

Christmas Day

Text: Hebrews 1:1 - 6 (NIV)

¹In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. ⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? ⁶And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

Theme: Now God Has Spoken by His Son

I hate puzzles. You get a box with all of these pieces, and you spend hours, days, and maybe even weeks trying to figure out how they all fit together. When it's done, it looks nice (unless you are missing a piece) But as you are putting it together, it is often challenging to know how it will all fit together.

The letter to the Hebrews tells us in these first verses that the puzzle is now completed. God gave us the pieces through the prophets, and put together they show us Jesus Christ as the Son of God. In these last days God no longer gives us the clues as to who the Savior will be. He has spoken to us through His Son.

I. Throughout the Old Testament God gave the people many clues about whom the Savior would be.

God gave the first promise of a Savior to Adam and Eve after they sinned in the Garden of Eden. In that promise He already gave them some clues about how He would save us. God said that he would be born of a woman and that He would be mortally wounded in the act of saving us. There were no other clues about the Savior until God called a man named Abraham and told him that the Savior would be one of his descendants. When Israel was on the way to the promised land, God gave Moses the promise of prophesy. It was through those prophets that God really began to give us the pieces of the puzzle, which show what the Savior would be like. For instance, the prophet Nathan told King David that the Savior would come from his line. David himself was a prophet. He wrote Psalm 22 which describes Christ's suffering on the cross in great detail. It speaks of how He would be mocked, how he would thirst, how they would cast lots for his clothing, and how His hands and feet would be pierced. Isaiah would give several prophecies about the coming Savior, including that He would be born of a virgin and that His ministry would be in Galilee. In chapter 53 he also describes the Lord's passion in great detail. Micah tells us that He would be born in Bethlehem and that His origins would be from everlasting. There are over 300 prophecies about the Christ in the Old Testament. The final prophet was John the Baptist. He told the people, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

II. All of these prophecies would be fulfilled in Jesus.

We can look back and see how Jesus fulfilled them all. Matthew begins his Gospel with 5 prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, and writes that this happened to fulfilled what was written through the prophets 12 times in his Gospel. The entire Bible is about Jesus and His salvation for us. The Old Testament gave the prophecies, and the New Testament has given the fulfillment. The letter to the Hebrews is telling us that it is a blessing to live in this New Testament era. We can sing, “Joy to the World the Lord has come.” We know who the Savior is. As a pastor I look at it as a personal blessing. The Old Testament priests were basically butchers as they sacrificed perhaps hundreds of animals each day. There is no longer any need for those sacrifices because they simply pointed to the sacrifice that Jesus would make for us on the cross. The good news of Christmas is that we know who the Savior is. He is that baby who was laid in the manger. We have His own words recorded for us in the Gospels. He is the one who gave His life on the cross and was raised on Easter morning.

Because Jesus is the One, these verses go on to tell us seven things about Him.

1. He is the heir of all things. All things will be given to Him as the Son of God. In Romans 8:17 Paul writes that we are co-heirs with Christ if we share in His sufferings, we will also share in His glory. Our Christian lives are not much different from our Savior’s life. We have our crosses to bear, but on the day when He returns, He will raise us from the dead, just as He was raised, so that we can live and reign with Him for all of eternity.
2. Through Him God made the universe. John also tells us that in the beginning of His Gospel, that all things were made through Him. Jesus is the Word of God through whom heaven and earth were created.
3. He is also the radiance of God’s glory. John also writes in the first chapter of His Gospel that in Christ we see the Father’s glory. The glory of God has come to earth in the humanity of Jesus Christ.
4. He is the exact representation of God’s being. People have often wondered what God is like. We don’t have to wonder that at all. We have seen God in the person of Jesus Christ. In Him all the fulness of the deity dwells in bodily form. He is God in the flesh. In Christ we see both the righteousness of God and the compassion and love of God.
5. He sustains all things through His powerful word. So often it seems to us as if the world is falling apart, but Jesus really does have the whole world in His hands. He keeps evil in check, and always makes sure that the good prevails in the end.
6. He made purification for our sins. On Christmas we celebrate that the Savior is born for us. We know that we are sinners, who do not deserve God’s love at all. In fact, we all deserve His punishment, but Christ paid for our sins on the cross. He purifies us through Holy Baptism in which He washes them all away. We don’t have to live in guilt or denial about our sins because Jesus has taken them all away.
7. He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. On Christmas our churches are full

when we gather to celebrate the gift that God gave to us at Christmas, that Christ came down to earth for us. In about 6 months we have another holiday, which is just as important, but there is no tree and no gifts, and few people in church. That is the festival of Christ's ascension. That holiday is just as important as Christmas. It was on this day that Christ entered this world to save us, but it was on ascension that he ascended back into heaven as the victor. From the right hand of the Father, He rules all things for the good of His people. We know that there is nothing that ever happens to us, which can separate us from His love.

Today we celebrate that the puzzle is solved. We don't have to wonder who the Savior is because God has spoken to us by His Son. There is no doubt about it. Jesus is the Savior who has come for you and me. We live in a world which is searching for the true meaning of life. Through these seven statements in the book of Hebrews, we see that life to its fullest revolves around the Savior, whose birth we celebrate today. This child is the Son of God, who has come to save us.

Amen

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