

Kailua Christian Church
Sunday, March 19, 2023
“Regarding the Divinity & Humanity of Jesus”
Hebrews 1:1-4
Guest Pastor: Pastor Danny Han

Scripture Reading:

Hebrews 1:1-4

1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom also He made the universe. 3 The 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 Majesty in heaven. 4 So He became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs.

Let’s pray.

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be pleasing to you, Oh Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. OPEN

Let’s turn to the first chapter of Hebrews.

Today’s message is “Regarding the Divinity and Humanity of Jesus.” I know, it’s kind of a mouthful there. But using the book’s opening words of Hebrews, we’ll look at Jesus’ divinity and his humanity and why it’s important to regard and grasp those two aspects of Jesus carefully. In so doing, we’ll discover just a few attributes of God that will hopefully strengthen our hearts and faith as followers of Jesus. Maybe some of this will be new, or perhaps you’re exploring your faith and wondering who Jesus is. I hope that today’s message will speak to your heart.

Now this comparison of the divinity of Jesus and His humanity has been discussed through the centuries, famously at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.

Let’s set the context, and I will start with a concession – We don’t know who wrote it. Early on, it was thought that perhaps the Apostle Paul wrote it. But it just doesn’t fit his writing style, so the commonly accepted thinking is ... we don’t know!

But there’s good news! Hebrews gives a beautiful picture of the divinity of Jesus. This book inspired a renewed faith in Jesus – a faith that may have been floundering under an oppressive Roman rule, which I’ll talk about in a moment.

And who was it written for? Well, we know it was written for a Jewish audience. The name itself is a dead giveaway as to who it was written to. It's written to the Hebrews. Hebrews is the name of the book – the Jewish people. And more specifically, it was written for Jewish Christians facing incredible persecution.

Everyone was supposed to worship the Roman Emperor by acknowledging and bowing to his divinely sanctioned authority as a Roman emperor – the centralized, single authority in everything. If you didn't do that, you were breaking the law.

These Hebrew Christians, and really Christians throughout the region of the Roman Empire in that first century, were being singled out because they were not doing that. They were not worshipping the Roman Emperors, so they were breaking the law. That put a target on their backs: These Christians would face persecution, imprisonment, their property being plundered, and many would meet a gruesome death.

That is a quick context for the book of Hebrews.

Now we will only cover the first four verses today as we regard and understand the divinity and humanity of Jesus, so allow me to read those four verses, then we'll go back verse by verse.

Hebrews 1:1-4

1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom also He made the universe. 3 The 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 Majesty in heaven. 4 So He became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs.

1.GOD IS JESUS

Okay, that first verse.

Hebrews 1:1

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

In the past God spoke to our ancestors.

Remember, these words are written to Jewish Christians – and that opening statement would remind them of their Jewish scripture passed down from their ancestors about a coming Messiah.

You can find those words and those prophecies in our Old Testament. We're talking history books like Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, 1st and 2nd Chronicles, etc. And from prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, even the Psalms to name some of those books and their prophecies.

So concerning those prophets and their prophecies, there are many prophecies about the Messiah in the OT. And this opening statement in the book of Hebrews reminds the Hebrews of that.

Yes. God spoke to their ancestors through the prophets, many times and in various ways. Those opening words of verse 1 were true.

Let's continue reading verse 2.

Hebrews 1:2

but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom also He made the universe.

These last days mean that all those OT prophecies culminate into this moment, these last days. The revealing of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

In these last days, God has spoken to us by His Son, Jesus. What does that mean, really? It means this. No more prophecy is required of the Messiah because the Messiah has come. In fact, Jesus surpasses all those Old Testament prophets by fulfilling all that they have been talking about for centuries.

God has appointed Jesus the heir of all things, and through Jesus, the universe was made.

The Heir of all things. Maker of the universe.

Consider Psalm 2:8.

Psalm 2:8

And I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

Read all of Psalm 2 later. It's full of Messianic prophecy.

And so Hebrews is making it clear what the prophets had said, that Jesus is the heir of all things.

This reminds me also of John 1:3-4, which we read as part of our NT reading plan.

John 1:3-4

3 Through Him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

4 In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom also He made the universe.

Take a moment to ponder the words of John 1:4.

In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

Jesus, besides being called the light of the world in John 1, and also in John 8:12, He's called the Word of life in John 1 and also in John 6:68.

