

And This Will We Do, If God Permits  
An Expository Journey through the **Epistle to the Hebrews**  
Chapter 3: The Preeminence of Jesus Christ  
**Hebrews 1:1-4**  
32: The Preeminence of Jesus Christ: Part 17

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WAOY Thursday 02/12/09

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our verse-by-verse journey through the **Epistle of Hebrews**, and today I want to continue to look at what the writer of **Hebrews** taught about the Preeminence of Jesus Christ. So let's open our Bibles and read **Hebrews 1:1-4** again together.

**1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,**  
**<sup>2</sup> in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.**  
**<sup>3</sup> And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,**  
**<sup>4</sup> having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.**

Now on the last broadcast, we were looking at the seven *excellencies* that the writer of Hebrews shows us in the second half of verse two and all of verse three. So let's read those verses again together:

**2 ... whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.**  
**<sup>3</sup> And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,**

Now in these two verses, we can see that the writer of **Hebrews** is going to great lengths to describe just who Jesus is to his first-century Jewish audience. And by teaching what he teaches here, the writer is showing these Jews (and us) that Jesus is far superior to any heavenly angel or any Old Covenant prophet.

So in his very detailed description, the writer lists these seven attributes about Jesus so that all of us may know that Salvation is in Jesus alone and *not* through adherence to the Law of God. Those seven attributes are:

1. His Heirship
2. His Creatorship
3. His Brightness
4. His Being
5. His Administration
6. His Sacrifice
7. His Exaltation

Now I want you to notice the fifth “excellency” that the writer talks about and that is found further into verse three when he talked about Jesus...

**... upholding all things by the word of his power...**

So here we see that Jesus is not only the Creator of all things and not only the One who will inherit all things. Not only is Jesus the One who is the very Brightness of God’s Glory, and not only is He the only One who is the exact representation of God’s Person... but the writer of **Hebrews** also says here that Jesus is the One by whom all things are upheld and sustained. Nothing that is made could continue on without Jesus upholding them. Everything that has been made - every atom of every molecule of everything in Heaven and earth - would collapse and dissolve were it not for the fact that Jesus Christ alone upholds it and sustains it. Nothing has the ability or the power to sustain itself except God. In other words, every area of Creation - all that is made - is not self-sustaining but depends wholly on an outside and external power and force to sustain it or maintain it. And the Bible says here that the external and outside Power and Force is Jesus the Christ.

So, that means that everything that is made is looking to Jesus for its continued existence. It is totally dependent on Jesus in order to continue to survive, and without Jesus everything would pass away. And, by the way the Greek is worded here, we can see that this “upholding of all things” is not a passive upholding in the sense that now that Jesus has set things up, they operate on their own. No, this is an active and an ongoing upholding that is going on by Jesus to sustain all that God has created. And we can also see here in verse three that the means by which Jesus upholds all things is by the Word of His Power.

So the writer does not use the Greek word *logos* which means *revelation*; he uses the word *rhema* which means *spoken word*. So, just as the Universe in all of its complexities was begun by the spoken Word of God the Father, so too, that very same universe is upheld and sustained by the same spoken Word of God the Son. And this has the net effect of making Jesus to be Deity, higher than any angel, more important than any prophet, and better than any teacher. This is just one of the many, many ways that the New Testament authors constantly assigned Jesus full and complete Deity.

No angel - not Michael, not Gabriel, not the cherubim or the seraphim of Heaven - could ever make the claim that the universe was upheld by their word. Moses, Abraham, Joshua, David or Isaiah could never say that the created universe was upheld by the word of their power. That kind of authority, that kind of Power, and that kind of Glory is reserved only for God.

Now, keep in mind why this Epistle was written. Even though Jesus died on the Cross and was raised from the dead by the Glory of the Father, the Jews continued to sacrifice animals. In fact, if the calendars are right and Jesus was born about 4 BC, that means that Jesus was crucified about AD 29, and rose from the dead the same year. But the only reason why the Jews stopped sacrificing animals was because the Roman general Titus Vespasian destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 70.

