

Jesus is the Better Voice

The fulness of God's communication to man is found in the person of Jesus. Therefore, we must seek to make Jesus our baseline for everything we believe and do in this life.

Hebrews 1:1-3, 12:25-27

RECAP

Jesus is better!

Better than what? Well, everything!

NOTE: In 13 chapters, the word “better” appears 13 times, and in every time describes something that is better because of Jesus.

As we saw last week, the enemy would love for us to believe that there is something other, something better, or something easier out there than Jesus.

This was the temptation for the Hebrew Christians of the first century who, under persecution, were debating whether or not their commitment to Christ was worth it.

- Why cling to Jesus when we could go back to the safety net of Judaism?
- What is so special and unique about Jesus that would cause us to forsake all others and give our lives for the sake of following Him?

These are great and valid questions: So much so that the author of Hebrews decides to write a theological dissertation, using the material most familiar and authoritative to His audience (the Old Testament), to lay out a case for Who Jesus truly is and who He is better and always worth it.

Hey, If you're going to lay everything on the line to follow Jesus, it's a good thing to know who you're following and why He deserves your life? taht's what Hebrews is all about.

- But here's the thing, once you've studied these things, you are accountable to them! When you get a clear picture of Who Jesus is, how worthy He is, how holy He is, how superior He is... you can't turn back. You must make that decision that for you, **"To live is Christ. To Die is gain."**

INTRODUCTION

Today, we are going to make our way through verses 1-4 with a message entitled, **"Jesus is the Better Voice."**

And here's the big idea summary of today's message:

"The fulness of God's communication to man is found in the person of Jesus. Therefore, we must ensure that the voice of Jesus speaks louder than every other voice or influence in our lives."

Let's stand and read verses 1-4, pray, and dive in.

BIBLE VERSE

[Heb 1:1-4 NKJV] 1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

WOW

Talk about being intimidated as a pastor. The first sentence of Hebrews is theologically exhausting. It's like sticking your shovel in the ground and on the first scoop hitting the largest oil reserve in existence. How to you contain it all! As a pastor trying to teach Hebrews 1, I feel like a small hole in the dam of a large lake trying to take this ginormous volume of material and

expressing it is a 40 minute sermon! ***But these first sentence, in short, tells us that Jesus is the express communication of the invisible God to humankind.***

We see this in 5 ways:

God communicates His truth through Jesus

God communicates His creative power through Jesus

God communicates His nature through Jesus

God communicates His authority through Jesus

God communicates His Victory through Jesus

1

God communicates His truth through Jesus

BIBLE VERSE

1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son...

GOD

The first word of the letter is a appropriate... it is simply God.

- In the author's mind, God is not someone who has to be proven for His existence is already self evident:
- ***The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament His handiwork (Psalm 19:1)!***
- Some would say that the more we learn in the scientific realm, the ,more absurd it becomes to believe in a creator. I feel the opposite! the more science proves the complexity of life, down to the very molecules, the more it points to the utter ingenious and creative power of God. Science without God simply creates more questions for itself that become more and more complex to answer with each new discovery.

But I love this... at the beginning of every story worth telling is God:

- He is preexistent and eternal. When time and matter began, there was God. When Salvation came to mankind, it was, “For God so loved the world.”
- For every longing of the human soul or question of the human mind, or struggle with the human identity, the best thing that one can do is simply put God at the beginning. ***Start with God and you’ll finish well!***

BEFORE WE DIG TOO MUCH DEEPER...

Notice that God doesn’t simply exist, but He communicates with His creation!

Simply note this amazing revelation about the nature of God: ***God is a communicative being.***

- From the beginning, God has not “Shut His mouth” so to speak toward humanity.
- All throughout history and through various different methods God has spoken.
- God has not made himself inaudible. That is most incredibly obvious when you look at Jesus, for in the person of Jesus God shouts.
- If His divine creation wasn’t enough for people to hear Him, if the words of the prophets were not enough for people to hear Him, if Israel was not enough for people to hear Him, if His righteous judgements were not enough for people to hear Him, Jesus is certainly enough!
- The cross and the resurrection is the loudest and clearest message to humanity to God’s reality, love, and desire.

