“Jesus is the Express Image of God”

Hebrews 1:1-9

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Introduction:

“Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th’incarnate Deity, Pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel,” are usually words we hear sung during the Christmas season (Hark! The Herald Angels Sing/Charles Wesley). Yet, the truth of Jesus Christ manifested and revealed God in the flesh is our Christian song for all times.

The very foundation of our faith tells us that God become flesh and dwelt among us (see John 1:14). With that man was no longer at an ends to figure out what God was like. All that had to do was review the life of Jesus Christ and there they would see God. Jesus Christ is and was the exact representation of God Almighty. When we see Jesus, we see God.

Today’s lesson gets to the very heart of that message. With contentions arising among new believers and Judaizers attempting to add works of the flesh to the finished work of the Spirit performed through Christ, the writer of Hebrews goal is to set the record straight on this foundational truth of Jesus Christ and how He is the fulfiller of everything the Old Testament set about to put into action.

Hebrews 1:1-4 “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times 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; 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.”

“God.” I absolutely love the way this lesson starts: with “God.” Isn’t that how all our lessons should start? “God” is the all and center of every truth revealed in His word and in this life. Without God there is nothing and nothing exist without Him. Our lesson opens up with this focus and puts a comma behind the word “God” that commands a time of pause and reflection before moving further in the study.

What God has done in this lesson is “spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets.” Acts 3:21 tells us, “God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” God has never left man on his own since the time of creation. He has remained in fellowship and communication with man through the ages.

Communication is a key component in any successful relationship. Through this, God has imparted instruction and guidance to His people. He didn’t hide His will from the people but through many “prophets” and leaders He made Himself known. Numbers 12:6 reaffirms this by saying, “Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.”

The “prophets” acted as a GPS would do in our vehicles and show the way to reach one’s destination and one’s destination is to be in the will of God. Jeremiah 25:4 states, “And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined you ear to hear.” Whether one follows the instructions and positioning of God was another story.

It’s ironic that in the verse in Numbers above speaks of God revealing Himself and His plans and purposes in a “vision” and “in a dream.” Our lesson today in Hebrews show that God does indeed use many various forms to get His message
and point across to divulge what thus saith the Lord to His people. Our lesson states that when He spake He did so “in divers manners.” Be it dreams, vision, illustrations, miracles or one on one personal verbal expressions; God has kept the pathway of communication open between He and His people.

“Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.” The life of Jesus Christ became the vision and the dreams fulfilled. Jesus once spoke and said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil,” (Matthew 5:17, emphasis mine). The words He spoke became the end all mouth piece of God. In intercessory prayer Jesus said, “For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me . . .” (John 17:8). Jesus, through His messages and life revealed God’s will to His people once and for all.

“Whom he hath appointed heir of all things.” The Son has received the inheritance of all things. As the executer of my mother’s estate I am responsible to make sure everything entailing her passing and inheritance is paid and divided evenly amongst the siblings. I have been “appointed” by her to fill this role. It is my assigned role as the oldest in the family; the firstborn. Hebrews 3:6 tells us, “Christ is faithful as the Son over God’s house,” (NIV). Isaiah 9:6 says, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder . . .” He was born to rule as “heir” with dominion forever. Jesus has been “appointed” and anointed to carry the load of God’s inheritance for the entire world; past, present and future. As the “Son” this was/is His duty and privilege.

At an earthly coronation the new king or queen carries the weight of the crown as a symbol of the responsibility they now hold in that office. With this King/Heir, the whole of His entire rule and what He would do for humanity is placed solely on Him to carry. Walking the road on that horrible day, bearing a physical cross as well as a spiritual cross, was an example of the weight bore on His shoulders. He would carry it all; bare it all, that others might be free, (John 19:16b-17).

“By whom also he made the worlds.” The Bible, in no uncertain terms, lets us know the involvement of Christ during Creation. John 1 goes into great detail stating: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the
Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made,” (John 1:1-3).

Speaking of Christ, the Apostle Paul taught in Colossians, “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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist,” (Colossians 1:16-17). This not only establishes Christ as the Word present and in charge during Creation, but it also establishes His supremacy over all; key focus of our lesson.

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” Jesus once told His disciples, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” (John 14:9). And Colossians 1:15 says, speaking of Christ, “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.” Jesus is an exact representation of God the Father; He is “the express image of his person.” Earthly parents may pass on some traits that identify that child as yours. It could be the shape of their nose or the way their eyes sparkle or their giggle chimes. But Christ is God! Christ (God the Son) is exactly as God the Father. There is no separation between the two.

