

03. Unrivaled Revelation

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Letters from Jesus

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Bible Text: Hebrews 1:1-4

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Thank you. Let me ask you to take your Bibles and turn to Hebrews chapter 1. I can see why Don has no musical talents, he gave them all to his kids. I know the feeling, Don, I really do.

You know, every now and then you find something that's just excellent and it was many, many years, in fact, I'm still not sure that I have found the equal but I know when I lived at Texas A&M University going to school there, I lived with an old widow lady and Mrs. Hedge could fix pinto beans better than anybody I've ever met. I still haven't found anybody that fixes them quite that good. I don't know how she did it and I know nothing competes with a memory but I just never have been, I managed to have a few good bowls every now and then but they are still not quite Mrs. Hedge's. I know there's great, you know, every buddy loves Bluebell, right? Because that's the ice cream and I know the pastor if he wants ice cream, he wants Bluebell but I happen to know that the hallelujah ice cream I fix has surpassed every other ice cream under the sun, there's not any other ice cream that good. In fact, if ice cream could praise the Lord, it would taste like what I would make and so it's unrivaled in its ice creaminess, I guess I'll say.

But today I want to talk about unrivaled revelation. The greatest revelation that we could have from God. And I don't know how many of you are like this but every now and then I just think that I wish God would just tell me what he wants me to do. Do you all ever feel that way? Do you wish he'd just write it on a blackboard or write it out in the sky for you to see or suddenly surround you with a bright shining light and this big booming voice would come out of the clouds and he would tell you what that is. The problem is that there was a man that had that kind of experience one time. He was out in the woods and he was contemplating the differences, so he says, between all the different denominations and wondering why there were so many and he's frustrated by it and all of a sudden and if you read his account of this tale in a book called the "Pearl of Great Price," he was surrounded by darkness and, by the way, God doesn't usually do the darkness thing unless it's Mount Sinai and he's trying to protect you from his wrath. But he's surrounded by darkness and he had this great fear and dread come upon him and then he met this angel named Mormon who told him that there was a true faith and that he could write about it and, of course, we've never found the reformed Egyptian place that it was claimed to have been written in and they've never turned over one shovel of dirt in

Central America that's ever proven a single city mentioned in the book of Mormon and the Mormons ignore the book themselves. It says right there in the book of Mormon that if you believe in a God who changes you to not believe in a God of miracles and yet Brigham Young said, "As man is, God once was. As God is, man will become," they believe in change. That's bad because if you have a perfect God and he changes what would that make him? Imperfect. You can't change perfect and wind up with anything other than imperfect and yet that's their theology. That's part of what they're doing. Similarly, you just have to know that there's, you know, there's so many wrong things with that religion and with that faith and they come up with this other revelation and, of course, they say that the book of Mormon is perfect and I marvel at that because the book itself says, "If we could have translated it out of the Hebrew. The book would have been perfect." So it admits it's an imperfect book and yet the Mormons claim it's perfect.

And then you have this funny thing that there's this fellow, they tell a flood story in the book of Mormon and there was this guy and his family that needed to escape and so rather than tell them to build an ark, in the book of Mormon, God tells him to hollow out a tree and get inside this tree, it would have had to have been a big tree, but get inside the tree and to not put any glass in the sides of the tree where it could leak even though glass wasn't invented until the 14th century BC by the Phoenicians but let's ignore that little mind boggling fact, but the best part is he tells them to put a hole in the top of the vessel and a hole in the bottom of the vessel so that if the boat rolls over they can all still breath. I don't know about you but that sounds like a bad nautical plan. You know, water is going to start coming in the minute you hop in the thing and yet these people continue to get on their bicycles and ride around in their white shirts and not even understanding what their own book has in it. Why did they need another revelation or weren't the ones we had good enough?

Now, last week we started on a journey toward the letters to the seven churches and I was eager to jump right into the letter to the church of Ephesus at chapter 2, verse 1 and I started looking at chapter 1 and I thought, "No, we need to see who it is that's speaking to us," and then we got into basically the first eight verses of Revelation 1 now and I thought, you know, it's worth time to pause and look at Jesus. Revelation chapter 1 begins with exalting Jesus. John extols his values, talks about who he is and then the next thing that happens in Revelation 1 is he hears the voice of Jesus saying, "I am Alpha and Omega. The beginning and the end." Then he turns to see the one talking to him and he begins to see and he sees this one robed in white whose hair's like white and he is girded about the chest with a golden girdle and he's got, his feet are like flaming fire that you would have in a furnace and then he falls at his feet and worships. It's a beautiful process to that and so I remember that the first verb in that whole passage, the first imperative verb, the first verb that tells us to do something, simply says "behold." It means to gaze intently upon something.

My wife and I had an interesting discussion this morning. She was kind of surprised to hear I wasn't in the actual letters to the seven churches. I said, "No, no, no, no, I think we have to stop and look a little longer at Jesus." John spent the entire first chapter doing it so let's not immediately jump there until we have at least gone through that. You know,

sometimes it does us good to stop and gaze at someone that we already love to remember why we love them, to remember how beautiful they are. I know my wife's beautiful but every now and then we may be sitting across the table at Cotton Patch and I really get a good look at her and she still has that youthful face that I married and she still has that beautiful smile and I think, "Wow, why did she ever marry me?" You know, that's what I think. Then I look at my daughters and I see in them the beauty that they have and I think, you know, and this is no offense to any of the rest of you, sorry but nobody else's daughters are as pretty as mine to me and I just think how beautiful they are and how wonderful they are. By the way, if you're curious, Hope's the one that looks the most like Judy at that age but they're all every one of them just beautiful. They all look like Judy and me and the love of God all mixed together and it's been an awesome experience. But you know, sometimes you get so busy in life that you're busy doing the chores and you're busy talking about the calendar and you're busy taking care of the schedule and you're busy taking care of the bills and you're busy doing work and washing dishes and doing the laundry and 100 other things and sometimes you're busy doing ministry so much to the extent that you don't really stop and gaze upon the ones you love and most of all we don't stop and really look and gaze upon Jesus.

I think it's significant in Revelation chapter 1 that John tells us what he was doing when all this revelation came to him. He was on the Island of Patmos. He was there because of his faith and he had been exiled there. They'd already tried boiling him in a cauldron of oil one time and that didn't work and he was supernaturally delivered. They exiled him out to Patmos. Patmos was a place where they didn't have a TDHMR, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, so they sent the people that had mental problems, they sent people who had problems coping with life, they sent them out to live on Patmos. They didn't have a whole lot of prisons. They had prisons but they sent the worst criminals out to Patmos because basically it was an island and there wasn't any way to escape. It's not like you were going to swim away and so they sent him out there kind of like Alcatraz was for many years here in the United States. They would put them out there and so you basically have criminals and kooks and scorpions for your neighbors and a rock for your bed butt he says, he doesn't complain about all that. He says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." That's where we need to be, right? We need to stop thinking about what's going on around us to the extent that we can be in the Spirit on the Lord's day. I know that you're just like me that sometimes you just wish God would just make it plain and he would make it very, very clear what he said.

I want you to look with me in your Bibles at Hebrews chapter 1. Just in honor of God's word, let's stand as we read these four verses of Scripture and I know some of you are already thinking that pastor is confused again because we're supposed to be doing the letters to the seven churches that's in Revelation. Why are we looking at a Scripture in Hebrews? Because it's the same subject and I think we need to dwell on it just a little bit longer because the writer of Hebrews said some things we need to pay attention to and here are our memory verses.

