Yet how else can one interpret some of His sayings? He tells a story of a man grumbling at the speck in his brother's eye when a great 'plank' -for this is the meaning of the word translated 'beam'-is sticking out of his own. He pictures a Pharisee drinking. It may have been soup. He does not say. But he carefully strains out a gnat, and gulps down a whole camel. Whether the Pharisees laughed at that I don't know, but I am sure the little boys sitting round his feet and playing on the edge of the crowd did.

"Does a man light a lamp, He asks in one of His addresses, and put it under the bed ? Do you think that question could have been asked seriously ? Take the story of the friend at midnight asking for three loaves. The response is a sleepy ' Go away! I am with my children in bed.' I believe that is an obvious touch of humour. Then, you remember, the friend goes on pestering him till at last the man rises, ' not because the other is his friend, but because of his importunity, and gives him whatsoever he desires.' In other words, he does not want to be troubled, but the other makes such a noise that at last the father says that if only he will stop making that noise, which may wake the baby at any moment, he will give him the whole house. Jesus paints another picture of Pharisees invited to a feast. One of them excuses himself on the ground that he has bought two oxen, another that he has bought a field, another that he has married a wife. Fancy a corpulent old Pharisee missing a free meal because he had to try his oxen or look at a muddy field, or, we should say, hold his wife's hand! Surely there is the ring of real humour in His voice and a sparkle in His eyes!

" I think also that the radiant humour of Jesus probably explains many passages that he sound harsh. Unfortunately we cannot recapture the flash in His eye, or the tone of voice on which the character of many of His replies depends. For instance, you will remember the story of the Syro-phoenician woman who comes to Him, and to whom He says a thing that sounds cruel and hard, even rude: ' I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. . . . It is not meet to take the children's food and cast it to the dogs.' What an awful thing to say! But you cannot see His eyes. You know He was joking from the woman's answer. She would never have dared to answer a rabbi as she did unless she had seen in His eyes that He was only teasing her. 'No,' she said, ' but even the puppies (she uses a different

word from His word for dogs) eat the crumbs under the table.' And then He did what she had asked Him to do. Sometimes, when I hear these matchless stories read in church by some solemn, pompous person, I imagine Peter and John sitting together in the back pew, and the former nudging the latter and saying, ' He wouldn't read it like that if he had been there, and heard Jesus say it."

There are many hints about the joyful nature of Jesus in the Gospels that we tend to ignore because of the history of art that pictures Jesus as so sad. His enemies called Him a winebibber and a glutton, and a friend of publicans and sinners. This was due to the fact that Jesus was often at celebrations like weddings and banquets. Often it was with people who were not the most respectful. And seldom did He fast, or expect His followers to do so. He was a party lover because that is where He could get to know people. The Pharisees saw all of His fun loving times as a disgrace for a religious teacher and they called Him the worst of names by saying He was a winebibber and glutton. Dr. Glover called this, "the most precious bit of slander that ever slipped from slimy lips." He said this because it reveals just how radiant and attractive Jesus was to all kinds of people. He was fun to be with, and the life of any party. This picture of Jesus is becoming more and more acceptable, and there are numerous paintings of Jesus which show Him laughing and with a big smile. This was once very unacceptable because people let the culture and the times dictate how they see Jesus rather than the Word of God.