CONTEXT

As I said, God communicates in many different ways, but one of God’s most effective and go-to methods of communication of His truth to people throughout time has been through the use of people who would verbalize His communication on His behalf. ***These were called prophets.***

It’s hard to get a direct count, but I numbered about ***65 people who are recorded in the OT as being prophets*** or having prophesied on behalf of God. Of those, the ones God wanted us to remember and possess are recorded for us in the scripture.

You could say, in times past, God spoke through many mouths and in many ways:

- He once spoke through a Donkey
- To Elijah, He spoke in a still small voice

- The prophets were versatile in their deliveries. Some preached – others acted out object lessons – or did miracles – or interpreted dreams...

Why is this important: In the context of the Jewish faith, Judaism is built upon the authority of the prophets along with the Mosaic law (which the author dives into later).

- Here, the author makes the case that while the prophets clearly expressed the voice and communication of God, it is Jesus, the ultimate prophet, that fulfills and brings definition and context to everything they said.
- The prophets painted an accurate, but incomplete picture of God's ultimate purpose. With the coming of Jesus, the picture was completed! David Guzik paints a great analogy:

QUOTE

“Using the properties of light as an illustration, we may say that God spoke in a spectrum in the Old Testament. Jesus is a prism that collected all those bands of light and focused them into one pure beam.”

David Guzik, Commentary on Hebrews

BIBLE VERSE

Remember the words of Jesus?

Luk 16:16 NKJV – “The law and the prophets were until John...” – John the Baptist was the last Old Covenant prophetic voice directly declaring the revelation of God. And He was pointing to Jesus. Then Jesus made this profound statement:

Mat 5:17 NKJV – “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

Do you want to see the complete picture? The full communication of God's plan? Want to know what the prophets were really all about? **You now have to look at Jesus.**

QUOTE

God's truth was rooted in Judaism but revealed in Jesus.

Josh, Quote

LAST DAYS

In these last days, or literally, "Final times" God has sealed His message in the person of Jesus Christ.

- Up to Christ, God's message had been continually unfolding like a scroll, but Jesus is God's final message and chapter to the world before the end of it. Sure, it's been 2000 years for us, but nothing for God. He is waiting for the final communication to be heard in the entire earth before the end comes.
- Jesus didn't just bring another message **FROM** God in a continuing string of messages, Jesus is the complete message **OF** God.

EXAMPLE: Have you seen those series of commercials, maybe during the Super Bowl, where they show you a provoking clip that doesn't fully make sense or have a conclusion on its own, then it says something like: ***"To see the rest of the story, visit this website." The prophets were accurate yet incomplete soundbites. Want to know the full story? Go see Jesus!***

SIDE-NOTE: This is why we must be very leery of anyone who claims to come with a new divine revelation of God that comes outside of who Jesus is, and what He has already revealed and spoken. Even if someone comes in the name of Jesus but doesn't align with the scriptural Jesus, he or she must not be regarded as though they are truly coming from God. **Please remember this lest you be tempted to look somewhere else for the revelation of God:**

QUOTE

Everything God wants humanity to know about Him is found in Jesus.

Josh, Quote

APPLICATION

God didn't send Mohammed to bring us the next, fuller revelation of Himself. God didn't send Joseph Smith to bring us a new and updated knowledge of Jesus.

- Josh what about prophets in the NT? Yes, the Bible clearly speaks that there are NT prophets, but they are not like the OT prophets.

QUOTE

New Covenant prophets don't reveal new truth but freshly apply old truth.

Josh, Quote

APPLICATION

In other words, a NT prophecy is only as good as it lines up with the historical, biblical Jesus. Jesus is still at work. He is still speaking today by His Spirit and through His word. Jesus will always have new and living application for us that He will reveal specifically for our lives, but it will always line up with how He has already revealed himself.

- ***Jesus will not contradict today something He said or revealed 2000 years ago.***

APPLICATION

This is why I take issue with blanket prophecies coming from so-called prophets that claim to speak for Jesus, frequently communicating things that aren't even really aligned with what Jesus was about. Many people today don't take the weight seriously of what it actually means to

“Speak on behalf of Jesus to others.”

“Jesus says this is your year of financial breakthrough. This is your year of Yes's!”