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his

Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by 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 on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Let's pray.

Father, open now our hearts to see the excellencies of Jesus, we beg it in Christ's name. Amen.

Thank you. You may be seated.

I want to just...two main thoughts here in Hebrews chapter 1 and the first one is that God spoke in the past by the prophets. The good news is that even when we clamor for, "I wish God would just tell me what's going on. I wish he'd write it in the sky. I wish he'd shine a light down from heaven and I'd hear him speak." The reality is, God is not silent, the problem is maybe our ears are stopped up. For the last three weeks now I've had a stopped up right ear, the eustachian tube's clogged and I've tried a number of different things and I got a little bit of relief last night and then it clogged back up and so whenever the kids are standing on my right side and talking to me I really don't hear them and I have to kind of turn and get my left ear to where I can hear them and I think now they just stand on my right side and say something hoping that in my senility and in my laziness I'll just say, "Yes, go ahead and do whatever it is you just said." You know, I think they may be taking advantage of me. It's hard to hear. The problem though is God isn't silent, the problem is that sometimes we're just not listening to what he has already said. He loves to speak to us. He loves to talk to us. He likes to be listened to.

Just the other day or yesterday I guess it was, Richard called me and I already had my day laid out but Richard called me and he invited me to join him at the opening of the Gander Mountain sports store and I went over there and we went off and had a hamburger after that and you heard him talk about it in the Sunday school lesson if you were here but, you know, when you're old and your kids are leaving home and they quickly forget you anyway, it's nice when they call dad up and want to eat lunch and you change your plans to go spend time with them because it's just that precious to you. You know, God loves to speak to us. He wants to spend time with us.

Now, you notice it says that in Hebrews 1 that when the prophets spoke it says God spoke. It doesn't say that the prophets spoke, it says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." It was God speaking. The prophets opened their mouth but it was God talking. Why? Because he supernaturally supervised their speech and their writing in order that his message might be made clear and the prophets gave the words people needed to hear. Now sometimes it was judgment. Sometimes it was encouragement. Sometimes it was telling what was going to happen in the future but he always gave them these particular notes.

Now, you notice it says in "sundry times and in diverse ways." So first of all, the Greek here says "he gave it to us in various portions." He gave it in different kinds of portions and let's face it, you know there are different parts to the word of God: there's the law; there's the prophets; there's the Psalms; the Proverbs which we would call wisdom literature; there's the minor prophets and the major prophets and all those divisions within the Old Testament; there's the historical books and the first five of those books are called the Torah. And so you've got all those different divisions and isn't it a good thing that God spoke to us in more than one portion or we probably wouldn't get anything out of it. I don't know about you, but every time I read that passage in Ezekiel about there was a wheel in the middle of the air and there was another wheel in it and the big wheel was turning one way and the little wheel was turning another way and there's all these things revolving around the throne of God, it's just too much for my small country boy mind to comprehend. I haven't ever preached on that passage because I'm afraid I wouldn't even know how to introduce it. It's just a vision of the Majesty of God and it's really beyond my comprehension so I struggle with some passages in Ezekiel and I finally pretty well have my grip around Daniel and that's good but then I look at Old Testament passages and I see Christ in everything.

When we first came here, I started a series on the tabernacle and we spent over a year studying the tabernacle and I thought that would be the most boring, dry, dead, dull stuff but God said do it and so I got in and I found out that even in the little details about how the sockets that they set the post in for the tabernacle were made of silver and why that was significant and what it pictured about Jesus Christ and how everything was constructed and everything in the tabernacle was a detailed picture of Jesus Christ. Even the top of the table of showbread, it had two different borders around it so that nothing could fall off that table of showbread and it was a picture of our security in Christ with our salvation that once we're genuinely saved, we can't be unsaved. Just so many beautiful details there but if we don't get Zechariah, we might understand Jonah. And if we don't get Leviticus, maybe we'll get something out of Proverbs but he's given us in many different ways.

You see, the reality is that he's spoken over and over and over again in 39 books of the Old Testament, he spoke. In 27 books of the New Testament he spoke. John Piper said this, he says, "So I have been rebuked in my complaining about the silence of God. I am like a person complaining in the land of 10,000 lakes," by the way John Piper pastors in Minnesota and, by the way, the address of his church is on 11th Avenue so listen to this next comment. "I am like a person complaining in the land of 10,000 lakes that there's no lakes in Minnesota because I don't see one from 1801 11th Avenue." What he's saying is that when we say that we can't hear from God, the fact is that we are surrounded by an abundance of God speaking to us and if we haven't heard it, it's not because God hasn't given it to us. He's given it to us in many portions.

I have to marvel every time I think about the children of Israel camping around the Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament and we know that when they camped that the tabernacle proper had this huge cloth fence around it, as it were. They had curtains and

there was only a gate on the east side and on the east side of the camp was the tribe of Judah. So in order to get into the tabernacle, you had to walk through the tribe of Judah and Jesus is called the lion of the tribe of what? Judah. You see, you can't come into the presence of God without going through Jesus so it's a picture. Then you've got inside of this and by day when the children of Israel were being led, there was this cloud that they followed and it was not a normal cloud. It was a cloud that was close to the ground. It was a cloud that moved. It was a cloud that could suddenly change directions and it was called the Shekinah and at night it was a flame of fire. Just imagine going out at night and seeing this flame of fire jumping off the top of the tabernacle proper and it lit up the night sky.

The Bible says that there was a prophet by the name of Balaam that went out there one night and a king named Balak had said, "I'm going to hire you. I want you to curse Israel." And so he took Balaam out to the side of a mountain and he looked down on the children of Israel at nighttime and he tried to curse them and he couldn't. All that would come forth out of his mouth was blessing. He tried three different times and all he could do was bless Israel because God wouldn't let a curse come out of his mouth. But isn't it fascinating what Numbers chapter 2 says that Balak saw. He looked at them at night, which you may not realize in Numbers 2, it says, "Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron saying, 'The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance. Now those who camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah... Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Issachar...then comes the tribe of Zebulun, the total of the numbered men of the camp of Judah: 186,400.'" And if you went on reading, you could come up with a table that listed all of the tribes of Israel and how big they were. It tells which ones camped on which side and it is fascinating that God gives us those details and you think, "Why would God bother to tell us which camps camped on which side of the Ark of the Covenant and why is that important? And why is it important that we know their population statistics?" But then if we draw a map of where they camped and we put the right tribes, east, west, north, south of the Ark of the Covenant, we notice that we have the Ark of the Covenant here in the middle and then we have some tribes to the south and the tribes to the north and the tribes to the west and the tribes to the east and if you actually draw those to scale and put their boxes, it's amazing the geometric figure that it performs because even in...Jesus is even in the details. Think about going out at night and you see this bright fiery cloud going right up out of the middle but it's nighttime so all the tents for all the families have a lantern hung in their tents and Balaam would have walked out trying to curse the nation of Israel and he would have been confronted with a giant flaming cross. Even in the little details, Jesus is there.