Spurgeon points out that it was not just the death of Jesus that caused God to anoint Him with the oil of joy, for it was also for His perfect life. He wrote, "On account of our Lord's perfect life he is now rewarded with superior joy. Others there are to whom grace has given a sacred fellowship with him, but by their universal consent and his own merit, he is prince among them, the gladdest of all because the cause of all their gladness. At Oriental feasts oil was poured on the heads of distinguished and very welcome guests; God himself anoints the man Christ Jesus, as he sits at the heavenly feasts, anoints him as a reward for his work, with higher and fuller joy than any else can know; thus is the Son of man honoured and rewarded for all his pains." Jesus feasted joyfully on earth without sin, and the result is He will feast forever in heaven where sin is no more, and where joy and laughter will be endless. There will be many companions sharing the eternal feast, but Jesus will always have a greater measure of joy than any angel or man, for it was His obedience to the Father that made all this joy possible. His anointing with the oil of joy is an eternal anointing, and none will ever be more joyous and happy than Jesus. Spurgeon writes again, "The Man of Sorrows is the fountain of all joy to others, and is the possessor of all the joys of heaven and earth, by virtue of his triumphs. He has experienced joys in proportion to his sorrows; as he once waded through deep waters of grief he has now climbed to the highest mountains of happiness. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross despising the shame, and now having sat down at his Father's right-hand he enjoys pleasures for evermore."

It is easier for people to accept the eternal joy of Jesus, but they seldom think of the many reasons Jesus had for being the most joyous man who ever lived while He was on the earth in the flesh. It is always cause for joy when we are doing a good job, and when we are complimented for it. God spoke to Jesus at His baptism just before He was going into the desert to face His greatest temptation, and He said to Jesus that He was well pleased with Him. Jesus heard His "Well done, good and faithful servant." This was a

great source of His joy. God was ever with Him, and giving Him full assurance of His favor. When we are doing what gives God pleasure, we are filled with pleasure ourselves, and Jesus was always doing what pleased God. He grew in favor with both God and man it says in Luke 2:52. He was a spiritual and a social success, and that leads any person to joy. He never failed to please God, even though not all men were pleased with Him, and that is why He was and is the happiest man who ever lived.

Can you imagine the joy of Jesus after His ordeal with Satan in the wilderness. The angels came to minister to Him, and that had to be a scene of joy beyond what most can ever experience. Jesus had faced the worst enemy of God and man and He came through the fire without a singed hair. He had won over the most powerful force for evil in the universe. I saw how people celebrated when we won World War II. I was just a young boy, and I was down town in Sioux Falls, South Dakota when all of a sudden whistles started to blow. People stopped their cars in the street and got out to dance on the road and hug strangers. Paper was flying out of windows in the upper stories of the buildings. It was a wild celebration, for victory had been won over an enemy. Such joy is rare to see, and I have never seen it again like that, but I can imagine the depth of joy Jesus felt after winning the greatest victory possible. Jesus had every reason to be the happiest man in the universe.

Spurgeon waxes eloquent in his defense of the happy Jesus by suggesting it would be impossible for a normal man to not be filled with joy in doing all of the good that Jesus did in His daily ministry. He writes, "Do you think, brethren, our Savior lived in this world, doing so much good, without receiving some joy in his acts of mercy? To teach, to labor, and to make men holy, must give joy to a benevolent mind. It could not be otherwise than pleasant to a good man to do good. If God delighteth in mercy, surely his express image must do the same. To restore the dead to their sorrowing relations, was this no satisfaction? Did the widow's grateful eye in the gates of Nain kindle no joy-flashes in his heart? Did the thankfulness of Mary and Martha inspire no comfort in the Life-giver? Think you that it was not gladsome work to feed the famishing multitudes? Who could look upon the feasting thousands without rejoicing? To heal the leper, to restore the lame, to give eyes to the blind and ears to the deaf, who could do all this and not be happy in distributing the boons? Surely, brethren, there were some hosannas in Jesus's ears, and though he could always bear the cry of "Crucify him! Crucify him!" yet he must have felt the wondrous joy of doing good, which is one of the delights entailed on all self-sacrificing lovers of others." He concluded that a man who lives in full obedience to the will of God all of his life must be a man full of joy. He writes, "Indeed, my brethren, there is more than enough of evidence to prove that a rich anointing of gladness rested on the head of the Man of Sorrows."

