

Christ: The Final Word

Pastor Michael Ewart
Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-4

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UNEDITED DRAFT

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Christ: The Final, Simple Word

We live in a pluralistic society. That means our society is diverse. People believe all kinds of different things and tolerate each other's beliefs even when they don't match their own. I think it is good that we live in such a society. It means we have freedom to believe and worship according to our convictions.

However, many in our culture take this a step farther. They think that all religions and beliefs are equally true, equally right, equally valuable. All religions are a way to approach God and all have something useful to add to that goal.

If you are convinced that your beliefs are right and others are wrong, then you are considered closed minded and intolerant. That puts us frequently in uncomfortable positions. Have you ever felt a little embarrassed or apologetic before someone who attacks you for being so close minded and intolerant?

Today God's Word will give us help and conviction in such situations. Today we celebrate the 2nd and final Sunday after Christmas. As we think about the significance of Jesus' birth one last time, we remember just who he is.

We're looking at a few verses from the letter to the Hebrews. We don't know much about the author of the letter, including his name. We know more about the recipients of the letter based on the content. They were Jewish people, which we know from the frequent references to the Old Testament with which they are presumed to have a familiarity. But it appears they were also people living in a big city. The content indicates they too lived in a pluralistic society. And so the author spends considerable time talking about Christ and his uniqueness and supremacy and adequacy and totality.

So let's take a look at a few verses, and maybe this will be your impetus to read the rest of the letter to the Hebrews this week. Today we'll hear how Christ is: God's final word.

Hebrews 1:1-4 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,

So again, the writer is speaking to people of Jewish decent. "In the past" refers to all of history of the Jewish people that came before the birth of Christ. Before Christ came on the scene, God spoke to his people in a wide variety of ways at various times. He spoke to Abraham and called him to be the Father of a special nation... the one to whom the Savior would be born. God spoke to Abraham's grandson Isaac through a vision he had while sleeping one night. God revealed things to an Egyptian Pharaoh in a dream, and only Joseph was able to interpret that dream. God spoke to Moses in a burning bush. God led the people of Israel with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. God spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai and inscribed the 10 Commandments on stone tablets. The Lord spoke to Joshua, Moses' successor, before he entered the Promised Land. God spoke to a boy named Samuel who later served as priest of the Lord. God spoke through the many prophets he sent to the people of Israel, who time and again declared, "This is what the Lord says!" God spoke to his priests somehow through something

called the Urim and Thumim. God communicated to his people through the rites and worship rules he gave them.

So, yeah, many times in various ways!

But the writer to the Hebrews tells us, NOW unlike back then, in these last days not like the former days, he speaks to us by his Son... just ONE way and at ONE time. Before he spoke piecemeal... in parts... gradually revealing. Now he has spoken in full. All of his revelation made through his Son.

Now, who is this Son? Certainly we learn all about his earthly life in the Gospels. You can read about his humble birth and his poor living conditions. You can read about his hunger, thirst, sadness, amazement, exhaustion. All those human attributes are on prominent display. But the writer to the Hebrews does not want us to miss something really important. This was not just a man... not just a religious guru... not just a charismatic teacher who garnered a following. Our text reveals to us something spectacular, amazing and unique. Jesus is not just true man. He is also true God.

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.

We are accustomed to thinking only about what Jesus means for us. But this verse reminds us of what Jesus meant to his heavenly Father. He was appointed heir of all things. That is, all things are made *for* him. He inherits everything from the heavenly Father. This shows his unique relationship with the Father.

And through whom he made the universe. How did the Father create the universe “through” the Son? In John’s Gospel we are told that Jesus is the eternal word of God. In Genesis we are told that all things were created by God’s Word. God spoke and it was. The Word he spoke was the Son. Through him God made the universe. So what this is stressing if all things are from him and for him, is that he is true God.

Nature: **The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being,**

Jesus is in very nature God, but veiled in human flesh. God wants us to know him. He want us to have a personal relationship with him. But if he directly appears to us in all of his glory, we would die. A sinful human being cannot stand directly in the presence of the glory of God and live. If you want to know God, get to know his Son. You can’t look at God and live, but you can look at God in human flesh and live. And what you see in Jesus the Son is an exact representation, and precise copy of the character of God.