You notice he says that he spoke "by the prophets." It means that he caused the prophets to speak on his behalf and he specifically is referring to the Old Testament prophets. This is how God talked. He didn't write his word in the sky. He didn't always shout it from a mountain for all to hear. He didn't just whisper it in the heart of one lonely Israelite. He would call a prophet and he would inspire that prophet to speak and to write but don't miss what he says here when the prophet spoke, God spoke. It was God who was doing

the talking. And he says he spoke "to the fathers," just generally the ancestors of the Hebrew people. And they would bring different kinds of words as the prophets. But there was a problem with what the prophets brought and that is that each prophet had a portion of the truth. He had an aspect of the truth and everything the prophet said as they are moved along by God was inerrant and infallible. It was a perfect revelation but the fact is that everything in the Old Testament basically is a shadow and the cross and Jesus are the substance in the New Testament. You see, the shadow of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ falls on the Old Testament and everything there is just but a picture of it.

Now, the writer of Hebrews says not only has God spoken in the past but he has spoken in these last days. Now, you need to understand what this phrase "in these last days" means for us because they had a very particular term. Jews divided time into three areas of time, of course, we would call it past, present and future but Jews had some other more interesting names for it. They referred to "times past" meaning things that were part of the Old Covenant, things that were long ago. Then they would talk about "this age" or "this world" meaning pretty much the present times, maybe the time that they were alive. In other words, the past wouldn't include when they were growing up as a kid. That would still be part of this age or this present time because it's during their lifetime. Then they would talk about "things to come" or "the age to come" and what they meant by that term was that the age to come or the things to come was when the Messiah would come and rule and reign in Jerusalem. So the writer of Hebrews says God has spoken "in these last days," in other words, it's the second period of history.

Now, we have a first speaking of God through the prophets but in these last days, he speaks to us by his Son. Now, Jesus is the dividing line of history. That's why even today we refer to BC and A.D. I think it's just stupid when people try to say B.C.E. now just so they don't have to say BC. You know, they say before the common era. What they are meaning is before Jesus was born and let's just be clear about that, that he's the dividing line of history. "In times past" would be before Jesus' incarnation. "In these last days" would be since his incarnation and his death and his resurrection. There is a huge difference, in the past the prophets spoke on God's behalf but Jesus is God speaking for himself. That's a big difference. That's a big difference.

Now, I have to think in terms of software because that's who I am, I'm a software engineer and so imagine we had a software called GodSpeak. Well, GodSpeak 1.0 comes out and when we get GodSpeak 1.0, you have these prophets who are coming and they would speak on divine retribution or they would speak on the need to repent or they would speak on the coming of the Messiah that was going to be in some long distant time in the future, in the age to come. Or they would bring words of comfort to people who were in exile and who God wanted to keep them faithful and tell them to live the life that they should live to glorify Jehovah until such time as they get to go back into their land. But it was little bits and pieces of the revelation and it was always relevant to a small subject but you never quite got the full Revelation. They were pictures of Christ and they were pictures of the Redeemer but the whole plan of God wasn't really revealed in clear

detail in the Old Testament so God comes up with new software. This time it's GodSpeak 2.0 and this time it is God doing the speaking.

Now, I have to tell you it irritates me when I've got a software that I really, really love and it works perfectly and some idiot decides he needs to make an improvement to it and they try to come out with a new version and then all of a sudden nothing works. Just this last week I was on a part of the website at work where I used to always find all this useful documentation and I used to always point people to and say, "Oh, here's where you go to get the answers." Then I went there and they had moved it and the site that they moved it to, every time I loaded the site in my browser it came up with this big page error. My browser doesn't like something about the new site. Well, my browser worked just fine on the old site, why did they have to monkey with it?

But the thing is, you can't improve on Jesus. You don't need a GodSpeak 3.0. Jesus who is God, who was God, who will always be God so perfectly that he said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." You just can't improve on it. Let me read you what John Piper says about "these last days." Listen very closely to how he describes warfare here. He says, "The last days of a war are the days after a decisive battle has been fought or the decisive bomb has been dropped. Everyone knows who will win. It is only a matter of time. The resistance may go on for years, but the mortal blow has been struck to the enemy and the high ground has been captured. The days of fighting that remain are the last days of the war. So it is since the Son of God came into the world. It is his death and resurrection. The decisive battle with sin and death and hell has been fought and won. It is only a matter of time." Can we just say, "Glory," together? Everybody, one, two, three, "Glory." That's awesome. "These are the last days bringing his decisive triumph to all the peoples of the earth." Now listen closely, here it is, "But the point for the writer of Hebrews is this: The Word that God spoke by his Son is the decisive Word. It will not be followed in this age by any greater word or replacement word. This is the Word of God – the person of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus, the work of Jesus."

Now, let me tell you what the implications are for you and me. If somebody tells you that they had a dream last night and they have a revelation from God, somebody says that they have a word of God, tell them to show it to you in the word of God. That's where the source of authority is. It's not some vision that you've had or as Scrooge might say, some bit of undigested beef. It's the height of arrogance to for anyone to say that they have a new revelation when there is no need for a GodSpeak 3.0 because Jesus is the perfect revelation since it is God revealing himself. The fact of the matter is, God has already revealed himself.

Now, look at the comparison between the past and these last days and we're in these last days. He's not talking about the last days with the respect to eschatology, he's talking about the fact that the battle has been won and now there are still skirmishes and there is still guerrilla warfare fighting by the demons but the reality is the battle is over and we're just waiting for the King to bring the triumphant parade through the skies. God spoke in times past by the prophets, in these last days God the Son speaks for himself. In the past, he spoke many times and in many ways and now he speaks to us in his Son. In the past,

he spoke to the fathers, now he speaks to us. In the past, there was an incomplete revelation and now there is a perfect, complete revelation.

So who is this Jesus that we see? He has absolute majesty. I just want to show you very quickly that the writer of Hebrews in the first four verses outlines seven things that show that Jesus has absolute, perfect majesty. First of all, he is the Son. By the way, the Muslims want to say that Jesus, they'll acknowledge that Jesus was great but they say he was a prophet but that's wrong. Jesus isn't just a prophet. They get upset if we say something about Mohammed but the reality is every time they say Jesus is a prophet, they are committing blasphemy. He isn't just a prophet, he's God. He is God. He's not just a Rabbi, he's God. He's not just a good teacher, he's God. He is the Son of God. Now, when you look at my sons you may not see a great family resemblance but you're going to know that the mark of my life is on their lives. Very often when I hear Richard teaching, I sometimes hear him say something and say it in the exact way and the exact phrase that he has heard me say it for years and years and he may think it's his original thought. I hope so, you know, that would be great but he bears that bit of character on his life. They have characteristics from me. Most of all, if I'm human, they are human. If Jesus is the Son of God, that means he's divine. He's not just a person. He must be, absolutely must be, divine.

Then the second thing is he says that he is "appointed heir of all things." Now, let me tell you a couple of things that means. One is that it means that he has unlimited resources. If you know that you have everything under your control: all of creation; all of space; all of the cosmos; all of the might in the world; all the wealth in the world; all the resources of the world; all the natural resources of the world; then there's probably not a promise you can't keep if you've got it all. Jesus can't make a promise that he cannot keep. He makes good on his promises.

Now, let me point out something though: he is heir of all things because he's the Son but there was a date and time that you get officially recognized as an heir. You could have argued that in 1968 when I was six years old and my grandfather came down from Minnesota to visit us in Amarillo, Texas and he brought my first bicycle and I'm out in front of 123 Parkview Lane in Amarillo, Texas and I'm on this bicycle with training wheels and I'm riding it back and forth and then the training wheels started falling off. So one day they fell off while I was a long way down the street and they had just put down brand-new asphalt on the street and it was a hot 100 degree day and I was in my bare feet. This kids, is why I don't go barefooted anymore because it hurt and I was trying to walk it back and I finally said, "Do you know what? I'm going to learn to ride without training wheels today because this asphalt is hot." That was motivation. I figured it out. I hadn't needed training wheels ever since then but I remember, you might have said that that day that because I was my grandfather's grandson, that perhaps I was eligible to be his heir but it wasn't until Melody was a toddler of about two and both my grandfather and grandmother passed away that one day we got a letter in the mail with a check from the estate of Dr. Fred Rohlin. Why? Because I had been appointed heir.