Who has the audacity to say that to a thousand individuals? This might be the year of your greatest pain, greatest struggle or greatest loss. It might be a year of waiting, or testing, or maybe of no! It might be the year you make a million or lose a million, the year when all your dreams come true, or all your dreams fall flat.

But one thing I can promise... no matter what your year holds Jesus holds the truth you need to navigate it and come out the other end with greater faith and deeper intimacy with God.

You want a voice that will speak light into your darkness, clarity into your confusion, order into your chaos, truth into your uncertainty? **He who has ears, let Him hear!!!**

The voice that created and calmed the sea. The voice that physically spoke on this earth and is recorded in this book. The voice that speaks through the written, inspired scripture. The voice that speaks by His Holy Spirit who is in us. This voice of Jesus is the only one that you really need to listen to.

2

God communicates His creative power through Jesus

BIBLE VERSE

2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

BIBLE VERSE

Psalms 19:1 (NIV)

¹ Psalm 19 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

New International Version (NIV)

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ILLUSTRATION

The vastness and immensity of the universe should boggle our minds and remind us of how small we truly are.

- **Earth to the sun – the sun to the largest known star – largest known star to other large stars – largest stars to the number of stars in the universe.**
- **We are infinitesimal beings.**

- He created the stars ALSO... Measured the heavens with a span (measuring rod)... He counts the stars and calls them by name...
- 2 trillion galaxies, 100 billion stars per galaxy. 2 + 23 zeros planets.
- What is man that you are mindful of Him? We are the apple of His eye, created in His image, the center of His plan for the universe is right here, right now.

APPLICATION

This is an incredible statement!

Jesus is the heir of all things: Everything that exists rightfully belongs to Him and is under His ownership.

[Rom 8:16-17 NKJV] 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him], that we may also be glorified together.

Through whom the worlds were created: Jesus was the hand of God’s creative genius.

This is another way to declare that Jesus is part of the triune Creator. Genesis 1 declares:

- *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth – The Father creating*
- *The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters – The Spirit of God creating*
- *Then God said – the Word of God creating – John gives us insight to the nature of that Word:*

Jhn 1:1-3, 14 NKJV – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

There we have it!

Interesting: the word “worlds” is the Greek word AION – it speaks not only of the material universe but to time itself. Jesus, being outside of time, created time.

Isaiah 9:6 – He shall be called... Everlasting Father

BIBLE VERSE

[Isa 45:18 NKJV] 18 For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: “I [am] the LORD, and [there is] no other.

BIBLE VERSE

Col 1:15-17 NKJV – He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 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.

APPLICATION

Why should we listen to the voice of Jesus? Because every atom of the universe listened. That’s why they came into being. I think the voice that spoke everything into existence certainly holds the authority that we should submit to and trust!

3

God communicates His Glory in Jesus

BIBLE VERSE

3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person,

EXPOSIT

Here the author describes the nature of Jesus in two ways: 1.) The glory of God was represented in Jesus 2.) The personality of God was represented in Jesus.

The brightness of His glory – **1 Timothy 6** teaches us that God is immortal and dwells in unapproachable light. No one has seen Him... except for the Son Who eternally dwelt within the light as part of the godhead. From an OT perspective the Jewish reader would understand “The

brightness of His glory” refers to the person of Jehovah, for God is light and in Him is no darkness at all:

- *The glory that caused the Israelites to tremble at Mount Sinai.*
- *The glory that filled the tabernacle.*
- *The glory that resided in the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day.*
- *The glory that fell and resided in the temple.*
- *The reader would have understood that the author is implying that Jesus is the same expression of the brightness of the glory of God.*

The express image of His person – This term in Greek goes far beyond describing a resemblance. It’s not like Jesus kinda looked like God might look. No, the phrase means “Exact representation”, no not in His physical attributes, but in His personality and character.

Remember what Jesus told Thomas when Phillip asked him, “**Show us the Father!**”

BIBLE VERSE

Jhn 14:9 NKJV – Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

ILLUSTRATION

None of us gets the concept of a triune God There is no earthly example that suffices because it is something unique to the divine nature.

BIBLE VERSE

[Mar 9:2-7 NKJV] **2** Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. **3** His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

APPLICATION

The language indicates that Jesus was the source of the brightness.