In the beginning was the Word. Jesus. He was in the beginning with God. Even before He came to earth, He was fully God and embodied God's spoken word.

And here in Hebrews 1:2, we see that Jesus made all things. (See also Colossians 1:15-16).

Jesus is the one who brings light and life to all people.

So the book of Hebrews affirms that Jesus is God, and God is Jesus. It makes this clear from the outset for those Jewish Christians as they were facing heavy persecution, and perhaps a floundering faith.

And this leads us to our first point as we regard the divinity and humanity of Jesus, and it's this:

1. The incarnate God is Jesus.

Jesus is God, and God is Jesus. We can't miss that.

2. THE INCARNATE GOD IS NEAR TO US

The Transfiguration of Jesus in Mark 9 is a powerful scene that's connected to this passage in Hebrews because the Transfiguration was when Peter, James, and John caught a glimpse of the divinity, the radiance, the majesty of Jesus, but yet missed it. They saw but they didn't see if that makes sense. This is what they saw as they looked at Jesus in

Mark 9:3

Mark 9:3

His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them.

In the Bible, when color is described in terms of radiant white – it refers to the heavenly origin of something.

And that is the continuity of it. God is Jesus, and Jesus is God. The divinity of God squeezed down into the person of Jesus who would be born to live a life on earth for 33 years. That's what Peter, James, and John didn't see at that moment – that God was Jesus.

God is Jesus. And God is with us.

What Peter, James, and John saw on that mountaintop during the Transfiguration (which they would come to understand later) was a glimpse of what this third verse in Hebrews describes.

Hebrews 1:3a

3a The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Jesus showed the nature of His divinity, the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of God to those three disciples atop that mountain.

But in his radiant glory, He was also a human. He stepped down from heaven to live among us. And in being human, He gave us the exact representation of God's being – God's nature shown to us in the person of Jesus.

John 1:18

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

And here's our second point as we regard the divinity and humanity of Jesus, and it's this:

2. The incarnate God is near to us.

God is personally available to everyone. That is what the disciples would come to understand, and for those Hebrew Christians within a few generations of Christ's life on earth, and for us now – the incarnate God is near to us. God is personally available to everyone. That is a practical definition of the incarnation. God is personally available to all of us.

God is Jesus. Jesus is God. And He is personally available.

John 1:4 says:

And in Him was life, and that life was the light of all people.

All people. That includes you and me.

The radiance of God's glory and His exact representation now living among them.

John 14:6 says ...

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 14:6

God's word shows we have direct access to God because of Jesus. It's only through Jesus that God is near to us.

=====

And so we must model this attribute as followers of Jesus – being relational and near to others.

Like an old friend of mine named Ben, who showed up at my door unannounced when I just turned 20. Introduced himself for the first time, and showed me Jesus by being there during a rough moment in my life. Showed me how to relate to others. I'll never forget Ben and what he did for me. This was taken from 1995 give or take a year. That's Ben on the left.

I'll let you try to figure out which one's me. HINT: I once had hair.



Ben showed me Jesus, and he made me his friend. Where I am today has a lot to do with Ben choosing to build a relationship with me. This was taken almost exactly one year ago, at a reunion of old friends of 30 years.



I love this quote from a favorite teaching pastor of mine.

Walk with people as you walk with Jesus. Before long, they'll meet each other.

The incarnate God is near to us.

Will we be close to others around us like Ben?

Let's continue reading.

3. THE INCARNATE GOD LOVES

Hebrews 1:3b

3b After He had provided purification for sins,

I know, it's a little strange to just pause it like that because I'm not completing the sentence. Bear with me. I think it's really important to catch this.

After he provided purification from sins.

Here's what I want us to catch. God loved us so much that He cleansed us of our sins – our wrongdoings.

He did that by transferring our sins – our wrongdoings – to Jesus who lived a perfect life.

And in exchange for that sin, He also transferred the righteousness of Jesus to us so that we can stand before a perfect God.

And all that happens when we receive God's gift of faith in Jesus Christ. It's in Christ alone our hope is found.

So God provided a way to purify us of our sins by making Jesus the perfect sacrifice for sinful humanity and transferring all that sin to Him, and by giving us Jesus' righteousness so that when God looks at us, He sees his Son Jesus.

But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8.