You see, it's one thing to be eligible to be heir, it's another thing to be appointed heir but you can't be appointed heir until the last will and testament is done. Another word for "testament" is "covenant." And Jesus was eligible for the heir of all things because he is God but God didn't appoint him heir and say, "Sit down on my right hand until I make all your enemies your footstool," he didn't say that, God the Father did not say that to God the Son until God the Son had finished his last will and testament on the cross at Calvary and he's officially declared, Romans 1:4 says that it's his death and his resurrection that declares Jesus to be "the Son of God with power." Isn't it wonderful, though, that he's the heir? If he says in Matthew 5 sitting on a mountainside, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth," he can make good on the promise because the earth belongs to him. If he says "nothing in creation, neither height nor depth nor principalities nor power nor things present nor things to come shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus," he can make good on that promise because he owns all of those things. He's the appointed heir. He's heir by virtue of who he is but he's appointed heir by virtue of what he has done.

Then he is Creator. It says, "By whom also he made the worlds." The Trinity is all involved in the creation. It says in Genesis chapter 1, "In the beginning, "Bereshit bara Elohim et hashamayim ve'et ha'arets. In the beginning God the Father created the heavens," not heaven as you see it in your King James English translation, "the heavens and the earth." He created the heavens and the earth and yet he also says in Genesis 1 that, "The Spirit brooded over the face of the waters." It's like the Spirit is a dove hovering over the waters of the earth to help bring that world that was without form and void into something that had a form. Then God the Father says to God the Son and God the Spirit, "Let us make man in our image." He's heir of all things. He upholds all things by the word of his power.

I just have to take a quick detour here and we're not going to finish the message so I'll try to quit at an appropriate point but isn't it fascinating when it says that God "at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past." I just want to show you one way that maybe you've forgotten and maybe some of you have seen me do this before but the fall of the tower at Babel when the languages were confused happened about 2818 BC and there was one language that survives from very close to that time called Sumerian but the second oldest language in the world is Chinese. It dates to 2500 BC. It dates before Hebrew. It dates before the Old Testament was written. Before the books of Moses were written down. We find some fascinating things there, for one thing, we find that every year the Emperor of China went to the northern part of China and he offered a sacrifice to the God who created the heavens and the earth. He went to the southern part of China in the other half of the year and did the same thing.

There are three different kinds principally, this isn't an exhaustive list, but there are three primary kinds of characters in Chinese. There are pictographic characters. It is a picture of something. In fact, I'll see if I can do this. Okay. There. So if you look right here, you see a character that's a picture of a man. It has two arms and two legs and a head there and that's what that character represents. It represents a man so that's an example of a pictographic character. Then there are ideographic characters where you take lots of little

pictures and combine them and you get the meaning of the word from the combined meaning of the pictures. Those are fascinating. There are over 300 of those characters in Chinese that tell stories from the first 14 chapters of Genesis. Then there are phonetic characters.

Let me just point very quickly at a few here. Here is the word for Spirit. So when we talk about the Shun Ling, the Spirit of God, it's very interesting characters that it's made up of. First of all, this top character you see here is the word for "cover." Then you see different variations of the word for "rain" but you'll notice they took that top character for the word "rain" and they turned it on its side and so you have right here, there is a cover over the waters basically is what it's saying. Genesis 1:2 says, "The Spirit of God brooded," or hovered, "over the face of the waters."

Then we look at it a little bit more and another character, you know rain, by the way, also often refers to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Joel 2 says, "For he hath given you the former rain moderately and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month...And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." So often you see rain as part of that ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Then you see yet another segment of characters, that little square that use see at the top left, it represents a mouth and if you put three of them together it's the Chinese word for "conduct" because conduct, the way you are to conduct your lives or the conduct of your lives are supposed to be according to three words. By the way, in Scripture it says in the mouth of how many witnesses let every word be confirmed? Two or three witnesses, let every word be confirmed. In order for us to conduct our lives properly, we need to live by the words of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That's why there are three there, the Trinity is right there.

Then there is a word for man and sometimes it's abbreviated. Sometimes you see the pictographic character there on the bottom which just looks like two legs with a head but sometimes you could just abbreviate it with that small vertical stroke and it puts it together and all of these things, then we see here, here's the character for the word "work" and a character for the word "man" and it means "a worker of miracles." So if you put all the things together, listen to what the word "Spirit" means in Chinese. It means "a worker of magic that was part of the three persons, hovered over the spirit of waters and hovered over the waters and made a miracle." Isn't that amazing?

Now, here's another one. This one's even easier. This is the word "twangsa" which means "to create." It's interesting because in the upper left there you see a cross that's the number ten in Chinese. When you put a line underneath it, it means ten toes standing in the mud or clay so it's a picture of dust or clay. Then there is the word "mouth" that you see there that's underneath that in that character that you see it, the bottom left. Then over on the upper right, you see characters that mean "full grown" and "walking." Then there is a little mark they put next to the dust portion of the character there and when you put that little mark there it means "to breathe into or to speak." So really the word "create"

means that God made someone, that man was made out of dust or clay was breathed into and instantly became full grown and walking. This is before the Old Testament. Where did they get that story?

What about the word "ancestor" in Chinese? Isn't it a fascinating thing that there are only two characters here in ancestor and it basically says that the character on the left is the character for the word "God" and it says that Adam only had one ancestor. It's pointing back to his ancestor. Who did Adam come from? God. Now, we have many ancestors, they don't. It's interesting that the word for "fire" pictures a person with fire radiating out from their bodies. In 1 Corinthians 11:7 it says that man is made in the image of God. Psalm 104 says this, "Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great ; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain." God is clothed in light and Adam and Eve, I believe, since they were made in the image of God, they were covered in light. Now, they didn't have on cloth clothing so when the Bible says in Genesis 1 that they were naked and they were not ashamed, it means it, but it still, I believe made in the image of God, they were clothed with light because they didn't even recognize they had a problem until Genesis 3:7 and then it says, "And the eyes of them both were opened and they knew they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons." Why? They lost that covering of light when they sinned against God.

This is a character you see in every single Chinese restaurant and when I was in mainland China and I was walking down the aisles in the Forbidden City where there are homes that are literally 400 years old, I would see this character on a door turned upside down because that was a symbol meaning that they already felt blessed, that blessing had already arrived. But what's interesting is the character on the left is the word for "God," and then that character, the single horizontal line on the top right means "one" and then the square again means "mouth" or "person." That bottom picture is a picture of a garden. You know, when you lay out a garden, you divide it into areas and you plant certain things in each area of the garden so the word "blessing" means one man in the garden alone with God. You know, we ought to think about being blessed like that more often.

I think this word for "flesh" is interesting. It basically shows the inside of a body. There is another person and a hand is reaching in through the top to pull the other person out and we see that exact thing happen in Genesis where God reaches inside of Adam and pulls out something that becomes Eve and Adam says, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman for she was taken out of man."