Ability: **sustaining all things by his powerful word.** By God’s powerful Word, the universe came into existence. By his Word you have life. By his Word, all things are sustained. When you see this man arrested, condemned, abused, crucified... do not forget his current glory and exaltation. This is the same one who sustains all things by the power of his Word.

Most marked accomplishment: **After he had provided purification for sins,** a brief mention of Christ’s most important work and achievement. He provided purification for our sins. Our sins made us impure... dirty before God in heaven. Like an unwashed, smelly hobo trying to attend a stranger’s wedding, so are we thinking we can crash heaven in spite of our sins and the stench of our guilt. We need washing. And that’s what Jesus provided. He purifies us of our sin. Himself pure, blameless and perfect, he was just the one who could be our substitute and take our place. The humility! The love! He took our guilt. He paid our debt. He forgave us all our sins. He purified us so we are clean.... So we BELONG in the heavenly banquet.

Current position: **he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.**

Jesus is not just a good man. Well, maybe he's an angel? No, he is superior to all the angels. He is God's Son. He is the final Word of God. Jesus is the full and final revelation of God.

APPL: In order to have a truly close relationship with someone, you have to ultimately accept their finalities. When a man and woman get married, there is almost always some illusion of changing the other. For years, they work on each other, trying to change them into the "perfect spouse" they were just sure they would become. Only when they finally come to grips with the fact that they are who they are and choose to love them anyway will they truly enjoy intimacy.

Jesus is the final word. God is who he is. Man doesn't get to remake God into his own image. Our religion does not change or shape God in any way at all. You will never get close to God if you cherry pick from his Word what you want to believe about him. God's Word is not a smorgasbord to choose from. The person who does so loses God. The god you are worshiping is not the true God, but an idol made in your own image.

Rather we must look to Jesus as the Final Word. God is who he is regardless of what you believe about him. He is the holy, righteous God who hates sin and rebellion and disobedience. He is the God who loves us and chose to rescue us through the life and death of his own Son in Palestine 2,000 years ago. That Son of God rose from the dead and now sits at the right hand of the Father ruling all things. He will return in glory and will judge the living and the dead. All who believe in him will rise to eternal life. All who do not will rise to eternal condemnation.

There is not room for any other opinions, religions or any other god. In our country you are free to believe whatever you want, and I will fight to give you that right. But in God's Kingdom, you do not have the freedom to believe what you want. The only way for all religions to be true is either a) there is no god. Or b) God holds no one accountable for what they believe, which means he is completely uninterested in having a personal relationship with anyone, which essentially lands you back at (a)... there is no god interested in you, so it doesn't matter what you believe about him.

But the truth is there is one true God. And God has revealed who he is and what has done for you. And Jesus is the final word! Take him or leave him! Take him and you live forever. Leave him and you perish apart from him forever.

Now, if you take him. If you believe in him and trust that Jesus really is the final Word from God, then there is a necessary consequence, and we find it in the beginning of chapter 2: **Hebrews 2:1-4 We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?**

This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

There was a message we heard: Announced by Jesus. Given to apostles. It is the gospel. We must pay more careful attention (literally, excessive, careful, close attention; "obsession") Be furiously obsessed! ...so we don't drift away. When you become a Christian, God calls you to a furious obsession with the message. Obsess on grace / gospel. Work it in, work it in, work it in.

“Message spoken by angels.” The Law given at Mt. Sinai. Law was never to be broken. If you did, punishment. If that’s the result of disregarding the law, how much more the Gospel! He’s not just another prophet, he is the final word... the prophet from whom all prophets came. Saved by grace not by what you do. If you disregard this, what will the consequence be?

So here is the amazing Final Word. God looked at us in our finality and realized that sin was a part of us that we could not change. So God adjusted to us. That’s what love does. We’re sinners. That’s our finality. The only way for God to related to that was to adjust to it. So he sent his Son, born as a weak human being... just like us. He went to the cross. Solitary confinement causes people to go crazy. Jesus on the cross experienced the purest form of solitary confinement. His most intimate relationship which he enjoyed for eternity was broken. Why did he go through it? Because we should have and he was our substitute. He endured the broken relationship so we can have the right relationship.

That’s the final word! Take it or leave it. But never consider it one among many options. Jesus is the only way, truth and life. If you believe this, then OBSESS about what Jesus did for you on the cross. Think about it constantly. Share it with others daily. It is the only Word that saves. “There is no other name given among men by which we must be saved. Jesus is the Final Word. Amen.