So the Jews were continuing to sacrifice animals for four decades after Jesus rose from the dead. And they would be sacrificing animals today if the Temple had not been destroyed, because orthodox Jews still do not trust Christ for Salvation. And when the Jews tear down the Muslim mosque in Jerusalem in the near future and rebuild their

Temple, they are going to reinstate animal sacrifices because they still reject that Christ paid for all of our sins on the Cross. This means that the religion that modern Jews follow is a false religion and is not what Moses and Abraham and David wrote about because all that these men wrote about was Jesus.

So it was not because of the Resurrection that caused Jews to stop animal sacrifices; it was the sovereign act of God in allowing pagans to destroy their sacred Temple... and by doing that, God was saying to the Jews that the Old Covenant had passed away and been absorbed by the New. And that is why this writer wrote this Book... to inform the Jews or the Hebrews of the first century that Jesus spoke of a superior Covenant, made on superior Promises, brought forth by a superior Sacrifice, and made by a superior High Priest. And what Jesus said was infinitely better than what any prophet had spoken, and what Jesus did was infinitely better than anything an angel did, because Jesus was better than angels and better than prophets... because Jesus was God!

And so here in verse three, the writer tells us that Jesus has the very same attributes or *excellencies* that are reserved solely for God when he said that Jesus upholds all things by the Word of His Power. And the Apostle Paul sang a hymn in **Colossians 1:13** that speaks of this very thing when he sang: (KJV)

**13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:**

**14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:**

**15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:**

**16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:**

**17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.**

Jesus holds all of the protons and neutrons and electrons of every atom in the universe together; at the same time, He also sustains all of the galaxies throughout the entire created universe.

We cannot create a speck of dust; we cannot create a single molecule; no angel in Heaven can create anything; no prophet can create anything. But not only did Jesus *create* all things, but the Bible says that He *sustains* all things that were created by the Word of His

Power, and they function by His control and by His express permission. And what this means is that when Jesus looks at anything in this universe - your car, your house, your heart, your mind, your plans for the future, the Milky Way galaxy, the super nova in space, every mountain, every river, every fly and every single speck of dust - Jesus looks at those things that He created and He says *"This is mine. This belongs solely to me, and I allow it to function, and I sustain it!"*

And this means that when you get in your car to go shopping and you drive down the road, and you go into the store and you buy what you want, and you return home, all that just happened occurred strictly by Jesus' permission; Jesus graciously allowed you to do that. Jesus sustained everything from your mind to your car to your heart so that you could do that. That is the impact of this verse.

And what all of those galaxies and all those mountains and all those rivers and trees and specks of dust and shopping trips should do is to do what they do for the Glory of God, and if they do anything at any time for any other reason *other* than the Glory of God, it is sin.

Oh, the immense superiority of Christ as both Creator and Sustainer! And this should humble us. This should do great damage to our pride and great harm to our arrogance, and this should make us feel very small, and insignificant, and guilty of all the sins that we have committed against this great God, Who both creates and sustains all things. You see, dear friends, to study the Bible like this allows us to see things from God's Perspective. We spend most of our lives looking at things through human eyes and rationalizing things through human logic and trying to make sense of things through human wisdom, and you just can't get there from here.

The Bible was not written from a human perspective. That is why it is called the Word of God and not the Word of "real smart men". When you get what the Puritans called "The Logic of Scripture", or in other words, when you begin to look at life and salvation and eternity through the Eyes of God, as recorded in the pages of Scripture, you see things far differently. And things that were so confusing begin to make sense. You realize that man and the benefit of man is not at the center of all that God does. God and the Glory of God is at the center of all that God does; and you begin to realize that God does what he does - not so that we can be made much of - but so He can be glorified, and so that He can be exalted and feared, loved and obeyed and honored, and so that all

nations will know that He is the Lord and that there is none else. *That* is what God is passionate about.

And so God made great waterfalls and threw stars out in space, and spun the earth in its orbit; God makes crickets to chirp and babies to laugh and mountains to smoke, and birds to fly, and fish to swim, so that in all of that, His Glory can be made known in the earth... so that all creation may wonder after Him, be amazed at Him, and love and adore and worship Him. And it is Jesus and it is the Word of Jesus' Power that sustains and upholds all of these things so that even angels and prophets will bow down before Him and call Him "Lord".

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **Hebrews**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. *Soli Deo Gloria*. For the Glory of God alone.