Then you go and look at the word for "boat" and it means a ship or a vessel with eight people on it. We have the number eight and the word for "vessel" and the word for "people." How many people were on the Ark? Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives. That's eight people. Just think about that.

Then I want to stop with this one but the word for "substitute." There are three people pictured in that top character and the words that you see for the top two means that they are distinguished persons. It's not just the normal word that you would use for a person

but it means a person who is distinguished, who is important. And yet one of the three is speaking on behalf of the others and the word there, you see the mouth and there's like a tongue there in the middle of that box and that means to speak. It means that the Godhead is made up of three people and yet the middle person of the Godhead speaks for them. Wow. That's before the Old Testament was written. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past," even in Chinese.

Now, something else that makes Jesus perfect and wonderful is he is the glorious God. Notice what it says, he is the "brightness or radiance of his glory." You know, when you look at a diamond, the thing that you look at as you shine a light on it, you see how it sparkles and you see the clarity and you see the color and there is a whole science for how you pick and how you rate diamonds. It's the brightness and the brilliance of that diamond that make up its value and yet when you see that brilliance, you say, "Oh, look at that diamond." You don't say, "Look at the brilliance," you say, "Look at the diamond. It's awesome." When you go out and see the sunset at night and you say, "Oh, what a glorious sunset," you're not really talking about the mass of hydrogen around a core and the nuclear fusion that's going on 81,000,000 miles away. That's not what you're talking about. What you're really talking about is the rays, the radiance that shines off of it and you say, "How beautiful that is." You see the radiance and you claim, "I see the sun." A poet once said,

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

The only way we could handle God and develop a relationship with him is if God revealed himself to us in a way we could understand. John 14:9, "Jesus saith unto him," talking to Philip, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "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." Warren Weirsbe has paraphrased that verse better than I think anyone has. He says, "The children of God look into the word of God, they see the Son of God and they are changed by the Spirit of God to be like the Son of God so one day they share in the glory of God." That's pretty awesome.

He is the glorious God. He is also the essential character. That phrase, "The express image of his person" in Greek, it says kai, which means "and" and then it says charakter. That's where we get the word "character" from. ???? The character of his essence. You know, we see somebody that's like their dad or sounds like their dad or acts like their dad and we say, "Oh, he's a chip off the old block," and not to be irreverent but when you've seen Jesus, you've seen the Father because the stamp of the character of God is all over Jesus. Why? Because he is God.

Then he is the upholder of all things. You see, Jesus' word is so powerful that he spoke the worlds into existence but it is his work that keeps the world together even today. His word keeps him in existence now. In physics, there are two laws of thermodynamics and the first law is called the law of conservation of energy and matter meaning that the amount of matter and the amount of energy in space is constant. Now, we can change things back and forth. We can change matter, we can burn wood and turn it into heat, but we turn that wood into an amount of energy and entropy that equals that so that the total amount of matter and energy in the universe never changes. Do you know why we can do that? It's because he upholds all things by the word of his power. The reason this pulpit is still together is that he is upholding it by the word of his power. His powerful word is creative but it's also sustaining. Paul said in Colossians, he says, "Jesus is before all things and by him all things consist."

Here's the last reason that he, the absolute reason and then I'm going to give you one relative reason before we stop but the last absolute reason that he is absolute Majesty is the enthroned Redeemer. It says "when he by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." I read a lot of different translations on that and there are some translations that do parts better than other parts, one thing I love about the King James is that it emphasizes the words "by himself." You see, there are two actions in this verse. First of all, it says he "by himself purged our sins." He sacrificed himself. He himself was the sacrifice but here's the other thing: he didn't need your help. So Brother Tom, he didn't need a priest to tell you that you needed to say a certain number of Our Father's or Hail Mary's. You didn't need rosary beads. You didn't need a human intercessor. You weren't going to lose it if you missed Mass.

I have a friend that I worked with a number of years ago and he goes to the Church of Christ. He asked me one day, you know, about this doctrine that we have about the permanence of our salvation, we call it the security of the believer. I gave him a whole website that had some really good points on it and he came back and was like, "Well, I still don't believe that. You're going to have to give me more reasons." And the thing that he stated was that in the church that he had been a member of growing up, a Church of Christ, he had had a Sunday school teacher that taught for many years and then one day that Sunday school teacher commits adultery with somebody else in the church and they left the church and the family was devastated, the church was devastated and he says, "That proves that you can lose your salvation." I said, "No, it doesn't. It proves a couple of things: one, he could be really backslidden or another thing could be that like you, he thought that he had to have some part in his salvation, he wasn't really born again and he lived a good religious life for a lot of years and then he fell off the wagon."

But see, Jesus doesn't need my help. He starts telling us that he's the Creator and then he now tells us that he's the Redeemer. Creation belongs to Jesus for two reasons: he created it and he has redeemed it. He is the rightful heir to the universe. You know, I asked my friend more about his faith and he wouldn't miss a Sunday at his church and every Sunday they have to have communion in the Church of Christ and if you're not there on Sunday and you don't take communion and you happen to sin that week and then you die after you sin, you can go into eternity in hell. I couldn't live that way. First of all, it

wouldn't be based on truth. The fact is, I think it's arrogant for me to say that, "Jesus provided salvation but it's kind of fragile. What he gave me is kind of breakable. I'd better do all I can to keep it." No, you'd better make sure you have it but once you've got it, it's durable. It's eternal. 1 John 5:13 says, "These things have I written unto you that you may," what? "You may know that you have eternal life," not wonder if you lost it between last Sunday and now. "That you may know that you have eternal life."

Then the second action after he by himself had purged their sins, he says "he sat down on the right hand of the Father" as a co-equal, as a co-regent. Kings often would reign together. The king would appoint one of his sons to be co-regent with him and they shared power and they shared authority and they were co-regents together and God the Son, after he had proved his worth and after he had proved his righteousness by living a sinless life and dying an atoning death and rising again from the dead and was declared to be the Son of God with power, sat back down on the throne that he left when he came to earth to die for you. By the way, the Dutch Common Language Bible has a beautiful translation. It says, "He cleansed humanity from their sins, and afterward took his place at the right hand of God's Majesty in heaven."

And then one last thing, not only are all of these absolute points, but there is relative Majesty meaning he's more majestic than some other things. We don't have time to go into all the things he's better than but just look at this: he's better than the angels. I noticed that when I'm driving around, you've probably seen it too, you're sitting at a stoplight and you see another little car and of course motion catches your eye and so a lot of times people have something hanging from the little mirror and sometimes it's those little pine tree shaped air fresheners and sometimes it's some other thing but very often I see these little crystal angels. They put them there for their protection. When you buy these things in the store, they come with names. It's fascinating that only two angels are mentioned anywhere in Scripture: Gabriel and Michael. We don't have any other angels named in Scripture. Now, the Rabbis used to talk about Raphael and Phanuel as being other angels and there are at least 10,000×10,000 angels so there are plenty of names to go around but only two mentioned in Scripture and yet there are more than 200 different names for Jesus in the Bible. He has a more excellent name than any.

He starts by saying the Father calls them right here in Hebrews chapter 1 calls him "Son," and a little bit later in Hebrews 1, God the Father says to God the Son, "O God." He calls his Son God. Why? Because he is God.