Every time I see phrases such as “the brightness of his glory” referencing Jesus, it always brings my mind back to the time of transfiguration when while in the person of Christ when His majesty was exposed and radiant before the eyes of those privileged to witness it (see 2 Peter 1:16-17). They saw just a portion of the deity He is; a portion of Jesus’ true identity. God’s glory broke through the flesh and showed who Jesus really was and is. Jesus is “Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us,” (Matthew 1:23) and full of the divine glory of God.

“Upholding all things by the word of his power.” Jesus boldly stated after His death and resurrection, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” (Matthew 28:18). He has all authority. He has all dominion. Jesus is large and in charge and He is carrying and sustaining all things! “He is before all things, and by him all things consist,” (Colossians 1:17).
“When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Jesus became the substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of mankind to free him from the bondage of sin. Galatians 3:13 tells us, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Again, in Ephesians 1:7 it says, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Jesus satisfied the payment for the debt of our sins and “purged” us.

People needed a Savior. People needed to be saved from their sins. Jesus Christ was the only one who could fulfill the promise given. He supplied the means for salvation once and for all when He died on Calvary’s cross for, “without shedding of blood is no remission,” (Heb. 9:22). This was God’s foreordained plan coming to pass (see also 1 Peter 1:19-20). He is the only One who can present us “faultless” (Jude 1:24).

“Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” The idea of sitting down shows completion, and the position of the “right hand of the Majesty on high” express the honor He is deserving of in His deity. “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour . . .” (Acts 5:31).

“Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” Name means everything especially during the Bible era. Your name follows you through life be it for good or bad. People know you by your name. Often names demonstrate character and traits that are indicative to an individual. Here, the name of Christ; Jesus’ name is “more excellent” than any angel in heaven. Since, Jesus’ name is “more excellent” that means Jesus Himself is “more excellent.” He’s greater than all created beings no matter what. “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth,” (Philippians 2:10). Nowhere is that said of the angels. Jesus is greater!

Hebrews 1:5-8 “For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the
world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

"Angels" are created beings. The "angels" are not inheritors of a "kingdom." The "angels" do not sit on a throne. The "angels" are ministering "spirits" that do the will of God. "Angels" are beings of force to fight when they need to be (see Daniel 10:13 and Revelations 12:7). "Angels" are messengers of God (Matthew 1:20-21; 28:5-7). "Angels" assist people (Psalm 91:11; Acts 12:7; Hebrews 1:14). But, "angels" are not the "Son;" they are not the "begotten" of the "Father."

“When he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” This is reminiscent of Jesus’ birth. Luke 2:13-14 “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” The angels worshipped Jesus! It was as if heaven could not hold back its rejoicing over the birth of the Savior. Heaven peeked through into the earthly realm and the shepherds present that night got to see them “get their praise on” as we would call it today.

Jesus is King. Jesus is the one who possess the “sceptre” signifying His lordship over all. Revelation 11:15 declares, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

Hebrews 1:9 “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”

“Loved righteousness, and hated iniquity” are the criteria that had to be filled. He was the perfect sacrifice. He was and is the perfect King. He was and is the perfect Son. He lived a life unblemished and full of love for the right things and for people while drawing men closer to God. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, *who knew no sin*; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” (2 Corinthians 5:21, emphasis mine). Again, “For such an high priest became us,
who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens,” (Hebrews 7:26).

He did it all for us. Sin has destroyed the world. Sin put Him on the cross. Sin is the enemy He conquered once and for all. It’s His enemy since the beginning of time and has incurred His wrath for He “hated iniquity.”

“God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” We see similar reference in Psalm 45:7 where again it states, “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” He is eternally anointed for this (see Isaiah 61:1). He has given the oil of joy for mourning (see Isaiah 61:3). There is joy in the supremacy of His reign for He is above all. There is no earthly king or leader that can come close to the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. There are no angels or any other created being that surpasses Him. He is above all!

Although we, as children of God, share in the inheritance supplied through Christ. And, although we are no longer at enmity with Him but rather become “joint-heirs with Christ,” (see Romans 8:17); we must remember on all accounts and in every way He, the Lord Jesus Christ, is above all!

Conclusion:

For any questionings of the faith simply look to Jesus and He will show you God because He is God. Nothing else need be added.