- When Moses came out of being in the presence of the Lord, he wore a veil over his head because he was reflecting the glory he had seen, and it would quickly fade.
- Here, Jesus doesn't merely reflect the glory of God, He emanates the glory of God!
- Interesting how Mark notes the whiteness of the clothes. Why? I'm not sure. It could be a reference to the holiness and righteousness of Christ with which he would ultimately clothe us. Though our sins be as scarlet, they will be white as snow...
- Like no launderer could whiten them – implying that with was not a natural event, but supernatural. Jesus was going far beyond bleach!
 - Luke adds, “they were as bright as a flash of lightning!”
 - Matthew adds, “that His face shone like the sun...”
 - When John describes the final city that we will all ultimately dwell in, the new Jerusalem, listen to how He describes the light source:

[REV 21:23 NKJV] 23 THE CITY HAD NO NEED OF THE SUN OR OF THE MOON TO SHINE IN IT, FOR THE GLORY OF GOD ILLUMINATED IT. THE LAMB (JESUS) IS ITS LIGHT.

Peter, James, and John, in a moment unlike any other human being, has ever experienced, get to see a glimpse of the glory that Jesus truly possessed.

“For a brief moment the veil of his humanity was lifted, and his true essence was allowed to shine through. The glory which was always in the depths of his being rose to the surface for that one time in his earthly life.” -Kent Hughes

INCREDIBLE! Here they see the son of God shining in glory! Adds a whole new meaning to getting “sun-burned.” If this wasn't enough for the three disciples to take in, it gets even more intense!

BIBLE VERSE

4 And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. 5 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah”– 6 because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid. 7 And a cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!”

APPLICATION

The two most revered and respected figures to the Jewish people show up and start chatting Jesus!

SYMBOLISM: Why these two? For many obvious reasons:

- Both Moses and Elijah conversed directly with God (Moses on Mt. Sinai, and Elijah on Mt. Horeb.)
- They had both seen a glimpse of God's glory.
- They both had miraculous departures from the earth in which God was directly involved.
- Moses represented the law given to Israel, Elijah represented the prophets (God's divine institutions and God's divine revelation)
- Together, they were a summary of the Old Covenant

What were they and Jesus talking about? Dr. Luke tells us in his parallel account: "They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem."

THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS: Was everything the law pointed to and everything the prophets foretold of. Their presence with Jesus signifies a few powerful realities:

1. Jesus' mission and purpose were in complete concordance and alignment with the law and the prophets. Jesus said, "I did not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to complete them."
2. Indicates the greater authority of Jesus. Moses and Elijah didn't have sunbeams radiating from their heads! The law and the prophets are subjected to, and made complete in Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION

THE CLOUD:

- Israel – God led his people of Israel through the wilderness by a pillar of cloud by day – God's presence was in the cloud.
 - Moses – God came to Him in a thick cloud
 - Tabernacle – the cloud would depend upon the tabernacle and God would speak to Him.
 - Temple – later the Glory of God would fill the temple in a cloud so thick, the priests could not stand and minister in the temple.

THE FATHER SPEAKS: Hear Him! How about that response to make things clear!

- This is the second time God the Father puts His unabashed public endorsement on Jesus (The first at His baptism).
- Hear Him – Literally, obey His voice. In essence, God declares that Jesus is the highest authority on that mountain. He is not Moses’s and Elijah’s equal. The law and the prophets hold no authority on their own apart from Jesus.

BIBLE VERSE

[2Pe 1:16-19 NKJV] **16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;**

APPLICATION

Why should we listen to Jesus’ voice above all others? Because it is the voice of God Himself. When Jesus speaks, God is speaking. When Jesus says, “This or that is true” it is God saying, “This or that is true.”

4

God communicates His authority through Jesus

BIBLE VERSE

and upholding all things by the word of His power,

APPLICATION

Not only did the word of Jesus **create** all things, but it also **upholds** all things! The supportive force of the physical universe is the word of Jesus!

Molecular science teaches us that like particles repel. Yet the protons in the nucleus of an atom somehow have a strong force that binds them. Scientist overseas has spent billions of dollars to collide particles together to try to find these invisible molecules. What a shock it will be to them when they find that their “Cosmic glue” and “God particle” was none other than God!