Now, we don't have time to go through 200 names of Jesus but I want you to look at three distinct categories and you might want to write these categories down and make a list as you're reading the Bible to find all 200 of these names. There are names that reveal the nature of Christ. He's called the chief cornerstone; he's called the firstborn over all creation; he's the head of the church; he's the holy one; he's the Judge; he's the King of kings and Lord of Lords; he's the light of the world; he's the prince of peace; he's the Son of God; he's the Son of man; he's the word of God; he's the word; he's the word of life. Then there are some names about his position in the Trinity. He's alpha and omega; he's Emmanuel which means God with us; he is the I Am, he says, "Before Abraham was, I

Am"; he's the Lord of all. Look at this one, 1 John 5:20, it says he is the true God. Not just an angel. By the way, Jehovah's Witnesses think Jesus is an incarnate angel. The Mormons think Jesus is an incarnate angel. The Bible says that Jesus is the true God.

Then there are some names about his work on earth: he is the author and perfecter of our faith. Now, let me just say something about "perfecter." He started my relationship with him and he perfects it and because he is perfect and he is perfecting me, he is not going to lose me along the way. If he perfects us, how can we be responsible for keeping? He is the bread of life; he's the bridegroom. By the way, you ought to be really happy that Jesus is the bridegroom. You ought to be, this ought to just really excite you because here's the deal: he's a righteous Judge and when he makes a promise, he always keeps it and he is eternal and he has given us eternal life and we're told that we have everlasting life. So if I already have everlasting life and Jesus is eternal and he makes a promise and he always keeps it, when you get married, what's the phrase the preacher says to you, till what? Till death do you part. Jesus said the same thing to his bride, the only thing is he's never going to die and he gave us everlasting life so there isn't going to be any parting. There is no parting there, Brother Tom. There is not going to be any parting. He is the deliverer; he is the good shepherd; he is the high priest; he is the Lamb of God; he is a mediator, he stands in place; he's the rock; he's the resurrection and life; he's the Savior; he's the true vine; he's the way, the truth and the life.

He's better than the angels because he has a better name. He's also better than the angels because they worship him. By the way, the first imperative verb in the book of Hebrews is God the Father talking to the angels and he says this, "Let all the angels of God worship him." That's a command. God is commanding angels, "You worship my Son. You worship Jesus." That's the first command. Why? He sits on his throne. By the way, if you ever look at Isaiah 6, do you remember this story? Isaiah has a picture and he says, "I saw the Lord," and he uses the word "Yahweh" meaning the second person of the Godhead. He says, "I had a vision and I saw him high and lifted up and his train filled the heavenly temple." He says this, "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim." Now, let me give you a quick grammar lesson: in Hebrew if a word ends in "im" it's plural. So the King James has an "s" on it. I've taken the "s" off because you don't need it. "Stood the seraphim," that's plural. It says, "each one had six wings." Now look at these. These are angels flying around the throne of God. What do they do with their wings? Look closely: with two they cover their face. With two they cover their feet and with two they fly. Now think about this: they are around Jesus who is sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high and they are flying around the throne and these are perfect, sinless beings and yet Jesus is so holy, he is so transcendent, he is so perfect that the angels of God don't even dare look at him. The next time you hear someone using your Lord's name in vain, realize they need help because they don't even have a clue. The angels won't even look at him and yet we'll breathe his name just as an utterance. I am beginning to wonder if I should end every prayer by saying, "In Jesus' name," and I understand why we do that and I understand but I think praying in Jesus' name means more than just patching the phrase to the end of our list of wants. I think it means that

when we pray in Jesus' name, we get into the mind of Christ and we see his will when we pray. That's what it means to pray in the name of Jesus.

"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." And they shouted this so loud, by the way, that Isaiah records that the very posts of the temple shook when they cried, "Holy, holy, holy." That's a big deal. By the way, we don't have time for it but my favorite part of that is when he says, "Woe unto me, I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips in the midst of a people of unclean lips." And it says that an angel took tongs from the altar and brought it and touched his mouth with it. What's the next verse say? Does anybody know? He gets a hot burning coal and he touches Isaiah's mouth and Isaiah goes, "Ouch!" No, that's the funny thing. It doesn't say that. Well, how would you feel if a hot coal touched your lips? I have trouble something with habanero's. Do you know why it didn't hurt? Because when Isaiah was cleansed of his sins, it never hurt Isaiah, it hurt Jesus. That's why there's no record of the pain when the angel touched his lips.

He's better than the angels. He's better than the angels also because they minister to the saints. He says he makes his angels ministers, flaming ministers of fire to the saints. I don't know how many angels I've got around me but there are some around me right now. By the way, I'm discovering that Scripture tells us a lot of things about angels we ignore. Angels can help to influence the minds of men. It's not just the Holy Spirit that moves in our hearts, it can be the angels. Angels in the Old Testament mediated the law of God to people. They helped bring the law of God off of Mount Sinai to us. Angels are involved in persuading men and, of course, we've seen the comedy shows, right? The little angel on their shoulder, a little devil on this shoulder. There's a lot more truth to that than you know. By the way, I'm not a big reader of fiction. I don't have time to waste my mind on stuff that's not true. There is so much true stuff I need to be reading. There are Christian biographies I need to read. There's the word of God and that alone is the only book I need for the rest of my life and you might think I'm woefully out-of-date if I don't read the newspaper, don't read all this, no, I'm going to tell you, you read your Bible and you are completely up-to-date. But if I was ever going to read another work of fiction, it would be, I got a lot out of reading the works of Frank Perretti years ago because in those books, he switches between the physical world and the spiritual world and until I had read his books, I hadn't really thought about the fact that right now, while we're here in a physical place thinking about lunch, that the angels, some of them are pleading with us to listen to the Spirit and to pray when the invitation song is sung in just a minute that we need to love Jesus better. Others though, others, the demons, are trying just to say, "Ah, ignore it. It's just one more service."

Here's the question and this is the last slide. I think we need to stop for a few minutes. It does me good every now and then to stop and gaze across the table at my beautiful wife because of all the temptations in the world and then when I really focus back on her, I thought, you know, I've got the best any man could have. It does me good to stare across the table and look at my daughters and think, I could not be in the company of any more charming or beautiful people on the planet. And I even look at Arthur and think some nice things about him too. Good kid. But you know what we need to do? We spent a lot

of time this morning and you as always have been patient and attentive and I thank you. Can I encourage you to do one thing this week? It's just when you're reading? Maybe you don't keep up with that list that you're trying to read through the Bible in a year, maybe you don't keep a commentary side-by-side with your Bible, but would you just in whatever part of the Bible you are and whatever page you're on or whatever story you're in, would you look for Jesus?

I want to get to those letters to the seven churches but it won't be next week. Next week I'm going to be it Maydell, Texas preaching to one of the only other churches that would ever invite me back again and being with some wonderful country people on Father's Day. But we'll be back. We'll pick up with this but we're going to go back to Revelation 1 and we're going to look more at Jesus. Do you know why? I just don't think you can gaze at him too long. In fact, I think that if we really got our hearts right with Jesus and spent more time focusing on him and created a greater love to where we weren't indifferent to the word of God being taught, where we craved to be there when it's being opened and expounded to us. When we wanted to get up in the morning and open our Bible because we really wanted to see what Jesus had to say to us. When we want to hear him speak to us rather than us just give a wish list to him, I have a feeling that if we could get our hearts right before we got to Revelation 2:1, we wouldn't feel so convicted when he tells the church at Ephesus, "You have lost your first love. You don't love Jesus like you used to." I for one, hope that by the time I get to Revelation 2:1, that I've got a full heart of love for my King, my Savior, the Creator, the Almighty, the Pantocrator as they call it in Greek, the one who is all sufficient.