It is important that we see this side of Jesus, for those who did not, but saw Him only as stern and somber, developed the kind of atmosphere that appealed to none but pessimists about human nature. Jesus had the perfect human nature and it was one that delighted in all that God had made. He loved people and nature and all of life, and this is the example of the kind of Lord we want to exalt as our example. If He did not enjoy life, but just endured it, then He is a poor guide for us. But if He loved life and enjoyed each day of it, then He becomes the image of God that we want to imitate, and the one that will

appeal to all people. Sad and depressed looking people do not attract others. I never heard anyone say, "I love to spend time with so and so because they are always complaining about life and sad over everything. They are never for anything and excited about the future, but always against anything and see the future as being worse than the miserable present." If you know anyone like this, send them a get well card quickly. You can count on it that Jesus never received such a card, for He was a happy person. In fact, none was ever happier, for He was the happiest person who ever lived, and the happiest person in the universe. His was **THE GREATEST JOY**.

## **CONCLUSION**

The chapters above would seem to say about all that could be said to exalt the greatness of Jesus, but the reality is that they are just the introduction to a book that goes on to give us many other ways in which Jesus is the greatest. It would take a series of volumes to cover all the ways in which He is not just great, but the greatest. I will list the ways that I have discovered so that you might be motivated to search this book for yourself, and possibly find even more ways in which it exalts the Lord Jesus Christ. Here are the ones I have found.

### **HEB. 2**

<b>2:1-4</b>	<b>THE GREATEST MESSAGE</b>
<b>2:5-9</b>	<b>THE GREATEST MAN</b>
<b>2:10-13</b>	<b>THE GREATEST BROTHER</b>
<b>2:14-17</b>	<b>THE GREATEST DEATH</b>
<b>2:18+2:10</b>	<b>THE GREATEST SUFFERER</b>
<b>2:18</b>	<b>THE GREATEST TEMPTATION</b>

### **HEB. 3**

<b>3:1-6</b>	<b>THE GREATEST LEADER</b>
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### **HEB. 4**

<b>4</b>	<b>THE GREATEST REST</b>
<b>4:14-16</b>	<b>THE GREATEST HIGH PRIEST</b>

### **HEB. 5**

<b>5:7-11</b>	<b>THE GREATEST OBEDIENCE</b>
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### **HEB. 6**

<b>6:1-3</b>	<b>THE GREATEST MATURITY</b>
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## **HEB. 7**

<b>7</b>	<b>THE GREATEST KING</b>
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## **HEB. 8**

8

**THE GREATEST COVENANT**

## **HEB. 9**

9:11

**THE GREATEST TEMPLE**

9:12

**THE GREATEST BLOOD**

9:23 +10

**THE GREATEST SACRIFICE**

## **HEB. 10**

10:20f

**THE GREATEST WAY**

## **HEB. 11**

11 TO 12:3

**THE GREATEST FAITH**

## **HEB. 12**

12

**THE GREATEST ENCOURAGEMENT**

## **HEB. 13**

13:8

**THE GREATEST STABILITY**

I will close with a famous quote from an unknown author that I have read many times, but it still gives me a thrill, for it makes clear that even on the human level Jesus was the greatest person who ever lived on this planet.

“Jesus Christ came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman. He put on humanity that we might put on divinity. He became Son of Man that we might become sons of God. He was born contrary to the laws of nature, lived in poverty, was reared in obscurity, and only once crossed the boundary of the land in which He was born-and that in His childhood. He had not wealth or influence and had neither training nor education in the world's schools. His relatives were inconspicuous and un-influential. In infancy He startled a king. In boyhood He puzzled the theologians. In manhood He ruled the course of nature. He walked upon the billows and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book and yet all the libraries of the world could not hold the books about Him. He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished the theme for more songs than all songwriters together. He never founded a college, yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as He has. He never practiced medicine and yet He has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors have

**healed broken bodies. This Jesus Christ is the star of astronomy, the rock of geology, the lion and the lamb of zoology, the harmonizer of all discords, and the healer of all diseases. Throughout history great men have come and gone, yet He lives on. Herod could not kill him. Satan could not seduce him. Death could not destroy him and the grave could not hold him.”**

**In other words, He is Jesus the Greatest.**