- The word of Jesus spoke all things into being from nothing. It’s that same word that allows all things to hold together. When Jesus speaks, the natural laws bow down to His authority. Winds ceased, storms stilled, and limbs grew back... but what we saw on earth was really a small demonstration of His authority and power over all creation.
- One day, the word of Jesus will speak, and by His word every molecule will be released.

[2Pe 3:12 NKJV] 12 ...the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

[Mat 28:18 NKJV] 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

But if he has the power and authority to uphold all of creation, why do I doubt that he is upholding the things that concern me?

Not only does He hold all things in time and space together, but also the things that concern me. From the enormous to the infinitesimal, Jesus holds it all... and my life and eternity are safe within His care.

How does He uphold it all? By the **word of HIS POWER!**

- **Don’t miss this! The words of Jesus are infinitely powerful.**
- **When He says, “You are forgiven” you can’t undo that! When He says, “You are free” don’t believe anything else. Since His words uphold all, we are upheld when we believe and walk in them.**

5

God communicates His victory through Jesus

BIBLE VERSE

3 – ...when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

APPLICATION

In short, Jesus was God's declaration that sin would not have the final word over humanity!

- Sin was *humanity's problem* and hell was *humanity's plight*, but Jesus was *humanity's hero*.

He purged our sins – one of the greatest and most mystifying aspects of the gospel!

- *Here the author of Hebrews utterly dismantles and destroys the man-made religious system. He does the unthinkable in the Jewish mind. Not only does he declare that God became a man in the person of Jesus, but that God became the very sacrifice for man's wickedness.*

Purged – to offer purification: This is another Old Testament image.

- When someone was ceremonial unclean according to the law of Moses they had to purify themselves.
- They had ceremonial baths called “Micvas” and would dip in these and clean their clothes in them if they had defiled themselves.
- The problem is it only made the flesh and the clothes clean, it didn't do anything to cleanse the conscience or permanently erase the guilt of the sin or spiritual uncleanness that took place.

But Jesus' blood provided eternal and complete purification of sin because it was perfect sinless blood. The OT prophesied of this:

Speaking of the Messiah, Ezekiel prophesies:

“Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness...”

David cried out for this eternal cleansing in Psalm 51:7:

Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

ILLUSTRATION

APPLICATION

Not only did He purge our sins, but he purged our sins “by himself.”

IMPRESSIVE: 9 times in the book of Hebrews we see the phrase, “He Himself” speaking of Jesus. He’s the man. All the things no one and nothing else could do to make a way to God, He did Himself!

- How many Jesus’ does it take to wipe a person’s slate clean from sin? 1 and only 1.
- He didn’t need help for His lifeblood alone was sufficient to forgive every sin of every person once and for all!
- Why would you want to trade the precious blood of Jesus that has power like that for the blood of animals whose sacrifice could never do the job?

Then we read, “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high”: WOW! This tells me that:

QUOTE

The cross was not the deathbed of an innocent victim. It was the battlefield of a victorious warrior King!

Josh, Quote

APPLICATION

Upon which Jesus, the owner of all things, the creator of all things, the sustainer of all things, crushed satan’s head and took away His power over death once and for all! His words created, His words sustain, and with the words, “It is finished” He spoke the stronger and better words of salvation to all mankind.

- No lie of the devil can ever stand up to those words uttered from the cross. His is the victory and now He is ascended and ruling in the place of ultimate authority and power forevermore!

BIBLE VERSE

[Heb 12:25-27 NKJV] 25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more [shall we not escape] if we turn away from Him who [speaks] from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, “Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven.” 27 Now this, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

CONCLUSION

What voice is defining your truth? Managing your expectations? Establishing your priorities?

Who’s voice speaks the loudest to you?

- Is it your political party?
- Is it your friends or family?
- Is it your culture?
- Or is it Jesus?

God is speaking. He is speaking through Jesus. If you don’t know Jesus personally, He has given himself to purge your sins as well. You can take heed this morning to the better voice, the voice of salvation calling out to you today.

For all of us, let us listen closely to Jesus. Make His voice your plumb line, His gospel your foundation, His word your guiding light, and wherever this life takes you, you will not falter.