As Brother Stephen comes and leads us in a song, I appreciate those of you who responded last week and I don't want to just appeal to you for the sake of bringing somebody up to the altar every week, but I know that this week I had one of those weeks where I let busyness crowd out the time I needed to have spent gazing upon Jesus. I don't know if you had that problem like I did but I want to commit to him afresh this Sunday to really spend time gazing upon him. Maybe you want to tell him that you're sorry you didn't spend time with them like you should. Maybe you just want to tell him, "Jesus, I want to see you better because all the noise of the world and all my problems get in my way of seeing you and that's what I want most of all."

Would you stand as we sing? What number, Brother Stephen?

1

2 **Steps to revelation**

- Exalting -- John begins Revelation 1 by extolling the virtues of Jesus
- Hearing
- Seeing
- Worshiping

3 **The imperatives**

- First imperative directed at the reader in Revelation 1 is "behold" or "gaze intently upon."
- Not really a 1-week part of this series....
- Sometimes we need to take a few moments and re-gaze or refocus upon the ones we love to see their true beauty and fall in love with them all over again.

4 **Do you ever wish...?**

- Do you ever wish that you could just clearly hear from God what it is that He wants for you?
 - Maybe an audible voice from heaven?
 - Or a billboard signed by God?
 - Or some spectacular light from heaven that knocked you off your horse, temporarily blinded you, and changed your life forever?

5 **Hebrews 1:1-2**

- *GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,*
- *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

6 **Hebrews 1:3-4**

- *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 on the right hand of the Majesty on high;*
- *Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

7 **God spoke in the past**

By the prophets

8 **God is not silent!**

- He spoke in the Old Testament by the prophets in MANY time and in MANY ways.
- God loves to speak to us so that we can know Him.
- When the prophets wrote or spoke, they did so as they were moved by God so that it says, "God spoke." His words became their words.
- God who knew their needs told them all they needed to know.

9 **The portions**

- In a variety of ways – through example, through strange methods, through public speaking, through writing
- In many "portions" – Each prophet gave a portion of revelation, but it was at best a

fragment.

- Contributions included in the Law, the history, the major prophets, the minor prophets, the Psalms and Proverbs

10

11 **Numbers 2:1-7**

- Num 2:1-2 *Now the LORD spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "The sons of Israel shall camp, each by his own standard, with the banners of their fathers' households; they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance. Now those who camp on the east side toward the sunrise shall be of the standard of the camp of Judah,... Those who camp next to him shall be the tribe of Issachar,...then comes the tribe of Zebulun, the total of the numbered men of the camp of Judah: 186,400*

•

12 **And More Details....**

13 **How Did They Camp?**

- Do you see it yet? Do you see the awesome truth in those numbers? Isn't it exciting?
- Still not sure?
 - How about if we insert the tabernacle in the middle and then group the tribes around the tabernacle, just like it said in Numbers 2: 1-2?
- The Significance of Judah
 - Had to come through Judah to get to the only gate to the Tabernacle.
 - Jesus is the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" (Hosea 5:14; Revelation 5:5)

14

15 **Jesus is even in the details**

- God included the census of each.
- The Holy Spirit helps us to see these truths.
- The prophet Balak had the opportunity to see a giant flaming cross at night.

16 **The prophecy**

- "By the prophets" = God caused the prophets to speak on His behalf
 - Specifically refers to Old Testament prophets
- "To the fathers" = ancestors
- They brought forth the Word of God:
 - Warnings of judgment
 - Promises of mercy to those who repent
 - Accurate fortelling of future events

17 **The problem**

- Each prophet had a "portion" of the truth to give. But none had the complete picture of God's plan.
- The things they write about are shadows but Jesus is the substance.
- The prophets spoke without error or flaw, but they relayed a message from God that was incomplete.

18 **Jesus has spoken!**

In these last days

19 **"In these last days"**

- Jews at the time Hebrews was written divided time into three periods:
 - "Times past"
 - "This age" or "this world" = the present time
 - "Things to come" or "The age to come" = refers to when the Messiah will sit on a throne in Jerusalem
- God has spoken "in these last days" = in the recent part of the second phase of history
 - Not a reference to the end times

20 **The dividing lines of history**

- It means that all of history ("His story") is divided into two great time frames – B.C. and A.D. Jesus is the dividing line of history.
 - "In times past" = Before Jesus' incarnation (B.C.)
 - "In these last days" = in the recent days since Jesus' incarnation, death, and resurrection (A.D.)
- Before Jesus, the prophets spoke on God's behalf.
- In Jesus, God speaks for Himself!

21 **No GodSpeak 3.0**

- GodSpeak 1.0 -- The prophets spoke without error, but their revelation of God was incomplete.
- GodSpeak 2.0 – Jesus – who IS God, who WAS God, who will always BE God revealed God so perfectly, that He could say, "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*"
 - There can be no further improvements on the revelation given by Jesus during His earthly ministry.

22 **John Piper on "these last days"**

- *The last days of a war are the days after the decisive battle has been fought or the decisive bomb has been dropped. Everyone knows who will win. It is only a matter of time. The resistance may go on for some years, but the mortal blow has been struck to the enemy and the high ground has been captured. The days of fighting that remain are the last days of the war.*

23 **John Piper (2)**

- *So it is since the Son of God came into the world. In his death and resurrection, the decisive battle with sin and death and hell has been fought and won. It is only a matter of time. These are the last days bringing his decisive triumph to all the peoples of the earth.*
-

24 **John Piper (3)**

- *But the point for the writer of Hebrews is this: The Word that God spoke by his Son is the decisive Word. It will not be followed in this age by any greater word or replacement word. This is the Word of God—the person of Jesus, the teaching of Jesus, and the work of Jesus.*
 - Desiring God -- <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/in-these-last-days-god-has-spoken->

by-a-son

25 **The implications**

- If someone tells you they have a new word from God, ask them to show it to you in the Word of God!
 - It is the height of arrogance for someone to say they have a new revelation when there is NO need for GodSpeak 3.0! Jesus IS the perfect revelation since it is God revealing Himself.
- Quit looking for God to write His will for you on a billboard or speak to you in reverberating tones. He has already spoken in Jesus!

26 **The Comparison**

- 1 "In times past"
 - 2 • God spoke by the prophets
 - In many times and in many ways
 - To the fathers
 - Incomplete revelation
 - 3 "In these last days"
 - 4 • God the Son speaks
 - In His Son
 -
 - To us
 - Perfect, complete, revelation.
 -

27 **Absolute Majesty**

Who is this Jesus?

28 **1. The Son**

- Jesus is NOT just a prophet, rabbi, or great teacher.
- He is the Son of God.
 - My sons bear the marks of my influence on their lives.
 - They have characteristics from me. They are human like me.
 - Jesus is the Son of God meaning that He is Divine like God the Father. He IS God.

29 **2. Appointed Heir**

- "*Whom He hath appointed heir of all things*"
 - Unlimited resources
 - Can make good on His promises
- Jesus is heir of all things because He is the Son
- Jesus was officially declared heir of all things after His death and resurrection proved Him to be "the Son of God in power" (Romans 1:4)

30 **2. Appointed Heir (2)**

- Heir of all things for 2 reasons:
 - He created it "*by whom also He made the worlds*"
 - He redeemed it "*when He had by Himself purged our sins sat down on the right hand of*

the Majesty on High..."

- The "appointment"
 - A person qualifies as heir by virtue of their relationship to another.
 - They are only appointed an heir when the "last will and testament" are complete.