Jesus became the answer. He died on the cross for our sins in place of us, and we can stand in the presence of God because of that. That's how much God loves us, that He would give his only begotten Son to do all this. Sending His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.

But have you considered this? Among all the belief systems in the world, Christianity teaches something that is entirely different than anything else: God loves His enemies.

Think about that.

While we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Romans 5:10

God loves. God loves his enemies.

Or on the cross at Calvary, as Jesus looked down on the people who hated Him, and yelled “crucify him and save yourself,

” He said these words:

Luke 22:34

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

So that leads us to our third point as we regard the divinity and humanity of Jesus, and it’s this:

3. The incarnate God loves

The incarnate God is love. And that love was demonstrated so beautifully at the cross by his Son Jesus.

=====

As I was preparing this message, I came across a quote in the book *Saved From What?* by R.C. Sproul.

Here’s what R.C. Sproul asked in rhetoric fashion:

Why didn’t Jesus just come down from heaven and go straight to the cross?

Have you asked that question? God, why would you have Jesus born into such a mess of a world, grow up and experience all the limitations of a human being with all its heartache and sadness, and face temptation, when you could have just sent Him straight to the cross for our sins?

Because God wanted all of us to see His character up close and personal through the person of Jesus, because – here’s the thing – He wanted to model that for us. So Jesus lived a full life, from birth to death on the cross at the age of 33, to demonstrate how to love, and how to be close to people in a relationship filled with compassion and care. And what better way for us to learn that than to see how Jesus did it, to model Him and the fullness of his life as we live out our faith by loving others like Jesus.

The last time I checked, Jesus’ words known as the Great Commission in Matthew 28 did not say, “Go and make converts.”

Jesus said, “Go and make disciples.”

Just like Ben did with me. He showed me Jesus. And I followed.

4. THE INCARNATE GOD IS VICTORIOUS

Let’s continue reading the rest of that third verse.

Hebrews 1:3c

He sat down at the right hand of Majesty in heaven.

So after purifying us from our sins, He sat down. The work of salvation is done through Jesus Christ. He did all the work, and now His work of salvation is complete.

He sits at the right hand of Majesty, as to say, it's finished. All pau. He is at the right hand of God. It makes sense He would be sitting in the heavenlies, since that's where He came from. Jesus' radiance at the Transfiguration was indicative of His divine origin. So of course He would return there. This is affirmed all throughout the NT. It's even prophesied in the OT.

And this sitting at the right hand of God is a position of divine power. If Jesus wasn't God, He wouldn't be sitting in that position.

Revelation 22 repeats a certain phrase three times:

Look, I am coming soon. Look, I am coming soon. Yes, I am coming soon.

Revelation 1:7 says

Revelation 1:7 Look, He is coming with the clouds," and "every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him"; and all peoples on earth "will mourn because of Him." So shall it be. Amen!

Jesus' work of Salvation is finished.

Jesus is at the right hand of God.

Jesus is coming soon.

And because we can stand on these truths, we can know that the incarnate God is victorious. And that's our last point.

4. The incarnate is victorious.

Now we did read verse 4 of Hebrews 1. So let's cover that real quick. It's a bit of a shift because it talks about angels, and there is a great comparison of Jesus to the angels in Hebrews, but it starts here with verse 4. Here's the reader's digest version:

Jesus is superior to all creation because He is the Son of God. Remember, He created the universe. That's it. Hebrews lays it out quite well in the subsequent verses as to the position of angels in light of that. There is no comparison. Jesus is divine. Angels are, well, not divine. They're angelic, but that's not the same thing.

So let me wrap it up.

Regarding the Divinity and Humanity of Jesus, we must know that:

Jesus is God, the incarnation of God Himself.

That God is Jesus, God in the flesh.

That His divinity and humanity show us God's attributes and qualities. And they are of the highest quality.

That the incarnate God, Jesus, is relational and near to us. He loves us, even when we were unlovely.

And that the incarnate God, Jesus, is victorious over all things.

That's a God worth following if you ask me. That's the Jesus worth sharing.

Let me sum up today's message this way. Here's the bottom line:

The divinity and humanity of Jesus show us the attributes of an incarnate God worth following.

The incarnate God is Jesus.

The incarnate God is near to us.

The incarnate God loves us.

The incarnate God is victorious.

I believe in that God. I believe in that Jesus. I believe in that Holy Spirit. I believe. How 'bout you?

Thank you for allowing me to share God's word today.