31 **3. Creator**

- "By whom He made the worlds,"
- The Trinity was involved in the creation
 - "In the beginning, God" = The Father
 - "The Spirit brooded over the face of the waters"
 - "Let us make man in our image"

32 **Creation in Chinese**

- God's truth revealed in Chinese before recorded in Hebrew
- Fall of tower of Babel – approximately 2818 B.C.
- First Chinese language documents – 2500 B.C.
 - Older than Hebrew documents
 - Before the Old Testament was written, Chinese emperors were offering 2 yearly offerings to the God who created the heavens and the earth.

33 **Hebrews 1:2-3**

- 就在這末世藉著他兒子曉諭我們；又早已立他為承受萬有的，也曾藉著他創造諸世界。3 他是上帝榮耀所發的光輝，是上帝本體的真相，常用他權能的命令托住萬有。他洗淨了人的罪，就坐在高天至大者的右邊
- Three primary kinds of characters:
 - Pictographic
 - Ideographic
 - Phonetic

34 **Holy Spirit**

35 **Holy Spirit (2)**

- The top character for "water" on the left is turned on its side and then combined with the character for "cover."
- The Bible teaches that the Spirit of God "brooded" or "hovered" over the face of the waters on the earth prior to the creation of land (Genesis 1:2).

36 **Holy Spirit (3)**

- Rain sometimes used as a symbol for the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
- Joel 2:23,28 says *"for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. . . . And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh;*

37 **Holy Spirit (4)**

- 3 mouths (or persons) – to represent the Trinity of God
- CONDUCT = Living your life based on the Word of the Trinity
- Normal character for man at bottom, but can be abbreviated as at top. Three persons again.

38 **Holy Spirit**

+

39 **Holy Spirit**

40 **CREATE**

41 **CREATE**

42 **ANCESTOR**

43 **ANCESTOR**

- We have many ancestors but the first man – ADAM – only had one – God!
- The character for “ancestor” agrees with Scripture when it says that man was made in the image of God!

44 **FIRE – LIGHT**

- 1 Corinthians 11:7 says that man is the image and glory of God.
- Psalm 104:1-2 says that God covers Himself with light like a garment. Man made in His image would be clothed with light.
- Adam & Eve covered with light until sin caused them to lose their covering (Genesis 3:7)

45 **BLESSING**

46 **FLESH**

- Depicts a “border” of a man’s flesh.
- An entrance is made through that flesh to reach another person inside.
- *“This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”*

47 **BOAT**

- BOAT = ship or vessel with 8 people aboard
- How many were on the ark? -- EIGHT!
-

48 **SUBSTITUTE**

- The SUBSTITUTE is the MIDDLE person of a TRINITY who spoke in a way we could understand.
- Jesus – our Savior – died in my place and in your place as your Substitute.
- God “spoke” this truth into Chinese before the OT was written!
-

49 **4. Glorious God**

- Brightness or radiance of His glory
 - Like the brightness, color, and clarity of a diamond shows the glory of that stone
 - You see the sun because it radiates light to us. You say, “What a glorious sunset!” You see the radiance but say that you see the sun.

The Sun of God in glory beams

Too bright for us to scan;

*But we can face the light that streams
For the mild Son of man.*

- 2 Corinthians 3:18

50 **5. The Essential Character**

- "The express image of his person"
- καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ
 - The "character of His essence"
 - The exact image; a "chip off the old block"
 - The perfect representation of God's essence
 - Why? Because He IS God!

51 **John 14:9**

- *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?*

52 **6. Upholder of all things**

- Jesus' Word is so powerful that all He has made is sustained by that Word.
 - ... *upholding all things by the word of his power*
- Jesus spoke the worlds into existence by His Word. His Word keeps them in existence now.
 - The Law of Conservation of Matter and Energy
- Jesus's powerful word is creative and sustaining.
- Colossians 1:17 -- *And He {Jesus} is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

53 **7. Enthroned Redeemer**

- *"when He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"*
- In Greek, the two actions are related.
 - Jesus by HIMSELF purged our sins
 - By sacrificing himself
 - Without any help from you (to provide salvation or sustain it)
 - Then Jesus sat down on the right hand of the Father
 - As the co-equal co-regent

54 **Enthroned Redeemer (2)**

- Dutch Common Language translation: *"He cleansed humanity from their sins, and afterward took his place at the right side of God's majesty in heaven."*

55 **Relative Majesty**

Jesus is BETTER than anything or anyone else!

56 **A better name than the angels**

- Has a more excellent name
 - Only 3 angels are named infrequently in Scripture
 - Jesus is the WORD OF GOD – the *Logos*, the SON of God, and a hundred other titles
- The Father calls Him "Son"

- The Father calls Him "God"

57 **Over 200 names for Jesus**

- The Nature of Christ
 - Chief Cornerstone: (Ephesians 2:20)
 - Firstborn over all creation: (Colossians 1:15)
 - Head of the Church: (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23)
 - Holy One: (Acts 3:14; Psalm 16:10)
 - Judge: (Acts 10:42; 2 Timothy 4:8)
 - King of kings and Lord of lords: (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 19:16)
 - Light of the World: (John 8:12)
 - Prince of peace: (Isaiah 9:6)

58 **Names of Jesus (2)**

- Son of God: (Luke 1:35; John 1:49) – Jesus is the "only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14).
Used 42 times in the New Testament, "Son of God" affirms the deity of Christ.
- Son of man: (John 5:27)
- Word: (John 1:1; 1 John 5:7-8)
- Word of God: (Revelation 19:12-13)
- Word of Life: (1 John 1:1)

59 **Names of Jesus (3)**

- His position in the trinity
 - Alpha and Omega: (Revelation 1:8; 22:13)
 - Emmanuel: (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:23)
 - I Am: (John 8:58, with Exodus 3:14)
 - Lord of All: (Acts 10:36)
 - True God: (1 John 5:20)

60 **Names of Jesus (4)**

- His Work on earth
 - Author and Perfecter of our Faith: (Hebrews 12:2)
 - Bread of Life: (John 6:35; 6:48)
 - Bridegroom: (Matthew 9:15) -- We are bound to each other in a covenant of grace that cannot be broken.
 - Deliverer: (Romans 11:26)
 - Good Shepherd: (John 10:11,14)
 - High Priest: (Hebrews 2:17)
 - Lamb of God: (John 1:29)
 - Mediator: (1 Timothy 2:5)

61 **Names of Jesus (5)**

- Rock: (1 Corinthians 10:4)
- Resurrection and Life: (John 11:25)
- Savior: (Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:11)
- True Vine: (John 15:1)

– Way, Truth, Life: (John 14:6)

62 **Better than the angels who worship Him**

- The first imperative verb in Hebrews is when God tells the angels to worship His Son!
- Jesus sits on the throne.
- The seraphim hide their eyes from His glory.

63 **Isaiah 6:1-3**

- *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: The whole earth is full of his glory.*

64 **Better than the angels who carry out ministry to the saints**

- The angels minister to the redeemed (which makes them subservient to the Redeemer)
-
-

65 **The question for all of us**

- Stop for a moment
- Ponder just what we have seen about this awesome Jesus in just these few verses
- Do you love Him enough?
 - Did you spend time with Him this week?
 - Did you ask Him to speak to you?
 - Did you offer something of yourself to Him?
 - Did you offer of the resources that He placed in your stewardship to worship Him?
 - Have you fallen on your knees to praise Him!